

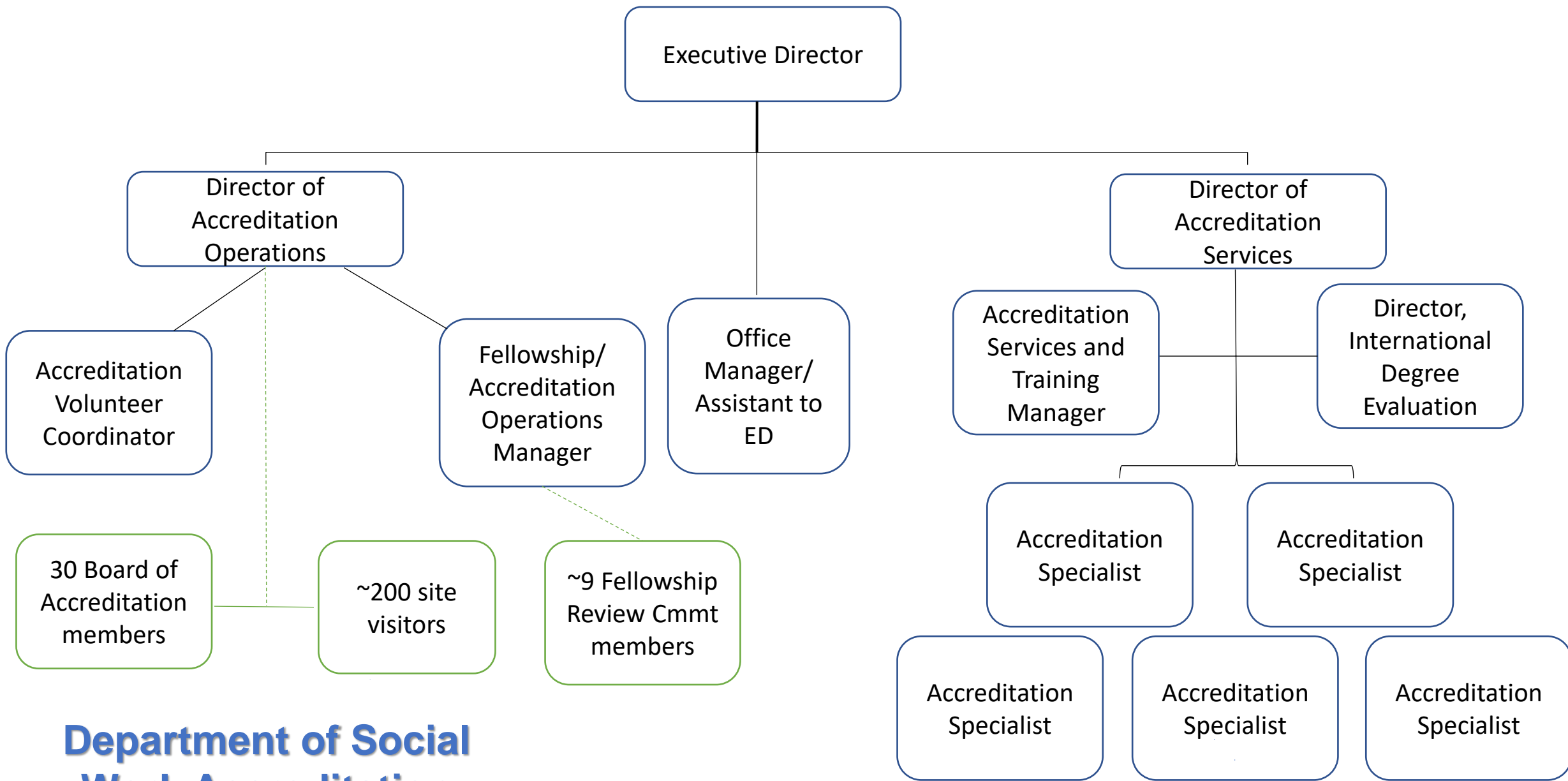


COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Site Visitor Training

Term July 2023- June 2026





Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)

Training Purpose, Goal, and Objectives

Purpose: To clarify expectations, review updated policies, answer questions, and prepare site visitors to conduct reaffirmation site visits on behalf of the CSWE-Board of Accreditation (BOA).

Training Goal: To prepare site visitors to conduct a successful site visit, from site visit planning through submitting the site visit report.

Training Objectives:

To prepare site visitors to:

- Prepare for and conduct a productive visit for 2015 or 2022 EPAS
- Understand the stages in the site visit process
- Learn the role, scope, and boundaries of site visitors operating under the authority of the BOA
- Work with programs to develop site visit schedule
- Conduct both in-person and virtual site visits
- Write a clear, objective site visit report
- Understand CSWE Staff roles/access support

