



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

CRITERIA FOR SECTION 7 REGISTRATION

POLICY STATEMENT

Last Reviewed:
For Review:

February 2019
February 2021

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

1. Introduction

The Social Workers Registration Act 2003 requires that the Social Workers Registration Board establish criteria for the registration of social workers. Section 7 of the Act entitles a person who does not have a recognised New Zealand qualification to be registered if the Board is satisfied that:

- (a) he or she has an overseas qualification equivalent to a recognised New Zealand qualification (except to the extent that it may not include a component whose satisfactory completion ensures that its holder-
 - i. is competent to practise social work with Māori; and
 - ii. is competent to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand; and
- (b) either:
 - i. he or she is registered or licensed as a social worker, or as the practitioner of a profession equivalent to that of a social worker, in a state other than New Zealand (whether the State in which the equivalent qualification was obtained or some other state); or
 - ii. there are good reasons for his or her not being so registered or licensed; and
- (c) he or she has satisfactorily completed a course or courses of training ensuring that he or she-
 - i. is competent to practise social work with Māori; and
 - ii. is competent to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand; and
- (d) he and she can speak and write English reasonably effectively, and understand spoken and written English reasonably well; and
- (e) he or she has enough practical experience in practising social work;
- (f) and,
- (g) his or her competence to practise social work has been found satisfactory under Part 3; and
- (h) he or she is a fit and proper person to practise social work; and
- (i) he or she intends to live and practise social work in New Zealand.

2. Board Requirements

Equivalence to a Recognised New Zealand Qualification

Section 7(a) of the Act states that an applicant who does not have a recognised New Zealand qualification is entitled to registration, provided that they have the equivalent to a New Zealand qualification (except to the extent that it may not include a component whose satisfactory completion ensures that its holder-(i) is competent to practise with Māori and (ii) is competent to practise with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand).

The process for establishing equivalence to New Zealand recognised qualifications required for registration are to assess the following criteria:

- Determining eligibility to practise social work in the country where the qualification was completed;
- Level and length of formal qualification;
 - Minimum three-years bachelor's degree; or
 - Two-years master's degree, with relevant undergraduate study;
- Length and relativity of supervised practice experience undertaken within the period of study (minimum of 70 days), and whether this practice was supervised by a qualified social worker

The SWRB may consider registration with restrictions or conditions on practice for applicants who have a substantially equivalent overseas degree.

Such as degree would:

- Have a minimum of 70 days of supervised practice experience within the period of study; and
- Be a baccalaureate degree in a related field and include a combination of knowledge, skills, and practice substantially equivalent to a New Zealand social work qualification; or
- If combined with another qualification, that together would meet the requirements to be classified as an equivalent to a New Zealand recognized qualification;

For master level qualifications applicants would need to demonstrate that their undergraduate qualification provided sufficient study in the humanities and social sciences to prepare them for professional social work study at a postgraduate level. Normally this would require an undergraduate degree in a cognate discipline such as psychology, sociology or social policy. Where this is not demonstrated the applicant will be required to complete a minimum of 120 credit points of study approved by the SWRB before being granted full registration.

In addition, consideration will be given to relevant in-country requirements for recognition of social work qualifications, at the time the qualification was completed, where available. If the professional activities are comparable but substantial differences in the professional qualifications are identified, subsequent **post-qualification professional experience** of the applicant **may be considered**. If a deficit remains, the SWRB may require an applicant to undertake additional study or supervised practice as a condition on their registration or annual practising certificate.

CRITERIA FOR SECTION 7 REGISTRATION

Overseas Registration or License

Section 7 (b) of the Act requires that the Board establish whether an applicant has been registered/licensed to practise overseas and if not why not. Information and supporting documentation will be requested relating to this requirement.

Competence to Practise social work with Māori; Competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups; and Competence to Practise Social Work

Section 7 (c) (i) & (ii) of the Act requires that an overseas qualified applicant is entitled to be registered if he or she has completed a course or courses of training which ensures that he or she is competent to practise social work with Māori and competent to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand.

Section 7 (f) of the Act requires that an applicant's competence to practise social work has been found satisfactory under Part 3.

The Board has determined that applicants with an overseas qualification who apply for registration from overseas or who have not practised social work in New Zealand may complete an overseas practice competence assessment and will be provisionally registered with this competence. They will then be required to a) complete a minimum of 20 hours of CPD relating to competence to practice social work with Māori. This would include relationship building with Māori rūpū, Māori community/iwi and as a result of those relationships develop ways of knowing and being in Māori, and b) complete a minimum of 20 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; before completing a full competence assessment to be eligible to move to full registration.

English Language Competence

Under Section 7 (d) of the Act an overseas qualified applicant is required to speak and write English reasonably effectively and understand spoken and written English reasonably well.

The following Board's policy will apply:

- English Language Competence and English Language Testing

Enough Practical Experience

Section 7 (e) of the Act states that an applicant is required to have enough practical experience in practising social work.

The following Board's policy will apply:

- Enough Practical Experience

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CRITERIA FOR SECTION 7 REGISTRATION

Fit and Proper

Section 7(g) of the Act states that an applicant must be a fit and proper person to practise social work.

The following Board's policy will apply:

- Fit and Proper Person

Intention to Live and Practise Social Work in New Zealand

Section 7(h) of the Act requires that an overseas qualified social worker is only entitled to be registered if they can demonstrate that they intend to live and practise social work in New Zealand.

The Board will substantiate an applicant's legal entitlement to live and work in New Zealand by seeking information and supporting documentation regarding citizenship, residency, and/or a visa or permit to work in New Zealand.