

Assessment of International Credentials - Questions and Answers

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Why complete a CASW Assessment of International Credentials?

CASW assessments of equivalency to a Canadian Bachelor or Master of Social Work are typically used by applicants as part of registration with one of the provincial or territorial social work regulatory bodies in Canada: <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/node/21/policy-and-regulations/regulatory-bodies>.

A CASW assessment does not guarantee applicants successful registration with a social work regulatory body or a social work position/job in Canada.

What is a provincial or territorial Social Work Regulatory Body?

In Canada, regulation of the social work profession is based on provincial legislation and is thus the responsibility of provincial social work regulatory bodies: <http://www.casw-acts.ca/en/node/21/policy-and-regulations/regulatory-bodies>. We would advise you to contact the regulatory body in the province or territory where you wish to practice for registration requirements before proceeding with a CASW Assessment. (Note: CASW's assessments are currently accepted in all provinces/territories with the exception of British Columbia and Quebec).

CASW cannot assess degrees in disciplines other than social work.

If you do not have a Bachelor or Master degree in Social Work from a country other than Canada, the Assessment of International Credentials from CASW is not the correct next step for you.

In order for a degree to be found equivalent to a Canadian Social Work degree (MSW or BSW) it must contain all the elements included in the Standards of Accreditation: <https://caswe-acfts.ca/our-activities/accreditation/>. For this reason, degrees obtained in disciplines other than social work cannot be considered for assessment.

CASW assessments consider only academic credentials: degrees, diplomas and certificates, but not work or volunteer experience.

I have completed an assessment from another Education Credential Service - am I still required to complete a CASW Assessment?

Whether a CASW Assessment is required is solely the decision of the provincial or territorial regulatory body: <http://www.casw-acts.ca/en/node/21/policy-and-regulations/regulatory-bodies>.

Given that CASW applies the CASWE Standards of Accreditation (<https://caswe-acfts.ca/our-activities/accreditation/>) in its assessment, it is a different service than WES provides. Therefore, CASW cannot take results of a WES assessment into consideration when completing an evaluation. CASW assessments of equivalency to a Canadian Bachelor or Masters of Social Work are typically used by applicants as part of registration with one of the provincial or territorial social work regulatory bodies in Canada. Whereas other ECA's such as WES, IQAS, or ICAS are used for immigration purposes.

How will my degree be assessed?

The CASW assessment compares the program completed by an applicant in terms of the number of credits in the areas of social work intervention methods, social policy, field of practice and social problems, research methods, and field work, to Canadian standards to determine equivalence to a Canadian social work degree. These Canadian standards are based on the accreditation standards of the Canadian Association of Schools for Social Work Education

(CASWE) and information in this respect can be found on the CASWE website by clicking this link, (<https://caswe-acfts.ca/our-activities/accreditation/>). Note that the evaluation is purely academic in nature and does not consider work or volunteer experience.

BSW

The first level professional degree (BSW) is generally a four-year degree program that consists of combined liberal arts and social work courses. The standards in Canada for a BSW stipulate a minimum of 20 credits (120 credit units) of which 40% of course credits must be in liberal arts (humanities and social sciences) and at least 50% course credits in professional social work. For your information, a credit unit represents 15 hours of classroom instruction. Translated to ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), degrees must contain at least 240 ECTS credit points. Also, the standards for field work/practicum in Canada stipulate a minimum of 700 hours.

Generally stated, the objectives are “the achievement by the graduate of a level of competence adequate for undertaking initial responsibility in general practice.” Please be aware, CASW has experienced that those individuals who have completed the 3-year BSW program in the United Kingdom, without additional post-secondary education, are often deficient in Liberal Art and Social Work courses required to meet the Canadian 4-year BSW degree academic standards.

MSW

In Canada, the Master of Social Work (MSW) is either a one-year graduate program following the BSW or a two-year graduate program that admits candidates who hold General Arts or other non-social work bachelor degrees. Field practice is an essential component of both models. In a one-year graduate program after a B.S.W. the program must include 450 hours of field practice, or the completion of a Thesis/Dissertation deemed worth 3 credits (Canadian Equivalency) or more by the University. In a two-year graduate program after a Bachelor’s degree (non BSW), 900 hours of field practice are required. Although a thesis or research report is not an essential component except as described in the one-year MSW program, it may be necessary for the total number of academic credits."

The general objective of programs at the Master’s level is stated as follows: to contribute to the preparation of graduates who possess an advanced level of competence with respect to a particular social problem area, professional service sector, social work methodology, professional role or function or in a combination of these.

Documents are evaluated with the aid of various resources:

The CASW Evaluators review all the documentation provided to determine authenticity and congruency between the documentation received directly by the academic institution (Primary Credential/Transcript and Verification form) and the Applicant supplied documentation as well as the University website if available. If there are discrepancies, the applicant is contacted for clarification of information.

The CASW Evaluators determine the number of credits the academic institution has awarded based on information concerning direct classroom hours per course, preparation work time and

other types of relevant course work. The CASW Evaluators review supporting academic credential information and the field practice information.

European countries have determined credit equivalencies through the European Credit Transfer system (ECTS) and the Credits Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS).

The prior experience and ongoing updating of CASW's database of academic institutions provides the CASW Evaluators with documented background knowledge for most institutions applicants have graduated from. However, all applicants have differing academic credentials consequently graduates from the same program often receive differing assessment results.

