



# **Social Workers Registration Board**

**Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro**

## **Annual Education Providers Report**

A high-level overview of the SWRB-recognised social work education programmes for the 2020 academic year

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## He ara pūkenga, he ara tauwhiro, hei whakamana mātā waka

*The many pathways of knowledge, the many pathways of social work, to uphold the dignity of all*

Ngā mihi mahana kia a koutou i runga i ēnei āhuatanga o te wā.

### Introduction

All social work education providers submit a report on information related to their social work programmes to the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) each year. This Annual Education Providers Report (the report) summarises the information provided to the SWRB for the 2020 academic year.

The report presents demographic information about students enrolled in social work programmes. It also aims to gather valuable information about student field-education placements. The report will be used as an evidence base to develop insights about trends and patterns of students in social work programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The 2020 report also includes information from education providers about changes the SWRB made to the Programme Recognition Standards (PRS) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the purposes of this report, data was collected through a SurveyMonkey questionnaire.

We would like to thank the institutions for their participation in this survey, enabling us to compile this report.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact the Social Workers Registration Board ([www.swrb.govt.nz](http://www.swrb.govt.nz)).

Ngā mihi

Catherine Hughes, Chief Advisor: Social Work

## Headlines

- 2665 students were enrolled in recognised social work programmes in 2020. Of these, 229 students were completing a Master's in Applied Social Work.
- 480 students were studying part time.
- 546 students were eligible to graduate between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2021.
- 2282 enrolled students identified as female, 373 identified as male and 9 identified as gender diverse.
- 32% of enrolled students were 24 or younger, 22% were aged between 30-39.
- 45% of students identified as Pākehā making up the largest ethnic group. 31% of students identifying as New Zealand Māori.
- 1058 students completed fieldwork placements. 750 were placed in non-government organisations, 305 in government organisations and 148 were in Māori or iwi-based organisations.
- 57 students did not complete placements for reasons other than a placement fail grade.
- 16 students received a placement fail grade.

## Qualification Overview

The programme recognition standards (PRS) recognise entry into the social work profession through two qualifications: a four-year bachelor's degree and a two-year master's level qualification.

Both degrees require students to complete 120 hours of field education placements in the final two years of their study.

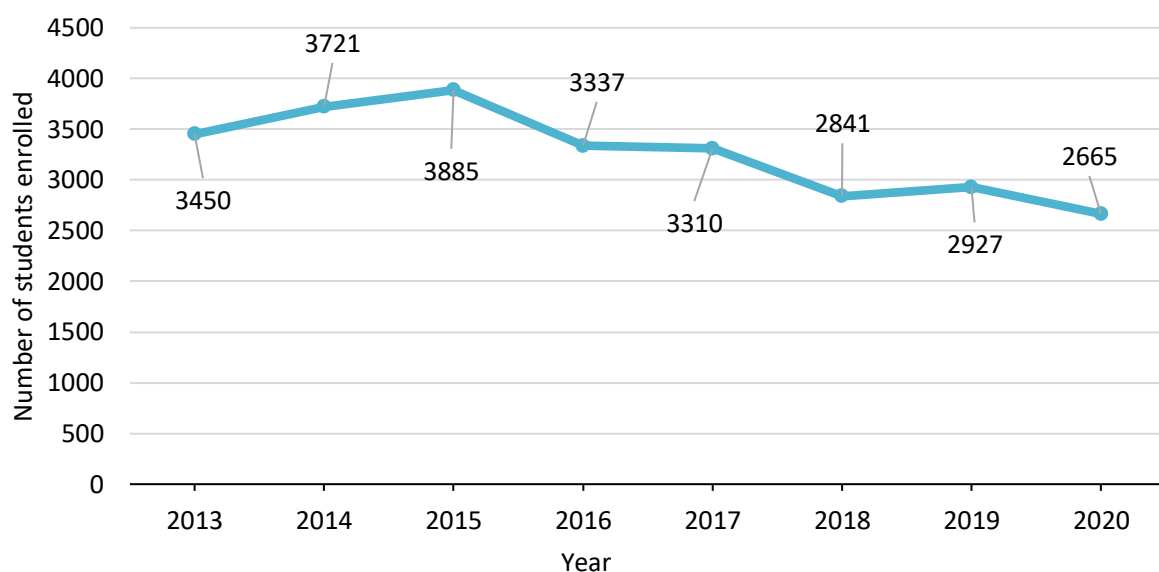
Before being registered onto a social work programme, students are required to have academic and professional suitability. They must also have a Vulnerable Children Act (VCA) screen and a police check.

