



Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012

**Guideline 1.1:
Guidance on essential
core curriculum content**

Guideline 1.1: Guidance on essential core curriculum content (Ref ASWEAS 3.3)

This document is to be read in conjunction with the *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS 2012). ASWEAS 2012 spells out the principles, standards and broad requirements for accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of professional social work education programs run by higher education providers (HEPs) and delivered by social work academic organisational units (SWAOUs).

This document provides guidance to educators on essential core curriculum content program requirements (ASWEAS 3.3) for programs seeking accreditation by AASW under the following headings:

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1. Mental health curriculum content

This statement provides detail on the specific mental health curriculum content expected as part of the ASWEAS. The content covers attitudes and values, knowledge for social work practice and social work practice skills. Distribution of this statement to higher education providers will be accompanied by a list of resources that identifies key references and other educational material.

By including specific mental health curriculum content in the education and accreditation standards, the AASW acknowledges that social workers in any practice setting will have at least some clients affected by mental health problems of varying severity. This reflects the prevalence of mental health problems in the Australian population, and also the complex situations that clients are likely to be facing. In turn, clients should be able to expect that social workers can recognise the nature of their difficulties, including mental health problems, and work collaboratively with them to resolve or improve their situation.

In this statement, the term ‘mental health problems’ is used to encompass the broad spectrum of conditions. This term has been chosen for its inclusiveness and currency. Although it does not differentiate between levels of distress and disability, this can be achieved in other ways, such as by referring to minor or major mental health problems. The content outlined in this statement also refers to positive mental health. There are two further terminological issues. The first concerns the terms ‘client’ and ‘consumer’ for those with a mental health problem who make use of services. The two terms are used interchangeably in this document. The second issue is what term to use for ‘significant others’. This statement uses ‘family and friends’ and ‘carer’ interchangeably.

It is important to note that the mental health curriculum content covered in this statement is introductory. It builds on other important bodies of knowledge, such as human development across the life span and sociological perspectives on stigma, which students would be expected to have covered elsewhere. The focus here is on mental health content directly relevant to social work practice and to beginning practitioners.

This statement identifies the basic attitudes and values, knowledge and skills aimed at preparing social work graduates to respond to clients’ mental health problems in a range of practice settings. The intended outcome is an entry-level social worker who can identify when mental health problems may be affecting a client, respond appropriately and act accordingly. This might include continuing to assist clients while referring them for specialist mental health care, or in the event that such a referral is refused. Social work interventions would be guided by the profession’s primary concern to build the capacity of individuals, families, groups and communities, and to promote mental health and wellbeing.

The statement draws on the AASW *Code of Ethics* (1999) and the AASW *Practice Standards for Social Workers* (2003). It is also influenced by the AASW *Competency Standards for Mental Health Social Workers* (2004) and the *National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce* (2002). However, neither of the latter documents is directly applicable as they both focus on standards to be reached after two years of practice in the mental health field, rather than by entry-level practitioners.

Given that the statement focuses on mental health content at an introductory level, higher education providers may choose to provide additional mental health input such as electives and/or fieldwork placements for students intending to work in the mental health field after graduation. It would also be expected that social work graduates taking positions in mental health services would have in-service training, and access to post-qualifying courses in mental health practice.

The curriculum content described here encompasses the basic attitudes and values, knowledge and practice skills which would enable an entry-level social worker in any practice setting to identify and respond appropriately to clients with mental health problems.

1.1. Attitudes and values

It is assumed that the values, principles and ethical behaviour for social work practice as outlined in the *AASW Code of Ethics (2010)* would be covered fully in other parts of the qualifying social work course curriculum. This section concentrates only on attitudes and values which are particularly important to people with mental health problems, due to their experience of disadvantage, stigma and discrimination, including from mental health professionals.

The attitudes and values identified here draw on the practice principles specific to mental health which are identified in the *AASW Competency Standards for Mental Health Social Workers*. In this statement, they are taken to underpin basic mental health knowledge and skills. The mental health curriculum content would therefore be expected to cover the following:

- 1) Recognition and valuing of the person.
- 2) Respect for the client as a person, irrespective of their mental health problems.
- 3) A commitment to the importance of partnership and mutuality, especially with clients and their family and friends, through active collaboration and a readiness to engage in respectful partnerships.
- 4) Sensitivity to the impact of powerlessness, marginality, stigma and disadvantage, and the experiences of the client and family members, especially of social stigma and self-stigmatisation.
- 5) Empathy, compassion, and the importance of conveying hope and confidence.
- 6) Sensitivity to process, and adherence to mutuality, respect, honesty and integrity in professional practice.
- 7) A commitment to social justice for people with mental health problems, based on their human rights, and to advocacy at the individual and system level.
- 8) A commitment to the key tenets of professional confidentiality, recognising that confidentiality for clients with mental health problems may be subject to legislative caveats.
- 9) Understanding and respect for the ethic of care in relation to people with mental health problems, including the right of access to treatment, as well as the right to refuse treatment, except in certain circumstances defined in state mental health legislation.

1.2. Knowledge for social work practice

The range of knowledge potentially relevant to social work practice with clients affected by mental health problems is considerable, yet arguably not all is necessary for the beginning practitioner. Furthermore, there are obvious limits to how much can be encompassed in a social work course qualifying students for practice.

For these reasons, the areas of knowledge identified below are separated into those designated essential to the mental health curriculum, and those considered desirable.

1.2.1. Essential areas of knowledge

- 1) Mental health problems and interventions
 - a) An appreciation of the potential risks as well as developmental opportunities associated with major life stage transitions, such as attachment difficulties in early childhood, child behavioural problems, adolescent body image problems, and mental health problems following childbirth.
 - b) A beginning understanding of patterns of thinking, feeling and action which might indicate that a client is experiencing mental health problems, and of relevant contextual factors e.g. current or recent stressful life events.
 - c) A beginning appreciation of how the different health disciplines interpret mental health problems, and their approach to resolving these problems, and how to use this in establishing collaborative working relationships.
 - d) A basic grasp of a psychiatric diagnostic framework, including differentiating between psychotic and non-psychotic conditions, and an introductory knowledge of how a client might present with behaviours characteristic of common mental health problems such as anxiety or depression, and also the less common, including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, personality disorders, eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
 - e) An appreciation of the possible co-occurrence and influence of problematic use of alcohol and/or drugs.
 - f) An introductory understanding of the purpose of psychiatric diagnosis and specifically, the nature of a mental status examination, and of the implications for social work practice.
 - g) A beginning understanding of contemporary approaches to mental health care, including early intervention and relapse prevention, rehabilitation and recovery approaches, and of the implications for social work practice.
 - h) An introductory knowledge of contemporary treatment modalities, including the use of psychotropic medication, individual therapies such as cognitive behaviour and interpersonal therapy, group work and family therapy.
- 2) Social work assessment and intervention
 - a) Knowledge of what should be covered in a social work assessment, particularly understanding the relevance for a client's mental health problems of social and environmental factors, such as social isolation, family stress, unemployment, low income and inadequate housing.

- b) An appreciation of how the emergence of mental health problems and their ramifications are influenced by age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geographical location.
 - c) Understanding the importance of taking account of the impact of parental mental health problems on children, and of a child or adolescent's emotional and psychological problems on parents and siblings.
 - d) An appreciation of the possible range of consumer experiences, including social stigma and self-stigmatisation, and how this should influence social work practice.
 - e) An understanding of the likely experiences of families and other carers, including the impact of social stigma, and how this should be taken into account in social work practice.
 - f) A basic grasp of social work interventions at the individual, family, group and community level and how these might be applicable to clients with mental health problems.
- 3) Relevant services, policy and legislation
- a) Knowledge of services and resources relevant to a better quality of life and recovery for clients with mental health problems, and their availability and accessibility in the local area.
 - b) Knowledge of the basic structure of local mental health services, public and private and including disability support as well as clinical services, and referral pathways. Understanding when a referral for mental health care might be appropriate for a client with mental health problems, and to whom referral should be made and how.
 - c) A basic knowledge of sections of state mental health legislation relevant to social work practice, particularly confidentiality, involuntary treatment (whether in hospital or the community), and guardianship. Understanding when a referral for assessment for involuntary treatment might be necessary, and how to do this respectfully with a client.
 - d) An introductory grasp of national and local state mental health policy.
 - e) A beginning appreciation of how research and evaluation applies to social work practice with people with mental health problems, especially in relation to evidence-based practice and program evaluation.

1.2.2. Desirable areas of knowledge

- 1) An understanding of the influence of age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geographical location on mental health problems, and specifically:
 - a) Mental health problems characteristic of different age groups across the life span.
 - b) Different presentations by women and men, and related life stresses.
 - c) Indigenous experience and understanding of mental health problems.
 - d) Mental health problems associated with migration, especially the experience of being a refugee.
 - e) Mental health problems associated with poverty and disadvantage.
 - f) Mental problems in rural and regional areas.

- 2) An understanding of the history and current state of national and local state mental health policy development.
- 3) An understanding of historical and contemporary conceptions of mental health problems and societal responses.

1.3. Skills for social work practice

The focus here is on basic skills for working in a range of practice settings with clients with mental health problems. It is acknowledged that the client may well have been referred for matters other than mental health problems. The skills are the capacity to:

- 1) Engage with clients with mental health problems, paying attention to their experience of stigma, discrimination and powerlessness.
- 2) Build a trusting relationship with clients with mental health problems, including with those whose need for service might not be recognised or accepted by other workers or services due to difficulty in communicating and relating to others.
- 3) Explore the experience of the client's family and friends, establish a relationship and work collaboratively with them as well as the client. This may include negotiating and resolving potentially complex confidentiality issues.
- 4) Take account of the possible influence of mental health problems on a client's situation when undertaking a comprehensive, collaborative social work assessment.
- 5) Assess the likelihood of client self-harm, including suicidal risk, and identify appropriate responses.
- 6) Assess the possibility of harm to others, such as children's emotional or physical needs not being met, and of harm from others, such as through an abusive relationship, and identify appropriate interventions.
- 7) Develop an individual service plan based on the maximum level of collaboration possible with the client and their family.
- 8) Undertake social work interventions at the individual, group, family and community level, such as problem solving, developing relapse prevention strategies, providing family education and support.
- 9) Advocate for client and/or family access to relevant resources.
- 10) Work collaboratively with other practitioners involved with the client, including GPs and disability support workers.
- 11) Make effective referrals and respond appropriately to referrals.
- 12) Obtain and provide consultation where necessary.
- 13) Seek out relevant research and evaluation on a regular basis to inform practice.

References

- Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) (1999). *Code of Ethics*. Canberra: AASW.
- (2003). *Practice Standards for Social Workers: Achieving Outcomes*. Canberra: AASW.
- (2004). *Competency Standards for Mental Health Social Workers: Final Report*. Canberra: AASW
- (2008). *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards*. Canberra: AASW.
- (2010). *Code of Ethics*. Canberra: AASW.
- Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (2002). *National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

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The AASW acknowledges the high-quality work of Dr Valerie Gerrand in developing this statement. This project is an exemplar of collaboration within the sector. All Australian social work programs were consulted in the development of this statement. It is the first of specific core curriculum statements being developed to be read in conjunction with the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards.

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2. Child wellbeing and protection curriculum content

The purpose of this statement is to outline the specific child wellbeing and protection curriculum content required by these standards. The statement covers the attitudes and values, knowledge and skills required of beginning social workers to promote the wellbeing of children, young people, families and caregivers, and to prevent or respond to child abuse and neglect.

By including specific content relating to children in its standards for social work education, the AASW acknowledges the vital importance of the wellbeing of all children and young people. The AASW recognises the significant role of social workers in every practice setting in promoting this and in ensuring the safety and protection of all children. These practice settings include adult as well as children's services, government, nongovernment and private practice and practice settings as diverse as health, corrections, education, income security, drug and alcohol and mental health.

The intended outcome of including the child wellbeing and protection curriculum content is that all entry-level social workers will be alert to the needs of children. They will be able to communicate with them, act to promote their wellbeing, identify when their wellbeing may be compromised, and use a range of social work practice methods to respond to the need that is assessed. All such social work interventions will be guided by the profession's commitment to the pursuit of social justice, the enhancement of the quality of life and the development of the full potential of each individual, group and community in society.

Concern for the wellbeing of children and young people has been a core element of social work practice internationally since the development of social work as a distinct profession. The AASW acknowledges that in Australia social workers played a role in the history of child protection, including the removal of Indigenous and other children from their families and communities and that this has led to intergenerational trauma and the tragic legacies of the 'Stolen Generations' and the 'Forgotten Australians'. Social workers have also been among those who have advocated for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other vulnerable children and families. The AASW acknowledges the need for social workers to be alert to, and to advocate against, unjust practices and policies, and to analyse the potential for professional practices to perpetuate abusive practices.

