



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



**Accreditation Lunch & Learn:  
Exploring and applying for Candidacy**

Thursday, May 7, 2020 | 2-3pm ET | Zoom



# Housekeeping



- Welcome!
- This webinar is being recorded
- Available on the CSWE website by May 11, 2020
- Pre-candidacy and related questions submitted during registration
- We have 100 participants on today's webinar and may not be able to answer all questions that are submitted in Chat or Q&A at the end

If you have additional pre-candidacy questions, please schedule a consultation with the Director of Accreditation, Mary Kurfess, at [mkurfess@cswe.org](mailto:mkurfess@cswe.org).

If you have already been assigned, contact your Accreditation Specialist

Mary Kurfess, Director

Monica Wylie,  
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Accreditation Specialist

Vitali Chamov,  
ISWDRES Manager

# Meet The Accreditation team

**Your Webinar Facilitators are the Director, Mary Kurfess, and the five (5) Accreditation Specialists!**

- Programs work with the Director until their candidacy application is approved.
- Then each program is randomly assigned to an accreditation specialist
- Co-located programs are typically assigned to the same specialist
- The specialist is the liaison between the Commission on Accreditation (COA) and the programs
- Each specialist collaborates with about 180 programs

Hello!

# Agenda

## Exploring and Applying for Candidacy

Framework for Accreditation

Getting Started

Timetables

Candidacy Process

Application Forms

Writing Benchmark I

Resources

Q & A



# Framework for Accreditation

# Framework for Accreditation

The primary purposes of accreditation:

**-Quality Assurance - Academic improvement - Public accountability**

- Social work accreditation is a **peer-review** process.
- Members serving on the Commission on Accreditation (COA) are volunteer social work faculty
- COA accredits baccalaureate and master's level programs
- The CSWE - COA is the sole and final arbiter of program compliance with accreditation standards

# Framework for Accreditation

- Accreditation is a program-initiated process
- Social work programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the 2015 EPAS
- The Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) **staff liaise** between the COA and the social work programs:
  - provide consultation services
  - education and training
  - accreditation policies and procedures
  - send COA decision letters to programs

# Framework for Accreditation

- The COA is recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
- CSWE is the only recognized social work accrediting body for the United States and its territories
- The professional judgements of the COA are based on the **Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)**
- The EPAS are developed/revised every seven years by the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP) and the COA.



# Getting Started

# BEFORE CSWE: Approval to Start the Process

## **IMPORTANT STEP: Approvals Required in Advance of Application Submission to CSWE's Accreditation Department**

- State higher education and regional accreditation approvals must be obtained prior to submitting application.
- Internal program, institutional, or board approvals
- These approvals can take anywhere from 6-months to 1-year or more dependent upon each process and the materials required for approval.
- Plan accordingly as the Accreditation Department cannot move forward the application without documented approvals at the state- and regional-levels.

# TERMS

- Pre-Candidacy
  - The time before the COA awards a program Candidacy status
- Candidacy
  - Term used broadly to refer to a 3+ year period of time before the COA grants a program Initial Accreditation
- Benchmarks I, II, and III
  - Year/phase 1, 2, and 3 of the Candidacy process
  - Also refers to a document turned in during each year of Candidacy
- CV I, II, and III
  - Commissioner site visit 1, 2, & 3 corresponding with Benchmarks 1, 2, & 3
- Candidacy Status, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of Candidacy, Initial Accreditation
  - Decisions by the COA after each Benchmark

# Benchmarks

- The benchmark model is a 3 year systematic, incremental approach to developing a social work program and writing a comprehensive self-study.
  - **Some** of the accreditation standards addressed at Benchmark I;
  - **more** at Benchmark II,
  - **all** at Benchmark III
- The first portion of the Benchmark (I or II) document consists of specific accreditation standards with which the program must be in **compliance**
- The second portion of each Benchmark (I, or II) consists of standards that must be addressed in writing by the program in **draft** form.
- **At Benchmark III**, an entire self-study with narrative written showing program **compliance with all accreditation standards** is reviewed for Initial Accreditation.

