

**CCSWR Statement**

**The role of CCSWR/social work regulators in the accreditation of social work programs**

*The CCSWR provides a national structure for provincial and territorial social work regulatory authorities to act together as the voice, both nationally and internationally, on social work regulatory matters in Canada. The following statement reflects its vision with respect to the accreditation of social work programs in Canada.*

Under ~~the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and~~ the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement changes in registration requirements in one province have implications for all provincial social work regulators. Social work regulators across Canada should understand and have an opportunity to comment on any changes in registration requirements in other provinces. This is important and also required by legislation. Changes in registration requirements in any one province can have significant and unforeseen implications in terms of social work regulation in other provinces.

Differences in legislation and policy across the provinces mean that flexibility with respect to differences in registration requirements, specifically with respect to the approval of programs, may be required. CCSWR continues to strive for collaboration, sharing of information and mutual recognition between social work regulators across Canada.

Provincial regulators use and trust accreditation by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) as the basis for social work program approval and a key requirement associated with their registration processes. This is because:

* The CASWE process of accreditation is clearly defined.
* Current regulation, policy and practices reflect an understanding that the approval of programs should be undertaken as part of a collaborative and shared process which includes regulators and educators, represented by the CASWE.
* CASWE is a national body with expertise and resources devoted to the accreditation process. It is recognized as expert in social work education. It is generally agreed that CASWE is in an appropriate position to define acceptable and agreed upon standards.
* Most provinces are not in a position to take on a process of approving social work programs, due in part to a lack of resources.

Notwithstanding the above, the CCSWR would like to further develop its understanding of the Canadian Association of Social Work Educators’ (CASWE) standards for accreditation. The CCSWR also recognizes that it may also need to further consider the issue of approval of schools/colleges not eligible for CASWE accreditation. However, whenever there is a departure from what is generally felt to be a reliable and agreed upon process for social work program approval, it is agreed that the potential repercussions for all regulators should be carefully considered. This will help to ensure that there is a relatively consistent process to ensure mutual recognition of approved programs.