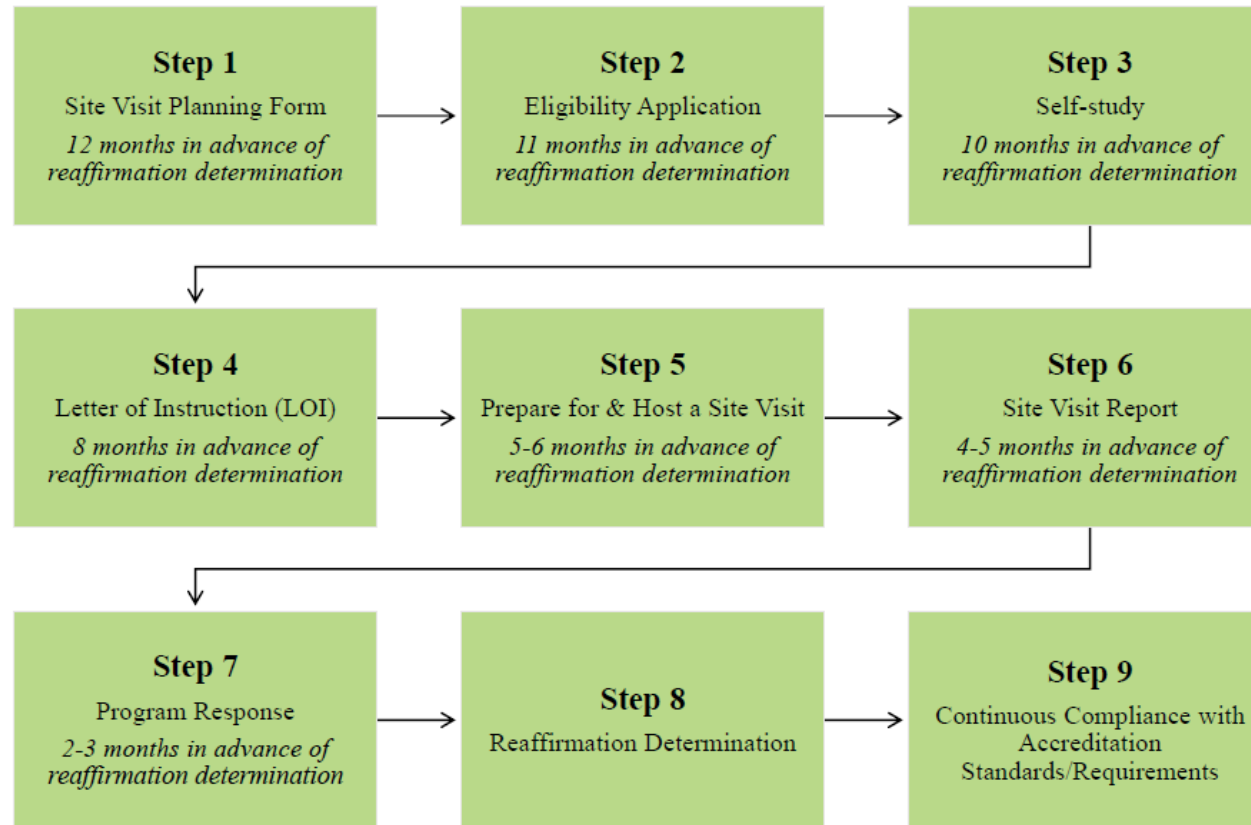
Introduction to Reaffirmation Site Visits



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Board of Accreditation (BOA)
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)
Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Program Accreditation

Reaffirmation Process Overview



Roles with the Accreditation Process

- **Site Visitor:**
 - Volunteer social work faculty who conduct site visits on behalf of the BOA as part of the reaffirmation process.
- **Board of Accreditation (BOA) Member:**
 - BOA members are also volunteers and former site visitors. BOA members are appointed for up to two three-year terms and as part of their role, they review accreditation documents for both candidate and accredited programs. BOA members also conduct visits to programs in candidacy.
- **Accreditation Specialist:**
 - CSWE Staff who liaise between programs, BOA, and site visitors while providing consultative and training services related to accreditation. Specialists are experts on the content of the standards and should be the visitors' go-to for questions related to this.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:**
 - CSWE Staff with primary responsibility is the management of all volunteer-related aspects of accreditation work, including the scheduling and logistics of both reaffirmation and candidacy visits.
- **Director of Accreditation Operations:**
 - CSWE staff responsible for the oversight of volunteer-related aspects of accreditation work as well as accreditation operations.
- **Program's Primary Contact:**
 - Whom the visitor will be in contact with to plan and conduct the visit. The primary contact should be included on all communications.



Role of the Site Visit in Accreditation

- The goal of conducting reaffirmation site visits is to advance quality social work education through multi-method and multi-phase regularly scheduled accreditation reviews. The site visit is an integral step in the peer-review reaffirmation process.
- The site visit is an opportunity to gain stakeholder experiences, gather information/facts and clarify any questions the BOA may have had after reviewing their self-study.
- The site visitor acts as an information gatherer on behalf of the BOA during the visit. This is not a “gotcha” for the program but an opportunity for the BOA and the program to understand stakeholder experiences and any factual observations gathered so the BOA can review and ask further questions as needed.



Role & Scope of the Site Visitor

- Visitors DO:
 - Abide by the Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines for Site Visitors
 - Review the program's self-study documents and BOA-issued Letter of Instruction (LOI).
 - Plan questions using the General Questions Bank designed to collect targeted information to answer the questions outlined in the LOI.
 - Listen to the experiences of the stakeholders and hear the program's story.
 - Submit a comprehensive report following the visit, which summarizes the factual and objective findings from the visit.
- Visitors DO NOT:
 - Provide feedback, opinions, advice, recommendations, or instructions to the program.
 - Interpret any standards for programs.
 - Discuss additional information in the self-study that is not identified in the LOI.
 - Determine compliance nor select a decision type.

Role, scope, and boundary information is also included in the LOI, which can be found on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage.



Site Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines

- I will only accept visit assignments for which I have no conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict (1.2.14 Conflict of Interest Policy).
- 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.



