



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

## 2022 Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Frequently Asked Questions *Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Program Accreditation*

The program's [primary contact](#) may direct questions to the program's [accreditation specialist](#). All general or public inquiries may be directed to [accreditation@cswe.org](mailto:accreditation@cswe.org).

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### Transitioning to 2022 EPAS

#### Pre-Candidacy & Candidacy Programs

1. **If our program currently has Pre-Candidacy or Candidacy status, when do we transition to the 2022 EPAS?**

Programs complete all stages of the candidacy process under the same set of standards. Any program currently in the candidacy process under the 2015 EPAS will continue under the 2015 EPAS through initial accreditation. Programs can transition to the 2022 EPAS as soon as initial accreditation is achieved. All accredited programs are expected to operate under the 2022 EPAS by July 1, 2025, except programs granted initial accreditation after July 1, 2024, which will have 1 year from their initial accreditation date to transition to the 2022 EPAS.

2. **My institution is starting a baccalaureate or master's program, which set of standards will be used?**

- Programs submitting *Draft Benchmark 1* documents on or before December 31, 2022, will begin the process and remain under the 2015 EPAS.
- Beginning January 1, 2023, all *Draft Benchmark 1* documents will be submitted under the 2022 EPAS.
- If a program has submitted its *Candidacy Eligibility Application* but has not submitted its *Draft Benchmark 1* by January 1, 2023, the program will utilize the 2022 EPAS.

## Accredited Programs (Reaffirmation)

### 3. **When does our accredited program need to transition to the 2022 EPAS?**

All accredited programs are expected to transition to, and operate under, the 2022 EPAS by July 1, 2025, unless otherwise noted on the *Implementation Timeline* on the 2022 EPAS [webpage](#).

### 4. **Why is the COA expecting all programs to operate under the 2022 EPAS by July 1, 2025 regardless of accreditation review date (unless otherwise noted on the implementation timeline)?**

The COA carefully and intentionally developed the 2022 EPAS implementation timeline. While common practice among accreditors, an expected implementation date is new to social work accreditation.

The COA designed the implementation timeline to unify social work education in using the most current standards, which support programs in developing social workers committed to the principles of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion. A common implementation date works to instill public confidence in the expected knowledge, values, and skills possessed by graduates of a CSWE-accredited program.

The COA continues to offer programs the option of requesting temporary extensions to their accreditation review dates. Learn more about these options in sections [1.2.2. Postponement of Reaffirmation Review](#) and [1.2.3. Agenda Adjustments](#) in the [EPAS Handbook](#).

### 5. **If my program is not under an accreditation review by the COA, what does it mean to “operate under” the 2022 EPAS (as mentioned in the Implementation Timeline)?**

To “operate under” the 2022 EPAS means that the program has aligned its program mission; anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; explicit curriculum; implicit curriculum; and assessment to comply with the nine social work competencies, behaviors, and accreditation standards in the 2022 EPAS. For example, the program will ensure its generalist curriculum implements the nine social work competencies (and any additional competencies added by the program) but does not submit forms or syllabi to the COA until their next reaffirmation review.

Programs are not expected to submit a report to CSWE to demonstrate the transition to the 2022 EPAS. The COA trusts that programs are transitioning to the 2022 EPAS. Programs will be evaluated for compliance with the 2022 EPAS at their regularly scheduled reaffirmation review.

### 6. **When operating under the 2022 EPAS, should all transition elements be finalized on a specific implementation date?**

The required implementation date means the program is officially “operating under” the

2022 EPAS. However, the COA understands that transitioning to a new EPAS takes careful planning and may be ongoing due to institutional processes governing programmatic and curricular updates.

A new EPAS does not require an overhaul of the entire social work program. It can be helpful to focus time and resources on updating program elements related to the major changes in between the 2015 EPAS and 2022 EPAS (described in [FAQ #17](#)).

