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CSWE ANNUAL CONFERENCE | ATLANTA, GA | OCTOBER 22–25, 2026

Accreditation Strategies for New Applicant Programs

Navigating the Traditional Candidacy Pathway

#CSWE26

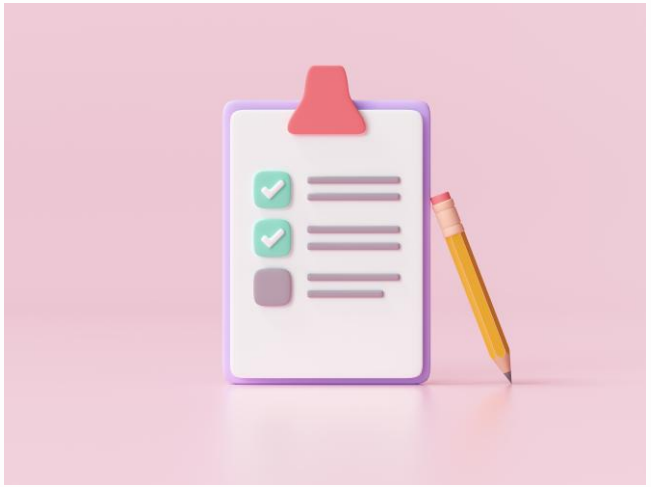
Meet Your Presenter



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Accreditation Services Manager

Learning Objectives



1. Complete a tutorial on successfully navigating the application process.
2. Learn good practices and common errors when developing your first accreditation documents.
3. Learn tips for demonstrating readiness to earn an official accreditation status.
4. Explore helpful tools and resources.
5. Discover strategies for designing a new professional education program to meet the national accreditation standards.

Setting the Stage: Goals

- Brief background about starting a new program
- The review process and what to expect
- Retroactive accreditation status
- Submission deadlines
- Program options
- Storytelling
- Strategies for BM1 standards
- Resources
- Questions



Phases of Starting a New Program

New Applicant

- Exploring Accreditation of New Program.
- Includes:
  - Candidacy Eligibility Fee and Application.
  - Submitting Benchmark 1 (BM1) for staff approval.

Pre-Candidacy

- Pre-Candidacy Status attained.
- Staff Approval of BM1 has been granted.
- Program is placed on a BOA agenda.
- Program is assigned to CSWE Accreditation Specialist to work with.

