



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Site Visitor Orientation

Term July 2025- June 2028



EDUCATE



ADVOCATE



COLLABORATE

Orientation Objectives

Introduce
ourselves as staff
and volunteers

Learn the role,
scope, and
boundaries of site
visitors

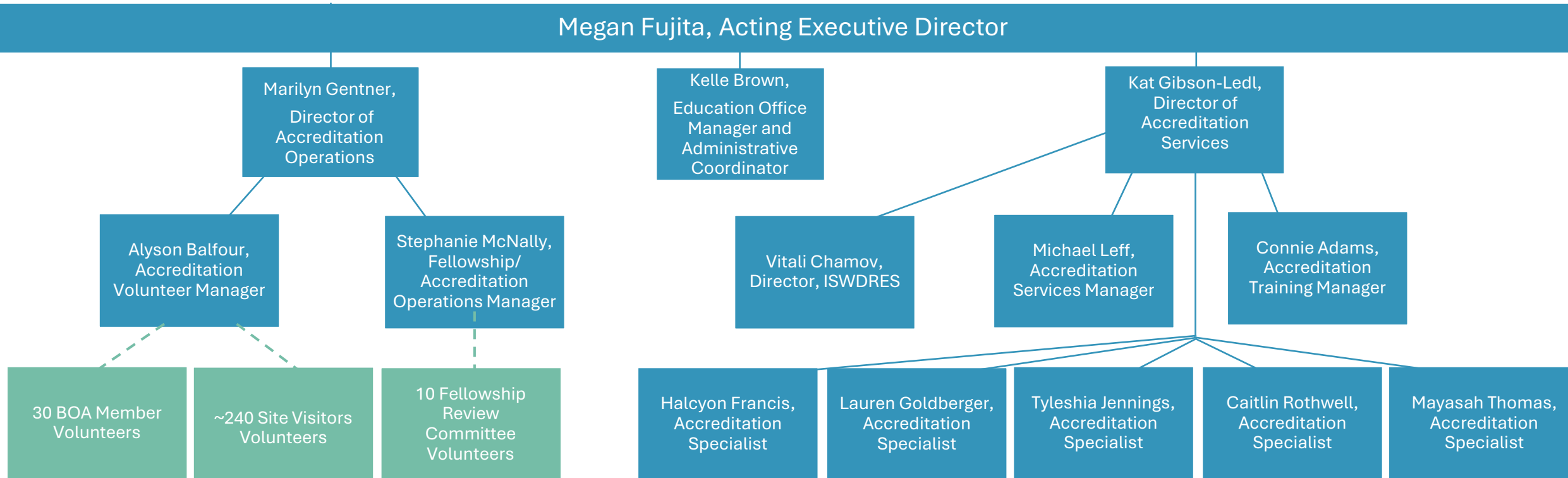
Understand CSWE
Staff roles/access
support

