

**CSWE's Board of Accreditation and WSU's Master of Social Work Program  
Recommendations: Faculty Response**

The following information is the MSW faculty response to the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Board of Accreditation recommendations made after granting the MSW program Accreditation on October of 2023. We were granted accreditation until 2031. We also included WSU's MSW Program Recommendations with comments and action plans to further assist us as we continue to address the challenges faced by the program, faculty, students, and community members.

Recommendation from Board of Accreditation	Program Response/Plan
<p>The program is asked to describe program-level plans to continually improve the learning environment to affirm and support persons with diverse identities (Accreditation Standard 3.0.3).</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> While we agree with this standard, we also have to comply with recently passed State legislation: HB 261: Equal Opportunity Initiatives <a href="https://le.utah.gov/~2024/bills/static/HB0261.html">https://le.utah.gov/~2024/bills/static/HB0261.html</a> to ensure that we are in compliance with Utah State, as well as CSWE standards.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> Faculty members will review HB 261, as well as university guidelines to ensure we follow procedure and meet requirements. As a program that is accredited by a governing body, we also have to abide by CSWE accreditation standards which include provisions for diversity and equity. Faculty will become familiar with both documents and ensure that we follow proper protocol. The program has also hired a new recruiter/advisor for the department who will assist in recruiting potential candidates from a variety of colleges and universities. Academic advisors, faculty, and the program director are also available to affirm and support students with diverse identities.</p>
<p>The program is asked to submit revised assessment matrix with revisions for Measure 2 (Portfolio assignment) for both generalist practice and specialized practice, reflective of all nine competencies and any additional competencies added by the program. In addition, the program is asked to submit revised assessment measure(s), assignment(s), and rubric(s) (Accreditation Standard 4.0.1).</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> In reviewing final benchmark, it was noted that the majority of the information was included. However, the document is lengthy so we thought to provide clarity for the BOA.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> The assessment matrix, assignment description, and rubric were revised for measure 2 to include clarification on for each of the 9 competencies as related to assignments on the Portfolio. These are completed and will be including in the Progress Report for CSWE as requested. We also omitted any course-embedded measures that were not directly assessing each competency (APA format, timely submission, and grammar).</p>

<p>The program is asked to provide its most recent year of summary data and outcomes for the assessment of each of the identified competencies, specifying the percentage of students achieving program benchmarks for each program option (Accreditation Standard 4.0.2).</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> The program did not have ample data when final benchmark was completed. This was due to the spring semester still being in session when report was due in March. Upon completion of the semester, we were able to attain a full year’s worth of data for submission to the BOA.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> The most recent academic year, 2023-2024, of data and outcomes have been summarized and updated for both the generalist and specialized years of study. The data addressed the assessment of each of the 9 competencies and provided the percentage of students who achieved the program benchmarks.</p>
<p>The program is asked to provide Form AS 4(M) to report its most recent assessment outcomes for each program option to constituents and the public on its website and routinely update its findings. The program is asked to provide an active website hyperlink to the location of the form on the program’s public website (Accreditation Standard 4.0.3).</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> We did not have a full year’s worth of data to submit this when we completed our final Benchmark III Report in March 2023 because we were in the middle of spring semester.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> This concern has been addressed and has been added to the MSW website: <a href="http://weber.edu">Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (weber.edu)</a>. Additionally, we will make sure we continue to update this form each academic year to remain in compliance with the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE).</p>
<p>The program is asked to describe implications for program renewal across all program options. It is asked to discuss specific changes it has made in the program based upon assessment outcomes, with clear links to the data (Accreditation Standard 4.0.4).</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> The program is aware that changes are necessary to improve. With each newly accepted group of students comes challenges that may be different than the previous group. This is why we believe it is important to listen to the students to ensure we are providing the best MSW education as possible while making changes as we go.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> The program holds “meet and greet” gatherings with students in each of the cohorts to discuss student needs and concerns. This is a process we started with our initial cohort in an attempt to gain insight into the program, field sites, and faculty, both positive and needing improvement. We also review course evaluations and exit interviews to gain information to assist in creating change within the classroom and program</p>

