Accreditation & 2015 EPAS Overview

Presented by Accreditation Specialists:
- Anna Holster, MPhil, MSW
- Katie Gibson-Ledl, LLMSW-Macro
- Marilyn Gentner, LMSW, LICSW
- Katie Benson, MSW
- Spencer L. Middleton, MSW
Session Purpose

The Accreditation Specialists will provide the Program Directors Academy participants with an overview of the Department of Social Work Accreditation and its services, the role of Commission on Accreditation, the accreditation cycle and process, and information about the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

The intent of this session is **not** to provide formal reaffirmation training.
Agenda

• Framework for Accreditation
• Reaffirmation Process Overview
  • Accreditation Resources
• 2015 EPAS Overview
  • Faculty
  • Administrative Leadership
  • Assessment
• Self-Study Submission & Formatting Guidelines
• Site Visit Overview
• Upcoming Trainings & CSWE Learning Academy
• Changes Between Accreditation Review Cycles
• CSWE Contact Information
• Takeaways
• Q & A
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; and
• public accountability
Framework for Accreditation

• *Regional Accreditors:* Accredits institutions
  - CHEA Directories: [https://www.chea.org/directories](https://www.chea.org/directories)

• *Programmatic Accrdrictor:* CSWE’s Commission on Accreditation accredits baccalaureate and master’s social work programs
Framework for Accreditation

The Commission on Accreditation (COA) 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.

The professional judgements of the COA are based on the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) developed by the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and the COA.
Framework for Accreditation

EPAS Development Process:

• COA and COEP are responsible for revising the EPAS at periodic intervals not to exceed 7 years
• Requirement by CHEA (CSWE’s recognizer)
• 2015 EPAS involved a 5-year process with 3 drafts issued for public review and comment
• Next set of EPAS will be released in 2022
  - Current progress: environmental scan, drafting, and feedback from programs, members, and the public
2022 EPAS Feedback Opportunities

• Feedback Session: Future Directions in Field Education 2022 EPAS and Beyond
  o Thursday, October 24th | 3:30-4:30PM | Plaza Building, Governor’s Square 15

• Feedback Session #1:
  o Friday, October 25th | 10:30-11:30AM | Plaza Building, Governor’s Square 12

• Feedback Session #2:
  o Saturday, October 26th | 1:45-2:45PM | Plaza Building, Governor’s Square 12

• Online survey open now through December 13, 2019
Framework for Accreditation

Who are the Commission on Accreditation (COA)?

• Volunteers
• Background in social work education and practice
• Public member
• Active CSWE member with 2 years site visitor experience
• Appointed for 3-year terms by the chair of the CSWE Board of Directors
CSWE Commissions & Councils

CSWE is a membership organization featuring a shared governance structure. Learn more about the board, commissions, & councils and get involved!

Comprehensive list of CSWE commissions and councils: cswe.org/About-CSWE/Governance/Commissions-and-Councils
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)
Accreditation Resources: CSWE Website

• [cswe.org](http://cswe.org) > Accreditation > Process
• Directory of Accredited Programs
• COA Decisions
• Reaffirmation and candidacy processes
• Accreditation standards, EPAS handbook, and samples
• Training

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

*Explore CSWE’s initiatives and resources!*
Accreditation Resources: Accreditation Specialist

- Provides accurate information and resources regarding accreditation
- Conducts trainings
- Provides customized consultations via phone, video, in-person, at APM, at BPD, etc.
- Provides guidance in navigating the reaffirmation process
- Assists in understanding the COA’s policies and procedures
- Does not determine compliance/noncompliance
- All communications are facilitated via the program’s primary contact

Should questions arise regarding accreditation, always confirm accuracy with your program’s accreditation specialist!
Accreditation Resources: Communications from DOSWA & COA

• Periodic accreditation updates sent to program’s primary contact after COA meetings

• Review your programs listing in the Directory of Accredited Programs annually and send updates as needed
  
  o Change in program director, field director, primary contact, institution’s president, program website, phone number, etc. per policy 1.2.4 in the EPAS Handbook
2015 EPAS Overview
Overview of the 2015 EPAS

