



South African Council for Social Service Professions

**POLICY ON THE
ASSESSMENT OF INTERNATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS AND REGISTRATION FOR
SOCIAL WORKERS AND SOCIAL AUXILIARY
WORKERS**

2019

South African Council for Social Service Professions

Policy on the assessment of international qualifications and registration for social workers and social auxiliary workers

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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 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 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 practicing social work and child and youth care work. Registration is mandatory for social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers, learner social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers and student child and youth care workers.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACRONYMS.....	4
DEFINITIONS.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. SUPERSEDING OF EXISTING POLICY.....	5
3. LIST OF APPLICABLE LEGISLATION.....	5
4. AIM OF THE POLICY.....	5
5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY.....	5
6. POLICY OBJECTIVES.....	5
7. APPLICABILITY.....	5
8. POLICY STATEMENT.....	6
9. POLICY PRINCIPLES.....	6
10. AUDITABLE OUTCOMES.....	6
11. APPLICATION, ASSESSMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCESS.....	6
11.1 Introduction.....	6
11.1.1 <i>External verification process</i>	6
11.1.2 <i>SACSSP internal process</i>	6
11.2 Assessment.....	7
11.2.1 <i>First phase: Screening panel</i>	7
11.2.2 <i>Second phase: Assessment of assignments</i>	7
11.2.3 <i>Third phase: Assessment panel</i>	7
11.2.4 <i>Fourth phase: Panel for oral examination</i>	7
11.3 Responsibilities	7
12. PLAGIARISM.....	8
13. APPEALS.....	8
14. COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS.....	9
15. MONITORING AND QUALITY CONTROL.....	9
16. RISK MANAGEMENT.....	9
17. OBLIGATION TO COMPLY.....	9
18. COMMENCEMENT.....	9
BIBLIOGRAPHY	9

ACRONYMS

ETD	Education, Training and Development
HWSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade and Occupations
SACSSP	South African Council for Social Service Professionals
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable in the interpretation of concepts within this specific policy. Concepts not defined here are sufficiently explained in the text of the policy.

'assessment' means the process used to identify gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competencies in a qualification, part-qualification, or professional designation in order to make a judgement about a learner's achievement. Assessment can be formal, non-formal or informal; assessment can be of learning already done, or towards learning to inform and shape teaching and learning still to be done (SAQA, 2012);

'assessor' means a person able to conduct high-quality internal and external assessment for specific qualifications, part-qualifications, or professional designations. Appropriately qualified lecturers, teachers, educators, trainers, examiners, moderators, chief markers, markers, recognition of prior learning (RPL) specialists, and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) officials are all examples of assessors (SAQA, 2013a);

'moderation' in assessment means internal and external verification that an assessment system is credible and that assessors and learners behave in an ethical way; and that assessments are fair, valid, reliable and practicable (SAQA, 2013a);

'NQF level' means one of the series of levels of learning achievement arranged in ascending order from one to ten according to which the NQF is organised and to which qualification types are pegged (SAQA, 2013a);

'policy' means a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or guideline;

'professional board' means the Professional Board for Social Work established to register and regulate the social work profession as prescribed by the Act;

'proof' means evidence provided in support of the application;

'qualification' means a registered national qualification (SAQA, 2013a);

'quality assurance' means the processes put in place to assure the quality of assessment;

'recognition of prior learning (RPL)' means the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development (SAQA, 2013b);

'registration' means registration as a social worker or social auxiliary workers in terms of the Act;

'regulations' means regulations made in terms of the Act;

'standards' means statements of education and training outcomes and their associated assessment criteria; and

'verification' means the process of confirming evidence is valid and reliable (SAQA, 2017).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) is a statutory body that regulates the social service professions in terms of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978. The Social Service Professions Act, 110 of 1978 allows for the establishment of Professional Boards. Social workers, student social workers, social auxiliary workers and social auxiliary work learners are represented by the Professional Board for Social Work.

1.2 The vision of the South African Council for Social Service Professions is that *social service practitioners united in excellence*. The SACSSP's mission is *servicing the best interests of the social service practitioners, professions and service users by regulating, leading and promoting the social service professions in an innovative and responsive manner*. It further, guides, enables and empowers the social service practitioners to promote and enhance development social welfare in the interests of their various social service client groups. The SACSSP further serves the interests of social service practitioners and their service users through the development, promotion, and quality assurances of their training.

