

Accreditation Services, Scope, & Resources

Welcome to the accreditation process!

Whether you are a new program administrator ready to absorb as much as possible or a seasoned writer of accreditation documents, we invite you to explore the accreditation services and resources brought to you by the Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) and Commission on Accreditation (COA).

One of our most frequently asked questions is “*What accreditation resources, supports, and services are available to our social work program?*” This section provides a snapshot of year-round accreditation services and resources provided to programs. We look forward to engaging with you and establishing a professional working relationship as you work towards your accreditation goals. We are thrilled to continually assess and enhance our offerings and appreciate your participation and feedback – so check back often for updates!

Scope & Services

The following descriptions comprise the most frequent external or public-facing activities for each role within the accreditation team. This list is not comprehensive of the full scope of each team member’s role in facilitating accreditation processes.

Director of Accreditation:

- Processes applications for current site visitors applying to serve on the Commission on Accreditation (COA)
- Processes complaints (policy 1.2.1 in the [EPAS Handbook](#))
- Processes waiver requests (policy 1.2.5 in the [EPAS Handbook](#))
- Serves as primary contact for practice doctoral program accreditation inquires; e-mail practicedoc@cswe.org

Senior Team Leader:

- Reviews and determines outcome for Candidacy Eligibility Applications
- Provides consultation to programs that are considering applying for Candidacy and pre-candidate programs until the approval of the draft Benchmark 1 document
- Reviews and approves Draft Benchmark 1 documents
- Consultations may be provided on the accreditation process, EPAS, and COA interpretations via phone, e-mail, video, and/or in-person at CSWE’s Annual Program Meeting (APM) and the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) conference
 - YouCanBookMe scheduling app conveniently linked in e-mail signature

- Appointments are available to social work education programs only; not members of the public
- Appointments may only be booked by the program's selected primary contact and/or their designees (per policy 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#))
- For public inquires, feel empowered to call CSWE headquarters at (703) 683-8080 to locate the staff member who can best respond to your question(s) or review our [Whom to Contact](#) info sheet
- Consultations services are available year-round!
- Develop and maintain accreditation templates, forms, and resources
- Provide guidance in navigating the pre-candidacy process and the substantive change process
- Provide accurate accreditation-related information and [resources](#) to programs and the public
- Maintain the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) and make program-requested updates to primary contact, program director, field director, and all directory fields
- Assist in understanding accreditation [policies and procedures](#)
- Conduct in-person and virtual [trainings](#) and offer [educational opportunities](#) to accredited and candidate programs in Alexandria, VA; at the annual APM; and/or online year-round
- [Train](#) and support site visitors and COA volunteers
- Collaborate in individualized and group settings with programs in their efforts to reach their accreditation goals
- Communicate with the program's selected primary contact (per policy 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#)) and designees authorized by the primary contact to speak with the Senior Team Leader
- Does not determine compliance/noncompliance as COA has sole and final authority as the arbiter of compliance in regulation decision-making

Accreditation Specialists:

- Provide customized consultation on the accreditation process, EPAS, and COA interpretations, via phone, e-mail, video, and/or in-person at CSWE's Annual Program Meeting (APM) and the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) conference
 - YouCanBookMe scheduling app conveniently linked in each specialist's e-mail signature
 - Appointments are available to social work education programs only; not members of the public
 - Appointments may only be booked by the program's selected primary contact and/or their designees (per policy 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#))
 - For public inquires, feel empowered to call CSWE headquarters at (703) 683-8080 to locate the staff member who can best respond to your question(s) or review our [Whom to Contact](#) info sheet
 - Consultations services are available year-round!
- Develop and maintain accreditation templates, forms, and resources
- Communicate COA decisions, rationales, and letters

- Provide guidance in navigating the reaffirmation or candidacy process and changes between review cycles
- Provide accurate accreditation-related information and [resources](#) to programs and the public
- Maintain the [Directory of Accredited Programs](#) and make program-requested updates to primary contact, program director, field director, and all directory fields
- Assist in understanding accreditation [policies and procedures](#)
- Conduct in-person and virtual [trainings](#) and offer [educational opportunities](#) to accredited and candidate programs in Alexandria, VA; at the annual APM; and/or online year-round
- [Train](#) and support site visitors and COA volunteers
- Collaborate in individualized and group settings with programs in their efforts to reach their accreditation goals
- Manage the COA document review process
- Liaise between the COA and the program in communicating citations, [decisions](#), rationales for decision-making, and next steps
- Communicate with the program's selected primary contact (per policy 1.2.7 in the [EPAS Handbook](#)) and designees authorized by the primary contact to speak with the Accreditation Specialist
- Does not conduct document reviews, provide written feedback, nor offer live or on-demand reviews of written materials
- Does not determine compliance/noncompliance as COA has sole and final authority as the arbiter of compliance in regulation decision-making

Site Visit Coordinator:

- Facilitates volunteer interest in serving as a site visitor and managing site visitor roster
- Processes applications for volunteer site visitors
- Assigns and communicates commissioner visitor assignments
- Assigns and communicates site visitor assignments
- Serves as point of contact to address logistics in the event of emergencies during site visits
- Assists with questions related to site visit logistics and site visitor reimbursement

Department Manager:

- Feesaccred@cswe.org
 - Responds to questions related to *Candidacy* and *Reaffirmation* fees, invoices, and payments
 - Serves as point of contact for programs that have issues or need troubleshooting related to paying accreditation fees
 - Annual member dues questions should be directed to membership@cswe.org
- Accredworkshop@cswe.org
 - Responds to questions related to registering for *Candidacy* and *Reaffirmation* workshops

- Serves as point of contact for programs that have issues or need troubleshooting related to workshop registration, logistics, or offerings

ISWDRES:

CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) is recognized as the sole accrediting body for social work education in the United States and its territories. COA does not accredit social work education programs beyond the U.S. and its territories. Thus, the *International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service (ISWDRES)* recognizes internationally earned academic credentials in social work that are comparable to accredited baccalaureate and master's degrees in social work in the U.S. and its territories. Recognition may be necessary to establish qualifications for employment, graduate school admission, membership in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), state licensing, and/or certification.

