COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Required Format of Materials Submitted to the COA

The following policies and procedures apply to **all documents** submitted to the Commission on Accreditation (COA) or accreditation staff. This includes but is not limited to:

- Reaffirmation self-studies
- Candidacy benchmarks
- Site/Commission visit reports
- Program responses to visit reports
- Progress reports
- Restoration reports
- Site visit planning forms
- Eligibility applications
- Substantive change proposals
- Notifications of program changes
- Forms

General Formatting

All accreditation documents submitted to the COA and/or accreditation staff must be formatted as follows:

- ☐ Use 12-point Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial font.
- ☐ No word limit, but readers appreciate brevity.
- ☐ Margins, indentations, and subheadings should be consistent.
- ☐ Pagination should be continuous.
  - o Especially in Volume I of self-studies and benchmarks.
- ☐ Single space all documents.
- ☐ Include a table of contents.
  - o A table of contents should be provided in each volume of self-studies and benchmarks identifying component parts.
- ☐ Include a cover page addressed to the COA and/or accreditation staff.
  - o For self-studies and benchmarks, each volume should include a cover page identifying the program/institution name, primary contact, level, EPAS version (2015 or 2008), date submitted, and document title.
- ☐ Refer to the APA Publication Manual, 6th ed. for all other matters of style.

Reaffirmation & Candidacy Documents

Eligibility Applications (for Reaffirmation, Candidacy, and Initial Accreditation)
- ☐ Eligibility applications include a series of eligibility standards that require the program to demonstrate that its host institution can and will support and sustain a social work program.
- ☐ There are different eligibility applications for Reaffirmation, Candidacy, and Initial Accreditation. Please complete the proper application.
- ☐ Web-based hyperlinks to content that substantiates compliance with the eligibility standards may be included in the application.
  - o A direct link to the relevant material **MUST** be provided. Accreditation staff will not search/click through the website for requested information.
  - o If a direct link is not possible, the program **MUST** detail the specific section of the webpage or provide the navigation path (e.g., click "xyz" in the upper left corner, etc.) to quickly locate the requested information.

- o Alternatively, if a direct link is not possible, copy/paste the appropriate sections/content directly into the application.
- o Screenshots of website or other content will **NOT** be accepted.

Review Brief (for Reaffirmation or Candidacy Self-Studies)
- □ Review Briefs are the Commissioner's evaluative guide to locating information and reviewing self-studies and benchmarks. Fill out the form completely and check for accuracy. Do not complete the Compliance/Concern column, as that column will be completed by the Commissioners.
- □ There are different review briefs for Reaffirmation, Benchmark 1, Benchmark 2, and Initial Accreditation (aka Benchmark 3). Please use the proper form.
- □ Identify program options on page 2-3. Program options are locations or delivery methods such as main campus, online, branch/satellite campus, etc. Program options are defined in policy 1.2.4 of the EPAS Handbook.
- □ Do **NOT** make any changes to the form.

Self-Study (Benchmark, Initial and Reaffirmation)
- □ *VOLUME 1: Narrative Responses to Accreditation Standards*
  - o Follow the appropriate review brief as your outline.
  - o Include the exact text of each standard in bold face and follow it with a narrative response to the standard. It is not required to include the educational policy (EP) text.
  - o Address each component of the standard in your response and use subheadings when appropriate.
  - o Use terminology consistent with the 2015 EPAS and Glossary.
  - o Information and relevant documentation for each standard is included directly in response to that standard (**not as appendices or separate attachments**). Commissioners/staff will not search through the document for requested information.
    - Web-based hyperlinks to content that substantiates compliance with a standard will **NOT** be accepted. Commissioners/staff will not search websites for requested information.
    - All required compliance information **MUST** be documented via a narrative response to the standard.
  - o All forms, tables, and matrices should be inserted into the narrative (**not as appendices or separate attachments**). Required forms (under Self-Study Forms) include: faculty data form, faculty summary form, program expenses budget, assessment reporting form, and librarian's report.
  - o Always check CSWE's website for the most updated version of these forms. When including tables, charts, or matrices, always explain how to read or interpret the graphic in the accompanying narrative. For guidance on how best to present tables, charts, and matrices, use the APA Publication Manual, 6th Ed.
  - o Program options, defined in the 2015 EPAS glossary as locations and/or delivery methods, should be explicitly addressed in response to every standard. In cases where all program options are identical with respect to the program's response to the accreditation standard, state this clearly.
  - o There are a series of samples and optional benchmark and self-study volume 1 templates available on our website (select Resources).
    - Reaffirmation/Initial Accreditation Volume I Template
    - Benchmark II Volume I Template
    - Benchmark I Volume I Template

- □ *VOLUME 2: Syllabi*
  - o Syllabi should be consistent in format. The COA does not have guidelines or requirements for syllabi. However, syllabi are required to provide evidence that competency-based course content meets accreditation standards.