1.3 The South African Council for Social Service Professions executes its mission by adhering to the following principles:

- *Professionalism*
The SACSSP is a constituted statutory governance body that guides, serves and promotes various social service professions and their practitioners who render professional services to their respective service users.
- *Social justice*
Together with the various social service professions, the SACSSP focusses energy, resources and efforts striving for a society in which all members have the same basic rights, security, opportunities and social benefits.
- *Developmental*
The SACSSP guides, enables and empowers the professions and their practitioners through the quality assurance of registration, education, training and ethical conduct.

1.4 The section 17D of the Act and regulations make provision for the registration of social workers and social auxiliary workers who obtained a qualification at a training institution in a country or a state outside South Africa. Registration grants the holder the right to practise as a social worker or social auxiliary worker in South Africa. The Professional Board for Social Work is responsible to assess whether the qualification obtained outside the country presented by an applicant for registration is equal to or higher than the prescribed

qualification as per the Act.

2. SUPERSEDING OF EXISTING POLICY

This policy supersedes the previous policy: *Foreign Policy for the Registration of Application of Applicants with Foreign Qualifications as social workers and social auxiliary workers with the South African Council for Social Service Professions* dated, July 2009 and authorises its withdrawal.

3. THE SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS ACT 110 OF 1978

This policy was developed based on the provisions of the following legislation and regulations thereto:

- (a) Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978;
- (b) The National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008;
- (c) Higher Education Act 101 of 1997;
- (d) Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)' Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF);
- (e) SAQA's Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African NQF; and
- (f) Skills Development Act 97 of 1998.

4. AIM OF THE POLICY

The aim of the policy is to prescribe the process of application, assessment and registration of persons who obtained a qualification outside South Africa.

5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy addresses:

- (a) the process to be followed by applicants and the various structures within the South African Council for Social Service Professions and Professional Board for Social Work for the assessment of internationally obtained qualifications; and
- (b) the responsibilities of the various structures within the South African Council for Social Service Professions.

6. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The policy objectives are:

- (a) to describe the process to be followed in respect of applications for the assessment of internationally acquired qualifications; and
- (b) to describe roles and involvement of various role-players and the assessment of internationally acquired qualifications and their respective responsibilities.

7. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all applicants who obtained qualification outside of South Africa and wish to register to practise social work and social auxiliary work in South Africa.

8. POLICY STATEMENT

8.1 The South African Council for Social Service Professions through the Professional Board for Social Work has the mandate of protecting the public who use social services through the regulation of social service practitioners by means of registration. The Professional Board for Social Work contributes to the quality of social services by ensuring that social service practitioners who register are competent against the standards set for registration, education, training and practise according to the code of conduct.

8.2 The registration standards require specific qualifications of which the outcomes should be aligned with the standards set. The Professional Board for Social Work ensures that submitted internationally obtained qualifications meet the standards for registration.

9. POLICY PRINCIPLES

This policy The following principles apply in the implementation of this policy:

- *Accountability*: The policy complies with all legislation and policy requirements.
- *Administrative justice*: Application and assessments processes must be executed in an administratively just manner, which is transparent; timeous action and clear communication.
- *Collaboration*: Recognition that registration takes place in collaboration with other role players.
- *Developmental approach*: The focus of the application and assessment process shall be continuous improvement and advice on further developmental options.
- *Efficiency and effectiveness*: Objectives should be achieved in the most cost-effective manner.
- *Equality*: All applications should follow a similar process with no preference.
- *Fairness*: Application and registration processes should be fair.
- *Transparency*: Applicants should be aware of all processes followed and standards applied.

10. AUDITABLE OUTCOMES

The registration process of social workers and social auxiliary workers who obtained a qualification at a training institution in a country or a state outside South Africa shall comply with the following:

- (a) all applications shall be timeously dealt with;
- (b) there shall be evidence of fair, valid and reliable processes; and
- (c) transparent feedback to all applicant.

11. APPLICATION, ASSESSMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCESS

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The application and registration process for social workers and social auxiliary workers who present an internationally obtained qualification comprises an external and internal process for which the external is a pre-requisite to the internal process.

11.1.1 External verification process

11.1.1.1 Before any application is submitted to the SACSSP, applicants must obtain a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) certificate for the academic benchmarking of their existing qualification obtained outside South Africa. The purpose of the SAQA benchmarking is to determine if the existing qualification is equal or higher than the minimum academic qualification required in South Africa. This process is the responsibility of the applicant.

11.1.1.2 A SAQA certificate benchmarked at NQF level five, six and seven allows an applicant to apply for registration as a social auxiliary worker.

