



Baccalaureate Education Assessment Project (BEAP) Handbook (Revised October 27, 2003)

Vicky Buchan – Colorado State University
Grafton H. Hull, Jr. – University of Utah
Jannah Mather – University of Utah
Cathy Pike – Indiana University
JoAnn Ray (retired) – Eastern Washington University
Roy Rodenhiser – Rochester Institute of Technology
John Rogers – Mount Mercy College
Marshall Smith – Rochester Institute of Technology

Introduction

The Baccalaureate Education Assessment Project (BEAP), is the result of several years of collaborative developmental work between the authors and the BPD Board of Directors. The Board supported the effort of several groups to combine talents, models and views with the goal of creating a package of instruments for use by in-candidacy and CSWE-accredited BSW programs.

This is work “in progress” and will remain so as Accreditation Standards under the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) are periodically revised. The authors collectively thank the BPD Board for “continuing to believe” in the project. We also thank the many schools and students who offered to pilot test and provide feedback along the way. We hope you will be willing to continue with that process as together we seek to enhance assessment efforts and thereby Social Work Education.

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A. Timeline for Survey Distribution

The recommended timeline for distribution and collection of BEAP instruments is provided in the **Figure 1** below. The suggestions are based upon the purpose of each instrument, and it is important that participating schools adhere as closely as possible to these guidelines to increase data collection consistency. We recognize that each program will have to adjust the timetable according to its own academic calendar and we welcome both questions and feedback on how well the process works.

Figure 1. Overview of BEAP Administration Process

INSTRUMENTS	DISTRIBUTION TIMELINE	RECOMMENDED MAILING TIMEFRAME FOR DATA PROCESSING
Entrance Survey	Acceptance into Major* *At time of acceptance into Major, or at beginning of first SW course, whichever comes first	Mail immediately after collection from students. Include completed facesheet.**
Social Work Values Inventory (SWVI) @ Entrance – (Pretest)	Acceptance into Major* *At time of acceptance into Major, or at beginning of first SW course, whichever comes first	Mail immediately after collection from students. Include completed facesheet.**
Exit Survey	Late in the last academic term before graduation	Mail immediately after collection from students. Include completed facesheet.**
Social Work Values Inventory (SWVI) @ Exit – (Posttest)	Late in the last academic term before graduation	Mail immediately after collection from students. Include completed facesheet.**
Alumni/ae Survey	Two years post-graduation	Mail when the majority of responses have been returned. Any “straggler” forms can be sent in a second mailing. Include completed facesheet for each such mailing.**
Employer/Supervisor Survey	Two years post-graduation	Mail when the majority of responses have been returned. Any “straggler” forms can be sent in a second mailing. Include completed facesheet for each such mailing.**

**One facesheet can be used for submitting all sets of forms that are completed in the same month. However, for sets of instruments administered at different times, please use separate facesheets. Copies of the facesheet can be found at: www.rit.edu/~beap/facesheet/facesheet-beap.htm.

Each program will receive an SPSS analysis for all of the BEAP forms received at the data processing site. SPSS reports will be run as received from each BSW program and posted to a password-protected folder on the BEAP web site. Hard copy will only be provided when it is impossible to provide it electronically.

As soon as reports are generated for a program, they are uploaded into the secure BEAP web site located on the Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) server. These reports are in HTML format and viewable by using any Internet browsing software. A folder is established that permits access by one representative from each program and the BEAP Project Team. A unique user ID and password is created for the program representative. An E-mail message is sent to the person who originally submitted the BEAP forms indicating that the reports are available. The program representative is then able to access the reports, print them out, download them for later use and copy and paste portions of each of them into other documents (e.g., accreditation self studies, word processed documents, etc.).

Programs will be responsible for analysis of any qualitative feedback they choose to collect. Sample questions and other helpful information are available on the BPD web site (<http://www.rit.edu/~beap>). A national cumulative report will be posted on the BEAP web site (minus any identifying information of programs, students, and graduates) after its presentation at the annual BPD meeting.

