Council on Social Work Education

Board of Accreditation (BOA)
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)

ACCREDITATION POLICY HANDBOOK

for Baccalaureate, Master's, and Practice Doctorate Social Work Program Accreditation
version 11.20.2026

Accreditation policies are subject to change. Periodic updates to this handbook are effective immediately. When updates occur, programs primary contacts are notified, and the handbook is posted publicly. Visit the accreditation webpages at www.cswe.org to ensure use of the current version of this handbook.

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1. Introduction to Accreditation

1.1 CSWE Program Directory

CSWE Accreditation Staff maintain a CSWE Program Directory including information about each baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate programs that are currently Accredited, in Candidacy, or in Pre-Candidacy—as well as formerly accredited programs. Prospective students, current students, alumni, admission representatives, licensing boards, employers, the public, and other interested parties utilize the directory to obtain important information about programs, accreditation status, offerings, and contact information.

Each program's primary contact is responsible for ensuring that CSWE records remain current and accurate, including the public-facing directory listing located on the CSWE website. Review policy *4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications* for more information on the primary contact's roles and responsibilities. Review policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* for more information on completing updates to CSWE records and the program's directory listing,

CSWE Accreditation Staff also maintain a list of accredited post-master's fellowship programs,

1.2 Regularly Scheduled Accreditation Reviews & Continuous Compliance

Social work programs are accredited for a period of 8-years. Between these regularly scheduled accreditation reviews, programs are responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the accreditation standards and accreditation requirements at all times.

Accreditation is an ongoing process, and programs are encouraged to engage in program renewal and continuous quality improvement efforts in addition to maintaining minimum compliance with the accreditation standards.

While programs may identify individuals, groups, or committees to lead accreditation-related efforts, the social work program as a whole is responsible for maintaining accreditation.

CSWE Accreditation Staff encourage all administrators, full-time and part-time faculty, staff, students, field instructors, board members, and other relevant program stakeholders to understand and actively participate in accreditation processes. Ongoing accreditation efforts, including periodic reaffirmation reviews, are owned by and affect the entire program. Therefore, team-based approaches are highly recommended.

1.3 Integrity Policy

Doctrine of Integrity

In all relationships with the Council on Social Work Education and its Board of Accreditation (BOA), a program shall demonstrate honesty and integrity. In submitting materials for

candidacy, reaffirmation, or other accreditation-related processes, the program agrees to comply with CSWE's requirements, policies, procedures, guidelines, decisions, and requests.

Accredited and candidate programs must evidence full and candid disclosure and shall make readily available all information necessary to determine compliance. Programs are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the data and information submitted. Presenting false or materially inaccurate information, either through intent or through failure to exercise care and diligence in verifying the information, is considered a breach of this policy.

Breaches of Integrity

The program's failure to disclose information honestly and completely by presenting false or materially inaccurate information, by the intentional omission of relevant information, or by a distortion of information for the purpose of deliberate misrepresentation, will be considered a breach of integrity, in and of itself. Programs will be held responsible for the actions of its representatives. Verification of any alleged instances of breaches of integrity that impact compliance with one or more accreditation standards or requirements is referred to the BOA Executive Committee. The committee may conduct an investigation that may result in sanctions that could adversely affect the program's accreditation or candidacy status with the CSWE-BOA.

1.4 Confidentiality of Accreditation Reviews & Services

All Board of Accreditation (BOA) meetings and proceedings, including program materials and decision-making, are strictly confidential. BOA members and CSWE Accreditation Staff may not discuss nor disclose meeting content beyond the official dissemination processes. Accreditation decisions are disclosed publicly and published in the CSWE Program Directory 30-days after each meeting concludes.

Only information presented to the BOA by the program or acquired through accreditation-related processes will be considered when evaluating compliance with the accreditation standards, interpretations, and accreditation requirements. In their deliberations, the BOA shall not consider extraneous information.

BOA members must delete and/or destroy all electronic files pertaining to program reviews after each BOA meeting concludes.

Candidacy visitors and site visitors must delete and/or destroy all electronic program files after each visit concludes. Visit reports may be retained.

Consultations provided by CSWE Accreditation Staff are confidential.

CSWE Accreditation Staff do not share program-specific information with other stakeholders, including other programs. This includes discussing other programs' compliance plans, sharing samples, offering networking connections, and identifying programmatic innovations.

1.5 Use of Aggregate Data for Research Purposes

CSWE Accreditation Staff use program materials (e.g., self-studies, benchmarks, substantive change documents) data for purposes of quality assurance for the Board of Accreditation (BOA), research related to social work education, and in preparing information for the revision of the accreditation standards.

Data are reported in aggregate form only and programs are not individually identifiable. Such research may significantly improve CSWE and BOA's understanding of the current state of social work education, and we thank programs in advance for their contribution.

There will be no repercussions on accreditation status as a result of CSWE using aggregate program accreditation materials for research purposes.

1.6 Statements & Certificates

Programs may use the following statements to optionally advertise, market, or display their current accreditation status on their website or materials.

Pre-candidacy Status

Statement for pre-candidate programs to post on their websites or use in marketing, recruitment, or other print and electronic materials:

[Program Name] is currently in pre-candidacy for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA).

Pre-candidacy status indicates that it submitted an application to be reviewed for candidacy and received approval of its Benchmark 1 from CSWE Accreditation Staff to move forward for a candidacy review within 1-year. A program that has attained pre-candidacy status has not yet been reviewed by the BOA nor verified to be compliant with the accreditation standards.

Students that are admitted to pre-candidate programs in the fall (or later) of the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy status will be retroactively recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program as long as the program attains initial accreditation. Candidacy is typically a 3-year process and attaining pre-candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain candidacy and initial accreditation.

Pre-candidacy applies to all program options, which include locations and delivery methods.

Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

Review our program's pre-candidacy status in CSWE's CSWE Program Directory. For more information about social work accreditation, contact CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation.

Candidacy Status

Statement for candidate programs to post on their websites or use in marketing, recruitment, or other print and electronic materials:

[Program Name] has achieved candidacy for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA).

Candidacy status indicates that it has made progress toward meeting standards of program quality evaluated through a peer review accreditation process. A program that has attained candidacy status has demonstrated a commitment to meeting the accreditation standards but has not yet demonstrated full compliance.

Students that are admitted to candidate programs in the fall (or later) of the academic year in which the program is granted candidacy status will be retroactively recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program as long as the program attains initial accreditation. Candidacy is typically a 3-year process and attaining candidacy does not guarantee that a program will eventually attain initial accreditation.

Candidacy applies to all program options, which include locations and delivery methods.

Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

Review our program's candidacy status in CSWE's Program Directory. For more information about social work accreditation, contact CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation.

Accredited Status

Statement for accredited programs to post on their websites or use in marketing, recruitment, or other print and electronic materials:

[Program Name] is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA).

Accreditation of a social work program by the BOA indicates that it meets or exceeds standards of program quality evaluated through a peer review accreditation process. An accredited program has sufficient resources to meet its mission and goals, and the BOA has verified that it demonstrates compliance with all accreditation standards.

Accreditation applies to all program options, which include locations and delivery methods.

Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

Review our program's accredited status in CSWE's Program Directory. For more information about social work accreditation, contact CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation.

Conditionally Accredited Status

Statement for conditionally accredited programs to post on their websites or use in marketing, recruitment, or print and electronic other materials:

[Program Name] is conditionally accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA).

Conditional accreditation of a social work program indicates that it has not demonstrated compliance with one (1) or accreditation standards. Programs placed on conditional accredited status must demonstrate compliance with all standards within 1-year of the BOA's decision. If a program is unable to demonstrate compliance within 1-year, the BOA may withdraw accredited status. Students that graduate from conditionally accredited social work programs will be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program.

Conditional accredited status applies to all program options, which include locations and delivery methods.

Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

Review our program's accreditation status in CSWE's Program Directory. For more information about social work accreditation, contact CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation.

Certificates

Programs that achieve initial accreditation or reaffirmation receive a printed certificate documenting their accredited status. Certificates are mailed 30-days following the BOA meeting at which the decision was rendered.

Additional copies or replacement certificates may be ordered for a nominal fee of $15.00 USD per copy. Payment options will be provided; however, CSWE will not generate invoices for this nominal cost. Electronic copies of certificates are not provided. Requests can be made to accreditation@cswe.org.

1.7 CSWE-BOA Accreditation Logo

Accredited programs may download the "accredited by CSWE-BOA" logo. Programs in pre-candidacy or candidacy are eligible to display this logo after initial accreditation is achieved.

To request the logo in a different format contact comms@cswe.org.

Guidelines for Use of the Logo

- The logo must always appear in isolation, uncluttered by competing images; appear horizontally; and be freestanding on a white background and never "framed" in a box.
- The logo is composed of two distinct elements, the graphic image and the tagline. If resized, these elements must remain proportional.
- Do not add words or other visual elements to the logo.
- Programs accredited by the CSWE Board of Accreditation (CSWE-BOA) may use the CSWE logo only as a part of the accreditation logo and only to indicate that a program is accredited by CSWE-BOA.
    - Please remove the CSWE logo from any printed or electronic material, if it appears without the Accreditation tagline.
- When the accreditation logo is placed on an institutional/program website, it must link directly to the CSWE accreditation webpage at www.cswe.org/accreditation.

Review policy *1.6 Accreditation Status Statements for Websites & Materials* for language to use in printed and electronic materials.

1.8 Use of Consultants

CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation and the Board of Accreditation do not recommend the use of external paid and unpaid consultants. External consultants hired by programs to assist in their progression through candidacy, reaffirmation of accreditation, or other accreditation processes are not employees or agents of CSWE. CSWE is in no way responsible for the services provided by such consultants, and in no way does CSWE guarantee, recommend, or endorse the services of any consultant.

1.9 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Purpose

This policy provides guidelines for the appropriate and ethical use of data mining tools and software applications [from here forward, collectively referred to as Artificial Intelligence (AI)], in the accreditation process for social work education programs to ensure that AI tools are used responsibly and confidentiality and integrity of accreditation materials are protected. This policy will be reviewed periodically as the AI landscape changes rapidly.

Scope

This policy applies to all Board of Accreditation members, site visitors, Fellowship Review Committee members (from here forward, collectively referred to as volunteers); accreditation staff; and other stakeholders involved in the accreditation of social work education programs. Within this policy, AI is defined as any software and technologies with the ability to generate text, paraphrase, summarize, or translate accreditation materials for preparation for submission to the accrediting body, during all stages of accreditation processes.

The use of AI notetaking may be used in cases of an approved accommodation with the explicit written and verbal permission of all parties involved.

Prohibited Uses of AI

- **Confidential Meetings:** Volunteers, programs, and accreditation staff are strictly prohibited from using AI software or application for notetaking and/or meeting summarization in accreditation-related meetings, including but not limited to: consultations, site visits, candidacy visits, or visit preparation meetings.

- **Confidential Materials:** Volunteers and accreditation staff are strictly prohibited from inputting self-studies, institutional reports, or other materials associated with accreditation reviews into AI applications. This includes but is not limited to AI systems for text analysis, summarization, and data processing.

- **Data Protection:** Any materials that are part of the accreditation process must be handled in accordance with data confidentiality protocols. AI systems, especially those that operate in cloud environments or rely on third-party data processing, present risks to data privacy and are not permitted for use with accreditation materials.

Approved Uses of AI

While the direct use of AI on accreditation materials is prohibited, AI tools may be utilized by the CSWE and accrediting body in the following ways:

- **Internal Data Analysis:** The Board of Accreditation and accreditation staff may use non-cloud-based AI tools internally to analyze aggregate or anonymized data to identify trends or support improvements in the accreditation process, provided that no confidential or identifying information is used.

- **Accreditation Support Tools:** AI may be used for general administrative purposes, such as scheduling, document management, or workflow optimization, but not for content analysis or decision-making related to specific accreditation cases.

Confidentiality and Data Integrity

- **Protection of Sensitive Information:** Accreditation materials often contain sensitive information about institutions, faculty, students, and program operations. Ensuring the confidentiality of these materials is a priority. Any unauthorized use of AI software to process or analyze these materials will be considered a breach of policy and may result in disciplinary action.

- **Secure Systems Only:** All materials related to the accreditation process must be stored, accessed, and analyzed using secure, authorized systems provided by the accrediting

body. AI systems not explicitly approved for use in accreditation are considered unsecure and must not be used.

Accountability and Responsibility

- **Volunteers:** It is the responsibility of accreditation volunteers to ensure that they comply with this policy and refrain from using AI tools to process accreditation-related materials. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in removal from their role or other corrective measures.

- **Accrediting Body Oversight:** Accreditation staff will monitor compliance with this policy to ensure that all participants in the accreditation process are aware of and trained in the appropriate use of AI. Accreditation staff reserve the right to use quality assurance tools such as plagiarism checkers, linguistic analysis, human review, and written declaration of authenticity from individuals submitting accreditation materials to monitor possible use of AI generated text in volunteer submitted materials. Any exceptions to the use of AI must be explicitly approved in writing by the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation.

Policy Enforcement

- **Material Submission Agreement**: All volunteers and accreditation staff will sign a written declaration stating their work submitted for review complies with the policy as stated above, to the best of their knowledge. This is an agreement between the CSWE Board of Accreditation and the submitter, to ensure submitted material maintains the quality and confidentiality of programs and stakeholders by refraining from using AI tools and software.

- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Any suspected violations of this policy, intentional or unintentional, made by volunteers, will be reported immediately to the Director of Accreditation Operations, Executive Director of Accreditation, and BOA chair. Volunteer remediation procedures are located in policies 3.3 Role & Responsibilities, 3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers, and 6.6 Site Visit. Any suspected violations of this policy, intentional or unintentional, made by CSWE Staff, will be reported immediately to the Executive Director of Accreditation. Violations will be investigated, and appropriate actions will be taken to address breaches, including potential removal from accreditation duties and informing those whose information was used that their information has been submitted through an AI tool or software.

- **Disciplinary Actions:** Individuals who violate this policy may face disciplinary measures, which could include revocation of accreditation roles, suspension, or other consequences as determined by the accrediting body.

Program Use of AI

CSWE's Department of Social Work Accreditation and the Board of Accreditation do not encourage nor discourage the use of AI in developing, editing, storing, or managing accreditation materials. Programs are responsible for the content of all accreditation information and documents submitted using CSWE required policies, materials, and templates. CSWE is in no way responsible for AI issues, errors, hallucinations, or breaches caused by programs' elective use of AI systems. Programs are solely responsible for the accuracy and quality of the accreditation materials submitted to CSWE per policy *1.3 Integrity Policy*.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains aligned with advances in AI technology, accreditation standards, and best practices in data security. Updates will be made as necessary, with input from stakeholders in the social work education community.

2. CSWE Department of Social Work Accreditation Services & Resources

Services

CSWE Accreditation Staff provide services, resources, education and training, and/or general information to the following stakeholder groups:

- Social work education programs
- CSWE accreditation volunteers
- Members of the public

Learn more about the services provided by the CSWE Department of Social Work Accreditation.

CSWE does not permit the recording of accreditation services/consultations. If an individual requires an accommodation-related request to record, contact your program's CSWE Accreditation Staff member in advance of the scheduled appointment.

CSWE is not a legislative interpreter nor legal entity. Legal counsel is not permitted to attend accreditation services/consultations reserved for social work education programs.

Visit the CSWE website to contact current Accreditation Staff.

Resources

Resources are routinely published on the CSWE website.

Evaluation of the Accreditation Process & Services

Following receipt of an accreditation decision, surveys may be sent to programs to solicit feedback on the accreditation process and services, including their experiences with CSWE Accreditation Staff and volunteer visitors. When a concern is raised during the feedback process, it is brought to the attention of the accreditation leadership team, who may take action or refer the concern to the Board of Accreditation Executive Committee.

3. Board of Accreditation

3.1 Introduction to the Board of Accreditation (BOA)

The CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA) is an accrediting body for social work education in the United States and its territories. The BOA receives its authority from CSWE's bylaws, and through its recognition granted by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the CSWE Board of Directors and the accrediting body delegates accrediting authority to the BOA.

The BOA is responsible for establishing accreditation standards and processes and conducting accreditation reviews to ensure high quality educational programs that prepare graduates to meet the changing demands of professional social work practice. The BOA's scope of accreditation includes:

- Baccalaureate Social Work Degree Programs
- Master's Social Work Degree Programs
- Practice Doctorate Social Work Degree Programs
- Post-master's Social Work Fellowship Programs

Within CSWE, the BOA is autonomous in all actions related accreditation decision-making, revising and interpreting standards, and developing accreditation policies and procedures. The BOA has final approval authority of the accreditation standards. As the decision-making body, the BOA has sole and complete authority as the final arbiter of compliance with the accreditation standards or other accreditation requirements.

Accreditation decision-making is based on the accreditation standards and other accreditation requirements developed by the BOA. The accreditation standards are reviewed and revised at periodic intervals, usually 7-years. The accreditation standards are updated through a multi-step process spanning several years, which includes multiple drafts and calls for feedback, prior to publication.

Accreditation is a peer-review process, accomplished via dedicated contributions of accreditation volunteers. The BOA is composed of peer social work educators, practitioners, and public members.

Composition

A minimum of thirty (30) members of the BOA shall be appointed by the Chair of the CSWE Board of Directors for terms of 3-years. It shall be composed of thirty (30) CSWE members and at least one (1) public representative who shall not be current or past members of the social work education sector.

Appointments shall be made with due consideration for the balance of factors necessary for the efficient and effective work of the BOA. BOA members may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms, for a total of six (6) consecutive years total. Composition of the BOA shall be

consistent with the CSWE Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy and will be monitored annually by CSWE Accreditation Staff and the BOA Executive Committee.

Review the Board of Accreditation webpage for a list of current BOA members.

3.2 Criteria for Appointment

The following criteria guide the appointment selection:

- Hold full-time faculty or administrative appointment in a CSWE-BOA accredited or candidate social work program, or a new applicant practice doctorate program, so long as the individual holds an active CSWE membership either individual or program.
- Possess a minimum of 5-years teaching experience in a CSWE-accredited or candidate program
- Have conducted at least three (3) accreditation visits under the current or most recent accreditation standards.
- Have demonstrated knowledge of curriculum development and accreditation procedures
- Be an active CSWE member or work at an institution with a CSWE-accredited social work program
- Reflect the geographic representation of the CSWE membership
- Represent a variety of program attributes (e.g., level, size, auspice)
- Commit to attending all meetings, reviewing program materials electronically, and conducting candidacy visits for candidate programs
- Practitioners or individuals from other disciplines (i.e., public members)

Disqualifications

- No person shall serve simultaneously on the CSWE Board of Directors and the BOA. **Note:** The BOA Chair's responsibilities include serving as an ex officio member of the CSWE Board of Directors.
- No person shall serve simultaneously on any other CSWE commission or council and the BOA.
- During their terms on the BOA, BOA members shall not serve as site visitors (including mock site visits), Fellowship Review Committee Members, or as consultants to social work programs seeking accreditation or reaffirmation.

3.3 Role & Responsibilities

Performance Expectations & Ethical Guidelines

Accreditation of social work education programs is central to the social work profession; therefore, the accreditation process must be carried out ethically, with integrity, competence, and free from bias. Board of Accreditation (BOA) members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that ensures these values are upheld.

When accepting an appointment, BOA members are required to follow the BOA's *Ethical Guidelines* and sign an ethical pledge at each meeting. This ensures that the BOA duties are carried out equitably, by avoiding real or apparent conflicts of interest or other improprieties. Adherence to these guidelines is essential to maintaining and preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the accreditation process.

If a BOA member has information believed to be relevant to the accreditation process, they must discuss this with the BOA Chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation to determine the appropriate use of the information.

BOA members shall not make any negative or disparaging comments in private or public about their involvement in the accreditation process and program materials.

Role and Responsibilities

BOA members' primary tasks are:

- Commit to attending three meetings annually, October, February, and June. Meetings may be held virtually or in-person.
- Reviewing meeting materials to participate in plenary, workgroup, and committee sessions.
- Be available to complete a minimum of three (3) visits per year based on need, unless an exception is approved by the chair of the BOA.
- Visit baccalaureate, master's, and/or practice doctorate programs, in-person or virtually including:
    - Candidacy/Benchmark 1
    - Candidacy/Benchmark 2
    - Candidacy/Benchmark 3
    - Modified Site Visits
    - Complaints
- Reviewing 20-40 program materials electronically, including: candidacy visit documents, candidacy and reaffirmation documents, and other accreditation-related documents.
- Discuss program materials with assigned workgroup members and CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
- Participate in standing or ad-hoc committees.
- Participate in orientation, BOA member training, visitor training, and other accreditation workshops or webinars as requested by the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation.
- Represent the BOA before constituent groups at the request of the BOA Chair and/or CSWE Accreditation Staff.

In addition, BOA members are expected to:

- Maintain expertise in the interpretation of the accreditation standards.
- Remain current on the policies and procedures of the BOA as recorded in this handbook.
- Review all assigned program materials with the accreditation standards, interpretations, BOA policies and procedures, and within a minimum compliance framework.

- Consider only materials provided by CSWE Accreditation Staff and never seek out or use information obtained from other sources (e.g., program websites, professional experience, relevant literature, or industry best-practices).
- Treat all program materials and the BOA decision-making process as confidential, to be discussed only during BOA meetings.
- Contact the CSWE Accreditation Specialist assigned to the program with questions about programs under review and never contact administrators, faculty, staff, students, colleagues, or third-party sources with questions about programs that are assigned for review.
- Complete decision briefs according to the instructions on the form and craft citation language used for the BOA decision letter.
- Return all decision briefs no later than the assigned due date, to the workgroup's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
- Provide objective/factual commentary, standard and interpretation-based citations, draft letter language, and recommendations for the programs assigned.
- Recuse self from BOA deliberations about programs or business when there is a conflict of interest.
- Delete and/or destroy all program materials after each meeting.

During Candidacy Visits

New BOA members do not conduct candidacy visits until they attend a minimum of two (2) BOA meetings.

BOA Member and Candidacy Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines

These criteria are intended to provide guidelines that bring about credibility and objectivity in accreditation processes and CSWE-BOA actions. BOA members are required to affirm the *BOA Member and Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines* to ensure duties are carried out confidentially, fairly, impartially, and responsibly by avoiding actual or apparent conflicts of interest and other improprieties. Adherence to these guidelines is essential to maintaining and preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the accreditation process.

Conflicts of interest and other ethical issues are not always clear-cut. It is therefore impossible to create rules covering every potential scenario. In such cases, members must exercise careful judgment, considering each situation individually. These principles provide guidance to promote credibility and objectivity in all accreditation actions. When reviewing visit assignments good and careful judgment must prevail after examining the assignment for potential conflicts of interest.

Candidacy visitors are reminded that both individual and collective accountability applies if the ethical and behavioral guidelines are breached.

- I will only accept visit assignments for which I have no conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict per policy 3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers.

- I will not use AI software or application for notetaking and/or meeting summarization in accreditation-related meetings, including but not limited to site visits or visit preparation meetings. I will not input self-studies or other materials associated with accreditation reviews into AI applications. This includes but is not limited to AI systems for text analysis, summarization, and data processing. Additionally, I will not use tools that operate in cloud environments or rely on third-party data processing, which present risks to data privacy, and are not permitted for use with accreditation materials. I understand that AI tools may be used for general administrative purposes, such as scheduling, document management, or workflow optimization, but not for content analysis or decision-making related to specific accreditation cases.
- I will abide by all candidacy visit policies and procedures as provided in CSWE materials.
- I will prepare for the visit by thoroughly reading all benchmark materials.
- I will maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the candidacy visit, including confidentiality of and all accreditation materials related to the visit. I will not disclose programmatic or institutional information, oral or written, to others that was garnered in the accreditation process or discussions relative to candidacy visit.
- I will only consider information presented by the program in its program documents or disclosed by the program.
- I will refer program complaints from individual faculty members or students to CSWE Accreditation Staff.
- I will only meet with parties approved by the program's primary contact.
- I will not make offensive, insensitive, or damaging comments before, during, or after the visit concludes.
- I will not recruit faculty, students, or a job for myself.
- I will not advocate for the use of particular content, theories, literature, or practice models.
- I will refrain from imposing personal preferences, comparing programs, or sharing subjective opinions about the quality of any aspect of the program.
- I will not make value judgments about resources, facilities, or faculty credentials.
- I will consult with programs on procedures or strategy in achieving compliance with accreditation standards, and not unduly criticize.
- I will travel coach and not bill programs for telephone calls, alcohol, or other personal expenses.
- I will not accept non-visit related social invitations.
- I will not accept gifts from the program.
- I will submit visit reports that are impartial, written in my own words, and specific to the program visited.
- I will submit the visit report to CSWE by the required deadline.
- Upon the conclusion of the visit, I will:
    - no longer communicate with the program unless for reimbursement purposes.
    - destroy/delete all program documents.

Reporting Ethical or Behavioral Violations

Programs that have experienced a candidacy visitor that violated ethical or behavioral guidelines before, during, or after the candidacy visit are encouraged to report such violations to the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager. If the Volunteer Manager is unavailable, the CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations, or CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation may be contacted.

Such reports will not affect the program's accreditation decision, and if possible, will be used to assist in the visitor's professional growth. Each report is handled with care and on a case-by-case basis, with the utmost respect and integrity. Depending on the situation, visitors may be contacted to discuss a remediation plan or may be removed from service.

Former BOA Members

Former BOA members can conduct candidacy visits for up to 4-years after they rotate off the BOA to increase the number/pool of available visitors. Former BOA members that continue to conduct candidacy visits after rotating off may provide consultation to candidacy and accredited programs at their discretion outside of their visitor role. In such instances, the former BOA member must identify the program they consult with as a conflict of interest and cannot conduct visits to those programs.

Failure to Execute BOA Member Role & Responsibilities

If BOA member fails to dutifully and faithfully execute their role and responsibilities, including upholding all ethical guidelines, the BOA Chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation will meet to develop performance feedback, remediation, or termination plan based upon the specific situation. The BOA Chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation will invite the BOA member to provide further details and input. The final authority to execute the plan falls within the authority of the BOA Executive Committee and the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation, including referral for removal of BOA member from service.

3.4 Chair & Vice Chair

Chair

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) Chair is the official spokesperson of the BOA. Only the BOA Chair or the chair's designee speaks for the entire BOA. BOA members must not make statements or give opinions that appear to represent the BOA.

The BOA Chair is elected by the BOA and has the following responsibilities:

- Appoint vice-chair of the accrediting body.
- Complete all duties of an active Board of Accreditation (BOA) member.
- Serve as a member of the Board of Accreditation Executive Committee (EC), attending all EC meetings.

- Preside over meetings of the accrediting body and executive committee; cognizant of pace, tone, and dynamics.
- Serve as a voting member on CSWE Board of Directors, attending all meetings, and representing the accrediting body.
- Provide leadership and oversight of the accrediting body's operations, including ensuring compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement and other official agreements.
- Represents the accrediting body in communications and engagements with internal and external partners. (e.g., listservs, conferences).
- Represents the BOA at annual meetings, when requested, such as the CSWE Annual Conference (AC), Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD), National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD), and other organizations as required.
- Attend regular planning meetings and participate in ongoing communication with the DOSWA Executive Director.
- Annually review member applications in collaboration with the DOSWA Executive Director.
- Provide constructive feedback, mentorship, and remediation, as needed, regarding performance of members of the accrediting body.
- Address BOA members' requests for leave for absence or virtual attendance to BOA meetings, as well as requests to forego candidacy visit assignment during a cycle.
- Lead the accrediting body in decision-making and consensus building.
- Contribute to the annual performance review of the DOSWA Executive Director, as requested by the CSWE President and CEO.
- Develop a collaborative and trusting relationship with DOSWA staff and support the ED and accreditation staff as needed.
- Attend BOA orientation and training each summer for new members to welcome and advise.
- During EPAS development, if applicable, the chair is responsible for co-chairing the joint writing committee and attending all meetings.

Vice Chair

The BOA Vice Chair is appointed by the BOA Chair.

The Vice Chair of the BOA has the following responsibilities:

- Member of the BOA Executive Committee.
- Perform the duties of the Chair in the absence of or the inability of the Chair to act.
- Record keeping and cross-checking citations and ratifications during the BOA meetings.
- Assist the Chair in providing constructive feedback, mentorship, and remediation, as needed, regarding the performance of members of the BOA.
- Lead training and development sessions for members, as requested by, and in collaboration with, Accreditation Staff.
- Assist with meeting pace, tone, and dynamics.
- Assist in decision-making and consensus building.

- Annually review member applications, as requested by the Chair.
- Develop a collaborative and trusting relationship with Accreditation Staff.

Vice Chair Eligibility

To be eligible to serve as the BOA Vice Chair, a candidate must be an active member of the accrediting body during the time of the election/appointment. Candidates must also have completed a minimum of three (3) years of service as a member of the accrediting body, either under a current or a prior appointment before the start of their term as Vice Chair.

3.5 Election of Chair

The CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA), as established in the CSWE bylaws Article 3, Section 5, sets forth the following policies and procedures for election of the BOA Chair.

Eligibility to Serve as BOA Chair

Eligibility to serve as BOA Chair is limited to members of the accrediting body whose term is active during the election and have served at least 3-years as a member of the accrediting body under current or previous appointment.

Eligibility to Vote for BOA Chair

Those eligible to vote are members of the accrediting body whose term is active during the election.

Terms

The term of office for all newly elected BOA chairpersons shall align with the current appointment in a manner that is faithful to CSWE bylaws Article 3, Section 5.

Term Limits

The BOA Chair may serve a lifetime maximum of three 2-year terms (i.e., 6-years) as BOA Chair.

Length of Term

The term of BOA Chair is 2-years. In cases where a chairperson is elected in their second BOA term with less than two years to serve as chair, the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation will petition the Chair of the CSWE Board of Directors to extend the appointment of the Chair to the BOA by 1-year. However, the appointment may not extend the length of service as BOA Chair past the lifetime maximum of 6-years.

The election of BOA Chair-elect shall take place in the year preceding assumption of the role of BOA Chair. The BOA Chair-elect shadows the BOA Chair during transition.

If the current BOA Chair is reelected to serve a second term as BOA Chair, then the BOA Chair shall immediately begin the 2-year term as BOA Chair at the completion of the previous term.

