



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



2015 EPAS Site Visitor Training

Hosted by: the Department of Social Work Accreditation and
members of the Commission on Accreditation

January 22, 2021 | 1-4pm ET | Zoom

Training Agenda, Goal, & Objectives

Anna Holster, MSW, MPhil
Accreditation Senior Team Leader

Housekeeping

- Please use Q&A function to ask any questions you may have
 - Questions will be answered by the presenters during the relevant section.
- *We encourage self-care during this session!* If you need to take a break, step away, stretch, or get a snack, please feel free to do so.
- This session will be recorded and will be made available on-demand for active site visitors.

Training Goal and Objectives

Purpose: To clarify expectations, answer questions, and prepare new site visitors to conduct their first site visit, as well as to provide ongoing training for site visitors conducting their next site visit.

Training Goal: To prepare site visitors to conduct a successful site visit, from site visit planning through submitting the site visit report.

Training Objectives | To prepare site visitors to:

- Understand the stages in the site visit process
- Learn the role, scope, and boundaries of site visitors operating under the authority of the COA
- Work with programs to develop site visit schedule
- Prepare for and conduct a productive visit
- Conduct both in-person and virtual site visits
- Communicate effectively with the program's Accreditation Specialist
- Write a clear, objective site visit report

Agenda

1 – 1:30pm ET:

- Welcome and Introductions of Staff & Panel
- Training Goals and Objectives
- Framework for Accreditation

1:30-1:45pm ET: Website Tutorial and COVID-19 Guidance

1:45 – 2pm ET: Site Visit Timelines and Logistics

2 – 2:15pm ET: Planning the Visit: Setting the Site Visit Agenda

2:15-2:30pm ET: Site Visit Preparation

2:30-2:45pm ET: Communication Guidelines and Writing the Site Visit Report

2:45-3:45pm ET: Site Visit Scenarios and Q&A With Panelists

3:45-4pm ET: Closing Remarks



Introductions

Accreditation Administration

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(Currently Hiring!)

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Executive Director

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Marilyn Gentner, Accreditation Specialist

Katie Benson, Accreditation Specialist

Monica Wylie, Manager & Assistant

Sheila Bell, Site Visit Coordinator

Vitali Chamov, ISWDRES Manager

Karen Chapman, Accreditation Specialist

Michael Leff, Accreditation Specialist

Stephanie McNally, Manager of Social Work Fellowship Accreditation

Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)

Meet the accreditation team! We provide year-round services.

Site Visitor Panelists

**Freddie L. Avant, PhD, LMSW-AP,
ACSW, C-SSWS**
Stephen F. Austin State University (TX)
Site Visitor

Lisa Clifton, JD, MSW
Southeastern University (FL)
Commissioner Emeritus

Deana F. Morrow, PhD, LICSW, ACSW
West Virginia University (WV)
Chair, Commission on Accreditation

Francis Origanti, PhD
Avila University (MO)
Vice Chair, Commission on
Accreditation

Octavio Ramirez, PhD, LICSW
Oakwood University (AL)
Commissioner Emeritus

Framework for Accreditation

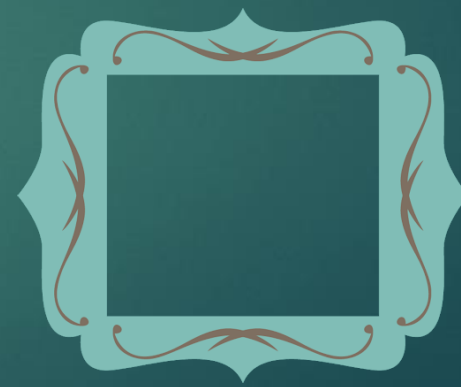
Deana F. Morrow, PhD, LICSW, ACSW
Chair, Commission on Accreditation

Framework for Accreditation

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
- public accountability



Framework for Accreditation

Regional Accreditors: Accredits institutions

- CHEA Directories: <https://www.chea.org/directories>

Programmatic Accreditor: CSWE's Commission on Accreditation (COA) accredits baccalaureate and master's social work programs

- Directory: <https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Directory-of-Accredited-Programs.aspx>

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

Who are the Commission on Accreditation (COA)?

