PRE-CANDIDACY MONTHLY WORKSHOP WITH

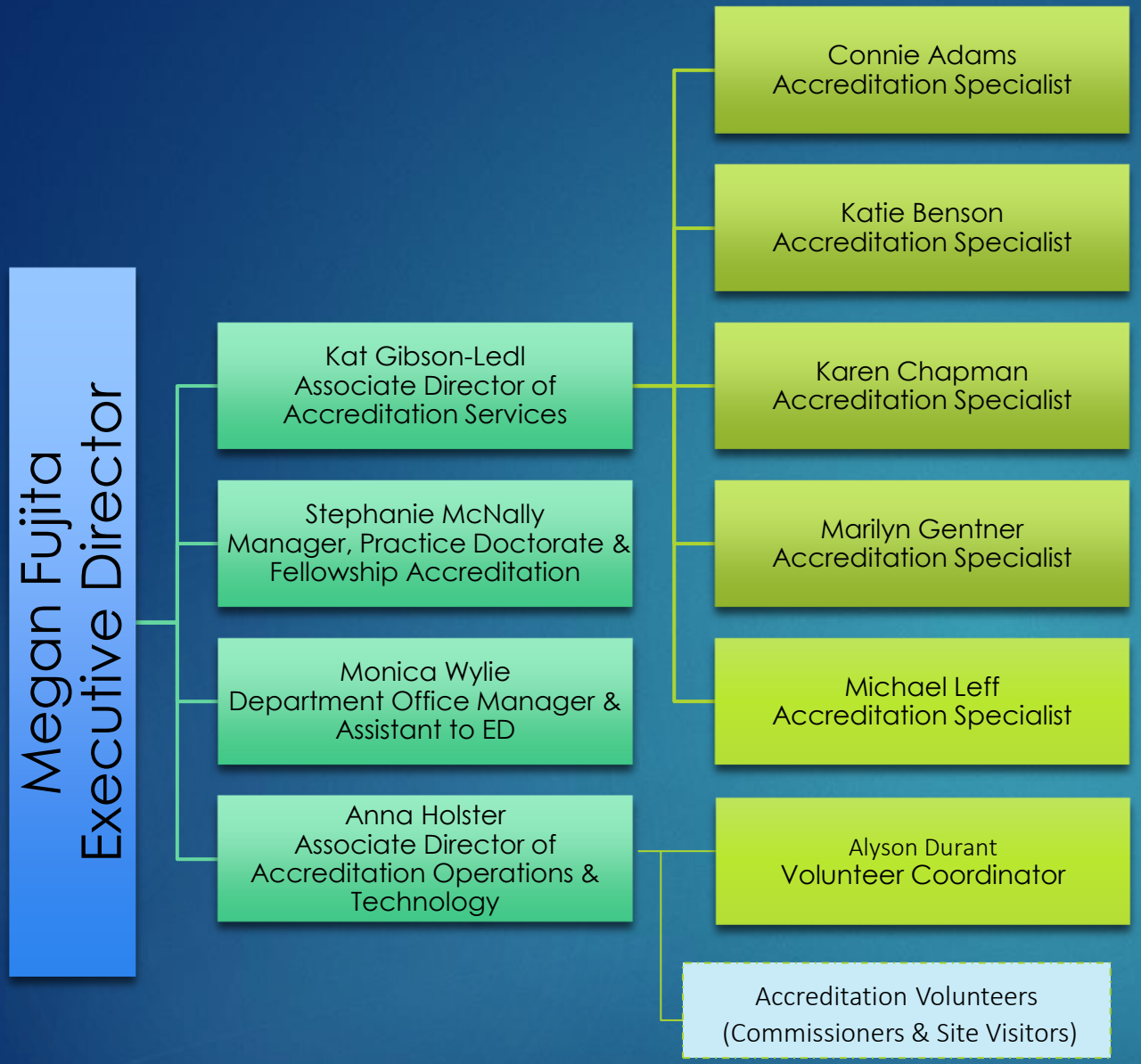
ANNA HOLSTER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ACCREDITATION OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

TOPIC 1: JUNE 2022

OVERVIEW OF TIMETABLES AND PROCESS

Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)

Meet the accreditation team!