B. Confidentiality – Program and Student

Confidentiality of participating students and schools is very important to the research team. Schools must complete the facesheet information both to identify to

whom reports are to be sent and to provide a profile of participating schools. Students are asked to identify themselves by creating a permanent confidential identification number. This ID number will allow the BEAP Research Team to track or "string" together individual student information over time for purposes of helping both programs and BPD identify variables related to such issues as program completion or dropout. However, there is no connection between the identification number and the name of an individual student or graduate. The BEAP Research Team will aggregate data from all participating programs and provide overviews each year at BPD meetings, on our web site (<http://www.rit.edu/~beap>), in the *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, or in *BPD Update*. Neither individual students nor individual schools will be identified in any way in these cumulative reports.

Participating programs should check with their Institutional Review Board (IRB) to determine their regulations and procedures on human subjects. Also, it must be made clear to potential respondents that they have the right to decline to participate.

At some point in the future it is anticipated that schools may voluntarily choose to share data with peer institutions if they deem it useful for regional comparisons or institutional requirements. The BEAP team anticipates such subsets of data will involve three or more programs and require the written permission of all programs involved. The database will need to be sufficiently large to protect the confidentiality of all participants (students, graduates, programs, etc.)

C. General Instructions for OPSCAN sheet handling

There are two types of survey instruments in the BEAP package. The Entrance

and Employer Surveys have an integrated format with the OPSCAN sheet also serving as the questionnaire. The remaining four instruments (SWVI@Entrance, SWVI@Exit, Exit Survey, and Alumni/ae Survey) have OPSCAN answer sheets separate from their questionnaires. The reason for the latter choice was strictly financial due to the cost of producing large, machine-scannable forms. In order to keep the cost of data processing to a minimum there are a few guidelines that programs are asked to follow.

1. The OPSCAN sheets for each instrument must be kept separate (i.e., the sheets for the Entrance Surveys must be kept separate from those for the SWVI@Entrance. Similarly, the SWVI@Entrance must be kept separate from the SWVI@Exit.).
2. Please make sure that all of the individual sheets in each stack are oriented in the same direction, i.e., page headers at the top and page numbers at the bottom with the first page facing up. Any forms that are out of orientation cause the whole stack to be rejected by the scanner and delay processing.
3. Each OPSCAN sheet needs to be reviewed to double check that participants utilized pencil (#2 only) as instructed on the instruments. If by chance, a form has been completed in ink, it will still be readable if you take the time to go over the ink marks with a pencil (Otherwise, it will be rejected by the scanner.).
4. Please make sure that the OPSCAN sheets are **never folded!** This requirement adds some extra costs in mailing questionnaires to employers and alumni, but ensures scanning potential and timely feedback to your program.

5. It is recommended that programs order a few extra OPSCAN sheets to provide a cushion in case they are needed.

6. Please note: OPSCAN sheets that are not readable will be discarded.

D. Face Sheet Information Form

The BEAP Face Sheet is crucial to the process of tracking each program's data. If it is not completed correctly, it can lead to lost data, or to a program's inability to track its students and graduates. Here are the important fields on the form that need to be carefully completed:

- Program: The complete, formal name of the BSW Program, as listed in the CSWE Annual Directory
- Contact Person: The person who will continue to work with program monitoring, and whom the BEAP Team can contact if any questions arise around your data submissions.
- Address: Complete mailing address
- Phone: Daytime, work phone number for follow-up
- E-mail: Absolutely crucial as all reports are generated electronically and will be distributed via a secure server on the World-Wide Web. Notification of report availability will be done via E-mail.
- Date: Date of completion of the Face Sheet for mailing
- Program ID: Your BSW Program's ID#, as assigned in the CSWE Commission on Accreditation database. If you know it, please enter it. If you do not know it,

it will be added by the BEAP Team.

