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Continued Evaluation of Student Outcomes In Field Education with a Standardized Instrument: The Updated SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument

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Abstract

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument serves as a standardized evaluation of student proficiency in the nine social work competencies identified by the Council on Social Work Education in the updated 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. This instrument is utilized within practicum or placement in undergraduate programs and in the generalist year of master's programs. Analysis of data involving 645 students from 20 undergraduate social work programs and 325 generalist-year master's-level students from five graduate programs underscores the reliability, validity, and practical applicability of this updated assessment tool.

Keywords: assessment; social work field placement; accreditation; reaffirmation

The field practicum serves as a pivotal component for social work students to operationalize and hone the skills acquired through their social work curriculum. Acknowledged as the "signature pedagogy" within social work education by the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of 2008, and reaffirmed in the subsequent EPAS of 2022, field education remains paramount in shaping the professional development of social work practitioners (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2008, 2022).

In accordance with CSWE accreditation criteria, the responsibility falls upon social work program faculty to meticulously craft and oversee field placements that adhere to EPAS standards. These standards dictate the evaluation of students' field performance, a crucial aspect of accreditation, reaffirmation, and ongoing assessment processes, which are essential for maintaining CSWE accreditation status.

Embedded within the broader framework of the Social Work Education Assessment Program (SWEAP), the SWEAP Field Instrument stands as one of seven instruments aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of social work education programs. Specifically tailored to meet the mandates set forth by the 2022 EPAS, the current iteration of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument serves as a standardized assessment tool for both undergraduate and graduate social work programs. (SWEAP, 2025).

The aim of this study is to examine the reliability and validity of the latest iteration of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument, thereby contributing to the ongoing discourse surrounding the efficacy and refinement of field education assessment methodologies within the realm of social work pedagogy.

Review of Literature

Field Education: Signature Pedagogy

The initial introduction to the standards of social work practice often occurs within the structured explicit curriculum of social work programs. Progressing through this curriculum alongside participation in field placements allows students to translate theoretical concepts into practical applications. Field education provides students with the invaluable opportunity to transfer classroom learning and social work skills into real-world settings, guided by experienced field instructors. Consequently, the field education experience serves as a crucial juncture for students to develop and embody the role of a practicing social worker (Bogo, 2015; Boitel & Fromm, 2014; CSWE, 2022; Sullivan, et al., 2020).

A longitudinal study examining the learning trajectories of undergraduate social work students found that field education played a significant role in cultivating a more profound comprehension of professional knowledge and skills (Lam et al., 2018). Following their engagement in field education, participants in the study demonstrated the ability to engage in meaningful and reflective consolidation of their learning experiences (Lam et al., 2018).

Assessing Student Learning Outcomes in Field Education

To appropriately assess students' learning outcomes in field education, social work faculty must consider many complexities when designing field evaluation instruments. These learning outcomes should be linked to the competencies outlined under the relevant CSWE EPAS. Measuring student competency within the practicum setting is a multifaceted endeavor, influenced by various factors such as the type of field placement setting, e.g., on-site, online, and/or hybrid. Guiding documents, such as a learning contract that clearly reflects the nine social work competencies, as well as the human factor (field instructor and student), are complexities that often result in diverse, and at times conflicting, focal points for field instructors when evaluating students (Sullivan et al., 2020; Wayne & Bogo, 2018).

The volunteer nature of the field instructor role, coupled with the demands on students, accountability pressures, and the desire for mentorship over evaluation, present multifaceted challenges for field instructors in assessing students (Gushwa & Harriman, 2019). Field instructors may exhibit leniency bias in evaluations, leading to concerns about grade inflation (Vinton & Wilke, 2011). With the growing number of social work students and programs, the complexities of evaluating student outcomes in the field have intensified over time (Gushwa & Harriman, 2019).

The intricate nature of student evaluation within the field setting poses challenges for social work programs striving to meet CSWE accreditation standards (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). Since 2008, educational standards have shifted towards competency-based outcomes, necessitating a corresponding evolution in assessment design (Boitel & Fromm, 2014). Despite these changes, significant variation persists in how student competency is evaluated across social work programs (Cleak et al., 2015; Regehr et al., 2011; Sellers & Neff, 2019; Sullivan et al., 2022).

