

## **SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD**

### **Notes of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Meeting of the Committee on Administration**

Date: 22 August 2016  
Time: 7:15 p.m.  
Venue: Conference Room, 26/F Eastern Commercial Centre, 83 Nam On Street,  
Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong

Present: Dr. LEUNG Chuen-suen (Convenor)  
Mr. CHUNG Wai-lung, Rivalino  
Mr. HUI Chung-shing, Herman  
Mr. KWAN Wing-shing, Vincent  
Mr. SHIU Ka-chun  
Mr. TAN Tick-yee  
Mr. WONG Ka-ming

Absent with apology: Mr. LO Wa-kei, Roy

In-attendance: Mr. LEUNG Sui-keung, Registrar  
Ms. FAN Lai-yee, Veronica, Assistant Registrar (Secretary)

#### **Notes**

1. Confirmation of the notice of meeting and the notes of last meeting

The notes of last meeting were endorsed without amendment.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Paragraph 5 Review of the FAQs on SWRB's website

- (a) The FAQs was put forward to the Board for endorsement on 27 June 2016. At the Meeting, Board Members made comments on the document. It was therefore revised and tabled at the Committee meeting for re-examination.
- (b) The Registrar provided supplementary information on the post meeting note. Though it was written that "the Board, however, would consider, on an individual basis, application for registration filed by a holder of a social work degree that was led by a distance education or

an off-shore programme, notwithstanding that the degree is accredited by the accreditation bodies”, in general, the Board was not minded to recognize such social work degree. The Board also had never received applications of such cases.

- (c) In question 6 of FAQs, it was written as “for a qualification to be awarded by an overseas tertiary institute, even though the programme is run by its Hong Kong partner and the students will take courses in the local territory, the local tertiary institute should not seek recognition of the qualification from the Board direct. Rather, the awarding institute should first seek the recognition of the qualification from the authorized accreditation body of its country”.
- (d) Members expressed that the principle as delineated in the post meeting note has an applicability wide enough to cover the situation as described in Question 6 of FAQs.
- (e) The general thinking of the Board was that any social work programme, which was led by a distance education or an off-shore programme and in partnership between two countries e.g. Australia and Philippines, would not be recognized by the SWRB notwithstanding that the degree was accredited by the accreditation body of one of the overseas countries.
- (f) Members did not have other revision on the FAQs.

## 2.2 Paragraph 8

- (a) The Registrar reported that the “handling of applications for registration of fresh social work graduates” was discussed at the Board Meeting on 27 June 2016.

## 3 Perusal of progress report on promotion of the Board

- 3.1 Members did not have comment on the progress report.

## 4 Consideration of the outline of issue 38 of the Newsletter

(Business information deleted)

## 5 Review of the SWRB’s website

- 5.1 To update the SWRB’s website, two documents namely “Reference on

Social Work” and “Agency Reference Handbook” in the website were required to update.

5.2 As the global definition of the social work profession had been revised by the IFSW General Meeting and the IASSW General Assembly in 2014, the “Reference on Social Work” was updated accordingly. The Convenor suggested to show the website of the definition instead of copying the full contents in the document.

5.3 The latest revision of the “Agency Reference Handbook” was released in 2005. However, the content containing the “Code of Practice” had not been updated since the amendments in 2010 and 2013. In this respect, the Board office updated the “Agency Reference Handbook” according to the changes made in the “Code of Practice”. Members endorsed the document without further comment.

## 6 Discussion on the details of Annual Meeting with RSWs 2016

6.1 Further to the last Committee meeting, the Annual Meeting with RSWs in 2016 was proposed to be held on 11 November 2016. The rundown of the Annual Meeting comprised a report session and a sharing session. For the sharing session, eleven themes were suggested for further discussion.

6.2 Members exchanged views as follows:

- (a) The theme “社福界被染紅” was sensitive and controversial.
- (b) The theme should not be confined to one political stance.
- (c) The wordings of the themes should be revised to be more neutral in view of the Board’s position as a statutory body.
- (d) It was suggested that themes related to political issue could also be considered.
- (e) The theme “解構社會工作者註冊局” might arouse RSWs’ concerns. On one hand, it would help speed up the amendments of the SWRO. On the other hand, the Board would put itself to face challenges at the Annual Meeting with RSWs.
- (f) It was suggested to invite speakers with different political stance.
- (g) The themes should be easy to understand and close to the social workers.