Understand the
basics of
reaffirmation

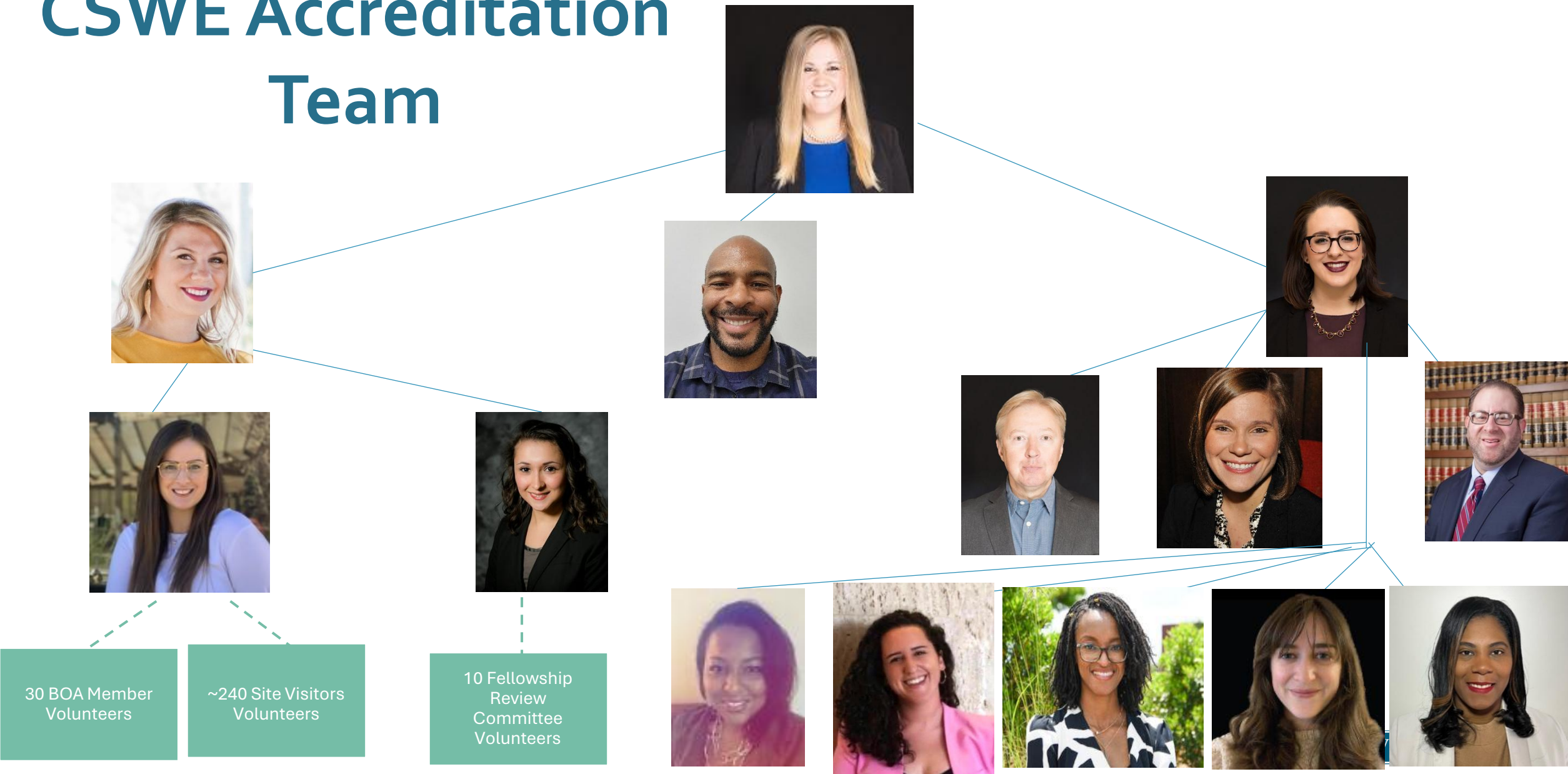
Review the basics
of site visit
matching logistics



CSWE Department of Social Work Accreditation Organizational Chart



CSWE Accreditation Team



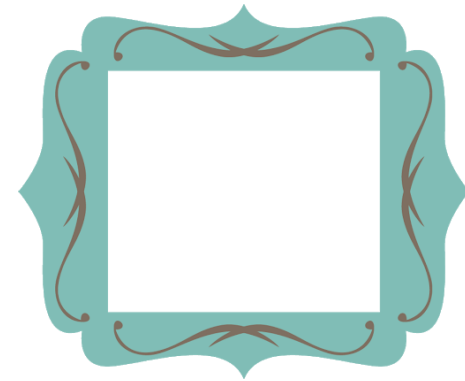
Introduction to CSWE and Accreditation

Framework for Accreditation

Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions as having a level of **performance**, **integrity**, and **quality** that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve.

The purposes of accreditation are:

- quality assurance
- academic improvement
- public accountability



Framework for Accreditation

The Board of Accreditation (BOA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is recognized by the **Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)** to accredit baccalaureate and master's degree programs in the United States and its territories. *The BOA is currently awaiting an application for expansion of scope to include practice doctorate programs.*

The professional judgements of the BOA are based on the **Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)** developed by the BOA and the Commission on Educational Policy (COEP).

