

**CSWE and Commission on Accreditation Statement
Update May 9, 2020, Alexandria, Va.**

The safety of students, educators, social workers, and their clients and communities are paramount to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and its Council on Accreditation (COA). In response to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to supporting social work education programs as follows:

1. Student safety. AS 2.2.7 requires that field education programs specify policies for supporting student safety in field. Programs are encouraged to safeguard student safety during the COVID-19 pandemic to the greatest extent possible, including suspending or delaying field education placements when necessary for student safety.
2. Reduction in field hours. Under AS 2.2.5, field education programs provide a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and a minimum of 900 hours for master's programs. Due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, students who have completed 85% of the required placement hours (i.e., equivalent to 340 hours for baccalaureate programs and 765 hours for master's programs) to a satisfactory level may, at program discretion, be evaluated as having met the field placement requirement. This reduction in field hours may be applied to field placement courses that are fully or partially completed by May 31, 2021. Field placement courses that are partially completed by May 31, 2021 may continue to apply the 15% reduction in hours until the specific field course is completed, even if the completion date is after May 31, 2021. New field placement courses that begin after May 31, 2021 will return to the full hours requirement. Remote field activity, as well as field supervision and field seminar hours, may be counted toward the accrual of field hours.
3. Remote field activity. Although AS 2.2.4 requires field education through "in-person contact," the Commission on Accreditation will broaden its interpretation to include remote-based field activity. Remote field activity can include engagement such as field-related assignments, trainings, and virtual meetings. Client-related virtual meetings should be in accordance with field site policies for secure communications.
4. Candidacy or reaffirmation materials that are due in spring or summer 2020. Extensions will be granted for programs whose submission of materials has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. If your program needs an extension, please request an extension by email to MKurfess@cswe.org and copy your accreditation specialist. Please include a brief description of the program's situation. The accreditation specialist will respond with the approved extension date.
5. Program site visits. Reaffirmation and candidacy site visits will be conducted through virtual meetings, instead of on-site meetings, through December 31, 2020. The virtual meeting directive may be extended as the COVID-19 situation warrants.

6. Assessment. Programs are encouraged to continue with their assessment plans to the extent possible. The Commission on Accreditation recognizes that assessment outcomes will likely be impacted by disruptions to class instruction and field. Programs who are in the process of reporting assessment outcomes as part of their candidacy or reaffirmation self-studies are encouraged to provide context relative to the impact of COVID-19. Programs may also address the impact of COVID-19 in implications for program renewal and program changes explicit curriculum assessment and implicit curriculum assessment.

We recognize these are extraordinary times and we will remain vigilant in supporting social work education programs and providing additional guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold.

Sincerely,

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