



Social Workers
Registration Board

Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

COMPETENCE

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved: Feb 2016

For Review: Feb 2018

COMPETENCE

This policy statement is based on the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act)

INTRODUCTION AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE BOARD

This policy paper addresses competence requirements described in Sections 6, 38, 39, 42, and 44 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

Section 6 of the Act entitles a person who has a recognised NZ qualification to be registered if the Board is satisfied;

- a) that his or her competence to practice social work has been found satisfactory under Part 3;

Section 38(1), requires the SWRB to find a person's competence to practice social work satisfactory for the purposes of the Act only if a competence assessment (set by the Board) has been completed within the last five years. The Board must be satisfied that, as a result of a competence assessment, the applicant has the skill and knowledge required to practice social work and meets the professional standards reasonably to be expected of a registered social worker.

Section 39 permits the Board to review a registered social worker's competence at any time including after being notified of a determination of complaint under section 71(1) (a).

Competence, for the purposes of the SWRB, is primarily defined in Section 42 which outlines the expectations of what may be assessed in any competence assessment processes.

Section 42 states that:

- (1) The Board may from time to time set programmes for the purpose of helping it decide whether people -
 - a. have the skill and knowledge required to practise social work in accordance with their registration (or proposed registration); and
 - b. meet the professional standards reasonably to be expected of a social worker
- (2) A competence assessment may comprise 1 or a combination of 2 or more of the following:
 - a. components entirely set by the Board; or
 - b. components set by some other person or body, and recognised by the Board without modification; or
 - c. components set by some other person or body, and recognised by the Board in a modified form.
- (3) At least 1 competence assessment must apply to all social work.
 - a. Any other competence assessment –
 - b. may apply to all social work; or

- c. may apply only to social work of a stated description; or
- d. may apply to all social work other than social work of a stated description.

Section 44 outlines the requirement for registered social workers, who wish to retain their practising certificate, to complete a competence assessment every five years.

Core Competence Framework

The Board recognises core competencies that reflect practice standards accepted in New Zealand. These core competencies apply to all competence assessment processes that are set and approved by the Board. When assessing competence the Board acknowledges that social workers are not a homogeneous group but come from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Further, culture recognises, but is not limited to disability, gender identity, religious beliefs and sexuality.

The requirements of the Act, The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) definition of Social Work and the ANZASW standards of practice, served to inform the Board in determining the following as initial core competencies that must apply to all social work:

- Competence to practice social work with Māori
- Competence to practice social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand
- Competence to work respectfully and inclusively with diversity and difference in practice
- Competence to promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice
- Competence to engage in practice which promotes social change
- Competence to understand and articulate social work theories, indigenous practice knowledge, other relevant theories, and social work practice methods and models
- Competence to apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgements
- Competence to promote empowerment of people and communities to enable positive change
- Competence to practice within legal and ethical boundaries of the social work profession
- Represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism

However, the Board acknowledges that social workers applying for registration with overseas practice experience will not be able to demonstrate their competence against the first two competencies listed above. They will therefore be required to initially demonstrate the following competencies to obtain an overseas practice competence certificate, and demonstrate competence against all competencies within a two year period.

- Competence to work respectfully and inclusively with diversity and difference in practice
- Competence to promote the principles of human rights and social and economic justice
- Competence to engage in practice which promotes social change

- Competence to understand and articulate social work theories, indigenous practice knowledge, other relevant theories, and social work practice methods and models
- Competence to apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgements
- Competence to promote empowerment of people and communities to enable positive change
- Competence to practice within legal and ethical boundaries of the social work profession
- Represents the social work profession with integrity and professionalism

Recognised Competence Assessment Processes

The SWRB is committed to providing a range of competence assessment options for social workers. Social Workers seeking a competence assessment can choose any of the non-graduate processes available.

Section 42 of the Act states that:

- (1) A competence assessment may comprise 1 or a combination of 2 or more of the following:
 - a. components entirely set by the Board; or
 - b. components set by some other person or body, and recognised by the Board without modification; or
 - c. components set by some other person or body, and recognised by the Board in a modified form.

Under Section 42 (2) (a) the Board administers its own competence assessment process. Competence assessment from this process is valid for five years.

The Board also administers the following two competence assessment processes:

1. Graduate competence which is embedded in recognised New Zealand social work programmes. This competence is valid for two years from the date of completing all the requirements of the recognised programme. This competence entitles graduates to provisional (Section 10) registration.

Information on recognised social work programmes is available from the Board www.swrb.govt.nz/NA_RecQuals

2. Overseas practice competence. This competence is valid for two years from the date of commencing social work practice in New Zealand. This competence entitles social workers to provisional (Section 10) registration.

In addition to the requirements to complete 2000 hours of supervised social work practice in New Zealand, social workers with overseas practice competence must complete the following to move from provisional (Section 10) to full (Section 7) registration:

- a) a minimum of 10 hours of CPD relating to competence to practice social

work with Māori. This would include relationship building with Māori ropu, Māori community/iwi and as a result of those relationships develop ways of knowing and being in Māori;

b) a minimum of 10 hours of CPD relating to competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand which would include relationship building with a number of ethnic and cultural groups and as a result of those relationships develop ways of knowing and being that demonstrates understanding of the complexity of cultural identities and how this impacts on practice; and

c) complete a full competence assessment within 2 years from the date of the initial assessment (this would then address section 6 (c) (i) & (ii) of the SWRAct

d) provide the SWRB with confirmation of professional supervision arrangements with a registered social worker within 3 months of commencing social work practice in New Zealand and confirmation from the professional supervisor after 12 months of social work practice in New Zealand that they have participated in a minimum of monthly supervision

Details of the SWRB Competence Assessment process are available from the Board www.swrb.govt.nz

Under Section 42 (2) (b) the Board recognises the following competence assessment processes.

1. The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) competence assessment process. Competence assessment from this process is valid for five years. For information on the ANZASW competence assessment process details are available from the ANZASW www.anzasw.org.nz

Competence re-certification requirements.

All competence certificates must be renewed prior to their expiry date.

Registered social workers holding a full competence certificate must submit a Continuing Professional Development log for the previous 5 years when applying for re-certification. The Board's policy for Continuing Professional Development will apply.

Registered social workers holding a graduate competence certificate or overseas practice competence certificate must submit a full competence application and a Continuing Professional Development log for the previous 2 years. The Board's policy for Continuing Professional Development will apply.

Social workers applying for re-certification, whose previous competence certificate has been expired for more than 2 years must submit a full competence application and a Continuing Professional Development log for the previous 5 years.

Social workers applying for their initial full competence assessment as part of an application for registration who fail that assessment will be able to resubmit a competence assessment application no sooner than 6 months and no later than 12 months from the date of their application submission and will, at the Board's discretion, be issued an interim Annual Practising Certificate, possibly with conditions, until their competence has been approved

Competence to practise social work with Māori and with different ethnic and cultural groups

Competence to practise social work with Māori and competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand are specifically addressed in the SWR Act, 2003. These competencies may be evidenced and based on the inclusion of an appropriate component within the recognised qualification, and/or as the result of completing a separate course or courses of training. These competencies are also tested as a part of the Board's full competence assessment and competence re-certification processes.