The AASW recognises the constructed nature of the terms 'child wellbeing' and 'child protection'. In this statement the term 'child wellbeing and protection' is used to refer to the responsibility of everyone, including social workers, for the wellbeing, development and safety of the children and young people in our community. The term encompasses a full range of strategies to enable children to develop their potential, from those which promote and support child wellbeing, to those which prevent and address harm.

This statement rests on assumptions that the family, in all of its diverse forms, is the basic unit of care for children and young people and that all families need supportive connections to enable them to grow and develop securely and happily. It acknowledges that many families and communities have to face situations and conditions that challenge their capacity to provide optimal care for children and young people and that in these situations most families and children need additional, personalised supports. Social workers, in a variety of practice contexts, need to be able to promote

child wellbeing and to assess and respond to the needs of children and families through direct practice and through working for structural changes.

This statement is based on the generic content of social work education outlined in the AASW *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (2008). It is structured so that the content areas correspond to Section 3 of that document. It identifies particular instances where the generic education program needs application to children and families. Distribution of this statement to higher education providers will be accompanied by a list of resources that identifies key references and other relevant educational materials which social work educators may use to support the inclusion of the child wellbeing and protection content. Some higher education providers may choose to provide additional child protection content such as electives and/or fieldwork placements in child protection. It is anticipated that social work graduates who work in statutory child protection services will participate in in-service training provided by their organisations and will have the opportunity to study child protection at postgraduate level.

The curriculum content described here encompasses the basic attitudes and values, knowledge and practice skills needed by an entry-level social worker in any practice setting to promote the wellbeing of children, young people, families, caregivers and to prevent or respond to child abuse and neglect.

2.1. Attitudes, values and principles

It is assumed that the values, principles and ethical behaviour for social work practice as outlined in the AASW *Code of Ethics* (1999) and in the revised AASW *Code of Ethics* (2010) would be covered fully in other parts of the qualifying social work course curriculum. The principles and attitudes identified here relate to the key social work values for situations involving children. These attitudes and values provide the ethical foundation for the knowledge and skills described further on in this statement. The overall goal is that entry-level social workers can understand and apply the core social work values and principles laid out in the 2010 Code of Ethics when encountering children, their mothers, fathers and carers in their family and social contexts regardless of agency setting.

1) Human dignity and worth

- a) Respect for the rights of children and young people as citizens, including the right to be informed about and to participate in decisions affecting them, and the right to protection from harm.
- b) Respect for the rights and responsibilities of mothers, fathers, family and community members to make informed decisions and to participate in decision-making processes about their own lives and those of children and young people in their care.
- c) Respect for families as the foundation of the social, cultural, and emotional wellbeing for children and for the needs of children and families for supportive and stable relationships with each other and with informal and formal supports in their communities.
- d) Commitment to ensure the maximum autonomy possible for children, mothers, fathers and families, to provide information to children, mothers, fathers and families and to ensure that principles of natural justice apply, including where there is a concern for a child's safety.

- e) Respect for the knowledge of all involved in partnerships that provide care to children, including foster carers, residential carers, birth and extended family members and statutory workers.
 - f) Respect for the cultural and spiritual needs of children.
- 2) Social justice
- a) Respect for cultural diversity, including respect for Indigenous kinship and family values and child-rearing practices, and those of other cultural groups.
 - b) Commitment to empowering children, mothers, fathers, families, individuals, groups and communities to access resources, choices and opportunities and to participate in the development of relevant policies and programs.
 - c) Awareness of power imbalances where issues of child abuse and neglect are raised, including an awareness of the social worker's own power practices.
 - d) Commitment to oppose discriminatory practices with children and families.
 - e) Commitment to child-sensitive practice, recognising that unless there is sensitivity to children's needs, children and parenting responsibilities can be invisible in adult services.
 - f) Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principles.
- 3) Service to humanity
- a) Promotion of the wellbeing of children and families takes precedence over the social worker's personal positions about family life or child rearing.
- 4) Integrity, honesty, reliability and impartiality
- a) When recording information about children, mothers, fathers, families and other significant adults, demonstrate impartiality, accuracy, inclusivity, cultural sensitivity and show a capacity to distinguish what is observed and described from opinion.
- 5) Competence
- a) A commitment to practitioner's life-long learning in the areas of child wellbeing and cultural knowledge, regardless of field of practice.
 - b) A commitment to practitioner's active participation in reflective supervision and reflective practice.
- 6) Ethical decision making
- a) Application of AASW Code of Ethics (2010) guidelines for ethical decision making in situations involving children. This encompasses principled decision making and actions that are transparent, research- and evidence-informed and which place the needs and wellbeing of children at the centre in the light of their developmental level and capacity for decision making.
 - b) Ability to articulate a decision-making process that takes account of the tensions between ethical principles when the interests of children, young people, their families and the broader community may conflict.

- c) Reflective and reflexive practice that allows heightened awareness of personal and professional values and assumptions that influence assessment and intervention in the lives of children and families.

2.2. Knowledge for social work practice

Application of the social work practice knowledge areas outlined in the ASWEAS to children and families involves the development of beginning knowledge and capacity for critical appraisal of knowledge in the following areas: children in the context of their families and communities; the policy, legislative and service contexts of social work with children and families; and social work practice with children and families.

1) Children in the context of their families and communities

Beginning knowledge of:

- a) Child development, including ecological models of human development, children's developmental needs, transitional milestones and life cycle phases, definitions and indicators of the wellbeing of children and young people within a sociological framework that encompasses the social construction of childhood and family life and ethnocentric understandings.
- b) Parent–child attachment and significant other attachments, the protective effects of secure attachment relationships and the effects of disruptions to primary carer–child attachment and of multiple changes of primary carers.
- c) The diversity of family structures, dynamics, systems and community networks with particular attention to cultural variations in family and community relationships and child care practices, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practices.
- d) Different types of child neglect and abuse, the way in which definitions of child neglect and abuse are shaped by culture and history, their interactions, manifestations, prevalence, incidence, causality, and effects including the effects on children's brain development of long-term neglect or traumatic injury, and the signs of maltreatment which may present in a range of practice settings.
- e) Current evidence about protective and risk factors relating to child wellbeing and child maltreatment at individual, family and community levels. This includes the impact of parental alcohol and other drugs misuse and parental mental health problems on children's wellbeing, a critical understanding of domestic and family violence, and the protective factors associated with children's resilience including enduring relationships and positive community connections.
- f) The process of colonisation and intergenerational trauma experienced by families, children and young people due to colonisation and/or past child welfare practices, in particular, the Stolen Generations, adults who grew up in alternative care, and children who have experienced detention.

2) Legislative, policy and service contexts of social work practice with children and families

Beginning knowledge of:

- a) The history and contemporary debates in social philosophy and policy relating to the wellbeing of children and families, including the history of child protection policy in Australia, with particular mention of the history of child protection interventions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and social work's role in the implementation of these policies.
- b) Structural and multiple disadvantages in Australia, including poverty and its impacts on children, families and communities.
- c) Contemporary service frameworks for children and families such as the continuum of services from promotion of wellbeing to prevention of abuse and neglect to treatment services and the ways in which services along this continuum match the multiple needs of children and families.
- d) The range of services and organisations which are relevant to the wellbeing of children and families (e.g. health, education, including schools, housing, alcohol and other drug, income support, refugee), Commonwealth and state responsibilities, the role of statutory child protection services and the Family Court, the relationships between services, the likely existence of protocols between services, and the local services and networks available to support mothers, fathers and families.
- e) The legal context for social work practice in child protection in Australia, and the legal and ethical responsibilities of a social worker under the legislative frameworks that protect children, including the reporting responsibilities of social workers under the relevant legislation in the state or territory in which the social work educational program is located or in the case of distance education programs, in the state or territory in which the student is located.
- f) Contemporary frameworks that enshrine the rights of children including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3) Social work practice with children and families

Beginning knowledge of:

- a) Critical practice frameworks that enable the application of a range of theories of social work practice to situations where the social worker encounters children, regardless of agency context, and which may include child-centred and family-focused practice, strengths-based and solution-focused approaches, anti-oppressive practice, group work, community development, research and policy responses.
- b) Assessment frameworks for assessing the psychosocial needs of children and families, including contemporary evidence about the use and relevance of risk and protective factors in assessment frameworks.
- c) Practice with involuntary clients, including power imbalances and strategies to respectfully promote engagement with children, young people and adults who do not wish to be clients.
- d) Culturally appropriate and respectful ways of working with children and families from diverse cultures, including Indigenous families and the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principles.

- e) Strategies that reduce risk factors to children at a family level and strategies that support mothers, fathers and families within the context of the promotion of wellbeing, prevention and tertiary continuum of services.
- f) The role of social workers in building and disseminating evidence about what works in practice and policy to promote the wellbeing of children and families and strategies to access specific information about children, families and communities as required, for example, cultural knowledge.

2.3. Skills for social work practice

This section outlines the skills that involve the capacity to implement the values and knowledge described earlier in this statement. Newly graduated social workers in all practice contexts need beginning skills to:

- 1) Appropriately transfer generic social work skills and apply social work practice theory when encountering children within their families and communities.
- 2) Identify the roles of the specific organisations in which they work and the relationships of those organisations to other parts of the service system that encounter children, young people and families, including protocols and referral pathways.
- 3) Engage with, listen to and build respectful trusting relationships with mothers and fathers, maintaining awareness that English may be a second language for many Australians, including some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.
- 4) Conduct a purposeful conversation with a child or young person, respecting their rights as a citizen and using developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies in order to understand the child or young person's perspective on their life.
- 5) Work ethically with professional authority while acknowledging and mediating the inevitable power disparity between worker and clients.
- 6) Undertake a holistic family assessment, in collaboration with the family, child and kinship networks where possible, which includes attention to the wellbeing of children and which builds on a critical understanding of the family's ecological and socioeconomic contexts.
- 7) Develop a respectful working partnership with children, young people, mothers, fathers, families, caregivers and other significant adults, to form a shared plan to address identified issues.
- 8) Undertake advocacy, conflict resolution, problem solving, planning, meeting facilitation and crisis intervention as required to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.
- 9) Collaborate effectively and respectfully with other professions and services/organisations, recognising that families may have multiple needs requiring the involvement of multiple organisations.
- 10) Make effective referrals/connections of families and children and caregivers with other services and community resources.
- 11) Write clearly and keep accurate records that distinguish what is observed and described from opinion.

- 12) Seek and utilise current evidence about good practice with children and families, and collect and use practice data to inform policy that promotes the wellbeing of children.
- 13) Work in a culturally safe way with children, families and communities and seek training to enable culturally safe practices. This will include implementing knowledge of culturally respectful ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and adhering to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principles.
- 14) Think critically and critically reflect on practice, identifying the knowledge used, the worker's own feelings and values about child wellbeing and families, and utilising supervision to explore how these may influence practice.
- 15) Practise self-protection and self-care. This involves being sufficiently self-aware to manage one's own wellbeing in the work context and to make appropriate use of supervision and other available supports.

References

- Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) (1999). *Code of Ethics*. Canberra: AASW.
- (2008). *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards*. Canberra: AASW.
- (2010). *Code of Ethics*. Canberra: AASW.

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3. Cross-cultural curriculum content

The purpose of this statement is to outline the specific cross-cultural curriculum content required by ASWEAS 2012. The statement covers the attitudes and values, knowledge and skills required of beginning social workers to promote effective cross-cultural social work practice.

The standards outlined in this statement promote the development of a critical awareness as to how both social workers and clients understand and experience their cultural identities that emerge from their unique cultural and social contexts. Along with the necessary skills, this ensures 'social workers promote respect for traditions, cultures, ideologies, beliefs and religions among different ethnic groups and societies, insofar as they do not conflict with the fundamental human rights of people' (AASW 2008, p. 5).

The standards have been developed in recognition of the importance of ensuring that all graduates of social work programs are able to work cross-culturally.

'Culture' refers to a constantly changing phenomenon of individuals and societies. As such, it is a socially-constructed and a highly-contested phenomenon within social work discourses.

Cross-cultural practice refers to practice where there is a diversity of traditions and intergenerational issues; ideologies, beliefs and religions; and race and ethnicities.

Cross-cultural practice can refer also to work acknowledging other diverse identities, such as sexual, political, professional and organisational. Where appropriate, these standards therefore address these broader dimensions of cross-cultural practice. All of these dimensions impact on us as culturally diverse social workers and clients alike, and therefore should be acknowledged as core to good practice in whatever context.

Throughout these standards the term 'client/s' is used referring to the people with whom we work. The term can be referring to individuals, families, groups and/or communities.

These standards do not specifically address the values and attitudes, skills and knowledge required for practice with Indigenous clients, recognising that there are many significant differences in Aboriginal Australian experiences. The Indigenous Curriculum Standards have been developed alongside these standards and seek to complement the focus of this document.

All social work programs are required to deliver this introductory material within their social work curriculum. Each higher education provider may implement these standards in different ways. Some higher education providers may choose to provide additional cross-cultural curriculum through electives and/or fieldwork placements.