# Commissioner Visits

- Program development is guided by COA commissioners who visit the program in person (in COVID-19, the visit is virtual)
  - At Benchmark I
  - At Benchmark II
  - At Benchmark III
- During each visit the commissioner consults with the program concerning its
  - Compliance with designated standards
  - Its progress with standards due in draft

# MAJOR CANDIDACY DUE DATES

(see Timetables for all due dates: <https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process>)

Candidacy Eligibility Documents	Draft Benchmark I (BM 1) to CSWE	Commissioner Site Visit Dates (3 are scheduled)	Commission on Accreditation (COA) Review Dates
<p><b>Jan 31, 2021</b> Due to CSWE director of accreditation</p> <p><b>Accreditation will apply to students entering Fall 2021 and beyond.</b></p>	<p><b>Due to CSWE accreditation specialist by no later than March 15, 2021</b></p> <p>Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by June 1, 2021</p> <p>Benchmark II &amp; II: see timetable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit 1: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2021</li> <li>• Visit 2: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2022</li> <li>• Visit 3: Sept 1-Nov 15, 2023</li> </ul> <p>E-mail final copy of Benchmark documents to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidacy Status Review—<b>February 2022</b></li> <li>• Year 2 Candidacy Review—<b>February 2023</b></li> <li>• Initial Accreditation—<b>February 2024</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Mar 31, 2021</b> Due to CSWE director of accreditation</p> <p><b>Accreditation will apply to students entering Fall 2021 and beyond.</b></p>	<p><b>Due to CSWE accreditation specialist by no later than May 15, 2021</b></p> <p>Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by August 1, 2021</p> <p>Benchmark II &amp; II: see timetable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit 1: Dec 1, 2021-Feb 28, 2022</li> <li>• Visit 2: Dec 1, 2022-Feb 28, 2023</li> <li>• Visit 3: Dec 1, 2023-Feb 28, 2024</li> </ul> <p>E-mail final copy of Benchmark documents to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidacy Status Review—<b>June 2022</b></li> <li>• Year 2 Candidacy Review—<b>June 2023</b></li> <li>• Initial Accreditation—<b>June 2024</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>May 31, 2021</b> Due to CSWE director of accreditation</p> <p><b>Accreditation will apply to students entering Fall 2022 and beyond.</b></p>	<p><b>Due to CSWE accreditation specialist by no later than July 15, 2021</b></p> <p>Approval by CSWE accreditation specialist by October 1, 2021</p> <p>Benchmark II &amp; III: see timetable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit 1: March 1-May 31, 2022</li> <li>• Visit 2: March 1-May 31, 2023</li> <li>• Visit 3: March 1-May 31, 2024</li> </ul> <p>E-mail final copy of Benchmark documents to commissioner and accreditation specialist one month prior to CV visit..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidacy Status Review—<b>Oct 2022</b></li> <li>• Year 2 Candidacy Review—<b>Oct 2023</b></li> <li>• Initial Accreditation—<b>Oct 2024</b></li> </ul>