The field placement setting is an optimal environment for assessing social work students' professional competency (Sullivan et al., 2020; Wayne et al., 2010). CSWE's 2022 EPAS mandates that a systematic approach to assessing field students be designed and administered to address the nine competencies in undergraduate and generalist practice graduate programs (CSWE, 2022). A crucial aspect of developing assessments for student learning outcomes involves careful considerations regarding

data collection and instrumentation, as these factors significantly impact the reliability and validity of the instrument. Reliability pertains to the consistency or repeatability of the measures, ensuring that the results are dependable and stable over time (Sullivan et al., 2022; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). Conversely, validity refers to the extent to which the assessment accurately measures what it intends to measure, providing a trustworthy approximation of the intended proposition, inference, or conclusion (Sullivan et al., 2022; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

The development of field measures at the school/program level presents challenges in ensuring instrument reliability and validity. An analysis of three such field evaluation tools, predating EPAS 2008, revealed broad evaluation categories that hindered outcome interpretation (Regehr et al., 2007; Sullivan et al., 2022). Additionally, samples used in the analyses of these instruments often lacked variability in student racial identification, with the vast majority of students identifying as White. Consequently, there is a growing consensus in the literature advocating for standardized evaluation tools for field practicum settings, rigorously assessed for reliability and validity and encompassing diverse student samples from multiple social work programs (Christenson et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2020; Sullivan et al., 2022).

Finally, a well-designed field education instrument will enhance the likelihood that the stated EPAS holistic perspective on competence in social work practice is present, emphasizing the integration and application of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in culturally responsive, purposeful, intentional, and professional ways to advance human and community well-being. This holistic view acknowledges that competence is multidimensional, encompassing critical thinking, affective reactions, and judgment exercised by social workers in diverse practice situations. Moreover, it recognizes that professional competence is developmental and dynamic, evolving over time through continuous learning and adaptation to changes in the social environment and professional knowledge base (CSWE, 2022). The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument emerges as a noteworthy example of such an instrument, addressing these concerns while facilitating comprehensive assessment in field education.

Social Work Education Assessment Project (SWEAP)

The Social Work Education Assessment Project (SWEAP) team is made up of a diverse group of social work educators from undergraduate, master's, and doctoral level programs across the country. Over the past 30+ years, more than 20 different social work educators have been part of the team. SWEAP team members are chosen for participation in the development of program assessment instruments due to each person's extensive experience in social work education. Many SWEAP team members have particular expertise in the administration of field/practicum education programs.

SWEAP team members have served as field directors, field liaisons, and field instructors across dozens of undergraduate and graduate social work programs. Multiple SWEAP team members have served as undergraduate and/or graduate social work program field directors, for a combination of more than 20 years of service in the role. All SWEAP team members have served as field liaisons and/or field instructors over multiple academic years at the BSW and/or MSW level. Multiple SWEAP team members have also been BSW and/or MSW program directors, for a combined more than 20 years of experience. In these administrative roles, and through consultation practices, multiple SWEAP team members have been responsible for the development of successful self-studies in support of initial CSWE accreditation and program reaffirmation at the undergraduate and graduate levels under many different iterations of EPAS.

Over 500 undergraduate and graduate social work programs have used SWEAP instruments. Multiple undergraduate and graduate social work programs have successfully used SWEAP instruments towards CSWE initial accreditation and reaffirmation under EPAS 2015. Multiple undergraduate and graduate level social work programs recently undergoing CSWE candidacy or reaffirmation processes successfully used SWEAP instruments to meet the updated requirements under CSWE EPAS 2022.

Evolution of the SWEAP Field Instrument

The focus of the present study is the development of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument, responsive to CSWE's 2022 EPAS. This instrument was designed to provide undergraduate and master's level social work programs with a standardized and easily deliverable method of evaluating student competency at the generalist practice level, in an effort to inform effective program evaluation and meet CSWE accreditation requirements.