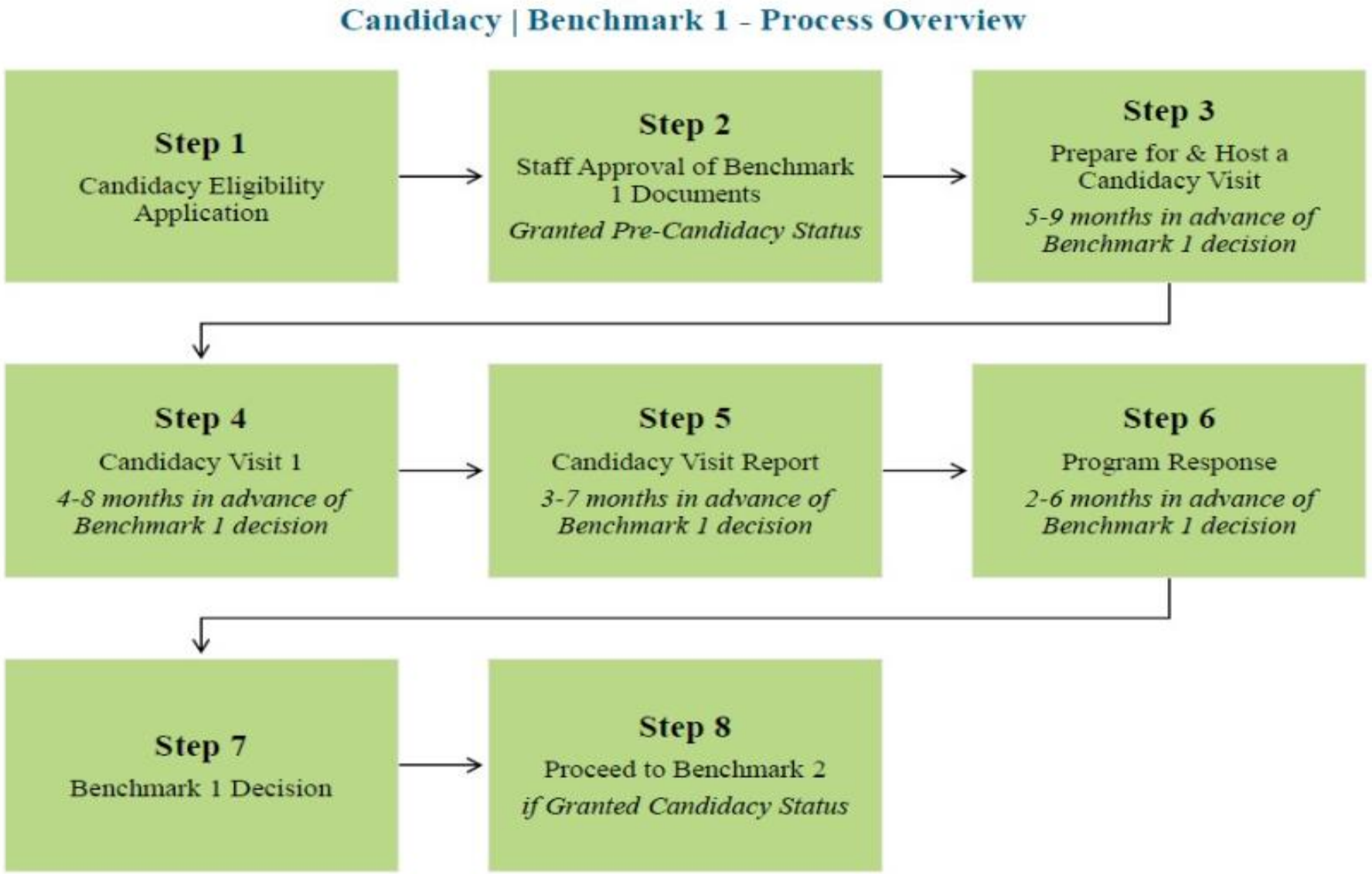
Candidacy

- Candidacy Status granted by the Board of Accreditation (BOA).
- Candidacy typically takes 2-3 years.

Initial Accreditation

- Initial Accreditation granted by BOA.
- Accreditation is an ongoing process for alignment and compliance with EPAS.
- BOA reviews program for reaffirmation every 8 years.

Benchmark 1 Process Flow Chart



Practice Doctorate Pathways: Traditional and TAP



Two Practice Doctorate Candidacy Pathways

Traditional Pathway: 3-year process for new and developing practice doctorate programs

Temporary Alternative Pathway (TAP): 1-year initial accreditation process for existing practice doctorate programs

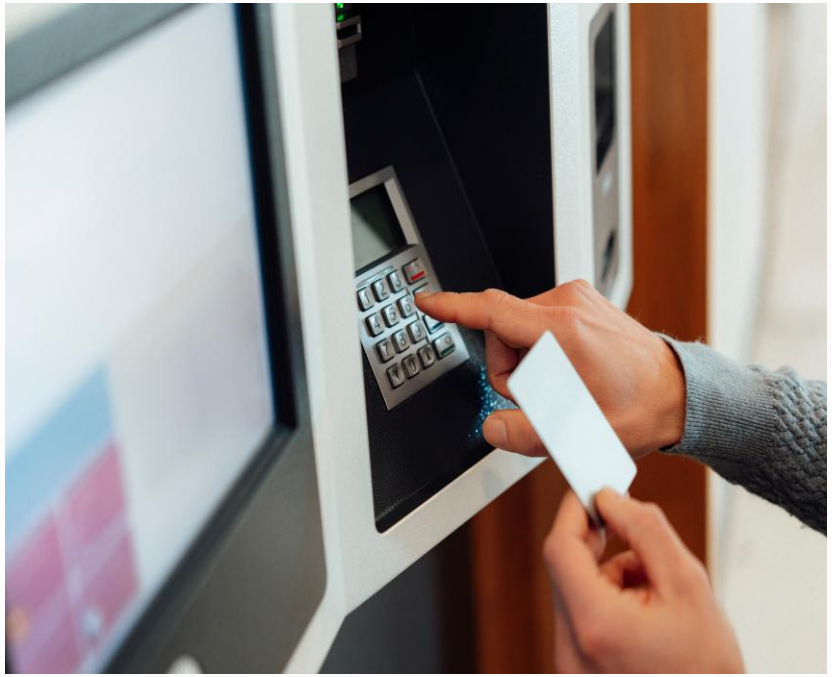
Candidacy Eligibility Application

- Obtain necessary approvals
- Only respond to Eligibility Standards 1-5
- Provide narrative responses to prompts in narrative of intent
- Provide evidence of payment of the Candidacy Eligibility Fee
- Respond appropriately to attestations
- Provide necessary authorizations of Chancellor/President and Primary Contact

Candidacy Eligibility Application | Common Concerns

- Necessary approvals not in place at the time of submission
- Program Director is not separate for co-located programs
- Program Director does not hold the requisite credentials
- Difficulty connecting institution's mission to the proposed program or discussing how proposed program relates to institutional strategic or long-term plan
- Sufficient financial supports are not adequately discussed
- Fee is unpaid - *the process of requesting and verifying payment can take some time, so plan ahead*!

Candidacy Fees



Type of Fee	Amount
Candidacy Eligibility Fee*	$12,500
Candidacy Visit 1 Fee	$7,000
Candidacy Visit 2 Fee	$7,000
Initial Accreditation Fee	$7,000
Additional Visit Fee (if required)	$3,500
Document Preparation and Visit Costs (borne by program)	Varies

**__Must__ be paid before Candidacy Eligibility Application can be approved*

Staff Approval of Benchmark 1 (BM1)

- Submit **fully completed** BM1 document with compliance plans for *approval* and *developmental* standards.
- Staff approval is granted when…

    1. Candidacy Eligibility Application is approved and Candidacy Eligibility Fee paid *before* BM1 submission.

    2. BM1 evidences that approval standards are fully documented and developmental standards have been outlined, attempted, or drafted.

- **What are approval standards and developmental standards?**

    - Review 2022 EPAS Benchmark Grid for Baccalaureate and Master's Programs or 2025 Practice Doctorate Standards Benchmark Grid.