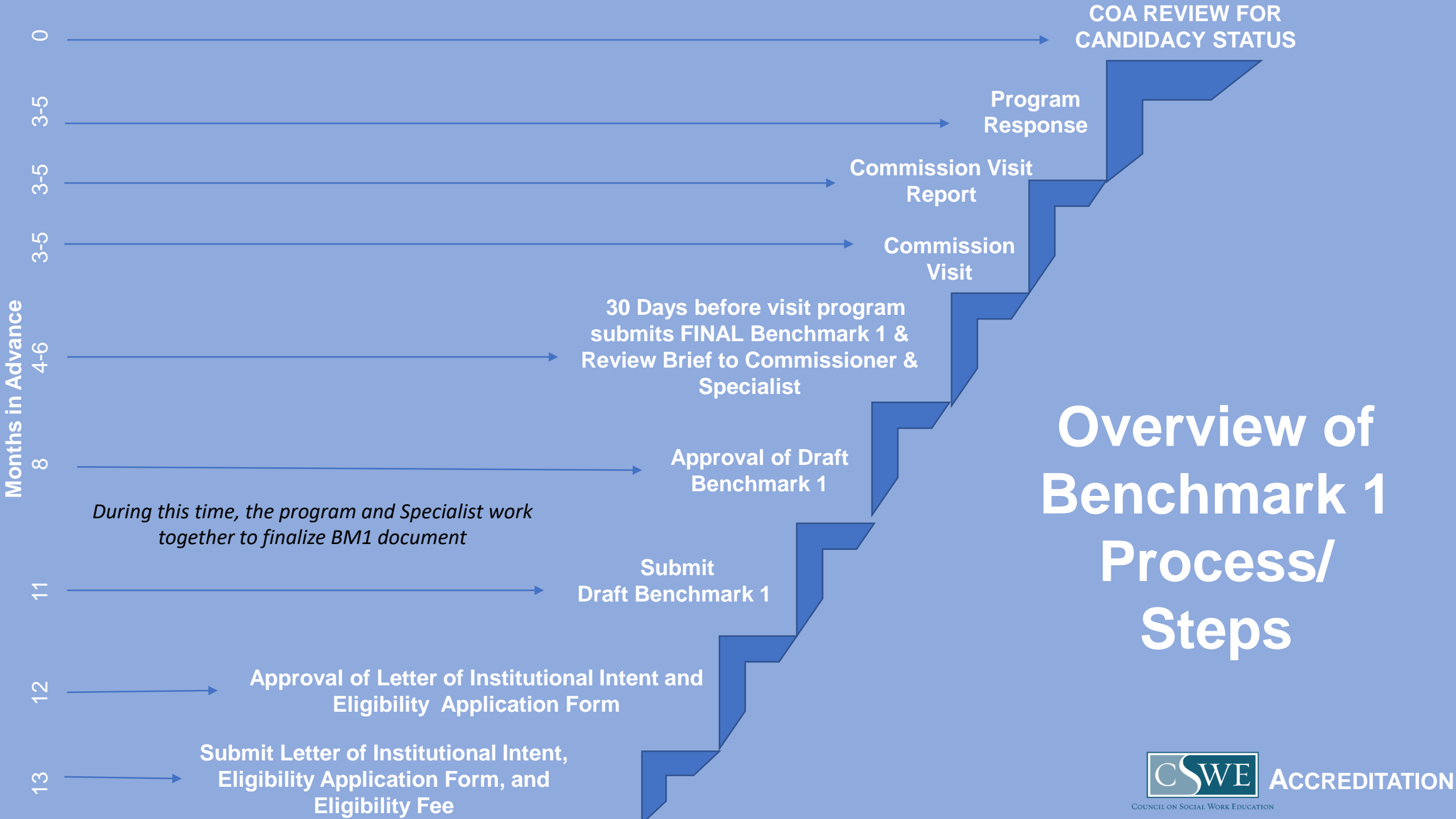
# Candidacy Timetables

- Programs are given a timetable for placed on a COA agenda when the application documents are approved and a Specialist is assigned.
- **However**, the timetable may be moved to a later agenda if the program is unable to meet the due dates for submission of materials
- The timetables are organized around COA meeting dates (February, June, October).
  - Chronological list of Candidacy materials and actions
  - The deadline for each item
  - To whom materials should be submitted
- Once the document is approved, a commissioner visitor will be assigned
- [Timetable for Candidacy- February Agenda](#)
- [Timetable for Candidacy- June Agenda](#)
- [Timetable for Candidacy- October Agenda](#)

## **Pre-Candidacy Process and Agenda Timetable**

- Program Submits *Candidacy Eligibility Application* and *Letter of Institutional Intent*
- Director reviews application and notifies program of result
- Once application materials are approved, Director assigns an Accreditation Specialist to the program
- Program submits Benchmark I document DRAFT
  - with accompanying *Benchmark I Review Brief* (form)
- Specialist reviews the draft and provides feedback
- Once the Specialist approves the Benchmark I document, the program is cleared to have a commissioner (site) visit.
- Commissioner Visit Report and Program Response
- COA meets to determine Candidacy status
- If Candidacy status is granted, write Benchmark II and submit to Commissioner Visitor and Specialist 1 month prior to visit. Programs do not submit drafts of Benchmark II and III documents for approval.





# Overview of Benchmark 1 Process/Steps

# Candidacy Eligibility Application

Signed by both social work program director and president/chancellor

- ***Eligibility Standard 1 - submit signed authorization form***
  - The review of the social work program by the Commission on Accreditation (COA) is authorized by the chief executive officer of the institution.
- ***Eligibility Standard 2 -***
  - The program is located in an educational institution recognized by a regional accrediting body approved by the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- ***Eligibility Standard 3 - submit approval by state; approval or notification required by institutional accreditor***
  - The institution must be legally organized and authorized to operate as a postsecondary educational institution under the laws of the relevant state. The program has been approved by the appropriate higher education authority.

# Candidacy Eligibility Application (continued)

- ***Eligibility Standard 4 – submit link or screenshot documentation***
  - The institution has a written affirmative action policy, plan or program, and procedures, and a policy against discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, ethnic or national origin, disability, or age and documented ADA compliance.
- ***Eligibility Standard 5***
  - Identify program director with demonstrated leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in the field of social work.
  - Director must possess a master's social work degree from a CSWE-accredited program.
  - It is preferred, but not required that director also possess a doctoral degree.
- ***Eligibility Standard 6***
  - The institution documents sufficient and firm institutional supports to create, build, and maintain the social work program. Include faculty, staff, budget, and other resources necessary to build and maintain the program.

# Letter of Institutional Intent

- Narrative that provides clear, complete, and sufficient information regarding the program and institution's intent to start a social work program, which includes the following:
  - A discussion of the institution's mission and the relationship of the social work program to that mission.
  - An analysis of the relationship of the proposed program to the institution's strategic or long-range plan.
  - A discussion of the costs, including a projected budget, of the program and the benefits or advantages that the institution expects to receive relative to these costs.
    - It is not necessary to use the Budget Form that will be needed later for Benchmark I
  - Preliminary ideas about the mission and goals of the social work program.
  - A summary of the program's initial development activities.