Site Visitor Conflict of Interest

- Direct Conflicts:
 - The volunteer lives or works in the same state where the program is located.
 - The volunteer is affiliated with the same educational system (e.g., SUNY, CSU, etc.)
 - The volunteer was assigned as a visitor to the program in the last accreditation cycle.
 - The volunteer has any existing or prior relationship with the institution or the social work program.
 - The volunteer has any pecuniary or personal interest in the program or its parent institution.
- Volunteers may also self-identify any programs where there are any other circumstances that they feel may impair their judgment.
- The entire conflict of interest policy can be reviewed here: [3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers](#) (page 22).



Site Visit Policies

- Site visit policies provide the foundation for guidelines related to the site visiting process from start to finish.
- Site visit policies are also meant to be used as a resource for visitors and programs while planning and preparing for reaffirmation site visits.
- We recommend keeping this link handy so you can reference the policies as needed.
- [Accreditation Policy Handbook | CSWE](#)
 - Site Visit Policies in section 6.6 (pages 102-116)



Important Dates for Site Visitors

Site Visit Availability Form	Site Visit Assignment	BOA Reviews Program and Issues a Letter of Instruction (LOI)	Site Visitor Receives LOI from Accreditation Specialist	Site Visit Occurs	Site Visit Report Due to Accreditation Specialist	Agenda Date Reaffirmation Decision
January 1 – February 1	By April 1	June BOA Meeting	July	September 15 – October 15	2 weeks after visit concludes	February BOA Meeting
May 1 – June 1	By August 1	October BOA Meeting	November	January 15 – February 15	2 weeks after visit concludes	June BOA Meeting
September 1 – October 1	By December 1	February BOA Meeting	March	April 1 - April 30	2 weeks after visit concludes	October BOA Meeting

Site Visitor Matching and Assignments

1. **Site Visitor Data and Availability Forms** completed by site visitors (May, September, February)
2. **Site Visit Planning Forms** completed by the program (June, October, January)
3. **Site Visit Matching** by Volunteer Coordinator
 1. During this time, visitors would receive a site visitor assignment request by email and have the option to confirm or decline that assignment
 2. The assignment request includes the name of the program, the date, and the format of the visit.
4. **Site Visit Assignment Notification**
 - Sent to the visitor, program primary contact, accreditation specialist, and the program's institutional administrator
 - From this point, the program may initiate contact with the site visitor to begin site visit planning, which occurs directly between the visitor and the program
 - The assignment notification includes the contact information for the program, accreditation specialist, and other visitors as applicable, the date and format of the visit, information about the site visit and site visit planning, and the standards the program is being reviewed under.



In-Person and Virtual Visits



- All reaffirmation site visits are conducted in-person, except for online-only programs.
- Online-only programs are those that offer a sole online program option, a majority (51% or more) of the social work curriculum delivered online.
- Visitors indicate their visit format preferences on the Site Visitor Data and Availability Form.
 - If virtual visits are a site visitor's only availability, keep in mind this likely will mean less opportunity to visit

Co-located Visits (BSW and MSW visit at same time)

- Institutions with both baccalaureate and master's program on the same reaffirmation agenda are each program level is assigned a separate site visitor
- Typically, the site visits are conducted on the same day, but not always
- If visits are on the same day visitors may share meetings, however both visitors are to conduct reviews independently (including asking questions, taking notes, and writing site visit reports)
- There must be separate site visit schedule for each program level.
- **Note:** Site visitors for co-located visits also receive the other program level's LOI. Be sure to read the correct letter. The program and site visitors work together to determine site visit meetings that may be combined.



Length of Site Visits

- **In-Person Visits:** One (1) full day, with travel days before and after that date
- **Virtual Visits:** One (1) full day, or two (2) consecutive half days
- **Extra half-day:**
 - Either visit type may include an extra half day, typically this is used for co-located programs or programs with time-intensive concerns on the LOI:
 - The half-day could be added by:
 - The program using the site visit planning form (visitor notified upon assignment)
 - The BOA when issuing the LOI (visitor notified, and asked to reconfirm their availability)
 - The program during the site visit planning process (visitor notified, and asked to reconfirm their availability)



Site Visit Emergencies

- Emergencies that can impact the scheduled date or format of the visit include but are not limited to inclement weather conditions, natural or manmade disasters, personal circumstances, etc.
- If the date, time, or format of the visit need to be changed based on these emergency circumstances, the options include but are not limited to the following:
 - Change the format of the visit to be virtual on the same day
 - Delay visit
 - Reschedule visit with the 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
- Due to the complexity of scheduling visits, cancellations and delays will be avoided whenever possible.



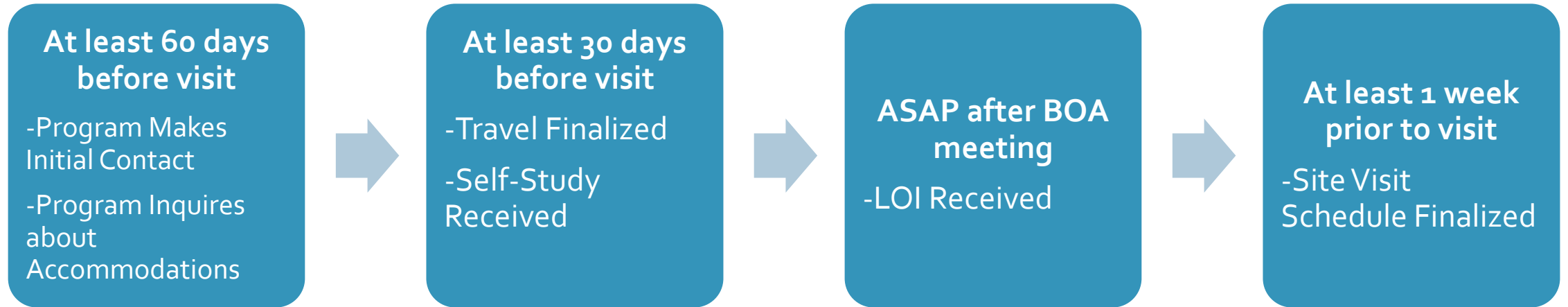
Site Visit Emergencies

- In the case of an emergency or other circumstance impacting the program and/or visitor's availability to conduct the visit as scheduled:
 - Reach out to CSWE staff right away, first the Volunteer Coordinator and then continue as needed to the Associate Director of Accreditation Operations and then the Executive Director of Accreditation.
 - The program, visitor, and CSWE accreditation staff must communicate to determine the best course of action.
 - If CSWE staff 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.
 - 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.