Election Procedures

The election process is administered by Department of Social Work Accreditation Staff at the direction of the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation.

Nominations

Members of the accrediting board may self-nominate or be nominated by current accrediting board members.

Nominations are accepted from October through December of that year.

There is no limit to the number of candidates that may be listed on the initial ballot.

Ballot Procedures

Vote is held by secret ballot. The ballot process shall not permit write-in nominations.

The BOA Chair is determined by the vote of a majority of the accrediting board members at which a quorum is represented.

CSWE Accreditation Staff present the election outcome to the BOA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee confirms receipt of the vote and CSWE Accreditation Staff present the outcomes of the election to the full accrediting board.

Run-off Election Procedures

In the event no candidates receive a majority or more of the votes of a quorum, or a tie occurs, a run-off election will be held between the top-two candidates receiving the most votes from the initial ballot cycle, following the same procedures outlined above, and repeated until a winner is chosen by simple majority.

The votes are tallied in rounds, with the lowest-ranked candidates eliminated in each round until there are only two candidates left. The candidate who is determined to have received the majority of the votes (more than 50%) in the final round is declared the winner.

Termination of Chair

Service as BOA Chair shall be terminated at any time by a majority vote of a quorum of the accrediting board.

3.6 Committees

Internal and external committees and volunteer groups support the work of the BOA.

Internal BOA Committees

All internal committees provide verbal updates and/or written reports to the full Board of Accreditation (BOA) at their meetings. The BOA has four internal standing committees and one ad hoc internal committee. Additional ad-hoc committees and taskforces may be formed on an as needed basis to review developing trends, address emergent issues, or complete tasks to further the purpose of the BOA.

Internal Standing Committees

The BOA has established the following standing committees. Standing committees appoint their own Chairs with the exception of the Executive Committee, whose Chair is the BOA Chair.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee serves in place of the BOA between commission meetings. At BOA meetings the committee's work includes the following:

Charges:

- Monitoring and making recommendations for the revision of accreditation standards.
- Reviewing updates from the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation.
- Evaluating the processes and procedures of BOA meetings.
- Monitoring the quality assurance of BOA (e.g., consistency in decision-making, BOA resources).
- Developing and considering policies for the BOA and collaborating with staff in maintaining a record of instituted policies.
- Reviewing staff decisions on timetable changes.
- Reviewing requests for waivers to accreditation standards.
- Reviewing complaints regarding program compliance.
- Reviewing and making recommendations to the full BOA on any topics, trends, or issues that may impact the accreditation process.

Service Criteria: The committee is composed of the BOA Chair, the Vice Chair (appointed by the BOA chair), the work group chairs (appointed by the BOA chair), and the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation (ex-officio).

Executive Committee/Workgroup Chair Eligibility: To be eligible to serve as a member of the BOA Executive Committee and a Workgroup Chair a candidate must be an active member of the accrediting body at the time of appointment. Candidates must also have completed a

minimum of two (2) years of service as a member of the accrediting body, either under a current or a prior appointment before the start of their term as workgroup chair.

Process for Selection of Internal Standing Committee Members:

- Executive Director of Accreditation gauges interest
- Executive Director of Accreditation shares interest with Executive Committee and solicits feedback from Executive Committee
- Executive Committee nominates candidates for committees
- Candidate Accepts or Rejects nomination"
- The Executive Committee votes on approval of candidates

Policy Committee

Charge: The committee forms, implements, maintains, and monitors policies and procedures and makes recommendations for policy changes to the BOA Executive Committee and/or full BOA. The committee reviews policies on an annual basis.

Service Criteria: The committee is composed of BOA members with an understanding of and interest in enhancing BOA policy. A minimum of three (3) BOA members and one (1) CSWE Accreditation Staff liaison. All committee members are from the BOA at-large.

EPAS Implementation Committee

Charge: The committee develops the implementation timeline and resources for the EPAS, solicits feedback, and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee or full BOA.

Service Criteria: The committee is composed of BOA members with an understanding of and interest in the implementation phase of the EPAS. A minimum of five (5) BOA members and one (1) CSWE Accreditation Staff liaison. All committee members are from the BOA at-large.

Fellowship Review Committee (FRC) Liaisons

Charge: Liaisons attend three (3) virtual FRC meetings (January, May, and September) annually. Participation in the FRC meetings allows the liaisons to obtain firsthand knowledge of FRC discussions and provide more opportunities to give feedback and direction to fellowship accreditation initiative. Following each FRC meeting, fellowship Accreditation Staff will provide the liaisons with a copy of the meeting minutes and the report that will be presented at the next BOA meeting.

Service Criteria: The committee is composed of up to two (2) BOA members (one of which may be a public member) with an interest in post-master's fellowship education and enhancing the fellowship accreditation process. Fellowship programs are practice-based and offer trainees a minimum number of supervised practice and learning experiences.

Internal Ad-hoc Committees

The Executive Committee establishes ad-hoc committees based on need and establishes their charges and service criteria.

Practice Doctorate Review Committee (PDRC) Liaison(s)

Charge: Liaison(s) attend three (3) virtual practice doctorate review committee meetings (January, May, and September) annually. Participation in the practice doctorate review committee meetings allows the liaisons to obtain firsthand knowledge of practice doctorate review committee discussions and provide more opportunities to give feedback and direction to the Temporary Alternative Pathway initiative for practice doctorate programs.

Service Criteria: The committee is composed of up to two (2) BOA members (one of which may a public member) with an interest in the Temporary Alternative Pathway initiative for practice doctorate programs.

Joint EPAS Writing Committee

Charge: The Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and Board of Accreditation (BOA) form the Joint Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) Writing Committee prior to the publication of a new set of EPAS. COEP and BOA prepare the next set of EPAS utilizing the knowledge and expertise of each group to prepare a writing/development timeline, data and feedback-informed educational policies and accreditation standards. The Joint Writing Committee develops the EPAS for voting by the parties identified in the CSWE Board of Directors and BOA Memorandum of Agreement.

Service Criteria: The committee is composed of 4-5 BOA members, inclusive of the BOA Chair, and 4-5 COEP members, inclusive of the COEP Chair. Additionally, the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation, the Vice President of Education, and staff identified by CSWE leadership serve as ex-officio committee members. Appointments of BOA members to the Joint Writing Committee are made by the BOA chair.

External Committees & Volunteer Groups

All external committees operate under the authority of the BOA. There are three standing external committees and one ad hoc external committee. Additional ad-hoc committees and taskforces may be formed on an as needed basis to review developing trends, address emergent issues, or complete tasks to further the purpose of the BOA.

Standing External Committees & Volunteer Groups

Post-BOA Candidacy Visitors

Charge: Former BOA members can conduct candidacy visits for up to 4-years after they rotate off the BOA to increase the number/pool of available candidacy visitors.

Service Criteria: Composed of former BOA members.

Site Visitors

Charge: Site visitors conduct visits to baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate programs seeking reaffirmation.

Service Criteria: Site visitors are full- or part-time social work faculty members working in a CSWE-BOA accredited or candidate social work program, or a new applicant practice doctorate program, so long as the individual holds an active CSWE membership either individual or program.

Fellowship Review Committee

Charge: primary review body for post-master's social work fellowship programs seeking initial or continued accreditation and is responsible for making accreditation decision recommendations to the BOA. The BOA considers FRC recommendations and ratifies accreditation decisions.

Service Criteria: social work educators and practitioners with fellowship education experience.

Ad-hoc External Committees & Volunteer Groups

Practice Doctorate Review Committee

Charge: Committee assists with the review of the initial pool of temporary alternative pathway practice doctorate program applicants. The committee is responsible for making accreditation decision recommendations to the BOA. The BOA considers committee recommendations and ratifies accreditation decisions. This committee will operate from 2026-2029.

Service Criteria: Composed of former BOA members.

3.7 Workgroup Chairs

Workgroup chairs have the following responsibilities:

- Members of the Board of Accreditation Executive Committee serving as intermediaries between workgroup and Executive Committee.
- Develop a collaborative and trusting relationship with the Accreditation Specialist.
- Provide support to accrediting specialists in enforcing due dates, deadlines, and duties with workgroup members.
- Record keeping and cross-checking citations and ratifications during the BOA meetings.
- Provide constructive feedback, mentorship, and remediation, as needed, regarding performance of workgroup members.
- Facilitate workgroup meeting, pace, tone, and dynamics.
- Assist in decision-making and consensus.

3.8 Orientation

New Board of Accreditation (BOA) member orientation is designed and conducted by CSWE Accreditation Staff. Orientation includes introductory information about BOA processes, preparation for the first meeting, role and responsibilities of BOA members, the decision-making process, and information about the structure and function of the BOA.

Program materials are assigned for review following the BOA members' appointment and orientation.

3.9 Meeting Schedule & Attendance

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) convenes meetings three (3) times annually. Meetings typically occur over four (4) consecutive days.

Attendance

BOA members are expected to attend all meetings on time and participate until the conclusion. If unable to attend a meeting, the BOA member must notify the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation and BOA Chair as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made. When possible, it is expected that the BOA member completes their assigned reviews and submit decision briefs to balance workload and support workgroup processes.

If a BOA member is unable to consistently meet attendance expectations, they may be removed from the BOA.

Setting the Meeting Agenda

The BOA meeting agenda is set jointly by the BOA Chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation. Any parties beyond the BOA Chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation who wish to propose agenda items for discussion must gain approval from the chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation jointly.

In general, CSWE leadership, Board of Directors, or commissions and councils may make requests for accreditation information or propose items for BOA consideration through the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation who brings these matters to the BOA Chair and/or Executive Committee for consideration.

The BOA Chair and CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation share sole authority for finalizing the BOA meeting agendas.

Plenary Sessions

Plenary sessions are used to discuss policy issues, take action on committee reports, conduct in-service trainings, ratify workgroup recommendations, and discuss accreditation, higher

education, or social work information relevant to preserving the integrity of the accreditation process.

Workgroup Meetings

Program compliance and accreditation status are reviewed in one (1) of five (5) workgroups. Each workgroup is comprised of six (6) BOA members, including a workgroup chair, and staffed by a CSWE Accreditation Specialist. The workgroup composition remains the same for one (1) academic year, whenever possible. Composition of the workgroup may change annually due to changes in the composition of the BOA at-large.

Prior to each BOA meeting, the CSWE Accreditation Specialist assigns two (2) BOA member readers from their workgroup to review each program's materials. After reading the program materials, the BOA member reader makes a recommendation via a decision brief regarding the program's compliance with the accreditation standards and submits the decision brief to the CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

The CSWE Accreditation Specialist compiles the decision briefs into a book of draft BOA decision letters. The book is distributed to the workgroup for a period of reconciliation, when the two (2) BOA member readers per program finalize each citation and decision.

During the BOA meeting, all six (6) BOA members in the workgroup review the readers' recommendations, formulate a workgroup recommendation for consideration by the full BOA, finalizing citations and decisions. The workgroup ensures the decision matrix and letter book accurately reflects the rationale and next steps, so the CSWE Accreditation Specialist can draft the decision letter and consult with programs about the BOA's decisions.

The recommendations from each workgroup are ratified by the full 30-person BOA at its final plenary session.

Ratification Process

A methodology shall be used in the ratification/voting process that provides details of workgroup recommendations, promotes BOA discussion, and facilitates informed decision-making.

Conflicts of Interest & Confidentiality During Meetings

If a BOA member has a conflict of interest with a program under review, they must recuse themselves from the room when that program is discussed in workgroup deliberations and from voting on that program during the ratification process. Review policy *3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers* for more information.

When the workgroup chair has a conflict of interest, another BOA member serves as temporary chair for the review of that program. The workgroup chair may select the temporary chair to serve in their absence.

BOA members will be assigned to workgroups in which their programs are not reviewed.

All BOA meetings and proceedings, including program materials and decision-making, are strictly confidential. BOA members and Accreditation Staff may not discuss nor disclose meeting content beyond the official dissemination processes. Review policy *1.4 Confidentiality of Accreditation Reviews & Services* for more information.

Stewardship of Materials

BOA members must delete and/or destroy all electronic files pertaining to program reviews after each BOA meeting concludes.

Upon the conclusion of their service, BOA members must delete and/or remove their access to all electronic files pertaining to their BOA service.

3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers

To ensure that programs receive an equitable and impartial review from the Board of Accreditation (BOA), free from any ethical conflicts or inappropriate influences that could either corrupt the integrity of the accreditation process or could result in any appearance of impropriety, the following conflict of interest policies and procedures shall be in place. The same rules apply for all accreditation volunteers.

Ethical Guidelines & Direct Conflicts

A variety of situations exist where the potential for ethical dilemmas in the form of a conflict of interest (hereinafter "COI") can arise, when serving as an accreditation volunteer. Some of these potential ethical conflicts are easily discernable and others more nuanced. The questions of whether the visitor can act in an impartial manner free from any bias, or the potential for the program to believe that any such lack of impartiality exists, must be paramount to determining the existence of a potential ethical COI.

Situations Where Recusal is Necessary

If any of the following situations occur, the volunteer must recuse themself from any involvement in the visitation or review of a program, and decision-making about a program:

1. The volunteer lives or works in the geographical location of the institution or social work program's main campus (i.e., within the same state or metropolitan area); if the volunteer is affiliated with the same educational system (e.g., SUNY, CSU, etc.); or where the appearance of a conflict of interest might be present. If a program is online-only, this applies to a volunteer who lives or works in the same state or metropolitan area of the institution's main campus.
    a. An exception to this rule is that volunteers may conduct visits when there is a necessity for a Spanish-speaking volunteer regardless of geographical location, as

long as that volunteer does not fall under any other situations where recusal is necessary.

2. The volunteer visited the program for the last accreditation review.
    a. An exception to this rule is BOA members may be readers of program documents for programs they have read for previously.
    b. An exception to this rule is BOA members may be readers of program documents for Spanish-speaking programs they have visited in a prior candidacy benchmark due to the necessity for review by Spanish-speaking BOA members.

3. The volunteer has any existing or prior relationship with the institution or the social work program, as an employee, faculty member (full or part-time), staff member, student, alumnus, intern, donor, board member, member of educational or research collaborative, previous or current applicant (student or employment), party to any litigation, and/or consultant.

4. The volunteer has any pecuniary or personal interest in the program or its parent institution. This may include but is not limited to, any monetary or personal interest in the outcome of an accreditation decision; any close personal or professional relationships with individuals at the institution or social work program (including, but not limited to, any family members attending); or nonpublic or privileged information.

5. The volunteer believes that any other circumstances not aforementioned, could result in an impairment of judgement, create any appearance of impropriety, or cast any reasonable doubt as to the integrity of the accreditation process.

6. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) staff or the BOA Executive Committee.

Confidentiality of Accreditation Process and Materials

Program materials provided to volunteers are strictly to be used in furtherance of the accreditation process for the specific program that developed those materials. These materials are confidential, as is the review process. The volunteer is not to use any of that program's materials for any other purpose and must dispose of, delete, and/or destroy any program-related materials following the visit or review. Any volunteer who is found to have used program materials for personal gain, consultant work, internal use by their own program, or discusses confidential program material or findings with any external source outside of Department of Social Work Accreditation (hereinafter "DOSWA") staff, will be removed from service.

Responsibility to Notify of Alleged COI

Programs

If a program is aware of any potential COI issue related to visitor assignments, they are responsible for immediately notifying DOSWA staff (i.e., the Accreditation Volunteer Manager) of such potential COI, so that alternative arrangements can be made. Should it later be determined that a program knew or should have known of a potential COI and did not disclose this, it could have a potential adverse impact on their accreditation status per policy *1.3 Integrity Policy*.

Volunteers

Should a volunteer become aware of any potential COI, it is also their responsibility to immediately notify DOSWA staff (i.e., the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and the Accreditation Volunteer Manager) of such potential COI, so that alternative review or visit arrangements can be made. Should it be later determined that a volunteer knew or should have known of a potential COI and did not disclose this, they will be referred to the BOA Executive Committee for remediation and potentially removed from future service.

Accepting Gifts & Personal Time

The primary function of a visit is gathering information from programs in furtherance of the accreditation process. Social engagements, gratuities, or gifts may interfere with this function or create an appearance of impropriety or bias. Therefore, in furtherance of a need to keep the accreditation process impartial, accreditation visitors shall not accept non-visit related social invitations or gifts from institutions, programs, individual faculty/staff, students, or any other stakeholder group, and shall politely decline any such overtures in relation to the visit.

Additionally, while conducting a visit, a volunteer may be in close proximity to family, friends, colleagues, etc. Volunteers must exercise prudence and refrain from visiting with any of these personal contacts during the time in which they are scheduled to attend to matters associated with the visit. Volunteers must not make any plans that may interfere with their work of the visit, given that the travel and lodging the visitor is receiving is at the expense of the program and is with the understanding that they first perform the duties associated with the visit, free from any distractions. Upon the conclusion of the visit, the volunteer exercises care and discretion in the use of their personal time, ensuring that any personal activities do not incur additional cost or undue burden on the host institution and program (i.e., extending the visit an additional day or night).

3.11 Accreditation Standards

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to evaluate compliance and accredit baccalaureate and master's social work programs and the 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs to evaluate compliance and accredit practice doctorate social work programs.

The accreditation standards support academic excellence by establishing national thresholds for programmatic quality and professional competence. The accreditation standards permit programs to use traditional and emerging models of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate.

While using the accreditation standards to set goals for minimum compliance, programs can use creativity, innovate, and pilot educational offerings and operations that allow the program to best achieve its mission, goals, and competencies within its unique context.

The accreditation standards are conceptually linked. The educational policy describes each programmatic feature, and the derived accreditation standards specify the requirements used to develop and maintain an accredited social work program. The accreditation standards describe multiple features of an integrated curriculum design.

Per Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) requirements, the BOA must periodically review and update the accreditation standards. Approximately every 7-years the BOA revises the accreditation standards. The BOA is committed to engaging programs and the public in the revision process through drafts issued for public comment.

Programs are accountable to the set of accreditation standards under which they are currently operating. The BOA may issue implementation timelines, requirements, and resources when a new set of accreditation standards is published. Programs may be required to transition to a new set of accreditation standards on a specific timeline.

Interpretation Guide

The BOA also maintains an interpretation guide, an official companion document to the accreditation standards, providing programs with the BOA's intent and interpretation of the accreditation standards. Interpretations further clarify the BOA's expectations for programs to meet each accreditation standard and provide guidance for developing clear and concise written compliance narratives in accreditation documents. The BOA uses the interpretation guide to conduct consistent and complete reviews of a program's compliance with the accreditation standards to issue candidacy, reaffirmation, or other accreditation decisions.

Commercial Assessment Instruments and Packages

The BOA does not endorse third-party, commercial, standardized, or customized assessment instruments and packages. Although the BOA does not prohibit the use of these commercial packages, it is the responsibility of programs to use assessment plans with assessment instruments that are compliant with the accreditation standards.

3.12 Compliance, Concern, and Noncompliance Definitions & Citations

Definitions

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) uses the accreditation standards, Interpretation Guide, and accreditation requirements to conduct consistent and complete reviews of programs for candidacy, initial accreditation, reaffirmation of accreditation, substantive changes, special compliance reviews, and other accreditation processes.

The BOA's reviews, citations, and decision-making are based upon the program implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the accreditation standards, interpretations, and accreditation requirements.

The BOA is the sole and final arbiter of compliance. Site visitors serve an important role in collecting clarifying information on behalf of the BOA. However, site visitors do not have the ability to determine compliance, cite standards, or recommend a decision to the program or BOA.

The following definitions guide the BOA in their decision-making process:

- **Compliance:** The program-submitted information was clear, complete, and accurate as evaluated by the BOA.

- **Concern:** The program-submitted information was unclear, incomplete, inadequate, inconsistent, or inaccurate as evaluated by the BOA.

- **Noncompliance:** The program-submitted information did not meet the minimum requirements as evaluated by the BOA.

Understanding Citations

A citation is a concern or noncompliance issue identified by the BOA based upon the accreditation standards, interpretations, or accreditation requirements during an accreditation process.

Citations are documented in a BOA-issued letter such as the *Letter of Instruction* (LOI), deferral letter, decision letter, substantive change letter, or other accreditation letters.

- Citations at the *Letter of Instruction* (LOI) phase of the reaffirmation process are considered concerns.
- Citations at the decision phase of the candidacy and reaffirmation processes may be considered concerns or noncompliance issues and will be labeled accordingly within the body of the letter.
- Citations during a substantive change, special compliance review, and other accreditation process may be considered concerns or noncompliance issues and will be labeled accordingly within the body of the letter.

Each citation identified in the BOA-issued letter will be accompanied by the board's findings, a rationale, and instructions for next steps.

- The reaffirmation LOI is issued directly to the site visitor.
- Deferrals and substantive change letters are issued directly to the program.
- All other final BOA decisions letters are issued to the program's primary contact and institution's president/chancellor.

The BOA employs a fair and impartial peer-review process, ensuring educational programs are provided an opportunity to formally respond to citation(s) identified by the BOA or appeal an adverse action.

Minimum Compliance Framework

The BOA utilizes a minimum compliance review framework based on each social work program's compliance with the accreditation standards, interpretations, and/or other accreditation requirements. All standards must be upheld to protect students, faculty, staff, clients and constituents, and the public as well as the quality of the educational environment in which competent social workers are prepared.

While the BOA sets the minimum compliance requirements, programs/institutions may elect to exceed the minimum accreditation requirements at their discretion as long as the program demonstrates minimum compliance.

Citing Additional Standards

Occasionally, information provided by the visitor or program may prompt a new citation not identified in a previous accreditation review phase. In such cases, the following decision trees guide BOA members and/or CSWE Accreditation Staff in providing the program an opportunity to respond to the new citation(s).

Candidacy

Cite new approval standard(s) if the:

- BOA reader identified a concern/noncompliance issue in the benchmark documents that was not identified by the candidacy visitor.
- Program submitted new concern/noncompliance information in their response to the *Candidacy Visit Report*.
- Program submitted a new compliance plan that warrants a follow up report (e.g., deferral, progress report).
- In candidacy, developmental standards cannot be cited; however, it is the goal of the visitors, CSWE Accreditation Staff, and BOA readers to provide consultation and feedback on developmental standards. Quality of consultative feedback depends upon the degree of development of the draft.

Reaffirmation

Cite new specific standard(s) if the:

- Site visitor reported new information based on general questions to which the program did not respond clearly and the new information was evaluated as a concern by the BOA.
- Site visitor reported new information based on specific questions to which the program did not respond clearly and the new information was evaluated as a concern by the BOA.
- Program submitted new concern/noncompliance information in their response to general questions.
- Program submitted new concern/noncompliance information in their response specific questions.
- Program submitted a new compliance plan in response to specific questions that warrants a follow up report (e.g., deferral, progress report).
- Program submitted new concern/noncompliance information in their response to a BOA-requested report (e.g., deferral, progress report, modified site visit).

Substantive Change

Cite new impact statements or standard(s) if the:

- CSWE Accreditation Staff or BOA identified a concern/noncompliance issue in the *Substantive Change Proposal* that was not previously identified.
- Program submitted a new compliance plan that warrants a follow up (e.g., deferral, modified site visit).
- Program submitted new concern/noncompliance information in their response to the deferral or modified site visit.

Special Compliance Review

Cite new standard(s) if the:

- Program submitted new concern/noncompliance information in their report.
- BOA identified a concern/noncompliance issue in the report that was not previously identified.
- Program submitted new compliance information that warrants a follow up (e.g., deferral, progress report, modified site visit).

While candidacy, reaffirmation, substantive change, and special compliance review processes are the most common, additional accreditation processes may prompt citations.

3.13 Decision Letters

After the meeting, the CSWE Accreditation Staff finalize decision letters and disseminate them to programs on behalf of the Board of Accreditation (BOA). All final and official BOA decision letters are on CSWE-BOA letterhead and signed by the BOA Chair.

Thirty (30) days after each BOA meeting Letters of Instruction (LOI) to the site visitor and BOA decision letters, which include a rationale for the decision and directions for next steps (if applicable), are emailed to programs under review. Letters with next steps will provide instructions for the program to rectify the area(s) of concern and/or noncompliance. LOIs are addressed to the site visitor with a copy sent to the program's primary contact. BOA decision letters are addressed to the institution's president/chancellor with a copy sent to the program's primary contact.

Although rare, if an error is discovered after the BOA meeting adjourned the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation notifies the BOA Chair, who may convene the BOA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may review the situation, consult with the readers and CSWE Accreditation Specialist, and make a determination regarding the most expeditious way to rectify the situation. The BOA works assiduously to avoid errors and is mindful of the potential consequences to the program involved. Ultimately, the BOA's primary goal is to protect the integrity of the accreditation process and ensure educational quality through compliance reviews.

4. Accreditation Processes

4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications

Primary Contact

Each applicant, pre-candidacy, candidacy, and accredited program selects one (1) primary contact. To streamline communication, the primary contact's responsibility is to represent the program in all exchanges with CSWE and the public. The primary contact manages all accreditation-related communications including reviewing periodic Board of Accreditation (BOA) and Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) updates, submitting program materials for accreditation reviews and between review cycles, receiving official BOA-issued letters, processing fee invoices, and engaging in consultation or other accreditation services with CSWE Accreditation Staff. Primary contacts may email accreditation@cswe.org to request contact information for their program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

The primary contact also ensures that CSWE program records remain accurate and current, including the public-facing CSWE Program Directory located on the CSWE website. To complete updates to the program's record or Directory listing, review the steps outlined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* regarding changes in key program personnel.

To change the primary contact, the current primary contact and/or their superior must follow the steps outlined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* to facilitate the transfer of responsibility.

Designees

The primary contact may request additional program authorized personnel (e.g., designees) to be added to the program's CSWE database record. CSWE Accreditation Staff may share program-specific information with designees (e.g., program director, field director, coordinators, dean, chair, committee chair, key faculty writing the self-study) as long as the primary contact is included in all communications. When designees initiate contact with CSWE Accreditation Staff, it is the program's responsibility to ensure the primary contact is aware of and involved in each verbal exchange and copied on each written communication.

If the program fails to include the primary contact on communications, CSWE Accreditation Staff will include the primary contact in their response. To add designees to the program's CSWE database record, follow the steps outlined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*. CSWE Accreditation Staff reserve the right to verify authorized personnel status with the primary contact.

Information Sharing

Accreditation Staff do not share program-specific information or provide accreditation services to any individual not identified in the program's CSWE database record as the primary contact or a designee. Such services are reserved for authorized personnel only.

Accreditation Staff do not share program-specific information with other programs.

Upon request, for purposes such as independent scholarly research, CSWE Accreditation Staff may share a spreadsheet of publicly available information in CSWE Program Directory. Contact accreditation@cswe.org to request a spreadsheet. The Directory is continuously updated, and each issued spreadsheet will be dated.

General and public-facing information may be shared upon request with any stakeholder including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and members of the public.

Release of BOA Decision Letters

The BOA is required by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to share BOA decisions and programs' accreditation status with the public. The BOA will use the text of its decision letters for research and evaluation purposes in aggregate. The BOA's policy is not to release the full text of decision letters. If an institution or program releases parts of the visit report or the BOA decision letter that distorts the decision, the BOA reserves the right to release the full text of such reports or letters to correct the perceived distortion.

Record Maintenance

Programs are expected to maintain accurate records of their accreditation-related documents, including any documents submitted to the CSWE Department of Social Work Accreditation or BOA and official BOA decision letters. Examples of accreditation-related documents include self-study/benchmark documents, Letters of Instruction, visit reports, program responses to the visit report, BOA decision letters, deferral letters, timetable change approvals, waiver notifications, program change notifications, and substantive change approvals.

Requesting Copies of BOA Decision Letters or Customized Letter

Authorized personnel from accredited social work programs have the right to request a copy of a BOA decision letter or custom letter confirming the program's accreditation history, current status, and next review date. The following are not considered BOA decision letters and may not be re-released to programs:

- Self-study/benchmark documents
- Letter of Instruction
- Visit reports
- Program responses to visit reports
- Timetable change approvals
- Waiver notifications
- Program change notifications
- Substantive change approvals

Authorized personnel include the primary contact and designees listed in the program's CSWE database record. Follow the steps outlined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*

to update authorized personnel in the program's record.

The request for a BOA decision letter or customized letter must be made in writing via email to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist a minimum of 2-weeks in advance of the date the program requires the documentation. Requests that are not allotted the full 2-weeks for staff processing are not guaranteed to meet the program's expected timeframe.

4.2 Accreditation Fees

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), through its Board of Accreditation and Department of Social Work Accreditation, maintains established reaffirmation and candidacy fee schedules to support the operations of the accreditation processes for applicant, candidate, and accredited social work baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate degree programs as well as for substantive changes and post-master's social work fellowship programs. CSWE reviews its fee structure periodically along with budget projections for the coming years. The results of these reviews are used to determine whether the fees or the structure applied to fee collection should be modified to meet the requirements of an autonomous operational budget supported by accreditation fees as expected for an accrediting organization recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Upon the release of a new set of accreditation standards, costs associated with the review of programs for reaffirmation, candidacy, and substantive changes, are evaluated and a new accreditation fee schedule is released.

Review the current fees for baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate, and fellowship programs.

For programs seeking accreditation: programs must complete the candidacy eligibility application process under the fee structure existing at the time of application. Should the fee structure change prior to candidacy eligibility application approval, programs will be required to meet the new fee structure to continue with the candidacy process.

From programs seeking to add a program option: Review the current substantive change fee.

Direct any questions regarding accreditation fees to feesaccred@cswe.org.

4.3 Forming & Dissolving Collaborative Programs

A collaborative program is a single baccalaureate, master's, or practice doctorate social work education program operated by two (2) or more institutions. The collaborative design recognizes the collective experience of two (2) or more academic units and creates a distinctive organizational structure.

Accreditation is awarded to the collaborative program as a whole; not to the member institutions.

Collaborative programs undergo the same eligibility, candidacy, initial accreditation, and reaffirmation processes as single programs.

Shared Resources

Typically, collaborative programs are formed to share resources (e.g., faculty, library, information technology, expenses for operating costs), enhance opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, and to increase student and faculty campus-based resources (e.g., bookstores, cafeterias, and fitness centers). Collaborative programs are generally found to enhance programs by enabling them to serve a broader pool of students. Collaborative programs offer new opportunities while also creating new demands for increased coordination and teamwork among faculty and administrators.