- Syllabi must be provided and complete; TBD content should not be included.
- Each course/syllabus discussed in the curriculum matrix should be included in Volume 2.
- Provide only a master syllabus when there are multiple sections of a course.

☐ *VOLUME 3: Student Handbook and Field Manual*
- The student handbook and field manual must be included in Volume 3.
- A table of contents for Volume 3 must be provided.
  - All documents provided in Volume 3 must be in the table of contents
  - A searchable cover page using wording that is identical to the table of contents must precede all documents in Volume 3.

Program Responses and Reports
Includes program responses to site/commission visit reports, deferral responses, progress reports, and restoration reports.

☐ The entire document must as a single/continuous file with all relevant compliance materials embedded directly into the document.
☐ Follow the COA-issued letter as your outline.
- Program responses to visitor reports **MUST** include the full language copied/pasted from the visit report.
☐ Include the exact text of each standard in bold face, the COA letter language, and follow it with a narrative response to the standard and all relevant information/documentation to support compliance. It is not required to include the educational policy (EP) text.
☐ Address each component of the standard in your response and use subheadings when appropriate.
☐ Information and relevant documentation for each standard is included directly in response to that standard (not as appendices or separate attachments). Commissioners will not search through the document for requested information.
- Web-based hyperlinks to content that substantiates compliance with a standard will **NOT** be accepted. Commissioners/staff will not search websites for requested information.
- All required compliance information **MUST** be documented via a narrative response to the standard.
☐ All forms, tables, and matrices should be inserted into the narrative (**not as appendices or separate attachments**). Required forms (select Self-Study Forms) include: faculty data form, faculty summary form, program expenses budget, assessment reporting form, and librarian's report.
- Always check CSWE's website for the most updated version of these forms.
☐ When including tables, charts, or matrices, always explain how to read or interpret the graphic in the accompanying narrative.
☐ There are a series of curriculum matrix and assessment plan samples available on our website (select Resources).
- Generalist Practice Curriculum Matrix
- Specialized Practice Curriculum Matrix
- Assessment Plan
- Reporting Assessment Outcomes
☐ Do not edit or refer to previously submitted documents. Previously submitted documents will not be considered in the accreditation review process unless otherwise stated in policy/procedure. Commissioners must be able to determine compliance without referring to documents not provided in this response or report.
☐ Program options, defined in the 2015 EPAS glossary as locations and/or delivery methods, should be explicitly addressed in response to every standard. In cases where all program options are identical with respect to the program's response to the accreditation standard, state this clearly.

Electronic Submission

Accreditation processes are paperless! Physical copies are no longer required.

Acceptable Document Types

□ Microsoft (MS) Word Documents
  o Review Briefs must be submitted in MS Word
  o Site/Commission visit reports must be submitted in MS Word
□ Searchable Adobe PDF Documents
  o Reaffirmation self-studies
  o Candidacy benchmarks
  o Program responses to visit reports
  o Progress reports
  o Restoration reports
  o Eligibility applications
  o Substantive change proposals
  o Notifications of program changes
  o Forms
□ Cloud-based documents will **NOT** be accepted
□ Scanned documents will **NOT** be accepted
□ Password-protected documents will **NOT** be accepted

Searchability

□ All documents must be searchable
□ Do **NOT** scan documents
□ MS Word or other word-processing documents should be converted to PDF using the word processor's Print and "Save as PDF" function.
□ Short supporting documentation such as letters or memos are an exception to the "no scanning" rule.
  o Letters or memos that provide documentation of the program or field director's full-time appointment may be scanned providing:
    ▪ Scanned documents must be preceded by a searchable cover sheet indicating what the scanned document is and the standard for which it has been provided.
    ▪ The language used in the cover sheet must be identical to the language used in the table of contents.
    ▪ Scanned documents may **NOT** be longer than three pages.
  o Scanned letters/memos must be clearly readable.
  o Scanned letters/memos must be incorporated into the relevant accreditation document, not included as an appendix or separate attachment.