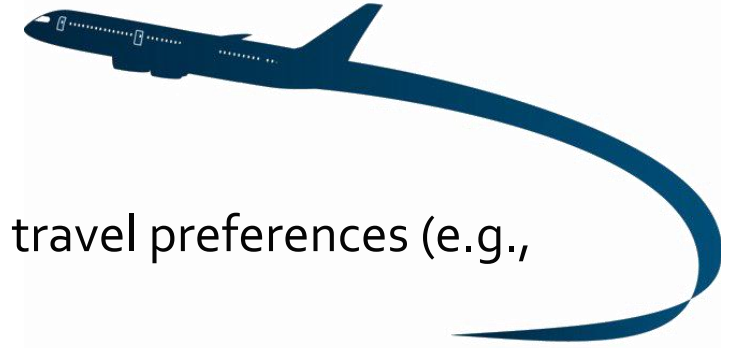
Before the Visit

Site Visit Planning



- **Note:** Visitors communicate with the primary contact for the program (or at least include them in all communications). The visitor should not be receiving any other information from the program or its constituents prior to the program, including contact with program representatives beyond those authorized by the primary contact.

In-Person Site Visit Logistics Planning



- Programs book and pay for all expenses, and consult with visitors on travel preferences (e.g., most convenient airport, time of travel), including:
 - Prepaid coach airfare
 - Prepaid hotel arrangements (not dorms or other campus housing), to include a separate workspace
 - Ground transportation (prepaid whenever possible)
 - Meals are likely to be out-of-pocket expenses
 - Programs are to provide any per diem/reimbursement information in advance prior to the visit
- Site visitors are **not** required to submit any W-9 tax forms, personal service agreements, or similar contracts as volunteers.
 - If a program makes such a request, contact the Volunteer Coordinator for assistance
 - If the visitor enters into such an agreement, CSWE is not responsible for the content or program's adherence to the contract

Virtual Site Visit Logistics Planning



- Policies are consistent for both in-person and virtual visit formats.
- In addition, the visit must be:
 - One full day or two consecutive half-days
 - Occur via interactive videoconferencing format, allowing real-time visual and audio participation by multiple participants simultaneously
 - Hosted by the program
 - Tech tested prior to visit day
 - Private meeting room
 - Not recorded

Additional tips are in the **Guidelines & Tips for Virtual Visits** document on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage.



Letter of Instruction and Self-Study Review

- The visitor receives the self-study via email from the program at least 30 days before the visit and the Letter of Instruction (LOI) via email from the program's accreditation specialist as soon as possible after issued by the BOA.
- The visitor reviews the self-study in its entirety with special attention to the standards in the BOA-issued LOI for context and site visit schedule finalization.
- **Have a question about specific standards in the LOI?**
 - Contact the program's accreditation specialist
 - Use the 2022 or 2015 EPAS Interpretation Guides
 - Reference the 2022 EPAS Reaffirmation Training
- **The review will likely take a few hours, so plan accordingly!**



Letter of Instruction Sample - 2015 EPAS

(full sample available on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage)

Instructions for General Questions

Discuss general questions related to the following accreditation standards with the program: Program Mission and Goals (**AS 1.0**), Diversity (**AS 3.0**), and Assessment (**AS 4.0**).

Instructions for Specific Questions

Area(s) of Concern

In taking this action, the BOA identified the following area(s) of concern.

Accreditation Standard 1.0.3: The program identifies its goals and demonstrates how they are derived from the program's mission.

The program identified its goals. However, the program did not clearly demonstrate how the goals are derived from the program's mission.

The site visitor is asked to explore with the program how each of its goals are directly derived from the program's mission.

Letter of Instruction Sample -2022 EPAS

(full sample available on the
[Site Visit Information](#) webpage)

Instructions for General Questions

Discuss general questions related to the following accreditation standards with the program: Program Mission (AS 1.0), Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) (AS 2.0), Explicit Curriculum (AS 3.0), Implicit Curriculum (AS 4.0), and Assessment (AS 5.0).

Instructions for Specific Questions

Area(s) of Concern

In taking this action, the BOA identified the following area(s) of concern.

Accreditation Standard 2.0.1: The program engages in specific and continuous efforts within the explicit curriculum related to anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The program provided specific and continuous efforts within the explicit curriculum related to anti-racism, diversity, and equity. However, the program did not identify continuous efforts within the explicit curriculum related to inclusion.

The site visitor is asked to discuss with the program one or more specific and continuous program-level effort within the explicit curriculum related to inclusion.

