

# The Section 13 Experience Pathway – A Guide for Applicants

## Introduction

1. The Experience Pathway: S13 is a route to registration for people who have been working in social work for a number of years, but who do not have a recognised social work qualification.
2. The Experience Pathway is provided for under section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 which sets out the following criteria which must be met before Registration can be granted. For each applicant the Board must be satisfied that:
  - (i) ***his or her practical experience in practising as a social worker in New Zealand is enough to compensate for the lack of such a qualification; and***
  - (ii) ***his or her competence to practise as a social worker has been found satisfactory under Part 3; and***
  - (iii) ***he or she is a fit and proper person to practise as a social worker; and***
  - (iv) ***that (whether as a result of his or her satisfactory completion of a course or courses of training, or because his or her practical experience in practising as a social worker in New Zealand is enough to compensate for not having completed such a course) he or she—***
    - (A) ***is competent to practise as a social worker with Māori; and***
    - (B) ***is competent to practise as a social worker with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand.***

## What will you look for in my application?

The legislation sets high expectations about the experience and competence we require for registration. You will need to provide information about:

### 1. The type of social work experience you have had in Aotearoa

To be successful you will need to show evidence of your *social work* experience. This could be shown through:

- a. jobs you have held with social work in the job title or job description. You may have worked alongside social workers in the same team doing the same work.
- b. experience of working with a range of individual families and groups where you needed to draw on a significant body of social work practice knowledge.
- c. roles you have held where a significant degree of autonomy was required. Roles where you have had to manage risk, complexity, and identify and respond to harm.
- d. work where you have needed sufficient cultural capability and understanding to support responding effectively to the needs of Māori.
- e. evidence of progression through your social work career. You may be involved in providing advice and leadership to others; your peers will recognise you as a competent practitioner.

## **2. The breadth and depth of that social work experience including your experience and skills in working with Māori and other ethnic and cultural groups**

To be successful, we will be expecting that:

- a. Most or all your experience will have been in Aotearoa
- b. Your work has encompassed a wide range of social work tasks including client engagement and empowerment, planning, intervening, reviewing, risk assessment, advocacy, and working with complexity, including working with trauma and harm.
- c. You can show evidence of applying relevant bodies of social work and related knowledge and utilising 'practice frameworks' drawing on evidence-based, practice-based, and indigenous-based models.
- d. Your experience includes working with Māori and other ethnic groups and cultures.
- e. You may also have knowledge of the law and will probably have faced and resolved ethical challenges.

## **3. Your Learning and Professional Development experience**

To be successful, you will be expected to show how your professional development has supported your growth as a social work practitioner:

- a. You can provide evidence of your relevant professional development, both self-directed learning and through qualifications and training which is linked to the practice of social work currently and over time.
- b. You can describe the impact of that learning on your practice as a social worker.
- c. You have consistent and regular use of support to manage work, grow skills, and reflect on practice.
- d. You can provide examples of times when social work has been personally and professionally challenging and help was sought. You can describe learning from these challenges and how practice developed as a result, and the benefit of the support you received.
- e. You can describe your journey into social work and throughout your career with insight and learning.
- f. You can describe your values and what they mean for your social work practice.

We recommend that you work through the above list and identify which elements you can demonstrate before deciding whether to proceed with your application. If you are unsure about anything you can always contact one of our friendly advisers by email to [applications@swrb.govt.nz](mailto:applications@swrb.govt.nz) or freephone **0508 797 269**.

## **Is there anything else we will want to know?**

We will want to know:

- you can express yourself both verbally and writing
- that you are a fit and proper person to undertake social work
- you can provide evidence of support for your application from a manager or supervisor and two of your peers who must be registered social workers.

## **I want to proceed with my application. What do I do now?**

We welcome applications in te reo Māori and English.

Go to the SWRB website, create an account in [MySWRB](#), click the 'apply for registration' button and supply the details required for your registration application. Follow the prompts on screen and choose the Experience Pathway: S13 option.

You will need to complete the template for your application. This is a Word document form to download. Submit your completed application through MySWRB.

You will need to pay the application fee.

Please discuss your application with your manager or supervisor to make sure that you have their support through the process.

The section 13 process can appear challenging. However, you may also find it rewarding. It provides an opportunity to reflect on your career, your practice, and the difference you have made to tamariki, whānau and communities and how your knowledge skills and expertise have built up over many years.

Please contact us if you need further information to help you make your application. You can contact us by email to [applications@swrb.govt.nz](mailto:applications@swrb.govt.nz) or freephone 0508 797 269.