

Social Workers Registration Board

Programme Recognition Standards – June 2021

Preamble

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) has the legislative responsibility to recognise New Zealand educational qualifications required for social workers practising in New Zealand.

The SWRB recognises generic entry to the profession at two educational qualification levels.

- At the undergraduate level, a 4 year full time equivalent 480 credit point bachelor's degree with a minimum of 210 credit points at level 7 on the New Zealand Qualification Framework (NZQF);
- At the postgraduate level, a 2 year full time equivalent 240 credit point master's level qualification with a minimum of 40 credit points at level 9 on the NZQF

These standards are additional to the approval and accreditation requirements of the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

These standards have been developed in consultation with academic and professional stakeholders. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) *Global Definition of Social Work* (2014), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) *Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession* (2004), the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Work (ANZASW) *Social Work Field Education Guidelines* (2016) the SWRB *Core Competence Standards* (2016) and the SWRB *Code of Conduct* (2016) have been guiding documents in this development.

The SWRB recognises programmes for a maximum of 5 years. Programme recognition is delivery site specific.

Interpretation

Social work academic staff member

In these standards, a social work academic staff member is a fully registered social worker with a current annual practising certificate (APC) who holds a Masters level qualification; or a Social Work Bachelor degree and has demonstrable, relevant and suitable professional experience, in consideration of Section 100 and 101 of the Social Workers Registration Act (Appendix 1). The social work academic staff member will be employed by the tertiary education provider delivering the programme on a tenured or fixed term contract, for a minimum of 1 semester. A social work academic staff member may be employed in a range of academic positions including, but not limited to, programme leader, professional teaching fellow, or lecturer. Tutors, or tutorial assistants, however named, enrolled in a higher research degree, who have a minimum of 2 years of supervised social work practice in New Zealand, and who have no responsibility for developing or co-ordinating social work theory, skills or practice course, or responsibility for field education, are exempt from the social work academic requirement to hold a minimum of a master level qualification.

Provisionally registered overseas qualified social workers with a minimum of a master's level qualification may be appointed as a social work academic so long as the SWRB is notified that co-

teaching arrangements ensure appropriately qualified staff teach New Zealand context and bi-cultural practice aspects of the curriculum and that an appropriate professional development plan is in place.

Teaching

In these standards, teaching includes curriculum development and review, assessment design and delivery, lecturing and tutorial support.

Process

The process for achieving and maintaining recognition and re-recognition is:

Establishing the recognition /re-recognition panel. This normally occurs in the year prior to the recognition or re-recognition. The SWRB requirements for membership of this panel are a) an international social work academic who is appointed at senior lecturer level, or above; b) a national social work academic who is appointed at senior lecturer level, or above, c) a nominee of NZQA or Universities New Zealand, d) a RSW practitioner familiar with the programme, d) a senior academic from another college/faculty in the institution and e) a SWRB staff member or SWRB external appointee as panel chair. At least one panel member will be conversant in Mātauranga Māori, tikanga and Te Reo. The tertiary education institution applying for programme recognition/re-recognition may, if they wish, add additional members to the panel.

The SWRB has a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to facilitate the recognition process for Wānanga, Private Training Establishments and Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics. If a tertiary education institution from these sectors is applying for recognition of a new programme then NZQA will manage the panel process and appoint an independent chair. In these cases the SWRB requirement for panel membership is a) an international social work academic who is appointed at senior lecturer level, or above; b) a national social work academic who is appointed at senior lecturer level or above, c) a RSW practitioner familiar with the programme and d) a SWRB staff member or SWRB external appointee. A further SWRB requirement will be that at least one panel member will be conversant in Mātauranga Māori, tikanga and Te Reo.

Scheduling the timing of the panel process. The tertiary education institution suggests possible timings to the SWRB in the year before the recognition or re-recognition process is due to occur. This may be dependent on the international academic's availability or other approval, accreditation or institutional quality assurance review processes.

Wherever possible, re-recognition panel visits will occur simultaneously with institutional review processes.