• EPAS describes four features of an integrated curriculum design:
  o Mission and Goals
  o Explicit Curriculum
  o Implicit Curriculum
  o Assessment

• EPAS Glossary

• COA interpretive discussions/decisions
  o Copy of 2015 EPAS:
Key Developments | 2015 EPAS

• Holistic Competence
• Multi-Dimensional Assessment
  • (4) Dimensions: knowledge, values, skills, cognitive & affective processes
• Implicit Curriculum Assessment
• Language Updates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008 EPAS</th>
<th>2015 EPAS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>Area of Specialized Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Generalist</td>
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<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Specialized</td>
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Competency-based Education

• Implemented in the 2008 EPAS, continues in 2015 EPAS

• Curriculum content and assessment of student learning outcomes are based upon the nine social work competencies and any additional competencies the program chooses to add
Competency-based Education

• **Holistic Competence** | The 2015 EPAS recognizes competence as holistic; this means that the demonstration of competence is informed by the appropriate knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

• **Dimensions** | Each of the nine social work competencies listed in the EPAS is followed by a paragraph that describes the competency. This description contains dimensions of the competency necessary for learning and developing competence throughout the course of a program.

  The dimensions are: *Knowledge, Values, Skills, and Cognitive & Affective Processes*
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
# Social Work Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior</th>
<th>Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice</td>
<td>Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</td>
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<td>Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice</td>
<td>Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice</td>
<td>Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</td>
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<td>Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice</td>
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</table>
Generalist & Specialized Practice

• Generalist Practice | baccalaureate & master’s programs
  o Implements the nine competencies in the 2015 EPAS
  o Programs may add additional competencies

• Specialized Practice | master’s programs only
  o “Extends and enhances” the nine social work competencies for each area of specialized practice
  o Programs may add additional competencies
Program Options

• Defined on page 21 of the EPAS Glossary as:
  “Various structured pathways to degree completion by which social work programs are delivered including specific methods and locations such as on campus, off campus, and virtual instruction.”

• Includes: main campus, branch campus, satellite site, online program, etc.

• Program options are not plans of study such as advanced standing, 16-month, 24-months, part-time, etc.

• A substantive change report is required when adding a new program option per policy 1.2.4 in the EPAS Handbook

• Self-study: Each program option should be explicitly addressed in response to each standard.
Overview of the Reaffirmation Process/Steps

- **Eligibility App**
- **Self-Study**
- **Letter of Instruction***
- **Submit Self-Study**
- **Site Visit Preparation**
- **Site Visit**
- **Site Visit Report**
- **Program Response**

*Programs should not provide a written response to the LOI nor provide a written response in advance of the site visit.

MONTHS IN ADVANCE:

- 12
- 11
- 10
- 8
- 6-8
- 3-5
- 2-3

COA REAFFIRMATION DECISION
Reaffirmation Decisions

• Decision types and descriptions are located in the EPAS Handbook: https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/EPAS-Handbook

• 2.6.1 Reaffirmation Determination Decisions
  o Reaffirm Accreditation for 8 Years.
  o Reaffirm for 8 Years with a Progress Report to be Reviewed by the Program’s Accreditation Specialist or COA.
  o Defer a Decision on Reaffirmation to the Next Meeting and Request Clarifying Information.
  o Place the Program on Conditional Accredited Status.
  o Initiate Withdrawal of Accredited Status.
  o Order a Modified Site Visit.
Reaffirmation Timetables

• Commission on Accreditation (COA) Agendas – meets 3x per year
  o February, June, October/November

• Timetables indicate key deadlines throughout process – utilize this tool early and mark your calendars!