- Program Type: BSW only, or Combined BSW & MSW
- State the state in which BSW Program is located
- CSWE Region and BPD Region: Can be obtained from <http://www.rit.edu/~beap/facesheet>
- Year Accepted for Candidacy: If still in candidacy, as listed in the current CSWE Directory. Otherwise, if already accredited, leave blank.
- Year First Accredited: As listed in the current CSWE Directory
- GPA: Highest possible grade point average attainable by students in your BSW Program
- Program Auspices: Public, Private Denominational, or Private Non-Denominational
- Graduates: Number of students graduating during the most recently completed academic year as entered in the CSWE online data collection system (usually in November of each year) under Baccalaureate Program/Degrees Awarded <http://www.cswe.org/cgi-local/stats edit.pl>
- Number of Instruments Given Out: For each of the six possible BEAP instruments, we need to know the number of instruments you either passed out to students or sent to alumni/ae. This is needed to calculate the overall return rate.
- Number of Instruments Received Back: This should agree exactly with the number of instruments being submitted with the Face Sheet. For instruments

collected from students still on campus, this number should come close to the number of instruments given out to them. For instruments collected from graduates, this number will be significantly lower (usually) than the number of instruments mailed to them.

- **Month in Which Most of Data Was Collected:** Pick one month in which the majority of the data for any particular instrument was collected. If two attempts at collecting the data were done which resulted in two sets of the same instrument, then please report the second set of instruments on a separate Face Sheet. It is important to be able to distinguish data collected at two different times.
- **Year in Which Most of Data Was Collected**

E. The BEAP Package and Accreditation Standards

CSWE and social work education have been in the forefront of a national trend focusing on assessment. Regional accrediting bodies have more recently demanded that colleges and universities assess the effectiveness of their educational activities. CSWE has been emphasizing assessment for over a decade and many BSW programs have been identified as exemplary models by their respective institutions for their consistent evaluation efforts.

The current CSWE Evaluative Standards and the new Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) – Standard 8 – Program Assessment and Continuous Improvement address the importance of educational excellence. While CSWE does not endorse any particular means of demonstrating educational excellence, the BEAP

package was designed to help programs address this important task. In particular, the BEAP instruments are intended to help a program answer three major program monitoring questions:

1. Are we delivering the program we say we are?

That is, do respondents (or their employers or supervisors) report developing the knowledge, skills, and values the program seeks to deliver?

2. Are we delivering the program to whom we say we are?

What are the demographics of our student body? Are there any trends in these demographics? Do these demographics fit with program goals and objectives?

3. What is the perception of students and alumni/ae of program process and climate?

Are there issues we should be aware of related to quality of advising and opportunities for professional development?

The BEAP is designed to provide regular program feedback from multiple consumers within a longitudinal timeframe that begins during the professional education process and continues for two years following graduation. Information gained from this assessment process allows programs the opportunity to make decisions based upon empirical data. The opportunity is also provided for programs to then monitor the impact of changes that were made in various aspects of the program such as curriculum, field instruction, advising, etc.

It is important to note, that while the Baccalaureate Education Assessment

Package addresses major pieces of the Accreditation Standards and EPAS particularly related to curricular objectives, it cannot fully assess achievement of all program goals or objectives. Social work education programs will be responsible for adding additional measures to fully comply with CSWE Standards and to address objectives unique to their institutional mission.

F. The BEAP Instruments and the Primary Questions Addressed by Each.

1. **Entrance Survey.** The entrance survey seeks to help programs develop a useful demographic profile of entering students. In addition to basic demographic information, it provides programs with an overview of financial resources students are currently using or plan to utilize. It provides information on employment status as well as background information regarding both volunteer and paid human service experience. Over a period of time this information helps track planned or unplanned changes in the profile of students in the program. It also allows a program to check the impact of policy changes such as admissions procedures.
2. **Social Work Values Inventory (SWVI).** The SWVI is based upon three concepts within the Social Work Code of Ethics: confidentiality, self-determination and social justice. The SWVI is meant to be given first when a student enters the Social Work Program or early in the first social work course. For some schools this may be as early as the freshman year, for others the major may not begin until the junior year. The SWVI

is repeated just prior to graduation. In addition to providing the program with pre/post information on student responses, the results may be particularly useful as programs seek to enhance the values content within their curriculum by identifying general areas of strengths and weaknesses based upon several years of feedback.