MAJOR CANDIDACY DUE DATES

(see Timetables for all due dates: https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process)

Candidacy Eligibility Application	Draft Benchmark I (BMI) to CSWE	Approval of Draft Benchmark I (BMI) by CSWE and Assignment to Agenda	Commissioner Site Visit Dates (3 are scheduled)	COA Review
Submitted to Associate Director (ADOT) on rolling basis throughout the year.	Submitted to Associate Director (ADOT) At least 1 round of feedback before approval. Allow 2-4 weeks for feedback.	Draft BMI approved by Associate Director (ADOT), granting Pre-Candidacy status. Associate Director (ADOT) assigns program to Accreditation Specialist. First 10 Draft BMI documents approved by December 1, 2022, are placed on October 2023 Candidacy agenda. Subsequently approved programs placed on February 2024 agenda.	• Visit 1: March 1-May 31, 2023 • Visit 2: March 1-May 31, 2024 • Visit 3: March 1-May 31, 2025 E-mail full BMI to commissioner and specialist one month prior to CV visit. Visit scheduled directly with visitor. Confirm visit date once scheduled at https://forms.office.com/r/FJNJEiZbAL.	• Candidacy Status Review–Oct 2023 • Year 2 Candidacy Review–Oct 2024 • Initial Accreditation–Oct 2025 Covers students admitted to social work program in fall 2023 or later, regardless of graduation date.
Submitted to Associate Director (ADOT) of on rolling basis throughout the year.	Submitted to Associate Director (ADOT) At least 1 round of feedback before approval. Allow 2-4 weeks for feedback.	Draft BMI approved by Associate Director (ADOT), granting Pre-Candidacy status. Associate Director (ADOT) assigns program to Accreditation Specialist. First 10 Draft BMI documents approved by June 1, 2023, are placed on February 2024 Candidacy agenda. Subsequently approved programs placed on June 2024 agenda.	• Visit 1: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2023 • Visit 2: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2024 • Visit 3: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2025 E-mail full BMI to commissioner and specialist one month prior to CV visit. Visit scheduled directly with visitor. Confirm visit date once scheduled at https://forms.office.com/r/FJNJEiZbAL.	• Candidacy Status Review–Feb 2024 • Year 2 Candidacy Review–Feb 2025 • Initial Accreditation–Feb 2026 Covers students admitted to social work program in fall 2023 or later, regardless of graduation date.
Submitted to Associate Director (ADOT) on rolling basis throughout the year.	Submitted to Associate Director (ADOT) At least 1 round of feedback before approval. Allow 2-4 weeks for feedback.	Draft BMI approved by Associate Director (ADOT), granting *Pre-Candidacy* status. Associate Director (ADOT) assigns program to Accreditation Specialist. First 10 Draft BMI documents approved by September 1, 2023, are placed on June 2024 Candidacy agenda. Subsequently approved programs placed on October 2024 agenda.	• Visit 1: Dec 1, 2023-Feb 28, 2024 • Visit 2: Dec 1, 2024-Feb 29, 2025 • Visit 3: Dec 1, 2025-Feb 28, 2026 E-mail full BMI to commissioner and specialist one month prior to CV visit. Visit scheduled directly with visitor. Confirm visit date once scheduled at https://forms.office.com/r/FJNJEiZbAL.	• Candidacy Status Review–June 2024 • Year 2 Candidacy Review–June 2025 • Initial Accreditation–June 2026 Covers students admitted to social work program in fall 2023 or later, regardless of graduation date.

2022 EPAS

- The *2022 EPAS* is expected to be voted on in June 2022 and released to the public in July 2022. However, all forms, templates, interpretation guides, and other resources will not be released until approximately December 2022.
- Until resources are available, this workshop will focus on the *2015 EPAS*. Once resources are available, this workshop will shift to focusing on how the standards apply to both the *2015 EPAS* and the *2022 EPAS*
- Programs submitting the first draft of Draft Benchmark I on or before December 31, 2022, will complete the full Candidacy process under the *2015 EPAS*.
- Programs submitting the first draft of Draft Benchmark I on or after January 1, 2023, will complete the full Candidacy process under the *2022 EPAS*.
- More information at https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/info/2022-epas/

Benchmark Model (continued)

- **Draft Benchmark I**
  - BMI standards reviewed in draft for approval by Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology → Pre-Candidacy Status Decision
  - BMII and BMIII standards reviewed for consultation and feedback
- **Benchmark 1**
  - BMI standards reviewed for approval by commissioner visitor and commissioner readers → Candidacy Status Decision
  - BMII and BMIII standards reviewed by commissioner visitor for consultation and feedback
- **Benchmark 2**
  - BMII standards reviewed for approval by commissioner visitor and commissioner readers → 2nd Year of Candidacy Decision
  - BMIII standards reviewed by commissioner visitor for consultation and feedback
- **Benchmark 3**
  - All standards reviewed for approval by commissioner visitor and commissioner readers → Initial Accreditation Decision
- Benchmark Grid - The *Benchmark Model Grid* illustrates which features of the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) the program is working on during each benchmark/commission visit