The curriculum content described here encompasses the basic attitudes and values, knowledge and practice skills needed by an entry-level social worker in any practice setting to promote competence in cross-cultural practice.

3.1. Attitudes and values

It is assumed that the values, principles and ethical behaviour for social work practice as outlined in the AASW *Code of Ethics* (1999) and in the revised AASW *Code of Ethics* (2010) will be covered fully

in other parts of the qualifying social work course curriculum. The cross-cultural curriculum content of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards is expected to address the following specific attitudes and values underpinning practice:

- 1) Respect for the person and his or her unique cultural identities.
- 2) Respect and empathy for the diversity of cultural experiences.
- 3) Valuing cultural diversity and the complexity of that diversity.
- 4) An understanding of, and a critical engagement with, notions of universal human rights.
- 5) Acknowledgement of the need for continual critical reflection on our personal and professional cultural contexts.
- 6) Acknowledgement of the complexities of cultural identities and experiences.
- 7) Recognition of the richness of knowledge and skills within different cultural groups.
- 8) Recognition of the differential power positions of various cultural groups in society and a preparedness to challenge racism and oppression.
- 9) Recognition of the strengths and tensions of diverse worldviews, and how they are culturally derived.
- 10) Recognition of the importance of dialogue in building cultural understanding.
- 11) Recognition of the Australian practice context and the interface with cultural diversity.
- 12) Recognition of the changing nature of cultural contexts and experiences.

3.2. Knowledge for social work practice

Application of the social work practice knowledge areas outlined in the ASWEAS to cross-cultural practice involves the development of beginning knowledge and capacity for critical appraisal of knowledge in the following areas: cultural and race theories; culturally safe and sensitive practice; specific historical and contemporary cross-cultural issues in Australia, international cross-cultural issues.

- 1) A critical understanding of culture as a socially-constructed and contested concept.
- 2) Knowledge of theories of ethnicity, race and whiteness, diversity, racism and power.
- 3) Knowledge of global and historical foundations of oppression.
- 4) Knowledge of theories for understanding identity and migration.
- 5) Recognition of the intergenerational impacts of cultural experiences.
- 6) Knowledge of the impact of conflict, trauma and torture on many migrant individuals and communities.
- 7) Knowledge of culturally safe and sensitive practice.
- 8) Knowledge of key organisations that support cross-cultural groups.
- 9) Knowledge of the importance of language barriers and the need to work with interpreters and/or bicultural workers.

- 10) Understanding of historical and contemporary perceptions of social work services among cross-cultural groups.
- 11) Knowledge of Australia's migration history and its importance in shaping the nation.
- 12) Knowledge of Australia's history of cultural diversity and racism.
- 13) Knowledge of settlement and support services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- 14) Knowledge of international protection regimes for refugees and asylum seekers.
- 15) Recognition of international politics and current affairs and their impact on migration and refugee policies and trends.
- 16) Recognition of the language and worldview barriers experienced by many people in the Australian community that inhibit wellbeing.

3.3. Skills for social work practice

This section outlines the skills which involve the capacity to implement the values and knowledge described earlier in this statement. The focus is on working with all clients in culturally sensitive and safe ways. Newly graduated social workers in all practice contexts need beginning skills to:

- 1) Critically reflect on their personal and professional cultural identities and the influence they have in social work practice.
- 2) Critically reflect on the organisational and social factors influencing the capacity for practice to be culturally sensitive and safe.
- 3) Engage in continual learning about culturally respectful, empowering practice.
- 4) Draw on their own cultural identities in effective social work practice.
- 5) Engage critically, and with flexibility and curiosity, in cross-cultural encounters.
- 6) Establish rapport and empathy with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- 7) Assess the language barriers that may impact negatively on client outcomes and access appropriate support processes and/or services.
- 8) Work effectively with interpreters and bicultural workers.
- 9) Communicate effectively through culturally respectful, clear dialogue.
- 10) Assess and address the barriers to effective communication.
- 11) Assess the cultural context and experiences of clients as part of an overall assessment to understand the ways these are influencing current wellbeing and/or difficulties.
- 12) Advocate with and on behalf of their clients in culturally respectful and socially just ways.
- 13) Use the full range of social work methods to work for change and social justice for culturally diverse people and communities.
- 14) Use supervision to critically reflect upon cross-cultural issues emerging in practice.

References

Australian Association of Social Workers (1999). *Code of Ethics*. Canberra: AASW.

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4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curriculum content

The preamble to the AASW *Code of Ethics* (2010, p. 5) states:

- Social workers acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.
- Social workers commit to acknowledge and understand the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the implication of this for social work practice.
- Social workers are responsible for ensuring that their practice is culturally competent, safe and sensitive.

These statements set a clear mandate for the educational preparation of social workers. They shape the ways in which the three core values of professional social work practice—respect, social justice and professional integrity—must be practised, addressing Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ experience as a priority in social work practice.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up approximately 2% of the overall Australian population. Yet on most national indicators of disadvantage, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to be over-represented. These standards recognise the commitment that social workers must have to addressing this ongoing disadvantage and to engaging in non-racist practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The legacy of the historical disadvantage and trauma affects all Australians. Despite this historical and contemporary disadvantage, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities are resilient, and a strengths approach is critical.

Throughout these curriculum standards, the Aboriginal lens of Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing (Martin 2003) is used. This lens provides a way of thinking holistically about experience, which becomes profoundly relevant for social work practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and indeed, all people with whom social workers engage.

Ways of Knowing:

Ways of Knowing is specific to ontology and Entities of Land, Animals, Plants, Waterways, Skies, Climate and Spiritual systems of Aboriginal groups. Knowledge about ontology and Entities is learned and reproduced through processes of: listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging, sharing, conceptualising, assessing, modelling, engaging, applying. Ways of Knowing also entails processes that allow it to expand and contract according to social, political, historical and spatial dimensions of individuals, the group and interactions with outsiders. So this incorporates the contexts as well as the processes. It is more than just information or facts, but is taught and learned in certain contexts, in certain ways at certain times (Martin 2003, p. 9).

Ways of Being:

We are part of the world as much as it is part of us, existing within a network of relations amongst Entities that are reciprocal and occur in certain contexts. This determines and defines for us rights to be earned and bestowed as we carry out rites to country, self and others – our Ways of Being. These are indelibly driven by our ontology through our Ways of Knowing and serve as guides for establishing relations amongst the Entities. Our Ways of Being are about the rights we earn by fulfilling relations to Entities of country and self (Martin 2003, p. 10).

Ways of Doing:

Our Ways of Doing are a synthesis and an articulation of our Ways of Knowing and Ways of Being. These are seen in our: languages, art, imagery, technology, traditions and ceremonies, land management practices, social organisation and social control. Again these are life stage, gender and role specific. For example, women have responsibilities and rites to fulfil as nurturers and men have responsibilities and rites to fulfil as protectors. Our Ways of Doing express our individual and group identities, and our individual and group roles. Our behaviour and actions are a matter of subsequent evolvment and growth in our individual Ways of Knowing and Ways of Being (Martin 2003, p. 11).

Throughout these standards, the term ‘identity’ is deliberately not used. This is because part of the legacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has been both the trauma of identity that led to Stolen Generations experiences, and the ongoing trauma when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ‘identity’ must be ‘proven’. It is also because within social work theory, a notion of a single or fixed ‘identity’ is not consistent with understandings of people as complex, fluid beings.

These curriculum standards outline what all accredited Australian social work programs must incorporate into the learning experiences of their students. By necessity, they engage educators in these learning experiences, so that teaching environments are culturally safe places for all. Therefore, these curriculum standards are about layers of learning.

The curriculum content described here encompasses the basic attitudes and values, knowledge and practice skills needed by an entry-level social worker in any practice setting to promote safe, reflective practice. It is based upon the foundations for social work practice outlined in the AASW *Code of Ethics* (2010).

4.1. Knowing and Being: attitudes and values

To ensure safe practice, the social work curriculum content is expected to embed the following specific attitudes and values underpinning practice:

- 1) Respect for, and acknowledgment of, the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.
- 2) Respect for the person and who they are in their unique cultural context.
- 3) A preparedness to challenge racism and oppression.

- 4) An understanding of, and a critical engagement with, notions of universal human rights, social justice and non-racist practice.
- 5) Acknowledgement of the need for continual critical reflection on our personal and professional cultural contexts.
- 6) Recognition of the richness of knowledge and skills within different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups.
- 7) Recognition of the strengths and tensions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews.
- 8) Recognition of the importance of dialogue, accountability, mutual respect and responsibility in building understanding and relationship.
- 9) Acknowledgement of the complexities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.
- 10) Recognition of the constantly changing nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts and experiences.
- 11) Recognition of the Australian practice context and the interface with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.

4.2. Knowing: knowledge for social work practice

The social work curriculum is expected to address the following specific knowledge areas underpinning practice:

- 1) Knowledge of the resilience, strengths and survivorship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.
- 2) Knowledge of the intergenerational impacts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences of racism and oppression, in particular, the traumatic legacy of the Stolen Generations.
- 3) Knowledge of the continuing health and social inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and other Australians.
- 4) Awareness and understanding of historical and contemporary perceptions of social work services among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the legacy arising from experiences of colonisation, dispossession and the Stolen Generations experiences.
- 5) Knowledge of the three core values of professional social work, outlined in the *AASW Code of Ethics (2010)*.
- 6) Knowledge of Australia's history of colonisation and its devastating impact on the wellbeing and ways of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 7) Knowledge of legislative and policy practices that both enhance and inhibit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing at individual, family and community levels.
- 8) Knowledge of the central notions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and family life, including country, language, kinship and moiety.
- 9) Knowledge of some of the worldview differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Western perspectives in relation to time, 'identity' and individuality.

- 10) Knowledge of the structure and governance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.
- 11) Knowledge of the importance of Aboriginal worldviews, terms of reference and meaning.
- 12) Knowledge of communication differences with the Aboriginal emphasis on yarning and storytelling.
- 13) Knowledge of theories of race, diversity, and power.
- 14) Knowledge of Australia's history of colonisation and its importance in shaping the nation.
- 15) Knowledge of key organisations that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 16) Knowledge of who to engage with and how when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, mindful of the resourcing issues that they face.

4.3. Doing: skills for social work practice

The social work curriculum is expected to address the following specific knowledge areas underpinning practice:

- 1) Critically reflect on their own personal and professional assumptions and worldviews, and the influence they have in social work practice.
- 2) Critically reflect on the organisational and social factors influencing the capacity for practice to be culturally sensitive and safe.
- 3) Engage in continual learning about culturally respectful, empowering practice.
- 4) Use supervision to critically reflect upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues emerging in practice.
- 5) Work effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues within organisational contexts.
- 6) Communicate effectively through respectful, clear dialogue.
- 7) Assess and address any barriers to effective communication.
- 8) Assess the cultural context and experiences of clients as part of an overall assessment to understand the ways these are influencing current wellbeing and/or difficulties.
- 9) Advocate with and on behalf of clients in culturally respectful and socially just ways.
- 10) Use the full range of social work methods to work for change and social justice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- 11) Establish rapport and empathy with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples particularly through the use of listening rather than questioning.
- 12) Relate using skills of yarning and storytelling and other skills based on narrative approaches.

References

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Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012

**Guideline 1.2:
Guidance on
field education programs**

Guideline 1.2: Guidance on field education programs (Ref ASWEAS 3.4)

This document is to be read in conjunction with the *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS 2012). ASWEAS 2012 spells out the principles, standards and broad requirements for accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of professional social work education programs run by higher education providers (HEPs) and delivered by social work academic organisational units (SWAOUs).

This document provides guidance to educators on field education program requirements (ASWEAS 3.4) for programs seeking accreditation by AASW under the following headings:

Contents

1. Requirements of a program for learning in field education
2. Roles and responsibilities
 - 2.1. Field educator responsibilities and qualifications
 - 2.2. Social work program responsibilities
3. Location of placements
 - 3.1. Placements in the student's place of employment
 - 3.2. Overseas placements
4. Assessment in field education

1. Requirements of a program for learning in field education

- 1) Field education subjects must demonstrate a developmental approach to learning that complies with the principles for social work education set out in ASWEAS 2012 (Section 2).
- 2) Field education subjects must be taken over two years within the professional social work program of study.
- 3) Students must successfully complete a minimum of 1,000 hours in at least two field education subjects. These hours must be completed within the normal working hours / days of the organisation hosting the placement. No leave of any kind may be included in this requirement; that is, the full 1,000 hours must be completed.
- 4) Practice–theory integration seminars may be included within the required hours up to a maximum of 14 hours per 500-hour placement.
- 5) No placement will be shorter than 280 hours.
- 6) No placement will be an observational placement.
- 7) Placements must be structured in a way that is educationally viable (so that educational goals can be achieved). Patterns of placement days may vary from five days per week, to a minimum of two days per week. Placements that are two days per week must include at least two full-time (five-day) block periods, unless the SWAOU determines that extenuating circumstances apply.

