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ACHSWE continues to have ongoing concerns about the ASWEAS (2024), as noted in our *Letter of Serious Concern* (30.11.24).

In reviewing the AASW 2024 ASWEAS we have found a further problem that will have far reaching implications for social work education in Australia. We point to two criteria:

Standard 5: Criterion 1a Staff **assessing** (my emphasis) students in the program are suitably experienced, prepared for the task and hold a social work qualification recognised for eligibility for membership of the AASW.

Standard 8: Criterion 2.a: academic staff teaching the program, including those from **related fields**, have the knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the general and specialist subject area taught.

We have sought clarification about the relationship between these two standards. Advice from the AASW is thus (I quote):

- **Assessors must be qualified social workers** because they're making decisions about whether students are competent to enter the profession.
- **teaching** staff can include non-social workers, as long as their expertise aligns with the content they're delivering.'

ACHSWE interprets this to mean that **every assessment item that contributes to a subject grade on a student's academic record for an accredited social work degree** needs to have been marked by a social worker, including assessments in subjects such as psychology, sociology, anthropology. ACHSWE believe this is both poor pedagogical practice and impractical for the following reasons:

- **Teaching and assessment are usually done by the same staff in higher education institutions.**

The ASWEAS appears to treat teaching and assessing as distinct – whereas we argue that that best practice is where the assessor is also the educator or part of the teaching team for that subject. In universities, a staff member employed to teach a subject is usually also responsible for marking student assessments in that subject. This ensures that assessors are familiar with assignment requirements and the material being assessed. It also reflects the assessment being intrinsically woven into the learning/teaching experience. Many

subjects entail assessment of student presentations in online or face to face in classrooms, in addition to work submitted by students for assessment outside of class.

- ***Curriculum in social work education includes subjects taught by other disciplines.***

Multidisciplinary teaching is allowed in the ASWEAS provided teaching staff are '**suitably qualified in the content area**' however, a requirement that educators from other disciplines do not assess these subjects negates inter and transdisciplinary learning and development. Social workers are not generally content experts in subjects such as sociology and psychology.

- ***This arrangement presents industrial issues.***

This arrangement would skew the workload of social work educators to marking. Its impact is difficult to calculate because of the far-reaching consequences, creating flow-on impacts to the adjacent disciplines, requiring a relinquishing of marking that will also impact on all teaching and assessing workloads.

- ***Employing different staff to assess subjects than those who teach them would make it difficult to secure assessments against inappropriate AI use by students.***

Lastly, the imperative for assessments to be secured against AI, brings with it an increased emphasis on the educator being involved in the assessment, using such methods as assessments in the classroom. Incorporating arrangements to secure assessments against AI is a requirement of TEQSA. The AI challenges we are currently responding to more than ever pose a need for the integration of teaching and assessment.

Overall, we believe concerns such as the one we have raised here would be better dealt with if the AASW and ACHSWE had a partnership and relationship that supported a problem-solving approach. While ACHSWE members have been in email correspondence with your office, in relation to this and other issues, responses from your office have not resolved the problem we have identified.

Given that higher education providers are required to be compliant with ASWEAS 2024 by the 1st Jan 2026, this needs to be resolved urgently. We recommend that ASWEAS Standard, Criterion 1a be reworded as: 'Staff **assessing** students in the program are suitably experienced and prepared for the task'.



Wendy Foote
Chair, ACHSWE