



SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONS

STATEMENT OF MEETING Professional Board for Social Work

4 April 2023

STATEMENT OF THE 56TH MEETING OF PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR SOCIAL WORK

The Professional Board for Social Work held its 56th meeting on 7 March 2023. The meeting focused on the core business of the Professional Board and progress made since its 55th meeting held on 14 October 2022. The Professional Board congratulated Dr Elizabeth Smit, Member of the Professional Board for Social Work) with her promotion by the North West University to a Professor.

The Professional Board for Social Work received a report from the Registrar and noted the following as far as it pertains to its mandate:

- Role of Council as well as the Professional Board to protect and promote the interests of the professions of social work (and child and youth care work), maintain and enhance the prestige, status, integrity, and dignity of the professions and to protect the public.
- The risks in terms of the aforementioned where social service professionals do not comply with the provisions of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978.
- The current ICT challenge of not being able to issue direct communication to registrants through bulk emails. Registrants are encouraged to visit the SACSSP's website and social media platforms for information while this problem is being addressed.

The Professional Board for Social Work appreciated the approval of the *Regulations defining the scope of practice of the profession of Social Work* as per Government Notice No. R. 2617 published in Government Gazette No. 47300 of 14 October 2022. This is an important milestone as these Regulations replaces Regulations published in 1994. It is available on the SACSSP website.

Professional Board was apprised on the following matters pertaining to registration of social service professionals:

- A total of 82 applications for exemption from paying annual fees from unemployed social service professionals in terms of regulation 3(b) of the Regulations *relating to the fees payable by social workers, child and youth care workers, social auxiliary workers, auxiliary child and youth care workers, student social workers and student child and youth care workers (2022)* and 72 applicants qualified and were exempted for the next financial year, while ten applicants did not qualify. All applicants were informed on the outcome of their applications.
- A total of 17,000 social workers, 1,670 social auxiliary workers and more than 6,000 auxiliary child and youth care workers are to be removed from the Register (deregistered) in terms of section 20(1)(d) of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 due to failure to pay the annual fees as prescribed, and will be informed accordingly. Nonpayment of annual fees as required results in a social service professional not being registered and as such not allowed to practice his or her profession.

The Professional Board for Social Work received the following update with regards to the education, training and development of social workers and social auxiliary workers:

- Applications by training institutions for the review and approval (accreditation) of learning programmes were received from North West university for Bachelors in Social Work as well as a Masters in Social Work and UNISA

for Masters in Social Work. The assessment by the Professional Board for these applications have been concluded.

- Two appeals related to CPD were received and both were approved. The outcomes of the appeals were communicated to the appellants.
- The feedback correspondence from the Department of Social Development on the eight revised (amended) and new draft Regulations for specialities were considered, following the publication of these draft Regulations in the Government Gazette for public comments. The Professional Board agreed to resubmit these Regulations with explanatory memorandums as to provide context to the need in the establishment and regulation of specialities in social work.
- A submission from the South African Association for Social Workers in Private Practice (SAASWIPP) regarding the speciality in adoption social work where there are issues with regards to specialization of adoption services and there is a court matter was tabled during the meeting and will be attended to by the Professional Board.
- A task team of the Professional Board for Social Work consisting of subject matter experts will attend to the development of guidelines for ecometrics in social work practice.

The Professional Board for Social Work was apprised as follows on the status of inquiries into alleged unprofessional or improper conduct related to social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers and student social auxiliary workers:

The Professional Board received reports regarding inquiries into alleged unprofessional or improper conduct as follows:

The *Committee for Preliminary Inquiry (CPI)* dealt with 62 cases since September 2022 and 35 of these have been closed due as no evidence of unprofessional or improper conduct could be found. A further six cases are pending interviews with the parties concerned, while seven cases are pending submission of case files by respondents. Eleven cases have been referred to be dealt with in terms of regulation 8 (), while three cases were referred for mediation and one case was referred for a disciplinary inquiry in terms of section 22(1) of the Act.

The *Professional Conduct Committee* dealt with eight cases of alleged unprofessional or improper conduct. In this regard the Committee found one respondent not guilty while six respondents were found guilty of unprofessional or improper conduct, and one case is partly heard (parties are still to submit closing arguments). A penalty of twelve months suspension of his or her registration were handed down in terms of section 22(1)(b) for two of the respondents found guilty; one respondent registration was cancelled in terms of section 22(1)(c) after being found guilty; and fines were imposed as penalties in terms of section 22(1)(d) for three respondents found guilty.

The *Committee for Preliminary Inquiry Appeals Committee* heard ten appeals lodged against the findings of the CPI. The Appeals Committee, after careful consideration of all records and documentary evidence related to this dispute found that there is no evidence that will result in a different finding than the finding of the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry, and upheld the findings of the CPI in eight of the cases reviewed. The remaining two cases were referred back to the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry for a further preliminary inquiry to consider the additional evidence that was provided as part of the appeal.

The Professional Board for Social Work concluded its 59th meeting by expressing appreciation to Members for their participation and the Secretariat for their supportive work.

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ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR SERVICE PROFESSIONS

NON NOBIS – Not for ourselves

South African Council for Social Professions

The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) is an autonomous statutory body established in terms of section 2 of the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 ("the Act"). The SACSSP discharges its mandate, subject to the provisions of the Act together with the Regulations and Rules thereto, as the determining, guiding and directing authority body for the the social service professions of social work and child and youth care work in the country. The SACSSP fulfils this role through Council constituted in terms of section 5 of the Act and the Professional Board for Social Work and the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care Work established in terms of section 14A of the Act and constituted in terms of the applicable Regulations, by setting the standards for education and training of social service professionals (qualifications and continuous professional development); registration of social service professionals as a requirement to practice; setting standards for and exercise effective control over the professional conduct (including ethics) of social service professionals as well as by taking policy resolutions as guidelines for the practising of the social service professions under its auspices. Thus, protecting the integrity of the social service professions as well as the interest of the public at large. It is a legal requirement in terms of the Act for a social worker, social auxiliary worker, student social worker, student social auxiliary worker, child and youth care worker, auxiliary child and youth care worker, student child and youth care worker and student auxiliary child and youth care worker to be registered and in good standing in terms of his or her registration as condition to practise.