• cswe.org > Accreditation > Process > 2015 EPAS > Reaffirmation > Timetables
Agenda Adjustments & Postponements

- Due dates are firm, however, you have the option of requesting a temporary adjustment or postponement to have your program reviewed on a later COA agenda should the program meet criteria.
- Return to original reaffirmation date for next cycle.
- Policy 1.2.2 and policy 1.2.3 of Handbook provide process and criteria for requesting additional time.
- Contact your accreditation specialist to discuss options for agenda adjustments or postponements and submit required form.
Sample Curriculum Matrix, part 1

Sample Generalist Practice Curriculum Matrix with 2015 EPAS Competencies

This is a sample matrix, but at a minimum the curriculum matrix should include: 1) the nine social work competencies; 2) the course(s) where each competency is implemented; 3) course content (e.g. readings, module, assignments, class activities) where each competency is implemented; and 4) the dimension(s) (knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive & affective reactions) associated with the course content for each competency. Each dimension must be represented for each competency.

Note: Programs are encouraged to develop their own matrix format that works with their syllabi and curriculum content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Course Content</th>
<th>Dimension(s)</th>
<th>Page Number in Volume 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency 4: Engage In Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice</td>
<td>SW112: Introduction of Social Work Research</td>
<td>Literature review assignment: 1) Identify research designs. 2) Distinguish formal research and practice anecdotes. 3) Identify experimental vs. correlational analyses.</td>
<td>Knowledge, Skills</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>SW 231: Human Behavior Theory</td>
<td>Reading Assignment #3 Classroom Activity and Reflection</td>
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<td>SW 315: Advanced Social Work Research</td>
<td>Theory analysis paper: 1) Apply two named theories to case material. 2) Identify data sources for each theory. 3) Distinguish environmental and interpersonal variables</td>
<td>Cognitive/Affective Processes, Values</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge, Skills, Values, Cognitive/Affective Processes</td>
<td>75</td>
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</table>

- Content in the curriculum matrix references where and how each dimension of each competency is covered through the required curriculum.
- This is not where competency is assessed, but is where it is covered in the curriculum to ensure competence.
- Programs must provide content related to all four dimensions of every competency.
- This should be the best places (strong examples) where the competency is covered, rather than all places.
- Programs are expected to provide syllabi for all courses that are documented in the curriculum matrix.
### Sample Curriculum Matrix, part 2

**APPENDIX A, part 2**

Sample Generalist Practice Curriculum Matrix with 2015 EPAS Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Course Content</th>
<th>Dimension(s)</th>
<th>Page Number in Volume 2*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Competency 6:</td>
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<td>Communities</td>
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</table>

*Optional column

- Programs are expected to identify content related to each of the five systems levels for competencies 6-9.
- This can be done through the displayed format or by adding a column to the table on the previous page for systems level that applies to competencies 6-9.
Faculty Standards

AS 3.2.3: The program documents a full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio not greater than 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and not greater than 1:12 for master’s programs and explains how this ratio is calculated. In addition, the program explains how faculty size is commensurate with the number and type of curricular offerings in class and field; number of program options; class size; number of students; advising; and the faculty’s teaching, scholarly, and service responsibilities.
Faculty Standards

• One numerical FTE ratio should be provided.

• Programs may calculate the FTE ratio according to the program’s faculty workload policy and credit hour policy. It is within the purview of the program to determine and explain how the FTE ratio is calculated. Details of the calculation must be provided.

• For example, if the full-time teaching workload is six courses per academic year, each course covered by a part-time faculty member constitutes 1/6 FTE.

• For example, if full-time credit hours are considered 12 per semester, a student taking 6 credit hours per semester constitutes one-half FTE.

• Part-time faculty and students are typically included in the FTE ratio calculation.
Faculty Standards

• Individuals designated as faculty may be included; staff may not be included in the FTE ratio. The program director and field director may be included in the FTE ratio.

• FTE ratio should be consistent with the number of faculty identified on the faculty data and summary forms. If the program is co-located (both baccalaureate and master’s program), include the percentage of time assigned to each program for each faculty member identified without double-counting any faculty member’s time.

• The FTE ratio provided should be inclusive of all program options. A separate FTE ratio is not requested nor required.

• It is helpful to discuss how each program option has sufficient faculty.

• Discuss sufficiency of ratio given each component of standard.
Faculty Standards

• **AS 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-accredited program, with a doctoral degree preferred.