Steps Leading to Pre-Candidacy

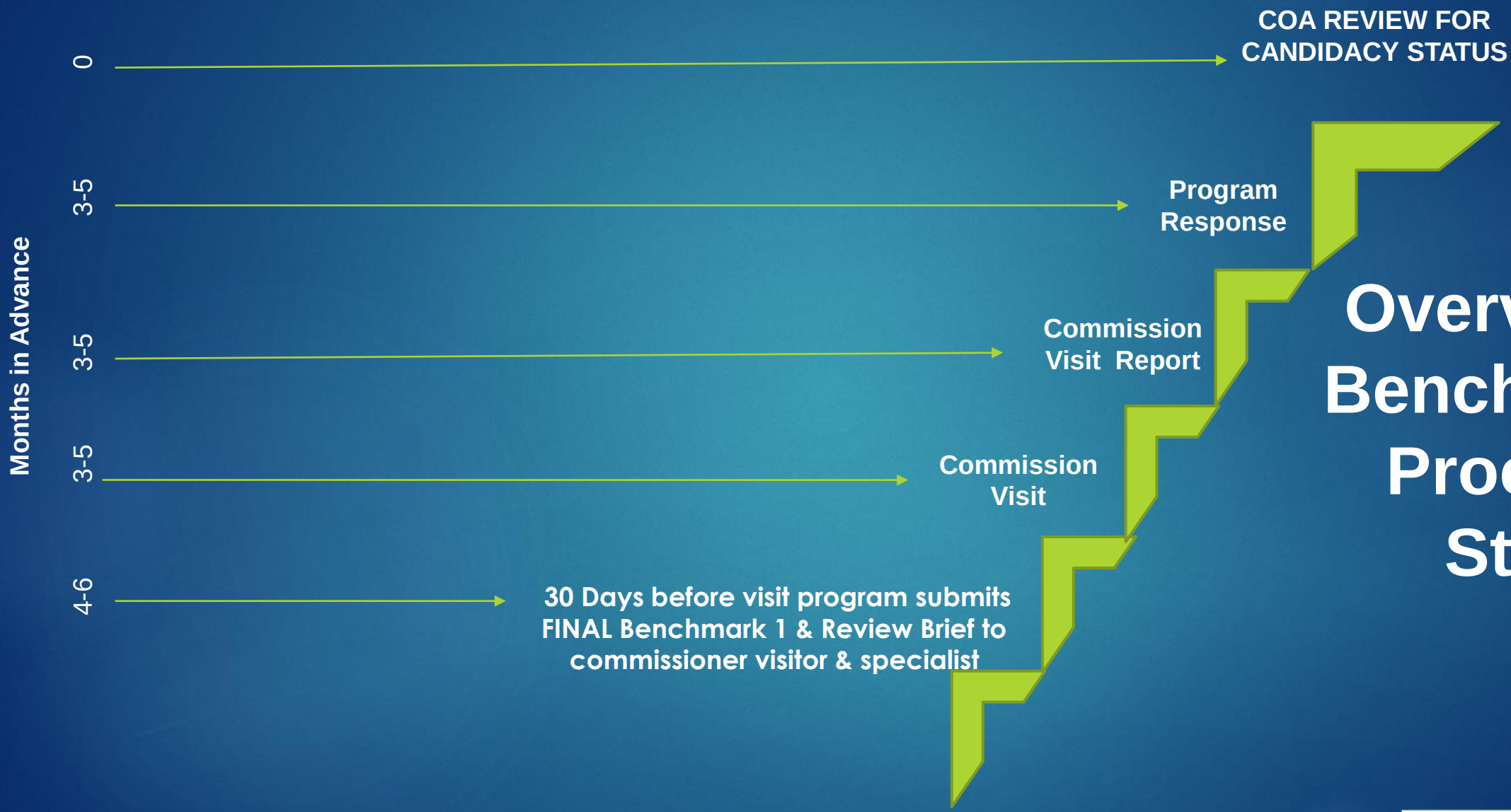
Months in Advance

1-4+	At least one round of feedback
4+	Submit Draft Benchmark 1
4+	Approval of Candidacy Eligibility Application
4+	Submit Candidacy Eligibility Application (including Letter of Institutional Intent) to Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology; submit Candidacy Eligibility Fee to CSWE Accounting Office

Draft Benchmark 1 Approval, conferring Pre-Candidacy Status, assignment to an Accreditation Specialist, and placement on COA Agenda for Candidacy review

