



**Social Workers
Registration Board**

Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro

EXPERIENCE PATHWAY: S13

POLICY

Date Approved: 10 November 2020
Approved by: Sarah Clark, Chief Executive
Scheduled for Review: June 2021

Relevant legislation:

The Social Workers Registration Act 2003 sections 13, 88, Schedule 1AA section 1 and 2
The Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019 section 24.

Other related SWRB policy documents:

Experience Pathway: S13 Process
Fit and Proper Policy
Supervision Policy
Competence Policy
English Language Policy
Continuing Professional Development Policy

PURPOSE

This policy describes the principles, parameters and pathway by which experienced social workers who do not hold a recognised social work qualification may become registered in Aotearoa New Zealand.

SCOPE

Applicants for registration with extensive Aotearoa New Zealand social work experience in the absence of an SWRB-recognised formal social work qualification are covered by this policy. Those who are currently enrolled in an SWRB-recognised social work course and those whose social work experience is outside Aotearoa New Zealand are excluded.

The Experience Pathway Policy is valid until 27 February 2024, from which time applications for registration through this pathway will no longer be accepted.

DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

The Act	Social Workers Registration Act 2003
The Board	The Social Workers Registration Board, established by section 97 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003
SWRB	The Secretariat of the Social Workers Registration Board
Registered social worker	A social worker whose details are entered in the register of social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand
CPD	Continuing professional development

INTRODUCTION

Social work in Aotearoa New Zealand originated from an unqualified but committed workforce striving to improve outcomes for others within their communities. As social work qualifications became more accessible, many social workers were able to build on their knowledge and skills through formal study. The passing of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 signalled the government's expectation that social workers would professionalise and become a regulated and qualified workforce. Section 13 of the Act was included to acknowledge the contributions of social workers who had been working in their communities before the Act came into force, when education leading to a recognised New Zealand social work qualification was not as accessible.

The Board offers the Experience Pathway: S13 to registration in recognition that some social workers have enough experience practising social work to compensate for the lack of an SWRB-recognised formal social work qualification.

ASSESSMENT

1. Principles

In assessing an applicant's eligibility for registration through the Experience Pathway: S13, the following principles are applied:

Experienced	Provides evidence of at least 10-15 years of experience practising social work in Aotearoa New Zealand. Both voluntary and paid experience is relevant
Knowledgeable and competent	Demonstrates understanding of all the SWRB Core Competence Standards and provides evidence of how they have applied them in practice, with particular emphasis on competence to practise social work with Māori and with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Skilled	Can demonstrate their skill through case study examples from their own social work practice. Colleagues familiar with the applicant's work support these examples.
Fit and proper	Meets the current SWRB requirements to be regarded as a fit and proper person to practice social work. Includes police vetting, professional and where requested, character references.
Professionally connected	Identifies a range of professional connections within social work and their community. Provides evidence of engagement in regular supervision and CPD.
Ethical and reflective	Demonstrates an understanding of ethical and reflective practice and provides examples of how they have applied ethical decision-making in their social work practice. Practises in accordance with the SWRB Code of Conduct and demonstrates knowledge of the ANZASW Code of Ethics.
Endorsed	Two registered social workers (or alternative professionals approved by SWRB) confirm the applicant's competence and fitness to practice.

Applications may be completed in either English or Te Reo Māori. Application forms are available in both languages.

2. Method

Effective communication is an essential component of competent social work. The Experience Pathway: S13 assessment involves both written and verbal communication where the applicant is required to demonstrate significant experience in applying knowledge and skill in safe, effective social work.

Assessment is conducted in two distinct stages:

- a) Stage One assesses the applicant's length and quality of social work experience in Aotearoa New Zealand and their experience of supervision and continuing professional development (CPD).

The assessment consists of a written application detailing the applicant's social work roles, supervision and significant CPD undertaken.

Where the assessment does not provide enough evidence of experience to qualify the applicant for the experience pathway, the applicant will have the opportunity to speak to an SWRB social work advisor in support of their application. This could be through either a phone or video call.

- b) Stage Two assesses the applicant's competence, connectedness and suitability for registration as a social worker through:
 - i. Application for registration - includes police vetting and provision of a professional reference to establish that the applicant is a fit and proper person to practise social work. An applicant with a history of convictions may also be required to provide a character reference and related reflective statement.
 - ii. Written application - requires the applicant to provide evidence of their knowledge of social sciences, social work theories, Te Tiriti O Waitangi and how this knowledge has been applied in their practice. The questions are linked directly to the SWRB Core Competence Standards.
 - iii. Endorsements to determine the applicant's connectedness within the social work sector and a perspective of their skill in practising social work. These endorsements will be required from two registered social workers, one of whom could be the applicant's professional supervisor. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. when an applicant comes from a small isolated community) the applicant may not have access to two registered social workers. In these cases a SWRB social work advisor will give guidance and approval for a suitable substitute.

3. Engagement

At its core, social work is a relational profession, therefore the Experience Pathway: S13 process is intended to be relational. In addition to the written work there will be points of contact between the applicant and assessors, both formally and informally. The applicant is welcome to contact a social work advisor at the SWRB for clarification of the requirements of the application at any time through the process.

All applicants are encouraged to engage with and seek support from a registered social worker during this application process.

4. Assessors

Stage One applications will be assessed entirely by SWRB Social Work Advisors. External assessors are appointed at the discretion of the SWRB and will be involved in Stage Two. Each external assessor must be:

- a) a registered social worker,
- b) currently practising,
- c) participating in regular professional supervision,
- d) experienced (minimum of 10-15 years practising social work in Aotearoa New Zealand), and
- e) endorsed by two other registered social workers

A minimum of two assessors will be involved in each application. At least one assessor will be tangata whenua with an understanding of Ao Māori and Mātauranga Māori values, concepts and principles.

5. Fees

Three separate fees apply to the full Experience Pathway: S13 process:

- a) Stage One fee,
- b) Registration fee and,
- c) Stage Two fee.

All fees will be charged as per the New Zealand Gazette. Fees are non-refundable as they cover the cost of assessing and processing the application. The Stage Two fee is payable at the same time as the Registration fee however they are distinct fees.

6. Transitional process

The SWRB recognises that some applicants have already entered the Experience Pathway: S13 process previously named “Section 13” and have been recommended to continue by submitting the earlier application format known as the “Full Framework.” So that applicants who have already commenced work on the Full Framework application are not disadvantaged, there will be a transitional time in which these applicants will have the choice of applying using either the Full Framework or the new Stage Two assessment. Full Framework applications will be received until 30 June 2020. After this date only Stage Two assessments will be accepted.

7. Appeals

An applicant who has been declined registration following an application has the right of appeal to the District Court. Any appeal must be on a notice of appeal and lodged within 20 working days of being advised of the Board’s decision in relation to the outcome.