General Questions in Site Visit Planning

- Asked by site visitors at every visit to understand the program's stakeholder experiences and gather factual observations to help the BOA understand the program for a comprehensive and multi-method review.
- The *General Questions Bank* is used by site visitors to plan the questions they will ask during the site visit to address the general standards as requested by the BOA.
 - Visitors do not need to ask every question contained in the question bank.
 - The questions are a starting point for conversation. Visitors do not need to ask the questions verbatim, and follow-up questions are permitted.

Difference in General Questions for 2015 and 2022 EPAS

- 2022 EPAS – Visitors ask questions regarding all **five** accreditation standards (1.0 Program mission, 2.0 ADEI, 3.0 Explicit Curriculum, 4.0 Implicit Curriculum, 5.0 Assessment) across different stakeholder groups throughout the visit to understand the stakeholders' experience with the program.
 - 2015 EPAS – Visitors ask questions regarding **three** accreditation standards (1.0 Program Mission and Goals, 3.0 Diversity, 4.0 Assessment) across different stakeholder groups throughout the visit to understand the stakeholders' experience with the program.
 - **These differences are also noted in the site visit report template and sample schedule.**
- General Questions Banks for the 2015 and 2022 EPAS are located on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage.



General Questions Bank Example

Accreditation Standard 5.0: Assessment

For Institutional Administrators:

- How does the institution support the program's assessment requirements?
- How does the institution support collecting program outcomes (e.g., graduation rates)?
- Does the program's assessment plan fit within the assessment needs of the institution?
- What support does your institution provide to its program to ensure it is able to meet its assessment benchmarks?

For Faculty:

- How does the program prepare faculty to assess student competency consistently?
- Do you feel prepared to assess student competency?
- Describe a data-based change(s) the program has made recently.
- How are you involved in collecting program outcomes (e.g., graduation rates)?
- What are the strengths of the program's assessment strategies?
- What are your suggestions for improving the program's assessment outcomes?

For Students

- How are you engaged in the assessment process?
- What do you know about your program is assessing student competencies?
- Are there any changes you would recommend making to the program's assessment plan?
- What changes have you seen to your program based on the review of assessment outcomes?
- What are the strengths of the program's assessment strategies?

For Advisory Board (if applicable):

- How are you informed of assessment outcomes?
- What are the strengths of the program's assessment strategies?

For Field Instructors (if applicable):

- How are you involved in assessment of students?
- How does the program prepare field personnel to assess student competency consistently?
- How are you informed of assessment outcomes?
- What are the strengths of the program's assessment strategies?

Site Visit Schedule

- The site visit schedule is developed jointly between the visitor and the program. Visitors may ask to include required items, if not already in the schedule.
 - A draft of the schedule may be developed in advance of receiving the LOI, however, it must be tailored to address any questions raised in the BOA-issued LOI.
 - A sample site visit schedule for in-person and virtual visits on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage.
- **Schedule is to include:**
 - Specific days and times, including time zone
 - Locations and/or meeting links
 - Breaks
 - Meals/mealtimes
 - Independent workspace and time for the visitor
 - **With whom the visitors will meet:**
 - Required:
 - President/chancellor (or designee)
 - Primary Contact
 - Program Director
 - Field Education Director
 - Faculty
 - Students
 - Optional:
 - Field Instructors
 - Community Advisory Board (if applicable)
 - Deans or other program administrators
 - Other stakeholders specific to the program's context

Program Name (Program Level)

Day, Month, Year – Day, Month, Year

Site Visitor Name, Credentials

CSWE Site Visit | Schedule

Day, Month, Year

Time: **Activity:**

Travel Details

- 4:00pm (EST) • Flight *[Insert details]*
- 4:30pm (EST) • Transportation *[Insert details]*
- 5:00pm (EST) • Hotel Arrival *[Insert details]*
- Meal *[Insert details]*

6:00pm (EST) Program Welcome to Site Visitor ³

Day, Month, Year

Time: **Activity:**

8:00am (EST) **Meal**

Transportation to campus *[Insert details]*

8:15am (EST) **Primary contact/program director meets site visitor on campus and escorts to meeting with institution’s president/chancellor (or designee)** *[Insert details]*

8:30-9:00am (EST) **Meeting with the institution’s president/chancellor (or designee)** ⁴

Participants: [Insert details]

- Name, President/Chancellor/Designee⁵

Location: [Insert details]

Content:

- Site visitor introduces role, function, scope, and procedures for the visit, and explains the accreditation process
- Site visitor answers any questions the institution’s president/chancellor (or designee) may have about the visit

• Site visitor asks general questions regarding the role and place of the

Site Visit Schedule Sample (In-Person)

(full sample available on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage)

Program Name (Program Level)

Day, Month, Year – Day, Month, Year

Site Visitor Name, Credentials

CSWE Site Visit | Schedule

Site Visit Schedule Sample (Virtual)

(full sample available on the
[Site Visit Information](#) webpage)

<i>Day 1: Day, Month, Year</i>	
Time:	Activity:
9:00am – 9:15 (EST)	Primary contact/program director welcomes and orients site visitor and introduces visitor to institution’s president/chancellor (or designee) <i>Meeting Link: [Insert details]</i> <i>Participants: [Insert details]</i>
9:15-9:45am (EST)	Meeting with the institution’s president/chancellor (or designee)³ <i>Meeting Link: [Insert details]</i> <i>Participants: [Insert details]</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name, President/Chancellor/Designee⁴ Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site visitor introduces role, function, scope, and procedures for the visit, and explains the accreditation process• Site visitor answers any questions the institution’s president/chancellor (or designee) may have about the visit• Site visitor asks general questions regarding the social work program within the institutional setting⁵• Site visitor asks any applicable specific questions from the <i>Letter of Instruction (LOI)</i>:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ <i>AS 3.4.5</i>
9:45-10:45am (EST)	Meeting with Program Administrators: <i>Meeting Link: [Insert details]</i> <i>Participants: [Insert details]</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name, Program Director• Name, Field Director Content:

Before the Visit Tips:

- ❑ Support is available! Don't hesitate to reach out to staff with any questions.
- ❑ In advance of your first visit, contact the program's Accreditation Specialist to walk through the LOI.
- ❑ Preparation is key! Don't wait to review the LOI and self-study; manage your time and pace your pre-reading
- ❑ Understand the standards in the LOI by reviewing the most current Interpretation Guide.
- ❑ Conduct an independent final review of the meeting schedule and preparation on the night before the visit.



