



## ACSW Education Approval Standards

### STANDARD 1: Program Mission, Outcomes, and Community Partnership

- 1.1 The mission statement is consistent with the values of social work and the social work competencies of the ACSW; and the mandate, mission, and the vision of the institution.
- 1.2 Stakeholders such as the institutional leadership, learners, field education supervisors, Program Advisory Committee members, and other internal department members have an awareness of the philosophy or major concepts of the mission statement.
- 1.3 The mission statement of the program is reviewed and has approval of the Program Advisory Committee.
- 1.4 The program learning outcomes are consistent with the values of social work and the social work competencies of the ACSW; and are reflective of the diversity in the Alberta population.
- 1.5 The program contributes to the advancement of the social work profession such as collaborative research, program evaluation, participation in program and policy development, and professional development opportunities.
- 1.6 The program faculty and professional staff have an awareness of the philosophy or major concepts of the mission statement and advance the mission statement and learning outcomes.
- 1.7 The program establishes a Program Advisory Committee with several stakeholders including learners, alumni, field education supervisors, Indigenous representatives, employers, local community members, and agencies that serve diverse populations. The Program Advisory Committee may participate in policy formation, program development and/or program evaluation.



**STANDARD 2: Governance and Program Resource**

- 2.1 The program has established autonomy and has a distinct identity within the education faculty or school division, and institution.
- 2.2 The institution/program has policies and processes that faculty participate in the decision making related to the recruitment, retainment, and promotion of the faculty and professional staff.
- 2.3 The institution fosters an educational/work environment free from harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power. The policies include racial, sexual, gender, sexist or heterosexist climate, and abuse of power. The policies and complaint procedures are publicized, accessible, and transparent.
- 2.4 The program has access to a budget and resources such as advising and administrative support, for compliance with the ACSW Approval standards, mission, and learning outcomes while maintaining the integrity of the program.
- 2.5 Where a social work program is offered on a decentralized, distant, hybrid, or virtual basis, the program/institution shall encourage the program standards are comparable to the on-campus program, and there are adequate resources provided to support learner success.
- 2.6 Where a social work program is offered under a brokering arrangement, the Approved program shall ensure the program standards are comparable to the host site campus; and that there are clear lines of communication, responsibility, and accountability between the two institutions that are transparent in writing.
- 2.7 The program updates and reports, in writing, any significant pending changes to the program or requests for approval to the ACSW Director - Education Programs and Standards or designate. This may include leadership changes (program coordinator or chair), increase in the number of learners, structure of field placement, configuration of curriculum, and delivery (virtual or brokering arrangements).
- 2.8 The program completes periodical/cyclical reviews, following the policies of the institution, establishing quality assurance that may include admissions, program advisory committee, the circular/spiral curriculum and course outlines, teaching methodologies, resources, reviewing current research, and field education.
- 2.9 The institution/program completes and submits the annual reporting requirements to the ACSW as scheduled.



**STANDARD 3: Human Resources and Work Environment**

- 3.1 The program/institution has policies and processes that the faculty participate in the development of the program mission, vision, and learning outcomes, as well as the overall development, management, and operation of the social work program.
- 3.2 The program has a sufficient number of qualified faculty and staff to adequately plan, administer, and deliver all aspects of the social work program.
- 3.3 The program has a sufficient number of full-time (regular, temporary, term- certain) faculty members supplemented with part-time faculty (temporary, sessional, casual); and full-time staff to adequately meet the obligations of the teaching, service to the institution, interaction with the community, and daily functioning of the program that provides program coherence and integrity.
- 3.4 The program/institution provides evidence of recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies used to address diversity in the faculty.
- 3.5 The program/institution provides opportunities and resources to support continuing professional development of faculty and professional staff.
- 3.6 The program faculty and staff promote and support constructive relationships *within and between* members of the social work program including academic freedom.
- 3.7 Faculty teaching core social work courses, including field education, and faculty in a leadership role such as program chair or coordinator must hold a minimum of an MSW or graduate equivalent and be an RSW. (Note: An RSW in this context refers to being on the general or clinical registry and not a provisional social worker).
- 3.8 The program has a policy and process to ensure that all faculty teaching social work courses, including field placement, have an active registration as an RSW with the ACSW on an *annual basis*. (Note: An RSW in this context refers to being on the general or clinical registry and not a provisional social worker).
- 3.9 The program will have a policy and process to ensure that all faculty teaching social work courses, including field placement, have acknowledged reading the ACSW approval standards on an *annual basis*.
- 3.10 The program faculty and staff promote and support constructive relationships between





