



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:

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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]