## Total Number of Enrolled Students

There were 2665<sup>1</sup> students enrolled in SWRB-recognised social work education programmes during the 2020 academic year.

The graph below shows a downward trend in the total number of enrolled students from 2013, to 2020.

**Figure 1** Number of enrolled students per year



<sup>1</sup> When comparing the data SWRB received from educators through this survey with data from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), discrepancies were found. Specifically, TEC reported more enrolled students (2,820). This difference was largely from Massey University, where TEC reported they had 575 students enrolled and our data stated 352. Other differences were found between the two datasets. This has largely been attributed to errors in data entry.

**Table 1.** Education programme reported number of students enrolled in 2019 and 2020

Institution	Enrolled students 2019	Enrolled students 2020	Direction of change
Ara Institute of Canterbury	114	113	↓
Bethlehem Tertiary Institute	59	57	↓
Eastern Institute of Technology	106	99	↓
Massey University	520	352	↓
Manukau Institute of Technology	226	219	↓
Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology	86	66	↓
Northtec	84	84	--
Open Polytechnic	176	165	↓
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa	406	376	↓
Te Wānanga o Raukawa	65	76	↑
The University of Auckland	205	212	↑
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology	50	44	↓
Unitec New Zealand	189	185	↓
University of Canterbury	226	208	↓
University of Otago	122	133	↑
University of Waikato	73	63	↓
Whitireia Polytechnic	119	123	↑
Wintec	101	90	↓
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2927</b>	<b>2665</b>	<b>↓</b>

## Number of Part-time/Full-time Students and Year Level

**Table 2.** Number of enrolments per year level

Year Level	Enrolled in 2019	Enrolled in 2020	Percentage of all students	Studying part time 2020	Studying full time 2020
Year one	888	858	32.3%	171	687
Year two	698	578	21.7%	94	484
Year three	586	523	19.7%	72	451
Year four	497	472	17.7%	55	417
Postgraduate year one	132	119	4.5%	41	78
Postgraduate year two	140	110	4.1%	47	63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2927</b>	<b>2660<sup>2</sup></b>	–	<b>480</b>	<b>2180</b>

Of all students enrolled in 2020, the largest cohort was first year students (around a third of all students).

The smallest proportion of enrolled students were those completing a Master's of Applied Social Work. This course was only available through four institutions. Postgraduate students made up 8.6% (229 students) of all enrolled students in the 2020 academic year, across both year groups.

Reported statistics show a decrease in the number of students as courses progress.

Around 18% of enrolled students were studying part time in the 2020 academic year. In comparison, the number of students studying part time in 2019 was more than a quarter (26.4%) of enrolled students.

**Table 3.** Number of part-time and full-time students per year

Institution	2019		2020	
	Part time students enrolled	Full-time students enrolled	Part-time students enrolled	Full-time students enrolled
Ara Institute of Canterbury	7	107	14	97
Bethlehem Tertiary Institute	40	19	22	34
Eastern Institute of Technology	75	31	12	87
Massey University	283	237	121	231
Manukau Institute of Technology	0	226	0	219
Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology	17	69	13	57
Northtec	21	63	0	84
Open Polytechnic	135	41	128	37
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa	22	384	11	365

<sup>2</sup> Totals for the number of students enrolled did not match the combined total of each year group due to discrepancies in reporting from several of the institutions.