- Volunteers
- *Peers*: full- or part-time social work faculty member at a CSWE-accredited social work program
- Public member
 - Practitioners or individuals from other disciplines
- A minimum of 3 years teaching and/or practice experience
- Trained site visitors who have completed at least 3 sites visits
- Reflect the geographic representation of the CSWE membership
- Represent a variety of program attributes (level, size, etc.)
- Maintain active CSWE membership
- Appointed for up to two consecutive 3-year terms by the chair of the CSWE Board of Directors

Framework for Accreditation

Who are the Site Visitors?

- Volunteers
- *Peers*: full-time or part-time social work faculty member at a CSWE-accredited social work program
- A minimum of 3 years teaching and/or practice experience
- Reflect the geographic representation of the CSWE membership
- Represent a variety of program attributes (level, size, etc.)
- Maintain active CSWE membership

Framework for Accreditation

- Accreditation is a fair, impartial, and objective **peer-review** process, accomplished via dedicated **volunteer** contributions of COA members and site visitors.
- The DOSWA **staff liaison** between the COA and the program, providing services, education and training opportunities, communicating accreditation policies, procedures, and interpretations, and furnishing COA decision letters to programs.
- **The COA is the sole and final arbiter of compliance.**
- Social work programs are solely responsible for implementing, demonstrating, and maintaining compliance with the current set of standards (2015 EPAS).

Framework for Accreditation

EPAS Development Process:

- COA and COEP are responsible for reviewing and revising the EPAS at periodic intervals (historically every 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.
- More information on [2022 EPAS](#) published and regularly updated

Website Tutorial

**Katie “Kat” Gibson-Ledl, LLMSW-Macro
*Accreditation Specialist***

Website Tutorial

- [2015 EPAS & Glossary](#)
- [2015 EPAS Interpretation Guide](#)
- [2015 EPAS Handbook](#)
- [Reaffirmation & Candidacy Training](#)
- [Accreditation PowerPoints](#)
 - **Topics:** 2015 EPAS Overview, Assessment, Candidacy, Frequently Cited Standards, Writing an Accreditation Document, Exploring & Applying for Candidacy
- [Accreditation Resources](#)
 - Eligibility Applications, Review Briefs, required forms, timetables, fee info, waivers, postponements, program changes, sample curriculum matrices, sample assessment reporting, etc.
 - **Always download the most updated documents before submitting your self-study/benchmark!**
- [Self-Study Volume 1 Optional Template](#)
- [Formatting & Submission Requirements](#) | Accreditation is paperless!
- [Site Visit Information](#)
 - Sample LOI, sample Site Visit Agenda, general questions bank, etc.
- [COA Decisions](#)
- [Directory of Accredited Programs](#)
- [Accreditation COVID-19 Response](#)

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



COVID-19 Guidance

Francis Origanti, PhD

Vice Chair, Commission on Accreditation

CSWE Response to COVID-19 Summary

We recognize that this is a stressful time for all stakeholders in higher education. CSWE's priority is the **health and safety** of its program members, volunteers, staff and social work faculty, staff, students, field personnel, and the clients, constituents, and communities they serve daily across the nation. CSWE and the COA **trust** that programs will do, professionally and ethically, what is best for them and their students as they develop contingency/continuity plans. We reiterate our **support and respect** for the **autonomy and diligence** of programs to provide accommodations and flexibility for their students in extenuating circumstances. Staff members are **available to assist** programs as situations arise.

CSWE Response to COVID-19 Summary

Reduction in Field Hours:

- Students who have completed 85% of the required placement hours (i.e., 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 requirements.
- This reduction in field hours may be applied to all field placement courses until May 31, 2021.
 - New field placement courses that begin after May 31, 2021, will return to the full number of hours required by AS 2.2.5.
- For programs that offer the reduction to students, even though students will be completing a reduced number of field hours during this time, they will be granted the full number of hours for accreditation and graduation purposes.
- Programs cannot waive more than 15% of field hours as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Virtual/remote field activity, as well as field supervision, field seminar hours, and simulations, may temporarily be counted toward the accrual of field hours.
- CSWE requires minimum compliance, but it is programs' responsibility to verify whether and what modifications have been made for licensure in their state

CSWE Response to COVID-19 Summary

Temporary Changes to Delivery Method:

- Programs may elect to temporarily offer fully online, hybrid, etc. curricula during the COVID-19 pandemic without obtaining approval from CSWE's COA.
- Temporary changes to delivery method will not impact accreditation status.
- Please do not submit contingency/continuity plans to accreditation staff.
- Permanent changes must be reported per policy 1.2.4 Program Changes in the EPAS Handbook.
- We reiterate our support and respect for the autonomy and diligence of programs to provide professional and ethical accommodations and flexibility for their students in extenuating circumstances.

