

# The New Social Work Environment

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## Introduction

Registration is currently voluntary but is expected to become the standard by the profession and the public. If you meet the criteria for registration and identify as a social worker you can apply for registration no matter whether you practice social work with clients, manage other social workers, are undergoing training to become a social worker etc. The key criteria is that a professional and ethical base defines your practice regardless of your job title.

## Criteria for Registration

Under the Social Workers Registration Act, 2003 a person who has a recognised New Zealand qualification is entitled to be registered if the Board is satisfied:

- that his or her competence to practise social work has been found satisfactory under Part 3; and
- that he or she is a fit and proper person to practise social work; and
- that (whether because of the inclusion of an appropriate component in that qualification, or as a result of his or her satisfactory completion of a separate course or courses of training) he or she
  - (i) is competent to practise social work with Maori; and
  - (ii) is competent to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand; and
- that he or she has enough practical experience in practising social work.

## Recognised qualifications for Registration

- For all social workers not yet enrolled in a course of study by 31 December 2005, the qualification required to register will be a Bachelor degree. A diploma will *not* be sufficient.
- Post-graduate qualifications in social work will only be sufficient for registration if the programme of study includes social work theory and practice, and two periods of supervised field practice.
- Social workers who are currently practicing and who have started an approved (lower-level) course of study by 31 December 2005 will be eligible to apply for registration under section 14(2). This means that until the end of 2005, social workers who have sufficient experience and meet competency requirements will be able to register as social workers with a qualification that is lower than a Bachelors Degree. The approved list of diploma-level courses can be found at [www.swrb.org.nz](http://www.swrb.org.nz)
- Policies and procedures for overseas qualifications are currently being developed.

## **Competence**

- Every social worker must complete a Board recognised competence assessment within the five years prior to application.
- Competence must be assessed every five years post-registration
- There are currently two providers approved to issue Competency Assessment Certificates

## **Fit and Proper**

The Board will take into account many factors when considering who is a “fit and proper” person to register. A list of offences that would most likely exclude applicants is included on the website. It includes such offences as homicide, sexual offending, violence, fraud, offences towards children, serious alcohol or drug offences, weapons offences. All applicants are subject to Police vetting.

## **Types of Registration**

There are several types of registration and will be prescribed depending on your circumstances i.e. where you were qualified, how long you have practiced for and how far along you are in your studies.

- *Section 6* Full registration
- *Section 7* Overseas qualified
- *Section 10* Provisional
- *Section 11* Temporary
- *Section 13* Recognised experience equivalent to a recognized qualification

## **Practising Certificates**

- No registered social worker may be employed as a social worker unless he/she holds a current practicing certificate
- The SWRB may set general conditions e.g. continuing professional development requirements, work under supervision, or set specific conditions for an individual
- Practising Certificates are issued annually, in line with other professions

## **Social Workers Registration Board - Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro**

- The Minister appoints the Board members
- SWRB is accountable to the Minister

The Board consists of:

- Six registered social workers
- Four non registered people

Members are appointed for two or three year terms.

## **The purpose of the Social Workers Registration Act 2003 is to:**

- Protect the public
- Establish a framework for registration
- Establish a Disciplinary Tribunal
- Promote the benefits of registration
- Enhance the professionalism of social workers

## Complaints

Complaints against registered social workers can be made to:

- The Health and Disability Commissioner
- The Registrar of the SWRB

by:

- The Minister
- The Children's Commissioner
- Any person in the service of the Crown
- Any member of the SWRB
- Any other person

A complaint can lead to:

- Suspension of registration
- Imposition of conditions and /or restrictions
- If upheld the social worker's registration can be cancelled, or suspended, or
- They could be censured, fined, or ordered to undergo training