Collaborative Models

Some collaborative programs have one chief administrator who is accountable to a multi-institutional board that functions as a dean or academic vice president would in a traditional program, such as making budgetary or personnel decisions regarding the hiring of the program director. Others have one chief administrator who is accountable to appropriate academic administrators at each campus. Another model may designate one person from each institution to serve alternating terms as chief administrator. The collaborative program may be located on one campus, each campus, or in a distinct location or delivery method separate from both institutions.

Dissolution

If one or more of the institutions of a collaborative program wish to separate or withdraw accredited status, the members of the collaborative program are first required to come to an agreement regarding the collaborative program's accreditation end date. The end date is defined as the agreed-upon date after the final students would graduate or transfer out of the collaborative program.

Once an end date for the collaborative program is agreed upon by the members of the collaborative, the chief administrator of the collaborative program submits a *Letter of Withdrawal* per policy *4.12 Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status*, notifying the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist in writing via email of the intention to dissolve the collaborative. Students can no longer be admitted to the collaborative after this date. The *Letter of Withdrawal* includes the end date of the collaborative and a narrative discussing how the program is making arrangements for the graduation or transfer of its students. Copies of the letter must also be sent to the president/chancellor of each member institution.

Once the requisite *Letter(s) of Withdrawal* is submitted to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, the collaborative program does not participate in the reaffirmation process.

Note: If the collaborative program's reaffirmation timetable occurs during the dissolution process, the program must request a timetable change per policy *4.6 Requesting an Extension or Timetable Change*.

The CSWE Accreditation Specialist will guide the collaborative and its members through the dissolution process. The collaborative program's chief administrator is expected to work with the CSWE Accreditation Specialist and the members of the collaborative to make arrangements for the graduation or transfer of its students.

If the members of a collaborative do not agree upon an end date, the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation will refer the matter to the Board of Accreditation (BOA) Executive Committee to determine an end date that is in the best interest of the students.

Accredited Status During Dissolution

The collaborative remains accredited until a plan of graduation or transfer for all students is established. A collaborative program is expected to remain in full compliance with all standards during the dissolution process. The BOA votes on the withdrawal of the collaborative's accreditation at the BOA meeting after the agreed upon end date, as documented in the *Letter of Withdrawal*.

Independent Accreditation for Members of the Collaborative

If one or more of the member institutions chooses to establish an independent social work program following the dissolution of the collaborative, the program(s) will be in candidacy status for 1-year and then reviewed for initial accreditation by the BOA. The CSWE Director of Accreditation Services will assign each member institution seeking individual accreditation to a CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

The CSWE Accreditation Specialist will provide a timetable, guidance, and information during the year of candidacy. The timetables for member programs from a dissolved collaborative may differ, depending upon the circumstances and readiness of each program to proceed toward initial accreditation.

The 1-year candidacy option is only available at the time of dissolution.

If an individual program chooses not to seek initial accreditation at the time the collaborative is dissolved, the program loses the option of the 1-year candidacy process toward initial accreditation. If the individual program decides at a later time to seek accredited status, the program is required to enter the full 3-year candidacy process to gain initial accreditation.

Students enrolled in programs leaving collaboratives and seeking individual accreditation:

Accredited status for individual programs will be retroactive to the fall term of the academic year in which the program is granted initial accreditation. Students enrolled in programs in a dissolving collaborative must informed that their program will be in candidacy status for 1-year and that they will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program until the program is granted initial accreditation by the BOA. Programs must also ensure student transcripts reflect enrollment or transfer to the single program no earlier than the fall term preceding initial accreditation being granted.

4.4 Mergers & Acquisitions

Merger

A program merger occurs when two (2) or more institutions with at least two (2) independently accredited social work education programs of the same level (e.g., two master's social work programs) decide to merge, therefore creating one (1) social work program under a single name and accredited status.

During the merger process, programs work closely with their assigned CSWE Accreditation Specialist to ensure students' accredited education is not jeopardized. All programs involved in the merger may be reassigned to one CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Accreditation is awarded to the merged program as a whole, not to the independent programs. A single institution can only house one (1) accredited social work program for each program-level.

Substantive Change Process

The merger process is completed via the substantive change process detailed in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*.

The institutions/programs involved must mutually agree upon which program will serve as the main site for the substantive change process. That main site will then add the other program(s) to its accredited scope as additional program options. The main site is responsible for submitting a *Substantive Change Proposal* for each new program option and follows policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*.

If more than one program level (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate) at an institution are merging with one or more other institutions, then the main site may be the same or different for each program level.

Letter of Withdrawal

After approval of a *Substantive Change Proposal*, the primary contact of each independent accredited program party to the merger submits a *Letter of Withdrawal*, including a transfer/graduation plan, per policy *4.12 Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status*.

The *Letter of Withdrawal* specifies the closure/end date of the independent program and a narrative discussing how the program is making arrangements for the graduation or transfer of its students, either into the merged program or elsewhere. All students must be transferred (to the newly merged institution or another institution) or graduated from the independent program on or before the end date of the independent program. After the end date of the independent program, all degrees must be issued by the merged institution for students to earn a degree from a CSWE-BOA accredited program. The independent program remains accredited until a plan for graduation or transfer of all students is established and each independent program is expected to remain in full compliance with all standards during the merger process. Any students admitted

to, enrolled in, or graduated from each independent program after the specified end date will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program.

Each program must also furnish an electronic copy of the *Letter of Withdrawal* via email to the president/chancellor and primary contact of every independent institution/program involved in the merger.

Once the requisite *Letter(s) of Withdrawal* is submitted to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, the program(s) do not participate in the reaffirmation process.

Note: If an independent program's reaffirmation timetable occurs during the merge process, the program must request a timetable change per policy *4.6 Requesting an Extension or Timetable Change*. When merging, the independent programs agree to the reaffirmation timetable for the main site.

For each independent program withdrawing accreditation, excluding the main site, the Board of Accreditation (BOA) votes on the withdrawal of accreditation at the BOA meeting after the agreed upon closure date, as documented in the *Letter of Withdrawal.*

Institutional Name Change

If the merger involves an institutional name change, the main site must submit written notification on letterhead per policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* and complete the Accreditation Program Record Update Form to the CSWE Department of Social Work Accreditation.

Acquisition Policy

An institutional/program acquisition occurs when an institution acquires another institution or program with at least one (1) accredited baccalaureate, master's, or practice doctorate social work education program; therefore, moving one (1) social work program to another institution, under a single institutional name and accredited status.

During the acquisition process, programs will work closely with their assigned CSWE Accreditation Specialist to ensure students' accredited education is not jeopardized. All programs involved in the acquisition may be reassigned to one CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Accreditation is awarded to the acquired program as a whole, not to the independent programs. A single institution can only house one (1) accredited social work program for each program-level.

Substantive Change or Expedited Initial Accreditation Process

The institutions/programs involved must mutually agree upon the date of acquisition, then complete the process that aligns with their situation:

1. **Substantive Change Process:** If the acquiring institution has an accredited social work program, the acquiring program will then add the other program(s) to its accredited scope as additional program options. The acquiring program is responsible for submitting a *Substantive Change Proposal* for each new program option and follows policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*.

2. **Expedited Initial Accreditation Process:** If the acquiring institution does not have an accredited social work program, and is acquiring an accredited social work program, the acquiring program must submit an *Initial Accreditation Eligibility Application* and *Narrative of Intent,* complete the initial accreditation process, and will be in candidacy status for 1-year prior to being reviewed for an initial accreditation decision by the BOA.
    a. Accredited status for the acquired program will be retroactive to the fall term of the academic year in which the program is granted initial accreditation.
    b. Students admitted to or enrolled in programs during the acquisition process must informed that their program will be in candidacy status for 1-year and that they will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program unless and until the program is granted initial accreditation by the BOA.
    c. Programs must also ensure student transcripts reflect admission/enrollment or transfer to the acquired program no earlier than the fall preceding initial accreditation being granted.
    d. The CSWE Accreditation Specialist will provide timetable options, guidance, and information before and during the year of candidacy.

Letter of Withdrawal

The primary contact of each accredited program party to the acquisition submits a *Letter of Withdrawal* per policy *4.12 Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status*, including a transfer/graduation plan.

The *Letter of Withdrawal* specifies the closure/end date of the acquired program and a narrative discussing how the program is making arrangements for the graduation or transfer of its students, either into the acquiring program or elsewhere. All students must be transferred (to the acquiring institution or another institution) or graduated from the acquired program on or before the end date of the acquired program. After the end date of the acquired program, all degrees must be issued by the acquiring institution for students to earn a degree from a CSWE-BOA accredited program. The accredited program remains accredited until a plan of graduation or transfer for all students is established and the accredited program is expected to remain in full compliance with all standards during the acquisition process. Any students admitted to, enrolled in, or graduated from each independent program after this end date will not be recognized as a graduate from a CSWE-BOA accredited program.

The acquired program must also furnish an electronic copy of the withdrawal letter via email to the president/chancellor and primary contact of every institution/program involved in the acquisition.

Once the requisite *Letter(s) of Withdrawal* is submitted to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, the program(s) do not participate in the reaffirmation process.

Note: If the acquired program's reaffirmation timetable occurs during the acquisition process, the program must request a timetable change per policy *4.6 Requesting an Extension or Timetable Change*. When being acquired, the acquired programs agree to the reaffirmation timetable for the acquiring program.

For each acquired program withdrawing accreditation, the BOA votes on the withdrawal of accreditation at the BOA meeting following the agreed upon closure date, as documented in the *Letter of Withdrawal.*

Institutional Name Change

If the merger involves an institutional name change, the program must submit written notification on letterhead per policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* and complete the Accreditation Program Record Update Form to the CSWE Department of Social Work Accreditation.

4.5 Waivers to Accreditation Standards

CSWE Board of Accreditation (CSWE-BOA) accredited programs can submit waiver requests on a rolling basis for the following accreditation standards. Programs at any stage of the candidacy process (e.g., applicant, pre-candidacy, candidacy) are not eligible to request waivers.

Program waiver requests are sent to the CSWE Director of Accreditation Services who submits them to the BOA Executive Committee for review and decision. CSWE Director of Accreditation Services who submits them to the BOA Executive Committee for review and decision. The BOA Executive Committee meets three (3) times per year and may review requests between meetings.

Guidelines for Submitting Waiver Requests

- Waiver requests must be submitted by the accredited social work education program's primary contact or chief administrator to the CSWE Director of Accreditation Services.
- Waiver requests must be submitted prior to the implementation of the proposed waiver. Failing to apply in advance may result in noncompliance and affect the program's accreditation status.
- If the waiver is being requested on behalf of the chief administrator, the request must come from the administrator to whom the chief administrator reports.
- Waiver requests must be submitted in writing and provide full documentation of the program's justification for its waiver request on behalf of the program and/or an individual faculty member. Acceptable formats include a Microsoft Word Document or searchable PDF. Scanned documents are not accepted.
- Waiver requests must specify the set accreditation standards and specific accreditation standard(s) for which a waiver is sought.

- Waiver requests can be temporary or permanent.

Waiver-eligible Accreditation Standards

2015 EPAS

A waiver may be granted to a program for a faculty member, program director, or field director who does not meet the qualifications specified in the accreditation standards, but whom the program believes best meets its current faculty, program director, or field director needs. Because the waiver is granted to the program to meet programmatic and institutional needs, the waiver expires when the individual for whom it was granted vacates the position.

Only the qualification components of these standards are waiver eligible. Programs cannot waive the following accreditation requirements:

- Minimum number of faculty
- Identification of a program director and their leadership ability
- Identification of a field director and their leadership ability
- Full-time appointment for faculty and administrators
- Principal assignment for faculty and administrators
  Majority of full-time, principally assigned faculty meet required qualifications

Baccalaureate and Master's Faculty Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard 3.2.2:*** *The program documents that faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and at least 2 years of post–master's social work degree practice experience.*
- ***Accreditation Standard B3.2.4:*** *The baccalaureate social work program identifies no fewer than two full-time faculty assigned to the baccalaureate program, with full-time appointment in social work, and whose principal assignment is to the baccalaureate program. The majority of the total full-time baccalaureate social work program faculty has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program, with a doctoral degree preferred.*
- ***Accreditation Standard M3.2.4:*** *The master's social work program identifies no fewer than six full-time faculty with master's degrees in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and whose principal assignment is to the master's program. The majority of the full-time master's social work program faculty has a master's degree in social work and a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.*

Baccalaureate and Master's Program Director Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard B3.3.4(a):*** *The program describes the baccalaureate program director's leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program with a doctoral degree in social work preferred.*

- ***Accreditation Standard M3.3.4(a):*** *The program describes the master's program director's leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program. In addition, it is preferred that the master's program director have a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.*

Baccalaureate and Master's Field Education Director Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard B3.3.5(b):*** *The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and at least 2 years of post-baccalaureate or post-master's social work degree practice experience.*
- ***Accreditation Standard M3.3.5(b):*** *The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience*.

2022 EPAS

A waiver may be granted to a program for a faculty member, program director, or field director who does not meet the qualifications specified in the accreditation standards, but whom the program believes best meets its current faculty, program director, or field director needs. Because the waiver is granted to the program to meet programmatic and institutional needs, the waiver expires when the individual for whom it was granted vacates the position.

Only the qualification components of these standards are waiver eligible. Programs cannot waive the following accreditation requirements:

- Minimum number of faculty
- Identification of a program director and their leadership ability
- Identification of a field director and their leadership ability
- Full-time appointment for faculty and administrators
- Principal assignment for faculty and administrators
- Majority of full-time, principally assigned faculty meet required qualifications

Baccalaureate and Master's Faculty Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard 4.2.2:*** *Faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and at least two years of post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work.*
- ***Accreditation Standard B4.2.1:*** *The baccalaureate social work program identifies no fewer than two full-time faculty, with a full-time appointment in social work, whose principal assignment is to the baccalaureate program. Inclusive of all program options, the majority of the full-time social work program faculty whose principal assignment is to the baccalaureate program have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program.*

- ***Accreditation Standard M4.2.1:*** *The master's social work program identifies no fewer than four full-time faculty with a full-time appointment in social work, whose principal assignment is to the master's program. Inclusive of all program options, the majority of the full-time social work program faculty whose principal assignment is to the master's program have both a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.*

Baccalaureate and Master's Program Director Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard B4.3.4(b):*** *The baccalaureate program director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program. The program director has the ability to provide leadership through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and/or other academic and professional activities in social work.*
- ***Accreditation Standard M4.3.4(b):*** *The master's program director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program. In addition, it is preferred that the master's program director have a doctoral degree, preferably in social work. The program director has the ability to provide leadership through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and/or other academic and professional activities in social work.*

Baccalaureate and Master's Field Education Director Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard B4.3.5(b):*** *The baccalaureate field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and at least two years of post-baccalaureate social work degree or post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work. The field education director has the ability to provide leadership to the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and/or other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.*
- ***Accreditation Standard M4.3.5(b):*** *The master's field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-BOA accredited program and at least two years of post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work. The field education director has the ability to provide leadership to the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and/or administrative or other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.*

Qualifications to Teach Social Work Practice Courses

To request a waiver, the program provides a curriculum vitae and presents information that demonstrates the individual's competence to teach in the specified area of social work practice, including generalist or specialized practice courses. Waivers are only granted in extenuating circumstances for generalist practice course instructors who do not meet the qualification specified in the accreditation standards.

The minimum requirement of 2-years post-social work degree practice experience in social work

is calculated in relation to the total number of hours of full-time and equivalent professional practice experience that does not include internship hours as part of a social work degree program. Social work practice experience is defined as providing social work services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities.

The waiver request for qualifications to teach social work practice courses must include:

- A curriculum vitae for the faculty member that provides information on the individual's qualifications and credentials in the following areas:
    - Demonstration of knowledge of the professional literature, theories, practice innovations, and emerging knowledge in the area of practice for which a waiver is sought.
    - Documentation of practice experience in the specified area of social work practice under professional social work supervision. Documentation must include the dates of such experience, frequency of social work supervision, clientele served, intervention techniques employed, and the ways in which this experience supports the request for waiver.
    - Documentation of courses taught under previous EPAS.
    - Evidence of active membership in and contributions to professional organizations and attendance and active involvement at professional social work meetings that relate to the practice content area for which the waiver is sought.
    - Publication in juried social work and related journals or through monographs and edited works in the area of practice area for which the waiver is sought.

- Identification of the social work practice courses for which the waiver is sought. Social work practice courses are defined by the program.

- Syllabi for the course(s) for which the waiver is sought and an explanation of how the course(s) fit in the social work curriculum.

Master's Degree in Social Work Qualifications for Faculty or Field Director

To request a waiver, the program provides information that demonstrates the individual's competence to serve as a social work faculty member or to administer the field education program.

The waiver request for a master's degree in social work for faculty or field director qualifications must include:

- A curriculum vitae of the faculty member and/or field education director that provides information on the individual's credentials in the following areas:
    - Demonstration of knowledge of the professional literature, theories, practice innovations, and emerging knowledge in social work.
    - Documentation of any practice experience in social work practice under professional social work supervision. Documentation must include the dates of such experience, frequency of social work supervision, clientele served,

intervention techniques employed, and the ways in which this experience supports the request for waiver.
    - Documentation of courses taught under previous EPAS.
    - Evidence of active membership in and contributions to professional organizations and attendance and active involvement at professional social work meetings.
    - Publication in juried social work and related journals or through monographs and edited works in the area of social work.

2-years Practice Experience Qualifications for Field Director

To request a waiver, the program provides information that demonstrates the individual's competence to administer the field education program.

The minimum requirement of 2-years post-social work degree practice experience in social work is calculated in relation to the total number of hours of full-time and equivalent professional practice experience that does not include internship hours as part of a social work degree program. Social work practice experience is defined as providing social work services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities.

The waiver request for 2-years post-social work degree practice experience in social work for field director qualifications must include:

- Information regarding the program's rationale for selecting this individual as the field education director for the social work program without the required practice experience.

- A curriculum vitae of the field education director that provides information on the individual's credentials in the following areas:
    - Documentation of hours employed under professional social work auspices, the nature of the work performed, and documentation that work was done under the supervision of professional social work supervisors.
    - Documentation of hours of volunteer practice experience in a social service agency.
    - Documentation of hours of paid experience as a consultant in the areas of the individual's practice expertise.
    - If licensed, documentation of hours required for licensure or other certification.
    - Academy of Certified Social Workers certification.
    - Supervision by professional social workers in a social service agency.
    - Agency-based field instruction of social work students in their practica.
    - Demonstration of practice-based, qualitative, or quantitative research.
    - Empirical applied field research in teaching practice (not solely a literature review).
    - Practice-related research or scholarly publication in social work journals.
    -

Master's Degree in Social Work Qualifications for Program Director

To request a waiver, the program provides information that demonstrates the individual's competence to administer the social work education program.

The waiver request for a master's degree in social work for program director qualifications must include:

- Information regarding the program's rationale for selecting this individual as program director of the social work program.

- A curriculum vitae and information regarding the equivalent leadership qualities of the individual as demonstrated:
    - Through teaching social work courses;
    - Conducting scholarship and research in social work;
    - Developing curriculum in social work;
    - Administrative experience in social work;
    - Presenting at professional social work meetings; and
    - Other academic and professional activities in the field.

2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs

Program Director Qualifications

- ***Accreditation Standard D4.2.4(b):*** *The practice doctorate program director has a doctoral degree in social work, 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. The program director has the ability to provide leadership through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and/or other academic and professional activities in social work.*

Master's or Doctoral Degree in Social Work Qualifications for Program Director

To request a waiver, the program provides information that demonstrates the individual's competence to administer the social work education program.

The waiver request for a master's or doctoral degree in social work for program director qualifications must include:

- Information regarding the program's rationale for selecting this individual as program director of the social work program.

- A curriculum vitae and information regarding the equivalent leadership qualities of the individual as demonstrated:
    - Through teaching social work courses;
    - Conducting scholarship and research in social work;
    - Developing curriculum in social work;
    - Administrative experience in social work;

- Presenting at professional social work meetings; and
- Other academic and professional activities in the field.

2-years Practice Experience Qualifications for Program Director

To request a waiver, the program provides information that demonstrates the individual's competence to administer the social work education program.

The minimum requirement of 2-years post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work is calculated in relation to the total number of hours of full-time and equivalent professional practice experience that does not include internship hours as part of a social work degree program. Social work practice experience is defined as providing social work services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities.

The waiver request for 2-years post-master's social work degree practice experience in social work for program director qualifications must include:

- Information regarding the program's rationale for selecting this individual as the program director without the required practice experience.

- A curriculum vitae of the program director that provides information on the individual's credentials in the following areas:
  - Documentation of hours employed under professional social work auspices, the nature of the work performed, and documentation that work was done under the supervision of professional social work supervisors.
  - Documentation of hours of volunteer practice experience in a social service agency.
  - Documentation of hours of paid experience as a consultant in the areas of the individual's practice expertise.
  - If licensed, documentation of hours required for licensure or other certification.
  - If applicable, Academy of Certified Social Workers certification.
  - Supervision by professional social workers in a social service agency.
  - Agency-based field instruction of social work students in their practica.
  - Demonstration of practice-based, qualitative, or quantitative research.
  - Empirical applied field research in teaching practice (not solely a literature review).
  - Practice-related research or scholarly publication in social work journals.

A waiver may be granted to a program for a program director who does not meet the qualifications specified in the accreditation standards, but whom the program believes best meets its current program director needs. Because the waiver is granted to the program to meet programmatic and institutional needs, the waiver expires when the individual for whom it was granted vacates the position.

Only the qualification components of these standards are waiver eligible. Programs cannot waive the following accreditation requirements:

- Minimum number of faculty
- Identification of a program director and their leadership ability
- Full-time appointment for faculty and administrators
- Principal assignment for faculty and administrators
- Majority of full-time, principally assigned faculty meet required qualifications

Eligibility Standards

- ***Eligibility Standard 2:*** *The program is within an educational institution recognized by a regional accrediting association.*
    - *A recognized regional accrediting organization is one approved by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or United States Department of Education (USDE).*

An optional temporary waiver is available to the eligibility standard requiring that a social work program is within an educational institution recognized by a regional accrediting association approved by the United States Department of Education (USDE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

This temporary waiver permits applicant, candidate, and accredited programs to operate within an educational institution recognized by an institutional accrediting body approved by both the CHEA and the USDE.

To request a temporary waiver, the program submits the *Temporary Waiver Request Form*.

Temporary Waiver During Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status

In extenuating circumstances, programs may request to temporarily waive specific faculty and administrative accreditation standards during program closure and withdrawal of accredited status for a timeframe not to exceed 1-year increments. If closure spans multiple years, the program must request and may be granted a continuation of the temporary waiver on a yearly basis until closure concludes.

The following faculty and administrative requirements are waiver eligible:

- Minimum number of faculty
- Program director's qualifications
- Field director's qualifications
- Full-time appointment for faculty and administrators
- Principal assignment for faculty and administrators
- Majority of full-time, principally assigned faculty meet required qualifications

Programs seeking a temporary waiver must first submit the *Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status Form* to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, notifying the BOA of the program's intent to close and withdraw accredited status. After submission of the required form, programs may submit the temporary waiver request. The request must be submitted prior

to making any changes to program faculty and administration that impact compliance with the accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements.

The temporary waiver request must include:

- Copy of the *Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status Form*
- Identification of the accreditation standard(s) for which the temporary waiver is requested
- Timeline explaining the reduced faculty and/or administrative structure throughout the closure period
- Impact(s) of a modified compliance plan on faculty, administrators, staff, and other relevant program stakeholders
- Impact(s) of a modified compliance plan on student safety, competence, and success
- A rationale for the request

Programs may propose phasing out faculty roles, part-time appointments for program director and/or field director, and temporary coverage by faculty and administrators from another social work program level within the institution. The plan must cover responsibilities of program leadership, field education, advising, assessment, and other duties pertinent to ensuring the program graduates competent, ethical, and safe social work practitioners while it prepares for closure.

In rare cases, programs may propose a time-limited extension to the program's accreditation status to remain open until final student(s) graduate from the institution while the social work program has concluded and is nonoperational. Typically, a limited number of remaining students have completed all social work requirements, yet the program has one or more students completing other institution-level or general education degree conferral requirements.

In such cases, accreditation status may not extend beyond 1-year following the final course taught within the social work program. All degrees must be conferred by that date, or the students will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-accredited program. However, the program must apply for a temporary waiver and have a minimum of one (1) faculty or staff member with a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program be assigned by the institution/program to provide advising and maintain support while students prepare for professional practice. The program makes the case for the amount of time available/assigned to the program and discusses sufficiency.

The BOA reviews the *Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status Form* and temporary waiver request to render a decision.

BOA Executive Committee Waiver Decisions

The following decision types are possible:

Decision Types for Waivers
Approve the waiver request.
Approve the waiver and request a progress report to the BOA Executive Committee.

Decision Types for Waivers
Accept the progress report.
Deny the waiver request/progress report, providing in writing the reasons for denial and avenues of redress if the program disagrees.
Defer the decision pending the receipt of additional information.
Refer the waiver request to the Board of Accreditation for a decision at its next meeting.

Waivers may be granted on a temporary or permanent basis.

A BOA decision letter is sent within 30-days following the waiver review.

4.6 Requesting an Extension or Timetable Change

Special Circumstances

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) recognizes that special circumstances may occur that prompt a program to request a to request an extension or timetable change.

Examples of these special circumstances include:

- Recent administrative changes in the program;
- Institutional restructuring;
- Current or anticipated loss of faculty key to developing the self-study;
- Current or anticipated addition of new faculty key to developing the self-study;
- Physical relocation of the program;
- Implementing a new set of standards that have been published for less than three (3) years;
- Unusual conditions requiring faculty attention;
- Natural or human-made disasters;
- Public health crises;
- Health problems of key faculty members; and/or
- Other, as described by the program.

Agenda & Administrative Adjustments

An *agenda adjustment* is a one-meeting (i.e., 4-month) temporary shift to a program's accreditation timetable requested by the program due to one (1) or more special circumstances.

An *administrative adjustment* is a one-meeting (i.e., 4-month) temporary shift to a program's accreditation timetable made by the BOA or CSWE Accreditation Staff due to unexpected special circumstances or a request for revision of program-submitted materials that reflects substantial issues or errors that hinders the BOA's review process.

The following policies guide staff decision-making on agenda and administrative adjustments:

- A maximum of one (1) adjustment is permitted per decision type.
- An adjustment can be granted to a single program for a maximum of one (1) meeting.
- Adjustments are granted only once during each reaffirmation cycle (i.e., once per each 8-year reaffirmation period).
- The program remains accredited during the period of adjustment.
- After adjustment of a review, the program's next reaffirmation date is calculated from program's original review date (i.e., the date at which the previous accreditation status expired). This ensures the program is reviewed on the correct cycle, accreditation status is retroactively effective, and there are no gaps in accreditation history.
- Programs at any stage of the candidacy process or preparing for reaffirmation may request an adjustment.
- Accredited programs granted an adjustment are also eligible for up to a 1-year postponement. Programs at any stage of the candidacy process are ineligible for postponement.
- Programs are not granted more than one (1) adjustment and one (1) postponement and during each reaffirmation cycle (i.e., once per each 8-year reaffirmation period).
- Any combination of timetable changes or extension requests (i.e., postponements, agenda adjustments, administrative adjustments, and/or permanent alignments) cannot result in the program exceeding ten (10) years between reaffirmation determinations.

Permanent Adjustments

Programs in pre-candidacy or candidacy may request a permanent 1-meeting permanent adjustment at any benchmark.

Benchmark 1: When a program requests a permanent adjustment at Benchmark 1, it will affect the program's retroactive accreditation date and may impact which students are covered under accreditation. It will also shift the program's Benchmark 2 and Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation review dates. Consult with the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist regarding how a Benchmark 1 permanent adjustment may affect the program's retroactive accreditation date and students.

Benchmark 2: When a program requests a permanent adjustment at Benchmark 2, it will not affect the program's retroactive accreditation date and will not impact which students are covered under accreditation. However, it will shift the program's Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation review date.

Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation: When a program requests a permanent adjustment at Benchmark 3, it will not affect the program's retroactive accreditation date and will not impact which students are covered under accreditation. However, students will not be recognized as graduates from a CSWE-BOA accredited program until the program is granted initial accreditation by the BOA. This may impact students who will be graduating before initial accreditation is achieved.

Programs are not granted more than one (1) permanent adjustment during each benchmark, for a total of three (3) permanent adjustments per the 3-year candidacy process.

Instructions

To request an adjustment, programs must complete the required Accreditation Timetable Change Request Form, which documents the program's rationale for the request. The form must be submitted via email to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and align with policy *4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements*.

Deadline

Candidacy: The program may submit their request no later than 3-months before the first day of their next candidacy visit timeframe:

February BOA meeting agenda date	Due June 1st (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	Due September 1st (previous year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	Due December 1st (previous year)

Reaffirmation: The program may submit their request no earlier than 2-years before their next self-study due date; and no later than 3-months before their next self-study due date:

February BOA meeting agenda date	Due January 1st (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	Due May 1st (previous year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	Due September 1st (previous year)

In extenuating/emergency circumstances only, programs may request an adjustment after the deadline. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Decision Types

When reviewing the adjustment request, the CSWE Accreditation Specialist considers the program's accreditation history, with special attention to recent BOA actions and the program's response to any concerns.

The following decision types are possible:

Decision Types for Adjustments
Approve the request and establish, for the current review only, a new timetable for submission of materials.
Defer a decision pending the receipt of additional information.
Deny the request, providing in writing the reasons for denial and avenues of redress if the program disagrees.

The program is notified in writing within 30-days following receipt of the request.

The decision will be reported to BOA Executive Committee at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Adjustment decisions are not eligible for appeal.

Postponement of Reaffirmation Review

A postponement is a 1-year temporary shift to an accredited program's reaffirmation timetable.

Postponements are not granted for the following reasons:

- Implementing a new program level/having another program level (e.g., baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate) in candidacy;
- Implementing a new program option;
- Implementing a new set of standards that has been published for three (3) or more years;
- Experiencing an extended reaffirmation process during the last review cycle (e.g., receiving a postponement, adjustment, deferral, progress reports, restoration reports, modified site visits); and/or
- Other, as described by CSWE Accreditation Staff.