CSWE Response to COVID-19 Summary

This is a rapidly evolving situation, for the latest information frequently visit:

- [Accreditation-specific COVID-19 Info](#)
 - FAQs and Field Guidance
 - Statement from the Commission on Accreditation and the CSWE Accreditation Department
 - Virtual Visits Guidelines & Tips
 - Pulse Survey Findings
 - Crowdsourced Virtual Social Work Field Education Task Ideas and Examples
- [CSWE COVID-19 Response](#)

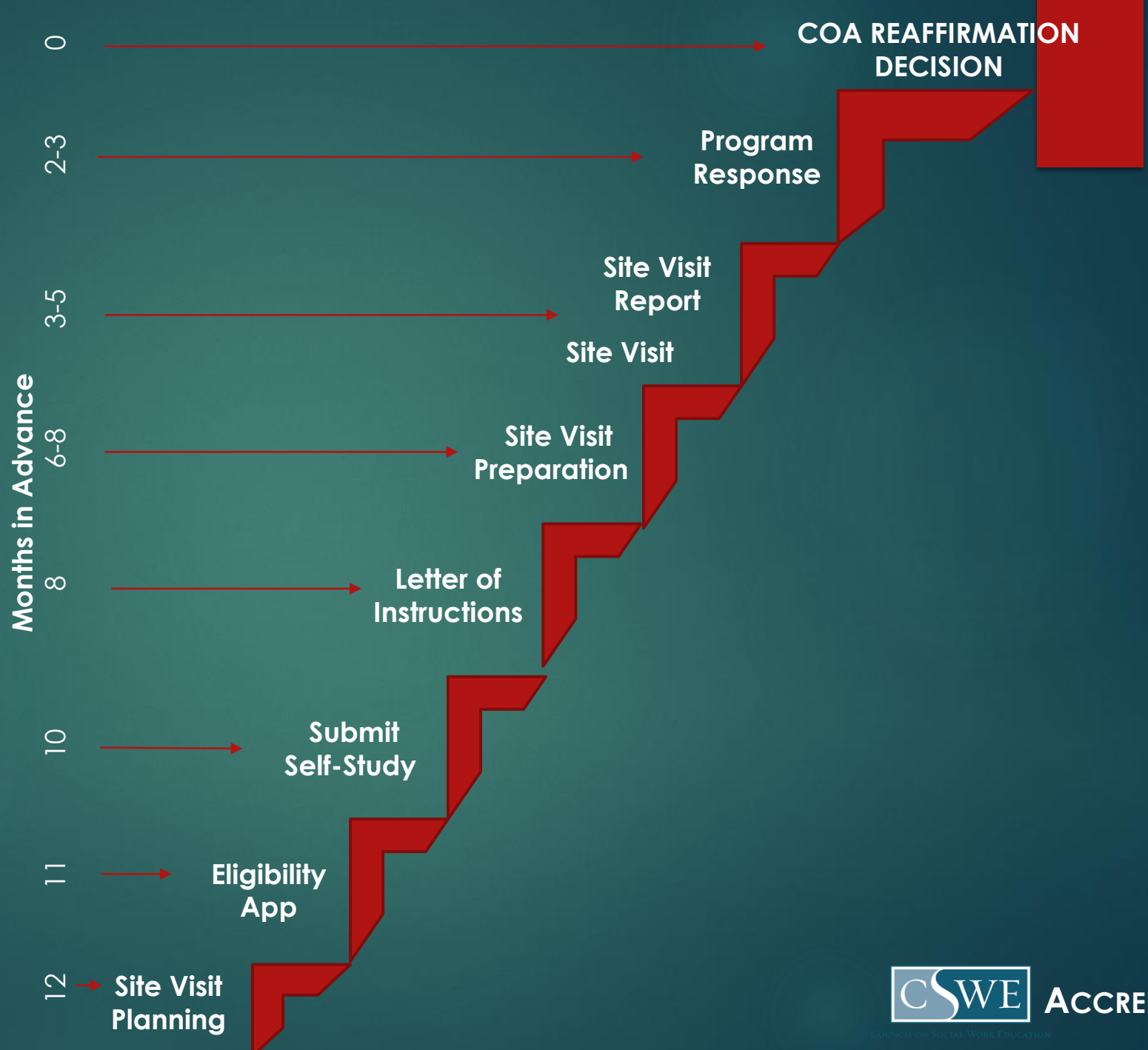
COVID-19 Flexibilities Impact on Site Visits