Te Wānanga o Raukawa	4	61	13	63
The University of Auckland	47	158	53	153
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology	1	49	3	40
Unitec New Zealand	32	157	3	182
University of Canterbury	31	195	43	166
University of Otago	25	97	14	119
University of Waikato	18	55	13	50
Whitireia Polytechnic	0	119	12	111
Wintec	14	87	5	85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>2155</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>2180</b>

**Table 4.** *Number of part-time and full-time postgraduate students*

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Part-time postgraduate students in 2020</b>	<b>Full-time postgraduate students in 2020</b>
Massey University	42	60
The University of Auckland	7	19
University of Canterbury	25	28
University of Otago	14	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>133</b>

In 2020, the total number of students enrolled in each year of study was less than in 2019.

## Gender of Enrolled Students

**Table 5.** *Gender identities of enrolled students*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Numbers in 2019</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Numbers in 2020</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Male</b>	375	12.8%	373	14.0%
<b>Female</b>	2544	86.9%	2282	85.6%
<b>Gender Diverse</b>	7	0.2%	9	0.3%
<b>Not Identified</b>	1	<0.1%	1	<0.1%

The gender mix of students enrolled in social work programmes in 2020 has remained stable since 2019, with students who identified as female remaining around 86%.

## Age of Enrolled Students

Around a third of all enrolled students were aged 24 or younger. The distribution of enrolled students across age groups remained stable between 2019 and 2020.

**Table 6. Age of enrolled students**

Age Group	Numbers in 2019	Percentage	Numbers in 2020	Percentage
24 or younger	919	31.4%	852	32.0%
25 – 29	547	18.7%	523	19.6%
30 – 39	698	23.8%	609	22.9%
40 – 49	521	17.8%	458	17.2%
50 – 59	217	7.4%	195	7.3%
60 or older	25	0.8%	24	0.9%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2927</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2661<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>

## Ethnic Identities of Enrolled Students

The proportion of social work students identifying as NZ Māori has increased from 29.5% in 2019 to 31.1% in 2020. However, there was a decrease in the population of social work students overall. Therefore, although the proportion of students identifying as NZ Māori increased, the actual number of decreased from 864 in 2019 to 830 in 2020.

The number of students identifying as Samoan increased from 200 in 2019 to 264 in 2020.

The number of students identifying as Pākehā decreased from 1399 in 2019 to 1203 in 2020.

**Table 7. Ethnic identities of enrolled students**

Ethnicity	2019	Percentage	2020	Percentage
NZ Māori	864	29.5%	830	31.1%
Pākehā	1399	47.8%	1203	45.1%
British/Irish	77	2.6%	53	2.0%
Other European	71	2.4%	66	2.5%
Australian	32	1.1%	17	0.6%
Samoan	200	6.8%	264	9.9%
Cook Island Māori	76	2.6%	78	2.9%
Tongan	127	4.3%	135	5.1%
Niuean	69	2.4%	33	1.2%
Tokelauan	12	0.4%	13	0.5%
Fijian	41	1.4%	34	1.3%
Other Pacific Islander	38	1.3%	27	1.0%
Southeast Asian	16	0.6%	25	0.9%
Chinese	39	1.3%	30	1.1%
Indian	65	2.2%	60	2.2%
Sri Lankan	5	0.2%	5	0.2%
Japanese	8	0.3%	3	0.1%

<sup>3</sup> For three education providers, the total number of students provided did not match the total calculated by combining age groups. This accounts for the difference in totals between demographics. Proportions/percentages have been calculated using the total calculated from age groups (i.e., total number of students we have age information for).

<b>Korean</b>	12	0.4%	7	0.3%
<b>Other Asian</b>	39	1.3%	32	1.2%
<b>Middle Eastern</b>	12	0.4%	18	0.7%
<b>Latin America</b>	9	0.3%	9	0.3%
<b>African</b>	48	1.6%	48	1.8%
<b>Other</b>	59	2.0%	69	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3318</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3028<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>–</b>

## English, Māori, and New Zealand Sign Language as First Language

There were 89 students enrolled in 2020 who did not have English, Te reo Māori or New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) as their primary/first language.