Re-recognition will normally occur in the last year of the current recognition. However, based on annual reporting information or stakeholder feedback, the SWRB may determine that the re-recognition process needs to be implemented at an earlier date.

Desk audit. The tertiary education institution is required to provide a full set of programme documentation demonstrating how they meet the SWRB programme recognition standards. The SWRB does not provide a template for this. It is up to the tertiary education institution to provide the evidence. This information is to be provided to the SWRB and external panel members at least 4 weeks before the scheduled panel visit.

The SWRB may engage an independent cultural assessor to carry out a further desk audit to ensure that, as per sections 100 & 101 of the Social Workers Registration Act (2003), the SWRB maintains mechanisms to ensure that there are at all times readily accessible to it the views of Māori as Tangata Whenua, Pacific people and other ethnic and cultural groups.

If the SWRB is of the opinion that additional information is required they will notify the tertiary education institution at least 10 days prior to the panel visit. This additional information may be tabled at the time of the panel visit.

Site visit. The panel will undertake a site visit, normally of two days, to enable meetings with the tertiary education institution staff, management, students, fieldwork educators and advisory/stakeholder committee members. For multi-site tertiary education institutions, the panel will visit each site that provides teaching to the students enrolled in the programme.

At the end of the site visit the panel will discuss with staff of the tertiary education institution any recommendations or requirements that they will include in the final report. All requirements will have a timeframe within which they must be met.

Reporting. The panel will provide the programme leader or nominated person with a draft report to check for factual accuracy before the report and recommendations are forwarded to the SWRB. The programme leader or nominated person will be invited to provide a response to the requirements before the report is forwarded to the SWRB.

Ongoing programme review. The SWRB will undertake a mid-recognition cycle visit to the recognised programme. If the recognised programme has an appointed monitor or external advisor, this visit will, wherever possible, take place at the same time as the monitor visit. Panel membership for the mid- recognition cycle review will be a) an international social work academic who is appointed at senior lecturer level, or above, b) a national social work academic who is appointed at senior lecturer level, or above, and c) a SWRB staff member or SWRB external appointee. The SWRB will also ensure that it receives specialist advice from a person conversant in Mātauranga Māori, tikanga and Te Reo.

All new programmes will undergo a formal review at the end of the first year of delivery. This review will initially be a desk audit against the recognition standards, requirements and recommendations in the original recognition report, followed by a site visit from a SWRB staff member or SWRB external appointee.

Non-compliance with standards.

If a programme does not meet a standard at recognition or re-recognition, within the stipulated time frame, or if the SWRB becomes aware that a recognised programme is no longer meeting a standard the programme's recognition will be withdrawn. A three month conditional recognition will be put in place to provide time for the programme to meet the requirement.

If the requirement is met within the three month period, the recognition will be restored. If it is not met the recognition will be withdrawn and, where applicable, the Tertiary Education Commission, the New Zealand Qualification Authority and the Committee on University Academic Programmes will be notified.

Students who are enrolled in the last two years of an undergraduate programme or the last year of a master's programme that has had recognition withdrawn will, when they apply for registration, be required to undertake, at their own expense:

- a) a written competence assessment set by the SWRB, and
- b) a face to face scenario based competence assessment conducted by the SWRB.

Tertiary education institutions that have their recognition withdrawn may apply for re-recognition no sooner than six months from the date that the recognition was withdrawn.

Fees and Costs. Fees are as listed on the SWRB fee schedule on <http://www.swrb.govt.nz/new-applicants/fees>