The following policies guide staff decision-making:

- A postponement can be granted to a single program for a maximum of 1-year.
- Postponements are granted only once during each reaffirmation cycle (i.e., once per 8-year reaffirmation period).
- The program remains accredited during the period of postponement.
- After postponement of a review, the program's next reaffirmation date is calculated from program's original review date (i.e., the year in which the previous accreditation status expired). This ensures the program is reviewed on the correct cycle, accreditation status is retroactively effective, and there are no gaps in accreditation history.
- Programs in any stage of the candidacy process cannot request a postponement. Candidate programs are eligible for one (1) permanent adjustment per benchmark. One (1) additional administrative adjustment may be granted for special circumstances.
- Programs granted a postponement are also eligible for one (1) adjustment.
- Programs are not granted more than one (1) postponement and one (1) adjustment during each reaffirmation cycle (i.e., once per each 8-year reaffirmation period).
- Any combination of timetable changes or extension requests (i.e., postponements, agenda adjustments, administrative adjustments, and/or permanent alignments) cannot result in the program exceeding ten (10) years between reaffirmation determinations.

Instructions

To request a postponement, programs must complete the required Accreditation Timetable Change Request Form, which documents the program's rationale for the request. The form must be submitted via email to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and align with policy *4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements*.

Deadline

The program may submit their request no earlier than 2-years before their next self-study due date and no later than 2-months before their next self-study due date:

February BOA meeting agenda date	Due February1st (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	Due June 1st (previous year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	Due October 1st (previous year)

In extenuating/emergency circumstances only, programs may request a postponement after the deadline. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Decision Types

When reviewing the postponement request, the CSWE Accreditation Specialist considers the program's accreditation history, with special attention to recent BOA actions and the program's response to any concerns.

The following decision types are possible:

Decision Types for Postponements
Approve the request and establish, for the current review only, a new timetable for submission of materials.
Defer a decision pending the receipt of additional information.
Recommend that the BOA order a modified site visit (in-person or virtual) to make a fully informed decision regarding postponement. The program pays the cost of the visit.
Deny the request, providing in writing the reasons for denial and avenues of redress if the program disagrees.

The program is notified in writing within 30-days following receipt of the request.

The decision will be reported to BOA Executive Committee at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Appeal Procedures

Programs dissatisfied with the decision may appeal, in writing, to the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation and request a review by the BOA at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The BOA decision on the appeal is final, and there is no further appeal.

Permanent Alignment of Program Levels

Institutions with accredited baccalaureate, master's, or practice doctorate social work programs on separate review timetables may request to synchronize/permanently align the reaffirmation review dates of all program levels at the institution so they take place at the same time. A permanent alignment may be granted to establish a single review date.

The alignment may entail a delayed review or an earlier review of one or more program levels to accommodate the alignment. Staff will make every effort to ensure comparable and reasonable movement for timely reaffirmation review of all levels. If only two programs are aligning, staff will align the programs with the middle date between the two established reaffirmation dates. If the middle date is in between two dates, the new reaffirmation date will be the earlier of the two dates.

The following restrictions apply to program alignments:

- Programs cannot request a permanent alignment if it will lead to a delay of more than 2-years for one of the programs.
    - Programs must either wait for their next reaffirmation cycle or move one program forward more than 2-years.
- Any combination of timetable changes or extension requests (i.e., postponements, agenda adjustments, administrative adjustments, and/or permanent alignments) cannot result in the program exceeding ten (10) years between reaffirmation determinations.

Instructions

To request a permanent alignment programs must complete the required Accreditation Timetable Change Request Form, which documents the program's rationale for the request. The form must be submitted via email to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and align with policy *4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements*.

Deadline

The program may submit their request no later than 2-months before the next self-study due date of the earliest program under review:

February BOA meeting agenda date	Due February1st (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	Due June 1st (previous year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	Due October 1st (previous year)

The program is notified in writing within 30-days following receipt of the request.

In extenuating/emergency circumstances only, programs may request a permanent alignment after the deadline. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The decision will be reported to BOA Executive Committee at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements

The following policies and procedures apply to **all documents** submitted to the Board of Accreditation (BOA) or CSWE Accreditation Staff.

Institutions with baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate social work programs, are accredited separately. Each program level must complete separate accreditation processes, including submitting separate documents.

General Content

- It is advisable and highly encouraged to adopt and implement the language of the accreditation standards.
    - If a program elects to use different terminology, the program must draw equivalency in their accreditation documents between the accreditation standards language and program-specific language.
- Program options, defined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* as locations and/or delivery methods, must be explicitly addressed in response to each accreditation standard.
    - Explicitly state if the written information provided is identical for all program options.
    - If written information provided is different for each program option, explicitly explain full and complete compliance information for each program option.
- All program information, operations, personnel, and offerings must be current at the time of submission.
    - Unless otherwise specified in the Interpretation Guide, accreditation documents must be written in present tense, evidencing current compliance. Documents must not project future compliance nor describe past compliance.
    - Candidate programs may write in future tense only in response to developmental standards.
- Information and forms, tables, matrices, policies, and documentation for each standard must be included directly in response to the relevant standard.
    - BOA members/CSWE Accreditation Staff do not search through documents for requested information.
    - When including tables, matrices, or charts always explain how to read or interpret the graphic in the accompanying narrative.
- Web-based hyperlinks to content that substantiates compliance with a standard are not accepted.
    - BOA members/CSWE Accreditation Staff do not search through the website for requested information.
    - All required compliance information must be documented in a narrative format and able to be archived.
- Do not edit nor refer to previously submitted documents.
    - Previously submitted documents are not considered in the accreditation review process unless otherwise stated in policy.
    - Full and complete information must be provided within the document under active/current review.
- Always check the accreditation homepage on the CSWE website for the current version required forms and templates prior to submission.

General Formatting

- Use 12-point Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial font.
- Typically, there is no word limit unless otherwise specified (i.e., *Substantive Change Proposal*), yet readers appreciate brevity.
- Margins, indentations, headings, and subheadings must be consistent.
- Pagination shall be continuous.
- Use single space only.
- Include a table of contents.
- Each submitted document must include a cover page identifying the program/institution name, primary contact, program level (baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate), standards version, date submitted, and document title.
- Accreditation documents shall be single/continuous files with all relevant information embedded directly into one (1) document.
    - All self-study and benchmark documents for reaffirmation, candidacy, pre-candidacy, and staff approval of Benchmark 1 must be submitted in three (3) separate documents/volumes.
        - Volume 1: Narrative Responses, Forms, & Supporting Documentation for Accreditation Standards
        - Volume 2: Syllabi for Required Social Work Courses on Each Curriculum Matrix
        - Volume 3: Student Handbook & Field Education Manual for Policies Included within Volume 1
- Appendices and separate attachments are not accepted.
- Refer to the APA Publication Manual, 7th ed. for all other matters of style.
- Review instructions below for formatting requirements for specific types of document submissions.

Language

All accreditation documents must be submitted in English, with the exception that Volume 2 and Volume 3 of reaffirmation self-study and candidacy benchmark documents can be submitted in Spanish.

Reaffirmation & Candidacy Documents

1. Eligibility Applications for Candidacy, Initial Accreditation, & Reaffirmation

- There are different eligibility applications for candidacy and reaffirmation/initial accreditation.
- Web-based hyperlinks to content that substantiates compliance with the eligibility standards can be included in the application.
    - A direct link to the relevant material must be provided. CSWE Accreditation Staff do not search through the website for requested information.

- If a direct link is not possible, the program must detail the specific section of the webpage or provide the navigation path (e.g., click the link titled "Mission Statement" in the upper left corner).
- Alternatively, if a direct link is not possible, copy/paste the appropriate sections/content directly into the application.
- Screenshots of a website or other content are not accepted.

2. Review Brief for 2015 EPAS Candidacy Benchmarks & Reaffirmation/Initial Accreditation Self-studies

- Review briefs are the BOA's evaluative guide to locating information and reviewing benchmarks and self-studies. Do not complete the "Compliance/Concern" column, as that column will be completed by the BOA readers.
- There are different review briefs for Benchmark 1, Benchmark 2, and Benchmark 3 (i.e., Initial Accreditation), and Reaffirmation.
- Identify all program options. Program options are locations or delivery methods such as main campus, online, branch/satellite campus, etc. Program options are defined in *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*. Each program's approved program options are listed in the CSWE Program Directory.
- Do not make any changes to the review brief.
- Programs reviewed under the *2022 EPAS* or *2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs* do not complete a review brief.

3. Candidacy Benchmarks & Reaffirmation/Initial Self-studies

Volume 1: Narrative Responses, Forms, & Supporting Documentation for Accreditation Standards

- *For pre-candidate programs only:* Following the Benchmark 1 staff approval process, the program must submit a clean version of the Benchmark 1 document, removing all comments, highlights, and tracked changes.
- *For 2015 EPAS:* Follow the relevant review brief or use the optional benchmark or self-study template as your outline.
  - If electing to create customized accreditation documents under the 2015 EPAS, include the exact text of each standard bolded, followed by the program's narrative response, supporting documentation, and any required form.
  - It is not required to include the educational policy (EP) text.
  - Address each component of the standard in your response and use subheadings when appropriate.
- *For 2022 EPAS:* Use the relevant required benchmark or self-study template. For Benchmark 1 staff approval submissions, include the Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist with your three (3) Benchmark 1 volumes.
- *For 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs:* Use the relevant required benchmark or self-study template. For Benchmark 1 staff approval submissions, include the Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist with your three (3) Benchmark 1 volumes.

- Narrative responses, forms, and supporting documentation for all accreditation standards must be included in Volume 1.

Volume 2: Syllabi for Required Social Work Courses on Each Curriculum Matrix

- Use a consistent format for all syllabi.
- There are no requirements regarding the content or formatting of syllabi, with the exception that submitted syllabi must be consistently formatted.
- Content in development shall not be included.
- A syllabus for each required social work course identified on a curriculum matrix must be included in Volume 2.
- Provide a master syllabus when there are multiple sections of a course.
    - Master syllabi must include descriptions of the social work course content identified on a curriculum matrix.
    - Descriptions must provide sufficient detail for BOA readers to evaluate consistency between a curriculum matrix and syllabi.
    - Programs may present condensed versions of their syllabi (e.g., versions downloaded from learning management systems) if the syllabi include sufficiently detailed descriptions of the social work course content identified on a curriculum matrix.

Volume 3: Student Handbook & Field Education Manual for Policies Included Within Volume 1

- *2015 EPAS* and *2022 EPAS:* The student handbook and field education manual must be included in Volume 3. No additional materials shall be submitted in this volume.
- *2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs:* The student handbook must be included in Volume 3. No additional materials shall be submitted in this volume.

In addition, follow the general content and general formatting requirements.

4. Program Responses and Reports

This section includes information about the following documents:

1. Program responses to visit reports
2. Deferral responses
3. Progress reports
4. Restoration reports
5. Special compliance review reports

- Follow the BOA-issued letter as the outline.
    - Include the exact text of each standard bolded, followed by the program's narrative response, supporting documentation, and any required form.
    - Program responses to visit reports must include the full LOI language and visit report language copied/pasted from the visit report.

    - Deferral responses, progress reports, restoration reports, and special compliance review reports must include the full citation language copied/pasted from the letter.
- It is not required to include the educational policy (EP) text.
- Address each component of the standard in your response and use subheadings when appropriate.
- Follow the general content and general formatting requirements.

Electronic Submission

Acceptable Document Types

Microsoft Word Documents Only

- Review briefs (for 2015 EPAS only)
- Visit reports
- Substantive change proposals
- Candidacy benchmark 1 for staff approval

Searchable PDF Documents or Microsoft Word Documents

- Eligibility applications
- Finalized candidacy benchmarks
- Reaffirmation/initial accreditation self-studies
- Program responses to visit reports
- Deferral responses
- Progress reports
- Restoration reports
- Special compliance review reports
- Notifications of program changes
- Forms

To convert a document to a Microsoft Word Document or searchable PDF, use your computer word-processor's "Print and Save as PDF" function.

Unacceptable Document Types

- Scanned documents
- Cloud-based documents (e.g., OneDrive, SharePoint, Google Docs)
- Password-protected documents
- Zip files

Searchability

- All documents must be searchable.

- Do not scan documents nor portions of documents.
- The following are exceptions to the no-scanning rule:
    - Letters or memos that provide documentation of the program or field director's full-time appointment.
    - Scanned letters/memos cannot be longer than three (3) pages.
    - Scanned letters/memos must be preceded by a searchable cover sheet indicating the title and purpose of the scanned document.
    - Scanned letters/memos must be clearly legible.
    - Scanned letters/memos must be embedded in the relevant accreditation document, not included as appendices or separate attachments.

Single/Continuous File

- Accreditation documents shall be single/continuous files with all relevant information embedded directly into one (1) document.
- Appendices and separate attachments are not accepted.
- Information and forms, tables, matrices, policies, and documentation for each standard must be included directly in response to the relevant standard.

Submitting Documents

- Accreditation processes are paperless.
    - Physical copies are not accepted.
    - Do not mail physical copies or other electronic media such as USB drives, CD's, DVD, or SD cards to CSWE headquarters.
- Submit all accreditation documents via email.
- Be cognizant of document size as large files may fail to send.
    - Send all required files in a single email.
    - Should a single email fail, the program may submit each document separately via multiple emails.
- Documents are considered submitted when the CSWE Accreditation Staff confirms receipt and successfully opens the document(s).

Seek Information Technology (IT) Support for Troubleshooting

- CSWE Accreditation Staff are not trained to troubleshoot formatting or submission issues.
- If the program requires additional assistance preparing and sending an accreditation document, partner with the institution's information technology (IT) services.
- Only after seeking assistance from the institution's IT services team, contact the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist to discuss alternative submission options if issues persist submitting accreditation documents.

Recipients by Document Type

Documents are submitted to the following recipients:

Document Type	Recipient
Eligibility Applications	CSWE Accreditation Staff
Benchmark 1 Documents for Staff Approval Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist	CSWE Accreditation Services Manager
Benchmark 1 Documents (after staff approval) Benchmark 2 Documents Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation Self-study	CSWE Accreditation Specialist & Candidacy Visitor
Reaffirmation Self-study	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Candidacy/Site Visit Reports	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Program Responses to Visit Reports	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Program Responses to Deferrals	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Progress Reports	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Restoration Reports	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Special Compliance Review Reports	CSWE Accreditation Staff
Notifications of Program Changes	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Substantive Change Proposals	CSWE Accreditation Services Manager
Forms	CSWE Accreditation Specialist
Waivers	CSWE Director of Accreditation Services
Complaints	CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation

Submission Deadlines

Candidacy

- Benchmark documents/initial accreditation self-studies must be emailed, and time stamped at least 30-days prior to the candidacy visit.

Reaffirmation

Eligibility applications must be emailed between the following due dates:

February BOA meeting agenda date	January 1 – March 1 (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	May 1 – July 1 (previous year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	September 1 – November 1 (previous year)

Self-studies must be emailed, and time stamped on or before the following due dates:

February BOA meeting agenda date	Due April 1st (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	Due August 1st (previous year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	Due December 1st (previous year)

Program Responses and Reports

- Program responses to visit reports are due within 2-weeks of the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist sending the report and detailed instructions.
    - The due date is customized and specified via email.
- Deferral responses, progress reports, restoration reports, and special compliance review reports are due no later than the date specified in the BOA decision letter.
    - Progress reports and restoration reports can be submitted early.
    - To submit for an earlier review, programs must complete the Early Submission Notification Form and email this form to the program's CSWE accreditation specialist no later than thirty (30) days prior to the document due date for that respective BOA meeting agenda.

Submit the Early Submission Notification Form by November 1st	**Progress Report or Restoration Report due by December 1st**	**Report reviewed at the February BOA meeting**
Submit the Early Submission Notification Form by March 1st	Progress Report or Restoration Report due by April 1st	Report reviewed at the June BOA meeting
Submit the Early Submission Notification Form by July 1st	Progress Report or Restoration Report due by August 1st	Report reviewed at the October BOA meeting

Reports must be emailed, and time stamped on or before the following due dates:

February BOA meeting agenda date	Due December 1st (previous year)
June BOA meeting agenda date	Due April 1st (same year)
October BOA meeting agenda date	Due August 1st (same year)

All Other Accreditation Documents

Additional formatting and submission requirements may be specified in policies relevant to the accreditation process under which the program is reviewed.

Final Submissions

All submissions are final. No additional materials will be accepted after an accreditation due date. CSWE Accreditation Staff cannot alter, edit, amend, nor substitute program materials submitted for an accreditation review.

Failure to Submit Materials

Failure to submit materials on time may affect the program's accreditation standing and result in an adverse action (e.g., place on conditional status, withdraw accredited status) and/or moved to a future BOA meeting agenda.

Programs may request reconsideration of adverse actions. Refer to policy *4.8 Appeals of BOA Decisions* for information on requesting reconsideration.

If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it must submit a restoration report within 1-year of being placed on conditional accredited status. Refer to policies *5.14 BOA Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation Decisions* and *6.9 BOA Reaffirmation Decisions* for a list of decision types after submitting a restoration report.

When the Department of Social Work Accreditation becomes aware of a late or missing submission, the program may receive email communication from CSWE Accreditation Staff requesting the required materials by a specified deadline. If the program successfully submits the required materials by the deadline provided, the materials will be processed accordingly. If the program fails to submit the required materials by the deadline, the BOA may initiate an adverse action.

Revise & Resubmit Requests

Requests for revision and resubmission may be made by CSWE Accreditation Specialists or the BOA due to the following reasons:

- Usage of outdated forms, templates, or accreditation materials
- Formatting and submission errors
- Failure to address all standards
- Pervasive issues within the document
- Failure to fully complete a required form or template
- Condition of documentation prevents visitor from performing duties with due diligence within a 1-1½ day visit

Due to these reasons and based on the materials provided, the review of the accreditation materials is significantly hindered, a decision cannot be rendered, or proceeding creates an undue burden for all parties involved (i.e., programs, BOA, visitors, and/or CSWE Accreditation Staff).

The BOA or CSWE Accreditation Staff may issue a revise and resubmit for up to 2-meetings based on the significance of the errors. Programs receive one (1) revise and resubmit request per each reaffirmation cycle. Reaffirmation cycles are defined in policy *6.1 Understanding Reaffirmation of Accreditation*. In extenuating circumstances, the BOA or CSWE Accreditation Specialists may issue an additional revise & resubmit for up to 2-meetings when significant errors persist.

Programs issued a first revise and resubmit are required to schedule a minimum of one (1) consultation with their program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist within 30-days of receiving notice of this action. Programs issued a second revise and resubmit are required to schedule a minimum of two (2) consultations with their program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and the Director of Accreditation Services within 30-days of receiving notice of this action.

Failure to Comply with Revise & Resubmit Requests

Failure to comply with these procedures, including scheduling the required consultations or submitting the accreditation document(s) by the revision due date, may result in the BOA

initiating an adverse action. After the second revise and resubmit, the BOA may initiate an adverse action due to persistent concerns when review of the accreditation materials remains significantly hindered, a decision still cannot be rendered, or proceeding continues to create an undue burden for all parties involved (i.e., programs, BOA, visitors, and/or CSWE Accreditation Staff).

The program's accreditation status will remain unchanged during the revision period, if the program complies with the revise and resubmit procedures.

4.8 Appeals of BOA Decisions

The following Board of Accreditation (BOA) decisions are adverse actions and are eligible for appeal:

- Deny Candidacy Status
- Remove from Candidacy Status
- Deny Initial Accreditation
- Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status
- Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status

If a program receives an adverse decision, the BOA provides two (2) appeals procedures:

1. Reconsideration
2. Panel review

Reconsideration must be completed before moving to the panel review. An accredited program retains its accredited status until all appeals are exhausted.

Reconsideration Hearing

Programs may challenge an adverse decision if, in the opinion of the program, the BOA's decision is arbitrary, capricious, or violates procedures.

The program's written request to the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation must be made within thirty (30) days following its receipt of notice of the adverse action. If the program fails to respond within 30-days, it waives the right to a reconsideration hearing.

A request for reconsideration must relate to the conditions that existed in the program at the time of the BOA's adverse action and state specific reasons why the reconsideration should be granted.

When reconsideration is requested, the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation sets the date and time for a hearing and appoints a reconsideration committee of three (3) BOA members. Reconsiderations hearings may be virtual or in-person, as determined by the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation. The program may send, at its own expense, the program's chief administrator, program faculty, and representatives from the institution. The social work

program's chief administrator is required to attend reconsideration hearing meetings. Legal counsel and other interested parties (e.g., students, faculty, staff) are not permitted to attend.

The reconsideration committee reviews the documentation on which the BOA based its decision and any written or verbal clarifying information the program provides. No new documentation is considered.

The following decision types are possible:

Decision Types for Appeals of Adverse Actions – Reconsideration Hearing	
Uphold the original BOA decision.	If the reconsideration committee believes that the original BOA decision was correct, it decides to uphold the original decision. The program will then respond as required in the original BOA decision letter.
Revise the decision.	If the reconsideration committee believes that the BOA decision was in error, the committee may revise the BOA decision and issue a letter with the revised decision and instructions to the program regarding next steps.
Uphold the original decision and issue a new decision.	The reconsideration committee may uphold the BOA decision based on the original program documentation and issue a new decision as a result of the clarifying information provided by the program at the reconsideration hearing.

A BOA decision letter is sent within 30-days following the reconsideration hearing to the institution's president/chancellor and the program's primary contact. If the program accepts the reconsideration committee's decision, it is expected to follow the instructions contained in the letter informing the program of the adverse decision. If the program does not accept the reconsideration committee's decision, it may request a panel review.

Panel Review

The final appeal for the program is a panel review, which is an independent consideration of the BOA's decision.

The program's written request for a panel review must be made within 30-days of receipt of the BOA decision letter upholding the adverse decision. If the program fails to respond 30-days, it waives the right to a panel review.

The program requests a panel review if, after the reconsideration findings are presented, it believes the BOA's action was arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise not in accordance with the BOA accreditation standards or procedures; or the BOA action was not supported by substantial

evidence in the record.

The panel reviews evidence in the record, including documentation and witness statements directly related to the BOA's adverse action and the reconsideration hearing. The record may include the program's candidacy or reaffirmation documentation, visit reports, the program responses to visit reports, the BOA decision letter detailing the adverse decision; and materials from the reconsideration hearing.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the panel review request, the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation sets the dates and time for a panel review and appoints a chair of two (2) or more review panel members from the list of active accreditation site visitors. Members of the review panel may not include current members of the BOA or former BOA members serving at the time of the BOA's adverse action. Panel reviews may be virtual or in-person, as determined by the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation. The program may send, at its own expense, the social work program's chief administrator, program faculty, and representatives from the institution. The program's chief administrator is required to attend panel review meetings. Other interested parties (e.g., students, faculty, staff) are not permitted to attend. At this stage, legal counsel for both parties are permitted to attend.

All costs related to the panel review are paid by the program. These include any legal expenses of the BOA, travel and accommodations for the review panel and participants in the proceedings, reproduction of materials presented at the hearing, and other related expenses.

The CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation submits the record of materials to the review panel and the program's written request, including additional evidence challenging the BOA's procedures or its facts. The chair of the review panel presides over the hearing and rules on procedure, conducting the hearing in a manner that allows the program a fair opportunity to present its case and explain its position without resort to formal rules of evidence. The program, BOA, and CSWE Staff may be represented by counsel during the hearing, and counsel may question any witnesses who speak at the hearing. Review panel members may question any witnesses or parties to the appeal.

The following decision types are possible:

Decision Types for Appeals of Adverse Actions – Panel Review
Uphold the BOA action.
Remand the decision back to the BOA for further consideration.

A decision letter is sent within 30-days following the panel review to the institution's president/chancellor and the program's primary contact.

4.9 Program Changes & Program Options

Policies and procedures are detailed in each of the following areas:

- Changes that Do Not Require Reporting

- Changes that Require Notification to the DOSWA
    - Changes to Key Personnel or the Program's Directory Listing/Database Record
- Substantive Change Proposals
    - Implementing a New Location-based Program Option
    - Implementing a New Online Program Option
- Failure to Report Changes

The CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA) understands that ongoing change is necessary to improve educational quality. In support of programs' continuous quality improvement efforts, BOA encourages experimentation in all aspects of program operations. Social work programs may seek to design educational innovations that reflect their unique context or significantly change methodologies to prepare competent graduates to meet the changing demands of the social work profession and current designs or practices.

Some program changes do not require reporting to the BOA or the Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA).

The accreditation status obtained at initial accreditation or reaffirmation only covers the components that were reviewed in the self-study at the time of the BOA review. Changes may take place within the program prior to its next scheduled accreditation review; however, some program changes impact compliance with the accreditation standards, interpretations, or accreditation requirements and require reporting to the BOA or DOSWA.

Changes that Do Not Require Reporting

The following changes do not require reporting:

- Revision of the program's mission and goals
- Revision of the curriculum, including:
    - Syllabi
    - Course sequencing
    - Required social work courses (including practice and field courses)
    - Course titles or content
    - Electives
    - Prerequisites
    - Number of seat, contact, or credit hours per course
    - Number of credit hours for degree conferral
    - General education and liberal arts requirements
    - Addition of a social work minor, associate degree, or dual/double major
    - Addition of a learning site or hybrid/blended curriculum design
- Changes in qualified faculty or the composition of faculty, students, or both
- Changes in the program's policies and procedures relating to admission, transfer, advisement, grievance, or termination
- Changes to assessment plans

Changes that Require Notification to the DOSWA

Policy

Program changes that may impact compliance with the accreditation standards require an email notification to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist no later than 30-days after implementation. Such changes include, but are not limited to:

- Changes to key personnel or the program's directory listing/database record (← click the link to review separate reporting procedures)
- Institutional name change
- Reduction in resources (e.g., finances, personnel, technology)
- Changes in the faculty-to-student ratio that falls below the ratios per the accreditation standards
- Loss of faculty that places the program below the minimum number of full-time faculty required per the accreditation standards
- Changes in program director and/or field director assigned time that falls below the assigned time per the accreditation standards
- Closing a program option (e.g., main campus, branch/satellite, online)
    - Program must complete a Program Option Closure Form and email it to their CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
    - A transfer or graduation plan must be provided for closure of a program option.
- Changes to the program's host institution's accreditation or recognition status with their a regional accreditor, state or federal governmental agency, U.S. Department of Education, or state, district, or territory-level authority, resulting in issuance of an adverse action, investigation, or withdrawal of accredited status (initiated by the accrediting body or the institution/program)
- Temporary closure of the program or host institution in event of a manmade or natural disaster, other public health emergency, or circumstances beyond the control of the educational environment

As this list is not exhaustive, the program contacts their CSWE Accreditation Specialist to discuss planned and upcoming changes to determine if notification is required.

Procedures

The notification must be on program letterhead, signed by the program's primary contact, not scanned, and emailed. Review policy *4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements* for more information.

The notification must include the following information:

- Institution name
- Program level (baccalaureate, master's, or practice doctorate)
- Primary contact's information
    - Name
    - Credentials

    - Title
    - Business email address
    - Business phone number
- Detailed description of the change
- List of any standards or accreditation requirements impacted by the change
- The program's time-bound plan for addressing compliance with each standard or accreditation requirement

Review Process

The CSWE Accreditation Specialist may accept the notification, request clarifying information or supporting documentation, or refer the change to the BOA for review.

The CSWE Accreditation Specialist will inform the program's primary contact of the outcome of the notification review via email within 30-days after the CSWE Accreditation Specialist confirms receipt of the notification. In cases when clarifying information or supporting documentation is requested or the change is referred to the BOA for review, the CSWE Accreditation Specialist will specify next steps and applicable deadlines.

If the program reports noncompliance issues, refer to policy *4.10 Special Compliance Reviews* for more information.

Changes to Key Personnel or the Program's Directory Listing/Database Record

Changes in key personnel or the program's CSWE Program Directory listing/database record must be reported to the DOSWA no later than 30-days after the implementation of change to ensure the program record remains accurate and important accreditation communications are delivered to the correct individuals. To change the primary contact, the current primary contact and/or their superior must complete the form below to facilitate the transfer of responsibility.

The program must submit the Accreditation Program Record Update Form to the DOSWA. Programs are only expected to complete the section(s) of the form relevant to the changes. All other sections may be left blank.

Substantive Change Proposals

Policy

Programs are required to complete a *Substantive Change Proposal* when establishing a new program option, such as a physical location or online delivery method.

The proposal must be reviewed and approved by the DOSWA and/or BOA prior to starting a new program option. The BOA considers the start of a program option (implementation date) to be when a majority (more than 50%) of social work curriculum is offered for the first time in the new program option.

As the regulatory body for social work education in the U.S. and its territories, the BOA identifies the purpose of the *Substantive Change Proposal* is to verify that significant program changes are consistent with the accreditation standards and ensure that the planned expansion of program options does not adversely impact the integrity and quality of the current program operations, resources, offerings, and compliance with the accreditation standards.

Social work program accreditation is awarded to and covers all program options; therefore, each program option is required to maintain continuous compliance with the accreditation standards. Noncompliance issues affecting one (1) program option impacts the accreditation status of the entire program, inclusive of all program options.

A substantive change is defined as a significant modification, high-impact change, and/or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited program. The purpose of this review process is to ensure that the substantive change does not adversely affect the capacity of the social work program to continue to meet the accreditation standards.

Programs cannot implement any changes that require a *Substantive Change Proposal* during the candidacy or reaffirmation process. The candidacy process begins with the submission of the benchmark 1 document and ends with an initial accreditation decision. The reaffirmation process begins with the submission of the self-study and ends with a reaffirmation decision.

In addition, programs cannot submit substantive changes within benchmark documents or reaffirmation self-studies to seek accreditation approval. This is a distinct review process, and a *Substantive Change Proposal* must be submitted separately from any other accreditation review process.