	<p>overall. Examples of changes within the classroom include: (1) the need to create additional sections of required courses as we increase student numbers within each cohort; (2) creating block courses to provide students with additional options in course enrollment – this allows students the ability to focus on less courses during each 7 week block, as well as provides them with the ability to have more in-class time for lectures, experiential activities, and guest speakers; (3) creating new clinically based elective courses that students can take to improve their clinical skills, and offering different options each semester; and (4) hiring new MSW faculty to assist in teaching our increasing student numbers. We also hold training sessions for agency supervisors that include teaching the 9 competencies that students must master via their field experience. Since implementing these trainings, supervisors have been able to cater their field experiences to these competencies, including increasing agency’s knowledge and understanding of the importance of incorporating the competencies into practice. This was evident in the end of year assessment data where we observed an improvement on the overall ratings on some of the competencies, including those connected with research informed practice/practice informed research. We will continue to hold greet and meets, field supervisor trainings, student orientations, and hold discussions with community partners to ensure our students are receiving the best MSW education possible. We will also take the information learned through these meetings, trainings, and discussions to continue making improvements and promoting clinical social work, harm reduction, and work with the Latinx community.</p>
<p><b>MSW Program Recommendations</b></p>	<p><b>Program Response/Plan</b></p>
<p>The program would benefit from improving its marketing strategies to secure a larger number of applicants with each application cycle</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> While we have managed to fill our existing student openings, we have noticed a decrease in applicants from year to year. Our initial year we received 60 viable applications to fill 20</p>

	<p>slots, year 2 we received 170, but only 140 were viable to fill 48 slots, year 3 we received 140 applications with 130 viable, to fill 50 openings.</p> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> We acknowledge that we need to be more proactive in our recruiting of potential students. The department is in the process of hiring an Advisor/Recruiter who will work to recruit MSW applicants to increase the numbers for the upcoming application cycle that begins on August 1<sup>st</sup> until November 30<sup>th</sup>. This person will be attending graduate fairs at Utah colleges and universities, as well as contact local and regional social work programs to market the MSW program to them.</p>
<p>The program needs to hire an administrative/enrollment specialist to help meet student, faculty, and director needs.</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b></p> <p><b>COMMENT:</b> This position recently became open in early May and will be posted soon. We have had many hiring searches throughout the semester and are hoping to fill this position within the next couple of months.</p> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> We are currently working on determining the needs associated with this position and should have it tightened up in the next couple of weeks.</p>
<p>The program could benefit from revisiting its admission deadline, as many local universities have earlier deadlines that can interfere with our field placements.</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b></p> <p><b>COMMENT:</b> We started our initial application cycle with a deadline of Dec. 15. Since we had 20 students to place, we thought that would provide ample time to locate and secure our agency affiliation. We also knew that we would need to increase the number of agency affiliations to fill our student placement needs as our student numbers would also increase. The next year we changed the deadline to November 30, to provide additional time to review applications and secure field sites. We are still losing sites because it appears that agencies are wanting students in place much sooner.</p> <p><b>ACTION PLAN:</b> The MSW faculty will discuss this concern to see if we may be able to begin accepting applications earlier in the summer and end earlier in the fall. It is a discussion that our MSW Field Director is anticipating will benefit field placement in the long run.</p>

<p>The program can benefit from securing an intern tracking system to assist in data collection needed for CSWE assessments accreditation standards (see Board of Accreditation Standards addressed above).</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> At present time, we are calculating the assessment data manually at the end of each semester to ensure we are keeping up to date. Securing this tracking system would benefit the field director as she places students in field settings and ensures all accreditation standards are met.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> We are working to secure this tracking system (Tevera) with hopes of having it up and running by fall semester. Because of the legal/IT approvals, as well as budget reconciliations, we may not have it ready until the spring semester, but it is definitely in the works.</p>
<p>As the program continues to grow, and the number of students increase, the program will benefit from revisiting the number of sections offered of all required courses, as well as continue discussing potential clinically focused elective courses to ensure students are receiving a program focused experience.</p>	<p><b>AGREE</b>  <b>COMMENT:</b> We have increased the number of course sections each year to ensure students gain a positive educational experience. Additionally, the CSWE notes a 12:1 student to faculty ratio which up to date, we have attempted to meet. We anticipate with each increase of students, we will need to also either increase faculty members, or secure adjunct faculty to assist in teaching our students.  <b>ACTION PLAN:</b> We were able to secure UT State Legislative funds (\$380,000) to assist in improving and increasing our program and numbers respectively. We were able to hire a new MSW faculty member who will begin with the new academic fiscal year, July 1, 2024. We are excited to welcome this faculty member as she will assist in meeting the educational needs of our MSW students.</p>