Single/Continuous File

□ Appendices and separate attachments may **NOT** be included in any document submission to the COA or accreditation staff.
□ Numerous appendices and attachments can result in a confusing or incomplete review process.
□ Streamline the all relevant information, policies/procedures, forms, tables, and matrices by inserting it directly into the narrative, form, application, etc.

Self-Study (Benchmark, Initial and Reaffirmation)

□ Submit no more than four (4) self-study documents for reaffirmation or candidacy:
  o *Volume 1* is a single document that includes the entire program narrative response to accreditation standards in PDF format.
  o *Volume 2* is a single document that includes all program syllabi for courses discussed on the curriculum matrix in PDF.
    ▪ All course content discussed on the curriculum matrix **MUST** be included on the corresponding syllabus in Volume 2.

- - o *Volume 3* is a single document that includes a table of contents, the student handbook, and the field manual.
    - o Review Brief is a single document that **MUST** be submitted in MS Word format.
  - □ Baccalaureate and master's program candidacy/reaffirmation self-studies may **NOT** be combined. For programs submitting undergraduate and graduate program materials simultaneously, a separate Volume 1, 2, 3 and review brief must be submitted for each program.
    - o Each program is reviewed independently and accredited separately.
  - □ Reaffirmation documents must be submitted directly to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist.
  - □ Candidacy documents must be submitted to the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist and the Commission Visitor.

Program Responses and Reports
  - □ Program Responses and Progress Reports should be submitted as a single PDF document.

Submitting Documents
  - □ Submit documents via email.
  - □ Be cognizant of document size as large files may fail to send via email.
    - o Programs should attempt to send all required files in a single email.
    - o Should the email fail, the program may submit each document separately, in multiple emails.
  - □ Documents will not be considered "submitted" until the Accreditation Specialist and/or Commission Visitor confirms that they have received and successfully opened the submission.
  - □ Do **NOT** send other electronic media such as CD's, DVD, or SD cards.

Seek IT Support for Troubleshooting
  - □ Accreditation staff are not trained to troubleshoot formatting or submission issues.
  - □ Should the program require additional assistance preparing an accreditation document according to these policies and procedures, they are encouraged to partner with their institution's IT services.

Submission Deadlines

Reaffirmation
  - □ Self-studies must be e-mailed/time stamped on or before the date due:

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

  - □ Program responses to the site visit report are due within 2-weeks of the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist sending the report and detailed instructions. The due date will be specified via e-mail.
  - □ Deferral responses, progress reports, and restoration reports are due no later than the date specified in the COA-issued decision letter.

Candidacy
  - □ Benchmark/initial self-studies must be e-mailed/time stamped at least 30 days prior the commission visit.
  - □ Program responses to the commission visit report are due within 2-weeks of the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist sending the report and detailed instructions. The due date will be specified via e-mail.
  - □ Deferral responses, progress reports, and restoration reports are due no later than the date specified in the COA-issued decision letter.

Substantive Changes

- □ Substantive change proposals must be e-mailed/time stamped on or before the date due:

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

- □ These deadlines apply for all substantive change proposal, whether they are submitted for COA or accreditation staff review.
- □ Per policy, the program should expect approximately 3-6 months between proposal submission date and decision date. This timeline is subject to change depending on the outcome of the review.

All other accreditation document submissions:

- □ Due dates are specified in the relevant policy/procedure in the EPAS Handbook. Contact the program's CSWE Accreditation Specialist if there are any questions regarding the due date for a specific accreditation document.

Failure to Submit Materials

- □ Failure to submit materials on time may result in the program being placed on conditional status and/or being moved to another agenda date per Section 2.1.1 in the EPAS Handbook.
- □ **NO ADDITIONAL MATERIALS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER AN ACCREDITATION DUE DATE.**
- □ Accreditation staff cannot alter, edit, amend, nor substitute program materials submitted for an accreditation review.
- □ **FAILURE TO MEET THE DUE DATE MAY AFFECT THE PROGRAM'S ACCREDITATION STANDING.**