Note the following when submitting *Substantive Change Proposals:*

- Programs may submit *Substantive Change Proposals* during the candidacy or reaffirmation process; however, the program cannot implement the change until after an initial accreditation or reaffirmation decision is issued by the BOA.
- Programs are not required to wait for acceptance of progress reports to submit a proposal.
- Programs may not submit *Substantive Change Proposals* if they are on conditionally accredited status.
- Should a program not achieve initial accreditation or reaffirmation, then the program must adjust the implementation date of their new program option until the current program is successfully accredited.

Programs may market, advertise, and recruit for planned program options in advance of receiving approval; however, the program may not state, nor imply, that approval has been granted or that the program option is "CSWE-BOA accredited" in any written materials or verbal exchanges. The CSWE Program Directory and CSWE Accreditation Staff can only confirm approved program options. Thus, approval is advised before advertising and recruiting. Approval is not guaranteed, and the program must plan a minimum 6-months in advance of their implementation date to request approval. If a program fails to obtain approval of the proposal

prior to the implementation date, all written materials must be updated to clarify to constituents that approval is pending.

Program Option Types and Definitions

When the policy utilizes "curriculum," this refers to the social work program curriculum, not general education, liberal arts requirements, or non-social work curriculum. This includes both generalist and specialized social work curricula. If a student can complete more than 50% of their program online, then that constitutes an online program option. Fully online generalist curriculum, specialized curriculum, or advanced standing programs are also considered online program options.

Program Options – Various structured pathways to degree completion by which social work programs are delivered, including face-to-face, online, branch or satellite campus, broadcast site, and correspondence.

Program options are not calendars/plans of study, such as advanced standing, full-time, part-time, 16-months, 2-years, weekend, evening, night; nor are they population-based plans such as an adult learning option.

1. In-person/Face-to-Face/Traditional – Any physical location in which the instructor(s) and student(s) are concurrently in-person together. This allows for live synchronous interaction between instructors and students.

> **1a. Main/Primary Campus –** A majority, more than 50%, of the curriculum is delivered in-person at a primary physical location, such as a main campus.
>
> **1b. Branch/Satellite Campus –** A majority, more than 50% of the curriculum is delivered in-person at a location physically detached from the main campus.

2. Distance Education – Any curriculum delivery method in which there is a separation, in time or place, between the instructor(s) and student(s). This includes both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced or pre-recorded) education models.

> **2a. Online –** A majority, more than 50%, of the curriculum is delivered online.
>
> **2b. Broadcast Site** – A majority, more than 50%, of the curriculum is broadcasted via television, audio, telephone, internet radio, livestream, computer-based video, or other modes of technology to students collectively convened in-person at program-established classroom location(s) physically detached from the main campus. Each physical classroom location to which the curriculum is broadcasted is considered a separate program option.
>
> **2c. Correspondence –** The whole curriculum delivered through mailing materials (videos, texts, assignments, etc.) electronically or through the post to students.

The following are not identified as a distinct program option and do not require a *Substantive Change Proposal:*

> **3. Learning Site –** Sites where only limited portions (50% or less) of the curriculum is offered offsite at a location physically detached from the main campus. A learning site is not considered an additional program option. A learning site does not require a *Substantive Change Proposal* and shall not be identified as a distinct program option in accreditation-related documents.
>
> **4. Hybrid/Blended –** Locations where a majority (more than 50%) of the curriculum is delivered at a previously established CSWE-BOA approved location (e.g., main campus, branch campus, etc.) and limited portions (50% or less) of the curriculum is delivered online. This model includes 50% or less of courses delivered fully virtually. This model may also include any percentage of individual hybrid/blended courses delivered partially in-person and partially virtually. A hybrid curriculum design is not considered an additional program option. Rather, it is a face-to-face program option with online course offerings/elements. A hybrid curriculum design does not require a *Substantive Change Proposal* and shall not be identified as a distinct program option in accreditation-related documents.

Scope – Scope includes local, regional, national, or international and refers to the program's primary focus for providing education to students. Programs are solely responsible for securing the appropriate levels of approval and permissions to operate in additional jurisdictions or expand their scope. BOA's approval of a *Substantive Change Proposal* does not supersede any approvals also required from the social work program, institution, state higher education authority, and/or regional accreditor. Programs may modify the scope of a program option, following the approval of a substantive change for that program option.

Substantive Change Fee

A $1,250 fee is assessed for each substantive change proposal submitted by a program. Instructions for fee payment are detailed in required *Substantive Change Proposal* template.

Approved Program Options

All approved program options are listed in the program's record in the CSWE Program Directory.

Procedures

The required *Substantive Change Proposal* template is located on the CSWE website.

The program will declare on the template which set of accreditation standards they are currently operating under. Programs are not permitted to have different program options complying with different sets of standards.

Should the program plan to comply with the accreditation standards uniformly across program options (e.g., same faculty, courses, policies, resources, assessment plan), a new physical location or online delivery method where a majority (51% or more) of the curriculum is considered a separate program option requiring a *Substantive Change Proposal.*

The program must plan a minimum 6-months in advance of their implementation date to request approval and expect approximately 3-6 months between proposal submission date and decision date. This timeline is subject to change depending on the outcome of the review. The program is solely responsible for planning the implementation timeline in accordance with the advance submission, maintaining compliance with the accreditation standards, and adhering to accreditation policies and procedures in between reaffirmation review cycles. Submissions that do not plan for advance submission are not guaranteed to be reviewed in accordance with the program's desired timeline. There are no options for an expedited review.

Separate *Substantive Change Proposals* must be submitted for each new program option proposed. Also, separate *Substantive Change Proposals* must be submitted for each program level (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate) for which a change is proposed.

Proposal Submission for Location-based or Online Program Options

Substantive Change Proposals for the addition of a location-based program or online option are accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Upon receipt, the proposal is placed in a review queue and reviewed in order of receipt.

For example: If a program intends to implement a new program option in the August of a given year, a *Substantive Change Proposal* must be submitted by February 1st of the same year to ensure the program submits 6-months in advance of implementation.

The proposal must be emailed to CSWE Accreditation Services Manager by the program's primary contact.

Formatting & Submission

The proposal must use the template, be submitted as a Microsoft Word document, may not include separate appendices nor attachments, and be emailed. The "Impact Statements" section of the *Substantive Change Proposal* has a strict 50-page limit. Review policy *4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements* for more information.

Incomplete or incorrectly formatted proposals are not reviewed, and CSWE Accreditation Staff may ask the program to revise and resubmit. Documents that require revision and resubmission delay the review process and the program may be reviewed at a later date or future BOA meeting.

Review Process

Programs implementing a new location-based or an online program option will be reviewed by CSWE Accreditation Services Manager.

The program's primary contact will be notified of the outcome of the *Substantive Change Proposal* review process via email on a rolling basis, in order of receipt.

The email notification will include a formal letter. Any citations included will be based upon concerns regarding missing or insufficient information in any section of the proposal. Impact statements are based upon the accreditation standards and focus on ensuring that the planned expansion of program options does not adversely impact the integrity and quality of the current program operations, resources, offerings, and compliance with the accreditation standards. These statements also ensure that the program's compliance plans for the new program option aligns with accreditation standard requirements.

The following decision types are possible:

Decision Types for Substantive Change Proposals	
Approve the Substantive Change Proposal	Approve the program's compliance plan with all accreditation standards for the new program option, finding that the addition of this program option will not adversely impact the integrity and quality of the current program operations, resources, offerings, and compliance with the accreditation standards.
Defer Decision for One Meeting and Request Clarifying Information to be Reviewed by the Accreditation Services Manager	The program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision, and the program must submit documentation or clarification necessary for the DOSWA to make a decision at or before the next BOA meeting. Director of Accreditation Services reviews are conducted on a rolling basis in between or at the next BOA meeting.
Defer Decision for One Meeting and Request Clarifying Information to be Reviewed by the BOA	The program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision, so the program must submit documentation or clarification necessary for BOA to make a decision at their next meeting.
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	The addition of this program option may adversely impact the integrity and quality of the current program operations, resources, offerings, and compliance with the accreditation standards. The program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards. A visitor is sent, at the program's

Decision Types for Substantive Change Proposals	
	expense, in-person or virtually, with instructions and the program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting following the visit.

The CSWE Accreditation Services Manager or BOA may defer the decision multiple times until all requested documentation or clarification is provided by the program. Once all questions and concerns are resolved, CSWE Accreditation Staff will inform the primary contact of approval of the *Substantive Change Proposal.*

A formal letter is sent within 30-days following the CSWE Accreditation Services Manager or BOA approval and effective the date of approval. The substantive change approval will be reported to BOA at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Note: While the CSWE Accreditation Services Manager may approve the proposal, staff do not determine compliance as the BOA is the sole arbiter of compliance. A full compliance review will occur during the program's next regularly scheduled reaffirmation review or special compliance review.

Failure to Report Changes

It is the sole responsibility of the program to report changes to the BOA and/or the DOSWA according to this section of the handbook. Programs are encouraged to contact the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist to discuss planned and upcoming changes to determine if notification or a *Substantive Change Proposal* is required.

Failure to report required changes or submit a *Substantive Change Proposal* in advance of the implementation date may adversely impact the program's accreditation status.

Programs cannot operate additional program options without obtaining appropriate approvals in advance of implementation of a significant change. In order to fulfill a primary purpose of accreditation and protect the public, CSWE Accreditation Staff cannot confirm accredited status of program options that are not approved and reflected in the CSWE official database records via the CSWE Program Directory. Thus, failure to obtain approval of a substantive change may adversely impact students and their future licensing, employment, educational enrollment, or other post-degree pursuits.

When the DOSWA becomes aware of a program change without the receipt of notification or submission and acceptance of a *Substantive Change Proposal*, the program will receive email communication from the department requesting the proper documentation within 60-days. If the program successfully submits the required documentation by the deadline provided, the notification or proposal will be reviewed by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist for notifications of changes, by the CSWE Director of Accreditation Services on a rolling basis for new program options, or by the BOA at their next available regularly scheduled meeting.

If the program fails to submit the required documentation by the deadline, it may result in the program being referred to the BOA Executive Committee for placement on conditional accredited status. Conditional status is an adverse action, and programs may request reconsideration. Refer to policy *4.8 Appeals of BOA Decisions* for information on requesting reconsideration.

4.10 Special Compliance Reviews

Social work programs are responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the accreditation standards and all accreditation requirements during, and between accreditation reviews.

The accreditation status obtained at initial accreditation or reaffirmation applies to accreditation standards that were reviewed in the self-study at the time of the Board of Accreditation (BOA) review.

Programs are accountable to the accreditation standards under which they are currently operating. The BOA may issue implementation timelines, requirements, and guidance when new accreditation standards are published that may impact which set of standards the program is accountable to for compliance.

Programs are encouraged to implement interim plans to remain compliant during times of change or transitions. It is expected that programs understand, implement, and maintain continuous compliance with the accreditation standards and accreditation requirements.

Should the program request additional information or believe a special compliance review of the program is warranted, the program's primary contact may initiate one or both of the following:

Request a Letter from the Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)

The program's primary contact may request a customized letter from the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist via email clarifying accreditation standards and accreditation requirements.

Refer to policy *4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications* for more information about the primary contact's role and process for requesting a customized letter.

Program-Initiated Special Compliance Review

The program's primary contact may request a program-initiated special compliance review by emailing the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist. When requested, the following process will be initiated:

1. CSWE Accreditation Staff will attempt to arrange a courtesy phone call with the program's primary contact to discuss the issue and explain next steps. If CSWE

Accreditation Staff are unable to schedule a call within 30-days, the process will proceed to the next step.

2. The program will receive an email communication from their CSWE Accreditation Staff initiating the special compliance review process. CSWE Accreditation Staff will request a report due within 30-days, including:
    a. A formal written response to the relevant standard(s) in question as well as a time-bound plan of action for addressing any identified issues.
    b. The program's plan details and demonstrates its good faith effort and due diligence to restore full compliance within 3-months from the date the report is submitted.
3. The CSWE Accreditation Specialist will refer the report for substantiation and action by the BOA Executive Committee at their next regularly scheduled meeting.
4. Within 30-days days following the BOA meeting, the program will receive a letter indicating the BOA's decision.

BOA-Initiated Special Compliance Review

The BOA reserves the authority to initiate a special compliance review at any time.

Annual Collection of Program Assessment Outcomes

CSWE Accreditation Staff review assessment outcomes annually, between and during regularly scheduled accreditation reviews. This process is a continuing accreditation requirement, independent of any regularly scheduled review that may be underway. Programs are required to use the applicable form available on the CSWE website to report outcomes to their stakeholders and the public. Programs are responsible for ensuring their assessment plan and summary outcomes are posted publicly on their webpage and the data are collected within the last two (2) years. Assessment outcomes are published publicly in the CSWE Program Directory. Specific instructions are sent to programs by CSWE Accreditation Staff regarding this process. Failure to maintain updated assessment outcomes may result in a special compliance review.

Annual Accreditation Record Audit

CSWE Accreditation Staff conduct an annual audit of program records, including but not limited to: primary contact, president/chancellor, program options, and publicly posted student learning assessment outcomes to verify records are accurate and current. Programs are responsible for complying by responding to the audit each year, including programs in the closure process. Failure to comply may result in a special compliance review and referral to the BOA Executive Committee.

BOA Executive Committee Decisions

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Types for Special Compliance Reviews	
Find Program Compliant with the Accreditation Standards and/or Accreditation Requirements and Conclude Special Compliance Review	BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements. The special compliance review concludes, no further action is required. A letter is sent to the program.
Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA Executive Committee, BOA Workgroup, or Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. A letter is sent to the program identifying specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.
Defer Decision and Request Clarifying Information to be Reviewed by the BOA Executive Committee or BOA Workgroup	The BOA finds that the program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision, so the program must submit documentation or clarification necessary for BOA to make a decision. A letter is sent to the program. The BOA may issue multiple deferrals.
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	The BOA believes that the program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements. A letter is sent to the program. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, with instructions to review specific compliance issues and the program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting following the visit.
Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status	The BOA finds the program noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements and places it on conditional accredited status if it believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within 1-year. A letter is sent to the program identifying specific areas of noncompliance. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a restoration report.
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements and the BOA does not believe that

Decision Types for Special Compliance Reviews	
	noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. A letter is sent to the program identifying specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.

Related Policies

Refer to policy *4.11 Complaints Regarding Program Compliance*. Persons, groups, or organizations related to the program are eligible to file a formal complaint to the BOA. Complaints must pertain to matters related to program compliance with the accreditation standards. The BOA is not authorized to adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual faculty or student grievances against a program. The BOA may select a variety of decision types as a result of a complaint review, including adverse actions.

Refer to policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options* detailing which changes impact compliance with the accreditation standards and require reporting to the BOA or DOSWA. Changes may take place within the program prior to its next scheduled accreditation review.

Refer to policy *4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements* for all accreditation documents.

4.11 Complaints Regarding Program Compliance

Formal complaints to the CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA) must pertain to matters related to program compliance with accreditation standards. Persons, groups, or organizations related to the program are considered recognized complainants and may file a complaint.

The BOA is not authorized to adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual faculty or student grievances against a program. Complainants must use all appropriate institutional and professional channels of appeal before filing a formal complaint with CSWE-BOA. The institutions in which programs are housed assume responsibility for implementing and enforcing their own policies in these areas. When alleged violations cannot be resolved within the institution, appellate procedures within state systems of higher education or state judicial courts shall be used to assess and enforce institutional compliance with policies.

Instructions to File a Complaint

Once all guidelines are reviewed, submit a complete *Complaint Form* via email to the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation.

CSWE Accreditation Staff do not consult with potential complainants regarding the eligibility or validity of their complaint. CSWE Accreditation Staff are ethically bound to facilitate the procedures as written in this policy and ensure each potential complainant's autonomy. The responsibility rests with each potential complainant regarding determining whether their complaint relates to program compliance with accreditation requirements. Action cannot be taken on a complaint until documentation is submitted.

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation with evidence that the complaint meets the following criteria:

- Filing is by a recognized complainant.
- The complaint is accompanied by documentation showing that the complainant has exhausted all appropriate institutional and professional channels for resolution.
- The complaint is related to a possible violation of one or more accreditation standards.
- The documentation submitted in the formal complaint must be connected to a possible violation of one or more accreditation standards.
- The complainant must provide evidence that the chief administrator of the program named in the complaint was given a copy of the complaint, including all materials submitted to the BOA.

Evaluation to Determine if Criteria Have Been Met

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, CSWE Accreditation Staff determines whether the criteria for formal complaints have been fully met and whether the complaint falls within the BOA's authority. If CSWE Accreditation Staff determines that the complaint does not meet the criteria for formal complaints or is not within the BOA's jurisdiction, the complainant is notified and given specific reasons for the refusal.

If CSWE Accreditation Staff determines the complaint meets the criteria for a formal complaint, the complainant and the program concerned are notified. The program has thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of the complaint to respond. CSWE Accreditation Staff share the program response with the complainant, who is given 2-weeks to respond. CSWE Accreditation Staff present the formal complaint, the program's response, and the complainant's response to the BOA during its next regularly scheduled meeting and recommends a decision.

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Types for Complaints Regarding Program Compliance	
Find the Program Compliant with the Accreditation Standard and Dismiss the Complaint	If the BOA dismisses the complaint, CSWE Staff and the BOA Chair notify the

Decision Types for Complaints Regarding Program Compliance	
	complainant and the program, stipulating the reasons for the BOA's action.
Defer Decision and Request Clarifying Information to be Reviewed by the BOA Executive Committee	If the BOA finds evidence that the program has made reasonable progress in rectifying the situation, it can defer the decision to a BOA meeting within the next year.
Appoint an Investigating Committee	If the BOA needs more information to make a decision, it will appoint an investigating committee to conduct a confidential investigation with full knowledge and consultation of those concerned. The program pays expenses relating to the investigative visit. The investigating committee reports its findings to the full BOA at its next regularly scheduled meeting, and the BOA decides if the program is compliant with the accreditation standards in question.
Substantiate the Complaint and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Executive Director of Accreditation	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. A letter is sent to the program identifying specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.
Substantiate the Complaint and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA Executive Committee	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards and/or accreditation requirements but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. A letter is sent to the program identifying specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	If the BOA believes that a program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards, the BOA orders a modified site visit to collect more information. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit.
Find the Program Noncompliant with One or More Accreditation Standards and Place it on Conditional Accredited Status	The program is placed on conditional accredited status if the BOA believes that noncompliance issue(s) can be resolved by the program within 1-year. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program

Decision Types for Complaints Regarding Program Compliance	
	accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a *Restoration Report*.
Find the Program Noncompliant with One or More Accreditation Standards and Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if it believes that the program cannot take corrective action within 1-year. The program is required to work with the Accreditation Specialist to make arrangements for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine the date the accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration.
Restore Accredited Status	The BOA review of the program's *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* finds that the program has taken corrective action and is compliant with all accreditation standards. No further action is required.
Restore Accredited Status and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Executive Director of Accreditation	The BOA finds that one or more areas of the *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* are areas of concern and requests a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report
Restore Accredited Status and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA Executive Committee	The BOA finds that one or more areas of the *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* are areas of concern and requests a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report

4.12 Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status

If a program wishes to close and withdraw accredited status, the program's primary contact completes the Program Closure & Withdrawal of Accredited Status Form at least 90-days in advance of the program closure date, if possible. The form is emailed to the program's assigned CSWE Accreditation Specialist notifying the Board of Accreditation (BOA) of its intention to close the program. The program is expected to make arrangements for the transfer or graduation of its students and works closely with the CSWE Accreditation Specialist during this planning process, at the conclusion of which the date of the program's accreditation will be decided. A program is expected to remain in full compliance with all standards and requirements during the withdrawal process.

5. Candidacy & Initial Accreditation

5.1 Understanding Candidacy Benchmarks & Initial Accreditation

Candidacy is the accreditation process for new or existing social work programs seeking initial accreditation. Institutions with baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate social work programs seeking candidacy and initial accreditation, are accredited separately. Each program level must complete separate candidacy processes, including submitting separate documents.

The benchmark model is a developmental, systematic, and incremental approach to developing an accredited social work program, aligning the program elements with the accreditation standards, and writing a comprehensive self-study. There are three (3) benchmarks:

1. Benchmark 1/Candidacy Visit 1/Pre-candidacy
2. Benchmark 2/Candidacy Visit 2/Candidacy
3. Benchmark 3/Candidacy Visit 3/Initial Accreditation

The first portion of each benchmark consists of specific accreditation standards that must be approved by the Board of Accreditation (BOA) for the program to proceed to the next benchmark, and the second portion consists of standards that must be addressed in developmental form to prepare the program for the next benchmark. The approval and developmental standards applicable to each benchmark are delineated in the Candidacy Benchmark Grid.

Program development is guided by three (3) visits from current or recent former BOA members. During each candidacy visit, the candidacy visitor identifies any areas of concern related to the program's response to approval standards and provides consultation on the program's response to developmental standards. Visitors do not have the authority to determine compliance and will not recommend a decision to the program nor BOA. Following each visit, BOA readers will review the program's benchmark documents, the *Candidacy Visit Report*, and the *Program Response to the Candidacy Visit Report* to make a decision.

Programs usually complete the candidacy benchmarking process in 3-4 years. The steps in the candidacy process are as follows:

Benchmark 1

1. Program completes and submits the *Candidacy Eligibility Application* and pays the *Candidacy Eligibility Fee.*
2. Program completes and submits the *Benchmark 1* document along with the *Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist* to CSWE Accreditation Staff at least six (6) months in advance of the Benchmark 1 staff approval deadline for the agenda they are seeking.
3. CSWE Accreditation Staff provide iterative feedback and work with the program to finalize the *Benchmark 1* document.
4. CSWE Accreditation Staff approve the *Benchmark 1* document, formally issuing *Pre-candidacy* status to the program and assigning a CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

5. Program finalizes and submits the *Benchmark 1* document to the candidacy visitor and CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
6. Program and candidacy visitor prepare logistics and accommodations for the visit.
7. Program ensures all *Benchmark 1*-related fees are paid.
8. Program hosts the candidacy visit.
9. Visitor prepares and submits the *Candidacy Visit Report.*
10. Program crafts a formal written response to the *Candidacy Visit Report.*
11. BOA reviews the *Benchmark 1* document*, Candidacy Visit Report*, and *Program Response* to issue a Benchmark 1 decision.

Benchmark 2

1. Program finalizes and submits the *Benchmark 2* document to the candidacy visitor and CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
2. Program and candidacy visitor prepare logistics and accommodations for the visit.
3. Program ensures all Benchmark 2-related fees are paid.
4. Program hosts the candidacy visit.
5. Visitor prepares and submits the *Candidacy Visit Report.*
6. Program crafts a formal written response to the *Candidacy Visit Report*.
7. BOA reviews the *Benchmark 2* document*, Candidacy Visit Report*, and *Program Response* to issue a Benchmark 2 decision.

Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation

1. Program completes and submits the *Initial Accreditation Eligibility Application.*
2. Program finalizes and submits the *Benchmark 3* document/*Initial Accreditation Self-study* to the candidacy visitor and CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
3. Program and candidacy visitor prepare logistics and accommodations for the visit.
4. Program ensures all Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation-related fees are paid.
5. Program hosts the candidacy visit.
6. Visitor prepares and submits the *Candidacy Visit Report.*
7. Program crafts a formal written response to the *Candidacy Visit Report*.
8. BOA reviews the *Benchmark 3* document/*Initial Accreditation Self-study, Candidacy visit Report*, and *Program Response* to issue an Initial Accreditation decision.

Resources, candidacy benchmark grids, timetables, forms, samples, and accreditation fees associated with each candidacy benchmark, are located on the CSWE website:

- 2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit
- 2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Toolkit

Student Recruitment, Advertising, & Marketing

In the developmental, application, pre-candidacy, and candidacy stages, each program has autonomy to select their recruitment, advertising, and marketing strategies. Programs are encouraged to be honest with their students and stakeholders about the candidacy process,

including retroactive accreditation, and the risks involved. Ultimately, these communications are within the program's discretion. CSWE does not vet nor approve such communications.

Prior to receiving pre-candidacy status, the program does not have a status with CSWE-BOA and is not published in the CSWE Program Directory. Once granted pre-candidacy status, programs are published in the CSWE Program Directory and optional language for recruitment, advertising, and marketing materials is provided per policy *1.6 Accreditation Status Statements for Websites & Materials*.

Student Admission Timing

If the program is planning to admit students in the academic year in which candidacy is granted, the program may consider admitting part-time students in year 1, full-time students in year 2, and advanced standing students (for master's programs) in year 3, with initial accreditation planned at the end of year 3. This admission plan is not required.

Alternatively, programs may plan to admit students the fall after candidacy is granted. In this case, the program may consider admitting part-time and full-time students in year 2, and advanced standing students (for master's programs) in year 3, with initial accreditation planned at the end of year 3.

At Benchmark 1, it is not required for the program to have students enrolled nor be fully operational. At Benchmark 2, students must be enrolled in the program and the program must be fully operational.

If students graduate from a candidate program before it achieves initial accreditation, the degrees are not yet considered earned from a CSWE-accredited social work program, until if/when initial accreditation is granted. This may impact students' licensing, doctoral education enrollment, and job prospects. It is advisable to research and discuss conditional, limited, or provisional licenses with the licensing boards in the state(s) students may seek licensure. It may also be helpful to research job requirements.

Declaration of All Program Options

All program options, as defined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*, must be reflected in the *Benchmark 1* document for staff approval. Once a program is issued *Pre-candidacy* status, additional program options cannot be added until the program achieves *Initial Accreditation*.

Generalist and Specialized Curricula for Master's Programs

Candidate programs must develop and offer generalist and specialized curricula for the master's programs. Master's programs cannot offer specialized curricula/an advanced standing only program.

5.2 Retroactive Accredited Status

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.

Review policy *1.6 Accreditation Status Statements for Websites & Materials* for language programs may use to explain retroactive accredited status.

5.3 Assignment to a BOA Meeting Agenda

A maximum of ten (10) programs are reviewed for a *Candidacy* decision at each Board of Accreditation (BOA) meeting. To be assigned to a BOA meeting agenda, programs must complete the following steps in partnership with CSWE Accreditation Staff:

- Receive approval of their *Candidacy Eligibility Application*
- Received approval of their *Benchmark 1* document from CSWE Staff
- Be issued *Pre-candidacy* status

Once ten (10) *Pre-candidate* programs are assigned to a BOA meeting agenda, the subsequent programs will automatically be assigned to the next available BOA meeting agenda.

Once assigned, the program remains on the same February, June, or October BOA meeting agenda as it progresses through the candidacy process unless a permanent adjustment is requested per policy *4.6 Requesting an Extension or Timetable Change* or two (2) deferrals are issued at any BOA decision-making stage. Learn more about deferrals in policies *5.12 BOA Benchmark 1 Decisions*, *5.13 BOA Benchmark 2 Decisions*, and *5.14 BOA Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation Decisions*.

5.4 Candidacy Timetable

Once assigned to a Board of Accreditation (BOA) meeting agenda and granted pre-candidacy status, programs receive a copy of their candidacy timetable.

The candidacy process is program-driven, and reminders/prompts are not provided. Therefore, programs may download a copy of their candidacy timetable, a tool to assist your program in tracking due dates, accreditation fees, materials, activities, and formatting/submission requirements for each step of the candidacy process.

Timetables are based on the BOA's meeting schedule. The accrediting body meets three times annually: February, June, and October.

To download a copy of the correct timetable, programs must identify their next candidacy decision date. This date can be identified in the following ways:

1. Each *Pre-candidate* program receives a copy of their candidacy timetable once assigned to a BOA meeting agenda.
2. Listed in the CSWE Program Directory in the "Next Accreditation Review" date field.
3. Stated in the program's last decision letter issued by the BOA.
4. Primary contacts may contact the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist to verify. Per policy *4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications*, the program's primary contact is selected by each program and identified in the CSWE Program Directory. Primary contacts may email accreditation@cswe.org to request contact information for their program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

After identifying the program's next candidacy decision date, download a pre-filled timetable or complete a blank timetable . To complete a blank timetable, select the corresponding February, June, or October timetable. Navigate to the final row of the timetable and insert the next candidacy decision date in the middle column of the row titled "BOA Review for Candidacy, 2nd Year of Candidacy, or Initial Accreditation." This is the date when the BOA will decide whether the program is approved to move forward based on compliance with the accreditation standards and the program should progress to the next accreditation review. From the final row, work backwards to the top of the document filling in the relevant year for each step of the candidacy process.

Request a pre-filled timetable or direct questions to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

5.5 Candidacy & Initial Accreditation Eligibility Applications

Prior to Benchmark 1

The *Candidacy Eligibility Application* requires social work programs and their host institutions to meet specific standards and craft a letter of institutional intent to be eligible to seek accreditation. The application evaluates the institution's ability to establish, support, and sustain an accredited social work program.

Applications are reviewed by CSWE Accreditation Staff, who may approve the application, request the program revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information, or refer the application to the Board of Accreditation (BOA) for review. CSWE reserves the right to decline consideration of any application that does not meet the eligibility criteria.

Each BOA agenda has the potential for 10 new applicant programs which is determined by the date the program's *Benchmark 1* is approved by CSWE Staff.

February Agenda: The first 10 *Benchmark 1*'s approved by June 1, are placed on February BOA Agenda of the next year.

June Agenda: The first 10 *Benchmark 1*'s approved by September 1, are placed on June BOA Agenda of the next year.

October Agenda: The first 10 *Benchmark 1*'s approved by December 1, are placed on October BOA Agenda of the next year.

Prior to Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation

The *Initial Accreditation Eligibility Application* requires social work programs and their host institutions to continue meeting specific standards to be eligible to seek accreditation. The application evaluates the institution's ability to support and sustain an accredited social work program.

Applications are reviewed by CSWE Accreditation Staff, who may approve the application, request the program revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information, or refer the application to the BOA for review. CSWE reserves the right to decline consideration of any application that does not meet the eligibility criteria.

If a program submits an eligibility application and is approved for candidacy eligibility, the program must submit Benchmark 1 to the Accreditation Services Manager within one (1) year to maintain eligibility. If a program fails to submit Benchmark 1 within one (1) year or decides not to move forward with the candidacy process, the program forfeits its fees. Refer to policy *4.2 Accreditation Fees* for more information.