The first SWEAP Field Instrument (formerly known as the Field Placement/Practicum Assessment Instrument, or FPPAI) was designed originally as a standardized instrument for evaluation of student outcomes in field education by SWEAP in response to the 2008 EPAS. The original SWEAP Field instrument was developed, piloted, and evaluated under the supervision of the SWEAP team. Pilot evaluation found the instrument to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha = r = .96) (Christenson et al., 2015). Various additional measures of validity were also supported (Christenson et al., 2015). The SWEAP Field instrument was later updated to a newer version in response to the 2015 EPAS and guidance gleaned from CSWE presentations at professional conferences and related trainings (Krase et al., 2022).

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument was designed specifically to measure student attainment of each of the nine generalist practice competencies outlined in the updated CSWE EPAS 2022, as evaluated in real practice by their field instructors. As a measure of student achievement in a real practice setting, the 2022 instrument meets the 2022 CSWE EPAS requirement of having one such measure, and is available for administration by bachelor's level social work programs and by generalist-practice–level master's programs.

The items for evaluation included in the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument were selected to provide holistic assessment of the individual student's "demonstration of the competencies and the quality of internal processing informing the performance" (CSWE, 2022), observed by the field instructor. The 2022 instrument was designed more generally to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual social work students in their practice within the field setting, while simultaneously providing a system to easily aggregate data for use in program-level assessment.

In the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument each of the competencies is captured for assessment both at the general competency level and with operationalized definitions of behaviors. The behaviors used in the 2022 instrument are directly related to those outlined in EPAS 2022 under each CSWE-defined competency. Any similarity between items in the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument and those in the SWEAP 2015 Field Instrument is related to the language of EPAS. Given that a number of the 2022 EPAS behaviors are multi-barreled, the 2022 instrument separates those behaviors into multiple items to allow for individual analysis in certain circumstances.

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is designed to allow field instructors to provide quantitative evaluation of the student for each identified behavior. In addition to the quantitative portion of the instrument, field instructors can also contribute qualitative feedback through the narrative portion of the online administered instrument.

Instrument Administration

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is administered exclusively through the SWEAP website. The instrument can be administered in a number of ways. Individual links to electronic instruments can be sent directly to field instructors through the SWEAP website, or these links can be emailed to field instructors via the SWEAP user email platforms.

Programs can choose to distribute instruments through a single link, where one uniform link can be sent by email, and/or integrated into field and/or learning management systems for delivery. Programs can also integrate individualized instrument links into their online field management systems, through a process called

Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI). With LTI, faculty and program administrators can more easily oversee field instructor completion of the 2022 instrument as an assigned assessment.

Instrument Measurement

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument contains 29 questions. There are three to five standard items per each of the nine CSWE competencies; one of the standard items asks for assessment of the student at the competency level, and at least two standard items ask for assessment at the behavior level. All questions are written in Likert-type scale format, asking the field instructor to rate student performance. The instrument scale consists of five points ranging from 1 = *lacking performance* to 5 = *mastered performance*. The value of 3 on the instrument is defined as *competent performance* (See Table 1). This is the same scale that was used on the SWEAP 2015 Field Instrument, since programs had universal success in securing initial accreditation and reaffirmation using this scale.

Table 1

SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument Rating Scale

Scale	Performance measure	Description	Definition
5	Mastered	The intern/student shows effective and innovative application of the knowledge, values, and skills related to the performance of the practice behavior.	"Somebody highly skilled at something." Mastered performance is demonstration of knowledge, values, and skills of the practice behavior at high levels.
4	Superior	The intern/student shows superior application of the knowledge, values, and skills related to the performance of the practice behavior.	"Surpasses competent in one or more ways." Superior performance is demonstration of knowledge, values, and skills where all components of the practice behavior are included.
3	Competent	The intern/student shows competent application of the knowledge, values, and skills related to the performance of the practice behavior.	"Having enough skill or ability to do something well." Competent performance is demonstration of knowledge, values, and skills where all components of the practice behavior are included, but at the beginning or rudimentary level.
2	Inadequate	The intern/student shows beginning application of the knowledge, skills, or dispositions related to the performance of the practice behavior.	"Failing to reach an expected or required level or standard." Inadequate performance is demonstration of knowledge, values, and skills where one or more of the components of the practice behavior are missing.
1	Lacking	The intern/student has not demonstrated application of the knowledge, values and skills related to the performance of the practice behavior.	"Missing, not present or available." Lacking performance is the inability to demonstrate any of the components of the knowledge, values, or skills related to the practice behavior.