The largest proportion of these students were enrolled at Whitireia Polytechnic (37 students) and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (19).

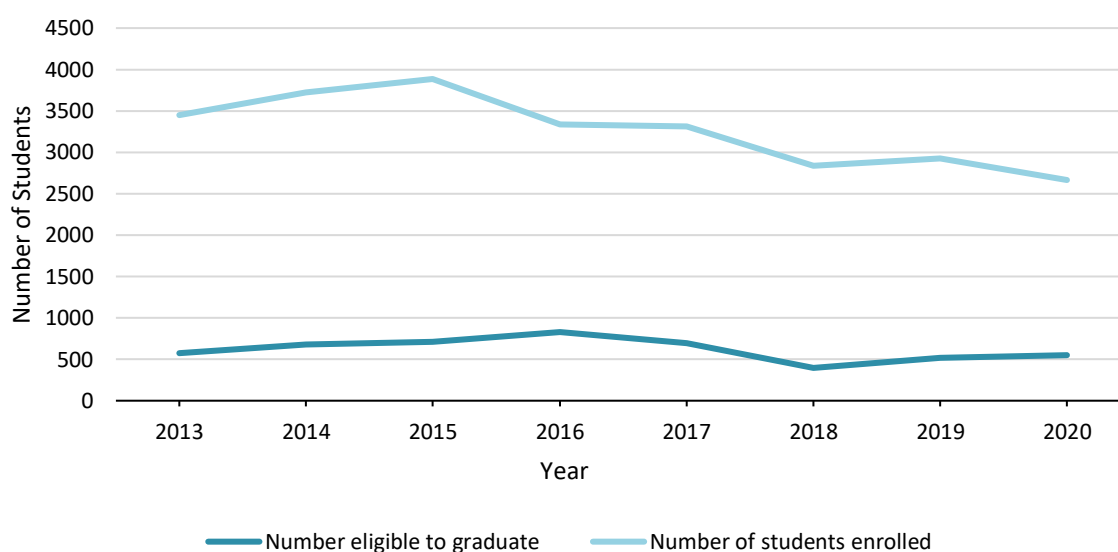
These students are required by the Programme Recognition Standards to demonstrate their English ability through the International English Language Test (IELTS) and/or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Two social work education providers were unable to provide the number of students who did not have English, Māori or NZSL as their first language.

## Students Eligible to Graduate During the 2020 Academic Year

Programme providers reported that 546 students became eligible to graduate between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2021. Although there has been an increase in numbers

**Figure 2.** Number of enrolled students and eligible graduates



<sup>4</sup> Students were able to choose more than one ethnicity that they identified with. This accounts for the increased total of 3028 in comparison with the total number of students enrolled and for why a combined total of percentage will add to more than 100%.

eligible over the past two years, the numbers were higher for the previous five years with a peak in numbers eligible to graduate in 2016.

## Field Education Placements for Social Work Students

Overall, 1058 social work students completed field education placements during the 2020 academic year. Of these students, the largest proportion attended Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (17.0%, 180 students) and Massey University (16.4%, 173 students). The number of placements in 2020 is similar to 2019 where 1059 placements were completed.

### Distribution of placement days

Social work education programmes are required to provide students with a minimum of 120 days of field education. There must be at least two different experiences and one must be at least 50 days.

Most institutions distribute the required number of days on placement equally, with 60 days spent on each of two different placements. However, several institutes distribute placement days as 50/70, and one institution distributes placement days as 20/60/60 across three placements.

For postgraduate students, the days on placement were either distributed as 60/60 or 50/70.

### COVID-19 changes to placements (Note these flexibilities were developed in 2019 and based on the 2018 PRS)

The 2020 academic year was interrupted by COVID-19, where New Zealand was placed under an Alert Level 4 lockdown from 26 March to 27 April. The COVID-19 lockdown resulted in significant changes to the PRS which are outlined below.