Programs should refer to the [implementation timeline](#) to identify implementation information, however programs may elect to transition to the 2022 EPAS earlier. Programs will be evaluated for compliance with the 2022 EPAS at their regularly scheduled reaffirmation review.

**7. Will our program be reviewed under the 2015 EPAS or 2022 EPAS?**

- Programs submitting self-studies before August 1, 2024, will have the option to use either the 2015 EPAS or 2022 EPAS.
- Programs submitting self-studies on or after August 1, 2024 (June 2025 agenda for reaffirmation) will use the 2022 EPAS.
- See the *Implementation Timeline* on the 2022 EPAS [webpage](#).
- Find the program's next review date in CSWE's [Directory of Accredited Programs](#).

**8. Can we submit our self-study using the 2022 EPAS early?**

Programs may elect to submit accreditation materials using the 2022 EPAS beginning in January 2023. Please note that required materials (e.g., forms, templates) were published on the [CSWE website](#) as part of the 2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit in December 2022 and 2022 EPAS training will be available in spring 2023.

**9. Can we delay our reaffirmation date to have more time to transition to the 2022 EPAS?**

Yes, implementing a new set of standards is a qualifying reason for temporarily delaying reaffirmation unless the 2022 EPAS has been published for three (3) or more years.

A program may apply for the following to allow more time to implement the 2022 EPAS:

- 1-meeting agenda adjustment (4 months); and/or
- 2-meeting postponement (8 months); or
- 1 year postponement.

Review policies *1.2.2. Postponement of Reaffirmation Review* and *1.2.3. Agenda Adjustments* in the [EPAS Handbook](#) for full policies and procedures.

**10. Can our program choose to adopt part of the 2022 EPAS (e.g., field and faculty standards) and part of the 2015 standards while we work on our transition from**

## 2015 to 2022?

No, programs must comply with the entire set of standards require by implementation timeline.

### 11. My program is still operating under the 2008 EPAS, should I move to the 2015 EPAS or 2022 EPAS at this point?

All accredited programs are expected to transition to, and operate under, the 2022 EPAS by July 1, 2025 unless otherwise noted on the *Implementation Timeline* on the 2022 EPAS [webpage](#). Your program's [primary contact](#) may contact your program's [accreditation specialist](#) to discuss your program's specific timeline.

## 2022 EPAS Resources & Training (interpretation guide, templates, forms, etc.)

### 12. When can we expect the 2022 EPAS Interpretation Guide to be available to programs to begin transitioning to the 2022 EPAS?

A toolkit of resources, including the 2022 EPAS *Interpretation Guide* was published on the [CSWE website](#) as part of the 2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit in December 2022.

### 13. When will forms like the curriculum matrix or assessment reporting forms for the 2022 EPAS be available?

A toolkit of accreditation resources, including required templates for candidacy Benchmark 1, candidacy Benchmark 2, and Initial Accreditation / Reaffirmation Self-study, was published on the [CSWE website](#) in December 2022 as part of the 2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit. These templates included curriculum matrices, assessment reporting forms, and more.

### 14. What training will be provided to programs and when?

Pre-candidacy and reaffirmation training for the 2022 EPAS will be made available to programs beginning spring 2023. [Webinars](#), [APM](#) presentations, [consultative services](#), and more will be shared directly with programs and published on our training [webpage](#) as events are scheduled. Questions regarding trainings may be directed to [accredworkshop@cswe.org](mailto:accredworkshop@cswe.org).

### 15. When will 2022 EPAS training be offered to site visitors?

Site visitors training under the 2022 EPAS will be offered beginning spring 2023. If you are interested in becoming a site visitor and learning more about training once it is available, please contact Alyson Durant, Accreditation Volunteer Coordinator, at [adurant@cswe.org](mailto:adurant@cswe.org).

## 2022 EPAS Content

### 16. Does CSWE have any guidance on conveying the importance of anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (A DEI) in social work education with our institution?

CSWE continues to affirm its commitment to A DEI. Alongside the 2022 EPAS, CSWE has published a document sharing resources and information [regarding A DEI here](#).

