



# **SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS**

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## **STATEMENT ON 45th MEETING OF PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR SOCIAL WORK**

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5 March 2020

The Professional Board for Social Work held its 45th meeting from 13 to 14 February 2020 in Pretoria. As usual the meeting was well attended. The meeting focused on the strategic matters related to the mandate of this Professional Board.

The Professional Board noted the approval of the following policy documents which Council ratified during their 56th meeting:

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy
- Quality assurance tool for Bachelor of Social Work
- Norms and standards for Bachelor of Social Work

The Professional Board discussed extensively the need to develop guidelines for private practise so as to safeguard the social work profession and service end users from independent /private practitioners who may not be registered or affiliated to recognised professional associations. Furthermore, such practitioners may lack adequate work experience or supervision. Draft guidelines for private practise will be presented to the Professional Board before circulating to affected parties for feedback.

On the 44<sup>th</sup> statement of this Professional Board it was mentioned that certain SADC countries like Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe requested Council's assistance with the registration of their students in South Africa as well as support or guidance with establishing their own Professional Councils/Boards in their respective countries. To date there has been contact made with the universities of Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A roundtable dialogue will be organised in due course to look at qualification alignment between respective qualification authorities and councils on higher education in the respective countries.

The Professional Board took note of the organisational report based on quarter 3 that was presented by the Registrar. While major progress has been made, a major concern is that practitioners seem not to be aware that annual fees are payable on or before the 1st January of every year as prescribed (regulation 7(5)). The notable confusion is the clause on deregistration "if money is not collected within 3 months from the time it was due (Section 20 (1) (d)). The implied period of grace is creating a serious challenge for finance because practitioners wait until the 31st March to make payments which delays Council's Finance department from reconciling payments and issuing receipts on time. Notices will be sent out highlighting those clauses which may lead to deregistration such as paying subscriptions late, not updating particulars etc. The term of office for the current Council and the two Professional Boards is coming to an end next year in June; voter education and/or awareness will take place prior to nominations and elections. The Board also noted the intention to investigate the possibility of on line voting.

It was reported that from October 2019 to February 2020 the number of social service professionals registered within the social work register is 4739. The Professional Board took a resolution during their 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting that all registered specialists on Council's database will be subjected to compliance audits and letters will be issued to all non-compliant practitioners. The registrations division conducted an audit to check compliance to section 4(1) and 9(1) of the regulations 8-4 on the registrations of speciality in adoption work. All 67 practitioners who are on the database registered as adoption specialists were assessed and 44 are in good standing, 2 no longer practise and 21 have not responded to the compliance letters sent to them. All 21 social service practitioners who have not complied will be deregistered and be reported to the Department of Justice.

The Professional Board noted the importance of reviewing the Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct parallel with the Code of Ethics and Rules relating to Acts or Omissions of social service professionals which shall constitute unprofessional or improper conduct. A joint task team comprising members of the Professional Conduct Committee from both Professional Boards will convene in March 2020 to finalize the document that will be presented to Council for ratification during their meeting in April 2020. The Board resolved that the Policy on Fit and proper Person should be located within the Registrations Committee.

Progress was reported on the education, training and development's Probation task team which convened to review regulations for specialisations. The Supervision task team is busy working on the exit level outcomes (ELOs) on the assessment criteria. An audit of post graduate qualifications is in progress, all universities in the country were sent letters requesting information.

Five institutions of higher learning offering BSW degrees will be quality assured and the first QA site visit will take place in June 2020. The committee has worked on social auxiliary work norms and standards and the document will be submitted to the Professional Board before it is circulated to the accredited social auxiliary work training providers for consultation.

The Professional Board received a presentation relating to Forensic social work qualifications from Professor Cornelia Wessels a representative from the University of North West Potchefstroom Campus. She mentioned that her institution offers a short programme in Forensic social work (prerequisite is a Bachelor of Social Work on NQF level 8) and a Master's programme. For more information about these qualifications you can visit the university's website on this link <http://health-sciences.nwu.ac.za/psychosocial/social-work>

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#### **ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SERVICE PROFESSIONS**

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP/ Council) is a statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act No. 110 of 1978 (the Act). Council has two professional boards under its auspices: the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work. Council, in conjunction with its two professional boards, guides and regulates the professions of social work and child youth care work in aspects pertaining to registration; education and training; professional conduct and ethical behaviour; ensuring continuing professional development; and fostering compliance with professional standards. It protects the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. In order to safeguard the public and indirectly the professions, registration with Council in terms of the Act is a prerequisite before practising social work and child and youth care work. Registration is mandatory for social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers, student social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers, student child and youth care workers, and student auxiliary child and youth care workers.