Framework for Accreditation

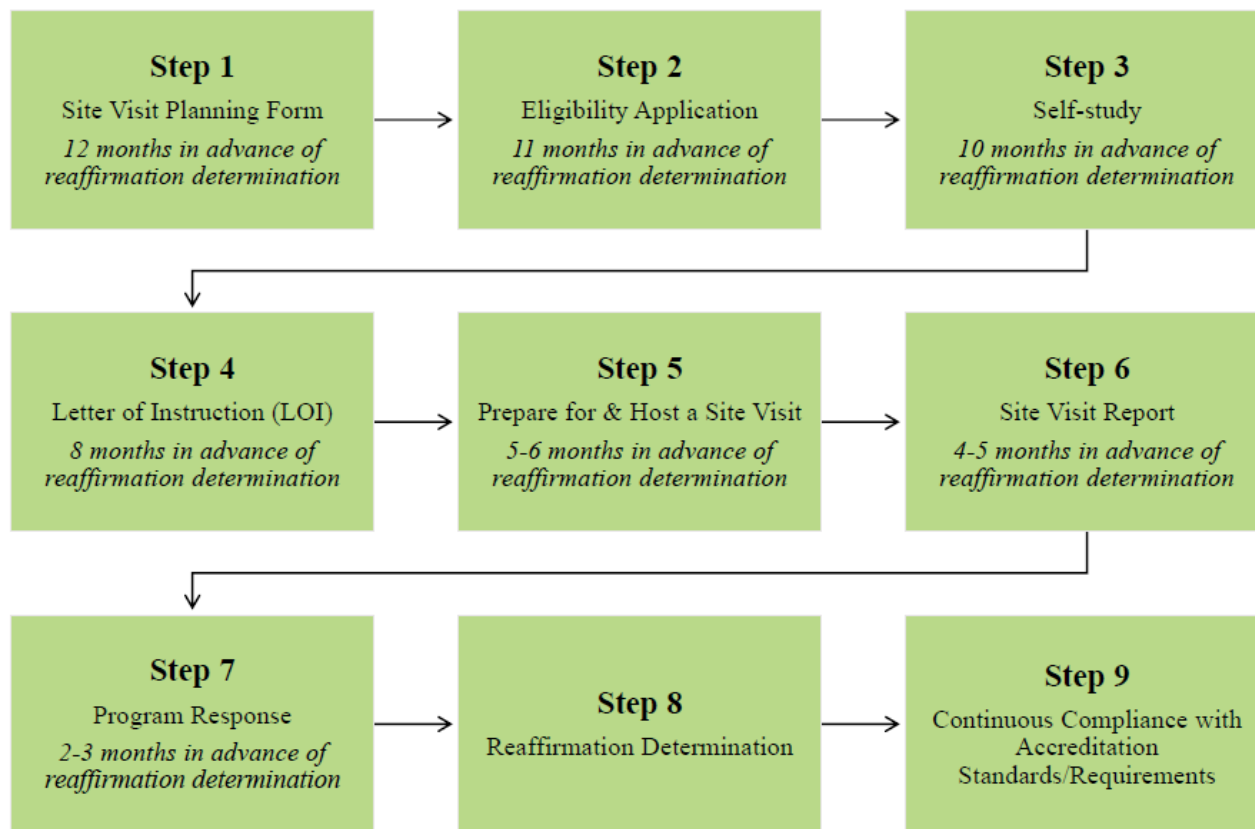
- Accreditation is a fair, impartial, and objective **peer-review** process, accomplished via dedicated **volunteer** contributions of BOA members and site visitors.
- The Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA) **staff liaise** between the BOA and the program, providing services, education and training opportunities, communicating accreditation policies, procedures, and interpretations, and furnishing BOA decision letters to programs.
- **The BOA is the sole and final arbiter of compliance.**



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Board of Accreditation (BOA)
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)
Baccalaureate and Master's Social Work Program Accreditation

Reaffirmation Process Overview



Roles within the Accreditation Process

- **Site Visitor:**
 - Volunteer social work faculty who conduct site visits on behalf of the BOA as part of the reaffirmation process.
- **Board of Accreditation Member:**
 - BOA members are also volunteers and former site visitors. BOA members are appointed for up to two three-year terms and as part of their role, they review accreditation documents for both candidate and accredited programs. BOA members also conduct visits to programs in candidacy.
- **Accreditation Specialist:**
 - CSWE Staff who liaise between programs, BOA, and site visitors while providing consultative and training services related to accreditation. Specialists are experts on the content of the standards and should be the visitors' go-to for questions related to this.
- **Volunteer Manager:**
 - CSWE Staff with primary responsibility is the management of all volunteer-related aspects of accreditation work, including the scheduling and logistics of both reaffirmation and candidacy visits.
- **Director of Accreditation Operations:**
 - CSWE staff responsible for the oversight of volunteer-related aspects of accreditation work as well as accreditation operations.
- **Program's Primary Contact:**
 - Whom the visitor will be in contact with to plan and conduct the visit. The primary contact should be included on all communications.