- Programs submit a 1-page summary in the self-study describing the temporary changes they've made to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Programs must demonstrate compliance with the standards according to **typical operations**
- Virtual site visit through December 31, 2021

Site Visit Timelines

Katie Benson, MSW
Accreditation Specialist

Overview of the Reaffirmation Process / Steps



Important Dates for Site Visitors

Agenda Date (Reaffirmation Decision)	Self-Study Due Date	COA Review for Letter of Instructions (LOI)	Site Visit Date
February	April 1 <i>(prior year)</i>	<p>June COA Meeting <i>(prior year of Agenda date)</i></p> <p>LOI sent to site visitor(s) 30 days after the COA meeting with a copy to primary contact <i>Do <u>not</u> respond to the LOI</i></p>	<p>Sept 1-Nov 15 <i>Site Visit Report due to CSWE within 2 weeks of the site visit</i></p> <p>Program response due within 2 weeks of receiving the <i>Site Visit Report</i> from CSWE</p>
June	August 1 <i>(prior year)</i>	<p>October/November COA Meeting <i>(prior year of Agenda date)</i></p> <p>LOI sent to site visitor(s) 30 days after the COA meeting with a copy to primary contact <i>Do <u>not</u> respond to the LOI</i></p>	<p>Dec 1-Feb 28 <i>Site Visit Report due to CSWE within 2 weeks of the site visit</i></p> <p>Program response due within 2 weeks of receiving the <i>Site Visit Report</i> from CSWE</p>
October/November	December 1 <i>(prior year)</i>	<p>February COA Meeting <i>(same year of Agenda date)</i></p> <p>LOI sent to site visitor(s) 30 days after the COA meeting with a copy to primary contact <i>Do <u>not</u> respond to the LOI</i></p>	<p>Mar 1-May 31 <i>Site Visit Report due to CSWE within 2 weeks of the site visit</i></p> <p>Program response due within 2 weeks of receiving the <i>Site Visit Report</i> from CSWE</p>

Site Visitor Logistics

Sheila Bell

Site Visit Coordinator

Site Visitor Data Sheet

- Complete [Site Visitor Data Sheet](#) at least once per year with your availability for the next year
- If your availability changes during the year, please either resubmit data sheet or email the site visit coordinator updated availability
- Site visitors will be selected based on availability identified on the data sheet, so be sure to complete it accurately
- If you wish to discontinue volunteer site visit service, contact the CSWE Site Visit Coordinator

Scheduling Your First Site Visit

- Site visit coordinator receives the *Site Visit Planning Form* from program with proposed visit dates
- Site visit coordinator will locate a slate of potential site visitors with identified availability on at least one of those dates and no identified conflicts of interest with the program
 - The program will verify that there are no conflicts of interest with the potential slate of visitors
- Site visit coordinator will contact potential site visitor to verify availability to conduct a site visit
 - The visitor will verify there are no conflicts of interest with the assignment
- Site visitor will select preferred date
- Site visit coordinator will send letter to all parties confirming assignment details
- All future communication to arrange visit will occur directly between site visitor and program's primary contact

Conflicts of Interest & Site Visitor Selection

Site visitors will not be assigned to programs with which either they or the program identify a conflict of interest.