3. **Exit Survey.** The Exit Survey is completed by students just prior to graduation. A field seminar or a capstone seminar may be a logical context for administering it. This instrument seeks to obtain feedback from students about their experiences while in the program. A major section addresses evaluation of curriculum objectives based upon Accreditation Standards. Post-graduate plans, related to both employment and graduate education, are addressed as well as basic demographic information to compare with the entrance profile.

4. **Alumni/ae Survey.** The Alumni/ae Survey is distributed only once to each graduate, two years after a student's graduation whether or not he/she is employed in Social Work. Thus, students who graduated in 2001, for example, are to be sent the Alumni Survey in 2003.

Standardizing the timing for using this instrument is essential to create a reliable database for comparison over time. Graduates are asked to reevaluate the same curriculum objectives that were evaluated using the Exit Survey at graduation. This feedback is sought both from graduates employed in social work and those not employed in social work. The

Alumni/ae Survey also gathers information on graduates' current employment, their professional development activities, and plans or accomplishments related to graduate education.

5. Employer/Supervisor Survey. The Employer/Supervisor Survey completes the BEAP package, and addresses both accreditation and university concern for feedback from the practice community. The primary purpose of this survey is to evaluate graduates' preparation for practice based again upon curricular objectives. The method selected to obtain this data is based upon both the literature in higher education assessment and the experience of several programs. Asking alumni to request employer feedback addresses the primary concern of confidentiality, and also allows the BEAP package to maintain the connection among all surveys based upon the permanent student identification number.

G. Developing an Evaluation “Climate”: Keys to Success

There is an abundant literature on assessment in higher education and schools are encouraged to review ideas of colleagues from a variety of disciplines to gain useful ideas on how to enhance their program's efforts. The ideas listed below are based upon this literature, the collective experiences of the BEAP authors, and common evaluation protocol. These are not intended as the final “words of wisdom”, but as some beginning ideas as programs individually seek the best options for themselves.

1. **Identify stakeholders.** Higher education is required to be accountable to ever increasing constituencies. Some of these stakeholders we all have in common, but individual programs can also identify unique groups specific to their own situation. These groups need to be at least aware of your program assessment efforts, if not directly involved.
2. **Understand the theoretical model.** Program monitoring has been used for years by business and industry. It allows for what may be referred to as “administrative intelligence”; that is, programs can continually be aware of what is working and what is not. It is a tool, not a master!
3. **Keep evaluation alive!** Communication with those most closely involved in offering or utilizing feedback (in this case students and faculty) is very important to continued success. The opportune time to first involve students in ongoing program monitoring is when they enter your program. Faculty should be involved in and reinforce the program’s assessment efforts. For instance, there may be additional questions that the faculty believes need to be addressed.
4. **Use the results!** We do not recommend a “knee jerk” reaction to the first feedback received. There are, of course, always variations from year to year. Each year’s data provides input on program strengths and weaknesses and if a trend is seen over several years, it may be time to consider programmatic changes. Then the feedback can be followed to address the impact of these changes.

5. **Suggestions for improving the alumni/ae return rate.** The value of any assessment instrument is affected by the return rate. Many social work education programs have experimented with different methods to encourage respondents to return survey instruments. The suggestions that follow are those that have been used effectively by various programs.

- Provide a cover letter signed by a faculty member popular with prior graduates.
- Explain in the cover letter how important the graduate's views are to the future of the program.
- Follow-up the mailing in a couple of weeks with a post card encouraging return of the instrument.
- Consider having current students call each graduate to encourage completion of the instrument.
- Enclose a card that each graduate can complete and return entering them into a drawing for something of value (e.g., program sweatshirt, a set of the Encyclopedia of Social Work, etc.). Prizes can be purchased or donated by merchants, faculty, or students.
- Employer Survey: Include the Employer/Supervisor Survey in the packet mailed to the alumnus/a, requesting him/her to give it to the employer or supervisor. Otherwise, consider requesting the name and address of the alum's employer/supervisor from the alum and sending the Employer/

Supervisor Survey directly from the school to the employer or supervisor.

On behalf of BPD and the BEAP Research Team, thank you for joining the
assessment effort. We look forward to working with you!