The new changes to the PRS reflected necessary adaptations to mitigate the health and safety risks to students which arose from COVID-19. As such, the minimum of 20 face to face social work teaching days was removed from the PRS and institutions provided teaching through virtual means.

The mandatory marae-based experiences could not take place due to efforts to reduce social contact.

The PRS were also changed so that students were able to carry out their field placement in total hours (900) instead of having to complete 120 days of at least 7.5 hours per day.

Changes in the PRS were also made to allow students to complete their required hours at a single agency or at their place of work. Alternatively, placements could be split across agencies if they were interrupted by lockdowns.

The requirement for placements to consist of two different fields of practice and with two different field education supervisors remained.

Institutions were also able to develop online alternatives to face-to-face field work education for one of a student’s placements.

For more information around the changes to the PRS due to Covid-19 please refer to: [Educators | Social Workers Registration Board \(swrb.govt.nz\)](https://www.swrb.govt.nz)

### Region of field education placement for students enrolled in 2020

**Table 8.** *Regions where students completed field education*

Region	Students placed
Northland	45
Auckland	368
Waikato	82
Bay of Plenty	75
Gisborne	24
Hawke’s Bay	45
Taranaki	16
Manawatu-Whanganui	65
Wellington	124
Tasman	2
Nelson	32
Marlborough	6
West Coast	2
Canterbury	109
Otago	35
Southland	7
Chatham Islands	0
Overseas	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1039<sup>5</sup></b>

The largest proportion of field education placements were in Auckland (35.4%), followed by Wellington (11.9%) and Canterbury (10.5%). This distribution of student placements was similar in 2019.

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<sup>5</sup> For three of the education providers, the total number of students placed (provided by the education providers) did not match the total when calculated from placements by region. This accounts for the difference in reported totals. Proportion/percentage of placements by region has been calculated using the region total.

## Field education settings

Most students were placed into non-government organisations (NGOs), this was followed by placements in government settings, and subsequently, placements into Māori or Iwi based organisations.

**Table 9.** *Placement settings*

Placement settings	Number of placements	Percentage
Government	305	25.2%
Non-government organisations	750	62.3%
Māori or Iwi based	148	12.30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1203<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>

## Field education in government agency settings

A total of 305 students undertook placements in government agency settings during the 2020 academic year. This number marked a decrease from 382 in 2019.

Most placements in government agency settings in 2020 were either in District Health Boards (42.4%) or at Oranga Tamariki (43.8%).

Only one student undertook a fieldwork placement in a local or regional council. This was significantly fewer than in 2019 when 49 students completed their placements in local councils.

Other government placement settings included the New Zealand Police, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, and the Ministry of Education.

**Table 10.** *Breakdown of government agency field education*

Government agency setting	Students placed
District Health Boards	129
Oranga Tamariki	133
Corrections	20
Local/Regional Council	1
Other Government Placements	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304<sup>7</sup></b>

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<sup>6</sup> This total is more than the number of students who undertook placements as students may do more than one placement in the academic year. This may also be due to issues around reporting by the institutions.

<sup>7</sup> This total does not match the total number of govt. agency placements stated above due to discrepancies in data/totals from 3 education providers. Proportions are calculated using the total number of students that we have placement setting information for (304).

## Supervision of students in government agency placements

Most supervision in government agency placements was provided by on-site Registered Social Workers (78.4% of supervision). This is similar to 2019, when 78% of supervision was provided by an on-site RSW.

**Table 11.** *Supervision in government agency placements*

Type of supervisor	Primary supervisors	Secondary supervisors	Total
On-site/RSW	298	33	<b>331 (78.4%)</b>
Off-site/RSW	40	29	<b>69 (16.4%)</b>
On-site/non-RSW	15	7	<b>22 (5.2%)</b>
Off-site/non-RSW	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>422</b>

## Field education in non-government agency settings

In 2020, 750 students were placed in non-government agency settings, an increase from 720 students in 2019.