## Education Approval Program

the SW program and other resources and departments *internal* to the institution.

3.11 The program faculty and staff promote and support constructive relationships between the social work program and other resources and community partners *external* to the institution.



**STANDARD 4: Learner/Learning Resources Standards**

- 4.1 The program has established a set of academic and/or non-academic criteria for admissions and includes any equity provisions consistent with the program's/institution's mission and values. The criteria requirements are transparent and available for prospective applicants.
- 4.2 The program/institution provides opportunities for prospective applicants to have available admission resources and academic advising.
- 4.3 The program/Institution provides opportunities for learners to have academic advising regarding their program and ongoing academic progress.
- 4.4 The program/institution provides opportunities for learners to have available mental health and wellness resources.
- 4.5 The program/institution provides opportunities for learners to have accessibility accommodations and resources are available.
- 4.6 The program/institution provides resources in areas of writing, research, tutoring, information technology, and library materials (hard copies and virtual databases).
- 4.7 The program provides opportunities for learners, informally and formally, to participate in the governance of the program that may include, but is not limited to, participation on the Program Advisory Committee.
- 4.8 The program/institution provides opportunities for learners to participate in the evaluation of the learning environment including teaching in academic courses, field placements, and other educational settings.
- 4.9 The program has policies and processes related to academic courses, outlining and reviewing professional readiness responsibilities and learner suitability, which is in accordance with the ACS W Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.
- 4.10 The program/Institution has policies and processes in managing learners engaged in behaviour contrary to the ACSW Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, which includes both academic and non-academic misconduct.
- 4.11 The program/institution shall have policies and processes regarding the implications of a criminal record in terms of admission, continuance in the program, and potential impact





## Education Approval Program

on field education.

4.12 The program will inform learners of eligibility requirements for ACSW registration.



**STANDARD 5: Curriculum/Learning Standards**

- 5.1 The program provides the Educational Competencies through circular or spiral curriculum that is relevant to the core learning outcomes. Programs shall specify in which courses and how educational competencies are integrated (core curriculum matrix).
- 5.2 The program establishes a curriculum that provides a balance of general education (minimum of 30%) and professional education (minimum 50%), including at least 700 field education hours.
- 5.3 The program develops intentionally designed curriculum with a variety of teaching methodologies including teaching materials that reflect diverse experiences, identities, and practice contexts in the preparation and registration of social work practice in Alberta; and eligibility for transfer credits into Alberta based IBSW and BSW programs.
- 5.4 The program demonstrates that curriculum content has been designed to provide an integrated approach to addressing the “Diversity - Diversity issues, including those specific to the Alberta population” segment of the Core Curriculum Competencies including ethnicity, age, LGBTQIA2S+, religion, physical and mental ability, and other marginalized communities.
- 5.5 The program develops intentionally designed course outlines with information such as a course description, course and reference materials, learner assessment/evaluation, lecture/content schedule, institutional grading system, and general policies.
- 5.6 The program faculty develops and regularly evaluates the circular/spiral curriculum including course outlines, teaching methodologies, resources, reviewing current research, and field education.
- 5.7 The program has clear and transparent policies about transfer credits between college and university programs, schools of social work, in Alberta and nationally within the context of general university regulations.