Role of the Site Visit in Accreditation

- The goal of conducting reaffirmation site visits is to advance quality social work education through multi-method and multi-phase regularly scheduled accreditation reviews. The site visit is an integral step in the peer-review reaffirmation process.
- The site visit is an opportunity to gain stakeholder experiences, gather information/facts and clarify any questions the BOA may have had after reviewing their self-study.
- The site visitor acts as an information gatherer on behalf of the BOA during the visit. This is not a “gotcha” for the program but an opportunity for the BOA and the program to understand stakeholder experiences and any factual observations gathered so the BOA can review and ask further questions as needed.



Introduction to Site Visits

Role & Scope of the Site Visitor

- Site Visitors DO:
 - Abide by the **Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines** for Site Visitors throughout the process.
 - Review the program's self-study documents and **BOA-issued Letter of Instruction (LOI)**.
 - Select questions from the **General Questions Bank** designed to collect targeted information in each of the five general standards in the EPAS.
 - Listen to the experiences of the stakeholders and hear the program's story in the meetings outlined on the **Site Visit Schedule**.
 - Submit a comprehensive **Site Visit Report** following the visit, which summarizes the factual and objective findings from the visit for both LOI questions and general standards questions.
- Site Visitors DO NOT:
 - Provide feedback, opinions, advice, recommendations, or instructions to the program.
 - Interpret any standards for programs.
 - Discuss additional information in the self-study that is not identified in the LOI.
 - Determine compliance nor select a decision type.

Role, scope, and boundary information is also included in the LOI, which can be found on the [Reaffirmation Process](#) webpage. Site visitors often use that as a reference when introducing themselves and discussing their role during the site visit meetings.



Site Visitor Ethical and Behavioral Guidelines

- I will only accept visit assignments for which I have no conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict per policy 3.10 *Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers* in the Accreditation Policy Handbook (<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/3e97ec3e-61ab-439d-b903-34429ffb69fe/Accreditation-Policy-Handbook.pdf>).
- I will abide by all site visit policies and procedures as provided in CSWE materials.
- I will maintain confidentiality in all aspects of the site visit, including confidentiality of and all accreditation materials related to the visit.
- I will not use artificial intelligence (AI) software or applications including but not limited to paraphrasers/summarizers, during any site visit-related meetings or when producing site visit reports.
- I will not disclose programmatic or institutional information, oral or written to others, that was garnered in the accreditation process or discussions relative to site visit.
- I will only consider information presented by the program in its self-study or disclosed by the program.
- I will refer program complaints from individual faculty members or students to CSWE accreditation staff.
- I will only meet with parties approved by the program's primary contact.
- I will not make offensive, insensitive, or damaging comments before, during, or after the visit concludes.
- I will not recruit faculty, students, or a job for myself.
- I will not suggest nor advocate for the use of particular content, theories, literature, or practice models.
- I will not make value judgments about resources, facilities, or faculty credentials.
- I will not criticize procedures or strategy in achieving compliance with accreditation standards.
- I will not accept non-visit related social invitations.
- I will not accept gifts from the program.
- I will submit site visit reports that are impartial, written in my own words, and specific to the program visited.
- I will submit the site visit report to CSWE by the required deadline.
- Upon the conclusion of the visit, I will:
 - no longer communicate with the program unless for reimbursement purposes
 - destroy/delete all program documents.



Site Visitor Conflicts of Interest

Direct Conflicts:

- The volunteer lives or works in the **same state** where the program is located.
 - The volunteer is affiliated with the **same educational system** (e.g., SUNY, CSU, etc.)
 - The volunteer was assigned as a **visitor to the program in the last accreditation cycle**.
 - The volunteer has any **existing or prior relationship** with the institution or the social work program.
 - The volunteer has any **pecuniary or personal interest** in the program or its parent institution.
- ❖ Volunteers may also self-identify any programs where there are any other circumstances that they feel may impair their judgment.
- ❖ The entire conflict of interest policy can be reviewed here: [3.10 Conflicts of Interest for Accreditation Volunteers](#).



Site Visit Policies

- Site visit policies provide the foundation for guidelines related to the site visiting process from start to finish.
- Site visit policies are also meant to be used as a resource for visitors and programs while planning and preparing for reaffirmation site visits.
- We recommend keeping this link handy so you can reference the policies as needed.
- Updates and changes will always be highlighted yellow.
- **Site Visit Policies in Section 6.6:** [Accreditation Policy Handbook | CSWE](#)



Site Visit Policies



COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

• **Board of Accreditation (BOA)**
Department of Social Work Accreditation (DOSWA)

ACCREDITATION POLICY HANDBOOK

for Baccalaureate, Master's, and Practice Doctorate Social Work Program Accreditation
version 6.12.2025

Accreditation policies are subject to change. Periodic updates to this handbook are effective immediately. When updates occur, programs primary contacts are notified, and the handbook is posted publicly. Visit the accreditation webpages at www.cswe.org to ensure use of the current version of this handbook.