Questions Before the Visit

- Email or schedule consultation with the program's **Accreditation Specialist:**
 - Program document review
 - Content of the LOI
 - EPAS interpretations
- Email or schedule consultation with the **Volunteer Coordinator:**
 - Site visit planning
 - Site visit schedule
 - Logistics/Travel
 - Difficulty contacting the program
- **Note:**
 - Joint consultations may be appropriate.
 - Specialists may request a consultation before the visit with the visitor based on the LOI.



During the Visit

Setting the Tone and Stage

- Site visitors help set the tone
 - Bring a warm and collegial attitude of partnership
 - Come with curiosity and not a “gotcha” mentality
- Site visitors help set the stage
 - Abide by ethical and behavioral guidelines as well as their own professional boundaries
 - Explain the accreditation process and site visitor role to all stakeholders
- This applies to virtual and in-person visits, however, will look different for each.



Setting the Stage in Stakeholder Meetings

Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions as having a level of **performance**, **integrity**, and **quality** that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve.

The purposes of accreditation are:

- quality assurance
- academic improvement
- public accountability

Setting the Stage in Stakeholder Meetings

What is Accreditation?

- Accreditation is a fair, impartial, and objective **peer-review** process, accomplished via dedicated **volunteer** contributions of BOA members and site visitors.
- The Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) **staff liaison** between the BOA and the program, providing services, education and training opportunities, communicating accreditation policies, procedures, and interpretations, and furnishing BOA decision letters to programs.
- **The BOA is the sole and final arbiter of compliance.**

Setting the Stage in Stakeholder Meetings

Who are the Site Visitors?

- Site visitors conduct visits to baccalaureate and master's programs seeking reaffirmation. Site visitors are full- or part-time social work faculty members at CSWE-accredited social work programs.
- Site visitors operate under the authority of the CSWE-BOA (Board of Accreditation) and visit accredited social work programs to gather information related to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) based on questions provided by the BOA.

Setting the Stage in Stakeholder Meetings

Who is the Board of Accreditation (BOA)?

- The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA) is the accrediting body for social work education. BOA members are full- or part-time social work faculty members at a CSWE-accredited social work program with site visitor experience.
- The Board of Accreditation (BOA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is recognized by the **Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)** to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in the United States and its territories.
- As the accreditor, the BOA is responsible for both formulating accreditation standards and determining the criteria and process for evaluating these standards. In addition, BOA members conduct candidacy visits for baccalaureate and master's programs seeking initial accreditation.

Meeting with Institutional Administrators

- Site visits are expected to begin with a meeting between the visitor and the program's president/chancellor.
 - Primary contact/program director does not attend this meeting.
 - When this institutional administrator is not available, the program may determine a designee to hold this meeting in their place.
 - This meeting is typically about 30 minutes
- Site visitor introduces role, function, scope, and procedures for the visit, and explains the accreditation process
- Site visitor answers any questions the institution's president/chancellor (or designee) may have about the visit
- Site visitor asks general questions regarding the role and place of the program within the institution's system
- Site visitor asks any applicable specific questions from the Letter of Instruction (LOI)



Meeting with Stakeholders

- Required:
 - President/chancellor (or designee)
 - Primary Contact
 - Program Director (if different than primary contact)
 - Field Education Director
 - Faculty
 - Students
- Optional:
 - Field Instructors
 - Community Advisory Board (if applicable)
 - Deans or other program administrators
 - Other stakeholders specific to the program's context



Meeting with Stakeholders

- Reminders:
 - Visitors conduct onsite meetings with stakeholders in accordance with the agenda, collecting clarifying information related to the LOI.
 - Visitors ensure topics reviewed in the visit pertain only to standards covered in the LOI.
 - View, but do not collect, or include in your report, any supplemental materials (visuals, documentation, data) provided by the program or other stakeholders during the visit.
 - Take notes!
 - Inform the program that visitors do not determine compliance with the standards, redirect if you get questions about whether info gathered in the visit is “sufficient”
 - Decline non-visit related social invitations.
 - Meetings with faculty and students are held without the primary contact/program director. However, program representatives may propose being present based on the program’s context/culture.



Breaks



- Breaks are required per policy.
- Most visitors prefer to use this time to decompress and/or prepare for upcoming meetings and draft the site visit report.
- May be helpful to request a longer break before the exit meeting to gather notes.

Exit Meeting

- The primary contact and program director (if different) attend this meeting. The program may propose other program representatives or stakeholders based on the program's context/culture.
- Site visitor verbally summarizes areas discussed that will be included in the site visit report regarding:
 - General questions:
 - Stakeholder experiences
 - Factual observations
 - Specific questions raised by the CSWE-BOA
- Site visitor answers any questions stakeholders may have about the visit and allows the program to correct any inaccuracies.
- There should not be any surprises for the program in the site visit report, after going through the information in the exit meeting.