# Program Structure for Master's Programs

- Master's programs should be designed to be completed by full-time students in 2 years. It is permissible for individual students to take longer than 2 years, as long as the program is structured to be completed in 2 years.
- May elect to develop a part-time program, which should be designed to be completed within 4 years. It is permissible for individual students to take longer than 4 years, as long as the program is structured to be completed within 4 years.

# Reference Documents Used for Writing Benchmark I

- 2015 [Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS)
- [Benchmark Grid](#) - The Benchmark Model chart illustrates which accreditation standards the program is working on during each commissioner visit
- Benchmark I template – watch the website; templates for Benchmarks I, II, III are being developed and will be posted soon
- [Benchmark I Review Brief](#)
- [Budget Form](#)
- Faculty Summary Form

# Reporting on Faculty

Council on Social Work Education  
Commission on Accreditation (COA)  
Faculty Summary Form

Duplicate and expand as needed. Provide table(s) to support self-study narrative addressing *Accreditation Standards* below.

This form is used to assist the COA in the evaluation of the program's compliance with *Accreditation Standards* stated below.

**3.2.1** The program identifies each full- and part-time social work faculty member and discusses his or her qualifications, competence, expertise in social work education and practice, and years of service to the program.

**3.2.2** The program documents that faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience.

**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.

**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.

Provide the information requested below for all faculty employed in full- and part-time positions *within the past academic year*. However, if the program experiences major changes to faculty composition prior to self-study submission, please provide the most up-to-date information.

[DATES OF ACADEMIC YEAR]														
Initials and Surname of Faculty Member	Title	Hire Date	Race / Ethnicity	Gender	Tenure Track (Yes/No/NA)	Teaching Practice Courses (Yes or No)?	Years of Practice Experience		Years of Employment as Full-Time Educator*				Percentage of Time Assigned to Program**	
									Previous Positions*		Current Position*			
							Post-BSW	Post-MSW	BSW	MSW	BSW	MSW	BSW	MSW
<b>TOTAL FTE OF ALL FACULTY:</b>												<b>(sum)</b>	<b>(sum)</b>	

\*Combine full-time and part-time work into full-time equivalence years of full-time teaching, based on your institution's workload policy.

\*\*If part-time, identify percent of a full-time workload assigned to the program, based on your institution's workload policy.

- Include all full- and part-time faculty
- Include a faculty data form for each faculty member
- Add up percentage of time assigned column and use that sum for the ratio
- For cross-listed or part-time faculty, in the percent assigned column, use the percent of a full-time (teaching-only) workload they teach
  - E.g.: If 10 courses per year is full-time, each course counts as .1FTE
- If you have both BSW & MSW programs, divide the FTE between the two columns, being sure not to double-count time (Both columns combined should add up to 1 FTE)

# Making Changes While in Candidacy

- Programs may make changes and updates to policies and procedures at any point in the Candidacy process, as long as changes are compliant with the EPAS
- Avoid changes to core curriculum on which student demonstration of competencies will be assessed
- Avoid changing or adding areas of specialized practice (master's programs)
- Be aware of changed standards or interpretations that will have impact on the program (e.g. COVID-19 temporarily reduced field hours)
- All standards are reviewed at Initial Accreditation, so be mindful of how program changes impact standards that passed previous Benchmarks
- Provide personnel updates to accreditation specialist as they occur
  - Primary Contact, Program Director, Field Director, and President are kept on file with CSWE



# Program Options

- Programs must specify their program options while in Pre-Candidacy
  - Program options are all locations and delivery methods
  - Once Candidacy has been granted at the end of the year of Pre-Candidacy, programs cannot add new program options
  - Once Initial Accreditation is granted, programs can add program options through substantive change process
- Narrative response for each standard must address all program options
  - With a statement that the narrative applies to all program options; or
  - With a description of how each program options complies with the standard
- All program options are accredited as part of one single program
  - If one program option is out-of-compliance, that affects the compliance of the entire program

# Document Submission

## **4 Separate Documents submitted with each Benchmark:**

- Volume 1 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
- Volume 2 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
- Volume 3 (MS Word or Searchable PDF)
- Appropriate *Review Brief* (Benchmark I, II, or III)  
(MS Word Format only)

**Submit all documents electronically**

# Accreditation Specialists

- Assist in understanding the COA's policies and procedures
- Do not determine compliance/noncompliance
- All communications are facilitated via the program's primary contact
- *YouCanBookMe* scheduling app is linked in email signature block for your convenience
- Should questions arise regarding accreditation, always confirm accuracy with your program's accreditation specialist!

