



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

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## **STATEMENT ON THE 46TH MEETING OF PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR SOCIAL WORK**

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12 August 2020

The Professional Board for Social Work (PBSW) welcomed Ms Sinenhlanhla Mthembu, newly appointed member versed in law. Ms Mthembu is a legal practitioner by profession.

The Professional Board commended the secretariat for arranging the meeting with representatives of SADC countries that took place on 3 July 2020. These countries are essentially looking at setting up a professional body, what regulates practise, alignment of curriculum, standards that guide quality and integrity of the study programs and minimum standards for graduates to exit with a required competency to function anywhere in Africa. Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe attended this meeting. A brief background on the status of social work training and practice of these countries was presented;

- Lesotho currently does not have a social work council or regulating body, but has a social work association and a council for higher education that reviews their curriculum.
- Swaziland University has a norms and standards body that is managed by its senate.
- In Zimbabwe, there is social work act that regulates the training, registration and practice of social work through the social work council. There is a council for higher education which support regulation of training. There is also a national association of social workers.

Each of these countries will look at specific support they think South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and the Professional Board for Social Work can give them and hopefully enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU). A second meeting is planned before the end of 2020.

The PBSW noted that the comments that were received following the gazetting of the seven fields of specialisation i.e. School Social Work, Occupational Social Work, Social Work in Health Care, Adoption, Clinical Social Work, Forensic Social Work and Supervision Social Work, are being consolidated by the Department of Social Development.

The board noted the progress made by Registrations Division in processing registration applications since the partial reopening of the office.

The PBSW noted the feedback given on the meeting with ASASWEI that took place on 18 May 2020. Agenda items included:

- New universities offering BSW accepted by SACSSP
- The lower ranking of social work on the CESM (Educational Subject Matter) compared to other similar professions, which adversely affects the subsidy categorisation given to universities and results in lower salaries to social workers.
- Postponed Quality Assurance visits to universities
- BSW standards replaced by ELOs
- Impact of COVID-19 on placement of BSW students for practical work, especially final year students

- Risks for students during field instruction and possible indemnity

PBSW proposed a meeting with ASASWEI and HOD's of Schools of Social Work in order to find a solution to the challenge of the 4th year students completing their practical placements in a way that meets the requirements of SACSSP for full registration. This meeting with HOD's and ASASWEI Executive is scheduled for 7 August 2020.

The Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) of this Professional Board has drafted "Peer review guidelines" subsequent to the observations made by the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry that some practitioners conduct what they call "peer review", in the absence of some of regulation or guidance. The Professional Conduct Committee is of the view that it may supplement the mechanism currently in place and assist in reducing the number of complaints against practitioners. The PBSW is to make a determination by 31 July 2020 as to whether peer review should be recognised as a standard of practice.

The Committee of Preliminary Inquiry has developed the draft procedure to give effect to Regulation 7(2) of the *regulations regarding the conducting of inquiries into alleged unprofessional conduct*, as published as R.917 in Government Gazette No. 25109 of 27 June 2003. The purpose of the draft procedure is to outline the process and procedure to be followed by the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry when conducting mediation process. The document is currently under the review of the Professional Board.

PBSW discussed a proposal of having webinars for communication with the sector to enhance engagement and provide clarity on different issues e.g. fee structure and CPD presentations. Dates will be shared once arrangements have been finalised.

The Professional Board concluded its meeting by reconfirming its commitment to the sector.

*Issued by:* SACSSP Communications

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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.