Fewer students were placed in Māori or Iwi-based organisations in 2020. There were 148 students in 2020 compared with 189 students in 2019.

## Supervision of students in non-government agency placements

**Table 12.** *Supervision in non-government placements*

Type of Supervisor	Primary Supervisors	Secondary Supervisors	TOTALS
On-site/RSW	439	146	<b>585 (64.4%)</b>
Off-site/RSW	178	54	<b>232 (25.6%)</b>
On-site/non-RSW	63	25	<b>88 (9.7%)</b>
Off-site/non-RSW	2	1	<b>3 (0.3%)</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>908</b>

There was an increase in the proportion of supervision provided in non-government agencies by an on-site RSW from 58% of supervision in 2019 to 64.4% of supervision in 2020.

## **Reasons for secondary supervisors for student placements**

For placements in both non-government and government placements, the most common reason given for students to have a secondary supervisor was due to students being unable to access a RSW for supervision. In some cases, it was to support student learning or to share the workload of supervision between two supervisors within their placement setting.

## **Placements in current place of employment**

In the 2020 academic year, 139 students undertook a placement in their place of employment. This was significantly higher than both 2019 (73 students) and 2018 (57 students). The interim changes in the PRS because of COVID-19 lockdowns meant students were able to complete both field education experiences in their place of employment, and this may have contributed to the increase in numbers.

## **Placement Fail Grades and Placement Non-Completion**

### **Placement fail grades**

In the 2020 academic year, 16 students (1.5% of all students undertaking a placement) received a placement fail grade. In 2019, 12 students received a fail grade.

Primary reasons given for fail grades in 2020 included:

- failed by placement agency
- failed assessment
- failure to demonstrate all course learning outcomes or an inability to meet learning outcomes
- re-enrolment
- non-completion of assessments
- failure to meet an agency's standard of conduct
- placement breakdown
- failure to withdraw from the paper in time.

### **Placement non-completion**

In the 2020 academic year, 57 students (5.4% of all students undertaking a placement) did not complete placements for reasons other than a fail grade. This is an increase from 41 students (3.6%) in the 2019 academic year.

Reasons provided for placement non-completion in 2020 included:

- COVID-19
- withdrawal due to personal circumstances/student circumstances
- health reasons
- whānau issues
- re-enrolment for following year
- withdrawal



- relocation
- extended end dates for placements/students still completing placement.

## Feedback on COVID-19 Flexibilities

All the institutions completing the survey were asked to comment on the changes made by the SWRB to the PRS. Education providers were asked to state which PRS amendments they felt were helpful and should be maintained in a post-COVID-19 environment.

Most institutions reported that they appreciated the ability for students to record their fieldwork placement time in hours instead of having to record full days.

Institutions indicated that they appreciated the ability for students to complete split and additional placements, or for students to complete both placements at the same agency. However, one institution commented that they had a student that completed two placements in the same agency. The student felt that they would have preferred to complete their final placement elsewhere to gain a different perspective.

The general theme of responses was positive and supportive towards the changes in the PRS about how placements were completed.

Several institutions stated they found the use of virtual tools such as Zoom helpful during the 2020 academic year. Education providers found that virtual tools for learning were useful for completing weekly supervision and teaching classes.

One institution reported they continue to use virtual tools when applicable, and to ensure they can immediately revert to online teaching if another lockdown were to occur. Education providers found the introduction of virtual sources in the PRS helpful to conduct supervision and teaching.

Some institutions responded favourably to the online alternatives to face-to-face fieldwork education during the 2020 teaching period.

However, one institution mentioned that they would only want to continue with online alternatives if face-to-face fieldwork was not possible due to another lockdown.

## *Endnotes*

For the previous Annual Education Reports please visit: [Publications | Social Workers Registration Board \(swrb.govt.nz\)](#)

Please note that this current report includes some small discrepancies in some of the reported figures that do not match the total number of enrolled students at each of these institutions. These matters have been footnoted throughout the document.