• **AS 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-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.
Program Director Standards

AS B/M3.3.4 a-c: Program Director qualifications, credentials, and administrative appointment

Baccalaureate:
• Documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work program
• A documented master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program (doctoral degree in social work preferred)
• 25% minimum administrative assigned time that is sufficient to lead program operations

Master’s:
• Documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work program
• A documented master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program (doctoral degree in social work preferred)
• 50% minimum administrative assigned time that is sufficient to lead program operations
Field Director Standards

AS B/M 3.3.5 a-c: Field Director qualifications, credentials, and administrative appointment

**Baccalaureate:**
- Documented master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and 2+ years of post-baccalaureate or post-master’s social work degree practice experience
- 25% minimum administrative assigned time that is sufficient to lead field education operations

**Master’s:**
- Documented master’s degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and 2+ years of post-master’s social work degree practice experience
- 50% minimum administrative assigned time that is sufficient to lead field education operations
Multi-Dimensional Assessment | Competency-based Student Learning Outcomes

• Minimum requirement: at least two measures assess each competency
  • One assessment measure is based on demonstration of the competency in real or simulated practice settings (includes behaviors)
  • Other measure is based on demonstration, but does not need to be in practice setting
  • Programs identify a minimum of (2) dimensions per competency

• At the baccalaureate level, programs must have a minimum of two measures for each competency at the generalist level.

• At the master’s level, programs must have a minimum of two measures for each competency at the generalist and specialized levels.
Assessment Data

• Data continuously informs and promotes changes in the explicit and implicit curriculum to enhance the competency-based education model

• *Requirement of AS 4.0.3 and CHEA*: Use Form AS 4(B) or Form AS 4(M) to report assessment outcomes for each program option to constituents and the public on the program’s website and routinely up-date findings (minimally every 2 years)
  
  o Accreditation Specialists collect and review annually
  
  o This form meets the requirements for AS 4.0.3, but does not meet the requirement of detailed assessment outcomes for AS 4.0.2
Implicit Curriculum Assessment

• Assess one aspect of the implicit curriculum as identified in 2015 EPAS, page 14, (AS 4.0.5)

• Which may include but is not limited to an assessment of diversity, student development, faculty, administrative and governance structure, and resources
  • Is not an assessment of the explicit curriculum (coursework, fieldwork, competencies, behaviors, or dimensions)

• Examples of implicit assessment instruments include alumni surveys, student exit surveys, focus groups, interviews, culture/climate surveys, strategic planning process, etc. etc.

• Assess each program option
Writing to an Accreditation Standard

• Write succinctly and clearly
• Write to each element/component of the standard
• Many citations occur because information was missing or unclear
• Use the Accreditation review brief to structure your response to each element of each standard; **Use subheadings!**
• COA cannot make any assumptions; describe how the programs complies with each standard
• Explicitly address each program option in response to each standard
Self-study Due Dates

Self-studies and the Accreditation Review Brief in Word Document format must be sent to the accreditation specialist by close of business on the due date:

- Feb agenda date > April 1st
- June agenda date > August 1st
- October/November agenda date > December 1st
Self-study Formatting

• Submit separate baccalaureate and master’s self-studies
  o Volume 1: Response to Accreditation Standards & Supporting Documentation
  o Volume 2: Syllabi (from required courses identified on curriculum matrices)
  o Volume 3: Student Handbook, Field Manual

• Incorporate forms, templates, and matrices into Volume 1, rather than Volume 3 (NOT as appendices)

• Describe all program options in response to each standard or provide explicit statement that the response applies to all program options
  o Be cognizant of the standards where changes are likely due to the nature of a different location or delivery method
  o For examples: field education, diversity, student development, resources, etc.
Effective June 10, 2019: The COA is paperless! Zero physical copies of accreditation documents are required. E-copies only will be accepted per the policy 1.2.11 Document Formatting & Submission in the EPAS Handbook.
Purpose of the Site Visit

• The site visitor’s primary task is to collect clarifying information on behalf of the COA via discussing only the general and specific standards identified in the Letter of Instruction (LOI)

• Director and Site Visit Coordinator select a site visitor after the program’s Site Visit Planning form is received and the Reaffirmation Eligibility Application is approved

• Visit occurs during a specified timeframe according to the program’s agenda date

• A separate site visitor will be assigned to each program level – baccalaureate and master’s
Role of the Site Visitor

• Site visitors are an integral part of the reaffirmation process, ensuring quality in social work education.