11.1.1.3 A SAQA certificate benchmarked at NQF level 8 or higher shall allow an applicant to apply for registration as a social worker.

11.1.1.4 Once the applicant has gone through the external process indicating the appropriate level, applicants shall be allowed to proceed with the SACSSP internal application process for social workers.

11.1.2 SACSSP internal process

11.1.2.1 Application: Application forms (Form R.3.SW or Form R.3.SAW) can be obtained from the Registration division or the SACSSP website: www.sacssp.co.za. The following supporting documents (completed in English) should accompany the application form:

- (a) clearance with National Child Protection Register in terms of section 126(3) of the Children's Act 38 of 2005 in the form of Form 30;
- (b) South African Police Service certified documents (not older than three months):
 - passport
 - residence permit
 - South African work permit
 - SAQA certificate
 - qualification in social work or social auxiliary work
 - proof of payment
 - academic record
 - police clearance report from country of origin (current)
 - documented proof that the applicant was allowed to practise as a social worker or social auxiliary worker in the country of origin
 - documented proof of statutory body affiliation (where applicable)

- employment history record of the last three (3) employers.
- 11.1.2.2 The application form needs to be submitted by post or be hand delivered with a non-refundable application fee as prescribed by the Regulations made in terms of the Act.
- 11.1.2.3 The correct bank account details are obtainable from the Registrar or from the SACSSP website. Always includes a reference number: the applicant's full name and surname, ID number or Passport number can be used
- 11.2 ASSESSMENT**
- 11.2.1 First phase: *Screening panel***
- 11.2.1.1 The screening panel shall screen each application form and supporting documents against the Professional Board for Social Work approved rubric and shall:
- (a) check the completeness of received applications and supporting documents;
 - (b) submit all validated and recorded application forms (and supporting documents) to the Education, Training and Development division for further processing; and
 - (c) shall sent compliant applications for the second phase of the application process which includes request to submit assignments whilst the non-compliant applications shall be disapproved.
- 11.2.1.2 Both the successful and unsuccessful applicants shall be informed in writing about the outcomes of their applications and be advised further
- 11.2.1.3 Compliant applications will proceed to the second phase and shall be:
- (a) provided with copies of the assessment criteria and preparation guidelines for either social work or social auxiliary work;
 - (b) required to complete the Professional Board's assessment within six (6) months of receiving the assessment criteria and preparation guideline;
 - (c) provided with copies of the assignment topics and preparation guidelines for either social work or social auxiliary work;
 - (d) required to submit all assignments to the SACSSP within six (6) months of receiving the assignment topics and preparation guidelines; and
 - (e) required to pay a non-refundable assessment fee as prescribed by the SACSSP.
- 11.2.1.4 Non-compliant applications shall be provided with the following relevant developmental feedback in support of their career pathing:
- (a) Option 1: Refer for registration as a social auxiliary worker, if applicable;
 - (b) Option 2: Refer to training institutions for completion of outstanding requirements for registration; or
 - (c) Option 3: Both of the above processes.
- 11.2.2 Second phase: *Assessment of assignments***
- 11.2.2.1 Applicants who fail the first assignments shall be provided with a second opportunity to re-submit the six assignments. Applicants who fail the assignments for the second time shall be disqualified from any further attempts.
- 11.2.2.2 Assignments shall be assessed by appointed assessors within one month after the assignments were received within the ETD division;
- 11.2.2.3 Assessed assignments shall be moderated by an appointed moderator within two weeks after assessment results were received.
- 11.2.3 Third phase: *Assessment panel***
- 11.2.3.1 Assess recommendations of both the assessor and moderator.
- 11.2.3.2 Assess the completeness to the application.
- 11.2.3.3 Review the recommendation.
- 11.2.3.4 Outcomes of the assessment of assignments will be communicated to the applicants and be informed of the next phase.
- 11.2.3.5 Assist the ETD division with the assessment of applications (and the supporting documentation) against the approved rubric.
- 11.2.3.6 Assist the ETD division with the development of required international qualification assessment tools as and when required.
- 11.2.3.7 Report assessment outcomes and other international qualification matters such as recommendations and concerns to the ETD division.
- 11.2.4 Fourth phase: *Panel for oral examination***
- 11.2.4.1 Applicants who are successful in assessment of their assignments will be subjected to oral examination.
- 11.2.4.2 Applicants found competent during oral examination will be registered immediately and be expected to comply with regulations for registration with SACSSP.
- 11.3 RESPONSIBILITIES**
- 11.3.1 Registration division**
- (a) record all received applications with 14 days.
 - (b) acknowledge received application forms;
 - (c) register all successful applicants within one week after receiving their assessment results from the ETD division.
 - (d) guide successful applicants through the process of registering with the SACSSP and provide all successful applicants with the following documentation:

- (i) the *Policy Guidelines for Course of Conduct, Code of Ethics and the Rules for Social Workers*;
 - (ii) copy of the supervision report; and
 - (iii) the Regulations relating to the registration of social worker and social auxiliary workers as published in the Government Gazette;
 - (iv) the Regulations pertaining to registration and annual fees payable to Council as published in the Government Gazette; and
 - (v) the Regulations regarding the conducting of inquiries into alleged unprofessional conduct.
- (e) inform successful applicants (on the registration date) of the following conditions:
- (i) all applicants must be exposed to compulsory supervision for a period of five (5) years from the date of employment;
 - (ii) all applicants must pay an annual fee as determined by the SACSSP at that specific point in time before the 31st March of each year;
 - (iii) all applicants must inform the Registration division of their appointment dates and the details of their immediate employer; and
 - (iv) all applicants must inform the Registration division of any change in their residential and/or work address.

11.3.2 Posting division:

- (a) submit all received applications and assignments within two days of the arrival date to the Registration division; and
- (b) record all received applications and assignments within three days on the SACSSP database.

11.3.3 Professional Board for Social Work:

- (a) approve assessors and moderators;
- (b) approve assignments topics;
- (c) provide direction in terms of all international qualification matters as per its mandate and resolutions;
- (d) quality assure the process of assessing and registering applicants with international obtained qualifications; and
- (e) report assessment outcomes to Council for noting.

11.3.4 ETD division:

- (a) assist the Professional Board for Social Work with the execution of its mandates and resolutions;
- (b) constitute the screening and assessment panel;

- (c) coordinate the logistics of the panels;
- (d) coordinate the logistics of the Professional Board assessment;
- (e) inform applicants of assessment outcomes;
- (f) report assessment outcomes and other international qualification matters such as recommendations and concerns to the Professional Board for Social Work;
- (g) refer successful candidates to the Registration division for registration;
- (h) administratively manage all information related to the Professional Board assessment;
- (i) recruit assessors and moderators;
- (j) allocate assignments to assessors and moderators;
- (k) provide applicants with written feedback after the conducted assessments and moderation;
- (l) develop and amend assessment tools as and when required; and
- (m) refer assessed applications back to the Registration division for filling.

11.3.5 Applicants:

- (a) complete the Professional Board assessment within six (6) months from application;
- (b) be exposed to a Professional Board assessment only twice; and
- (c) pay an administration fee for initial assessments, re-assessments and appeals as determined by the SACSSP at that specific point in time before assignments can be assessed.

12. PLAGIARISM

12.1 The general rules relating to plagiarism shall apply.

12.2 Any applicant shown to have a high prevalence of plagiarism shall be referred to the Professional Conduct division as per the prescripts of the Act and be subjected to the *Policy on the Fit and Proper Person Requirement*.

13. APPEALS

13.1 Unsuccessful applicants may submit an appeal (Form R.3.A) if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their applications. Applicants need to pay a non-refundable re-assessment fee as prescribed by the SACSSP.

13.2 Applicants need to submit the proof of payment to the SACSSP before commencement of the re-assessment. Appeals must:

- (a) reach the SACSSP within 10 working days after the applicant has received his/her assessment results;
- (b) be submitted in writing on the prescribed appeals form; and
- (c) be submitted for the attention of the Registrar.

14. COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

Competency shall be determined as per the prescripts contained within the Act and other national legislative requirements.

15. MONITORING AND QUALITY CONTROL

Quality assurance shall be conducted in compliance with the prescripts of the SACSSP.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management shall be conducted as per the SACSSP's *Risk Management Policy*.

17. OBLIGATION TO COMPLY

17.1 All persons responsible for executing this policy must ensure compliance with the policy in his/her respective area of responsibility. Compliance with this policy shall be subject to both internal and external audits.

17.1 Negligent or wilful non-compliance with this policy constitutes an offence that may lead to disciplinary action in terms of the relevant disciplinary procedures.

18. COMMENCEMENT

The provisions of this *Policy on the assessment of international qualifications and registration for social workers and social auxiliary workers* shall commence upon approval through a resolution of the South African Council for Social Service Professions.

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