Most instrument items are written to focus on particular student behaviors. Other items are written to combine reporting on a group of student behaviors. When a field instructor evaluates a student on a standard grouped item at a value less than 3 ("competent performance"), the SWEAP online instrument system allows the field instructor to provide more specific feedback on the individual items included in the grouped item. These items are largely reflective of the grouped language provided in the CSWE EPAS itself. Evaluation of the individual parts of any grouped item is NOT

included in aggregated reporting for CSWE assessment purposes.

The final SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument scale was developed from extensive literature research and recommendations from experts in assessment, including the SWEAP team members, during the piloting phase of the instrument, and included information from the 2022 EPAS standards. Please note that the standard SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument does not allow the scale to be adjusted. Programs sometimes question why the scale of this standardized instrument does not include a "not observed" option. This option was included in the original version but later removed after user feedback, and in consultation with CSWE. As reported by CSWE at professional conference presentations on assessment, student performance needs to be measured. If a student is lacking in the opportunity to evidence their competency, they are still lacking in that performance, and should be thus evaluated. The N/O option is, however, available to programs as an add-on instrument customization as part of a midpoint evaluation, since midpoint evaluations are not reported in program assessment for accreditation purposes.

Methodology

Study Design

The current study was designed to evaluate the reliability and validity of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument. The data for this study included instrument results collected as part of generalist-practice field placement evaluation of undergraduate and graduate students from 2022 to 2024.

Study Sample

A nonprobability, purposive sample was utilized in this study. Select social work programs already using the SWEAP 2015 Field Instrument were invited to participate in this piloting process. A purposeful mix of programs of various sizes, locations, and modalities was recruited. The ultimate study sample included 645 students from 20 different social work programs: 320 students from 15 different undergraduate programs, and 325 students from five different generalist-year master's-level programs.

Findings

Content Validity

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument was designed to measure student performance of the nine competencies outlined in CSWE's 2022 EPAS. These competencies serve as

the content and "constructs" that the 2022 instrument seeks to address and measure, respectively. The SWEAP team used the competency language provided in CSWE's 2022 EPAS, and the associated behaviors, as the guide in crafting each item. To support content validity, the primary team examined each competency as a separate construct. The language of the behaviors was considered further evidence of the limits and expectations of each construct. The behaviors were also considered vital content for inclusion in the instrument, as they further define the construct of each competency.

The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument was then presented to SWEAP users for feedback, and adjustments to language were made. Content validity is supported by the origination of instrument language from the CSWE EPAS, the inclusion of multiple items per competency, and the process of expert panel recommendations and incorporation of user feedback.

Construct Validity

The nine CSWE competencies are the intended constructs separately assessed through the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using JASP statistical software. The large sample size of the pilot group would be classified as "very good" for use in EFA under the Comrey and Lee guidelines (Comrey, 1973). The sample-to-variable ratio is 71.66:1, which is considered sufficient for EFA (MacCallum et al.,1999). EFA found a one-factor solution accounting for 67% of total variance across instrument items. Factor loading of individual items under a single factor ranged from 0.69 to 0.88. The EFA fails to support the separateness of the items classified under the nine different CSWE competencies, instead suggesting that all items measure a single factor.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using JASP statistical software was conducted to further explore, and potentially clarify, the EFA findings. Preliminary analyses found non-normal distributions on all items. Non-normality of the data raises concern for bias and inaccurate standard errors using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation of standard CFA. As a result, CFA was performed using three different methods on the nine competencies as individual factors: (a) maximum likelihood (ML) estimation, (b) robust standard errors, and (c) bootstrapping. All three method findings had identical results, suggesting the hypothesized model fit is poor, as indicated by significant chi-square values, ($\chi^2 = 921.635$, $p < .001$), RMSEA of 0.053 (90% CI = 0.49, 0.98), a CFI of 0.974, and a SRMR of 0.021.