Staff Approval of Benchmark 1 (BM1)

- Submit BM1 (volumes 1-3) to Accreditation Services Manager
- Iterative feedback provided using comment feature in MS Word
- Programs return documents with **staff comments intact** and new material highlighted in whatever color staff designate (varies per round)
- As many rounds of feedback as necessary to ensure document is BOA-ready
- Consultations and drop-in sessions provided

What Does Staff Approval Mean For My Program?

- Program issued **Pre-candidacy Status** and placed on a BOA agenda for review for Candidacy Status:
  - Candidacy visit will be scheduled;
  - Candidacy visitor reviews BM1 ahead of visit;
  - Candidacy visitor reports their findings;
  - Program responds to the visitors' findings; and
  - BOA members review BM1, candidacy visit report, and program response to determine candidacy status.
- Once **Candidacy Status** is granted, retroactive accreditation status becomes effective.

Retroactive Accreditation Status

Per policy 5.2 Retroactive Accredited Status in the Accreditation Policy Handbook:

*Only students admitted to the social work program **during or after** the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy will be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program, once the program achieves initial accreditation as granted by the Board of Accreditation (BOA). **Students admitted prior to the academic year in which the program was granted candidacy will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited social work education program**, regardless of the program's accredited status when they graduate.*

Example of Retroactive Accreditation Status

- **Your goal:** To admit students into your new social work program beginning in **Fall 2027**, due dates for the following timetables **must be met**:

  - October 2027 BOA Meeting Agenda (2027-2029),
  - February 2028 BOA Meeting Agenda (2028-2030), **OR**
  - June 2028 BOA Meeting Agenda (2028-2030)

Highlights of Submission Deadlines

Candidacy Eligibility Application & Fee Due	Submission of BM1 for Staff Approval	BM1 Staff Approval Deadline	BOA Meeting Agenda for Candidacy Status Decision	Retroactive Accreditation Status
April 1, 2026	June 1, 2026	December 1, 2026	October 2027	2027-2028-Academic Year
October 1, 2026	December 1, 2026	June 1, 2027	February 2028	2027-2028 Academic Year
January 1, 2027	March 1, 2027	September 1, 2027	June 2028	2027-2028 Academic Year
April 1, 2027	June 1, 2027	December 1, 2027	October 2028	2028-2029 Academic Year
October 1, 2027	December 1, 2027	June 1, 2028	February 2029	2028-2029 Academic Year
January 1, 2028	March 1, 2028	September 1, 2028	June 2029	2028-2029 Academic Year
April 1, 2028	June 1, 2028	December 1, 2028	October 2029	2029-2030 Academic Year
October 1, 2028	December 1, 2028	June 1, 2029	February 2030	2029-2030 Academic Year
January 1, 2029	March 1, 2029	September 1, 2029	June 2030	2029-2030 Academic Year
April 1, 2029	June 1, 2029	December 1, 2029	October 2030	2030-2031 Academic Year

Example Submission Deadline

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April 1, 2029	June 1, 2029	December 1, 2029	October 2030	2030-2031 Academic Year

Estimated Timeline (additional actions and due dates are in the detailed timetables)

Submission of Candidacy Eligibility Fee	Submission of Candidacy Eligibility Application	Staff Review of Submission of Candidacy Eligibility	Deadline to submit BM1 to staff for approval	BM1 Staff Approval Deadline	Submission of BM1 for BOA	Candidacy Visit Period	BOA Meeting Agenda for Candidacy Status Decision
Prior to application	10/1/2026	30-60 days for each review	No later than 12/1/2026	6/1/2027	8/1/2027	9/1/2027 through 11/15/202	February 2028
Prior to application	1/1/2027	30-60 days for each review	No later than 3/1/2027	9/1/2027	11/1/2027	12/1/2027 through 2/28/2028	June 2028
Prior to application	4/1/2027	30-60 days for each review	No later than 6/1/2027	12/1/2027	2/1/2028	3/1/2028 through 5/15/2028	October 2028

Program Options

- All program options covered under initial accreditation must be declared within the BM1 for staff approval document.
- All standards require responses inclusive of all program options.
- To add a program option, the substantive change process is required.
  - Learn more in policy 4.9 Program Changes & Program Options

Program Options | Scope

- Consider the “scope” of your program option(s):
  - Is it local, regional, national, and/or global?
  - Programs address their scope when discussing context, resources, and field standards.
  - Does the program have the infrastructure to manage the scope of the program option?
  - Does the program have resources to control the quality of each location or online modality?

Storytelling

- This is an opportunity to tell your program's story
- Some standards are factual, while others allow for complex narratives
- For example, program context allows you to speak about the rich history of the institution, the region, the needs of the community, the identities of the student population, and more
- Storytelling is essential when rationalizing the curriculum design
  - What theories, ideas, and frameworks are behind the design of this curriculum?
  - How was it shaped and who shaped it?
  - How does the practice community influence it?
- Specificity is key! Take the opportunity to shine a bright light on your program's identity