Exit Meeting

- Site visitors should wrap up the exit meeting by providing an overview of the next steps in the accreditation process.
 - Site visit report submitted two weeks after the visit
 - Program response submitted two weeks after the program receives the visit report from the program's accreditation specialist
 - BOA reviews all these documents and makes a final decision on compliance at the next meeting.
 - Specialist notifies the program of the BOA decision.
- Site visitors should remind the program the BOA is the sole arbiter of compliance, and they will review the information provided to make the decision.



During the Visit Tips:

- ❑ Be friendly, cordial, transparent, and confident.
- ❑ Give yourself breaks in between meetings; take self-care seriously.
- ❑ It's okay to say, "I don't know" and refer programs to their Accreditation Specialist.
- ❑ Enjoy the discussions and thoughtful exchanges in learning about the program.
- ❑ There is a spirit of trust in accreditation work; trust the program is sharing honestly and accurately.
 - ❑ The program's story is important; they've been building towards this review for 8-years.
 - ❑ The goal is not to dig for information or have a "gotcha" mentality.



Questions during the visit

- Email or call with the program's **Accreditation Specialist:**
 - Content of the LOI
 - EPAS interpretations
- Email or call with the **Volunteer Coordinator:**
 - Site visit planning
 - Site visit schedule
 - Logistics/Travel
 - Difficulty contacting the program
- **Note:**
 - Joint consultations may be appropriate.

After the Visit

Site Visit Report Templates

- The 2015 and 2022 Site Visit Report template includes:
 - Program/Visitor Information
 - General Questions Findings
 - Specific Questions Findings (in applicable)
 - Site Visit Schedule
- Site Visit Report Templates for the 2015 and 2022 EPAS will be sent with each LOI and are also located on the [Site Visit Information](#) webpage.

Writing the Site Visit Report

Program/Visitor Information:

- Document the details of the site visit

General Questions:

- Document the question(s) asked under each required accreditation standard (e.g., AS 1.0)
- Document the stakeholders asked
- Document the findings based on discussion with program stakeholders and objective observations

Specific Questions:

- Document the accreditation standard as cited in the Letter of Instruction (copy and paste)
- Document the citation from the BOA as cited in the Letter of Instruction (copy and paste)
- Document the findings based on discussion with the program, program stakeholders, and objective observations

Site Visit Schedule:

- Embed the site visit schedule at the end of the report (not submitted in a separate document)





COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)
Board of Accreditation

2015 EPAS
Site Visit Report Template

Instructions: Complete this required Site Visit Report Template and return it to the program's CSWE accreditation specialist at CSWE within 2 weeks of the visit. Do not alter this template.

- 1. Program Visited: _____
- 2. Program Visited State: _____
- 3. Program Visited Level: _____
- 4. Date of Site Visit: _____
- 5. Site Visitor's Name: _____

6. *Write a brief summary of the general questions discussions pertaining to: Program Mission and Goals (AS 1.0), Diversity (AS 3.0), and Assessment (AS 4.0).*

Program Mission and Goals (AS 1.0):

[Summarize your objective/factual findings related to this general question.]

Diversity (AS 3.0):

[Summarize your objective/factual findings related to this general question.]

Assessment (AS 4.0):

[Summarize your objective/factual findings related to this general question.]

7. List each accreditation standard/specific question raised by the BOA in its *Letter of Instruction* (LOI). Provide a thorough discussion of objective/factual findings for each item.

Accreditation Standard....:

[Insert full text of the accreditation standard from the LOI.]

Specific Question:

[Insert full citation language, including the instructions to the visitor, from the LOI.]

Site Visit Findings:

[Write your objective/factual findings to clarify this LOI item.]

[repeat these subheadings for each accreditation standard identified in the LOI]

8. Embed a copy of the site visit schedule including the stakeholders with whom the site visitor met.

[Embed here]



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Board of Accreditation (BOA)
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)
Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Program Accreditation

Site Visit Report

Program Visited:	<input type="text"/>
Program State, District, or Territory:	<input type="text"/>
Program Level:	<input type="checkbox"/> Baccalaureate <input type="checkbox"/> Master's
Visitor Name:	<input type="text"/>
Visit Date:	MM/YYYY
Visit Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Onsite <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual

Site Visitor Findings | General Questions

1.0 Program Mission

Question:

Stakeholder(s):

Findings Based on Discussion and Objective Observation:

[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheadings as needed, for each general question asked]

2.0 Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI)

Question:

Stakeholder(s):

Findings Based on Discussion and Objective Observation:

[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheadings as needed, for each general question asked]

3.0 Explicit Curriculum

Question:

Stakeholder(s):

Findings Based on Discussion and Objective Observation:

[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheadings as needed, for each general question asked]

4.0 Implicit Curriculum

Question:

Stakeholder(s):

Findings Based on Discussion and Objective Observation:

[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheadings as needed, for each general question asked]

5.0 Assessment

Question:

Stakeholder(s):

Findings Based on Discussion and Objective Observation:

[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheadings as needed, for each general question asked]

Site Visitor Findings | Specific Questions

Letter of Instruction (LOI)

Insert full accreditation standard and citation text from the LOI

Site Visitor Findings

Insert findings here

[Delete this help text before submission: Repeat subheadings for each specific question or indicate N/A for a general questions only LOI]

Site Visit Report Reminders

- **Site Visit Reports must:**
 - Be a factual, objective summary of the visitor's specific findings
 - Reflective of the discussions with stakeholders during the visit
 - Unique to the program that was visited (including reports for co-located visits)
 - Written in the visitor's own words
 - Include a report for each general standard required and each standard cited by the BOA in the LOI
 - Be submitted on time, unless an extension is granted by the accreditation specialist
- **Site Visit Reports must not:**
 - Use subjective language
 - Include any feedback, advice, or decision recommendations given to the program by the visitor
 - Include copy/pasted excerpts from the self-study or refer the BOA to the self-study
 - Include information outside of general standards and the specific standards outlined in the LOI
 - Include materials provided by the program during the site visit (this will be provided by in the program response).



