



Social Workers Registration Board

Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

POLICY

Approved by: Shannon Pakura, SWRB Chair
Date Approved: November 2010
Last Reviewed: 5 December 2019
Scheduled for Review: December 2020

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

Introduction and obligations of the Board

The Social Workers Registration 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.

Section 29 (2) of the Act states that conditions may relate to –

- (a) working under supervision; or
- (b) professional development.

In developing this policy, the Board has undertaken an extensive review of the continuing professional development requirements of other social work regulatory authorities internationally and other regulatory authorities in New Zealand and reviewed the professional literature.

Principles underlying the Board's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the maintenance and enhancement of your knowledge and expertise throughout your career. Beddoe and Duke define professional development as *"a career-long process in which, via diverse learning activities, professionals refine and augment their knowledge, develop their skills and undertake professional supervision to enhance critically reflective practice."*¹

CPD is about **staying current**, engaging in life-long-learning that enhances your professional development, skills and knowledge and improves outcomes for the people that you work with.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD):

- is a self-directed cyclical process that requires critical reflection.²
- incorporates a range of learning activities to meet individual learning styles
- is aligned with individual professional aspirations and agency goals
- benefits the practitioner as well as the client/service/service user
- requires a commitment from and is a shared responsibility between the practitioner and the professional supervisor/manager
- is a medium to ensure accountability to clients and the profession
- is appropriate to the level of experience of the practitioner

¹ Beddoe, L., & Duke, J. (2016). Continuing professional development of registered social workers in New Zealand. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 25(3), 35-49.

² For an understanding of critical reflection see Fook, J. (2015). Reflective practice and critical reflection. *Handbook for practice learning in social work and social care*, 440-454.

Board's requirements

The Board requires that every registered social worker engages in CPD as an annual, planned and purposive activity incorporated within a professional development plan.

The CPD log year is aligned with the Practising Certificate period running from 1 July to 30 June of the following year.

The Board has the following minimum expectations of continuing professional development:

- Registered social workers maintain a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activities in a CPD log/portfolio.
- Registered social workers complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD learning per year.
- Registered social workers utilise at least 2 types of CPD, at least one of which should involve engagement with others e.g. workshops, journal clubs, or any learning or development activity that is relational and involves interaction with others.
- Registered social workers undertake CPD activities each year that address learning goals and enhance their competence in at least 2 of the SWRB Ten Core Competence Standards.
- CPD logs show that registered social workers have critically reflected on their CPD learning and the relevance of the learning for their practice.
- At least one professional development activity undertaken each year addresses competence to work with Māori. (The type of activity in which this competence is developed is the registered social worker's choice)
- CPD logs are signed off by the registered social worker's supervisor.

All registered social workers are required to use either the CPD log template approved by the Board or the online template available to members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers.

From 1 February 2020 an annual CPD audit will be instituted, at which time 5% of all registered social workers will be asked to submit their CPD Logs for the previous Practising Certificate year. Those audited will be randomly selected from all practising registered social workers. Social workers who are selected for audit will be notified at the beginning of February and CPD logs must be submitted by the end of February the same year.

The CPD audit is one of a portfolio of activities that support competence, including professional supervision, qualification, and practice experience. The CPD log on its own is not a means of competence assessment; it is one of several measures of competence. If a social worker fails to provide a satisfactory CPD log, this may indicate a concern about competence or possibly conduct.

If a registered social worker fails to submit their CPD log when requested, they will be asked to submit a plan for CPD activities for the coming year, and will be subject to audit for the following year. If a registered social worker submits a CPD log that is not deemed satisfactory, they will receive guiding comments from reviewers to inform their future CPD and may be included in the audit for the following year. If a registered social worker subsequently fails to satisfy the Board's CPD requirements without reasonable justification, this may indicate a competence or conduct concern and may be dealt with under those Board processes.

All registered social workers are required to meet the Board's minimum expectations of 20 hours CPD per year. The Board believes that a practitioner working 20 hours a week or less requires a similar amount of continuing professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge, expertise and competence throughout their careers as a practitioner working full time. It is expected that social workers in full time employment will complete in excess of the minimum requirement. Social workers who are not practising are not required to complete CPD.