Guidelines for considering extenuating circumstances

On occasions, a student may request flexibility regarding the requirement that placements that are two days per week must include at least two full time (5 day) block periods, on the grounds of extenuating circumstances.

Requests for flexibility regarding this requirement can only be considered for extenuating circumstances.

Extenuating circumstances should normally only pertain to those with a disability in which the five day block is likely to lead to more impaired health or is simply untenable due to the nature of the disability.

The ASWEAS does not attempt to define extenuating circumstances absolutely.

The following is an example of circumstances which *may* be considered extenuating:

- Serious health issue, illness or disability which impacts on the student’s capacity to attend placements for at least two full time (5 day) block periods. An appropriate medical certificate or other assessments may be requested by the SWAOU in considering such requests.

The following are some examples of circumstances which would **NOT** be considered extenuating:

- Other work commitments
- Family commitments

- Holidays / Moving house
- Changing jobs
- Financial cost
- Transitory health matters

The above guidelines are not absolute nor are they exhaustive. It is recommended that each SWAOU considers all extenuating circumstances requests on a case by case basis.

The onus is on the student to demonstrate their extenuating circumstances and to provide appropriate evidence and/or supporting documentation upon request of the SWAOU.

SWAOUs are required to report on incidents where extenuating circumstances are granted as part of their annual reporting to the AASW.

- 8) All placements are carried out in a host organisation that provides appropriate social work tasks¹ and meets the educational requirements of the field education program.
- 9) Each student is allocated a field educator who is a suitably qualified and experienced practitioner meeting the requirements specified in this document. The field educator guides the student's learning during the placement.
- 10) Clear expectations for learning goals and performance outcomes, based on the *AASW Practice Standards for Social Workers (2003)* (and pending *Practice Standards 2013*) and the *AASW Code of Ethics (2010)* are established through a consultative process between the SWAOU, the field educator and the student, and are documented in a learning plan.
- 11) At least one placement will be in direct practice.
- 12) In some community contexts cultural support should be provided in addition to the requirements for supervision specified in this document. Cultural support may be provided by a community member who is not a social worker.

¹ Appropriate social work tasks are defined as tasks which enable students to develop practice and analytic skills in community work, casework, group work, social planning and social action, research, social policy analysis or social policy development.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for the student, the agency, the agency-based field educator, the HEP-based field education coordinator, SWAOU field liaison staff and, where required, the professional external field educator must be clearly outlined in the field education policies of the social work program.

2.1. Field educator responsibilities and qualifications

- 1) Field educators are qualified social workers (eligible for full membership of the AASW) with a minimum of two years' full-time practice experience, or its part-time equivalent, who demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional education and an interest in developing social work knowledge and skills.
- 2) In recognition of the difficulties for some regional HEPs, in exceptional circumstances relating to distance, a field educator with less experience may be allocated for one placement only. In this circumstance the field education coordinator must ensure that the field educator has additional support and mentoring.
- 3) Field educators must undertake training for the field education role before or during their first experience in the field educator role.
- 4) Social work field educators must be able to provide a minimum of 1.5 hours formal supervision per student for each 35 hours of placement. At a minimum, half of this supervision must be provided on a one-to-one basis.
- 5) The social work field educator will be able to observe the student's practice in placements where the focus is on direct practice. Ideally the field educator will also observe the student's engagement in team and interdisciplinary meetings.
- 6) The social work field educator will not be someone who has a current or prior close personal relationship with the student.

2.2. Social work program responsibilities

- 1) There must be a clearly identifiable field education unit including administrative support dedicated to organising field education.
- 2) Staffing of field education programs should reflect the SWAOU's commitment to the centrality of field education in the social work curriculum. For example, there may be clear connections between the academic and research interests of staff and the field education experiences offered by the academic unit.
- 3) All members of staff will actively contribute to the field education program. All academic staff will use opportunities to integrate learning from field education into other parts of the curriculum.
- 4) The social work program will assign a field education coordinator and field education liaison staff to each placement.
- 5) Field education coordinators must be social workers with a minimum of five years' post-qualifying practice experience.

- 6) Responsibilities of field education coordinators will include:
 - a) developing placements and engaging field educators
 - b) contributing to field education integration workshops
 - c) contributing to workshops for field educators
 - d) performing a field education liaison role.
- 7) Field education liaison staff must be either experienced HEP-based social work educators or social workers with a minimum of five years' post-qualifying practice experience.
- 8) The responsibilities of the field education liaison staff will include:
 - a) involving the organisation, the field educator and the student in a consultative process about the goals, learning processes, structure and assessment of the placement
 - b) maintaining regular contact with the student, with a minimum of three contacts, including at least one face-to-face visit, to clarify educational issues, monitor the progress of the placement, mediate any difficulties and assess student progress. These may include group meetings and tutorials. In exceptional circumstances relating to distance, this may be waived (and video-conferencing or voice over internet protocol (e.g. Skype)) for one placement only. Telecommunications and video conferences may be used to supplement site visits but will not entirely replace them. Students and field educators should be provided with additional on-site visits from liaison staff if difficulties arise during the placement.
- 9) The SWAOU must ensure that policies and processes are in place to meet duty of care, risk management and occupational health and safety requirements for students undertaking field education. These include:
 - a) recommending a maximum number of hours of placement and travel to be undertaken in one day
 - b) recommending a maximum number of paid hours and placement hours to be undertaken in a week
 - c) notifying host organisations of occupational health and safety requirements, higher education provider insurance arrangements and the limits of that cover.
 - d) ensuring that host organisations have alerted students to policies regarding harassment, bullying and other obligations under relevant legislation
 - e) ensuring that host organisations understand that their legal obligation to provide a safe workplace with respect to freedom from bullying, harassment etc. extends to students in the workplace
- 10) SWAOUs must offer adequate support to field educators in recognition of their contribution to the social work education program. This support should include:
 - a) access to the higher education provider's resources such as the library
 - b) consultation with SWAOU staff as required
 - c) training and support in student supervision

- d) other professional development activities as appropriate
- 11) In situations where the host organisation has no suitable social work field educator, arrangements must be made to ensure that appropriate professional formation and supervision is provided by a qualified social work field educator. The SWAOU will:
- a) negotiate with the host organisation to engage an external social worker to undertake the professional supervision requirements
 - b) negotiate with the agency for a suitably qualified co-field educator to be appointed to supervise the student's day-to-day learning in conjunction with the external social work field educator
- 12) Only one placement should have an external field educator, except in the exceptional circumstances listed in the work-based placements clause.
- 13) Where field educators undertake student supervision roles that are not included in their usual paid employment, in particular where they are employed as external field educators to the host organisation, it is expected that SWAOUs will negotiate payment as part of their contractual agreement with the field educator.
- 14) SWAOUs will liaise with host organisations so that the student has access to appropriate learning opportunities and to an educational environment that enables a student to meet the requirements for social work education. This includes arrangements for:
- a) adequate space and resources for the student as required, including use of desks, office space, computers, telephones and cars. If the resources that a student requires to meet their learning needs are not available, it is expected that alternative arrangements will be negotiated.
 - b) reasonable access to organisational records
 - c) accommodation of students' learning needs, including adequate time for supervision, completion of field education assessment requirements, reading and reflection.
 - d) a physically and emotionally safe and secure work environment.

3. Location of placements

It is essential that students have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of learning experiences in field education. In particular, students must undertake field placements in at least two different fields of practice and organisations, with different client groups, using different methods of social work practice and with a different field educator for each placement.

3.1. Placements in the student's place of employment

- 1) In order to provide a breadth of experience and to prevent conflicts of interest between employment and education roles, field education placements will be undertaken in a different context, organisation and field of practice to the student's place of employment.
- 2) This requirement may be waived for one placement only if the SWAOU is satisfied that all other principles and policies set out in this document can be met.
- 3) If a placement is undertaken in a student's place of work, a written agreement signed by the organisation, the SWAOU and the student will be completed. All parties will agree to:
 - a) agreement that the employee is in a student role while on placement and that the student is able to meet the educational requirements, principles and policies set out in this document
 - b) allocation of learning experiences not involving the student's routine work responsibilities, including details of the differentiation between learning goals and usual employment duties
 - c) protected time while on placement that is separate from the duties carried out at work and includes time to complete reading, reflective learning and assessment activities related to the placement
 - d) specification of how the criteria outlined in this document for field education are met
 - e) specification for how the placement will be monitored to ensure that the criteria will be met
 - f) that wherever practicable, the supervisor is not the student's line manager or usual supervisor
- 4) In exceptional circumstances, a student may be granted two field placements in the student's place of employment. These exceptional circumstances could include:
 - a) Where students are living and/or working in remote areas² and there is no suitable placement within a reasonable distance (> 90 kilometres travel)
 - b) Mobility, support, access and equipment requirements of students with a disability that would exclude other placement options

² Definition of rurality/remoteness: ARIA is an unambiguously geographical approach to defining remoteness. It is derived from measures of road distance between populated localities and service centres. These road distance measures are then used to generate a remoteness score for any location in Australia.

Australian Standard Geographical Classification – Remoteness Areas (ASGC-RA)

RA1 – Major Cities of Australia	Scores: 0 – 0.2
RA2 – Inner Regional Australia	Scores: >0.2 – 2.4
RA3 – Outer Regional Australia	Scores: >2.4 – 5.92
RA4 – Remote Australia	Scores: >5.92 – 10.53
RA5 – Very Remote Australia	Scores: >10.53

It is recommended that the definition of remoteness includes those areas which fall into the ARIA categories RA3–5 and RA2 where the distance to the major service centre is more than 90 kilometres.

- c) Extreme financial circumstances. This would involve a significant change to a student's living circumstances if they were required to undertake an unpaid placement and documentation must be provided to substantiate these claims
- 5) If the SWAOU approves two field placements in student's place of employment, it must guarantee that all of the principles and policies of this document are met. Grounds for exceptional circumstances must be documented in the social work field education handbook.
- 6) In cases where exceptional circumstances apply, the second placement in a place of work must be in a completely different practice setting and field of practice and with a different field educator from the first placement.

3.2. Overseas placements

- 1) When a student is enrolled in a higher education institution based in Australia, 50% (500 hours) of the field education program must be undertaken in Australia. It is preferable that the student undertake their first placement in Australia.
- 2) When a student is enrolled in an accredited social work program in an Australian HEP offshore campus, students can do both placements overseas as long as the principles and policies of this document are met.
- 3) Field educators must have at least two years' experience and be eligible for membership of either the professional social work association in the country where the placement is undertaken, or the AASW.
- 4) Field education coordinators must be staff members of accredited social work educational programs in the country where the placement is undertaken, or members of accredited Australian social work programs.
- 5) Recognition of prior learning for field education does not invalidate the requirement for one placement in Australia.

4. Assessment in field education

The AASW *Practice Standards for Social Workers* (2003) (and pending Practice Standards 2013) must be utilised to inform the assessment of student field placements as they give detail to the graduate attributes:

- 1) Social work programs should map the practice standards specified in the AASW Practice Standards across the entire curriculum and show how field education is located within this.
- 2) Social work programs have a responsibility to assist organisations and field educators to map the AASW Practice Standards against the experiential learning opportunities offered to students during placements and to articulate how the students' field education experiences relate to the practice standards.
- 3) Performance outcomes based on the AASW Practice Standards and the AASW Code of Ethics will be used to assess students in each of their field placements. It is expected that different performance outcomes will assess novice students (first placement students) and graduating students (final placement students).
- 4) A range of learning activities and methods of assessment should be used to assess the student's level of achievement and whether they have met the performance outcomes specified.
- 5) Assessment strategies will require the student to demonstrate performance at the same standards of academic rigour as is expected in any academic subject.
- 6) The assessment process will include contributions from all parties involved in the placement and is carried out in an equitable and collaborative manner.
- 7) The final decision about whether the student has achieved the identified learning goals and performance outcomes and has passed the field education subject is made by the SWAOU after consideration of material submitted by all parties.
- 8) Field education curricula must incorporate a development component, such as a rating* scale, so that student progress against the practice standards and/or levels of achievement can be assessed and recorded.

*The following example of a rating system was developed by, and is used with permission of, the Victorian Combined Schools of Social Work (CSSW).