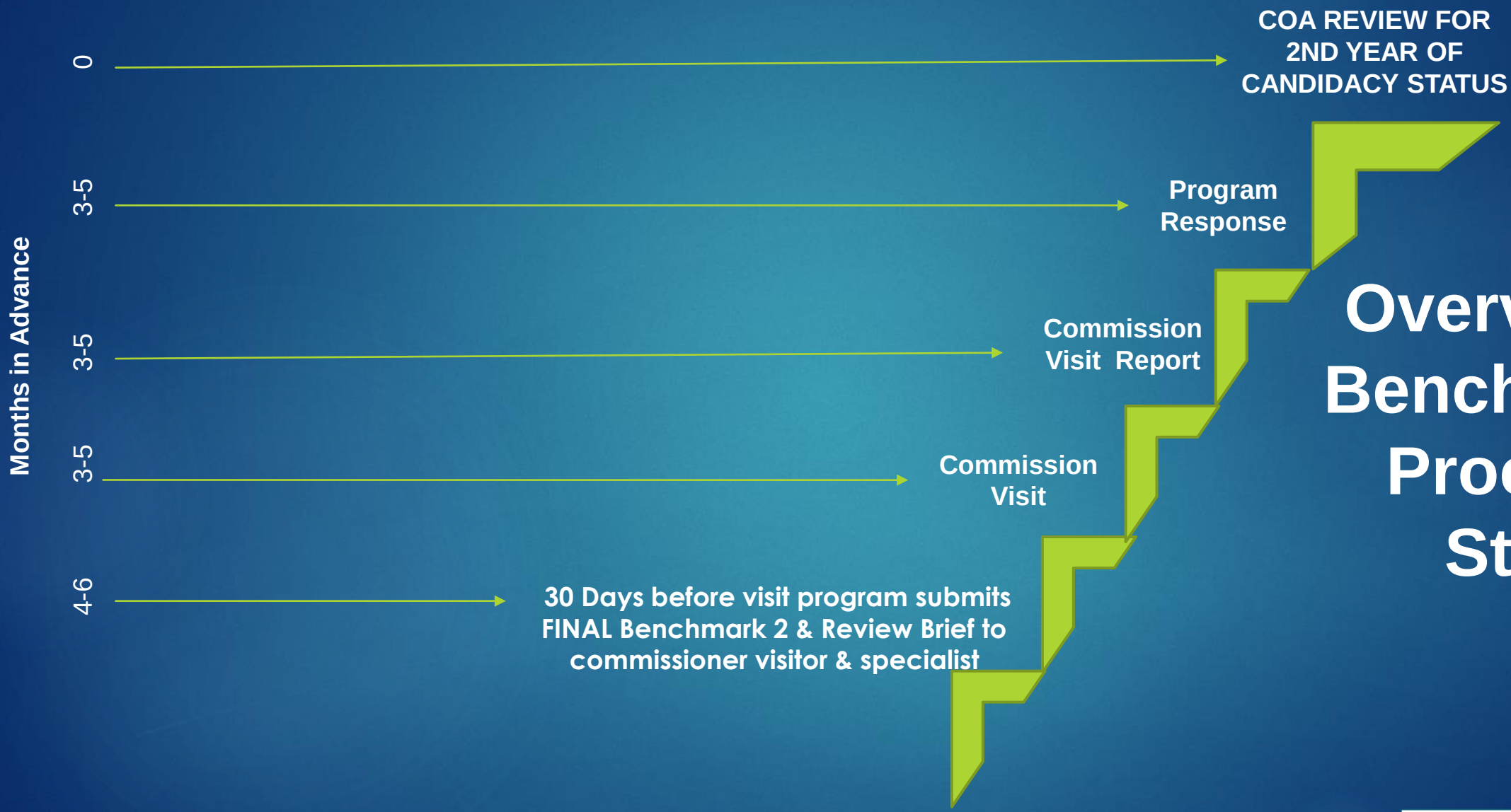
CSWE ACCREDITATION
COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Overview of Benchmark 1 Process / Steps