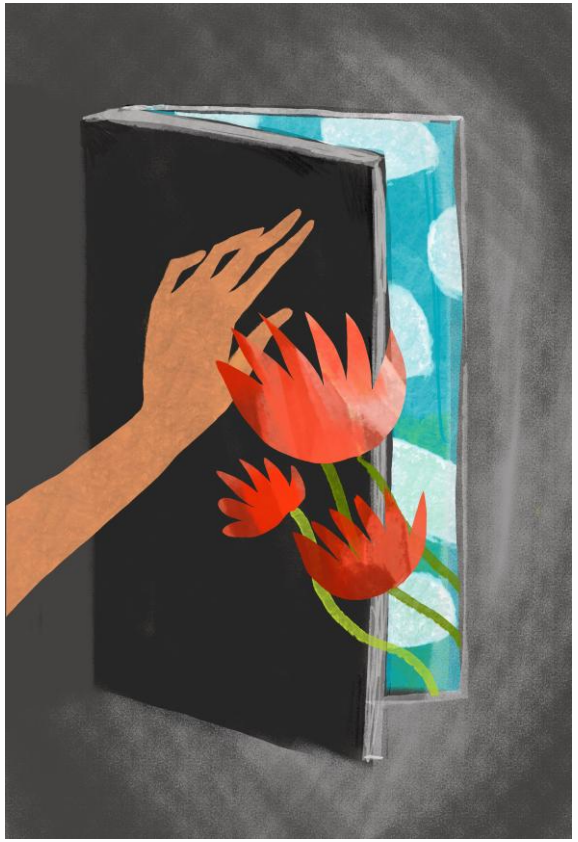
Example BM1 Storytelling Approval Standards



- Program Context
- Rationale for Curriculum Design
- Specialized Competencies (Master's Only)
- Core Expertise and Skills/Academic Product (Practice Doctorate Only)
- Leadership (Practice Doctorate Only)
- Mentorship (Practice Doctorate Only)
- Leadership Qualifications of Administrators
- Equitable and Inclusive Admissions Policies
- Resources and Student Supports

How To Tell Your Program's Story

- **Before putting pen to paper:** Understand the standard by reading the Interpretation Guide
- Do not modify the required template unless it is expressly permitted
- Address each compliance statement
- Write clearly and concisely
    - Be specific, not general/vague
    - BOA cannot assume anything or access outside links
    - Don't bury the evidence
- Use the standard language in your responses
- Be program-specific (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, or practice doctorate program), not institutional or departmental levels
- Address each program option (i.e., physical locations, online delivery method)
- Employ a final editor to give the document one cohesive voice



Benchmark 1 Strategies: Tips and Trends



Setting the Stage | Key Terms

- Interpretation Guide (IG):
  - 2022 EPAS IG (Baccalaureate and Master's)
  - 2025 Practice Doctorate IG (Practice Doctorate)
- 2022 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)
- 2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Standards
- B = Baccalaureate
- M = Master's
- D = Practice Doctorate

Program Mission -- AS 1.0.1 AS D1.0.1 (B/M/D)

- Program-level mission statement
  - Not department, school, or institution
- When explaining consistency between the program's mission statement, the profession's purpose, and the profession's values, you must show **HOW** these areas are consistent

Program Context -- AS 1.0.2; AS D1.0.2 (B/M/D)

- Discuss the program's context
- Examples of contextual factors *(review definition and examples in Interpretation Guide)*
- Explain **HOW** elements of the program's mission are consistent with its context
- Ensure program context matches the program's scope

Generalist Practice -- AS 3.1.1 (B/M only)

- Describe the generalist practice curriculum design
  - Programs often focus on theories taught in the curriculum rather than theories informing the formal curriculum design, structure, or blueprint (review examples in Interpretation Guide) or fail to respond this prompt entirely
  - Programs miss the discussion on *when* courses are offered, *how* they build on one another, and *how* students progress through curriculum
- Explain the coherent integration between class and field curricula
  - Programs do not speak to the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice within an intentional curriculum design
- Explain how generalist practice curriculum is informed by professional practice community
  - Programs often speak aspirationally with future-oriented language and not about ongoing engagement that has already occurred and will continue to occur
  - Must be planful as you cannot re-create this later

Specialized Practice: Competencies -- AS M3.2.1 (M only)

- Programs often do not extend and enhance their competencies thoroughly, they are too similar to generalist competencies
- Structure of a competency:
  - Competency title
  - Titles for competencies 1-5 must remain identical to the 9 generalist competences
  - Titles for competencies 6-9 may change to reflect the specialized system levels (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities)
  - Descriptive paragraph(s) containing the 4 dimensions (knowledge, values, skills, & cognitive and affective processes)
  - Behavior(s) to be demonstrated/operationalized in field
- Programs may elect to add one (1) or more competencies unique to the program's mission and/or context

Specialized Practice: Competencies -- AS M3.2.1 (M only)

Sample extended and enhanced competency (Advanced Generalist Area of Specialized Practice)

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Advanced Generalist Practitioners apply ethical decision-making based upon relevant ethical frameworks such as the NASW Code of Ethics, models for ethical decision-making, and legal statutes **(values**). They critically reflect on their biases, successes, and shortcomings as a practitioner with use of supervision and self-assessment to ensure that clients are receiving the highest level of care and consideration **(cognitive and affective processes).** Their understanding of trauma informed care and systems theory **(knowledge)** help them apply person-in- environment perspectives **(skills)** to client situations.

Advanced Generalist Practitioners:

a. Utilize technology in an ethical manner to ensure client confidentiality
b. Reflect on biases and seek supervisor input to ensure professional judgement and client safety
c. Apply ethical decision-making practices through utilization of National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context.

