

SOCIAL WORK ACCREDITATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: What is accreditation?

Answer: Council on Social Work Accreditation (CSWE) accreditation is a comprehensive process by which a BSW or MSW program is reviewed by trained site visitors. When a program is accredited it is considered to be delivering quality social work education that complies with nationally recognized standards.

Question: Why should a social work program be accredited and what are the benefits to students?

Answer: Accreditation is a statement to the students and communities the program serves that the program has complied with nationally recognized standards. It is like having the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval." An accredited BSW degree is required for employment in most states and for acceptance into advanced standing MSW programs. Students graduating from an accredited program are considered more marketable in terms of employment and graduate school.

Question: What specific areas of the program are reviewed by CSWE?

Answer: CSWE looks at the entire program structure but focuses on the following areas:

- Program mission, goals, and objectives
- The nature of curriculum content in the areas of ethics, practice, populations-at-risk and social justice, diversity, research, human behavior and the social environment, social policy, and field education and how this content is implemented in various courses and evaluated on a regular basis.
- Field education program
- Student rights are also an important aspect of a strong social work program. Students have legal rights in their educational process while programs have a responsibility to educate students to the professional Code of Ethics in terms of their conduct and performance in the program.
- Relationships with the university as a whole and the larger community are other important aspects of a strong and vibrant social work program.

Question: What is the accreditation process?

Answer: There are several steps and phases to the accreditation process:

- Pre-Candidacy Application: Submitted by the program to CSWE.
- Benchmark I Self-Study: Completed by the program and submitted to CSWE prior to the pre-candidacy site visit
- Pre-Candidacy Site Visit: Review and report by a Commissioner from CSWE
- Candidacy Decision
- Evaluation by the CSWE Accreditation Commission (February, 2007)
**program goes into *candidacy status* for 2-3 full years retroactive to 2006

- academic year
- Benchmark II Self-Study: Completed by the program and submitted to CSWE prior to the candidacy site visit
 - Candidacy 2nd Site Visit: Review and report by a Commissioner from CSWE (October 2007)
 - Benchmark III Self-Study: Completed by the program and submitted to CSWE prior to the candidacy site visit
 - **Candidacy 3rd Site Visit: Review and report by a Commissioner from CSWE (October 2008)**
 - FULL Self-Study: Completed by the program and submitted to CSWE prior to the full accreditation site visit
 - FULL accreditation visit: Review and report by a site visit team from CSWE (Fall 2009)

Question: How long does it take a program to go through the candidacy and accreditation process?

Answer: Typically, it takes about three years to achieve full accreditation status. **In the interim, programs are granted candidacy status to allow students to graduate with an accredited degree.**

Question: What is the role of the University administration in an accreditation process?

Answer: The University administration has a responsibility for providing adequate support to the program in terms of financial resources (budget), physical space (faculty offices and classrooms), administrative assistance (secretary) and for making other departments and programs aware of the social work program and how including this program in the academic offerings supports the overall University mission. The UTC program has received strong support in all of these areas.