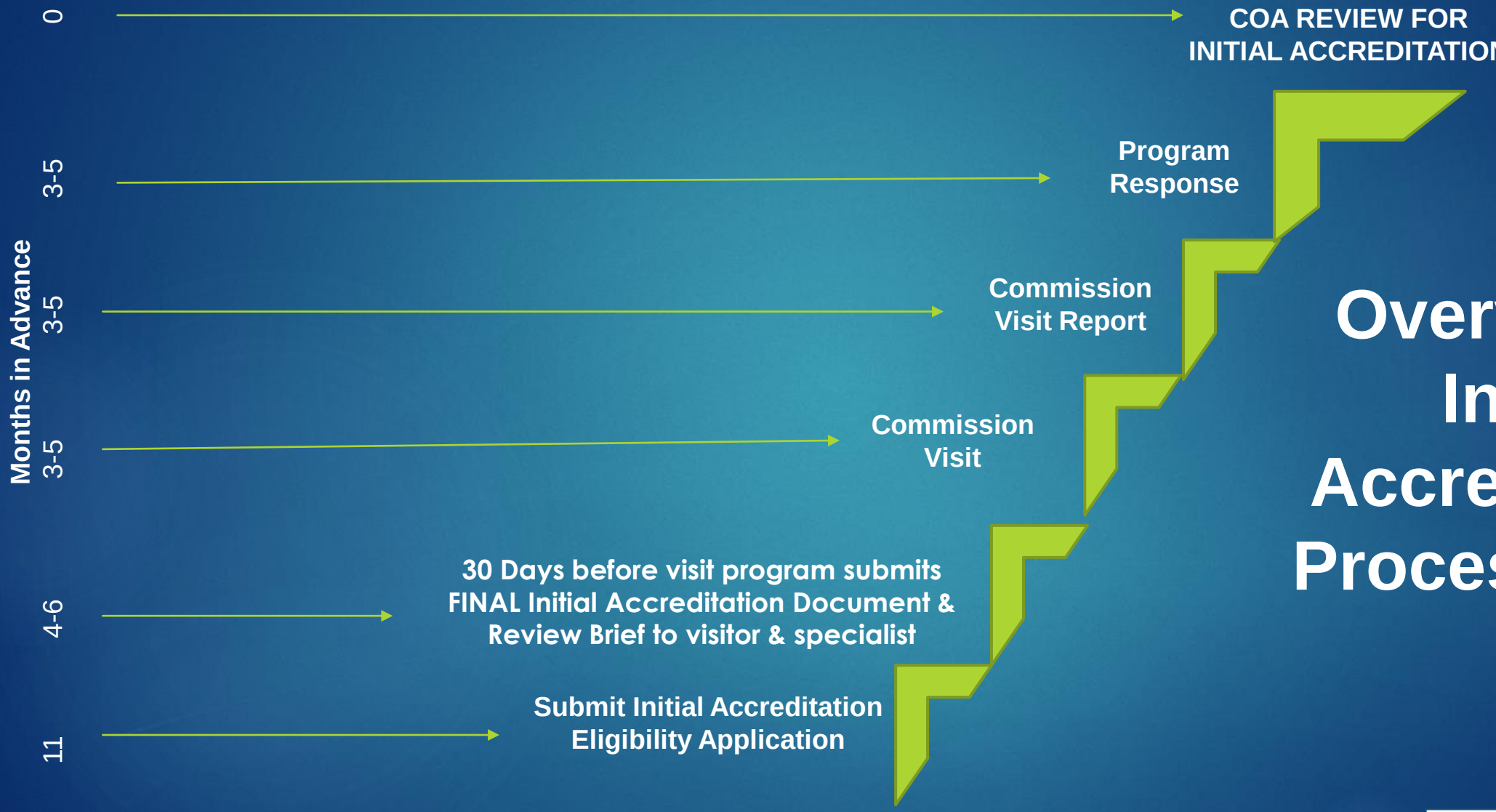
CSWE ACCREDITATION

Overview of Benchmark 2 Process / Steps



CSWE ACCREDITATION

Overview of Initial Accreditation Process/Steps



CSWE ACCREDITATION
COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Length of Candidacy Process

- Completing the Candidacy process is a 3-1/2-year incremental process that concludes with an Initial Accreditation (full accreditation) decision
- The Candidacy process is focused on a benchmarking model of program development which leads to an Initial Accreditation decision, which is granted for eight (8) years
- The program will be reviewed under the same EPAS for the duration of the Candidacy process (including deferrals and progress reports if applicable)
- After Initial Accreditation, programs will be reviewed every eight (8) years for reaccreditation (referred to as Reaffirmation)

COA Agenda

- Once a program is assigned to the February, June, or October agenda, the program remains on that same agenda throughout the Candidacy process and in the Reaffirmation process.
- If a program is deferred by the COA at any point in the process due to concerns or insufficient information, the program will remain on the original agenda date as long as the decision is granted at the next COA agenda
- A program is also permitted to request additional time at any point in the process, moving it to a later agenda
  - If a program requests additional time at any point in the process, that will permanently move it to a later agenda
  - Programs should work with DOSWA staff to request additional time as it may affect the program's retroactive accreditation date, including students covered by the program's accreditation status

Candidacy Timetables

- Your program is not placed on a COA agenda (scheduled for review at the February, June, or October COA meeting), until the program's *Benchmark I* document has been approved in draft by the Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology
  - Upon approval, your program will be assigned to an Accreditation Specialist and approved for a first commissioner visit
- The timetables are organized around COA meeting dates (February, June, October). Timetables feature:
  - Chronological list of candidacy materials and actions
  - The deadline for each item
  - To whom materials should be submitted
- Once the document is approved, a commissioner visitor will be assigned
- **Timetable for Candidacy- February Agenda**
- **Timetable for Candidacy- June Agenda**
- **Timetable for Candidacy- October Agenda**

Approval(s) to Start the Process

IMPORTANT STEP! Approvals Required in Advance of Application Submission to CSWE's Accreditation Department. This requirement comprises *Eligibility Standard 3* on the *Candidacy Eligibility Application*.