• Site visitors:
  o Operate under the authority of the COA;
  o Visit social work programs and act as information gatherers based on directions from the LOI;
  o Do not determine compliance with accreditation standards, nor offer advice on program development
Site Visit Schedule

• Meeting with Institutional Administrators (e.g., president, provost, etc.)

• Meetings with the Social Work Program may include:
  o Director, Dean, Chair, Faculty Members (full-time and part-time);
  o Field Director, Field Instructors, Field Personnel;
  o Staff, Students, Librarian(s), Advisory Boards, Alumni and;
  o Other individuals whose presence is relevant to the standards raised in the LOI

• Exit Interview

• Any supplemental information provided to the site visitor during the visit must appended to the program’s response to the site visit report
Site Visit Schedule | Resources

• Sample Site Visit Agenda
• General Questions Bank for Site Visitors

• Location on CSWE website: https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/Site-Visit-Information
Preparation for the Site Visitor

• The program director communicates with the site visitor to arrange the visit, including:
  o Travel Plans (prepaid coach fare; transferrable and refundable accommodations in case of emergency)
  o Hotel Accommodations (no dorms)
  o Work Space Requirements in the Hotel and on Campus
  o Reimbursement for Out of Pocket Expenses
  o Site Visit Schedule (based on Letter of Instruction)

• The self-study is sent by the program to the site visitor(s) 30 days prior to the site visit and should be identical to the version submitted to the accreditation specialist
Communication Guidelines

• The program director is the person responsible for all communication with the site visitor

• Faculty members, students, or others program stakeholders should not communicate with the site visitor before the arrival on campus, nor after the arrival until the scheduled meeting

• It is inappropriate for the site visitor to receive anonymous documents, telephone calls, or other similar information

• Following the site visit all communication between the program and site visitor ceases
Upcoming Trainings & CSWE Learning Academy

• 2015 EPAS Reaffirmation Training
  o Online modules
  o Face-to-face session
  o Programs register for online modules
  o Online registration grants access for four to attend in-person session

• Visit learningacademy.cswe.org to learn more and register

• New 2020 dates will be posted soon! Check back periodically or email Accredworkshop@cswe.org.
Changes Between Accreditation Review Cycles

• Policy 1.2.4. Program Changes in the EPAS Handbook

• Substantive Change Reports
  o Starting an online program option (review Section A)
  o Starting an off-site, branch, satellite, off-campus program option (review Section B)

• Other program changes require notification to the accreditation specialist (review Section C)

• The following list is not exhaustive, the program is encouraged to contact the accreditation specialist to discuss upcoming changes to determine if notification is required
Changes Between Accreditation Review Cycles

• Other program changes require notification to the accreditation specialist (review Section C)
  o Changes to key personnel (review Section 5c)
  o Reduction in resources
  o Closing a program option including online, off-site, branch, satellite, or off-campus sites
  o Changes in faculty-to-student ratio that effect compliance
  o Changes in program director and field director assigned time that effect compliance
  o Loss of faculty that puts the program below the minimum number of full-time faculty required (two for baccalaureate programs and six for master's programs)
  o Etc.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<td>Accreditation-related fees</td>
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<td>File a complaint/Request a waiver</td>
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<td>An other accreditation-related questions; contact your program’s accreditation specialist!</td>
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#APM19
Takeaways!

• CSWE’s Commission on Accreditation is recognized by CHEA.
• The current set of EPAS is dated 2015.
• The next set of EPAS will be dated 2022.
• The COA meets 3 times per year.
• My program’s accreditation specialist’s name is [differs per program].
• There are 4 (number) sections in the 2015 EPAS.
• The EPAS describes a competency-based education model.
• The self-study is comprised of 3 (number) volumes.
• True or False? The COA accepts physical copies of accreditation documents.
• True or False? Some program changes must be reported to COA or the accreditation department between review cycles.
Q & A

Thank you for attending this APM session!

Questions?