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Important Dates for Site Visitors

Site Visit Availability Form	Site Visit Assignment	BOA Reviews Program and Issues a Letter of Instruction (LOI)	Site Visitor Receives LOI from Accreditation Specialist	Site Visit Occurs	Site Visit Report Due to Accreditation Specialist	Agenda Date Reaffirmation Decision
January 1 – February 1	By April 1	June BOA Meeting	July	September 15 – October 15	2 weeks after visit concludes	February BOA Meeting
May 1 – June 1	By August 1	October BOA Meeting	November	January 15 – February 15	2 weeks after visit concludes	June BOA Meeting
September 1 – October 1	By December 1	February BOA Meeting	March	April 1– April 30	2 weeks after visit concludes	October BOA Meeting

Site Visitor Matching and Assignments

1. **Site Visitor Data and Availability Forms** completed by site visitors (January, May, September)
2. **Site Visit Planning Forms** completed by the program also for each visit cycle
3. **Site Visit Matching** conducted by Volunteer Manager
 - During this time between completing your availability form and assignments being finalized, visitors would receive a site visitor assignment request by email and have the *option to confirm or decline* that assignment.
 - The assignment request includes the name of the program, the date, and the format of the visit so visitors can confirm availability and conflict information .
4. **Site Visit Assignment Notifications** finalized by Volunteer Manager (April, August, December)
 - Sent to the visitor, program's primary contact, accreditation specialist, and the program's institutional administrator
 - From this point, the program may initiate contact with the site visitor to begin site visit planning, which occurs directly between the visitor and the program
 - The assignment notification includes the contact information for the program, accreditation specialist, and other visitors as applicable, the date and format of the visit, information about the site visit and site visit planning, and the standards the program is being reviewed under.



Site Visitor Availability Form

- In Microsoft Forms, like the data form recently completed to confirm your assignment - but this form is much shorter.
- This form is ONLY completed if you are available and would like to be matched with a visit in that cycle. Otherwise, you can skip it!
- Volunteer Manager emails all site visitors a link to the appropriate form a month before they are due
 - Example: The next availability form is for Spring 2026 visits. It is due on October 1, so the link will be emailed out on September 1).
- You do not need an account to access and complete the form.
- You can save a copy of your responses.
- The form will ask:
 - Basic Info: Name, email, program you work at, state you live and work in.
 - Visit Preference Info: Program level, visit format, travel.
 - Conflicts: List of all programs on the agenda, visitors select those that they have a conflict with.
 - Availability: List of all dates in the visit cycle, visitors select dates they are not available to conduct a visit.

Availability, Conflicts, and Visit Preference Form - Winter 2026 Site Visits

Form Due Date: June 1, 2025

Assignments Made By: August 1, 2025

Purpose: The information being requested in this form applies to the upcoming Winter 2026 Visit Cycle (January 15 - February 15, 2026). Please provide your availability, conflicts, and visit preferences by this date to be considered for matching in that cycle.

Instructions: Submission of this form is required to be matched with a site visit. If you are unavailable in this visit cycle, you can skip completing this form.

Additional Information: For more information about site visit matching and timelines, visit our site visit resources page (<https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/Site-Visit-Information>).

Questions: Email Alyson Durant, Accreditation Volunteer Coordinator, adurant@cswe.org

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

1. Full name *

Enter your answer

2. Email address *

Enter your answer



Length of Site Visits



❖ In-Person Visits

- Typically conducted in one (1) full day, with travel days before and after that date

❖ Virtual Visits

- May be conducted either in one (1) full day, or two (2) consecutive half days

❖ Extra half-day

- Either visit type may include an extra half day, typically this is used for co-located programs or programs with time-intensive concerns on the LOI:
- The half-day could be added by:
 - The program using the site visit planning form (visitor notified upon assignment)
 - The BOA when issuing the LOI (visitor notified, and asked to reconfirm their availability)
 - The program during the site visit planning process (visitor notified, and asked to reconfirm their availability)

In-Person and Virtual Visits



- Unless the program is online-only, all reaffirmation site visits are conducted in-person.
- Online-only programs are those that offer a sole online program option, a majority (51% or more) of the social work curriculum delivered online.
- Online-only programs do have the option to request an in-person visit on the site visit planning form, but the default is a virtual visit.
- Keep in mind there are typically more in-person site visits available than virtual ones and it can vary from cycle to cycle.