**STANDARD 6: Indigenous/Reconciliation Standards**

- 6.1 The program ensures, as part of the community, opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the development, delivery, implementation, modification, and evaluation of the program.
- 6.2 The program/Institution provides evidence of strategies to support the recruitment, hiring, retention, and the equitable criteria of Indigenous faculty and staff.
- 6.3 The program provides opportunities for Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other holders of traditional knowledge to assume co- teaching or teaching responsibilities within the social work curriculum.
- 6.4 The program demonstrates that faculty and staff have awareness and understanding on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations.
- 6.5 The program demonstrates that faculty integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the class environment.
- 6.6 The program demonstrates that the curriculum courses and content have been designed to provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing the “Indigenous Context – Respect for Indigenous ways of being, doing, and seeing’ segment of the Core Curriculum Competencies.
- 6.7 The program demonstrates how their recruitment, admission criteria, and intake processes (including designated seats), meet the needs and aspirations of Indigenous learners and communities.
- 6.8 The program establishes support resources including traditional healing such as smudging, sweats, access to Elders, to meet the educational and mental health and wellness of learners that supports success.
- 6.9 The program provides opportunities for learners and faculty to interact with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other community members in a variety of settings including ceremony and land-based learning.
- 6.10 The program offers Indigenous field placement opportunities that is considered suitable





## Education Approval Program

and relevant for social work practice that promotes and enables learners to further develop and enhance the values, knowledge, and skills reflective of the core learning objectives and their field placement learning contract (Field Education Matrix).

6.11 The program/institution assumes responsibility for fulfilling wisdom-based practice including provisions for honorariums, ceremonial resources, gifting, and hosting materials.



**STANDARD 7: Field Placement**

7.1 The program provides a minimum of 700-hour field education component with the purpose of integration of theory and practice referred to as integrative practice.

Note: graduates who are eligible for registration will be required to complete the regulatory mandated additional 1000 supervised practice hours once they are on the ACSW provisional registry.

7.2 The program offers a variety of *integrative practice activities* designed to align with core curriculum outcomes that concentrate on developing social work values, knowledge, and skills. The credit shall be up to 10% with a maximum of 70 field placement hours.

7.3 The program recognizes the diverse fields of practice within the social work profession and offers a variety of field placement opportunities that promote and enable learners to further develop and enhance the values, knowledge, and skills reflective of the core learning outcomes and their field placement learning contract (Field Education Matrix).

7.4 The program has discretion over the placements of learners. The program/institution shall make transparent the policies with respect to personal and professional suitability, readiness for practice, inability to place into a field agency, and termination of a learner in field placement.

7.5 The program will have a field placement coordinator role held by a faculty member who is a social worker on the general or clinical ACSW registry in good standing.

7.6 The program ensures that there is faculty allocated to field placement with ongoing contact (in person, virtual, phone, or e-mail) sufficient to support learners and field agency supervisors.

7.7 Field agency supervisors are RSWs in the province of Alberta evidenced by their current registration on the ACSW general or clinical registry. Where this is not available, the program provides alternative ways enabling the learner to acquire a social work perspective, referred to as RSW Supervision.

The standard is silent about the number of RSW supervision hours due to the variety of the number of placements and the number of hours per placement. Typically, the average for programs is approximately 10 to 15 hours for a 350-hour field placement term.

7.8 The program includes a minimum of one formal written field evaluation during each





## Education Approval Program

term of field placement that has established procedures for evaluating educational and learner outcomes, including criteria from the *Educational Competences*.

- 7.9 The program has field placement expectations, procedures, and processes available in a field manual that is transparent for learners and field placement agencies. As well as containing applicable forms such as learning contracts and evaluation assessments, the field manual shall include policies and procedures dealing with conflict, placement changes, and termination.
- 7.10 The program provides formal preparation in orientation of ongoing and new field instructors and agency supervisors including an emphasis on the ACSW Approval education standards.
- 7.11 Where academic credit is given for previous work experience in lieu of the field placement hours, clear criteria and procedures shall be specified and used to assess the ACSW curriculum matrix outcomes (Educational Competencies). The credit shall be for a maximum of 25% of the required practicum hours in the program.
- 7.12 The program/institution ensures adequate liability coverage for learners and field placement. The program shall ensure learners and field agencies are aware of this coverage and any limitations.