Specialized Practice: How Specialized Practice Builds upon Generalist Practice -- AS M3.2.2 (M only)

- One of the most commonly skipped standards on BM1 master's reviews
- Programs miss the intent and requirements of the standard
  - Select elements of the **generalist practice definition (EP 3.1)** that best influence each area of specialized practice
    - No need to discuss all elements, just the most salient
  - Then explain **HOW** each area of specialized practice builds upon each selected element

Specialized Practice: How Specialized Practice builds upon Generalist Practice -- AS M3.2.2 (M only)

Generalist Practice Definition (pg. 17 of 2022 EPAS):

Educational Policy 3.1: Generalist Practice

The baccalaureate and master's programs in social work prepare students for professional practice at a generalist level. The descriptions of the nine social work competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that are subsequently demonstrated in students' observable behaviors indicative of competence at a generalist level of practice.

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.

Specialized Practice: How Specialized Practice Builds upon Generalist Practice -- AS M3.2.2 (M only)

Example of how specialized practice builds on an element of the Generalist Practice definition:	**Elements of the Generalist Practice Definition**	**How the Specialization Builds Upon Element of Generalist Practice**
	Range of prevention and intervention methods	At the generalist level, students receive instruction about basic rapport building and introductory intervention methods. At the advanced generalist level, students receive more comprehensive instruction regarding advanced intervention methods such as CBT and DBT and utilize more advanced techniques and advocacy to aid in prevention.

Specialized Practice -- AS M3.2.3 (M only)

- Similar to requirements for generalist level (AS 3.1.1)
  - Describe the specialized practice rationale and curriculum design
  - Explain the coherent integration between class and field curricula
  - How specialized practice curriculum is informed by professional practice community
- *Where programs often misstep:*
  - Little distinction between generalist education/training and specialized education/training
  - Omitting theories/concepts/models that influenced design of curriculum
    - Know the “why” behind the “what” of the formal design
  - Difficulty showing the integration between class and field
  - Lack of ongoing ways in which program engaged with the professional practice community

Area of Focus -- AS D3.0.1 (D only)

- List each Area of Focus
- List and define any Core Expertise and Skills that are added by the program (beyond 6 CES)
- For each Area of Focus:
  - Describe the Area of Focus rationale and curriculum design
  - Describe how students are prepared for substantive expertise beyond the master's level in one or more areas of social work practice
  - How the curriculum ensures opportunities for students to advance practice
  - How the professional practice community is actively engaged in the explicit curriculum

Area of Focus -- AS D3.0.1 (D only)

- Where programs often misstep:
  - Little distinction between master's and doctoral-level curriculum
  - Omitting theories/concepts/models that influenced design of curriculum
    - Know the "why" behind the "what" of the formal design
  - Lack of ongoing ways in which program engages with the professional practice community

Academic Product -- AS D3.0.2 (D only)

- For each Area of Focus:
  - Identify the required academic product(s)
  - Describe how the academic product(s):
    - Demonstrates Core Expertise and Skills
    - Contributes to the advancement of practice related to the Area of Focus
  - Describe how faculty provide both mentorship and supervision of the students' academic product
  - Explain how the students' academic product reflects doctoral-level quality

Academic Product -- AS D3.0.2 (D only)

- Common missteps:
  - Programs often have difficulty discussing **HOW** the academic product contributes to the advancement of practice related to the Area of Focus
  - Programs often have difficulty demonstrating **HOW** the academic product reflects doctoral-level quality

Leadership -- AS D3.0.3 (D only)

- Provide the program's definition of doctoral leadership
- Describe how the curriculum prepares students to be doctoral leaders in:
  - Addressing anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion
  - Scholarship
  - Professional behavior and ethics
  - Human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

Leadership -- AS D3.0.3 (D only)

- Common missteps:
  - Programs are often unclear **HOW** the curriculum prepares students to be doctoral leaders in each of the specific areas
  - They are asked to expand by discussing which courses, sequences, mentorship mechanisms, course activities, academic products, etc. prepare students to be leaders

Equitable and Inclusive Admissions Policies -- AS 4.1.1; AS D4.0.1 (B/M/D)

- Underrepresented and historically and currently oppressed groups are unique to each program's context
- Describe **HOW** admission processes make the program both equitable and inclusive
- Describe **HOW** each process affects underrepresented and historically and currently oppressed groups

Admissions -- AS B/M4.1.2; AS D4.0.2 (B/M/D)

- Include all admissions types
- All admission criteria (standard, transfer, advanced standing for M)
- Process for evaluating admission applications
- Process for notification (for all decision types)
- How stakeholders are informed of admission criteria, evals, and notifications
- *International students:* Programs may admit international students as long as the program follows their institution's, state-based higher education authorities, and/or regional accreditor's policies and procedures for admitting international students

Admissions -- AS B/M4.1.2; AS D4.0.2 (B/M/D)

- ***For AS M4.1.2:*** Explicitly state master's admission includes an earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting organization

- ***For AS D4.0.2****:* Explicitly state if the admission criteria include an earned master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and two or more years of postmaster's social work degree practice experience in social work.