- State higher education and regional accreditation approvals must be obtained prior to submitting Candidacy Eligibility Application.
- Internal program, institutional, or board approvals should all be in place before applying for candidacy with CSWE.
- These approvals can take anywhere from a few months to a year or more, dependent upon each process, and are required for CSWE staff to accept and process the Candidacy Eligibility Application.
- Plan accordingly as the Accreditation Department cannot move forward the application without documented approvals at the state- and regional-levels.

Starting the Process

- Email *Candidacy Eligibility Application* (which includes *Letter of Institutional Intent* and all supporting materials) to Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology
- Submit *Candidacy Eligibility Fee ($10,000)*
  - Mail fee to
    - Ed Blair, Accountant, CSWE
    - 333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400
    - Alexandria, VA 22314
  - Email feesaccred@cswe.org if you would like to be invoiced prior to paying fee
  - Application cannot be reviewed and approved until fee payment is verified
- Approved by Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology and program is authorized to submit *Draft Benchmark I.*

Starting the Process

- *Draft Benchmark 1* document submitted via email to Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology (ADOT).
- ADOT reviews and identifies any areas for further revision that program must make prior to approval. Process may entail multiple rounds of feedback prior to approval.
- The date of *Draft Benchmark 1* approval determines the program's agenda date (February, June, or October).
- Approval of *Draft Benchmark 1* formally places program on agenda for first commissioner visit and confers *Pre-Candidacy* status.
- Review Candidacy Timetables for submission dates.
- Review CSWE website for resources, EPAS Policy Handbook, and *Formatting and Submission Requirements*.

Candidacy Eligibility Application

- Downloadable from cswe.org > *Candidacy tab* > *Eligibility Materials sub-tab*
- Seven (7) Eligibility Standards (Two (2) more will be at Initial Accreditation stage)
  - Provide response plus supplemental documentation for each standard
- Signed by both social work program director and president/chancellor/designee
- ***Eligibility Standard 1***
  - The president/chancellor of the institution authorizes the Commission on Accreditation's review of the social work program, including conducting commission visits.
- ***Eligibility Standard 2***
  - The program is located in an educational institution recognized by a regional accrediting body approved by the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- ***Eligibility Standard 3***
  - The institution must be legally organized and authorized to operate as a postsecondary educational institution under the laws of the relevant state. The program has been approved by the appropriate higher education authority.

Candidacy Eligibility Application (continued)

- ***Eligibility Standard 4***
  - The institution complies with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ***Eligibility Standard 5***
  - The institution has a written affirmative action policy, plan or program, and procedures, and a policy against discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, ethnic or national origin, disability, or age.
- ***Eligibility Standard 6***
  - Identify program director with demonstrated leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in the field of social work.
  - Director must possess a master's social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program.
  - It is preferred, but not required that director also posses a doctoral degree.
- ***Eligibility Standard 7***
  - *No information required at this time. This standard is not approved until Initial Accreditation.*
  - The institution identifies and describes the social work program in its catalog, similar publication, or website. Program mission and course offerings are specified.

Candidacy Eligibility Application (continued)

- ***Eligibility Standard 8***
  - *No information required at this time. This standard is not approved until Initial Accreditation.*
  - The educational institution provides its organizational chart to document the position of the social work program in the governance structure of the institution and to demonstrate its position relative to other professional education programs offered by the institution.
- ***Eligibility Standard 9***
  - *No information required at this time. This standard is not approved until Initial Accreditation.*
  - The institutional transcript for students who complete the accredited social work program confirms that the social work program was completed, and a baccalaureate or master's degree was awarded.
- ***Eligibility Standard 10 (Master's Programs Only)***
  - The institution must ensure that the master's program in social work is designed to be completed in 2 calendar years of full-time study or 4 years of part-time study, comprising all course work, papers or projects, and the field practicum.
- ***Eligibility Standard 11***
  - The institution documents sufficient and firm institutional supports to create, build, and maintain the social work education program.

Letter of Institutional Intent

- Final page of Candidacy Eligibility Application requires narrative that provides clear, complete, and sufficient information regarding the program and institution's intent to start a social work program, which includes the following:
  - A discussion of the institution's mission and the relationship of the social work program to that mission.
  - An analysis of the relationship of the proposed program to the institution's strategic or long-range plan.
  - A discussion of the costs (including a projected budget) of the program and the benefits or advantages that the institution expects to receive relative to these costs.
  - Preliminary ideas about the mission and goals of the social work program.
  - A summary of the program's initial development activities.