Extract from the Victorian CSSW *Common Assessment Tool* (2012)

A **rating scale** that identifies level of achievement against the core learning areas assists students and field educators to assess the level of the student's performance. This scale is designed for the purpose of indicating minimum standards expected for field education placements. It is holistic in nature, providing a broad rating against each of the core learning areas. The scale is as follows:

Rating	Level	Description
Not capable	0	Performance not at basic level expected. Poor understanding of requirements. Practice unsafe or inappropriate. Knowledge or skills undeveloped. Little application to learning.
Some capability	1	Performance not yet capable. Some requirements understood. Further work needed to demonstrate beginning capability.
Beginning capability	2	Performance at beginning level expected. Requirements understood. Practice capable under close guidance and supervision. Limited adaptability.
Capable	3	Performance at level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. Requirements integrated into practice. Can perform independently. Demonstrates adaptability and critical appreciation of own/others' practice.
Highly capable	4	Performance beyond level expected of newly qualifying practitioner. High levels of independence. Engages strongly in critical reflexivity. Exhibits ethical fluency. Generates new understandings or practices.
Unable to be assessed	U/A	The work has either not been undertaken or the supervisor has not had an opportunity to assess capability in this area.

To pass the first placement, students must at least reach a level of 'beginning capability' (2) for all learning outcome areas appropriate to the setting by the end of the placement.

To pass the final field education placement, students must at least reach a level of 'capable' (3) across all learning outcome areas, relevant to placement setting, by the end of the placement.

References

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Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012

**Guideline 1.3:
Guidance on RPL,
articulation and
credit transfer**

Guideline 1.3: Guidance on RPL, articulation and credit transfer (Ref ASWEAS 4.4)

This document is to be read in conjunction with the *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS). ASWEAS 2012 spells out the principles, standards and broad requirements for accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of professional social work education programs run by higher education providers (HEPs) and delivered by social work academic organisational units (SWAOUs).

This document provides guidance to educators on recognised prior learning (RPL), articulation and credit transfer program requirements (ASWEAS 4.4) for programs seeking accreditation by AASW under the following headings:

Contents

1. Articulation of programs and credit transfer
 - 1.1. Principles of articulation and credit transfer
 - 1.2. Definitions used in consideration of credit transfer
 - 1.3. Conditions set by Universities Australia
 - 1.4. Credit for completed diploma and advanced diploma study (TEQSA-recognised higher education providers)
 - 1.5. Transfers from a welfare, human services, social and behavioural science and community work program to a social work degree program
 - 1.6. Transfers between social work degree programs
 - 1.7. Credit for certificate courses in welfare
 - 1.8. Transfers from a welfare, human services, social and behavioural science and community work program to a qualifying master of social work program
2. Recognition of prior learning in field education
 - 2.1. Decision-making principles
 - 2.2. Assessment conditions for granting credit
 - 2.3. Assessment process for granting credit
 - 2.4. Policy regarding subsequent placements

1. Articulation of programs and credit transfer

1.1. Principles of articulation and credit transfer

The AASW supports the articulation of welfare, human services, social and behavioural science and community work programs of different levels with social work degree programs, including credit transfer, in accordance with the stated principles of Universities Australia and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Since 1998, higher education providers have extended credit arrangements, which may vary from provider to provider.

The granting of credit will be subject to HEP requirements for admission and to rules concerning the minimum amount of study required before a qualification from that HEP can be awarded. These requirements may vary for candidates admitted through special entry schemes. SWAOUs must ensure that students are not granted credit beyond those allowed and noted in sections 1 and 2 of this document.

SWAOUs must also ensure that students undertake all relevant social work subjects and are not exempted from social work subjects on the basis of the qualification that led to their initial acceptance into the degree; in other words, subjects must not be double-counted.

1.2. Definitions used in consideration of credit transfer

For the purpose of this document, the AASW will use the Universities Australia definitions when referring to credit transfer. These are:

- 1) A diploma means a diploma program accredited by the Australian Community Workers Association or recognised by the HEP granting the credit.
- 2) A reference to a three-year social welfare degree means a degree program accredited by the Australian Community Workers Association.
- 3) A reference to a four-year social work degree means a degree program approved by the Australian Association of Social Workers. Four-year programs may include an embedded honours program in fitting with AQF level (8) but only if social work learning outcomes are not compromised.

Individual higher education providers may accept, for the purposes of granting credit, diploma, associate degree and degree programs in addition to those referred to in the above definitions.

1.3. Conditions set by Universities Australia

Universities Australia has set the following conditions:

- 1) The granting of credit will be subject to university requirements for admission, and to university rules concerning the minimum amount of study required before a qualification at that university can be awarded.
- 2) Conditions may vary for candidates admitted through special entry categories.
- 3) Program prerequisites and the requirements of professional bodies will also be unaffected.

1.4. Credit for completed diploma and advanced diploma study

For graduates of TEQSA-recognised higher education providers the AQF recommendations for credit for graduates with diplomas are the accepted guides:

- 37.5% credit for an advanced diploma when linked to a four-year bachelor degree
- 25% credit for a diploma when linked to a four-year bachelor degree.

1.5. Transfers from a welfare, human services, social and behavioural science and community work program to a social work degree program

Universities Australia has decided that participating universities will grant:

- To candidates having completed two years of a three-year social welfare degree program, or holding a completed three-year social welfare degree, and admitted to a four-year social work degree program, a minimum of 25% credit, and normally in the range of 25%–50%, of the social work degree program.
- To candidates having completed one year of a three-year social welfare degree program and admitted to a four-year social work degree program, minimum credit of 25% of that social work degree program.

1.6. Transfers between social work degree programs

Universities Australia has decided that participating universities will grant full equivalent credit to candidates transferring between four-year social work degree programs.

1.7. Credit for certificate courses in welfare

Credit is not normally accepted for certificate courses in welfare.

1.8. Transfers from a welfare, human services, social and behavioural science and community work program to a qualifying master of social work program

The AQF identifies that prior studies in the same discipline at a three-year bachelor level (AQF 7) allow a master's qualification to be achieved in 1.5–2 years and if the three-year bachelor's qualification was in a different discipline, two years of master's coursework is typical. (AQF, 2011: 58)

Candidates entering a qualifying master of social work program who have completed a three-year social welfare program may therefore be granted a maximum of 25% or one semester of four as long as the SWAOU can ensure that graduates meet all required learning outcomes for Australian social work graduates as defined in ASWEAS 2012.

2. Recognition of prior learning in field education

The AASW supports the recognition of prior learning (RPL) only as a basis for application for credit in one (the first) field education subject in a social work program. If a school, department or unit elects to use RPL, it must clearly articulate the following:

- 1) a transparent process
- 2) the rationale for how RPL is to be used
- 3) the criteria used to assess RPL
- 4) the weighting which the school intends to use
- 5) the mechanism for appeal by the student.

The AASW acknowledges that life experience informs the student's participation in a social work course, but does not replace the required course content. Only formal work experience, tasks and duties in line with social work roles, tasks and functions should be considered when granting RPL, not life experience.

2.1. Decision-making principles

- 1) Credit for the first field education placement or part thereof, may be possible on the basis of recognition of prior work experience or the successful completion of field education placements completed prior to entry into the social work program.
- 2) Recognition of Prior learning for field education must be thoroughly assessed.
- 3) Performance outcomes for first placement based on the AASW Practice Standards and Code of Ethics must be used to assess students for RPL. Guideline 1.2 Guidance on Field education programs should be referred to with respect to assessment in field education.
- 4) In order to be granted RPL for field education the student must provide evidence that they have met the standards and performance outcomes for the first placement.
- 5) Granting of RPL for a complete field education subject should be considered very carefully and granted only if the SWAOU is certain the person will meet all learning outcomes of the program by the time they complete the program.
- 6) Only formal work experience, tasks, and duties in line with social work roles, tasks and functions must be considered when granting RPL for field education credit.

2.2. Assessment conditions for granting credit

Assessment conditions for granting credit will include:

- 1) Currency of the work experience (with a minimum of three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant context in the previous seven years of which at least one year of full-time equivalent has been in the last three years
- 2) Minimum three full-time equivalent years' practice in a relevant context, using social work practice skills such as assessment and counselling and methods such as case work or community work. The minimum expectation for a 'relevant context' is that it includes an organisational

context and similar kinds of professional work experience that correspond to what would be expected of a first placement student.

- 3) Assessment of a portfolio developed by the student demonstrating how he/she meets the practice standards and demonstrates the integration of theory and practice, social work ethics and values.
- 4) External, independent verification/reference as to accuracy of student's claims.

2.3. Assessment process for granting credit

- 1) Students will provide a portfolio (which should include for example, job descriptions accompanied by referee reports; skills assessment and critical reflection on placement or work experience) to be assessed which demonstrates:
 - a) how their work experience meets the relevant AASW practice standards to the level required by completion of the first field education subject
 - b) the integration of theory and practice, social work ethics and values
 - c) how they have met the specific learning outcomes for the first field education subject.
- 2) A qualified social worker who can attest to its accuracy will provide external, independent verification/reference as to the accuracy of student's claims.
- 3) The student will be assessed by a panel made up of the field education coordinator and at least one other member (a social work practitioner and/or a social work program staff member with expertise in RPL).

The granting of credit must to be considered with respect to the implications for second placement subjects.

2.4. Policy regarding subsequent placements

If partial or full RPL is granted, the following conditions apply for the second field placement. The meeting of these conditions must be considered prior to the granting of RPL for first placement.

- 1) The second placement must be undertaken in an Australian setting where the student can gain extensive experience with human services agency clients and practice case work, group work or community practice skills. The prime focus of the placement cannot be policy or research.
- 2) Strong preference is for on-site supervision unless in a remote setting where no other placement is available and high-quality external supervision is provided.
- 3) The placement setting must be different to settings in the student's work history and any experience on which the RPL application was based.



Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012

Guideline 1.4:
**Guidance on organisational
arrangements and
governance of social work
programs**

Guideline 1.4: Guidance on organisational arrangements and governance of social work programs (Ref ASWEAS 5.1)

This document is to be read in conjunction with the *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS 2012). ASWEAS 2012 spells out the principles, standards and broad requirements for accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of professional social work education programs run by higher education providers (HEPs) and delivered by social work academic organisational units (SWAOUs).

This document provides guidance to educators on organisational arrangements and governance of social work programs (ASWEAS 5.1) program requirements for programs seeking accreditation by AASW under the following headings:

Contents

1. Staffing and resources
2. Commitment of social work schools to the professional body

1. Staffing and resources

A social work academic organisational unit (SWAOU) offering a program of professional social work education must be resourced by appropriately qualified staff if the required educational outcomes for social work are to be achieved. In particular, it is critical that programs must be resourced such that they can maintain a research profile and foster a culture of scholarship and research.

This section provides information about academic staffing requirements in an SWAOU. These standards on academic staffing have been developed to ensure that education in social work is offered at a standard that merits accreditation.

- 1) The SWAOU must include a staffing profile that comprises a minimum number of social work qualified staff (eligible for membership of the AASW) with staff qualifications and experience in a range of practice areas at a level that would confer eligibility to join the Australian College of Social Work (ACSW). This profile must be taken into consideration in the planning phase of the development of the social work program and must be borne in mind when making a submission for accreditation of a new program.
- 2) Minimum social work qualified staffing requirements are essential to the SWAOU's capacity to foster and develop the professional social work identity of students, for teaching specific social work components of the program for ongoing professional development, research and course development and so that the SWAOU can contribute to the development of social work knowledge. Student to staff ratios generally should not exceed 22:1. Where specific skills are being taught, the student to staff ratio generally should not exceed 16:1.
- 3) A SWAOU proposing to offer one program of social work (e.g. a bachelor of social work or a qualifying master of social work) will only be considered for accreditation if there are at a minimum five or more full-time (or full-time equivalent) social work qualified staff members in that SWAOU. This level of staffing should be documented in the accreditation submission with the expectation that the full complement of staff will be in place by the second year of the social work program and will be subsequently maintained throughout the life of the program. At least three of the staff must hold full-time appointments.
- 4) A SWAOU proposing to offer more than one accredited social work program (e.g. a bachelor of social work and a master of social work) or offering one program on more than one campus will only be considered for accreditation if there are eight or more full-time (or full-time equivalent) social work academic staff members in that SWAOU. This level of staffing must be maintained throughout the life of the program. At least five of the staff must hold full-time appointments and be based full time on the campus at which the head and the administration of the SWAOU resides.
- 5) If an SWAOU program offers more programs (for example, postgraduate certificates and diplomas, advanced masters, professional and research doctorates), the number of social work qualified staff in the SWAOU will necessarily need to be greater to support student learning needs in these courses.
- 6) The head of the SWAOU, responsible for social work program management and leadership, must be a senior academic appointment preferably at professorial level (Level E), but at a minimum of associate professorial level (Level D) and be eligible for membership of the AASW.

It is expected that within a period of five years the required appointment will be at Level E. A Level E appointment is expected to be an eminent authority in social work and to have achieved distinction at national and international level through the making of original, innovative and distinguished contributions to scholarship, research and teaching in social work as well as commensurate contributions to the work of the academic institution.