5.6 Benchmark Documents & Initial Accreditation Self-study

Purpose of the Benchmark Documents & Initial Accreditation Self-study

The benchmark process requires programs to self-examine and conduct a study of how the program is developing to comply with the accreditation standards over multiple years. The resulting *Initial Accreditation Self-Study* compiles narrative and supporting documentation to evidence compliance.

Initial accreditation self-studies are typically written by teams of program faculty and staff, with the self-examination process beginning approximately 1-year prior to the submission of each benchmark.

Benchmark documents and the initial accreditation self-study are composed of three (3) volumes:

1. **Volume 1:** Narrative response and all relevant supporting documentation for compliance with all accreditation standards. Templates are required for this volume.
2. **Volume 2:** Syllabi for all required courses featured on each curriculum matrix to provide evidence that competency-based course content meets accreditation standards.
3. **Volume 3:** Student Handbook and Field Education Manual (applicable to baccalaureate and master's programs) only. No additional materials shall be submitted in this volume.

5.7 Staff Approval of Benchmark 1 Document & Obtaining Pre-candidacy Status

After CSWE Accreditation Staff approve the *Candidacy Eligibility Application*, the program completes and submits its *Benchmark 1* document for CSWE Accreditation Staff review, feedback, and approval along with the *Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist*. The *Benchmark 1* document must include volumes 1-3 to be reviewed. Volume 1 must include finalized content for all approval standards, and draft content for all developmental standards. Absence of compliance narratives, blank forms, or sections will result a request for revision and resubmission. The approval and developmental standards applicable to each benchmark are delineated in the Candidacy Benchmark Grid.

- 2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit
- 2025 Practice Doctorate Accreditation Toolkit

CSWE Accreditation Staff may approve the *Benchmark 1* document or request the program revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information and/or developmental content. Several rounds of feedback may be provided to ensure to the program is prepared to proceed with the candidacy process.

Once the program's *Benchmark 1* document is approved by CSWE Accreditation Staff, the program is issued *Pre-candidacy* status, assigned to a Board of Accreditation (BOA) meeting agenda, and assigned a CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Each BOA agenda has the potential for 10 new applicant programs which is determined by the date the program's *Benchmark 1* is approved by CSWE Staff.

February Agenda: The first 10 *Benchmark 1*'s approved by June 1, are placed on February BOA Agenda of the next year. Submissions of Benchmark 1 (i.e., three volumes) and the Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist are due no later than December 1, six (6) months prior to the June 1 staff approval deadline.

June Agenda: The first 10 *Benchmark 1*'s approved by September 1, are placed on June BOA Agenda of the next year. Submissions of Benchmark 1 (i.e., three volumes) and the Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist are due no later than March 1, six (6) months prior to the September 1 staff approval deadline.

October Agenda: The first 10 *Benchmark 1*'s approved by December 1, are placed on October BOA Agenda of the next year. Submissions of Benchmark 1 (i.e., three volumes) and the Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist are due no later than June 1, six (6) months prior to the December 1 staff approval deadline.

Program Submits Benchmark 1 & Benchmark 1 Writing Checklist	Staff Approval Deadline	Program Submits Final/Clean Benchmark 1 to Visitor & CSWE Accreditation Specialist	Candidacy Visit 1	BOA Meeting Agenda
No later than December 1	June 1	August 1	September 1 - November 15	February
No later than March 1	September 1	November 1	December 1 - February 28/29	June
No later than June 1	December 1	February 1	March 1 - May 15	October

5.8 Final Benchmark 1, 2, & 3 Documents/Initial Accreditation Self-study

Benchmark 1

After the program obtains *Pre-candidacy* status, the program finalizes the approved *Benchmark 1* document and prepares for *Candidacy Visit 1*.

For pre-candidate programs only: Following the Benchmark 1 staff approval process, the program must submit a clean version of the Benchmark 1 document, removing all comments, highlights, and tracked changes.

The final *Benchmark 1* document (Volumes 1, 2, and 3) is emailed to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and assigned Board of Accreditation (BOA) visitor a minimum of 30-days in advance of the visit window.

Benchmark 2

After the program obtains *Candidacy* status, the program finalizes its *Benchmark 2* document and prepares for *Candidacy Visit 2*.

The final *Benchmark 2* document (Volumes 1, 2, and 3) is emailed to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and assigned candidacy visitor a minimum of 30-days in advance of the visit window.

Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation

After the program obtains a *Second Year of Candidacy* status, the program finalizes its *Benchmark 3 document/Initial Accreditation Self-study* and prepares for *Candidacy Visit 3*.

The final *Benchmark 3* document/*Initial Accreditation Self-study* (Volumes 1, 2, and 3) is emailed to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and assigned candidacy visitor a minimum of 30-days in advance of the visit window.

5.9 Candidacy Visits 1, 2, & 3

Purpose

The purpose of candidacy visits is to meet with a current or recent former BOA member to assist in the program's development and success throughout the candidacy process. The visitor's primary task is to discuss the program's benchmark document. For the approval standards, the visitor will identify areas of strength and concern. The visitor also reviews the developmental standards and identifies areas of further development that the program can use in developing the next benchmark.

Candidacy Visitor Eligibility

Candidacy visits are conducted by current or recent former members of the CSWE-BOA. Members who rotate off the BOA may conduct visits for up to 4-years after rotating off. BOA members have a minimum of 5-years of teaching experience in CSWE-accredited or candidate social work programs and have completed at least three (3) site visits prior to serving on the BOA.

Candidacy Visit Assignments

Overview

Candidacy visits are scheduled based on the BOA meeting agenda for which a program will be reviewed for a decision. The visit assignment and visit occur in the months prior to this BOA meeting:

BOA Agenda for a Decision	Assignment Occurs	Visit Occurs
February	No later than July 1	September 1 - November 15
June	No later than October 1	December 1 - February 28/29
October	No later than January 1	March 1 - May 15

Selecting the Candidacy Visitor

The CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager selects a current or recent former member of the CSWE-BOA to conduct each visit based on their availability and conflicts of interest. Candidacy visitors and programs are asked to identify any conflicts of interest per policy *3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers*. Programs may only deny specific visitors on the basis of a conflict of interest and are unable to deny a visitor based on visitor experience at the program level; visitor area of expertise; institutional or programmatic religious affiliation, size, or administrative structure; program option(s) or delivery method(s); or other similar criteria. Due to ethical and administrative constraints, CSWE will not honor special requests with respect to preferences or choice related to the assignment of visitor(s).

Notification

Once visit assignments are finalized, the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager emails the assignments to the institution's president/chancellor, the primary contact for the program, the candidacy visitor, and the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Candidacy Visit Planning

Initial Contact, Setting a Date, and Individual Accommodations

Within 2-weeks of the candidacy visit assignment email notification, the program's primary contact is responsible for initiating contact with the visitor to begin planning the visit, including:

- selecting a date and completing the Candidacy Visit Date Log
- travel plans (if applicable)
- initial schedule setting
- inquire about any accommodations the visitor may need during travel or the visit (e.g., mobility, communication)

If the program's primary contact has not made contact with the visitor by this time, the visitor is asked to notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager for assistance.

Length of Visit

Most in-person candidacy visits are conducted in 1-day. If conducted virtually, visits are permitted to take place over one day or two-half days. An extra half day may be necessary for any visit type, depending on the complexity of the program, and may be arranged between the program and the visitor. The CSWE-BOA also reserves the right to extend visits, as needed.

Visit Format

Expectations are consistent for both in-person and virtual visit formats.

In-Person Programs
(as defined in policy 4.9 Program Changes & Program Options)

If the program has at least one (1) program option that is considered in-person, candidacy visits are to be conducted in-person at *Benchmark 1* and at *Initial Accreditation*. *Benchmark 2* visits are conducted online. The program may request an in-person *Benchmark 2* visit by emailing the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager within 30-days of receiving their decision letter granting candidacy status.

Online-Only Programs
(as defined in policy 4.9 Program Changes & Program Options)

All visits for online-only programs are conducted online. The program may request their next visit be in-person by emailing the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager within 30-days of receiving the email from CSWE granting pre-candidacy, candidacy, or a 2nd year of candidacy status.

Number of Visitors

One (1) candidacy visitor is assigned to visit each program. However, visits may also include an additional candidacy visitor for training and quality assurance purposes. This visitor will attend virtually and will not be an extra cost to the program.

Communication Guidelines

Advanced preparation for candidacy visits is essential and involves close collaboration among CSWE Accreditation Staff, candidacy visitors, and programs. All planning and communication regarding the candidacy visit occur through the program's primary contact on record with CSWE.

Candidacy visitors are volunteers authorized by the Board of Accreditation to collect information from the program and their stakeholders and provide consultation on accreditation standards. Stakeholders desiring to meet with candidacy visitors are to request a meeting through the program's primary contact to arrange time on the visit schedule, if not previously scheduled. It is inappropriate for stakeholders to provide visitors with documents or to call/email them before, during, or after the visit. Faculty members, students, or other stakeholders are not to communicate with the visitor through written or verbal means before the visitor's arrival nor during the visit until the allotted time in the visit schedule, when questions and discussion occur in a group setting. Visitors are not authorized to collect documentation from program stakeholders, and visitors are instructed to discuss any such incidents with the program's primary contact.

Content Preparation

No less than 30-days before the visit window, the program emails the program's benchmark document (all 3 volumes) to the visitor for their review and the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

The candidacy visitor reviews the program's benchmark documents prior to the visit and notes any strengths or concerns. The content of the discussion during stakeholder meetings in the visit is determined by the visitor's review of the program documents. The program should not expect to receive a list of standards to be discussed during the visit. Visitors may not request a written program response in advance of the visit. Visitors must use the required *Candidacy Visit Report* template after the visit concludes.

Candidacy Visit Schedule

No less than 1-week prior to the visit, the program's primary contact and visitor jointly finalize the visit schedule.

The schedule must include:

- Specific days and times, including time zones
- Locations and/or meeting links
- Breaks
- Mealtimes
- Independent workspace for the visitor
- Exit interview with the program director and primary contact (if different)
- With whom the visitors will meet:
    - Required:
        - President/Chancellor (or Designee)
        - Primary Contact
        - Program Director (if different than primary contact)
        - Field Education Director
        - Faculty
        - Students (unless the program does not have students at *Benchmark 1*)
    - Optional:
        - Field Instructors
        - Community Advisory Board (if applicable)
        - Deans or other program administrators
        - Other stakeholders specific to the program's context

Sample visit schedules are located on the candidacy process webpage.

Programs with More Than One Program Option

All full-time faculty responsible for program delivery are to be included in the visit, when possible, inclusive of all program options. Part-time faculty and staff may be included at the program's discretion. When programs have more than one (1) program option, it is at the discretion of the program to include other representatives/stakeholders from each program option in the candidacy visit. These stakeholders can be included in a face-to-face capacity (for in-person visits) or virtually, but visitors are not expected to visit all physical program options.

Social Events

Required social events or mandatory meals with program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

In-Person Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning

No less than 30-days before the visit, the program's primary contact:

- Confirms visit arrangements such as travel plans, hotel accommodations, and workspace requirements in the hotel and on campus with the visitor.
- Ensures the date of the visit is recorded in the Candidacy Visit Date Log.
- Agrees on a contingency plan with the visitor to be used in case the original visit plan needs to change due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances outside of one or both parties' control. This plan is to honor the work and time devoted to planning the visit and ensure the integrity of the visit is upheld within the candidacy process.

Please refer the Candidacy Visit Emergencies section for a list of options to consider.

The program confirms all arrangements with the visitor via email and the primary contact is copied on all communications, if another program representative is coordinating logistics. Programs are to accommodate visitor travel the day before and the day after the visit (unless earlier departure is requested by the visitor after the visit concludes). Depending on the location of the program, an extra travel day may be a consideration and discussion with the visitor due to travel time and time-zone adjustment.

Air Travel

Programs are required to provide prepaid coach fare airline tickets to visitors and are to consult with the visitor about the most convenient airport, airline carrier, and flight times. Purchasing refundable tickets and/or travel insurance is highly recommended, as unforeseen circumstances such as illness, weather, etc. may occur. The program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

Hotel

Visitors are to be housed in hotels, not in dormitories or other campus housing. Programs are required to coordinate hotel accommodations and arrange for the hotel to bill the program for visitor expenses at the hotel, except for personal incidentals. Hotel accommodations are required to include a workspace. Purchasing refundable rooms is highly recommended, as unforeseen circumstances such as illness, weather, etc. may occur. The program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

Ground Transportation

Programs are required to provide ground transportation for the visitor, including to and from the airport, to and from the hotel to campus, and any other required travel for the visit. Programs provide transportation in the form of a car, shuttle, taxi, rideshare, or rental car.

Visitors may choose to drive to the visit using a rental car, and the program is to reimburse or cover costs upfront. Visitors may also choose to drive their own personal vehicle, and the program is to reimburse mileage per the program's policies.

Ground transportation may be out-of-pocket expenses for the visitor, however programs must make every effort to cover such costs upfront, if possible. Programs are to ensure the visitor is comfortable with paying such expenses out-of-pocket prior to finalizing plans. Programs must inform the visitors how reimbursement for these expenses will be managed if the visitor agrees to pay out-of-pocket.

Meals

Meals not taken at the hotel or during the visit are likely to be out-of-pocket expenses for the visitors. Programs must inform the visitors how reimbursement for these expenses will be managed if the visitor agrees to pay out-of-pocket.

Review the Payment of Expenses section below for more information.

Virtual Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning

No less than 30-days before the visit, the program's primary contact:

- Confirms visit arrangements.
- Ensures the date of the visit is recorded in the Candidacy Visit Date Log.
- Agrees on a contingency plan with the visitor to be used in case the original visit plan needs to change due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances outside of one or both parties' control. This plan is to honor the work and time devoted to planning the visit and ensure the integrity of the visit is upheld within the candidacy process.
  Please refer the Site Visit Emergencies section for a list of options to consider.

The program confirms all arrangements with the visitor via email and the primary contact is copied on all communications, if another program representative is coordinating logistics. Depending on the location of the program, conducting the visit over two half-days may be a consideration and discussion with the visitor due to time-zone adjustment.

Virtual Visit Requirements

- The virtual visit must occur via an engaged and interactive videoconferencing format. Videoconferencing technology must allow real-time visual and audio participation by multiple participants simultaneously.

- The program selects the platform and serves as the coordinator of all meetings and ensures all stakeholders are included in the visit.

- The program's primary contact hosts the videoconference throughout the day and introduces the visitor to each stakeholder at the start of each meeting.

- The program assigns the visitor as a "co-host" to ensure meeting continuity, as the "host" may not attend all meetings on the agenda.

- The program and visitor test the technology prior to the meeting day.

The Candidacy Visit

Visit Privacy

Recording the visit is not allowed by either party. This also prohibits the use of artificial intelligence (AI) software, review *policy 1.9 Use of Artificial Intelligence* for more information. The meetings must be conducted in private meeting rooms. Select a distraction-free and low-noise area to participate in the meetings.

Visitor Welcome

In-Person

During the first evening visitors generally work alone to prepare for the visit. Program directors may meet with visitors to extend a brief welcome, explain the itinerary, answer any questions, and outline arrangements to escort them to each meeting. Required social events or mandatory meals with the program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot not be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

Virtual

Program directors may meet with visitors to extend a brief welcome, explain the itinerary, answer any questions, and outline the arrangements to accompany them to each meeting. Required social events with the program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot not be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

Meeting with the Institutional Administrators

The BOA expects the visit to begin with the institution's president/chancellor and any other institutional administrators at the program's discretion. The primary contact/program director introduce the visitor to the institutional administrator and after introductions, permit the visitor to meet alone with the president/chancellor or their designee. The meeting is typically about 30-minutes.

The purpose of this meeting is to explain the accreditation process, learn about the role and place of the program within the institution's system, answer any questions the administrator may have, and to collect any information related to the candidacy review. When it is not possible to meet

with the institution's president/chancellor, it is acceptable that the visitor meets with a designee as determined by the institution. CSWE trusts programs to make this decision and does not approve of the designee prior to the visit.

Meetings with the Social Work Program and Stakeholders

The visitor will also meet with the program director, the field education director, faculty members, students, and any other individuals whose presence may be relevant (e.g., field instructors, librarian, community advisory boards, alumni, staff). The purpose of these meetings is for the visitor and program to discuss stakeholder experiences of the program, as well as any strengths, concerns, and questions from the review of the program's document. This time is also used to consult regarding future program development as well as to answer any questions the stakeholders may have.

Should key personnel/an administrator become unable to attend the scheduled visit meeting due to emergency or extenuating circumstances, the program may select a proxy in their absence. Alternatively, the program may elect to host delayed virtual meetings with the absent key personnel/an administrator within 1 week of the scheduled visit date.

Faculty: All full-time faculty responsible for program delivery are to be included in the visit, when possible, inclusive of all program options. Part-time faculty and staff may be included at the program's discretion unless otherwise requested by the BOA. The primary contact/program director/program representatives do not attend meetings with the program faculty; however, program representatives may propose being present based on their unique context/culture.

Students: The primary contact/program director/program representatives do not attend the student meeting. However, program representatives may propose being present based on their unique context/culture. The BOA does not require or recommend dismissing classes during the visit. It is advised that the schedule be planned to permit participation by all constituents without disrupting the academic schedule.

Exit Interview

Visitors hold an exit interview with the primary contact and program director (if different) to convey the findings for inclusion in the visit report. The program will determine if additional stakeholders (e.g., administration, faculty) will be present. The program may ask questions, comment on the findings, or correct any inaccuracies.

Visitors may respond to questions, but do not make judgments of whether the program is in compliance with accreditation standards, as that decision rests with the BOA. Visitors remind programs that the findings, along with the *Program Response to the Candidacy Visit Report*, are reviewed by the BOA before making a decision about compliance and the BOA will notify them of its decision about program compliance and concerns.

Gifts

Visitors are unable to accept gifts.

Questions During the Visit

Questions related to accreditations standards or accreditation policies may be directed to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Questions regarding scheduling, transportation, accommodations, or reimbursement may be directed to the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager.

After the Candidacy Visit

After the conclusion of the visit, contact between the program and visitor ceases, with the exception of any travel or reimbursement inquiries. The visitor does not provide a copy of the *Candidacy Visit Report* to the program and the program does not provide a copy of its response to the visitor. If the program has additional questions or comments after the visit, the program contacts the appropriate CSWE Accreditation Staff member. Review the Candidacy Visit Report and Program Response to the Candidacy Visit 1, 2, 3 Reports policies for more information.

Payment of Expenses

If the visitor or program have any questions about payment of expenses for the visit, please contact the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager**.**

Visitor Responsibility

Visitors are not expected to provide the program with an IRS Form W-9, personal service agreements, or similar contracts requested by the program/institution, as they are not vendors or service providers. If this is requested by the program, the visitor is asked to contact the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager for support. Should a visitor choose to enter into a contract or similar agreement with the program, CSWE is not responsible for the content or the program's adherence to the agreement.

Within two (2) weeks of the conclusion of the visit, the visitor is expected to submit reimbursement documentation that aligns with the program's policies and procedures.

Program Responsibility

It is the program's responsibility to ensure all possible costs for the visitor are covered by the program prior to the visit, inclusive of travel days and the visit day(s). Visitors are volunteers, not contractors or employees of the program, institution, or CSWE. Therefore, visitors are not expected to provide the program with an IRS Form W-9, personal service agreements, or similar contracts requested by the program/institution, as they are not vendors or service providers. Programs are encouraged to use established vendors within their institution that can then bill the program. Another option is to provide the visitor with petty cash onsite for expenses. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the inability to proceed in the reaffirmation process.

Within 30-days of the visitor submitting reimbursement materials, the program will either have reimbursed the visitor for any out-of-pocket expenses or provide an update to the visitor on an estimated payment date.

Candidacy Visit Emergencies

CSWE recognizes that scheduled visits may need to end early, be delayed, moved virtually, or cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of relevant parties. Examples of these unforeseen circumstances include inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters, illness, or changes to visitor's or key personnel's schedules due to extenuating circumstance. Purchasing refundable tickets and/or travel insurance is highly recommended, as the program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

In these circumstances, CSWE must be consulted to determine the best course of action in an emergency before any changes to the date or the format of the visit are enacted, unless CSWE Staff are unavailable.

To inform CSWE Accreditation Staff of changes to a planned visit:

1. The party (visitor or program) must immediately notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager via email or telephone. If the Volunteer Manager is unavailable, the CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations or CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation may be contacted.
2. The party (visitor or program) will then notify the other party (visitor or program) via email and telephone.
3. The program, visitor, and CSWE Accreditation Staff must communicate to determine the best course of action. Due to complexity in scheduling visits, cancellations and delays will be avoided whenever possible, however the candidacy timetable may be impacted. Possible outcomes include but are not limited to:
    - Change the format of the visit to be virtual on the same day
    - Delay visit
    - Reschedule visit with same visitor for a later date
    - Reschedule visit with an alternate visitor for the original date
    - Reschedule visit with an alternate visitor for a later date

If CSWE is unavailable and/or the emergency occurs outside of business hours, the program/visitor may make an informed decision and report the course of action immediately to the CSWE Accreditation Staff. These occurrences will be handled on an individual basis. Examples of these emergencies include inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters. If necessary, visitors may book travel and accommodations and will be reimbursed by CSWE, and the program may be invoiced upon submission of details of extenuating circumstances and submission of receipts. Coach fare and basic accommodations are expected.

Volunteer Insurance Policy

CSWE holds a volunteer insurance policy that may be provided upon request.

5.10 Candidacy Visit 1, 2, & 3 Reports

Within 2-weeks of the conclusion of the candidacy visit, the candidacy visitor completes the *Candidacy Visit Report* to provide the BOA readers with a summary of the visitor's findings gathered from reviewing the benchmark document and discussions with program stakeholders regarding specific accreditation standards. Candidacy visit reports are reviewed by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, who may accept the report or request the visitor revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information.

The report is inclusive of the following requirements:

Report Formatting

- Submitted as a Microsoft Word Document
- Submitted as one single continuous document, not as multiple attachments
- All required fields are completed
- Formatting is consistent and easy to follow (e.g., fonts, spacing)
- For each concern, the report follows the format:
    - Insert full text of standard
    - (Optional) Summarized discussion and/or consultative advice provided to the program for context to the program, reader, and specialist
    - What the program provided. What was unclear, incomplete, inadequate, inconsistent, or inaccurate.
    - What the program is asked to do to address the concern.
- Written in third person without the use of first-person pronouns
- Written in complete sentences and in paragraph form, does not use bullet points or short-hand notes
- Does not include any supplemental materials provided by the program to the visitor (e.g. curriculum matrices)
- Ready for submission to the program's accreditation specialist, on or before the due date (2-weeks after the visit concluded)
- The candidacy schedule is included at the end of the report

Report Content

- The report is specific to the program and program level being visited
- The report is aligned with the relevant accreditation standards and related interpretations
- The report does not recommend a BOA decision
- The candidacy visit schedule is embedded at the end of the report
- **For Approval/Compliance Standards**
    - (Optional) The report includes a summary of the discussion and/or consultative advice provided during the visit for context to the program, reader, and specialist for each standard

    - The report includes objective concerns for approval/compliance standards that are actionable items requiring the program to formally respond and provide clarification to the BOA for decision-making
    - The report only includes language that is linked to an accreditation standard
    - The report specifies what the program provided, what the program did not provide, and what the program is asked to do to address the concern.
- **For Consultation on Approval/Compliance or Developmental Standards**
    - The visitor checks "yes" or "no" to verify whether they provided verbal consultation on approval/compliance and/or developmental standards
    - (Optional) The visitor provides a summary of their consultation, which may include overarching themes and/or specific standards, as applicable. This may also include information regarding stakeholder experiences or the visitor's experience in the program environment.

Should a visitor need time beyond 2-weeks to complete the visit report, the visitor must proactively communicate with the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist to inform of them of the delay and request an extension. The length of the extension is granted on a case-by-case basis, as CSWE recognizes that emergencies and unforeseen circumstances occur.

Visit Materials

The visitor deletes/destroys the program's documents upon confirmation of acceptance of the report by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Report Violations

Should the visitor fail to produce a report without communicating with the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist within 5-business days of the *Candidacy Visit Report* due date, or there are serious concerns with submitted report, the visitor will be contacted to discuss a remediation plan. The CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation and CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations have the right to remove BOA members, or post-BOA candidacy visitors, from service based on violations of visit conduct, integrity, or performance.

5.11 Program Response to the Candidacy Visit 1, 2, & 3 Reports

Once the *Candidacy Visit Report* is accepted by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, instructions are provided to the program to compose a *Program Response to the Candidacy Visit Report*, due within 2-weeks of receiving the report from the specialist.

The *Program Response* is the program's final opportunity to evidence complete and comprehensive compliance with the accreditation standards by submitting narrative responses and supporting documentation to respond to all standards discussed during the candidacy visit and identified in the *Candidacy Visit Report*. Programs must submit any materials provided to the Board of Accreditation visitor within their response. Programs do not refer to the benchmark

documents and must provide additional information to clarify the citations identified by the visitor.

In addition to documenting full evidence of compliance, the program may state whether it agrees or disagrees with candidacy visit findings and corrects any errors of fact. Disagreements with the *Candidacy Visit Report* must be stated clearly, and additional documentation provided as necessary.

5.12 BOA Benchmark 1 Decisions

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) reviews specific documents to make a benchmark 1 decision. The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted within the documents currently under review. **Do not refer to/cite previous submissions as the BOA will not have access to the prior draft benchmark documents or other accreditation materials.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Grant Candidacy Status	The BOA finds that the program is compliant with Benchmark 1 approval standards and grants the program candidacy status. The BOA decision letter instructs the program to prepare Benchmark 2 in preparation for its Candidacy Visit 2. Upon receipt of the visit assignment confirmation, the program contacts the visitor to arrange the visit.	1. Benchmark 1 Documents Volumes 1-3 2. *Candidacy Visit Report* 3. Program Response to the *Candidacy Visit Report*
Defer a Decision on Candidacy Status to the Next Meeting and Request Clarifying Information	The BOA decides to defer a decision when the program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision. A deferral is for one meeting only. Before the next BOA meeting the program is expected to submit the documentation or clarification necessary for the BOA to make a decision. In extenuating circumstances, and at the BOA's discretion,	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	the BOA may grant two deferrals at each benchmark.	
Deny Candidacy Status	A program is denied candidacy if the BOA finds the program's Benchmark 1 to be inadequate. The program has two options in response to the decision: (1) to accept the decision and apply for candidacy (2) to appeal by requesting a reconsideration of the decision. The program must notify their Accreditation Specialist in writing which option it intends to pursue. If the program accepts the decision, it may apply for candidacy no earlier than the second BOA meeting following the one at which the BOA made its decision.	

5.13 BOA Benchmark 2 Decisions

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) reviews specific documents to make a benchmark 2 decision. The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted within the documents currently under review. **Do not refer to/cite previous submissions as the BOA will not have access to the prior benchmark documents or other accreditation materials.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Grant a Second Year of Candidacy Status	The BOA finds that the program is compliant with Benchmark 2 approval standards and grants the program a second year of candidacy status. The BOA decision letter instructs the program to prepare Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation in preparation for its Candidacy Visit 3.	1. Benchmark 1 Documents Volumes 1-3 2. *Candidacy Visit Report* 3. Program Response to the *Candidacy Visit Report*

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	Upon receipt of the visit assignment confirmation, the program contacts the visitor to arrange the visit.	
Defer a Decision on a Second Year of Candidacy Status to the Next Meeting and Request Clarifying Information	The BOA decides to defer a decision when the program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision. A deferral is for one meeting only. Before the next BOA meeting the program is expected to submit the documentation or clarification necessary for the BOA to make a decision. In extenuating circumstances, and at the BOA's discretion, the BOA may grant two deferrals at each benchmark.	
Remove From Candidacy Status	A program is removed from candidacy status if the BOA finds the program's Benchmark 2 to be inadequate. The program has two options in response to the decision: (1) to accept the decision and apply for candidacy (2) to appeal by requesting a reconsideration of the decision. The program must notify their Accreditation Specialist in writing which option it intends to pursue. If the program accepts the decision, it may apply for candidacy no earlier than the second BOA meeting following the one at which the BOA made its decision.	

5.14 BOA Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation Decisions

Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation Decisions

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) reviews specific documents to make an initial accreditation decision. The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted within the documents currently under review. **Do not refer to/cite previous submissions as the BOA will not have access to the prior benchmark documents or other accreditation materials.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Types for Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation		Documents Reviewed
Grant Initial Accreditation for 8 Years	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards and grants accreditation for 8-years.	1. Benchmark 1 Documents Volumes 1-3 2. *Candidacy Visit Report* 3. Program Response to the *Candidacy Visit Report*
Grant Initial Accreditation for 8 Years with a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program's Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Grant Initial Accreditation for 8 Years with a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Defer a Decision on Initial Accreditation to the Next Meeting and Request Clarifying Information	The BOA decides to defer a decision when the program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision. A deferral is for one meeting only. Before the next BOA meeting the program is expected to submit the documentation or clarification necessary for the BOA to make a decision. In extenuating circumstances, and at the BOA's discretion, the BOA may grant two deferrals at each benchmark.	
Order an Additional Year of Candidacy	The BOA finds that the program's Initial Accreditation	

Decision Types for Benchmark 3/Initial Accreditation		Documents Reviewed
	Self-study needs further development and needs an additional year. The program revises its Initial Accreditation Self-study and prepares for an additional candidacy visit.	
Deny Initial Accreditation	The BOA determines that the program is noncompliant with one or accreditation standards. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance. The program has two options in response to the decision: (1) to accept the decision and apply for candidacy (2) to appeal by requesting a reconsideration of the decision. The program must notify their Accreditation Specialist in writing which option it intends to pursue. If the program accepts the decision, it may apply for candidacy no earlier than the second BOA meeting following the one at which the BOA made its decision.	

First Progress Report Decisions

The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted in documents currently under review. **Do not refer/cite to previous submission as the BOA will not have access.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Accept the First Progress Report	All of the areas of concern were addressed in the progress report, and no further action is required by the program.	1. BOA decision letter requesting the *1st Progress Report* 2. Program submitted *1st Progress Report*
Request a Second Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program's Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds that one or more of the concerns in the first progress report are still areas of concern and requests	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	a second progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Request a Second Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA	The BOA finds that one or more of the concerns in the first progress report are still areas of concern and requests a second progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	If the BOA believes that a program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards, the BOA can order a modified site visit to collect more information. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit.	
Accept the Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report	All areas of concern were addressed in the program response, and no further action by the program is required.	
Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status	The BOA finds the program noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and places it on conditional accredited status if it believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance. Conditional status is an adverse decision,	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a *Restoration Report*.	
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.	