Site Visit Report Sample Language (General Question)

3.0 Diversity / 2.0 Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI)

General Question: How are diverse identities within the program included and supported?

Stakeholder(s): Students

Findings Based on Discussion and Objective Observation: *Students reported* that the program recently opened a "Safe Space", which is a physical meeting space operated by the program where students can meet and interact with each other without judgement. The program opened Safe Space because a few students reported experiencing microaggressions from other students within the institution. *Students shared* that this also serves as the social work club's meeting space and includes a suggestion box and community announcement board to share resources and opportunities. *Many students agreed* this space has been supportive and helped them feel like they belong.



SAMPLE: Site Visit Report Language (Specific Question)

Accreditation Standard 3.1.5: The program submits its written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program documents how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

Letter of Instruction:

The program reported it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. However, the program did not provide a policy, nor document how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

The site visitor is asked to discuss with the program and review its policy stating it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. Additionally, the site visitor is asked to discuss with the program how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

Site Visitor Findings:

The program reported they updated the policy stating the program does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program reported that the updated policy is now in the student handbook and field manual, which was provided to the site visitor and reviewed. In addition to the student handbook and field manual, the program stated that the constituents are also informed of this policy on the program website and in orientation. The program will provide the updated policy in the program response.



Submission of the Site Visit Report

- Due **2 weeks** after the conclusion of the site visit to the program's accreditation specialist via email
 - Failure to adhere to this deadline can result in changes to the program's timeline for re-accreditation.
 - If late, proactively notify and request an extension from the accreditation specialist
- Submitted using the applicable Site Visit Report Template (2015 or 2022 EPAS)
- Submitted as one continuous Microsoft Word document rather than multiple attachments
- Formatted consistently throughout the entire document (e.g., fonts, indents, spacing)

Note:

- Accreditation Specialists review the report before sending the final copy to the program
- If the reports do not meet the requirements, specialists may ask the visitor to provide clarifying edits.

Full document submission policy here: [4.7 Document Formatting & Submission Requirements](#) (page 49).



Program Response to the Site Visit Report

- Programs receive the site visit report via email from the Accreditation Specialist
- Programs submit a *Program Response* within two (2) weeks of the date on receipt
- The *Program Response* is the final opportunity for programs to:
 - Provide any clarifying information related to questions in the LOI
 - Provide strengths and opportunities for continuous improvement
 - Correct any inaccuracies or misunderstandings they see in the site visit report
 - Include any materials reviewed with the visitor during the visit
- The BOA uses the LOI, the Site Visit Report, and the Program Response to the Visit Report to make a final decision on the program's reaffirmation.

Note: Site Visitors do not receive a copy of the Program Response, nor do they provide any response to this document.



Contact After the Visit/Reimbursement

- Visitors are to destroy/ delete all program documents upon confirmation from the specialist that the site visit report has been accepted and finalized.
- Contact between the program and the visitor should cease at the conclusion of the visit, except for any communication related to reimbursement
 - Programs are responsible for all expenses related to the visit, including travel days
 - Site visitors follow the guidelines provided by the program to submit reimbursement requests
 - Within 30 days of the reimbursement request submission, programs are required to either reimburse the visitor or provide an update to the visitor on the timeframe for reimbursement
- Any challenges around visit expenses are to be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator for assistance
- Any communication the visitor receives from the program regarding the visit report or other accreditation decision questions, should be directed to the specialist without responding to the program.



Questions After the Visit

- Email or schedule consultation with the program's **Accreditation Specialist:**
 - Content of the LOI
 - EPAS interpretations
 - Report Writing
 - Report Submission
- Email or schedule consultation with the **Volunteer Coordinator:**
 - Site visit planning
 - Site visit schedule
 - Logistics/Travel/Reimbursement
 - Difficulty contacting the program
- **Note:**
 - Joint consultations may be appropriate.



Site Visitor Resources

Accreditation Volunteer Resources:

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

- Reaffirmation site visits policies, templates, and resources: [Site Visit Information](#)
- Policies and procedures regarding the site visit can be found in section 6.6, *Site Visit Information*, of the [Accreditation-Policy-Handbook.pdf \(cswe.org\)](#)
- Information on becoming a site visitor: [Becoming a CSWE Site Visitor](#)
- Board of Accreditation Directory: [Board of Accreditation](#)

Accreditation General Resources:

- Accreditation Homepage: [Accreditation | CSWE](#)
- Accreditation Policies: [Accreditation-Policy-Handbook.pdf \(cswe.org\)](#)
- Reaffirmation Process: [Accreditation Process | CSWE](#)
- Reaffirmation Training (free for site visitors): [Training | CSWE](#)
- 2022 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit: [2022 EPAS | CSWE](#)
- 2015 EPAS Accreditation Toolkit: [2015 EPAS | CSWE](#)
- Directory of Accredited Programs: [Accreditation Directory | CSWE](#)
- Directory of CSWE Staff: [Staff Directory | CSWE](#)
- CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA) Decisions: [BOA Decisions | CSWE](#)