- 7) During the establishment phase of the social work program, the development of the program could be led by an academic appointed at Level C. However, a senior academic Level D appointee must be in place at the time of approval of provisional accreditation by the AASW.
- 8) The head of the SWAOU must be eligible for membership of the AASW
- 9) Collaboration between SWAOUs is valued and encouraged. For example, the following type of collaboration arrangements may be considered:
 - a) Programs sharing curriculum content and other materials with each other
 - b) Partnership arrangements regarding the sharing of senior social work academic staff across programs.

The AASW is committed to supporting the development of regional social work programs. Where SWAOUs experience continued difficulties in recruiting a senior social work academic at level D or E in regional universities, partnership arrangements can be put in place. The partnership arrangement should be reviewed at the end of 12 months and if necessary can be renegotiated for a further period.

Where SWAOUs collaborate with other programs, they should ensure that any such collaboration does not affect the ongoing viability of their own programs.

- 10) Social work programs should be embedded within a vibrant research culture and should be taught by staff who are engaged in research activities. At least 60% of the social work qualified staff should have research doctorates, professional doctorates or research masters and either established or promising research records. This requirement is essential to fostering a research culture in the discipline of social work and facilitating the development of higher level professional capability in various areas of social work practice.
- 11) The SWAOU must be able to demonstrate that it is research active. This will normally be demonstrated by meeting at least one of the following criteria:
 - a) More than 50% of the social work qualified staff must be appointed on teaching and research appointments, with at least 30% of their time allocated to research activities
 - b) More than 50% of the social work teaching staff must have published three peer-reviewed journal articles in the preceding three years.
- 12) The SWAOU must include social work qualified staff with contemporary and relevant knowledge and practice experience to teach in areas relevant to their field(s) of practice. Social work qualified staff should hold qualifications equal to or higher than social work programs in which they are teaching. This principle does not exclude skilled or experienced practitioners teaching in the programs who do not hold a degree equivalent to or higher than the program in which they are teaching.

The social work qualified staff of the SWAOU must have the expertise to cover the core social work knowledge and skills as specified in the ASWEAS and must deliver these areas of the curriculum, recognising that the SWAOU may also employ on a part-time or casual basis individuals with particular contemporary expertise to teach in some specialist areas.

- 13) The social work qualified staff of the SWAOU must have demonstrated ability in teaching and supervising social work research, policy and direct social work practice and in teaching at either undergraduate or postgraduate level.
- 14) The SWAOU must be able to demonstrate systematic monitoring of teaching quality such as participation in regular formal teaching/unit evaluation, staff performance management and professional development.
- 15) Social work programs must demonstrate integration of field education with the whole curriculum of the social work program. All staff teaching in social work programs must demonstrate their contribution to the field education program.

2. Commitment of social work programs to the professional body

Accredited social work programs will demonstrate active commitment to the profession of social work represented by the AASW and through the AASW linked to the International Federation of Social Workers and the International Association of Schools of Social Work. This could include:

- promoting the benefits of joining the AASW and encouraging participation in AASW activity on a national and state basis
- promoting a strong commitment to the profession of social work as a self-regulating profession and the role of AASW members in engaging in evolving professional issues in a self-regulating profession
- providing AASW access to students to promote the AASW in relation to benefits and responsibilities
- strongly encouraging social work educators to be role models in demonstrating a commitment to the professional association by being a member and participating in the work of the association at either branch or national level.

It is considered highly important that the accredited programs demonstrate their commitment to the profession of social work to support the development and quality of service for social work in Australia, noting that social work is a self-regulating profession and social workers have a responsibility to engage in key professional issues in order to keep developing a strong effective profession.

In particular this commitment should be demonstrated through adherence to the AASW Code of Ethics and through continuing adherence to practice standards and learnings in the education program to ensure that all graduates understand the development of social work knowledge and practice and receive high-quality education.

The AASW and accredited social work programs have a range of mutual priorities in ensuring the continuing development of the social work profession for students and qualified professionals. It is important that the AASW and educators continue to give ongoing consideration to these common goals and consider strategies to support the development of mutual interests, the identification and development of joint projects and activities, and practice partnerships, for the ultimate benefit of social work client groups. Although it is normally expected that social work educators who teach in accredited programs be members of the AASW, it is not mandatory for all staff of accredited social work programs to be members.

Satisfying the commitment to the profession requirements of the ASWEAS may be demonstrated by:

- adherence to and maintenance of the AASW Code of Ethics by staff and students in all accredited programs and mandatory incorporation of this code into the program curriculum
- demonstrated engagement with the AASW to promote and advocate the development of contemporary practice in the field of social work and the support to AASW to incorporate into activities and development
- membership of the AASW and participation in state and/or national activities of the AASW and in continuing development of the professional association by staff of accredited programs.



Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012

**Guideline 1.5:
Guidance on
reaccreditation reviews**

Guideline 1.5: Guidance on reaccreditation reviews (Ref ASWEAS 6.1)

This document is to be read in conjunction with the 2012 *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS 2012). ASWEAS 2012 spells out the principles, standards and broad requirements for accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of professional social work education programs run by higher education providers (HEPs) and delivered by social work academic organisational units (SWAOUs).

This document outlines the reaccreditation process and the responsibilities of the SWAOU, the review team and the AASW in the reaccreditation review of AASW-accredited social work programs (ASWEAS 6.1) under the following headings:

Contents

1. Reaccreditation review participants and responsibilities
 - 1.1. Social work academic organisational unit
 - 1.2. Review team
 - 1.3. Review team chairperson
 - 1.4. AASW staff
 - 1.5. AASW executive
2. Reaccreditation review process
 - 2.1. Stage 1: Planning
 - 2.2. Stage 2: Initial review
 - 2.3. Stage 3: Site visit
 - 2.4. Stage 4: Review report
 - 2.5. Stage 5: Decision making
3. Social work program review report
 - 3.1. report template
 - 3.2. Intellectual property
 - 3.3. Authorship and document control
4. AASW accreditation panel and appointment of review team
 - 4.1. AASW accreditation panel
 - 4.2. Appointment of review team
5. Annual Reporting

1. Reaccreditation review participants and responsibilities

The participants principally involved in, and responsible for, the activities of the reaccreditation review are as follows:

- social work academic organisational unit (SWAOU)
- review team
- review team chair
- AASW staff
- AASW executive.

Their responsibilities in the context of a reaccreditation review are discussed in sections 1.1 to 1.5.

Other parties, including students, other relevant HEP units/bodies, AASW branches and other relevant organisations are expected to participate where appropriate in the reaccreditation review process.

1.1. Social work academic organisational unit

The SWAOU is the unit within a higher education provider that is responsible for developing and delivering the teaching and learning elements of an AASW-accredited social work program.

The SWAOU's reaccreditation review responsibilities include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the review
- concluding arrangements with AASW and the review team for reaccreditation review activities
- entering into a contract with AASW to undertake the reaccreditation review
- providing all required information and supporting materials as outlined, and in the required format, towards demonstrating satisfaction of the requirements of ASWEAS 2012
- meeting the costs associated with the review, including the costs of review team travel, accommodation and meals and all reasonable costs associated with a site visit
- paying the reaccreditation review fee to AASW
- adhering to the process and requirements established in this document.

1.2. Review team

The review team consists of three members appointed from the AASW accreditation panel to review an existing program. One of the three chairs the team.

The review team's reaccreditation review responsibilities include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to review
- entering into a contract with AASW to undertake a reaccreditation review of a program consistent with the process and requirements established in this document
- liaising and coordinating (via the team chair) with the SWAOU on the details of the site visit and on reporting consistent with the process of this document

- undertaking a rigorous examination and assessment of the program against the requirements of ASWEAS 2012
- providing detailed recommendations to the SWAOU and the AASW regarding the program and its satisfaction of ASWEAS 2012 requirements
- participating in developmental discussion/work with the SWAOU towards identifying improvements and changes to the program towards meeting the requirements of ASWEAS 2012 and broader innovation and improvement to the program
- recommending to the AASW executive one of the following options:
 - a) The reviewed program should be reaccredited for a period of five years.
 - b) The reviewed program should not be reaccredited. The review team must provide detailed and clear reasons for making this recommendation.
 - c) The reviewed program should be provisionally accredited for a limited period, subject to the attainment of certain clearly stated requirements. This recommendation, which is preferable to option b), should only be made if the requirements can be accomplished within the stated time limits.

1.3. Review team chairperson

The chairperson of the review team is a member of the AASW accreditation panel eligible to act as chairperson of a reaccreditation review.

The chairperson's reaccreditation review responsibilities include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the review
- coordinating and concluding the arrangements for the review and for the site visit with SWAOU on behalf of the review team
- coordinating the work of the review team
- managing the review report and its submission to the AASW executive.

1.4. AASW staff

On behalf of the AASW executive, the staff are responsible for coordinating and managing reaccreditation reviews consistent with this document and ASWEAS 2012.

The staff's reaccreditation review responsibilities include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the review
- arranging details of the review, including the review team, and scheduling, reporting and delivery with the SWAOU and the review team
- concluding contract agreements with the SWAOU and the review team
- providing ongoing procedural and policy advice and support to the SWAOU and the review team
- managing delivery of the final review report
- managing and contributing to the briefing the AASW executive gives to the AASW board of directors
- actioning the decision of the AASW board of directors regarding reaccreditation.

1.5. AASW executive

The AASW executive has overall responsibility for reaccreditation review activities on behalf of the AASW board of directors.

The AASW executive's reaccreditation review responsibilities include:

- overseeing the reaccreditation review process
- briefing the AASW board of directors on the activities of the reaccreditation review.

2. Reaccreditation review process

Successful demonstration of meeting the requirements of ASWEAS 2012 through the process outlined will result in a recommendation to the AASW board of directors for reaccreditation. The final decision on accreditation is made by the board.

The process for the reaccreditation review of AASW-accredited social work programs is divided into five stages. Each stage may require a number of actions and products from each participant.

2.1. Stage 1: Planning

The process for a reaccreditation review starts with a written reminder from the AASW to the SWAOU that the current accreditation will expire in the coming year. A response from the SWAOU confirming a desire to seek reaccreditation initiates planning for the reaccreditation process.

The planning process initially involves the SWAOU and AASW staff until such time that a review team is appointed. At that point the details of the review are largely managed by the SWAOU and the review team, consistent with this document, with AASW staff providing process and policy support and advice as needed.

At the conclusion of Stage 1, all parties will be contracted to the reaccreditation review, dates for the site visit will be agreed and the SWAOU and the review chairperson will be working together to plan the remaining details of the review.

The Stage 1 process is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Stage 1 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
AASW staff	Notify SWAOU in writing of impending expiry of accreditation	Early, final year of current accreditation
SWAOU	Requests reaccreditation to AASW in writing	
AASW staff	Provide ASWEAS, guidelines and advice on process to SWAOU	
SWAOU	Provides date (within 1–2 weeks) for site visit	
AASW staff	Identify available reviewers, determine chairperson and one reviewer, offer selection for choice of third review team member to SWAOU	
SWAOU	Select third review team member from offered choices	
AASW staff	Finalise review team, confirm details and distribute contact details to SWAOU and review chairperson	
Review chairperson	Contact review team and SWAOU and commence arrangements for site visit	
AASW staff	Distribute contracts/invoices to SWAOU, contracts to review team	
SWAOU	Return completed contract/invoice	
Review team	Return completed contracts to AASW	

2.2. Stage 2: Initial review

With the review team in place, work now commences on the review proper. At least eight weeks before the scheduled site visit, the SWAOU will distribute its social work program review report. Copies of the report and accompanying materials will be provided to each member of the review team and one copy will be provided to the AASW national office. Materials should be provided in both hard copy and soft copy with the report to be provided in the format of the provided template (See Section 3.1).

At the conclusion of Stage 2, the review team will have thoroughly assessed and evaluated the content of the social work program review report against ASWEAS (2012) and developed an initial review report. The SWAOU will have received the initial review report and will be working to address any issues, requests or concerns it raises. All planning for the site visit, including the schedule and administration, will be completed.

The Stage 2 process is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Stage 2 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
SWAOU	Distribute social work program review report to review team, AASW staff	At least eight weeks before site visit.
SWAOU	Finalise all administration, travel, accommodation etc. details for site visit	At least eight weeks before site visit.
SWAOU, review chairperson	Agree schedule for site visit	
Review team	Assess the social work program review report and develop initial comments, requests and recommendations into an initial review report	
Review chairperson	Forward initial review report to SWAOU	At least three weeks before site visit.
SWAOU	Consider initial review report and complete work to address issues etc.	
SWAOU	As necessary provide further information in response to initial review report	

2.3. Stage 3: Site visit

The site visit is an important part of a reaccreditation review. The review team has now assessed the social work program review report and developed initial comments and recommendations based on an initial review report. The site visit allows the review team to meet key stakeholders within the SWAOU, the program and the HEP and to be provided with further information to inform their assessment.

Site visits are undertaken in a collegial atmosphere. Review team members are highly experienced academics and practitioners and offer an invaluable resource to SWAOU, because of their experience in reaccreditation reviews and their knowledge of the content and delivery of social work education. All parties are encouraged to work productively to the benefit of the program and its students.