Recognition is based on the general comparability of the program objectives (as stated in the program catalogue or program's official memorandum) and level of the applicant's social work education compared to social work education in the U.S. and its territories. Visit the [ISWDRES webpage](#) to learn more or apply. Questions may be directed to ISWDRES@cswe.org.

Post-Degree Fellowship Accreditation (pilot):

CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) voted to pilot the accreditation of post-degree fellowship programs at its October 2019 meeting. Accreditation of post-degree social work fellowship programs serves to recognize advanced training opportunities in focused areas of social work practice. Questions may be directed to Stephanie McNally, Manager of Social Work Fellowship Recognition, at smcnally@cswe.org.

Practice Doctoral Accreditation (pilot):

CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) voted to pilot the accreditation of practice doctoral programs at its June 2020 meeting. CSWE is moving forward to create the operational infrastructure to support this pilot accreditation process and determine when the pilot will begin. Access historical and current information about this pilot process on the [Practice Doctoral Accreditation webpage](#). Questions may be directed to practicedoc@cswe.org.

DOSWA Operations

Frequency of Communication

It is important to keep a continuous line of communication open between the accreditation team and the program. It is the program's responsibility to ensure its selected primary contact is reported to CSWE and remains current at all times for timely and consistent contact. The accreditation team sends periodic [accreditation news](#) and updates via email to the program's primary contact after COA meetings or as needed.

It is best practice to contact accreditation staff with questions as they arise. We request your patience and understanding while awaiting our response as we may be experiencing a high volume of communications.

Unsure whom to contact with your inquiry? Review our [contact reference guide](#).

Disclaimer About External Accreditation-related Information

Should questions arise regarding accreditation, **always confirm accuracy with your program's accreditation specialist!** Neither COA nor accreditation staff review, comment on, appraise, nor endorse external presentations, publications, resources, or consultants. CSWE's accreditation team is your primary and verified source of information. Accreditation consultations and review processes are considered confidential. Staff do not share program-specific information with other stakeholders, including other programs. This includes discussing other program's compliance, sharing samples, offering networking connections, identifying programmatic innovations, etc.

Commercial Assessment Instruments and Packages

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

Program Role & Responsibility

Accreditation is an elective, program-driven, and self-managed peer-review process. Programs will not receive prompts nor reminders. Programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the EPAS. Thus, it is important to understand all tools and resources available to you in order to successfully navigate the accreditation process.

Commitment to Quality

Similar to accredited programs, the COA and accreditation team are also committed to and engaging in continuous quality improvement efforts. This translates to updates and enhancements to policies, procedures, interpretations, requirements, and resources. COA and staff are diligent in providing e-mail blast updates to programs when changes and clarifications occur, or when new resources are published.

Resources Overview

The COA and accreditation staff share the goal of making the accreditation process transparent, accessible, developmental, and supportive. To this end, the website contains a robust amount of information and rich resources to guide you in your continuous quality improvement efforts and accreditation reviews.

Always check the CSWE website and download the most updated documents before submitting items to the COA and/or accreditation staff!

Recommended Reading

- [2015 EPAS & Glossary](#) | the current set of educational policy and accreditation standards that govern and guide your continuous accreditation efforts
- [2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide](#) | companion document to the 2015 EPAS that covers accreditation framework, 2015 EPAS framework, resources for navigating the accreditation process, and standard-by-standard interpretations & tips
- [2015 EPAS Handbook](#) | policies and procedures for navigating all phases of accreditation

Training & Educational Opportunities

- [Candidacy Training \(in-person\)](#) | for baccalaureate or master's social work programs seeking accredited status
- [Reaffirmation Training \(online\)](#) | for currently accredited social work programs seeking formal training on the 2015 EPAS and reaffirmation process
- [Accreditation Lunch & Learn Webinar Series](#) | periodic interactive topical webinar sessions
- [Past Accreditation PowerPoints](#) | depository of all publicly available informational PowerPoint presentations
- [Site Visitor Training](#) | for social work faculty and/or administrators interested in serving as a volunteer site visitor under the authority of the COA

[Accreditation Resources](#)

- Downloadable accreditation timetables | details what is due, to whom, when, and in what format
- Postponement / agenda adjustment form
- Team approach to writing a benchmark or self-study
- Sample curriculum matrices
- Sample assessment plan format
- Candidacy benchmark templates
- Reaffirmation /initial accreditation self-study template
- All required benchmark and self-study forms
- Formatting and submission requirements | accreditation is paperless!
- Eligibility applications
- Site visit planning forms
- Sample commission and site visit agendas
- Fee information

These web-based resources, in addition to the accreditation services provided by staff, fill your toolkit with the essential tools you need to achieve your accreditation goals.

Please feel empowered to reach out as questions arise!