Programme Standards

Standard 1: Governance	
1.1	The programme maintains the relevant tertiary education accreditation and approval for the curriculum.
1.2	The tertiary education provider responsible maintains control of all aspects of the programme. However, they work in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure the quality of all aspects of the curriculum delivery including field education.
1.3	The programme is implemented through a distinct social work unit which has a clear identity within the educational institution.
1.4	The mission of the social work unit reflects the values and ethical principles of social work.
1.5	<p>Overall academic leadership of the social work programme is the responsibility of a social work academic staff member who will have the authority and responsibility for professional decision-making, including ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the entry criteria for student selection and the student’s progress through the programme include assessments of fitness for registration in accordance with S.6(b) of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 (the Act) (b) there is a clearly articulated process for identifying and exiting students who are not achieving the academic outcomes or practice and professional standards, and (c) all social work academic staff members meet the qualification and registration requirements (d) the tertiary education provider provides opportunities to social work teaching staff to maintain sufficient experience in the field to keep up-to-date with current trends and issues in social work practice (e) teaching of all social work theory, practise and skills components of the curriculum is to be carried out by social work academic staff members.
Standard 2: Curriculum	
2.1	The curriculum will reflect the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities that are central to social work, underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge.
2.2	The curriculum will be designed to ensure that the graduate achieves the competencies required for registration and will integrate relevant social work theory, research, ethical values and practice for achieving the core knowledge, processes, values and skills for contemporary social work practice in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.
2.3	The curriculum will be strongly focused on social work practice, located within the current New Zealand and international contexts.
2.4	The curriculum will include relevant indigenous practice models and be cognisant of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in social service provision.

2.5	The curriculum will be designed to ensure graduates will be competent to practise social work: (a) with Māori (b) with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand (c) with people at different stages in their lifespan, and (d) with individuals, families, groups and communities; whānau, hapū and iwi in any given context.
2.6	The curriculum will be designed to ensure that graduates will have sufficient knowledge and skills to be a competent beginning practitioner in a range of scopes of practice including, but not limited to statutory care and protection, health social work and community development social work.
2.7	In preparation for field education, the programme will provide social work skills teaching that develops interpersonal skills, self-awareness, social and emotional competence, appropriate professional conduct, reflective practice, awareness of the importance of supervision and risk assessment.
2.8	Programme delivery, especially at undergraduate level, draws on multidisciplinary input, particularly drawing from the disciplines of humanities, health sciences, social sciences, and law.
2.9	Distance programmes will have a minimum of 20 days face to face social work skills teaching over the course of the programme. These teaching days may not be considered as replacement for field education requirements.
2.10	All students must have marae-based experience.
2.11	Student assessment against the Social Workers Registration Board 10 core competencies may take place throughout the programme but the student must have demonstrated that they meet the competencies by the end of the programme.

Standard 3: Field Education

3.1	The programme will require students to undertake a minimum of 120 days of fieldwork education in the final 2 years of the programme. Fieldwork specific tasks can be embedded into the 120 days
3.2	Field education will be delivered through a collaboration between the tertiary education provider, the agency, and practitioners supporting the students in the field education.
3.3	Field education will be sufficient in complexity of tasks and learning opportunities to ensure that students are prepared for beginning generic professional social work practice.
3.4	The programme will have an effective process for assessing agencies' suitability for providing field education experiences, taking into account existing audit and accreditation requirements from external agencies for the organisation and student evaluations of their field education experience.

3.5	<p>The tertiary education provider will have clearly articulated policies and processes for field education that ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) integration of theory, research, and practice learning (b) diverse and appropriate social work field education experiences (c) adequate resourcing to provide quality learning experiences (d) the field education agency provides the student with appropriate working conditions with good health and safety arrangements in place, and (e) that all parties involved in field education are experienced and qualified for their roles in supervision and assessment, with clear articulation of the mechanisms for training and support of these field education staff.
3.6	The programme will have a field education handbook that provides a detailed plan for field education, including student orientation, administration, supervision requirements, learning goals, contracts, and assessment processes.
3.7	Co-ordination of field education, including placement allocation, will be the responsibility of a social work academic staff member.
3.8	Each tertiary education provider will work collaboratively with other recognised programme providers and health and social service agencies within the region/s to ensure effective management of placement allocation.
3.9	There will be at least of two placements, both of which must be a minimum of 50 days duration over a minimum of 3 days per week or equivalent.
3.10	Students will be exposed to at least two potential fields of practice in differently structured settings.
3.11	A student will undertake no more than one field education experience within the student's place of work.
3.12	<p>If students are placed within their current employment organisation, the field education experience will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a field education experience that provides a significantly different social work experience to their normal employment (b) Learning goals related to the integration of new skills and knowledge, and (c) A plan in place for supervision and management of the dual role of employee and student.
3.13	Supervision will be the joint responsibility of the educational institute and the agency providing the field education experience
3.14	All students doing field education will have supervision, of a minimum of 1 hour per week or equivalent, provided by a social worker with full registration, at least 2 years of supervised social work practice in New Zealand and a current Annual Practising Certificate.
3.15	At least one field education experience will be supervised on site by a social worker who holds full registration, at least 2 years of supervised social work practice in New Zealand and a current Annual Practising Certificate.