In-Person and Virtual Visits



- Expectations are the same across in-person and virtual visits, though the logistics planning will be different.
- Deadlines, timeframes, and due dates are also consistent across visit types.
- Our policies review the logistics differences in *Section 6.6 Site Visit; Virtual Visit: Logistics and Contingency Planning* (page 120-121).



Co-located Visits

Institutions with both baccalaureate and master's program on the same reaffirmation agenda are each program level is assigned a separate site visitor.

- Co-located visits are typically conducted on the same day, but not always.
- Co-located visits may also be hosted in different formats: e.g. one visitor is in-person, and one is virtual.
- Both visitors are to conduct reviews independently (including separate site visit schedules, asking questions, taking notes, and writing site visit reports)
- When the visits are on the same day, some planning meetings and site visit meetings may be combined.
- **Note:** Site visitors for co-located visits also receive the other program level's LOI and documents. Be sure to read the correct materials for your assignment.

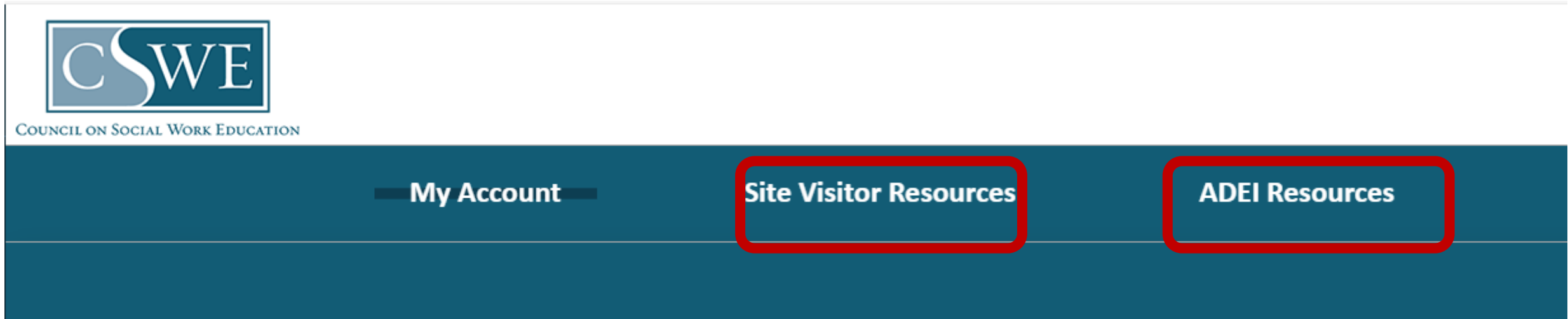


Site Visitor Resources

How to Access Our Members Only Resources

1. Go to <https://membership.cswe.org/Membership>
2. Login to your membership account (or link to your program to become a member, if needed)
 - Click *"keep me signed in if I close the browser"* (for ease, if you choose)
3. Recommend bookmarking this page in your browser
4. Tabs for **"Site Visitor Resources"** and **"ADEI Resources"** will appear on the top of your screen (see next slide for reference)
5. Access resources anytime!
6. Contact membership@cswe.org if you need help managing or accessing your CSWE membership account

Members Only View



Once logged in, you can toggle back and forth between these two pages as needed without having to navigate multiple webpage locations to find everything you need.



Site Visitor Resources Page

On this one-stop shop page you will find:

- ALL site visitor resources – policies, templates, samples, tip sheets, checklists, general questions banks, etc.
- Upcoming events
- Announcements & all the latest information
- Important dates for site visitors reference information
- Training slides and content
- Drop-in session slides and content
- Archived Newsletters
- Other general resource links related to site visiting and accreditation- EPAS Toolkit, EPAS Training, Directories, etc.
- **New resources are coming soon!** Stay tuned (we will also email you when new items launch).



ADEI Resources Page

CSWE has launched an ADEI webpage with centralized information including:

- CSWE Guidance
 - CSWE Statements
 - CHEA Statements
 - ADEI Resources
 - Waiver and extension information
 - And much more!
-
- ❖ Only accessible to members and program primary contacts
 - ❖ Webpage available to accredited, candidate, applicant, and practice doctorate program



THANK YOU

...for volunteering with CSWE! Social Work
accreditation wouldn't be possible without you.

A follow-up email will contain this slide deck along with the next steps toward training and certification.

You will also get access to the Site Visitor Resources Page following this session.