Program Structure for Master's Programs

- Full-time plans of study should be designed to be completed in no longer than 2 years. It is permissible for individual students to take longer than 2 years, as long as the program is designed to be completed within 2 years.

- Master's programs should be designed to be completed by part-time students in no longer than 4 years. It is permissible for individual students to take longer than 4 years, as long as the program is designed to be completed within 4 years.

- These requirements comprise Eligibility Standard 10 on the *Candidacy Eligibility Application*.

Stages of Program Development

- By the time a program is reviewed by the COA for *Initial Accreditation*, the self-study will be completed; at least one class will graduate within one year; and competency-based assessment data collected from program graduates (per policy *3.1.1 Benchmark Model* in the EPAS Handbook).
  - COA Update from February 2021: Programs under review for Initial Accreditation are no longer required to present a full year of assessment outcomes in order to receive Initial Accreditation, provided their first cohort of students will graduate within 1-year or less after the program is reviewed for Initial Accreditation. If programs document that their first cohort will graduate within 1-year or less of the Initial Accreditation review and no additional non-compliance issues are identified, programs may be granted Initial Accreditation with a Progress Report requiring them to submit assessment outcomes within 1-year of receiving Initial Accreditation.

Stages of Program Development

- Only students admitted to the social work program during the academic year in which the program is granted *Candidacy* will be recognized as having graduated from an accredited program (per policy 3.2.3 *Candidacy Policies* in the EPAS Handbook).
- Faculty Requirements (AS B/M 3.2.4):
  - 2 full-time for baccalaureate at BM1
  - Master's (2015 EPAS) – 3 at BM1; 5 at BM2; 6 at BM3
  - Master's (2022 EPAS) – 2 at BM1; 3 at BM2; 4 at BM3
  - Faculty must be appointed full-time to social work and at least 51% to program level

Program Options

- Programs must identify all program options while in Pre-Candidacy
  - Program options are all locations and delivery methods (review policy *1.2.4 Program Changes* in the EPAS Handbook for program option types and definitions).
  - Once Candidacy has been granted at the end of pre-candidacy/year 1, programs cannot add new program options
  - Once Initial Accreditation is granted, programs can add program options through a substantive change proposal
- Narrative response for each standard must address all program options (per compliance statements)
  - With a statement that the narrative applies to all program options; or
  - With a description of how each program options complies with the standard
- All program options are accredited as part of one single program
  - If one program option is out-of-compliance, that affects the compliance of the entire program

Making Changes While in Candidacy

- Permitted to make changes and updates to policies, procedures, curriculum, and assessment plan at any point in the Candidacy process, as long as they remain compliant with the standards
- Expected to continuously update evolving standards, such as faculty, budget, etc.
- All standards are reviewed at the Initial Accreditation stage for compliance, so programs should be mindful of how changes impact standards that have already been approved
- Submit database audit form to provide personnel or other program updates to as they occur

Document Submission

- Policy *1.2.11 Document Formatting & Submission* in the EPAS Handbook includes detailed formatting info
- 4 Separate Documents:
  - Volume 1: Narrative & supplemental tables & forms (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
  - Volume 2: Syllabi for all courses on curriculum matrix (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
  - Volume 3: Student handbook and field manual (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
  - Appropriate Review Brief (MS Word Format only)
- **No scanned documents will be accepted!**
  - Email all documents to Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and Technology (until *Draft Benchmark I* approval)
  - Once assigned, all Benchmark I, II, and Initial Accreditation documents should be emailed to both commissioner visitor and accreditation specialist

Review Briefs

- Programs complete **Section 1** by providing basic institutional and program info and identifying program options.
- Programs complete **Section 2** by inputting the **page number** of where each compliance and draft standard is located in Volume 1.
- **Benchmark I Review Brief (2015 EPAS)**
- **Benchmark II Review Brief (2015 EPAS)**
- **Initial Accreditation Review Brief (2015 EPAS)**

Writing Candidacy Documents

- **Please reference:**
  - Formatting and Submission Requirements
  - January 2020 Accreditation Lunch & Learn Presentation: "Writing an Accreditation Document"
  - Forms, samples, and resources at cswe.org > Accreditation > Process > Candidacy > variety of helpful sub-tabs

VOLUME ONE TEMPLATES

- **BM1 Volume 1 Template (2015 EPAS)**
- **BM2 Volume 1 Template (2015 EPAS)**
- **Initial Accreditation Volume I Template (2015 EPAS)**

Always check the website for the most current forms and accreditation updates!

These are optional templates for planning and writing purposes; not a required format. Programs are encouraged to craft a benchmark/self-study document that clearly responds to the EPAS.

The purpose of these templates are to assist programs with the structuring/outlining the document; not to provide content. Programs are solely responsible for documenting compliance with the EPAS.