Second Progress Report Decisions

The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted in documents currently under review. **Do not refer/cite to previous submission as the BOA will not have access.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Accept the Second Progress Report	All of the areas of concern were addressed in the progress report, and no further action is required by the program.	1. BOA decision letter requesting the *2nd Progress Report*

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	If the BOA believes that a program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards, the BOA can order a modified site visit to collect more information. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit.	2. Program submitted *2nd Progress Report*
Accept the Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report	All areas of concern were addressed in the program response, and no further action by the program is required.	
Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status	The BOA finds the program noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and places it on conditional accredited status if it believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a *Restoration Report*.	
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.	

Restoration Report Decisions

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Restore Accredited Status	The BOA review of the program's *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* finds that the program has taken corrective action and is compliant with all accreditation standards. No further action is required.	1. BOA decision letter placing the program on conditional accredited status and requesting the *Restoration Report* 2. Program submitted *Restoration Report* 3. BOA may access and review all previously submitted materials
Restore Accredited Status and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program's Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds that one or more areas of the *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* are areas of concern and requests a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Restore Accredited Status and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA	The BOA finds that one or more areas of the *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit*	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	Report are areas of concern and requests a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	A modified site visit is ordered when the *Restoration Report* fails to clarify program compliance. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit. After its review, the BOA either restores accredited status or initiates withdrawal of accredited status.	
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	program may apply for candidacy status.	

5.15 Withdrawal of Candidacy Status

If a program wishes to withdraw from candidacy at any time during the candidacy process (i.e., after pre-candidacy status is granted and prior to earning initial accreditation status), the program's primary contact completes the *Program Closure & Withdrawal of Candidacy Status Form* at least 90-days in advance of the program withdrawal date, if possible. The form is emailed to the program's assigned CSWE Accreditation Specialist notifying the Board of Accreditation (BOA) of its intention to withdraw from the candidacy process. If students are admitted and/or enrolled, the program is expected to make arrangements for the transfer of its students and works closely with the CSWE Accreditation Specialist during this planning process. If students have graduated, the program must send a letter informing them of the program's decision and implications for the graduates. Upon acceptance of the required form by the CSWE Accreditation Specialist, the date of the program's withdrawal from candidacy will be decided. A program is expected to remain in full compliance with all previously approved standards during the withdrawal process. If a program wishes to seek accreditation again after withdrawal, they must restart the candidacy process from the beginning and will be subject to all required fees.

6. Reaffirmation

6.1 Understanding Reaffirmation of Accreditation

After receiving initial accreditation, accredited status is reviewed for reaffirmation every 8-years. Institutions with accredited baccalaureate, master's, and practice doctorate social work programs, are accredited separately. Each program level must complete separate reaffirmation processes, including submitting separate documents.

Programs usually complete the reaffirmation process in 1-year. The steps in the reaffirmation process are as follows:

1. Program completes and submits a *Site Visit Planning Form.*
2. Program completes and submits the *Reaffirmation Eligibility Application.*
3. Program writes and submits the *Self-study.*
4. BOA issues the *Letter of Instruction (LOI)* to the site visitor.
5. Program and site visitor prepare logistics and accommodations for the visit.
6. Program ensures all reaffirmation-related fees are paid.
7. Program hosts the site visit.
8. Visitor prepares and submits the *Site Visit Report.*
9. Program crafts a formal written response to the *Site Visit Report*.
10. BOA reviews the *LOI, Site Visit Report*, and *Program Response* to issue a reaffirmation determination.

Resources, timetables, forms, samples, and accreditation fees associated with each reaffirmation, are located on the CSWE website.

6.2 Reaffirmation Timetable

The reaffirmation process is program-driven, and reminders/prompts are not provided. Therefore, programs may download a copy of their reaffirmation timetable, a tool to assist your program in tracking due dates, accreditation fees, materials, activities, and formatting/submission requirements for each step of the reaffirmation process.

Timetables are based on the Board of Accreditation's (BOA) meeting schedule. The accrediting body meets three times annually: February, June, and October.

To select the correct timetable, programs must identify their next reaffirmation date. This date can be identified in the following ways:

1. Listed in the CSWE Program Directory in the "Next Accreditation Review" date field.
2. Stated in the program's last decision letter issued by the BOA.
   Primary contacts may contact the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist to verify. Per policy *4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications*, the program's primary contact is selected by each program and identified in the CSWE Program

Directory. Primary contacts may email accreditation@cswe.org to request contact information for their program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

After identifying the program's next reaffirmation date, download a pre-filled timetable or complete a blank timetable. To complete a blank timetable, select the corresponding February, June, or October timetable. Navigate to the final row of the timetable and insert the reaffirmation date in the middle column of the row titled "BOA Review for Reaffirmation Determination." This is the date when the BOA will decide whether the program is compliant with the accreditation standards and whether accreditation should be reaffirmed. From the final row, work backwards to the top of the document filling in the relevant year for each step of the reaffirmation process.

Request a pre-filled timetable or direct questions to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

6.3 Reaffirmation Eligibility Application

The *Reaffirmation Eligibility Application* requires social work programs and their host institutions to meet specific standards to be eligible for reaffirmation of accreditation. The application evaluates the institution's ability to support and sustain an accredited social work program.

Applications are reviewed by CSWE Accreditation Staff, who may approve the application, request the program revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information, or refer the application to the Board of Accreditation for review. CSWE reserves the right to decline consideration of any application that does not meet the eligibility criteria.

6.4 Self-study

Purpose of the Self-study

The *Self-study* process requires programs to self-examine and conduct a study of how the program complies with the accreditation standards. The resulting self-study document compiles narrative and supporting documentation to evidence compliance.

Self-studies are typically written by teams of program faculty and staff, with the self-examination process beginning approximately 1-year prior to the submission of the self-study.

The self-study is composed of three (3) volumes:

4. **Volume 1:** Narrative response and all relevant supporting documentation for compliance with all accreditation standards. Templates are available for this volume.
5. **Volume 2:** Syllabi for all required courses featured on each curriculum matrix to provide evidence that competency-based course content meets accreditation standards.
6. **Volume 3:** Student Handbook and Field Education Manual (applicable to baccalaureate and master's programs) only. No additional materials shall be submitted in this volume.

6.5 Letter of Instruction (LOI)

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) reviews the program's self-study before the site visit and issues a *Letter of Instruction* (LOI) to the site visitor. The program's primary contact also receives a copy of the LOI, which specifies general and specific accreditation standards that the visitor must gather and summarize information from the program via discussion with program stakeholders. Therefore, the site visit is guided by the BOA's preliminary review of the self-study and clarifying information is requested.

The BOA takes one of the following actions after reviewing the program's self-study:

Types of LOIs
Issue a *Letter of Instruction* with general questions only.
Issue a *Letter of Instruction* with general and specific questions.

A BOA-issued LOI and self-study volumes 1-3 are sent to the site visitor and program's primary contact 30-days following the BOA meeting at which the LOI is issued.

6.6 Site Visit

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Overview of the Site Visit

Site visits are an integral step of the reaffirmation process. During the site visit, programs host a site visitor and clarify outstanding questions from the CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA). Site visitors operate under the authority of the CSWE-BOA and visit accredited social work programs

to gather information related to the accreditation standards based on questions provided by the BOA.

Prior to the site visit, the BOA reviews the program's self-study and sends a Letter of Instruction (LOI) to the site visitor specifying the accreditation standard(s) the visitor will discuss with the program. This ensures the visit is focused and guided by the initial BOA review and subsequent questions.

Following the visit, site visitors submit a comprehensive, objective, and thorough report of their findings, to which the program provides a response. The LOI, *Site Visit Report*, and *Program Response to the Site Visit Report* inform the BOA's final reaffirmation decision.

Site Visitor Appointment

Site Visitor Eligibility

To apply, an applicant must:

- be a current or former full- or part-time social work faculty member at a CSWE-BOA accredited or candidate social work program, or a new applicant practice doctorate program, so long as the individual holds an active CSWE membership either individual or program.
- have continued engagement in teaching and learning at a CSWE-accredited or candidate program
- be an active CSWE member (included with program membership);
- possess at least 3-years of teaching experience in a CSWE-accredited social work program; and
- be willing to conduct at minimum one (1) site visit every two (2) academic years.

Application

Eligible applicants interested in becoming a certified site visitor must complete the site visitor application during the application window.

Each year, a call for volunteers is announced by CSWE and applications open in April for approximately 1-month.

Within the application, individuals will:

- respond to a brief set of questions (including a statement of interest);
- upload their CV; and
- upload a letter of support from the program's chief administrator (e.g., dean, chair) documenting support of the time necessary to devote to site visitor trainings and commitments
    - If an individual completing the application is the program's chief administrator, a letter of support must be provided from an institutional administrator (e.g., provost).

- The letter demonstrates the program's support for the individual applying, especially for the time commitment needed for site visitor training, preparing for visits, and conducting visits.

Application Review and Selection

CSWE Accreditation Staff evaluate applications based on applicant qualifications and to ensure a diverse and well-rounded group of volunteers, considering, but not limited to the following: number of visits in the upcoming reaffirmation cycle(s), geographic diversity, institutional auspice (e.g., minority-serving institution, research/teaching focus), social work program options, size, program foci, and CSWE's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy Statement.

Appointment

Site visitors are appointed to a 3-year term of service, with the option to renew their appointment at the expiration of the term.

Site visitors are expected to conduct at minimum one (1) site visit every two (2) academic years, however, many site visitors conduct 1-2 visits per year based on need and availability.

A site visitor may be appointed if they plan to retire within their term of service, as long as the applicant meets eligibility requirements at the time of application.

Training

Once appointed, site visitors are required to participate in site visitor training before being certified. Periodic training may be required of site visitors to remain current on the accreditation standards, BOA interpretations, and/or site visit operations.

If a site visitor has not visited a program for 2-years, the visitor will need to be retrained before being assigned a visit.

Recognition

Certified site visitors receive a certificate after completion of training. Site visitors also receive letters of recognition each year they conduct a visit and at the conclusion of service.

Conclusion of Service

Planned Conclusion

A certified site visitor's service ends at the conclusion of their appointment term (3-years), unless the individuals reapply for another 3-year term. For example, if a site visitor is appointed July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027, and would like to continue their service, they must reapply when the application window opens in spring 2027.

If a site visitor would like to take a break from volunteering as a site visitor at the completion of their appointment term, the site visitor is able to reapply at the next available application cycle.

A site visitor who is no longer continually engaged in teaching and learning at a CSWE-accredited or candidate program since their term ended, does not meet the eligibility criteria to be a certified site visitor.

Unplanned Conclusion

When a site visitor chooses to end their service before the completion of their appointment term, the volunteer must inform the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager. The individual can reapply when the next application cycle opens if desired.

The CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation and CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations have the right to remove site visitors from service based on violations of site visit conduct, integrity, or performance.

Site Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Expectations

Site visitors operate under the authority of the CSWE-BOA and are required to serve under a code of conduct that includes ethical and behavioral expectations. Conversations and meetings that take place during the site visit must be pertinent to the general questions and specific standards cited by the BOA in the LOI and must not deviate from these areas. The role of the site visitor is an objective gatherer of information, and the site visitor must stay within the boundaries of this role. Site visitors do not provide developmental guidance, feedback, nor direction and cannot determine compliance with the accreditation standards. Compliance judgments and decision-making are solely within the authority and jurisdiction of the BOA.

Site Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines

Upon accepting the site visitor term of service each site visitor is required to attest to and abide by *Site Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines.* These criteria are intended to provide guidelines that bring about credibility and objectivity in accreditation processes and CSWE-BOA actions. Site visitors are required to affirm the *Site Visitor's Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines* to ensure duties are carried out confidentially, fairly, impartially, and responsibly by avoiding actual or apparent conflicts of interest and other improprieties. Adherence to these guidelines is essential to maintaining and preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the accreditation process.

When reviewing site visit assignments good and careful judgment must prevail after examining the assignment for potential conflicts of interest per policy 3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers. Possible conflicts and other ethical issues are not always clear-cut or easy to define. As such, the site visitor is to avoid assignments that would provoke questions about objectivity and integrity. These criteria are intended to provide guidelines that bring about credibility and objectivity in BOA actions.

Site visitors are reminded that individual and collective liability is possible if CSWE-BOA, or representing entities, violate its own operating principles.

Pledge:

- I will only accept visit assignments for which I have no conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict per policy 3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers.
- I will not use AI software or application for notetaking and/or meeting summarization in accreditation-related meetings, including but not limited to site visits or visit preparation meetings. I will not input self-studies or other materials associated with accreditation reviews into AI applications. This includes but is not limited to AI systems for text analysis, summarization, and data processing. Additionally, I will not use tools that operate in cloud environments or rely on third-party data processing, which present risks to data privacy, and are not permitted for use with accreditation materials. I understand that AI tools may be used for general administrative purposes, such as scheduling, document management, or workflow optimization, but not for content analysis or decision-making related to specific accreditation cases.
- I will abide by all site visit policies and procedures as provided in CSWE materials.
- I will maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the site visit, including confidentiality of and all accreditation materials related to the visit. I will not disclose programmatic or institutional information, oral or written, to others that was garnered in the accreditation process or discussions relative to site visit.
- I will only consider information presented by the program in its self-study or disclosed by the program.
- I will refer program complaints from individual faculty members or students to CSWE Accreditation Staff.
- I will only meet with parties approved by the program's primary contact.
- I will not make offensive, insensitive, or damaging comments before, during, or after the visit concludes.
- I will not recruit faculty, students, or a job for myself.
- I will not suggest nor advocate for the use of particular content, theories, literature, or practice models.
- I will not make value judgments about resources, facilities, or faculty credentials.
- I will not criticize procedures or strategy in achieving compliance with accreditation standards.
- I will not accept non-visit related social invitations.
- I will not accept gifts from the program.
- I will submit site visit reports that are impartial, written in my own words, and specific to the program visited.
- I will submit the site visit report to CSWE by the required deadline.
- Upon the conclusion of the visit, I will:
    - no longer communicate with the program unless for reimbursement purposes.
    - destroy/delete all program documents.

Electronic Attestation Form: *Site Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines*

Reporting Ethical or Behavioral Violations

Programs that have experienced a site visitor that violated ethical or behavioral guidelines before, during, or after the site visit are encouraged to report such violations to the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager. If the Volunteer Manager is unavailable, the CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations or CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation may be contacted.

Such reports will not affect the program's reaffirmation determination, and if possible, will be used to assist in the site visitor's professional growth. Each report is handled with care and on a case-by-case basis, with the utmost respect and integrity. Depending on the situation, site visitors may be contacted to discuss a remediation plan or may be removed from site visitor service.

Site Visit Matching and Assignments

Overview

Site visits are scheduled based on the BOA meeting agenda for which a program will be reviewed for a reaffirmation determination. The *Site Visit Planning Form*, assignment, and site visit occur in the months prior to this BOA meeting:

BOA Agenda for a Decision	Site Visit Planning Form Due	Assignment Occurs	Visit Occurs
February	February 1 *12 months in advance of reaffirmation determination*	No later than April 1 *10 months in advance of reaffirmation determination*	September 15–October 15
June	June 1 *12 months in advance of reaffirmation determination*	No later than August 1 *10 months in advance of reaffirmation determination*	January 15–February 15
October	October 1 *12 months in advance of reaffirmation determination*	No later than December 1 *10 months in advance of reaffirmation determination*	April 1–April 30

Program Availability

Programs submit the electronic *Site Visit Planning Form* applicable to the program's agenda date found on the reaffirmation process webpage approximately 1-year prior to the program's reaffirmation date.

The program specifies information related to the site visit logistics, including three (3) separate dates for the site visit. Programs list the date they would like the visit to take place. For most in-person visits the day before and day after the visit are travel days for the site visitor and the primary contact must be available for assistance with logistics coordination. The dates must be discussed and cleared by the president/chancellor of the institution, and any other necessary parties, before they are submitted. The dates must be kept open until the site visitor(s) and the date of the visit are confirmed by CSWE. The form assists the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager in scheduling the program's visit and assigning an appropriate site visitor.

Site Visitor Availability

Site visitors also complete a site visit availability form each spring, fall, and winter to determine the dates and format(s) in which the site visitor is available. The form is emailed directly to each visitor by the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager and assists in assigning the site visitor to a program that fits their schedule.

Site visitors experiencing a change in employment that impacts one's ability to serve as a site visitor must notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager within 30-days. Additional information may be requested, including, but not limited to a letter of support and updated contact information.

Length of Visit

Most site visits are conducted in 1-day, and if conducted virtually, visits are permitted to take place over two (2) half-days. This includes programs that have both baccalaureate and master's programs occurring simultaneously, as many meetings can be shared by both visitors. However, an extra half day may be necessary for any visit type, depending on the complexity of the program. Adding a half day to the visit may result in an extra hotel night at the program's expense. This can be requested when the *Site Visit Planning Form* is submitted or requested by the program/site visitor once the LOI is received by the program/site visitor. The CSWE-BOA reserves the right to extend visits, as needed, based on the content of the LOI.

Visit Format

The reaffirmation site visit is to be conducted in-person for all programs, except for online-only programs, as defined in policy *4.9 Program Changes & Program Options*. Online-only programs may request an in-person visit via the *Site Visit Planning Form*. Expectations are consistent for both in-person and virtual visit formats.

Number of Visitors

One site visitor is assigned to each program level (i.e., baccalaureate, master's, practice doctorate). If the program has both baccalaureate and master's programs under review at the same time and the visits are on the same day the other program level site visitor is included on the LOI notification for informational and planning purposes only. To optimize resources, both site visitors may attend relevant meetings together at the program's discretion and depending on the contents of LOI.

Matching and Assignments

CSWE Staff match programs and site visitors based on availability. Site visitors and programs are asked to identify any conflicts of interest per the *policy 3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers*. Programs may only deny specific site visitors on the basis of a conflict of interest and are unable to deny a site visitor based on visitor experience at the program level; visitor area of expertise; institutional or programmatic religious affiliation, size, or administrative structure; program option(s) or delivery method(s); or other similar criteria. Due to ethical and administrative constraints, CSWE will not honor special requests with respect to preferences or choice related to the assignment of site visitor(s).

Notification

Once visit assignments are finalized, the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager emails the assignments to the institution's president/chancellor, the primary contact for the program, the site visitor(s), and the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Site Visit Planning

Initial Contact and Individual Accommodations

The program's primary contact is to initiate contact with the visitor once the assignment is received, no later than 60-days before the visit. In the initial contact, the program is to inquire about:

- travel plans (if applicable)
- initial schedule setting
- any accommodations the visitor may need during travel or the visit (e.g., mobility, communication).

If the program's primary contact has not made contact with the visitor by this time, the visitor is asked to notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager for assistance.

Communication Guidelines

Advanced preparation for site visits is essential and involves close collaboration among CSWE Accreditation Staff, site visitors, and programs. All planning and communication regarding the site visit occur through the program's primary contact on record with CSWE.

If the program's primary contact changes at any point during the site visit process, from site visitor assignment until the visit is complete, it is the program's responsibility to notify the site visitor and CSWE per policy *4.1 Primary Contact & Accreditation Communications*.

CSWE-certified site visitors are volunteers authorized by the Board of Accreditation to collect specific information from the program and their stakeholders. Stakeholders desiring to meet with site visitors are to request a meeting through the program's primary contact to arrange time on the site visit schedule, if not previously scheduled. It is inappropriate for stakeholders to provide site visitors with documents or to call/email them before, during, or after the visit. Faculty members, students, or other stakeholders are not to communicate with the site visitor through written or verbal means before the visitor's arrival nor during the visit until the allotted time in the site visit schedule, when questions and discussion occur in a group setting. Site visitors are not authorized to collect documentation from program stakeholders, and site visitors are instructed to discuss any such incidents with the program's primary contact.

Content Preparation

The program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist emails the LOI and self-study volumes 1-3 to both the visitor and program 30-days following the BOA meeting at which the LOI is issued.

The program prepares for the visit by considering how it might respond to the questions raised in the letter during the site visit. The BOA does not expect the program to take formal action on the LOI nor submit a response to the site visitor before the site visit.

The site visitor reviews the self-study in its entirety prior to the visit, however only standards itemized in the LOI may be discussed onsite with the program. Information beyond the boundaries of the LOI cannot be discussed, requested, nor reported. Visitors must use the required site visit report template provided with the LOI. Site visitors may not request a written program response in advance of the site visit.

Co-located Programs

Co-located programs are those with both a baccalaureate and master's program. If the site visits occur on the same day, programs have the option of combining any meetings where the content is shared across both program; for example, meeting with the president/chancellor. When opting to combine meetings, while this may save time, be mindful of scheduling enough time so that both visitors can ask the questions specific to their Letter of Instruction (LOI).

Site Visit Schedule

No less than 1-week prior to the visit, the program's primary contact and site visitor jointly finalize the site visit schedule.

With the LOI as a guide, the schedule is to include:

- Specific days and times, including time zones
- Locations and/or meeting links
- Breaks
- Mealtimes
- Independent workspace for the visitor
- Exit interview with the program director and primary contact (if different).
- With whom the visitors will meet:
    - Required:
        - President/Chancellor (or Designee)
        - Primary Contact
        - Program Director (if different than primary contact)
        - Field Education Director (applicable to baccalaureate and master's programs)
        - Faculty
        - Students
    - Optional:
        - Field Instructors
        - Community Advisory Board (if applicable)
        - Deans or other program administrators
        - Other stakeholders specific to the program's context

A sample site visit schedule is located on the reaffirmation process webpage.

Programs with More Than One Program Option

All full-time faculty responsible for program delivery are to be included in the site visit, when possible, inclusive of all program options. It is at the discretion of the program to include other representatives or stakeholders from each program option in the reaffirmation site visit. These representatives/stakeholders may be included in a face-to-face capacity (for in-person visits) or virtually (for either visit format type), but site visitors are not expected to visit all physical program options. The CSWE-BOA reserves the right to request visits to specific program options, as needed, based on content of the LOI.

Social Events

Required social events or mandatory meals with program representatives are not acceptable. Visitors are not to accept non-visit related social invitations.

In-Person Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning

No less than 30-days before the visit, the program's primary contact:

- Confirms visit arrangements such as travel plans, hotel accommodations, and workspace requirements in the hotel and on campus with the visitor.
- Agrees on a contingency plan with the visitor to be used in case the original visit plan needs to change due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances outside of one or

both parties' control. This plan is to honor the work and time devoted to planning the visit and ensure the integrity of the site visit is upheld within the reaffirmation process. Please refer the Site Visit Emergencies section for a list of options to consider.

The program confirms all arrangements with the site visitor via email and the primary contact is copied on all communications, if another program representative is coordinating logistics. Programs are to accommodate site visitor travel the day before and the day after the visit (unless earlier departure is requested by the visitor after the visit concludes). Depending on the location of the program, an extra travel day may be a consideration and discussion with the visitor due to travel time and time-zone adjustment.

Air Travel

Programs are required to provide prepaid coach fare airline tickets to site visitors and are to consult with the site visitor about the most convenient airport, airline carrier, and flight times. Purchasing refundable tickets and/or travel insurance is highly recommended, as unforeseen circumstances such as illness, weather, etc. may occur. The program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

Hotel

Site visitors are to be housed in hotels, not in dormitories or other campus housing. Programs are required to coordinate hotel accommodations and arrange for the hotel to bill the program for site visitor expenses at the hotel, except for personal incidentals. Hotel accommodations are required to include a workspace. Purchasing refundable rooms is highly recommended, as unforeseen circumstances such as illness, weather, etc. may occur. The program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

Ground Transportation

Programs are required to provide ground transportation for the visitor, including to and from the airport, to and from the hotel to campus, and any other required travel for the visit. Programs provide transportation in the form of a car, shuttle, taxi, rideshare, or rental car.

Visitors may choose to drive to the visit using a rental car, and the program is to reimburse or cover costs upfront. Visitors may also choose to drive their own personal vehicle, and the program is to reimburse mileage per the program's policies.

Ground transportation may be out-of-pocket expenses for the visitor, however programs must make every effort to cover such costs upfront, if possible. Programs are to ensure the visitor is comfortable with paying such expenses out-of-pocket prior to finalizing plans. Programs must inform the visitors how reimbursement for these expenses will be managed if the visitor agrees to pay out-of-pocket.

Meals

Meals not taken at the hotel or during the visit are likely to be out-of-pocket expenses for the site visitors. Programs must inform the site visitors how reimbursement for these expenses will be managed if the visitor agrees to pay out-of-pocket.

Review the Payment of Expenses section below for more information.

Virtual Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning

No less than 30-days before the visit, the program's primary contact:

- Confirms visit arrangements.
- Agrees on a contingency plan with the visitor to be used in case the original visit plan needs to change due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances outside of one or both parties' control. This plan is to honor the work and time devoted to planning the visit and ensure the integrity of the site visit is upheld within the reaffirmation process.
  Please refer the Site Visit Emergencies section for a list of options to consider.

The program confirms all arrangements with the site visitor via email and the primary contact is copied on all communications, if another program representative is coordinating logistics. Depending on the location of the program, conducting the visit over two half-days may be a consideration and discussion with the visitor due to time-zone adjustment.

Virtual Visit Requirements

- The virtual visit must occur via an engaged and interactive videoconferencing format. Videoconferencing technology must allow real-time visual and audio participation by multiple participants simultaneously.

- The program selects the platform and serves as the coordinator of all meetings and ensures all stakeholders are included in the visit.

- The program's primary contact hosts the videoconference throughout the day and introduces the visitor to each stakeholder at the start of each meeting.

- The program assigns the visitor as a "co-host" to ensure meeting continuity, as the "host" may not attend all meetings on the agenda.

- The program and visitor test the technology prior to the meeting day.

The Site Visit

Visit Privacy

Recording the visit is not allowed by either party. This also prohibits the use of artificial intelligence (AI) software, during any site visit-related meetings. Review *policy 1.9 Use of Artificial Intelligence* for more information. The meetings must be conducted in private meeting rooms. Select a distraction-free and low-noise area to participate in the meetings.

During the site visit, program stakeholders and site visitors meet to discuss general questions. Beyond the general questions, site visitors ask programs to address specific questions raised by the BOA. The program then provides information via verbal discussion to the site visitor that clarifies, corrects, and/or supplements those parts of the self-study identified in the LOI in which the BOA had questions.

Site Visitor Welcome

In-Person

During the first evening site visitors generally work alone to prepare for the visit. Program directors may meet with site visitors to extend a brief welcome, explain the itinerary, answer any questions, and outline arrangements to escort them to each meeting. Required social events or mandatory meals with the program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot not be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

Virtual

Program directors may meet with site visitors to extend a brief welcome, explain the itinerary, answer any questions, and outline the arrangements to accompany them to each meeting. Required social events with the program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot not be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

Meeting with the Institutional Administrators

The BOA expects the visit to begin with the institution's president/chancellor and any other institutional administrators at the program's discretion. The primary contact/program director introduces the visitor to the institutional administrator and after introductions, permit the visitor to meet alone with the president/chancellor or their designee. The meeting is typically about 30-minutes.

The purpose of this meeting is to explain the accreditation process, learn about the role and place of the program within the institution's system, answer any questions the administrator may have,

and to collect any information related to the LOI. When it is not possible to meet with the institution's president/chancellor, it is acceptable that the site visitor meets with a designee as determined by the institution. CSWE trusts programs to make this decision and does not approve of the designee prior to the visit.

Meetings with the Social Work Program and Stakeholders

The site visitor will also meet with the program director, the field education director, faculty members, students, and any other individuals whose presence may be relevant (e.g., field instructors, librarian, community advisory boards, alumni, staff) to address the issues raised in the LOI. The purpose of these meetings is for the visitor and program to discuss stakeholder experiences of the program, as well as any strengths, concerns, and gather information based on the instructions given in the LOI.

Faculty: All full-time faculty responsible for program delivery are to be included in the site visit, when possible, inclusive of all program options. Part-time faculty and staff may be included at the program's discretion unless otherwise requested in the BOA-issued LOI. The primary contact/program director/program representatives do not attend meetings with the program faculty; however, program representatives may propose being present based on their unique context/culture.

Students: The primary contact/program director/program representatives do not attend meetings with the students; however, program representatives may propose being present based on their unique context/culture. The BOA does not require or recommend dismissing classes during the site visit. It is advised that the schedule be planned to permit participation by all constituents without disrupting the academic schedule.

Should key personnel/an administrator become unable to attend the scheduled visit meeting due to emergency or extenuating circumstances, the program may select a proxy in their absence. Alternatively, the program may elect to host delayed virtual meetings with the absent key personnel/an administrator within 1 week of the scheduled visit date.

Exit Meeting

Site visitors hold an exit meeting with the primary contact and program director (if different) to convey the findings for inclusion in the site visit report. The program will determine if additional constituents (e.g., administration, faculty) will be present. The program may ask questions, comment on the findings, or correct any inaccuracies. Site visitors may respond to questions but not make judgments of whether the program is in compliance with accreditation standards, as that judgment rests with the BOA.

Site visitors must remind programs that the findings, along with the *Program Response to the Site Visit Report*, are reviewed by the BOA before making a decision about compliance. Site visitors explicitly inform the institution and program that the BOA will notify them of its decision about program compliance and concerns.

Gifts

Site visitors are unable to accept gifts.

Questions During the Visit

Questions related to accreditations standards, the LOI, or accreditation policies may be directed to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Questions regarding scheduling, transportation, accommodations, or reimbursement may be directed to the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager.

After the Site Visit

After the conclusion of the site visit, contact between the program and site visitor ceases, with the exception of any travel or reimbursement inquiries. The site visitor does not provide a copy of the *Site Visit Report* to the program and the program does not provide a copy of its response to the visitor. If the program has additional questions or comments after the visit, the program contacts the appropriate CSWE Accreditation Staff member.