Both the visitor and the program indicate conflicts, such as:

- Live or work in same state
- Visited program for last accreditation review
- Worked for or considered for a position at the program
- Graduate of program
- Member of an advisory board
- Part of an educational collaborative organization
- Former or present consultant
- Any other potential conflicts or appearance of conflicts

Planning the Visit: Setting the Site Visit Agenda

Freddie L. Avant, Ph.D., LMSW-AP, ACSW, C-SSWS
Site Visitor

Purpose of the Site Visit

- The visitor's purpose is to **collect clarifying information** on behalf of the COA via discussion only on the general and specific standards identified in the COA-issued Letter of Instruction (LOI)
- DOSWA Executive Director and Site Visit Coordinator select a 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 visitor will be assigned to each program level – baccalaureate and master's

Role, Scope, & Boundaries of the Site Visitor

- The site visit is an important step in the peer-review reaffirmation process.
- Certified site visitors operate under the authority and jurisdiction of the Commission on Accreditation (COA).
- The visitor's role is that of information gatherer; visitors do **not** determine compliance nor select a decision type.
- **The COA is the sole arbiter of compliance.**
- Visitors do **not** provide feedback, opinions, advice, recommendations, nor instructions to the program.
- The content of the visit and report are structured around collecting clarifying information pertaining to **general and specific questions raised in the COA-issued Letter of Instruction (LOI)**.
 - Visitors do **not** explore additional information in the self-study that is not identified in the LOI.
- Role, scope and boundary info is provided on the [Site Visit Template](#), accompanying each LOI.

Logistics Preparation for In-Person Site Visit

- Upon appointment confirmation, the primary contact communicates with the visitor(s) to arrange the visit, including:
 - Travel plans (*prepaid coach fare; transferrable and refundable accommodations in case of emergency*)
 - Hotel accommodations (*no dorms*)
 - Workspace requirements in the hotel and on campus
 - Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses
 - Site visit schedule (*based on LOI*)
 - [Sample Site Visit Agenda](#) available for adaptation

Logistics Preparation for Virtual Site Visit

- Upon appointment confirmation, the primary contact communicates with the visitor(s) to arrange the visit, including:
 - Site visit schedule (*based on LOI*)
 - Site visit can be either one full-day or two half-days depending on preference and availability of both parties
 - Information regarding virtual meeting platforms and links to access meetings

Multiple Program Options

- For programs with multiple program options (e.g., main campus, branch campus, satellite site, online program, etc.), depending upon the questions raised in the LOI and physical distance, the site visitor may visit multiple locations, or the program may bring relevant stakeholders and administrators to the main institution location.
- Programs may utilize technology to include relevant parties from distance education sites / delivery methods (e.g., online) in the site visit rather than the visitor travelling to other locations
- Contact the program's accreditation specialist for further clarification and assistance.

Co-located Site Visits

- Baccalaureate and master's social work programs may have aligned reaffirmation review timetables
- Thus, their visits may take place simultaneously
- In such cases, you may be onsite with another site visitor
- Co-located programs are reviewed completely separately
 - Separate visitors are assigned, with separate LOIs, to each program
- If there are consistencies across the LOIs, the programs share stakeholder groups, and the visitors / programs agree, various meetings may be held jointly
 - For example, the BSW and MSW share a field director and field faculty. The programs were both cited on the same field-related issue. The meeting held to collect clarifying info may be held with both visitors at the same time.

Setting the Agenda

- Visitors and programs draft an agenda collaboratively
- Accreditation Specialists do not review, vet, nor approve the agenda
 - Staff trust that visitors and programs will collaborate to identify the best stakeholders to respond to the LOI questions and arrange the meetings accordingly
- Visits should occur without disrupting the academic schedule so that all stakeholders are available to participate
 - Monday – Friday; no visits on Saturdays nor Sundays though visitors may travel on these days if desired

Site Visit Schedule (based on LOI)

- The agenda is collaboratively developed by the visitor and program. Agenda is to include:

Required:

- Meeting with Institutional Administrators (e.g., president/chancellor or their designee)
- Meeting with Program Director
- Meeting with Faculty Members (full-time and part-time)
- Meeting with Students
- Exit Interview with Program Director (and any other stakeholders the program chooses)

Meetings with the Social Work program may include the following stakeholders whose presence is relevant to the standards raised in the LOI:

- Dean, Director, Chair;
- Field Director, Field Instructors, Field Personnel;
- Staff;
- Curriculum committee, assessment coordinator, librarian(s), advisory boards, alumni; etc.

Logistics Preparation for the Site Visit

The self-study is emailed *by the program* to the visitor at least 30 days prior to the visit and is identical to the version submitted to the accreditation specialist.