Construct validity is not supported using EFA and CFA. EFA and CFA suggest that the hypothesized nine-factor structure does not adequately represent the data, and further model modifications or alternative models should be considered.

Reliability Analysis: Internal Consistency

Responses on 29 items from evaluations of 645 individual students across the entire sample, and responses from BSW and MSW programs separately, were analyzed for internal consistency using PSPP open-source statistical software. The Cronbach's alpha reliability test of internal consistency for a scale score including all items across all students was calculated at 0.98. Such a finding indicates excellent overall internal consistency (Morgan et al., 2006). Cronbach's alpha reliability tests of internal consistency were also completed for each of the nine competencies, with items within a competency grouped as a construct. These statistics ranged from 0.92 to 0.96, indicating excellent internal consistency at the competency level, as well. See Table 2 for the reporting of Cronbach's alpha at the competency level for the total sample, as well as for the BSW and MSW subsamples.

Table 2

*SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument Reliability Analysis: Internal Consistency (*N *= 645)*

CSWE competency	Number of items	Total sample alpha	BSW alpha	MSW alpha
Competency 1: Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior	5	0.93	0.93	0.94
Competency 2: Advance human rights and social, racial, economic and environmental justice.	3	0.94	0.94	0.94
Competency 3: Engage antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.	3	0.93	0.93	0.92
Competency 4: Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice	3	0.93	0.93	0.92
Competency 5: Engage in policy practice	3	0.94	0.95	0.93
Competency 6: Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	3	0.94	0.94	0.93
Competency 7: Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	3	0.92	0.92	0.91
Competency 8: Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities	3	0.94	0.95	0.93
Competency 9: Evaluate practice with families, groups, organizations, and communities	3	0.96	0.97	0.95
Entire SWEAP 2022 field instrument	29	0.98	0.98	0.98

Discussion

The 2022 SWEAP Field instrument was developed to provide social work programs with a standardized assessment of student field placement outcomes that is responsive to CSWE's 2022 EPAS. Prior successes in securing CSWE accreditation and reaffirmation using the 2008 and 2015 FPPAI as assessment tools informed the development of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument. The 2022 instrument is designed to measure student achievement in the field placement through items grouped in relation to a given competency. The instrument reports are designed to provide

competency level assessment, as well as individual item-level feedback, to inform program evaluation and improvement. The instrument's reliability and content validity support the use of the 2022 instrument to measure student achievement at the competency level. Thus, it is not surprising that many undergraduate and graduate social work programs have successfully used the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument towards accreditation and reaffirmation since its development.

Critical in the development and use of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is the responsiveness of this instrument to the changing role of assessment in social work education, and in higher education in general. All social work programs face numerous challenges, especially when it comes to assessment. As regional accrediting bodies have placed more pressure on colleges and universities to use data to support their student outcomes, the burden of developing tools and reporting assessments has fallen on already overburdened faculty and program administrators.

The role of assessment coordinator (or other title) is often handed to untenured faculty, or at-will staff, with little or no experience in program evaluation. Many of these colleagues have risen to the task, and successfully developed assessment instruments for their own programs, providing excellent reporting. Many others have utilized professional networking to "crowdsource" ideas for assessment in the interest of saving time, and in not being alone in their process. Whether or not the program develops its own assessment tools, faculty and staff are still left with the tasks of designing, running, and interpreting reports based on the data.

A major benefit of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is that the time and energy otherwise necessary for developing tools, collecting data, and calculating outcomes is done methodically in a system designed by experts in the field. By using standardized instruments through a mechanized and online process, program faculty and staff can instead focus on the bigger picture of using assessment findings to improve their programs, and better support their students.

While the focus on assessment has only increased in higher education, there continues to be a dearth of published research on the validation of field instruments (Christenson, et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2020). The current article on validation of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is just one of few published studies that the authors could find on social work field instruments since the shift to competency-based education in the 2008 EPAS (Christenson, et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2020; Wang & Chui, 2017). Validating instruments through evaluation of data from a single social work program is a major concern (Rowe et al., 2020). The SWEAP Field Instrument provides the only validation evidence the authors could locate that includes data from multiple social work programs (Christenson et al., 2015; Rowe et al., 2020).

