



**Social Workers  
Registration Board**

**Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro**

## **RENEWAL OF ANNUAL PRACTISING CERTIFICATE**

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Approved:  
Last Reviewed:  
For Review:

November 2010  
April 2015  
May 2018

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

## **1. Who Should Hold a Practising Certificate**

### ***Section 25 of the Social Workers Registration Act states that:***

No registered social worker may be employed or engaged as a social worker unless he or she holds a current practising certificate.

The Board has determined that practising social work does not only involve direct interaction with clients but includes managing and/or supervising other social workers, teaching social work practice or theory and generally roles that utilise an individual's social work knowledge, skills, values and ethics.

## **2. Applying For a Practising Certificate**

Section 26 of the Act requires that an application for a practising certificate must:

- be made on a form provided by the Board for the purpose; and
- be accompanied by the fee (if any) set by the Board; and
- that the form may require any information the Board thinks appropriate, including a statement specifying whether the applicant is, at the date of the application, employed as a social worker.

Normally, the applicant will be treated as holding a practising certificate between the time the Registrar receives the application and the time the Registrar:

- issues a practising certificate to the applicant; or
- notifies the applicant in writing that he or she refuses to issue a practising certificate.

An applicant will not be treated as holding a practising certificate from the time the Registrar receives the application if the applicant:

- is a registered social worker whose registration is suspended; or
- if he or she has not completed a competence assessment within the previous 5 years; or
- if the Registrar—
  - has previously notified the applicant that he or she refuses to issue a practising certificate to the applicant; and
  - has not later issued a practising certificate to the applicant.

### 3. Conditions On Practising Certificates

Section 29 of the Act allows the Board to adopt general conditions subject to which all practising certificates, or the practising certificates of all registered social workers of a particular description, must be issued. Such conditions may relate to:

- working under supervision; or
- continuing professional development.

The SWRB has separate policies relating to both these requirements for all registered social workers.

- Supervision Expectations for Registered Social Workers
- Continuing Professional Development for Registered Social Workers

Section 35 refers to specific conditions that may be applied to individual practising certificates. It states that:

- (1) If a practising certificate relates to a person whose registration is subject to restrictions or conditions, the Registrar:
  - (a) must note the conditions on it; or
  - (b) must:
    - i. note on it that the person's registration is subject to the restrictions or conditions (or both) stated in the notice attached to it; and
    - ii. attach to it a notice stating all the restrictions and conditions.
  
- (2) If a practising certificate is subject to restrictions or conditions, the Registrar:
  - (a) must note the restrictions or conditions on it; or
  - (b) must:
    - i. note on it that it is subject to the restrictions or conditions (or both) stated in the notice attached to it; and
    - ii. attach to it a notice stating all the restrictions and conditions.

#### **4. Restrictions on the Issuing of Practising Certificates**

Section 30 of the Act requires that:

(1) The Registrar must refer an application for a practising certificate to the Board if he or she:

(a) believes on reasonable grounds that:

- i. the applicant has not completed a competence assessment required by this Act; or
- ii. the applicant has completed a competence assessment required by this Act, but the results are not yet available; or
- iii. the applicant has completed a competence assessment required by this Act, and the results seem unsatisfactory; or
- iv. the applicant has previously held a practising certificate, but has not held a practising certificate within the 3 years immediately before the date of the application; or

(b) suspects on reasonable grounds that the applicant:

- i. has at any time failed to maintain a reasonable standard of professional competence; or
- ii. has not been practising social work as a profession at any time within the 3 years immediately before the date of the application; or
- iii. is not a fit and proper person to practise social work.

Further, this section directs that the Registrar may refuse to issue a practising certificate if:

- satisfied that any information included in the application is false or misleading
- the applicant has not completed a competence assessment within the previous five years.

#### **5. Declaration of Not Practising**

Registered social workers who do not intend to practise need to advise the Registrar of this in writing. This includes stating the reasons she or he is not practising e.g. on parental leave or no longer working as a social worker. This information will be maintained on the registered social workers file to ensure that registration remains valid during the period of not practising social work.

## **6. Currency of Practising Certificate**

Section 34 (1) of the Act gives the Board authority to state the period of time the practising certificate is in force. Section 34 (2) states that:

- Interterm practising certificates are to be issued up to a maximum of four months (from the day the certificate is issued).
- All other practising certificates are to be issued up to the maximum of one year (from the day the certificate is issued).

The Board has decided to issue practising certificates annually (unless circumstances indicate a lesser time).

Under Section 34 (3), if the holder of a practising certificate ceases to be a registered social worker, the certificate is cancelled.

## **7. Failure to Hold a Current Practising Certificate**

Section 25 of the Act, states that:

No registered social worker may be employed or engaged as a social worker unless he or she holds a current practising certificate.

Section 148 (5) states that:

Every registered social worker commits an offence, and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or both, who:

- (a) holds himself or herself out as holding a current practising certificate when:
  - i. he or she does not hold a current practising certificate; or
  - ii. his or her current practising certificate is suspended; or
- (b) fails or refuses to comply with:
  - i. a restriction or condition on his or her registrations; or
  - ii. a condition on his or her practising certificate.

## **8. Information to be registered**

Section 123 of the Act stipulates the personal information that can be entered in the Register. Section 123 (1)(h) permits information relating to any matters the Board thinks appropriate in respect of a registered social worker to be entered in the Register. The Board has determined that this may include information relating to registered social workers who do not hold a current Practising Certificate.

## **9. Outstanding Fees or Fines**

Section 139 of the Act states that:

- (1) If a person has not paid a fine imposed on him or her under this Act, or any costs or expenses payable by him or her by an order under this Act, the Registrar may refuse to:
  - (a) issue a certificate of registration to the person:
  - (b) refer to the Board an application for registration made by the person:
  - (c) renew the person's registration:
  - (d) issue a practising certificate to the person:
  - (e) refer to the Board an application for a practising certificate made by the person.
- (2) If a person has not paid any fee set by the Board for the issue of a practising certificate, the Registrar may refuse to:
  - (a) issue a practising certificate to the person:
  - (b) refer to the Board an application for a practising certificate made by the person.

## **10. Board's Requirements**

Every registered social worker who is employed or engaged as a social worker must apply to renew their practising certificate annually, and pay the gazetted fee, before 30<sup>th</sup> June each year.

Each applicant for a renewal must meet the following requirements:

- Be a fit and proper person;
- Be engaged in regular supervision, commensurate with their level and focus of practice and years of employment;
- Be engaged in regular continuing professional development activities and maintain a record of these activities;
- Hold a valid competence certificate.

Each applicant must also provide any other information requested by the Board

## **11. Related Board Policies**

- Supervision Expectations for Registered Social Workers
- Continuing Professional Development for Registered Social Workers