Site Visit Preparation

Octavio Ramirez, PhD, LICSW
Commissioner Emeritus

COA Letter of Instruction (LOI) to Site Visitor

LOI includes:

- Instructions to discuss **General Questions** related to program mission and goals (**AS 1.0**), diversity (**AS 3.0**), and assessment (**AS 4.0**)
- [General Questions Bank](#) available, providing examples of general questions for various program stakeholders
- Instructions to discuss **Specific Questions**
 - Full Text of **Accreditation Standard**
 - *Instructions*: Description of issue and information the site visitor is asked to gather
- [Sample LOI](#) available to view content/s

Supplemental Materials

- The visitor collects the clarifying information as directed in the LOI **via discussion** with program stakeholders. The program is solely responsible for documenting compliance and submitting evidence in their formal written response to the site visit report.
- Site visitors do **not** request nor accept formal written responses to the LOI or any supplemental materials (beyond the self-study) in advance of the visit.
- Programs are permitted share documentation, visuals, or materials explicitly requested in the LOI with the visitor visually during the visit. However, the visitor does **not** collect nor submit these materials with their site visit report.

Site Visit Policies, Procedures, & Resources

- Policies and procedures regarding the site visit are located in sections 2.3. *Letter of Instruction, Site Visit Planning, and Site Visit Hosting* and 2.5. *Site Visit Report and Program Response* in the [EPAS Handbook](#).
- [Site Visit Information and Resources](#)
 - Sample Letter of Instruction (LOI)
 - Sample Site Visit Agenda (Reaffirmation)
 - Sample Commissioner Visit Agenda (Candidacy)
 - General Questions Bank for Site Visitors
 - Policy on Visit Reimbursement
 - Insurance Policy for Site Visitors
 - Guidelines & Tips for Virtual Visits
 - Site Visit Report Template

Matching Process

Due to ethical and administrative constraints, CSWE will not honor any special requests with respect to any preferences or choice related to the assignment of site visitor(s). Per policy 2.3.3. Site Visitor Qualifications and Selection in the EPAS Handbook, primary contacts “are able to refuse specific site visitors only on the basis of a conflict of interest.” All certified site visitors are trained to collect clarifying information guided solely by the COA-issued Letter of Instruction (LOI) and conduct visits objectively. The role, scope, and boundaries of site visitors are limited as described on the Site Visit Report Template.

Site Visitor's Arrival on Campus

- Primary contact may meet with the visitor to review the site visit schedule.
- Visitor works alone to review the schedule, reviews the self-study and LOI, and prepares for the visit.
- Visitor plans for report completion and deadlines.
- Visitor mealtimes are reserved for working, no social events should be planned.
- Visitors may politely decline social invitations to focus upon their visit role and responsibilities.

Emergencies/Questions During the Visit

Before the Visit:

Should an emergency arise before the visit occurs requiring the visitor or program to delay or cancel the visit, CSWE's Site Visit Coordinator should be notified immediately via telephone and email.

During the Visit:

- **Site Visit Coordinator / Executive Director of Accreditation:** Logistical questions related to visit, including concerns about boundary or ethical issues, scheduling, transportation, accommodations, or reimbursement
- **Accreditation Specialist:** Visitors or a program's primary contact may contact the program's accreditation specialist at any time to clarify an accreditation standard or the COA's policies or procedure, such as:
 - Interpretation of an accreditation standard
 - Clarification of the Letter of Instruction (LOI)
 - EPAS Handbook policies and procedures

Communication Guidelines and Writing the Site Visit Report

Lisa Clifton, JD, MSW
Commissioner Emeritus

Communication Guidelines

- The primary contact is the person responsible for all communication with the site visitor
- Faculty members, students, or others program stakeholders should **not** communicate with the visitor before/after arrival on campus until the scheduled meeting
- It is inappropriate for the visitor to receive anonymous documents, telephone calls, etc.
- Following the visit all communication between the program and visitor ceases (with the exception of completing fiscal reimbursements)
- Programs and visitors filter all communication post-visit to the Site Visit Coordinator (for logistics) or the Accreditation Specialist (for LOI or report content)