### 17. What are the major changes between the [2015 EPAS](#) and [2022 EPAS](#)?

#### a. **Competency 2 and Competency 3**

- i. Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice in 2022 EPAS **was** Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice in 2015 EPAS.
- ii. Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (A DEI) in Practice in 2022 EPAS **was** Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice in 2015 EPAS.

#### b. **Behaviors**

- i. The behaviors associated with the nine competencies have been reduced from 31 to 20.

#### c. **Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts (A DEI)**

*(Accreditation Standard 2.0.1 and 2.0.2)*

- i. Programs must describe how they engage in specific and continuous efforts within both the explicit and implicit curricula related to A DEI, based on Educational Policy 2.0 – A DEI.

#### d. **Professional Practice Community Engagement in the Explicit Curriculum**

*(Accreditation Standard 3.1.1 and M3.2.3)*

- i. Programs must explain:
  1. How the professional practice community is engaged in the generalist and specialized explicit curriculum.
  2. The impact this engagement has on curriculum content, development, and delivery.

#### e. **Employment-Based Field**

*(Accreditation Standard 3.3.7)*

- i. Programs may choose whether to permit employment-based field placements. If permitted:
  - Student assignments and employee tasks may qualify as field hours when directly linked to the nine social work competencies (and any additional competencies added by the program) and level of practice (generalist or specialized); and

- Field education supervision may be provided by the same supervisor if field education supervision is distinct from employment supervision and the supervisor meets the requirements of *Accreditation Standard 3.3.6*.

**f. Equitable and Inclusive Admissions Processes**

*(Accreditation Standard 4.1.1)*

- i. Programs describe how program admissions processes make the program equitable and inclusive, with particular attention to underrepresented as well as historically and currently oppressed groups as identified by the program according to their context.

**g. Advanced Standing Requirement**

*(Accreditation Standard M4.1.3)*

- i. All master's programs must offer advanced standing to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE's Commission on Accreditation.
- ii. Programs must have a policy to ensure that students admitted to advanced standing programs do not repeat generalist content at the master's level that has been achieved at the baccalaureate level.

**h. Minimum Faculty-Master's**

*(Accreditation Standard M4.2.1)*

- i. The minimum faculty for master's programs is now **four** full-time faculty with a full-time appointment in social work, whose principal assignment is to the master's program.

**i. Full-time equivalent Faculty-to-Student Ratio**

*(Accreditation Standard B/M4.2.3)*

- i. The full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio remains at 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and 1:12 for master's programs. Programs presenting a higher ratio must provide:
  1. Evidence to demonstrate achievement of student competence  
*[Accreditation Standard 5.0.1(b)]*
  2. Evidence to demonstrate achievement of program outcomes  
*(Accreditation Standard 5.0.3)*
  3. A rationale
  4. A discussion of sufficiency

**j. Assigned time for Program Director – Baccalaureate and Master's**

*(Accreditation Standards B4.3.4(c) and M4.3.4(c))*

- i. Assigned time to provide administrative oversight of the baccalaureate program is customarily, at minimum, 25%.
- ii. Assigned time to provide administrative oversight of the master's program is customarily, at minimum, 50%.

- iii. Programs must demonstrate sufficiency of assigned time for administrative oversight.

k. **Assigned time for Field Director – Baccalaureate and Master’s**

*(Accreditation Standards B4.3.5(c) and M4.3.5(c))*

- i. Assigned time to provide administrative oversight of the baccalaureate field education program is customarily, at minimum, 25%.
- ii. Assigned time to provide administrative oversight of the master’s field education program is customarily, at minimum, 50%.
- iii. Programs must demonstrate sufficiency of assigned time for administrative oversight.

l. **Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) Assessment**

*(Accreditation Standard 5.0.2 (a) and 5.0.2(b))*

- i. Similar to implicit curriculum assessment in the 2015 EPAS, programs are now required to have a systematic plan to assess ADEI efforts within the program’s **implicit curriculum** as reported in *Accreditation Standard 2.0.2*, and must have a process to formally review its ADEI assessment plan and outcomes.