Structure of Benchmark Documents

Volume 1

- BM1 and BM2
  - Standards for Compliance
  - All Standards for Draft
- BM3
  - All standards in Compliance
- All Benchmarks
  - Any tables, forms, supplemental documents, etc., should be incorporated into narrative; not as appendices

Volume 2

- BM1
  - Draft syllabi
- BM2 and BM3
  - Final/revised syllabi

Volume 3

- BM1
  - Draft Student Handbook
  - Draft Field Manual
- BM2 and BM3
  - Final Student Handbook
  - Final Field Manual

CSWE Accreditation Web Resources

- **Candidacy Documents - https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process** (select Candidacy)
  - Preparation → formatting requirements, Benchmark Grid, preparatory resources
  - Benchmark 1/2/3 → all required forms submitted at each stage
  - Timetables → timetables for the Candidacy process
  - Resources → sample format for curriculum matrices and assessment plan
- **Accreditation PowerPoints**
  - **Topics:** 2015 EPAS Overview, Assessment, Candidacy, Frequently Cited Standards, Writing an Accreditation Document
- **2015 EPAS & Glossary**
- **2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide**
- **2015 EPAS Handbook**
- **Formatting & Submission Requirements**
- **Directory of Accredited Programs**
- **COA Decisions**

Always check the website for the most current forms and accreditation updates!

Statement for Programs in Pre-Candidacy to Post on their Web Sites

Per policy 1.1.4 in the EPAS Handbook

- [Program] is currently in *Pre-Candidacy* for Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation.
- Pre-Candidacy for a baccalaureate or master's social work program by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation indicates that it has submitted an application to be reviewed for Candidacy and had its *Benchmark I* approved in draft form to move forward with *Candidacy* review within one year. A program that has attained Pre-Candidacy has not yet been reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation or been verified to be in compliance with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.
- Students who enter programs in *Pre-Candidacy* that attain *Candidacy* in the academic year in which they begin their program of study will be retroactively recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program once the program attains Initial Accreditation. The *Candidacy* process is typically a three-year process and there is no guarantee that a program in *Pre-Candidacy* will eventually attain *Candidacy* or *Initial Accreditation*.
- *Candidacy* by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation applies to all locations and delivery methods of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.
- For more information about social work accreditation, you may contact Accreditation.

Statement for Programs in Candidacy to Post on their Web Sites

Per policy 1.1.3 in the EPAS Handbook

- [Program] has achieved Candidacy for Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation.
- Candidacy for a baccalaureate or master's social work program by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation indicates that it has made progress toward meeting criteria for the assessment of program quality evaluated through a peer review process. A program that has attained Candidacy has demonstrated a commitment to meeting the compliance standards set by the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, but has not yet demonstrated full compliance.
- Students who enter programs that attain Candidacy in or before the academic year in which they begin their program of study will be retroactively recognized as having graduated from a CSWE-accredited program once the program attains Initial Accreditation. Candidacy is typically a three-year process and attaining Candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain Initial Accreditation. Candidacy applies to all program sites and program delivery methods of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.
- For more information about social work accreditation, you may contact Accreditation.

Ongoing Pre-Candidacy Consultation

- ✓ Sign up for a monthly Interactive *Pre-Candidacy* Workshop with the Associate Director of Accreditation Operations & Technology (ADOT) on the third Thursday of every month, 1-3pm ET/10am-noon PT. All program faculty or administrators at programs in *Pre-Candidacy* or earlier stages welcome
- ✓ Email Anna R. Holster, at aholster@cswe.org for assistance with any *Pre-Candidacy* questions
- ✓ Visit https://annaholster.youcanbook.me to schedule a Zoom consultation with Associate Director of Accreditation Operations & Technology
- ✓ New Pre-Candidacy Group at CSWE Spark to share resources with peers
- ✓ Program designates one primary contact, but that person is encouraged to involve any other faculty or administrators in consultation appointments
- ✓ Please submit database audit form, so we can keep our records of prospective programs current. Submit any time you have program updates.

CSWE ACCREDITATION
COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Upcoming Topics (subject to change)

- October Topic (#4): Assessment (repeated from April)
- November Topic (#6): Mission, Goals, and Field Education (repeated from May)
- December Topic (#1): Candidacy Overview (repeated from June)
- January Topic (#7): Implicit Curriculum, Policies, Procedures, Handbook & Field Manual (repeated from July)
- February Topic (#5): Commissioner Visit planning with a panel of guests from the Commission on Accreditation (repeated each February)
- March Topic (#2): Explicit Curriculum (repeated from August)
- April Topic (#3): Faculty and Administration Standards (repeated from September)
- Please feel free to suggest additional topics you would like to see covered in the chat or by emailing me at aholster@cswe.org.

Thank You!