Advanced Standing -- AS M4.1.3 (M only)

- All master's programs must offer advanced standing.
- Advanced standing-only programs are not permitted
- Include process/mechanism for ensuring baccalaureate social work graduates do not repeat generalist content achievements
  - Process/mechanism can be advanced standing
  - Must have secondary mechanism for cases when students do not qualify for advanced standing; this is where programs have the greatest difficulty
- *Pre-candidate and candidate programs:* Must have advanced standing policies at Benchmark 1 and can offer advanced standing admission anytime during the candidacy process; however, advanced standing must be offered by Benchmark 3

Transfer Policies -- AS 4.1.4; AS D4.0.3 (B/M/D)

- Include written policy for transfer of credits (cite location)
  - Does program adopt institutional policy or have program-level policy? Or both?
- Procedures for reviewing transcripts and/or other materials to determine course equivalency
- *For B/M:* Programs may only accept field education and practice course transfer credits from other CSWE-accredited or candidacy social work programs, unless the program is able to explain how the program assesses course equivalency to comply with all AS 3.2 (field education) standards and AS 4.2.2 (practice course instructor qualifications). Transfer credit policies and procedures do not need to explicitly state this; yet documentation cannot oppose/violate this interpretation.
- Explain how stakeholders are informed
- Cite written articulation of all related transfer credit policies/procedures
- Programs often misstep by not including the copied/pasted written policies

Course Credit for Work/Life Experience -- AS 4.1.5; AS D4.0.4 (B/M/D)

- Copy/paste the written policy explicitly stating that the social work program does not grant social work course credit for:
  - Life experience
  - Previous work experience
- Cite location of written articulation
- Explain how stakeholders are informed

Mentorship Policies -- AS D4.0.6 (D only)

- Specify that mentorship is provided by practice doctorate program faculty
  - Provide copied/pasted written policies for mentorship
  - Cite location
- Explain how mentorship is:
  - Equitable;
  - Inclusive; and
  - Supports the individualized professional development needs of each practitioner-scholar
  - Programs often have the most difficulty with this section of the standard
- Make an explicit statement/professional judgement about current sufficiency of mentorship to meet these needs

Faculty Summary Form -- AS B/M4.2.1; AS D4.1.1 (B/M/D)

- At BM1, B/M/D programs must all have at least 2 full-time (FT) faculty
  - **B-** majority of full-time social work faculty with principal assignment to the BSW have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program (credential requirements not met until BM3). At BM3 two FT principally assigned faculty is minimum
  - **M-** majority of full-time social work faculty with principal assignment to the MSW have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and a doctoral degree (credential requirements not met until BM3). At BM3 four FT principally assigned faculty is minimum
  - **D-** all faculty who teach in the DSW have doctoral degrees and the majority of the faculty also have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and two or more years of post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work (credential requirements not met until BM3). At BM3 two FT principally assigned faculty is minimum

Faculty Summary Form -- AS B/M4.2.1; AS D4.1.1 (B/M/D)

- Must provide corresponding *Faculty Data Form*
  - Ensure years of post-degree practice on *Faculty Data Forms matches what is on Faculty Summary Form*
- Principal assignment must be indicated
- A full-time faculty member or administrator cannot hold two or more active full-time appointments at two or more CSWE-accredited, candidate, or applicant programs or institutions.
- Too often, boxes are left unchecked

Faculty Summary Form -- AS B/M4.2.1 (B/M)

Program Level:
(check one only)
☐ Baccalaureate
☐ Master's

#	Name of Each Full- and Part-time Faculty Member (in alphabetical order)	Title	Full-time Faculty Member?	Full-time Appointment to Social Work? (Select N/A if not full-time faculty)	Faculty Member's Program of Principal Assignment? (Select N/A if not full-time faculty)	Percentage of Assigned Time to Program Level Under Review	Degree from CSWE-Accredited Master's Program?	Doctoral Degree?	Number of Years of Post-BSW Practice Experience	Number of Years of Post-MSW Practice Experience	Teaching Practice Courses?
1	John Doe	Field Director/ Asst Professor	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A	☐ Baccalaureate ☐ Master's ☐ Other [specify] ☐ N/A	%	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	Insert # or N/A	Insert # or N/A	☐ Yes ☐ No

Faculty Summary Form -- AS D4.1.1 (D)

#	Name of Each Full- and Part-time Faculty Member (in alphabetical order)	Title	Full-time Faculty Member?	Full-time Appointment to Social Work? (select N/A if not full-time faculty)	Faculty Member's Program of Principal Assignment? (select N/A if not full-time faculty)	Percentage of Assigned Time to Practice Doctorate	Degree from CSWE-Accredited Master's Program?	Doctoral Degree?	Number of Years of Post-MSW Practice Experience	Teaching Courses in Practice Doctorate Program?
1	Jane Doe	Program Director/Asst Professor	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A	☐ Practice Doctorate ☐ Other, specify ☐ N/A	%	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	Insert # or N/A	☐ Yes ☐ No

Program Director -- AS 4.3.4(a); AS D4.2.4 (B/M/D)

- Identify 1 program director
- Program director must have administrative oversight over the program in its entirety, inclusive of all program options
- Proper documentation = memo on letterhead, contract or hiring letter that explicitly states the program director:
  - Has a fulltime appointment to the social work program they administer, or social work overall
  - Has at least 51% or more of their appointment solely dedicated to the program they administer
  - Administers all program options
- Must be signed a supervisor or administrator (i.e., dean, director, chair, provost, president, or human resources)

Program Director -- AS 4.3.4(a); AS D4.2.4 (B/M/D)

Program Director must be formally hired with a start date no later than 30 days prior to the first date of the visit window.

Must be able to identify and write about them in BM1.