3.16	The social work academic staff member overseeing the student while on field education experience will not be the supervisor of the student for that field education experience.
3.17	The tertiary education provider is responsible for field education assessments which will be conducted through a joint process involving the tertiary education provider, the agency and the student.
3.18	Students' field education assessments will assess their capability to demonstrate and apply social work knowledge, skills and values in a practice setting.

Standard 4: Admission Criteria

4.1	Admission criteria into the professional social work programme will be rigorous, clearly articulated, address academic and professional suitability, and include VCA screen and police checks. [Refer to standard 1.5 (a)]
4.2	Admission criteria will require that all students who do not have English, Māori or New Zealand sign language as their primary language demonstrate either: (a) IELTS academic score of 6.5 academic no band score lower than 6.5, or (b) TOEFL Internet-based test (iBT) score of 85 or higher with a writing score of 22. These tests must have been completed in one sitting within the previous 2 years.
4.3	Admission criteria at the postgraduate level will also require a degree in an appropriate cognate discipline.
4.4	Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning criteria and processes will be clearly articulated and transparent. (a) No credit transfer or recognition of prior learning will be awarded for successful study that took place more than 5 years prior to the date of first enrolment in the programme. (b) Credit transfer or recognition of prior learning will not be awarded for more than 50% of the programme (c) No credit transfer or recognition of prior learning will be granted for field education unless the transfer is from a current SWRB recognised programme.

Standard 5: Professional and Stakeholder Collaboration

5.1	Collaboration in programme development and review will include professional associations, other stakeholders - including health and social service providers, users of social services, students and the tertiary education provider.
5.2	Each programme will have a stakeholder engagement plan, identifying all health and social service providers that are engaged with the programme and providing for regular meetings with all stakeholders, including users of local social services to ensure that stakeholders' views are sought and considered and that they: (a) receive accurate and timely advice on student entry requirements, programme initiatives and student achievement, and (b) have appropriate opportunities to provide feedback to programme staff and discuss solutions and opportunities to enhance the student's learning experience.

Standard 6: Staffing resources

6.1	The tertiary education provider will ensure that the programme is allocated a sufficient number of staff with the skills and experience necessary to deliver an effective programme that enables the students to develop effective social work skills and meet the SWRB core competencies.
6.2	Social work academic staff will be employed to teach core social work theory, skills and practice components of the programme and co-ordinate field education.
6.3	At least 60% of the social work academic staff teaching in the social work theory, skills and practice components of a postgraduate degree will have a research master's or doctoral degree.
6.4	The tertiary education provider will ensure that the programme is allocated a sufficient number of staff to enable social work academic teaching staff to be active in research, scholarship and/or critical reflective practice.

Appendix 1

Social Workers Registration Act 2003

100 Obligations of Board in relation to Māori

(1) In the exercise and performance of its powers and functions, the Board must ensure that the aims and aspirations of Māori as tangata whenua, and the need for the appropriate involvement of Māori as tangata whenua, are integral and ongoing priorities.

(2) The Board must maintain mechanisms (for example, appointing advisory committees or forming separate caucuses) to ensure that there are at all times readily accessible to it the views of Māori as tangata whenua.

101 Obtaining views of ethnic and cultural groups

The Board—

- (a) must maintain mechanisms (for example, appointing advisory committees or forming separate caucuses) to ensure that there are at all times readily accessible to it the views of Pacific people; and
- (b) must either maintain, or from time to time set in place as the need arises, mechanisms to ensure that it has access to the views of other ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand.