

Guide notes for the assessment of professional social work qualifications awarded outside New Zealand.

Applications: All applicants who hold professional social work qualifications gained outside New Zealand, except those who hold an Australian Association of Social Work accredited social work qualification, must have their professional qualifications assessed before the SWRB can proceed to consider their application for registration. Applications to the SWRB which seek recognition of professional qualifications for social workers awarded outside New Zealand are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The qualification assessment does not assess any other criteria required for registration.

Section 1 – Essential Criteria

An application for recognition must meet the following essential criteria when being considered for recognition:

1.1 Level of formal qualification

The practice of social work in New Zealand requires a four-year undergraduate or two year master's level qualification. The SWRB has determined that an applicant's overseas professional qualification must have a minimum duration of three years degree level study in social work or 2 years postgraduate study. However, consideration will be given to historical qualifications such as the English Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work's Certificate of Qualification in Social Work

If the professional activities are comparable but substantial differences in the professional qualifications are identified, subsequent **post-qualification professional experience and relevant continuing professional development** of the applicant **may be considered**.

If a deficit remains, the SWRB may require an applicant to undertake a **compensation measure**.

Section 2 – Decision Making Criteria

2.1 Meeting the standards

One of the functions of the SWRB is to set the standards of recognition of social work programmes in New Zealand. The standards are the threshold standards required for social work education in New Zealand.

Applicants will submit information on the following to enable the SWRB to determine whether the qualification is equivalent for the purpose of applying for registration:

The academic content of the education programme(s) leading to their professional qualification(s). This will be outlined in the transcript provided.

Field education practice placement content.

2.2 Curriculum content – academic

The SWRB will seek to establish proof that the academic content of a programme(s) leading to a professional qualification(s) awarded meets the required standards for a social work qualification in New Zealand.

2.3 Curriculum content – practice placement learning

The SWRB has established practice placement learning content required for a New Zealand approved qualification.

Practice placement which **precedes** academic training will not be considered for recognition purposes.

- Social work students in New Zealand are required to spend a total of no less than 120 days on placement. Supervision of each practice placement should be carried out by a professionally qualified or, if there is registration available in the country of origin, a registered social work practitioner.
- Normally there will be at least two placements in two different settings with different client groups.

2.4 Post-qualifying professional experience

If a substantial difference is identified in the applicant's professional education, relevant **post-qualification professional experience of the applicant may be considered** to determine if it makes up the deficit. Details of relevant post qualifying social work experience and relevant continuing professional development should be submitted by the applicant and may be subject to the necessary verifications by the SWRB.

If a substantial difference is identified, post qualifying experience will be used to determine:

- a. if the latter equips the applicant to demonstrate the standards required to practise social work in New Zealand; and
- b. if a compensation measure is required before the professional qualification can be recognised.

Section 3 Applicants without a Social Work Degree

The SWRB may consider restricted registration to applicants who have a substantially equivalent overseas degree.

Such a degree would:

- 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; and
- have a minimum of 70 days of supervised practice experience within the period of study.

Section 4 – Compensation Measures

4.1 The SWRB may require the applicant to **complete a compensation period of up to two years**, if:

- the education received covers substantially different matters than those required by the SWRB approved qualifications.
- the scope of practice in the applicant's home country is narrower than in New Zealand and the difference consists of specific training which is required in New Zealand.

A compensation period can be described as the assessed practice of social work, whether or not that practice is accompanied by other training, under the supervision of a fully registered social worker, who has a minimum of two years post-qualifying work experience.

Appropriate support and supervision should be maintained by the supervisor during this time.

The SWRB will determine the length and nature of the compensation period based on the substantial differences identified in each individual application against the standards for recognised New Zealand qualifications.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to locate employment and a supervisor who is willing

to supervise during the compensation period.

When the compensation period is completed, the applicant and the supervisor will both be required to submit signed reports to the SWRB.

These reports will provide evidence and examples demonstrating how any substantial differences identified have been addressed and whether the required standards have been met or not met. If not met, then a further plan will be put in place as to ensure the standards are met.

Appendix 1

Documents to be provided by the applicant

When applying to the SWRB for recognition of professional qualifications, each applicant must complete the application form online. Applications must be accompanied by the following documents:

- a. copy of degree certificate/s;
- b. copy of academic transcripts of professional qualifications. These documents should show the subjects, results/grades;
- c. if documents are issued in a language other than English, the SWRB requires copies of official translations to be supplied in addition to the original language document.