At the conclusion of Stage 3, the review team will have met with key stakeholders of the social work program and will have been provided with additional information responding to the comments, requests and recommendations in the initial review report. The review team will work on its final decisions and recommendations towards concluding a draft final review report.

The Stage 3 process is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Stage 3 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
Review team	Pre-site visit team meeting	Immediately before commencement of site visit once each member is on location
SWAOU, review team	Site visit activities as scheduled	
Review team	Review site visit outcomes, confer on revision of decisions and recommendations of review report. Agree to distribution of work in completing the draft final review report	Immediately after site visit

2.4. Stage 4: Review report

With the site visit concluded the review team should have all information necessary to complete a draft final review report. The report should provide specific recommendations to the SWAOU regarding the program and meeting ASWEAS 2012. The report will additionally recommend to the AASW executive one of the following options:

- a) The reviewed program should be reaccredited for a period of five years.
- b) The reviewed program should not be reaccredited. The review team must provide detailed and clear reasons for making this recommendation.
- c) The reviewed program should be provisionally accredited for a limited period, subject to the attainment of certain clearly stated requirements. This recommendation, which is preferable to option b), should only be made if the requirements can be accomplished within the stated time limits.

The draft final review report is provided to the SWAOU for a final response. The review chairperson, in consultation with the review team will then finalise the review report, amending recommendations as necessary based on the SWAOU final response. The final review report is then submitted to the AASW, with a copy provided to the SWAOU for their information.

At the conclusion of Stage 4, the review team will have submitted to the AASW a final review report providing a recommendation to the AASW board of directors regarding the reaccreditation of the program.

The Stage 4 process is outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Stage 4 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
Review chairperson	With input from review team, complete draft final review report and distribute to SWAOU, copied to AASW staff	Four weeks after the conclusion of the site visit
SWAOU	Provide final response to the draft final review report to the review chairperson	Four weeks after receipt of the draft final review report
Review chairperson	Assess SWAOU response and, in consultation with the review team, amend or confirm recommendations and finalise review report. Dissenting opinions must be clearly noted	
Review chairperson	Submit final review report to AASW, copied to SWAOU	Two weeks after receipt of SWAOU final response
Review team	Submit invoice to AASW staff at conclusion of work	Upon submission of final review report
Review chairperson	With input from review team complete draft final review report and distribute to SWAOU, copied to AASW staff	Four weeks after the conclusion of the site visit
SWAOU	Provide final response to the draft final review report to the review chairperson	Four weeks after receipt of draft final review report

2.5. Stage 5: Decision making

With the work of the SWAOU and the review team concluded, the final review report is considered by the AASW executive and staff to inform a briefing for the AASW board of directors. The briefing will include a recommended decision regarding reaccreditation and is scheduled for consideration at the next appropriate meeting of the AASW board of directors. Once the board has made a decision on reaccreditation, the AASW president will advise the HEP, the SWAOU and the review team of that outcome.

At the conclusion of Stage 5, all participants will be advised of the decision of the AASW board of directors regarding reaccreditation of the program.

The Stage 5 process is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Stage 5 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
AASW staff	Provide AASW executive with review report	
AASW executive, AASW staff	Draft briefing paper for AASW board	
AASW board of directors	Consider briefing paper and make decision on reaccreditation	At the first appropriate meeting of the AASW board of directors after receipt of the final review report
AASW president, AASW staff	Formally advise the HEP, the SWAOU, and the review team of the board's decision	

3. Social work program review report

The key product of the reaccreditation review process is the review report. In the initial social work program review report, the SWAOU, using the provided template, reports on the program against the requirements of ASWEAS 2012. The report, together with all relevant supporting documentation, is provided to both the review team and the AASW. Hard and soft copies are required, and the report must be provided in the format of the provided template.

Upon first assessment (before the site visit) the review team will develop initial comments, requests and recommendations in each section of the report, adding their content to the template document. This is then provided to the SWAOU to inform both the site visit and other work.

After the site visit, the review team will revise their comments and recommendations and produce a draft final review report, which will include a draft recommendation to the AASW board of directors regarding the reaccreditation of the program. That recommendation will identify one of the following three options:

- a) The program should be reaccredited for a period of five years.
- b) The program should not be reaccredited. The review team must provide detailed and clear reasons for making this recommendation.
- c) The program should be provisionally accredited for a limited period, subject to the attainment of certain clearly stated requirements. This recommendation, which is preferable to option b), should only be made if the requirements can be accomplished within the stated time limits.

The draft final review report is provided to the SWAOU to allow any final comments, or provision of details. This final response is provided to the review team who, informed by that response, confirm or amend their comments and recommendations before submitting the report to the AASW.

3.1. Report template

See attachment 1.

3.2. Intellectual property

The AASW supports innovation and best practice and acknowledges the importance of intellectual property. In completing a reaccreditation review, it is important that the SWAOU provide all material relevant to the assessment of whether the requirements of ASWEAS 2012 are met. All materials submitted are strictly controlled with access limited to the following parties: the SWAOU, the review team members (during course of the review), the review team composed for the immediately subsequent review, the AASW executive and board, and relevant AASW staff.

3.3. Authorship and document control

As the review report is developed, both the SWAOU and the review team will provide input. In using the template, both parties (the SWAOU and the review team) must consistently and accurately identify authorship. It is absolutely prohibited that at any time any party amend or remove content inputted by the other party.

The suggested naming convention for document control is as follows:

Name of HEP, PROGRAM ABBREVIATION (BSW, MSW etc.), YEAR, "REVIEW REPORT",
Version Number

4. AASW accreditation panel and appointment of review team

4.1. AASW accreditation panel

The accreditation panel is the name given to those association members approved by the AASW board to act as reviewers of social work programs for the purpose of determining whether the programs demonstrate the required standards for social work education. Members of the accreditation panel who are appointed to review an existing social work program are known as the review team. Experienced accreditation panel members may be invited to chair a review or to act as consultants to universities establishing new social work courses or programs.

4.1.1. Term of appointment

Appointment to the accreditation panel is initially for a period of three years. Members of the panel may reapply, by submitting updated curriculum vitae, to be reappointed thereafter every three years.

4.1.2. Procedures for appointment

A call for applications from members will be published in the National Bulletin as required.

- 1) Accredited members of the AASW can apply for appointment to the position of reviewer.
- 2) Applications should be sent in writing to the national office, and should be accompanied by the member's curriculum vitae and a statement addressing the selection criteria for appointment to the panel.
- 3) Applicants will be interviewed by a panel appointed by the board.
- 4) Accreditation panel members' names will be published on the members section of the AASW website.

4.1.3. Roles and responsibilities of a review team member

- 1) Prepare for a review of a social work program by reading all documentation.
- 2) Liaise with the chairperson of the review team and the AASW education officer prior to the review.
- 3) Declare any conflict of interest prior to the review.
- 4) Participate as a member of a team to review the social work program.
- 5) Assist the chairperson to write the report on the review.

4.1.4. Procedures for appointment of chairpersons of a review team

- 1) Members with at least three years' experience and three reviews on the accreditation panel will be invited to apply for the position of chairperson.
- 2) Chairpersons/consultants will be appointed by the president or nominee for a three year term initially with the option of continuing.

4.1.5. Selection criteria for appointment as chairperson of a review team

- 1) Demonstrated higher level skills to that required by a panel member.
- 2) Demonstrated skills in chairing in a range of different contexts.
- 3) Strategic and skilled in negotiating with senior university personnel.
- 4) Ability to analyse large quantities of data and to prioritise.
- 5) Ability to manage a newly formed team.
- 6) Advanced knowledge of the interface of social work education in a higher education setting.

4.1.6. Roles and responsibility of a chairperson

- 1) Advise the AASW on the policies and practice of reviews by participating in a panel of chair persons.
- 2) Declare any conflict of interest prior to the review
- 3) Brief the review team prior to a social work program review.
- 4) Liaise with the social work program prior to the review as required to ensure that all requirements will be addressed.
- 5) Submit the report to AASW two (2) weeks after receipt of SWAOU final response
- 6) Communicate with the education officer if the member's situation changes.
- 7) Participate in meetings of the accreditation panel as required.

4.2. Appointment of review team

Existing social work programs are reviewed by a review team which consists of three members from the AASW accreditation panel, one of whom will be a chairperson. The chairperson and one other member are appointed by the AASW. The names of two other available panel members will be provided to the SWAOU so they may select the third member of the team. The member selected by the SWAOU is not a representative or advocate for the SWAOU.

When appointing members of a review team, the following will be taken into account:

- 1) Compatibility of the proposed team with the school.
- 2) Particular knowledge base relevant to any special needs of the school.
- 3) Travel distance involved to contain costs for schools.
- 4) Any potential conflict of interest.
- 5) Representation on the team of teaching/academic and practitioner panel members.

5. Annual Reporting

It is a requirement that the SWAOU provide reporting each academic year on the status of the AASW accredited social work qualifications. Annual reporting will be completed each year prior to mid semester break (or equivalent), Semester One. SWAOU are to complete the ASWEAS Annual Report Template (Attachment Two) and submit electronically to the AASW Education program education@asw.asn.au

It is an expectation that annual reporting will be completed every year of accreditation including the year in which reaccreditation review is undertaken.

Attachment 1: Template for review report

Review report template [PDF]

Attachment 2: Annual reporting template

Annual reporting template [PDF]



Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS) 2012

Guideline 1.6: Guidance on new programs

Guideline 1.6: Guidance on new programs (Ref ASWEAS 6.2)

This document is to be read in conjunction with the 2012 *Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards* (ASWEAS 2012). ASWEAS 2012 spells out the principles, standards and broad requirements for accreditation by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) of professional social work education programs run by higher education providers (HEPs) and delivered by social work academic organisational units (SWAOUs).

This document provides guidance on the process and responsibilities of the SWAOU, the consultant and the AASW in an accreditation consultancy for new programs (ASWEAS 6.2) under the following headings:

Contents

1. Accreditation consultancy participants and responsibilities
 - 1.1. Social work academic organisational unit
 - 1.2. Consultant
 - 1.3. Consultancy advisers
 - 1.4. AASW staff
 - 1.5. AASW executive
2. Accreditation consultancy process
 - 2.1. Stage 1: Planning
 - 2.2. Stage 2: Consultancy
 - 2.3. Stage 3: Decision making
3. Social work program proposal and consultant's report
 - 3.1. Report template
 - 3.2. Intellectual property
 - 3.3. Authorship and document control
4. AASW consultants and appointment of consultant
 - 4.1. AASW consultants
 - 4.2. Procedures for appointment as consultant
 - 4.3. Selection criteria for appointment as consultant
 - 4.4. Process for appointment of consultants and consultancy advisers to an accreditation consultancy
 - 4.5. Accountability of consultant and consultancy advisers
5. Annual Reporting

1. Accreditation consultancy participants and responsibilities

The participants principally involved in, and responsible for, the activities of an accreditation consultancy are as follows:

- social work academic organisational unit (SWAOU)
- consultant
- consultancy advisers
- AASW staff
- AASW executive

Their responsibilities in the accreditation consultancy process are discussed in sections 1.1 to 1.5.

Other parties, including students, other relevant HEP units/bodies, AASW branches and other relevant organisations are expected to participate where appropriate in the process.

1.1. Social work academic organisational unit

The SWAOU is the unit within a higher education provider that is responsible for developing and delivering the teaching and learning elements of an AASW-accredited social work program.

The SWAOU's responsibilities in the accreditation consultancy process include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the consultancy
- concluding arrangements with AASW and the consultant for the consultancy
- entering into a contract with AASW to undertake an accreditation consultancy
- providing to the consultant all required information and supporting materials
- actively supporting and engaging with the consultant in the development of the social work program
- providing access to relevant stakeholders and resources as required
- meeting the costs associated with the consultancy, including the costs of review team travel, accommodation and meals and all reasonable costs associated with a site visit
- paying the accreditation consultancy fee to AASW
- adhering to the process and requirements established in this document.

1.2. Consultant

The consultant is a member of the AASW accreditation panel who has been appointed to act as an accreditation consultant.

The consultant's responsibilities in the accreditation consultancy process include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the consultancy
- entering into a contract with AASW to undertake an accreditation consultancy of a program
- undertaking the consultancy in a manner consistent with the process and requirements established in this document
- actively engaging and working with the SWAOU on the development of the social work program
- undertaking a rigorous examination and assessment of programs against the requirements of ASWEAS 2012
- providing detailed recommendations to the SWAOU and the AASW regarding the program and its satisfaction of ASWEAS 2012 requirements
- documenting with the SWAOU and individually the details of the program
- periodically consulting the consultancy advisers, providing them with reporting documents and accepting their feedback throughout the consultancy process
- developing and providing recommendations to the SWAOU towards meeting the requirements of ASWEAS 2012 and broader innovation and improvement to the program
- providing a final report to the AASW executive recommending one of the following:
 - a) The program should not be accredited. (Any recommendation against accreditation must be clearly based on the evidence provided in the final consultant's report.)
 - b) The program should be provisionally accredited for the duration of its first cohort.