How much does the CASW Assessment Cost?

The CASW assessment costs \$339.00 (Canadian). You will find details on how to make the payment under step 6 in the application procedures: <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/what-we-do/assessment-international-credentials>.

Applicants may make the payment at any point during the assessment process; however, a file will not move forward to the evaluation stage until a payment has been received.

The CASW refund policy can be found here: https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/attachements/CASW_Assessment_of_International_Credentials_Refund_Policy.pdf.

Does CASW return documents to applicants?

Please do **not** submit any original documents to CASW. As per our Terms and Conditions, CASW will not return documents submitted by applicants. CASW does **not** retain hard copies of documents. Any original documents received by CASW will not be returned and will be destroyed by CASW at its sole discretion (effective October 1, 2023).

How long will the assessment take?

Documents may be submitted in any order, or all at once, however a file will not move forward to the evaluation stage until CASW has received all the necessary documents and payment.

CASW opens a file in the applicant's name when we receive their first document. All subsequent documents are added to this file as they arrive at our offices. Unfortunately, due to the volume of mail received, CASW is unable to provide proactive updates regarding the receipt of mail, or status updates. Applicants may inquire about the status of assessments at any point in the process by email or by phone.

The time it takes to assess the file can vary greatly depending on demand, and CASW is unable to guarantee specific timelines in terms of completing evaluations. However, once **all** the required documentation has been received, assessments generally take between 6-12 weeks.

How will I receive my results?

When CASW has completed the evaluation of your credentials, you will receive electronic communication informing you of the evaluation results. Regardless of the outcome of your assessment, all applicants will receive electronic communication of results.

Please note: All results are provided via electronic communication, CASW does **not** provide physical copies of assessment results.

Applicants successful in obtaining equivalency to a Canadian BSW or MSW

Applicants successful in obtaining equivalency to a Canadian BSW or MSW will be provided electronic communications stating the equivalency of their credentials to the Canadian standard.

If you receive a Canadian equivalency rating (BSW or MSW) and have completed a Waiver Form: https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/attachements/waiver_ftsw_apr_08_e.pdf, electronic communications will be forwarded from CASW to the designated regulatory body.

Applicants not granted Canadian equivalency

If you are not granted Canadian equivalency, you will receive electronic communication outlining the reasons justifying the decision. Included in this communication will also be information regarding the requirements for a review of the assessment.

My assessment is complete, but I do not agree with my results.

Applicants who are not granted equivalence to a Canadian Social Work degree or applicants who received equivalence to a Canadian BSW and who believe they have equivalency to a Canadian MSW may ask for a review of this decision.

A review of your credentials may be granted if you provide substantial evidence that proves that CASW either:

1) Misinterpreted critical information pertinent to your evaluation or was otherwise at fault. CASW will only grant a review to applicants that provide substantial evidence to support their claim of misinterpreted critical information in the assessment.

CASW will not grant a review to applicants that provide their own analysis or interpretation of the assessment results without clearly providing substantial new information or explanation to justify that critical information was misinterpreted by CASW.

CASW will communicate its decision to review or not to review an assessment directly to applicants. This decision is final

If CASW grants a review based on its own misinterpretation of critical information, applicants will not be charged an assessment fee.

Or

2) Applicant did not submit all the necessary documentation required by CASW for its assessment service.

Applicants are responsible for providing all the documentation required to complete an assessment. If CASW grants a review based on the new documentation received from an applicant that was not provided for the initial evaluation, a full assessment fee of \$339.00 (\$300 plus 13% HST) is required before a review is completed. Effective January 1, 2022.

Review Procedure:

- 1) An applicant may request a review by submitting a letter to the CASW Executive Director. You must state the basis for the review and provide additional information or new perspectives to justify the review. You must include any documents necessary to support your request. Review requests must be submitted via email to caswassessment@casw-acts.ca.
- 2) The review is submitted to the CASW Executive Director for consideration. The CASW Executive Director reserves the right to refuse the request for a review if no substantial new information or explanation is provided to justify the review.
- 3) If the review is approved by the CASW Executive Director, your file will be reassessed by a separate CASW Evaluator for an independent third-party review.
- 4) Applicants will be updated when the application has been received and when the CASW Executive Director has come to a decision whether CASW will proceed with the review.

Is there any way I can build on my education so that it meets Canadian standards?

CASW is not a university and consequently can **not** advise an educational path to bring education to the standard of Canadian equivalency.

That being said, the option exists that applicants may directly apply to a provincial social work regulatory body in Canada to determine if they have an alternative assessment service for those who do not receive equivalency from the CASW assessment service.

As well, applicants may consider approaching an accredited Canadian School of Social Work (<https://caswe-acfts.ca/our-activities/accreditation/>) to determine what classes may be required to be completed in order to receive a BSW or MSW from their institution.

It is possible that individuals who complete additional education at the Bachelor or Master level may return for reassessment. However, it is **not** possible for CASW to advise applicants on an educational path to bring education to the standard of Canadian equivalency. Additionally, it is not possible for CASW to advise on the result of a reassessment ahead of the completion of a full evaluation. Each request is assessed on its own merit based on the education completed. Applicants who re apply after completing additional education are subject to the full assessment fee of \$395.00 (\$350 plus 13% HST).