Program Director must be actively working in the program by the time the document is sent to the visitor

Program Director: Leadership -- AS B/M4.3.4(b); AS D4.2.4(b) (B/M/D)

- Must have required degree type (*CSWE-accredited degree, CASWE-accredited degree, or internationally earned ISWDES-evaluated degree)
- **For B-** must have MSW degree from CSWE-accredited program*
- **For M-** must have MSW degree from CSWE-accredited program*
  - Preferred doctoral degree, preferably in social work
- **For D-** must have a doctoral degree in social work, a MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program, and two or more years of post-master's social work degree experience in social work

Program Director: Leadership -- AS B/M4.3.4(b); AS D4.2.4(b) (B/M/D)

- Prompts for describing the program director's leadership ability:
  - Teaching
  - Scholarship
  - Curriculum development
  - Administrative experience
  - Relevant academic experience
  - Relevant professional social work activities
- *Common missteps:* Above prompts for leadership ability are underdeveloped.

This is an example of an opportunity for storytelling!

Program Director: Customary Assigned Time -- AS B/M4.3.4(c); AS D4.2.4(c) (B/M/D)

- Procedures (i.e., formulas, show math) for calculating the program director's assigned time to administer the program
- If assigned time varies from the customary, provide a strong description of sufficiency (50% master's/practice doctorate & 25% baccalaureate)
- Must document current/present sufficiency
- *Common missteps:* Programs do not discuss all workload roles or do not show mathematical calculation for admin assigned time

Field Director -- AS 4.3.5(a) (B/M only)

- Identify 1 field director
  - Program director can serve as field director with sufficient assigned time
  - *For co-located programs:* Field director can be the same for both program levels, with sufficient assigned time
- The field director must have administrative oversight over the field education program in its entirety, inclusive of all program options
- Proper documentation = memo on letterhead, contract or hiring letter that explicitly states the field director:
  - Has a full-time appointment to the program level, or social work overall.
  - Field director administers all program options.
- Must be signed a supervisor or administrator (i.e., dean, director, chair, provost, president, or human resources).

Field Director -- AS 4.3.5(a) (B/M only)

- *For staff to approve BM1 and enter Pre-candidacy*: Must have a field director formally hired, with a start date no later than 30-days before the first possible date of your visit window (i.e., when the Benchmark document is sent to the visitor and program's accreditation specialist)
  - Must be able to identify and write about the field director in BM1.

- *For Benchmark 1:* Programs must have a field director actively working within the program 30-days before the first possible date in your visit window (i.e., when the Benchmark document is sent to the visitor and program's accreditation specialist) even if students are not enrolled or the program is not fully operational

Field Director: Leadership -- AS B/M4.3.5(b) (B/M only)

- **For B-** Field director must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two (2) years of **post-baccalaureate or post-master's** social work degree practice experience in social work.
- **For M-** Field director must have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least two (2) years of **post-master's** social work degree practice experience in social work.

- Must have required degree type (CSWE-accredited degree, CASWE-accredited degree, or internationally earned ISWDES-evaluated degree).

Field Director: Leadership -- AS B/M4.3.5(b) (B/M only)

- Prompts for describing the field director's leadership ability:
  - Practice experience
  - Field instruction experience
  - Administrative experience
  - Relevant academic experience
  - Relevant professional social work activities
- *Common missteps:* Above prompts for leadership ability are underdeveloped.

This is an example of an opportunity for storytelling!

Field Director: Customary Assigned Time -- AS B/M4.3.5(c) (B/M only)

- Procedures for calculating (i.e., formulas, show math) the field director's administrative assigned time
- If assigned time varies from customary, provide strong description of sufficiency (50% master's & 25% baccalaureate)
- Must document current/present sufficiency
- *Common missteps:* Programs do not discuss all workload policy roles or do not show mathematical calculation for admin assigned time

Resources/Budget Form -- AS 4.4.1; AS D4.3.1 (B/M/D)

- Process for developing budget *and* administering it (write to both)
- **HOW** these processes achieve program's mission *and* ensure continuous improvement (write to both)
- Discuss financial sufficiency over the three-year span covered by the *Form AS 4.4.1/D4.3.1: Budget Form*.
  - Ensure no blanks in form; for any line items that are "0" or "N/A" discuss them below form
- Do not include line items beyond the program's budget.
- Provide two (2) or more examples of how the program's financial resources are sufficient for each of the following:
  - Achieve the program's mission
  - Continuously improve the program
- Discuss current sufficiency of resources (must make an explicit statement).

Resources -- AS 4.4.4; AS D4.3.4 (B/M/D)

- Description must be specific to the program-level rather than the school/department-level or institutional-level
- Describe the program's technological access
  - Programs often misunderstand what constitutes technological access; review the definition in the Interpretation Guide
- Describe the program's technology support
  - Programs often misunderstand what constitutes technology support; review the definition in the Interpretation Guide
- Describe the program's office and classroom space (if applicable)
- Describe sufficiency of all three (tech access, tech support, office & classroom space)
- Make explicit statement of current sufficiency of each

Resources -- AS 4.4.4; AS D4.3.4 (B/M/D)

- *Technological Access:* How program students, faculty, and staff use technology to access and complete the educational program, usually virtually or remotely. This includes technology, software, or platforms that facilitate learning and human communication through computers.
    - **Examples include:** Devices, platforms, technology, learning management systems, shared networks, collaborative tools, online repositories/resources, etc.
- *Technology Support:* Technical assistance offered to students, faculty, and staff.
    - **Examples include:** Troubleshooting, information technology (IT) professional support, oversight of hardware and software, and maintenance and repair of technology.