Further research exploring the use of data collected using a single instrument, but across multiple social work programs, is strongly recommended to improve the assessment scholarship related to the validity of field instruments.

Even though the sample used in the present analysis was large, it cannot be assumed that the 645 students who completed the instrument are representative of students from all CSWE-accredited undergraduate and graduate programs. Students' demographic information was not collected during this study. Consequently, the lack of external validity of the reliability analysis is recognized. Additionally, while the SWEAP team members who developed the instrument items have significant and appropriate experience, other social work educators might have had a different perspective on the validity of the instrument.

Construct validity was not supported by EFA or CFA. Subsequent evaluation of construct validity is warranted. The current findings suggest that the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument items might be best reported as a single scale, instead of nine separate and distinct subscales. This finding might hold for other field instruments, but the authors cannot find evidence of other instruments have been evaluated using EFA and CFA for comparison. The authors are exploring the use of convergent and divergent discrimination methods for future evaluation of construct validity.

Conclusions

The SWEAP team acknowledges that SWEAP instruments are not the only valid and reliable instruments available for use. The SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is just one of many field/practicum placement instruments. The beauty of the current process of accreditation and reaffirmation is that programs are able to make their own informed decisions about what assessment tools to use.

There are barriers to the use of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument, most notably the expense (Rowe et al., 2020). SWEAP is a business, and the instruments, along with the reporting of the student data, must be purchased. All SWEAP instruments are copyrighted, and thus unauthorized use of the instruments is punishable by applicable law. However, the costs of purchasing SWEAP instruments is, arguably, comparable to the level of service and expertise offered by the products.

Each instrument currently costs $7 per student to administer, regardless of distribution format. The cost of instruments includes the ability of programs to use the student data in as many reports as the program deems necessary and appropriate. When considering the expense of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument, one also needs to consider, in balance, the amount of time that the field staff of a social work program spends on designing instruments, collecting data, and calculating

statistics to report on that data. For example, in a program with 20 students needing generalist practice–level field placement evaluation in a given year, the cost of administering the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument and running any reports through the SWEAP system would cost the program $140.

Another barrier to the use of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is technology. All SWEAP instruments are now only available online. As a result, all SWEAP instrument users need to have internet access to complete the instruments. However, SWEAP instruments have been optimized for completion on personal computers as well as mobile devices.

Since the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument is responsive to the nine 2022 EPAS competencies, the instrument is only appropriate for use in the reporting of student outcomes data for undergraduate social work programs and the generalist practice experience of graduate social work students. Undergraduate programs with additional, program-defined, competencies could still use the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument and work with SWEAP to develop and operationalize a customized instrument to measure the additional competencies. Graduate programs can also work with SWEAP to develop and operationalize a customized instrument to measure program-defined competencies for the specialized practice level of student field work. Customized instruments, however, do have an added fee to reflect the work of the SWEAP team to support the changes.

The authors acknowledge that EPAS standards, as defined by CSWE, change periodically, necessitating alterations to the instrument. Programs must therefore be careful to choose and interpret the field instrument that is reflective of the current EPAS standards under which they are operating.

Finally, even though the instrument anchors are objectively defined, it is possible that the individual cohorts may interpret and utilize the anchors differently. It is recommended that each program provide periodic training to their field instructors/supervisors regarding the use of the SWEAP 2022 Field Instrument to enhance consistency in reporting. Furthermore, programs should understand that the selection of the 2022 instrument as a measure of their program outcomes brings with it an expectation that they will engage in such training.

As future attention is paid to the assessment of social work student achievement in fieldwork, it will be important to evaluate and substantively address concerns like interrater reliability and grade inflation. More generally, attention to assessment in social work education needs to focus on exploring the process and concerns in setting and achieving benchmarks. Future research in the area should always focus on guiding undergraduate and graduate social work programs as they

strive for effective translation of their program assessment into valuable program improvements. The SWEAP team is honored to join our colleagues in this process.

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