Discussing General Standards

- Visit [Site Visit Information](#) section for bank of sample general questions
- [General Questions Bank](#) provides questions specific for each constituent group and general standard
- For lengthy *Letters of Instructions (LOI)*, general standards may be a shorter discussions
- For *General Standards Only LOIs* or for short *LOIs*, this may be a lengthier discussion if additional time isn't needed for specific concerns

Exit Interview

- Site visit concludes with an exit interview with the program's primary contact
- The program and/or site visitor will determine if additional constituents (administration, faculty, etc.) should be present
- The primary contact may ask questions, comment on the findings, and/or correct any inaccuracies
- Exit interview involves presentation of site visitor's findings
- You should be prepared to verbally present a draft of what will become your site visit report at the exit interview
- Nothing should be included in your site visit report that wasn't presented at the exit interview
- Never speak to compliance or sufficiency; instead, focus on presenting on your discussion and objective observations

Writing the Site Visit Report

Lisa Clifton, JD, MSW
Commissioner Emeritus

Writing the Site Visit Report

- Use **objective language** that describes your discussions
- Never identify that something is sufficient or compliant
- Never copy/paste content from a program-provided written document into your report; the program will provide their formal compliance narrative and supporting materials in response to your report
- Instead, summarize your discussion with the programs and factually state what the program reported (e.g.: The program described its policy and identified that it believes the policy is sufficient because...)

Sample Letter of Instruction Language

Accreditation Standard 2.2.11: The program describes how its field education program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

Letter of Instruction (LOI) Language

The program discussed how its field education program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. However, the policy provided did not clearly specify how the program monitors and verifies that the student's assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

The site visitor is asked to review with the program how it ensures that student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

Sample Site Visit Report Language

***Accreditation Standard 2.2.11:** The program describes how its field education program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.*

Site Visitor Findings

The program reported that it does not place field students in their employing agency. However, the program developed a policy to address such cases should they arise as an exception to their current practice. An updated description of that policy, extracted from the Field Manual, was provided to the site visitor. Per discussion with the field director the site visitor learned that if a student were granted a field placement at their employing agency, the requirement would be that the student's field placement role/responsibilities and field education supervision would be distinct from the student's employment. The program will provide supplemental information in its response to this report.

Site Visit Report Deadline

- No later than **2-weeks after the visit concludes**, the Site Visit Report is e-mailed to by the visitor to the program's assigned Accreditation Specialist, identified in the LOI
 - The visitor should never send the report directly to the program
 - Do **not** send the report to your home program's Accreditation Specialist
- If this deadline is missed, the program may be impacted by the consequences or their review delayed

Site Visit Report Review

- Upon receipt of the report, the Accreditation Specialist reviews the report for objectivity, clarity, comprehension, and completeness
- The Specialist may accept the report or request the visitor revise and resubmit with specific feedback for improving the report and ensuring consistency with policies and procedures
- Any feedback provided is shared to strengthen your visitor role and improve future visits/reports
- Specialists do not review drafts of the report
- Once the report is accepted, the Specialist sends the report with detailed instructions to the program for formal written response to your report
 - It is solely the program's responsibility to document compliance with the standards building on your report; the program does not rely solely on your report to document how they comply with the standard

Site Visit Scenarios and Q&A

Full Panel

Question and Answer

- Please use Q&A function to ask any questions you may have
- Panelists will respond to any questions you may have related to the site visit process, policies, or procedures
- Panelists will also respond to a series of potential scenarios that you may encounter during a site visit and how they would respond

Site Visit Scenario #1

In the *Letter of Instruction (LOI)*, **Accreditation Standard 3.2.3** was cited. In the meeting with faculty, you ask targeted questions to get additional information regarding the standard. During the meeting, a faculty speaks up and shares a personal concern about the program. The faculty member is adamant that the program is being dishonest and unethical. They share that it is their responsibility to advocate on behalf of themselves and others. The information being shared by the faculty is not related to the **accreditation standards** in *LOI*. How do you respond?

Site Visit Scenario #2

You are completing your visit and are now in the exit meeting with the program director and dean. Overall, you were able to gather the information requested by the commission in the *LOI*. In the *LOI*, ***Accreditation Standard 4.0.1*** was cited, and information provided by the program seems to indicate that the program is not in compliance based on your understanding of the standard. After summarizing your findings, the dean asks if the program is in compliance with ***Accreditation Standard 4.0.1***. How do you respond?