Resources/Reducing Barriers -- AS 4.4.5; AS D4.3.5 (B,M,D)

- Key to this standard is sufficient resources and supports for all students, including those with diverse abilities
- Describe program-level access to supportive technology
- Describe program-level access to student services (write about various services such accommodations, counseling, financial aid, health, etc.)
- Describe program-level access to accessible physical spaces
- At least two (2) or more examples for each of the above areas
- Describe sufficiency of each
- Make explicit statement of current sufficiency of each to reduce barriers while optimizing accessibility and equity

Resources & Training





Accreditation Home Page

Our website is improved!! Please visit: https://www.cswe.org/accreditation

This page includes:

- Overview
- Scope & Services
- Board of Accreditation (BOA) & Decisions
- CSWE Program Directory
- Accreditation Standards
- Accreditation Processes
- Forms/Resources
- FAQ's
- Contacting the Accreditation Team



2022 EPAS & Toolkit

cswe.org/2022EPAS

The toolkit includes:

- 2022 EPAS
- Interpretation Guide
- Required Forms & Samples
- FAQs
- ADEI Info
- Program Outcomes Info
- Accreditation Policy Handbook



2025 Practice Doctorate Standards & Toolkit

The toolkit includes:

- 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs
- Interpretation Guide
- Required Forms & Samples
- FAQs
- ADEI Info
- Program Outcomes Info
- Accreditation Policy Handbook



Drop-ins & Training

Group drop-in consultations for all New Applicant Programs

Accreditation trainings for all New Applicant Programs



Drop-in Sessions

- Drop-in sessions are available for all program levels
- At no cost
- Require registration!
- Baccalaureate and Master's are combined
- Traditional Pathway Practice Doctorate and TAP Practice Doctorate are combined
- *Purpose:* Opportunity to ask questions, learn the process in-depth, discuss interpretations, and network with other similarly situated folks!

New Applicant Drop-in Session Dates

Upcoming **Baccalaureate & Master's** Programs: Drop-in Dates (Eastern Time):

Date	Time (Eastern)	Registration Link
November 4, 2026	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/x7qBWK3pRnyoM-TgNLtj4w
December 16, 2026	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/dJRYDILeReC1QyR7KVPVzw
January 20, 2027	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/aadt7OZhR4-ZjMae1ifeyw
February 17, 2027	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/QljmVHo1QGWcBNTL30Cnyw

New Applicant Drop-in Session Dates

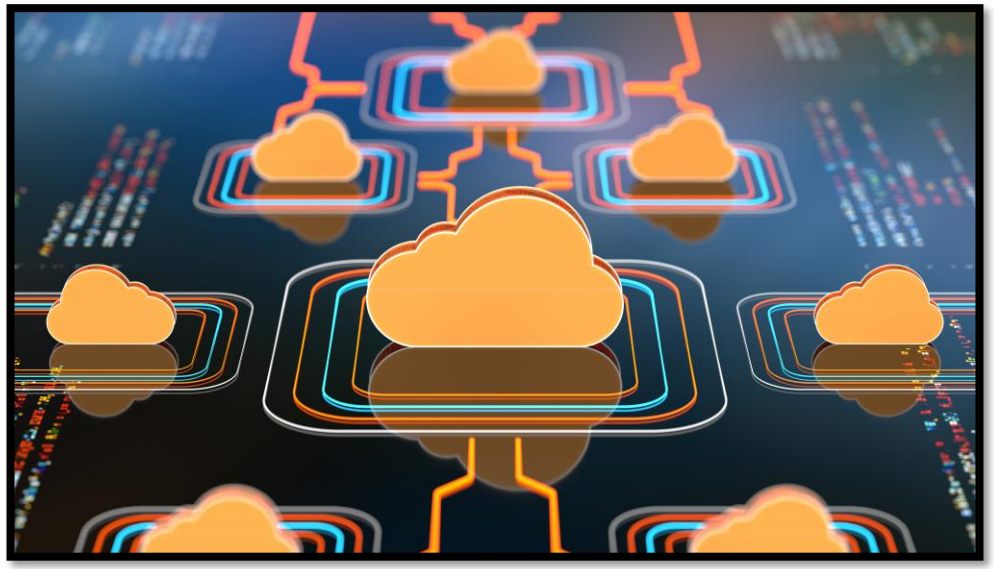
Upcoming **Practice Doctorate** Programs: Drop-in Dates (Eastern Time):

Date	Time (Eastern)	Registration Link
November 3, 2026	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/yIShOgVYQxqPo5HFjQXmpw
December 15, 2026	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/MCF1vxvkSru8-dJ5TGWLLQ
January 19, 2027	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/3a653Ul5S-WrlvP-_v9Fwg
February 16, 2027	1:00-2:15pm	https://cswe.zoom.us/meeting/register/ypWtfoGyRFKWofkmpy4Gwg

New Program Applicant Webpage

cswe.org/new-applicant-programs

- For Baccalaureate, Master's, and Traditional Pathway Practice Doctorate Programs



Questions?





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HONORING THE PAST, GROUNDING THE PRESENT

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