1.3. Consultancy advisers

The two consultancy advisers are members of the AASW accreditation panel eligible to act as accreditation consultants.

The consultancy advisers' responsibilities in the accreditation consultancy process include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the consultancy
- entering into a contract with the AASW to provide advice and support to the consultant during the accreditation consultancy of a program
- maintaining knowledge of the process and program development through review of reporting and proposed content
- periodically providing advice and support to the consultant
- providing advice on the report and recommendations throughout the process.

1.4. AASW staff

On behalf of the AASW executive, the staff are responsible for coordinating and managing the accreditation consultancy process consistent with this document and ASWEAS 2012.

The staff's responsibilities in the accreditation consultancy process include:

- declaring any conflict of interest prior to the consultancy
- arranging details of the review, including the review team, and scheduling, reporting and delivery with the SWAOU and the review team
- concluding contract agreements with the SWAOU and the review team
- providing ongoing procedural and policy advice and support to the SWAOU and the review team
- managing delivery of the final review report
- managing and contributing to the AASW executive briefing to the AASW board of directors
- actioning a decision of the AASW board of directors for provisional accreditation.

1.5. AASW executive

The AASW executive has overall responsibility for the accreditation consultancy process on behalf of the AASW board of directors.

The executive's responsibilities in the accreditation consultancy process include:

- overseeing the accreditation consultancy process
- briefing the AASW board of directors on accreditation consultancy activities.

2. Accreditation consultancy process

The process of an accreditation consultancy is developmental. The SWAOU and the consultant are expected to work closely in an ongoing fashion to develop a program that will meet the requirements of ASWEAS 2012. Two consultancy advisers will provide additional advice and support directly to the consultant throughout the process. Should the process of accreditation consultancy continue beyond six months from the date of contract, additional fees may be charged by the AASW following negotiation with the SWAOU.

Successful demonstration of meeting the requirements of ASWEAS 2012 through the process outlined will result in a recommendation to the AASW board of directors for provisional accreditation. Provisional accreditation, if awarded, is for the first cohort at which time a reaccreditation review must be undertaken towards possible reaccreditation. The final decision regarding accreditation is made by the AASW board of directors.

The process for the accreditation consultancy is divided into three stages. Each stage may require a number of actions and products from each participant.

2.1. Stage 1: Planning

The accreditation consultancy process starts with a written request from the SWAOU for the appointment of a consultant towards possible provisional accreditation of a social work program. This request must be received a minimum of 12 months before the program or degree is to be offered by the SWAOU.

The planning process initially involves the SWAOU and AASW staff. Once a consultant is appointed, the details of the accreditation consultancy are largely managed between the SWAOU and the consultant, consistent with this document, with AASW staff providing process and policy support and advice as needed.

At the conclusion of Stage 1, all parties will be contracted to the accreditation consultancy and the SWAOU and the consultant will work together to begin planning and development work. Work must be underway at least six months before the program is to be offered.

The Stage 1 process is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Stage 1 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
SWAOU	Requests the AASW, in writing, to appoint an accreditation consultant	Minimum 12 months before program is to be offered
AASW staff	Provide the SWAOU with ASWEAS, guidelines and advice on process	
AASW executive, AASW staff	Consult on selection of suitable consultant, identifying two nominees	
AASW staff	Offer nominees to the SWAOU for choice of consultant	
SWAOU	Selects consultant from offered nominees	
AASW staff	Confirm participation of selected consultant and facilitates contact between SWAOU and consultant	
Consultant	Contacts SWAOU and begins work	Minimum nine months before program to be offered
AASW staff	Distribute contracts/invoices to the SWAOU, contracts to consultant	
SWAOU	Returns completed contract/invoice	
Consultant	Returns completed contract to AASW	

2.2. Stage 2: Consultancy

Stage 2 commences with the SWAOU delivering its social work program proposal to the consultant and AASW staff. A report, using the report template, will provide all details of the current status and work to date in the development of the program. This document will form the basis of the work of the consultant with the SWAOU and is critical to the success of the process. It is an expectation that there is sufficient maturity of development and thinking displayed in the social work program proposal that the accreditation consultancy can be concluded within six months of the commencement of the consultancy process.

The process of consultancy is largely a matter for agreement between the SWAOU and the consultant, provided that at least one site visit (all campuses) is undertaken during the consultancy and contact between the parties, by teleconference or similar, occurs at least once a month.

Throughout the process it is the responsibility of the SWAOU and the consultant to ensure that work is clearly informed and designed towards meeting the requirements of ASWEAS 2012. It is also the responsibility of the SWAOU to update and amend the social work program proposal (including the report template). The consultant will utilise the expertise of the two consultancy advisers to provide advice, mentoring and support with respect to program development and recommendations of the consultancy report.

Upon agreement of conclusion of program development, the consultant will accept the revised social work program proposal document and undertake an assessment of the document against the requirements of the ASWEAS 2012. This will inform a draft consultant's report, which will be provided to the SWAOU for comment. If agreement is not forthcoming, it is the responsibility of both parties to seek assistance from the AASW.

At the conclusion of Stage 2, the proposed program will have reached a level of maturity that enables the consultant to make informed decisions about whether the program will meet the requirements of ASWEAS 2012. The consultant will complete a draft consultant's report which will be provided to the SWAOU for comment.

The Stage 2 process is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Stage 2 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
SWAOU	Provides social work program proposal to consultant and a copy to AASW and consultancy advisers	
SWAOU, consultant	Agree schedule for consultancy, including details for at least one site visit (all campuses) and a monthly teleconference (or similar)	
SWAOU	Finalise all administration, travel, accommodation etc. details for site visit(s) etc.	At least eight weeks before site visit
SWAOU, consultant	Commence work on development of program	
SWAOU, consultant	Undertake site visit(s)	
SWAOU	Maintains and develops social work program proposal document based on ongoing program development	
Consultant	Throughout process, as needed, seeks advice and support from consultancy advisers	
SWAOU, consultant	On agreement of conclusion of development, SWAOU submits updated social work program proposal to consultant and consultancy advisers	
Consultant	Assesses social work program proposal against ASWEAS 2012 and completes draft consultant's report, including a recommendation to AASW board of directors regarding provisional accreditation	
Consultant	Forwards draft consultant's report to SWAOU and consultancy advisers	
SWAOU	Considers draft consultant's report and provides detailed response	
Consultancy advisers	Responding to consultant's needs, provide advice and support, including comments on draft reporting and recommendations	

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
Consultant	Considers SWAOU response and confirms/amends recommendations as necessary. The final consultant's report is then submitted to the AASW and copied to the SWAOU	Minimum of three months before program is to be offered

2.3. Stage 3: Decision making

With the work of the SWAOU and the consultant complete, the final consultant's report is considered by the AASW executive and staff to inform a briefing for the AASW board of directors. The briefing will include a recommended decision regarding provisional accreditation and is scheduled for consideration at the next appropriate meeting of the AASW board. Once the board has made a decision regarding provisional accreditation, the AASW president will advise the HEP, the SWAOU and the consultant of that outcome.

At the conclusion of Stage 3, all participants will be advised of the decision of the AASW board of directors regarding the provisional accreditation of the program.

The Stage 3 process is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Stage 3 process

Party responsible	Activity	Time of activity
AASW staff	Provide consultant's report to AASW executive	
AASW executive, AASW staff	Draft briefing paper for AASW board	
AASW board of directors	Considers briefing paper and makes decision regarding provisional accreditation	At the first appropriate meeting of the board after receipt of the final consultant's report
AASW president, AASW staff	Formally advise the HEP, the SWAOU and the consultant of the board's decision	

3. Social work program proposal and consultant's report

The initial social work program proposal, including a completed report (using the report template), sets out the current state of the proposed program against the requirements of ASWEAS 2012. This, together with all relevant supporting documentation, is provided to both the consultant and the AASW. Hard and soft copies are required and the report must be provided in the format of the provided template.

Throughout the consultancy process, it is the responsibility of the SWAOU to update the social work program proposal. Upon agreement of conclusion of development, the SWAOU will provide the updated program proposal to the consultant. The consultant will then assess the proposal with appropriate advice and support from the two consultancy advisers and complete a draft consultant's report. The report will contain recommendations as necessary to the SWAOU as well as the consultant's recommendation to the AASW board of directors on whether the program should be provisionally accredited for the duration of its first cohort or not accredited. Any recommendation against accreditation must be clearly based on the evidence provided in the final consultant's report.

The draft consultant's report is then provided to the SWAOU, who will provide a final response to the consultant. This final response is then considered by the consultant in confirming or amending the comments and recommendations of the report. The report is then finalised and submitted to the AASW.

3.1. Report template

See attachment 1.

3.2. Intellectual property

The AASW supports innovation and best practice and acknowledges the importance of intellectual property. In completing an accreditation consultancy, it is important that all relevant material to facilitate the consultant's work in both development and assessment of meeting the requirements of ASWEAS 2012 be provided. All materials submitted are strictly controlled with access limited to the following parties: the SWAOU, the consultant and consultancy advisers (during course of the consultancy), the review team composed for the immediately subsequent review, the AASW executive and board, and relevant AASW staff.

It should be noted that consultants relinquish to the SWAOU any intellectual property created as part of the process. However, the AASW strongly encourages appropriate acknowledgement of the contribution made by all parties in the development of social work programs.

3.3. Authorship and document control

In using the report template, both parties (the SWAOU and the consultant) must consistently and accurately identify authorship. It is absolutely prohibited that at any time any party amend or remove content inputted by the other party.

4. AASW consultants and appointment of consultant

4.1. AASW consultants

AASW consultants are members of the accreditation panel who are nominated by the executive to act as consultants to higher education providers planning to develop new social work programs and to social work programs planning to extend their course either to a new location or by introducing a new program structure. It is preferable that consultants are academics or former academics with extensive knowledge and experience in curriculum design. The consultant will have participated in a least three reviews of an existing social work course and be an appointed chairperson.

For information on the appointment of the AASW accreditation panel, see Guideline 1.5.

4.2. Procedures for appointment as consultant

- 1) Members with at least three years' experience and three reviews on the accreditation panel will be invited to apply for the position of consultant.
- 2) Consultants will be appointed by the president or nominee initially for a three-year term with the option of continuing.
- 3) Consultants are alternatively referred to as chairpersons and are eligible to chair reaccreditation reviews.

4.3. Selection criteria for appointment as consultant

- 1) Demonstrated higher level skills to those required by a panel member.
- 2) Demonstrated skills in chairing in a range of different contexts.
- 3) Strategic and skilled in negotiating with senior university personnel.
- 4) Ability to analyse large quantities of data and to prioritise.
- 5) Ability to manage a newly formed team.
- 6) Advanced knowledge of the interface of social work education in a higher education setting.

4.4. Process for appointment of consultants and consultancy advisers to an accreditation consultancy

On receipt of a formal request from the higher education provider for the appointment of a consultant, the AASW executive and AASW staff will meet and consider the following factors before nominating two accreditation panel members to the HEP for its consideration:

- 1) Location of possible consultants in relation to the HEP.
- 2) Time since the consultant last chaired a review or conducted an accreditation consultancy.
- 3) Availability of consultant to undertake consultancy.
- 4) Consultant's previous experience in curriculum design and evaluation.

- 5) Consultant's knowledge base related to any special needs or focus of the HEP and the program under development (e.g. distance education provision).
- 6) Other relevant political factors.

After consideration of the factors listed above, the following will occur:

- 1) The AASW executive and AASW staff nominate two possible consultants from the accreditation panel and forward their names to the SWAOU having ascertained their willingness to be nominated.
- 2) The SWAOU selects one of the suggested consultants, and notifies AASW staff.

Two consultancy advisers will be appointed by the AASW to the accreditation consultancy from those accreditation panel members eligible to act as consultant.

4.5. Accountability of consultant and consultancy advisers

The consultant enters into a contract with the AASW which details the responsibilities of the consultant to contribute to the development of the program. The consultant is also accountable to the AASW for the production of a consultant's report and a recommendation regarding provisional accreditation.

Consultancy advisers enter into contracts with the AASW which detail their responsibilities.

5. Annual Reporting

Upon provisional accreditation it is a requirement that the SWAOU provide reporting each academic year on the status of the AASW accredited social work qualification. Annual reporting will be completed each year prior to mid semester break (or equivalent), Semester One. SWAOU are to complete the ASWEAS Annual Report Template (Attachment Two) and submit electronically to the AASW Education program education@asw.asn.au

It is an expectation that annual reporting will be completed every year of accreditation including the year in which reaccreditation review is undertaken.

Attachment 1: Template for review report

Review report template [PDF]

Attachment 2: Annual reporting template

Annual reporting template [PDF]