Site Visit Scenario #3

You are meeting with the field director, seasoned field instructors, and field seminar instructors to address ***Accreditation Standard 2.2.7*** in the LOI regarding policies, procedures, and criteria for supporting student safety in field education. A meeting participant asks you how your own program addresses supporting student safety and if you can provide examples of policies you've used to address the standard. How do you respond?

Site Visit Scenario #4

You are planning to visit a program that was not cited on any specific standards and was cited on general standards only. In reading the program's assessment plan, you have concerns with the outcome measures they are using and believe their assessment plan is out of compliance. How do you proceed?

Site Visit Scenario #5

You are visiting a program that was not cited on any faculty standards. In meeting with the program, you discover that a master's program has fewer faculty than presented on the self-study due to a recent departure of faculty. As a result, the master's program has fewer than six full-time faculty and a ratio higher than 1:12. How do you proceed?

Site Visit Scenario #6

You are connecting with the program after being issued the LOI to begin preparing travel (or virtual) logistics. After 2-weeks and multiple e-mail and phone call attempts, you are unable to connect with the program's primary contact to proceed. How do you proceed?

Site Visit Scenario #7

You are meeting with students and discussing general standards: Mission & Goals, Diversity, and Assessment. In the conversation, students express concern regarding lack of diversity in the student body and faculty. How do you respond?

Site Visit Scenario #8

You are 30-days away from your visit (virtual or in-person). The program's primary contact emailed you the self-study and a draft response to the LOI. The program asks that you review both the self-study and draft LOI response in advance of the visit. How do you respond?

Final Remarks

Marilyn Gentner, LMSW, LICSW
Accreditation Specialist

Advice from Commissioners, Visitors, & Accreditation Staff

- In advance of your first visit, contact the program's Specialist to **walk** through the LOI
- Support is available! Reach out to accreditation staff with your questions before or even during the visit
- Trust the staff and their expertise
- Understand the essence of the standards in the LOI by reviewing the most current [Interpretation Guide](#)
- Preparation is key! Don't procrastinate.
 - Be friendly, cordial, transparent, and confident
 - It's okay to say, "I don't know" and refer programs to their Specialist
 - Enjoy the discussions and thoughtful exchanges in learning about another program's strengths and areas for improvement
- Don't wait to review the LOI and self-study; manage your time and pace your pre-reading
- Give yourself breaks in between meetings; take self-care seriously
- There is a spirit of trust in accreditation work; trust the program is sharing honestly and accurately
 - The program's story is important, and they've been building towards this review for 8-years
 - The goal is not to dig or have a "gotcha" mentality

Wrap-up & Next Steps

Quiz

Anna Holster will send everyone the link to a 10-question quiz to complete the process of becoming a certified site visitor. You may use your training materials to pass the quiz. If you do not pass the quiz, study the materials and retake the quiz.

Certified Site Visitor Certificate

Sheila Bell will send everyone who completes this training and passes the quiz a *Certificate of Completion*.

Resources

To continue supporting your visitor role in-between trainings, resources are available on the [CSWE website](#). Can't find something? Contact [accreditation staff](#)!

Future Trainings

Periodic trainings serve as refreshers for seasoned visitors and orientation for new visitors. Training opportunities will be shared with all visitors. Training is required to continue visiting when a new set of EPAS is published.

Thank You For Attending!

Evaluation

- Participants in this seminar received an evaluation upon registration today. Please take a few moments to complete the training evaluation. Your comments are used to help improve future trainings.
- Please email any questions to Sheila Bell (sbell@cswe.org)

Interested in becoming a Commissioner?

Calls for applications for commissions and councils are sent to all CSWE members each spring. CSWE is actively recruiting commissioners with Spanish fluency.

Composition of the COA shall be consistent with the CSWE affirmative action policy and plan. Applicants must have completed 3 site visits in order to be appointed to the Commission.

Current site visitor and meet the qualifications? Contact the Executive Director of Accreditation to learn more and monitor your email for call for nominees.



Thank You!

Join us annually at the Site Visitor Reception at APM!

Please share your feedback via our on-demand anonymous poll to help us enhance virtual site visit trainings!

A formal training survey will also be sent via email after the training concludes.