Payment of Expenses

If the visitor or program have any questions about payment of expenses for the visit, please contact the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager**.**

Visitor Responsibility

Visitors are not expected to provide the program with an IRS Form W-9, personal service agreements, or similar contracts requested by the program/institution, as they are not vendors or service providers. If this is requested by the program, the visitor is asked to contact the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager for support. Should a visitor choose to enter into a contract or similar agreement with the program, CSWE is not responsible for the content or the program's adherence to the agreement.

Within two (2) weeks of the conclusion of the visit, the visitor is expected to submit reimbursement documentation that aligns with the program's policies and procedures.

Program Responsibility

It is the program's responsibility to ensure all possible costs for the visitor are covered by the program prior to the visit, inclusive of travel days and the visit day(s). Visitors are volunteers, not contractors or employees of the program, institution, or CSWE. Therefore, visitors are not expected to provide the program with an IRS Form W-9, personal service agreements, or similar contracts requested by the program/institution, as they are not vendors or service providers. Programs are encouraged to use established vendors within their institution that can then bill the program. Another option is to provide the visitor with petty cash onsite for expenses. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the inability to proceed in the reaffirmation process.

Within 30-days of the visitor submitting reimbursement materials, the program will either have reimbursed the visitor for any out-of-pocket expenses or provide an update to the visitor on an estimated payment date.

Site Visit Emergencies

CSWE recognizes that scheduled visits may need to end early, be delayed, moved virtually, or cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of relevant parties. Examples of these unforeseen circumstances include inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters, illness, or changes to visitor's or key personnel's schedules due to an extenuating circumstance outside of their control. Purchasing refundable tickets and/or travel insurance is highly recommended, as the program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

In these circumstances, CSWE must be consulted to determine the best course of action in an emergency before any changes to the date or the format of the visit are enacted, unless CSWE Staff are unavailable.

To inform CSWE Accreditation Staff of changes to a planned visit:

1. The party (visitor or program) must immediately notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager via email or telephone. If the Volunteer Manager is unavailable, the CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations or CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation may be contacted.
2. The party (visitor or program) will then notify the other party (visitor or program) via email and telephone.
3. The program, visitor, and CSWE Accreditation Staff must communicate to determine the best course of action. Due to complexity in scheduling visits, cancellations and delays will be avoided whenever possible, however the reaffirmation timetable may be impacted. Possible outcomes include but are not limited to:
    - Change the format of the visit to be virtual on the same day
    - Delay visit
    - Reschedule visit with same visitor for a later date
    - Reschedule visit with an alternate visitor for the original date
    - Reschedule visit with an alternate visitor for a later date

If CSWE are unavailable and/or the emergency occurs outside of business hours, the program/site visitor may make an informed decision and report the course of action immediately to the CSWE Accreditation Staff. These occurrences will be handled on an individual basis. Examples of these emergencies include inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters. If necessary, site visitors may book travel and accommodations and will be reimbursed by CSWE, and the program may be invoiced upon submission of details of extenuating circumstances and submission of receipts. Coach fare and basic accommodations are expected.

Volunteer Insurance Policy

CSWE holds a volunteer insurance policy that may be provided upon request.

6.7 Site Visit Report

Site Visit Report

Within 2-weeks of the site visit, the visitor submits the completed report template via email to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist. Report content is written in the visitor's own words and reflects objective and factual findings collected via discussion with program stakeholders. The report cannot refer BOA readers to the program's self-study or supplemental materials provided onsite, nor does the visitor include copied/pasted narrative or excerpts from program documents. The visitor does not include materials provided by the program in the report; the program will provide this information in their *Program Response to the Site Visit Report*.

Site visit reports are sent to and reviewed by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, who may accept the report or request the visitor revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information.

Should a site visitor need time beyond the 2-weeks to complete the visit report, the site visitor must proactively communicate with the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist to inform of them of the delay and request an extension. The length of the extension is granted on a case-by-case basis, as CSWE recognizes that emergencies and unforeseen circumstances occur.

Site visitors complete the Site Visit Report using the template, which can be accessed on the reaffirmation process webpage. The report must follow the below requirements:

Report Formatting

- File type: Microsoft Word Document
- One single continuous document; not submitted as multiple attachments
- A copy of the visit schedule is also embedded at the end of the report
- For each standard, the report follows the format:
    - Insert full text of standard
    - Insert full text of instructions from LOI (Letter of Instruction) for that standard
    - Summarized findings from discussions with the program about that standard
- Presents factual observations and actions in written in third person without the use of first-person pronouns
- Written in complete sentences and in paragraph form
- Does not use bullet points or short-hand notes
- Does not include any supplemental materials provided by the program to the visitor
- Does not refer to self-study

Report Content

- The report uses objective language and does not provide feedback/advice, nor recommend a decision
- The report is in alignment with relevant accreditation standards and related interpretations

- The report only includes language that is linked to the accreditation standard(s) included in the LOI
- The report is specific to the program and program level being visited
- 2022 EPAS or 2025 Accreditation Standards for Practice Doctorate Social Work Programs:
    - The report includes all five general standards (AS 1.0, AS 2.0, AS 3.0, AS 4.0, AS 5.0)
- 2015 EPAS:
    - The report includes the three required general standards (AS 1.0, AS 3.0, and AS 4.0)
- The report includes the general questions asked by the visitor from the General Questions Bank
- The report includes stakeholder feedback to the general questions by summarizing the discussion and any factual observations by the visitor
- The report includes the clarification provided by the program for each specific standard listed on the program's LOI by summarizing the discussion

Site Visit Materials

The visitor deletes/destroys the program's documents upon confirmation of acceptance of the report by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Site Visit Report Violations

Failure to submit the report may impact the program's reaffirmation timetable and result in volunteer remediation. Should the site visitor fail to produce a report without communicating with the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist within 5-business days of the *Site Visit Report* due date, or there are serious concerns with the submitted report, the site visitor will be contacted to discuss a remediation plan. The CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation and CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations have the right to remove site visitors from service based on violations of site visit conduct, integrity, or performance.

6.8 Program Response to the Site Visit Report

Program Response to the Site Visit Report

Once the *Site Visit Report* is accepted by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, instructions are provided to the program to compose a *Program Response to the Site Visit Report*, due within 2-weeks of receiving the report from the specialist.

The *Program Response* is the program's final opportunity to evidence complete and comprehensive compliance with the accreditation standards by submitting narrative responses and supporting documentation to respond to all general and specific standards identified in the *Letter of Instruction* (LOI), discussed during the site visit, and summarized in the *Site Visit Report*. Programs must submit any materials provided to the site visitor within their response (not as appendices or separate attachments). Programs do not refer to the self-study as the Board

of Accreditation previously evaluated the self-study to issue the LOI and will not access the self-study to make a final reaffirmation determination.

In addition to documenting full evidence of compliance, the program may state whether it agrees or disagrees with site visit findings and corrects any errors of fact. Disagreements with the *Site Visit Report* must be stated clearly, and additional documentation provided as necessary.

The BOA uses the LOI, *Site Visit Report*, and *Program Response to the Site Visit Report* to make a decision on the program's reaffirmation.

6.9 BOA Reaffirmation Decisions

Reaffirmation Determination Decisions

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) reviews specific documents to make a reaffirmation determination. The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted within the documents currently under review. **Do not refer to/cite previous submissions as the BOA will not have access to the program's self-study or other accreditation materials.**

Decision Types for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Reaffirm Accreditation for 8 Years	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards and reaffirms the program's accreditation for 8-years.	1. BOA-issued *Letter of Instruction (LOI)* 2. *Site Visit Report* 3. Program Response to the *Site Visit Report*
Reaffirm Accreditation for 8 Years with a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program's Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Reaffirm Accreditation for 8 Years with a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA	The BOA finds the program compliant with all accreditation standards but identifies one or more areas of concern that must be addressed in a progress report. The BOA's letter	

Decision	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	If the BOA believes that a program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards, the BOA can order a modified site visit to collect more information. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit.	
Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status	The BOA finds the program noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and places it on conditional accredited status if it believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a *Restoration Report*.	
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn.	

Decision	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.	
Defer a Decision on Reaffirmation to the Next Meeting and Request Clarifying Information	The BOA finds that the program's documentation is insufficient to make a decision, so the program must submit documentation or clarification necessary for the BOA to make a decision at the next meeting. In extenuating circumstances, and at the BOA's discretion, the BOA may grant two deferrals during one reaffirmation review cycle.	1. BOA-issued *Deferral Letter* 2. Program Response to the *Deferral*

First Progress Report Decisions

The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted in documents currently under review. **Do not refer/cite to previous submission as the BOA will not have access.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Accept the First Progress Report	All of the areas of concern were addressed in the progress report, and no further action is required by the program.	1. BOA decision letter requesting the *1st Progress Report* 2. Program submitted *1st Progress Report*
Request a Second Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program's Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds that one or more of the concerns in the first progress report are still areas of concern and requests a second progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Request a Second Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA	The BOA finds that one or more of the concerns in the first progress report are still areas of concern and requests a second progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	If the BOA believes that a program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards, the BOA can order a modified site visit to collect more information. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit.	
Accept the Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report	All areas of concern were addressed in the program response, and no further action by the program is required.	
Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status	The BOA finds the program noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and places it on conditional accredited status if it believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a *Restoration Report*.	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.	

Second Progress Report Decisions

The BOA will not review previously submitted documents. All evidence substantiating compliance must be submitted in documents currently under review. **Do not refer/cite to previous submission as the BOA will not have access.**

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Accept the Second Progress Report	All of the areas of concern were addressed in the progress report, and no further action is required by the program.	1. BOA decision letter requesting the *2nd Progress Report* 2. Program submitted *2nd Progress Report*
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	If the BOA believes that a program may be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards, the BOA can order a	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	modified site visit to collect more information. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit.	
Accept the Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report	All areas of concern were addressed in the program response, and no further action by the program is required.	
Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status	The BOA finds the program noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and places it on conditional accredited status if it believes that noncompliance issues can be resolved by the program within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance. Conditional status is an adverse decision, and programs may request reconsideration. If the program accepts the BOA's decision, it submits a *Restoration Report*.	
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.	

Restoration Report Decisions

The BOA takes one of the following actions:

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
Restore Accredited Status	The BOA review of the program's *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* finds that the program has taken corrective action and is compliant with all accreditation standards. No further action is required.	1. BOA decision letter placing the program on conditional accredited status and requesting the *Restoration Report* 2. Program submitted *Restoration Report* 3. BOA may access and review all previously submitted materials
Restore Accredited Status and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program's Accreditation Specialist	The BOA finds that one or more areas of the *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* are areas of concern and requests a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Restore Accredited Status and Request a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the BOA	The BOA finds that one or more areas of the *Restoration Report* or *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* are areas of concern and requests a progress report. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of	

Decision Type	Rationale	Documents Reviewed
	concern and a due date for the progress report.	
Order a Modified Site Visit *(In-person or Virtual)*	A modified site visit is ordered when the *Restoration Report* fails to clarify program compliance. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. This program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the site visit. After its review, the BOA either restores accredited status or initiates withdrawal of accredited status.	
Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status	The BOA initiates withdrawal of accredited status if the program is found to be noncompliant with one or more accreditation standards and the BOA does not believe that noncompliance issues can be resolved within 1-year. The BOA's letter identifies specific areas of noncompliance and instructs the program to work with the Accreditation Specialist to arrange for the graduation or transfer of its students and determine when the program's accreditation will be withdrawn. The decision to initiate withdrawal of accredited status is an adverse one, and programs may request reconsideration. After its official withdrawal date, a program may apply for candidacy status.	

6.10 Modified Site Visits

The BOA may order a modified site visit when the *Reaffirmation, Progress Report, Restoration Report,* or *Special Compliance Review* fails to clarify program compliance. A visitor is sent, at the program's expense, in-person or virtually, to review specific compliance issues. The program is reviewed at the next BOA meeting after the visit. After its review, the BOA makes a decision based on the decision type.

Overview

Modified site visits are scheduled based on the BOA meeting agenda for which a program will be reviewed for a decision. The visit assignment and visit occur in the months prior to this BOA meeting:

BOA Agenda for a Decision	Assignment Occurs	Visit Occurs
February	No later than July 1	September 1 - November 15
June	No later than October 1	December 1 - February 28/29
October	No later than January 1	March 1 - May 15

Selecting the Modified Site Visitor

The CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager selects a current BOA member to conduct each visit based on their availability and conflicts of interest. BOA members and programs are asked to identify any conflicts of interest per policy *3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers*. Programs may only deny specific visitors on the basis of a conflict of interest and are unable to deny a visitor based on visitor experience at the program level; visitor area of expertise; institutional or programmatic religious affiliation, size, or administrative structure; program option(s) or delivery method(s); or other similar criteria. Due to ethical and administrative constraints, CSWE will not honor special requests with respect to preferences or choice related to the assignment of visitor(s).

Notification

Once the visit assignment is finalized, the CSWE Accreditation Specialist emails the program and visitor with the BOA Decision Letter. Then the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager emails the assignment notification to the institution's president/chancellor, the primary contact for the program, the candidacy visitor, and the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Modified Site Visit Planning

Initial Contact, Setting a Date, and Individual Accommodations

Within 2-weeks of the modified site visit assignment email notification, the program's primary contact is responsible for initiating contact with the visitor to begin planning the visit, including:

- Selecting a date during the visit window designated in the assignment email and completing the Modified Site Visit Date Log
- Travel plans
- Initial schedule setting

- Inquire about any accommodations the visitor may need during travel or the visit (e.g., mobility, communication)

If the program's primary contact has not made contact with the visitor by this time, the visitor is asked to notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager for assistance.

Length of Visit

Most in-person modified site visits are conducted in 1-day or less. If conducted virtually, visits are permitted to take place over one day or two-half days. An extra half day may be necessary for any visit type, depending on the complexity of the program, and may be arranged between the program and the visitor. The CSWE-BOA also reserves the right to extend visits, as needed.

Visit Format

The BOA decides the format of the visit based on the compliance concern. Expectations are consistent for both in-person and virtual visit formats.

Number of Visitors

Typically, one (1) candidacy visitor is assigned to visit each program. However, the BOA may decide additional visitors are necessary, based on the compliance concern.

Communication Guidelines

Advanced preparation for modified site visits is essential and involves close collaboration among CSWE Accreditation Staff, BOA members, and programs. All planning and communication regarding the modified site visit occur through the program's primary contact on record with CSWE.

Candidacy visitors are volunteers authorized by the Board of Accreditation to collect information from the program and their stakeholders and provide consultation on accreditation standards. Stakeholders desiring to meet with candidacy visitors are to request a meeting through the program's primary contact to arrange time on the visit schedule, if not previously scheduled. It is inappropriate for stakeholders to provide visitors with documents or to call/email them before, during, or after the visit. Faculty members, students, or other stakeholders are not to communicate with the candidacy visitor through written or verbal means before the visitor's arrival nor during the visit until the allotted time in the visit schedule, when questions and discussion occur in a group setting. Candidacy visitors are not authorized to collect documentation from program stakeholders, and candidacy visitors are instructed to discuss any such incidents with the program's primary contact.

Modified Site Visit Schedule

No less than 1-week prior to the visit, the program's primary contact and visitor jointly finalize the visit schedule.

The schedule must include:

- Specific days and times, including time zones
- Locations and/or meeting links
- Breaks
- Mealtimes
- Independent workspace for the visitor
- Exit interview with the program director and primary contact (if different)
- With whom the visitors will meet:
    - Required:
        - President/Chancellor (or Designee)
        - Primary Contact
        - Program Director (if different than primary contact)
        - Field Education Director (applicable to baccalaureate and master's programs)
        - Faculty
        - Students
    - Optional:
        - Field Instructors
        - Community Advisory Board (if applicable)
        - Deans or other program administrators
        - Other stakeholders specific to the program's context

A sample visit schedule is located on the reaffirmation process webpage.

Programs with More Than One Program Option

All full-time faculty responsible for program delivery are to be included in the visit, when possible, inclusive of all program options. Part-time faculty and staff may be included at the program's discretion. When programs have more than one (1) program option, it is at the discretion of the program to include other representatives/stakeholders from each program option in the modified site visit. These stakeholders can be included in a face-to-face capacity (for in-person visits) or virtually, but visitors are not expected to visit all physical program options.

Social Events

Required social events or mandatory meals with program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

In-Person Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning

No less than 30-days before the visit, the program's primary contact:

- Confirms visit arrangements such as travel plans, hotel accommodations, and workspace requirements in the hotel and on campus with the visitor.
- Ensures the date of the visit is recorded in the Modified Site Visit Date Log.
- Agrees on a contingency plan with the visitor to be used in case the original visit plan needs to change due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances outside of one of both parties' control. This plan is to honor the work and time devoted to planning the visit and ensure the integrity of the site visit is upheld within the reaffirmation process.
  Please refer the Modified Site Visit Emergencies section for a list of options to consider.

The program confirms all arrangements with the visitor via email and the primary contact is copied on all communications, if another program representative is coordinating logistics. Programs are to accommodate visitor travel the day before and the day after the visit (unless earlier departure is requested by the visitor after the visit concludes). Depending on the location of the program, an extra travel day may be a consideration and discussion with the visitor due to travel time and time-zone adjustment.

Air Travel

Programs are required to provide prepaid coach fare airline tickets to visitors and are to consult with the visitor about the most convenient airport, airline carrier, and flight times. Purchasing refundable tickets and/or travel insurance is highly recommended, as unforeseen circumstances such as illness, weather, etc. may occur. The program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

Hotel

Visitors are to be housed in hotels, not in dormitories or other campus housing. Programs are required to coordinate hotel accommodations and arrange for the hotel to bill the program for visitor expenses at the hotel, except for personal incidentals. Hotel accommodations are required to include a workspace. Purchasing refundable rooms is highly recommended, as unforeseen circumstances such as illness, weather, etc. may occur. The program is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

Ground Transportation

Programs are required to provide ground transportation for the visitor, including to and from the airport, to and from the hotel to campus, and any other required travel for the visit. Programs provide transportation in the form of a car, shuttle, taxi, rideshare, or rental car.

Visitors may choose to drive to the visit using a rental car, and the program is to reimburse or cover costs upfront. Visitors may also choose to drive their own personal vehicle, and the program is to reimburse mileage per the program's policies.

Ground transportation may be out-of-pocket expenses for the visitor, however programs must make every effort to cover such costs upfront, if possible. Programs are to ensure the visitor is comfortable with paying such expenses out-of-pocket prior to finalizing plans. Programs must inform the visitors how reimbursement for these expenses will be managed if the visitor agrees to pay out-of-pocket.

Meals

Meals not taken at the hotel or during the visit are likely to be out-of-pocket expenses for the visitors. Programs must inform the visitors how reimbursement for these expenses will be managed if the visitor agrees to pay out-of-pocket.

Review the Payment of Expenses section below for more information.

Virtual Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning

No less than 30-days before the visit, the program's primary contact:

- Confirms visit arrangements.
- Ensures the date of the visit is recorded in the Modified Site Visit Date Log.
- Agrees on a contingency plan with the visitor to be used in case the original visit plan needs to change due to an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances outside of one of both parties' control. This plan is to honor the work and time devoted to planning the visit and ensure the integrity of the site visit is upheld within the reaffirmation process.
  Please refer the Modified Site Visit Emergencies section for a list of options to consider.

The program confirms all arrangements with the site visitor via email and the primary contact is copied on all communications, if another program representative is coordinating logistics. Depending on the location of the program, conducting the visit over two half-days may be a consideration and discussion with the visitor due to time-zone adjustment.

Virtual Visit Requirements

- The virtual visit must occur via an engaged and interactive videoconferencing format. Videoconferencing technology must allow real-time visual and audio participation by multiple participants simultaneously.

- The program selects the platform and serves as the coordinator of all meetings and ensures all stakeholders are included in the visit.

- The program's primary contact hosts the videoconference throughout the day and introduces the visitor to each stakeholder at the start of each meeting.

- The program assigns the visitor as a "co-host" to ensure meeting continuity, as the "host" may not attend all meetings on the agenda.

- The program and visitor test the technology prior to the meeting day.

The Modified Site Visit

Visit Privacy

Recording the visit is not allowed by either party. This also prohibits the use of artificial intelligence (AI) software, review *policy 1.9 Use of Artificial Intelligence* for more information. The meetings must be conducted in private meeting rooms. Select a distraction-free and low-noise area to participate in the meetings.

Visitor Welcome

In-Person

During the first evening visitors generally work alone to prepare for the visit. Program directors may meet with visitors to extend a brief welcome, explain the itinerary, answer any questions, and outline the arrangements to escort them to each meeting. Required social events or mandatory meals with the program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot not be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

Virtual

Program directors may meet with site visitors to extend a brief welcome, explain the itinerary, answer any questions, and outline the arrangements to accompany them to each meeting. Required social events with the program representatives are not acceptable. If the program decides to offer such events, it is within the visitor's purview to accept or decline the invitation. Additionally, these events cannot not be offered during typical work or preparation time for the visitor.

Meeting with the Institutional Administrators

The BOA expects the visit to begin with the institution's president/chancellor and any other institutional administrators at the program's discretion. The primary contact/program director introduce the visitor to the institutional administrator and after introductions, permit the visitor to meet alone with the president/chancellor or their designee. The meeting is typically about 30-minutes.

The purpose of this meeting is to explain the accreditation process, learn about the role and place of the program within the institution's system, answer any questions the administrator may have, and to collect any information related to the modified site visit review. When it is not possible to meet with the institution's president/chancellor, it is acceptable that the visitor meets with a

designee as determined by the institution. CSWE trusts programs to make this decision and does not approve of the designee prior to the visit.

Meetings with the Social Work Program and Stakeholders

The visitor will also meet with the program director, the field education director, faculty members, students, and any other individuals whose presence may be relevant (e.g., field instructors, librarian, community advisory boards, alumni, staff). The purpose of these meetings is for the visitor and program to discuss stakeholder experiences of the program, as well as any strengths, concerns, and questions from the review of the program's document. This time is also used to consult regarding future program development as well as to answer any questions the stakeholders may have.

Should key personnel/an administrator become unable to attend the scheduled visit meeting due to emergency or extenuating circumstances, the program may select a proxy in their absence. Alternatively, the program may elect to host delayed virtual meetings with the absent key personnel/an administrator within 1 week of the scheduled visit date.

Faculty: All full-time faculty responsible for program delivery are to be included in the visit, when possible, inclusive of all program options. Part-time faculty and staff may be included at the program's discretion unless otherwise requested by the BOA. The primary contact/program director/program representatives do not attend meetings with the program faculty; however, program representatives may propose being present based on their unique context/culture.

Students: The primary contact/program director/program representatives do not attend the student meeting. However, program representatives may propose being present based on their unique context/culture. The BOA does not require or recommend dismissing classes during the visit. It is advised that the schedule be planned to permit participation by all constituents without disrupting the academic schedule.

Exit Interview

Visitors hold an exit interview with the primary contact and program director (if different) to convey the findings for inclusion in the visit report. The program will determine if additional stakeholders (e.g., administration, faculty) will be present. The program may ask questions, comment on the findings, or correct any inaccuracies.

Visitors may respond to questions, but not make judgments of whether the program is in compliance with the accreditation standards, as that decision rests with the BOA. Visitors remind programs that the findings, along with the *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report*, are reviewed by the BOA before making a decision about compliance and the BOA will notify them of its decision about program compliance and concerns.

Gifts

Visitors are unable to accept gifts.

Questions During the Visit

Questions related to accreditations standards or accreditation policies may be directed to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.

Questions regarding scheduling, transportation, accommodations, or reimbursement may be directed to the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager.

After the Modified Site Visit

After the conclusion of the visit, contact between the program and visitor ceases, with the exception of any travel or reimbursement inquiries. The visitor does not provide a copy of the *Modified Site Visit Report* to the program and the program does not provide a copy of its response to the visitor. If the program has additional questions or comments after the visit, the program contacts the appropriate CSWE Accreditation Staff member. See the Modified Site Visit Report and Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report policies for more information.

Payment of Expenses

If the visitor or program have any questions about payment of expenses for the visit, please contact the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager**.**

Visitor Responsibility

Visitors are not expected to provide the program with an IRS Form W-9, personal service agreements, or similar contracts requested by the program/institution, as they are not vendors or service providers. If this is requested by the program, the visitor is asked to contact the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager for support. Should a visitor choose to enter into a contract or similar agreement with the program, CSWE is not responsible for the content or the program's adherence to the agreement.

Within two (2) weeks of the conclusion of the visit, the visitor is expected to submit reimbursement documentation that aligns with the program's policies and procedures.

Program Responsibility

It is the program's responsibility to ensure all possible costs for the visitor are covered by the program prior to the visit, inclusive of travel days and the visit day(s). Visitors are volunteers, not contractors or employees of the program, institution, or CSWE. Therefore, visitors are not expected to provide the program with an IRS Form W-9, personal service agreements, or similar contracts requested by the program/institution, as they are not vendors or service providers. Programs are encouraged to use established vendors within their institution that can then bill the program. Another option is to provide the visitor with petty cash onsite for expenses. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in the inability to proceed in the reaffirmation process.

Within 30-days of the visitor submitting reimbursement materials, the program will either have reimbursed the visitor for any out-of-pocket expenses or provide an update to the visitor on an estimated payment date.

Modified Site Visit Emergencies

CSWE recognizes that scheduled visits may need to end early, be delayed, moved virtually, or cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of relevant parties. Examples of these unforeseen circumstances include inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters, illness, or changes to visitor's or key personnel's schedules due to extenuating circumstance. Purchasing refundable tickets and/or travel insurance is highly recommended, as the program Is responsible for any fees associated with the cancelled, delayed, or if applicable, rescheduled visit.

In these circumstances, CSWE must be consulted to determine the best course of action in an emergency before any changes to the date or the format of the visit are enacted, unless CSWE Staff are unavailable.

To inform CSWE Accreditation Staff of changes to a planned visit:

1. The party (visitor or program) must immediately notify the CSWE Accreditation Volunteer Manager via email or telephone. If the Volunteer Manager is unavailable, the CSWE Director of Accreditation Operations or CSWE Executive Director of Accreditation may be contacted.
2. The party (visitor or program) will then notify the other party (visitor or program) via email and telephone.
3. The program, visitor, and CSWE Accreditation Staff must communicate to determine the best course of action. Due to complexity in scheduling visits, cancellations and delays will be avoided whenever possible, however the program's accreditation review timetable may be impacted. Possible outcomes include but are not limited to:
    - Change the format of the visit to be virtual on the same day
    - Delay visit
    - Reschedule visit with same visitor for a later date
    - Reschedule visit with an alternate visitor for the original date
    - Reschedule visit with an alternate visitor for a later date

If CSWE is unavailable and/or the emergency occurs outside of business hours, the program/visitor may make an informed decision and report the course of action immediately to the CSWE Accreditation Staff. These occurrences will be handled on an individual basis. Examples of these emergencies include inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters. If necessary, visitors may book travel and accommodations and will be reimbursed by CSWE, and the program may be invoiced upon submission of details of extenuating circumstances and submission of receipts. Coach fare and basic accommodations are expected.

Volunteer Insurance Policy

CSWE holds a volunteer insurance policy that may be provided upon request.

6.11 Modified Site Visit Report

Within 2-weeks of the conclusion of the visit, the Board of Accreditation (BOA) member completes the *Modified Site Visit Report* to provide the BOA readers with a summary of the visitor's findings gathered from reviewing the program document and discussions with program stakeholders regarding specific accreditation standards. The report is inclusive of the following requirements:

Report Formatting

- File type: Microsoft Word Document
- One single continuous document; not submitted as multiple attachments
- A copy of the visit schedule is also embedded at the end of the report
- For each standard, the report follows the format:
    - Insert full text of standard
    - Insert full text of instructions for that standard
- Presents factual observations and actions in written in third person without the use of first-person pronouns
- Written in complete sentences and in paragraph form
- Does not use bullet points or short-hand notes
- Does not include any supplemental materials provided by the program to the visitor
- Does not refer to previous accreditation documents

Report Content

- The report uses objective language and does not provide feedback/advice, nor recommend a decision
- The report is specific to the program and program level being visited
- The report is in alignment with relevant accreditation standards and related interpretations
- The report only includes language that is linked to the accreditation standards included in the BOA Decision Letter
- The report includes stakeholder feedback to the specific standards
- The report includes the clarification provided by the program for each specific standard listed on the program's BOA Decision Letter by summarizing the discussion

Modified Site Visit Reports are reviewed by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, who may accept the report or request the visitor revise and resubmit to provide clarifying information.

Failure to submit the report may impact the program's timetable and result in volunteer remediation or the BOA member being removed from service.

6.12 Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report

Once the *Modified Site Visit Report* is accepted by the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist, instructions are provided to the program to compose a *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report*, due within 2-weeks of receiving the report from the specialist.

The *Program Response* is the program's final opportunity to evidence complete and comprehensive compliance with the accreditation standards by submitting narrative responses and supporting documentation to respond to all standards discussed during the modified site visit and identified in the *Modified Site Visit Report*. Programs must submit any materials provided to the visitor within their response. Programs do not refer to previous accreditation documents and must provide additional information to clarify the citations identified by the visitor.

In addition to documenting full evidence of compliance, the program may state whether it agrees or disagrees with the findings and corrects any errors of fact. Disagreements with the *Modified Site Visit Report* must be stated clearly, and additional documentation provided as necessary.

The BOA uses the BOA Decision Letter, *Modified Site Visit Report*, and *Program Response to the Modified Site Visit Report* to make a decision.

A decision to accept or not to accept the program response to the modified site visit report will result in the program receiving a decision based upon the initial accreditation determination that they were seeking when the modified site visit was issued by the BOA. The following are possible decisions:

- Restore Accredited Status
- Restore Accredited Status with a Progress Report to BOA or Accreditation Specialist (1, 2, or 3 meetings)
- Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status; and
- Revise and Resubmit (1 or 2 meetings)
- Reaffirmation Determinations only/not applicable to Candidacy or Initial Accreditation decisions:
    - Reaffirm Accreditation for 8 Years
    - Reaffirm Accreditation for 8 Years with a Progress Report to BOA or Accreditation Specialist (1, 2, or 3 meetings)
    - Defer a Decision on Reaffirmation to the Next Meeting and Request Clarifying Information
    - Place on Conditional Accredited Status