m. **Program Outcomes**

*(Accreditation Standard 5.0.3)*

- i. New to the 2022 EPAS is the requirement for the program to monitor its program outcomes through **graduation rates** and at least **one additional outcome** selected from the following:
  - 1. Employment rates
  - 2. Higher education acceptance rates
  - 3. Time to program completion
- ii. **Question: I’m unfamiliar with some of these program outcomes, what do they mean?**
  - 1. Please visit the [2022 EPAS Interpretation Guide](#) for definitions of graduation rates, employment rates, higher education acceptance rates, and time to program completion.
- iii. **Question: Do our program’s outcomes affect our accreditation status?**
  - 1. No, the EPAS does not prescribe specific benchmarks for program outcomes.
  - 2. Programs are expected to collect the data, set their own benchmarks based on the program’s context, and use data for continuous program improvement.
- iv. **Question: We collect employment and higher education acceptance rates via an alumni survey, but we have a very low response rate. Will this impact our accreditation?**
  - 1. No, the EPAS does not prescribe specific response rates for collecting program outcomes.
  - 2. Program are expected to select the program outcome that best aligns with their context, discussing how data are collected and



used in continuous program improvement. Programs may choose to discuss response rates, or other areas that may impact the data, in their response to *Accreditation Standard 5.0.3*.

**v. Question: How do we proceed if our program will not have 3-years of program outcomes data to present in our self-study/benchmark documents?**

1. At minimum accredited programs provide:
  - a. One (1) year of data if submitting an accreditation document in 2023 or 2024.
  - b. Two (2) years of data if submitting an accreditation document in 2025 or 2026.
  - c. Three (3) years of data if submitting an accreditation document in 2027 and beyond.
2. At minimum candidacy programs provide one (1) year of data.
  - a. For programs under review for an Initial Accreditation decision: If the program documents they will graduate their first cohort of students within 1-year, the program may be granted initial accreditation with a progress report.
  - b. In such cases, the program is permitted up to 1-year from the initial accreditation date to collect and present one (1) year of data.

**18. Our master's program is under the 2015 EPAS for our next accreditation review. Per AS M4.2.1 in the 2022 EPAS, 4 full-time faculty is now the minimum. We believe 4 full-time faculty is sufficient for us. Is there a waiver for this standard?**

Yes, as of October 2022, the COA offers an optional temporary waiver to the accreditation standard pertaining to minimum number of full-time faculty required for master's social work programs (*Accreditation Standard M3.2.4*). This temporary waiver permits master's programs with accreditation reviews under the 2015 EPAS to operate with a minimum of four (4) full-time faculty as permitted in the 2022 EPAS. Complete and submit the [Temporary Waiver Request Form](#) to Katie Gibson-Ledl, [Associate Director of Accreditation Services](#), at [kgibson@cswe.org](mailto:kgibson@cswe.org).

**19. What is the EPAS, how often does it get revised, and what's that process?**

CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) are revised at periodic intervals of seven (7) years. To learn more about the EPAS revision process and the roles of the joint effort between CSWE's Commission on Accreditation and Commission on Educational Policy in developing the 2022 EPAS, please review the information published on page 6 of the 2022 EPAS and visit the 2022 EPAS [webpage](#).

**20. How do we provide feedback on the EPAS?**

After multiple [rounds of feedback](#), the 2022 EPAS has been released and is no longer open for comment. When the next set of standards are in the development process,



constituents will be invited to provide feedback via surveys on the CSWE website, and additional feedback opportunities will be offered to members, such as at CSWE's Annual Program Meeting.

Volunteers are integral to CSWE's [shared governance model](#), and we invite you to shape the future of social work education by contributing to the accreditation process through [volunteering as a site visitor](#). After service as a site visitor, you may apply to serve on the Commission on Accreditation.