6.3 After discussion, members selected the following three themes and revised the wordings as follows:

- (a) 1st Priority : 新政治形勢下社福界的挑戰 (original 社福界被染紅)
- (b) 2nd Priority : 整筆撥款對社工專業發展的影響

- (c) 3rd Priority: 社會工作者註冊局的改革與發展(original 解構社會工作者註冊局)

6.4 For each of the proposed themes, members also worked out the proposed speakers as below:

- (a) 1st Priority : 新政治形勢下社福界的挑戰 (original 社福界被染紅 )
  - (i) The newly elected Legislative Councillor (Social Welfare Sector);
  - (ii) (Anonymised), former Legislative Councillor; and
  - (iii) (Anonymised), former Legislative Councillor.
- (b) 2nd Priority : 整筆撥款對社工專業發展的影響
  - (i) The newly elected Legislative Councillor (Social Welfare Sector);
  - (ii) Representative of The Hong Kong Council of Social Service;
  - (iii) Representative of Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union
- (c) 3rd Priority: 社會工作者註冊局的改革與發展(original 解構社會工作者註冊局)
  - (i) The newly elected Legislative Councillor (Social Welfare Sector);
  - (ii) Mr. Lun Chi-wai, Chairperson of SWRB
  - (iii) Professor Kwan Yui-huen, former Chairperson of SWRB

6.5 The above themes and speakers would be put forward to the Board for discussion.

*(Post meeting note: the newly elected Legislative Councillor was Mr. Shiu Ka-chun and he would be in the proposed list of speakers. The proposal was put forward to the Board for discussion at the meeting on 9 September 2016. The first theme “新政治形勢下社福界的挑戰” was further revised as “Challenges faced by registered social workers under the new social environment” (在新社會形勢下註冊社工面對的挑戰). (Business information deleted) The Board office sent invitation on 27 September 2016. )*

7 Perusal of the list of additional candidates for appointment of Disciplinary Committee Panel members for the term from 16 January 2017 to 15 January 2020

7.1 An open nomination for candidates for appointment of Disciplinary Committee Panel Members for the term from 16 January 2017 to 15 January 2020 was conducted in May 2016. In parallel, existing DC Panel Members were invited to indicate willingness to take up appointment for another term if the Board so offered.

- 7.2 The Board office had followed up with the existing members of the DC Panel Members and majority of them had given positive replies. In the list of RSWs who held a recognized diploma in social work, five existing members declined our invitation and only twelve existing members accepted the invitation. The number just met the minimal statutory requirement. Members endorsed the list of existing members and the same would be put forward to the Board for consideration.
- 7.3 At the previous Committee meeting, members had already examined the backgrounds of candidates and selected 10 new members from the nomination list. After the meeting, Board Members referred four additional nominations to the Board office. The four candidates were non-RSWs. Members examined the backgrounds of the candidates and the same list would be put forward to the Board for endorsement.
- 7.4 The full list including all candidates shortlisted at the two Committee Meetings would be put forwarded to the Board for approval.
- 8 Exploration on enhancing the communications between SWRB and RSWs via electronic channel
- 8.1 Further to the previous Committee Meeting, members put up a suggestion to rebate \$30 registration fee or renewal fee to encourage RSWs to use electronic means to communicate with the Board. The arrangement and the cost-and-benefit analysis was set out in the proposal. An RSW who had paid the registration fee or renewal fee and chosen electronic means to communicate with the Board during the specified one-off period or before the specified one-off period would be entitled to receive the rebate registration fee.
- 8.2 At present, there was around 32% - 34% RSWs who had chosen electronic means to communicate with the Board. With the implementation of the rebate scheme, if 40% RSWs chose electronic means, the net cost would be \$418,005 and the cost per additional RSWs would be \$242.
- 8.3 If 50% RSWs chose electronic means, the net cost would be \$470,119 and the cost per additional RSWs would be \$122.
- 8.4 Members were invited to consider whether the proposed scheme was legitimate and fair; and whether the proposed scheme was cost effect.

8.5 Members exchanged views as follows:

- (a) RSWs who did not have computers or emails were not entitled to receive rebate of registration fee \$30. He/She might consider the policy be unfair. The Board might face judicial review.
- (b) To address the above problem, the concerned RSWs could declare that they did not have computers to facilitate the concerned RSWs to receive the rebate of registration fee.
- (c) Another benefit of the using electronic means was that the response rate would be higher if survey or consultation could be conducted in electronic means.
- (d) The Convenor expressed that the cost-and-benefit analysis should cover three years because the benefits brought to the Board would not be limited to one year. He had worked out a table computing the net cost at different adoption rate say 40%, 50% and 80% covering three years. The net costs would be \$370,626 (40%), \$354,789 (50%) and \$398,239 (80%) respectively. It was found that the differences in net costs at adoption rate of 40%, 50% and 80% were not big over three years. For the details of computation, please refer to Appendix 1.
- (e) The Board office had included a computation of cost-and-benefit analysis by computing the ratio of using the money incurred in the rebate as the numerator and the number of RSWs attracted by the scheme to change to use email communication as the denominator. This was the general formula adopted in cost-and-benefit analysis. The Convenor suggested that the cost-and-benefit should be computed by the ratio of money incurred in the rebate divided by the total number of RSWs using email communication, and the latter figure included the number of RSWs who had chosen to use email communication before the rebate scheme.
- (f) Before sending the reminders by registered mail, the Board office could send additional email to RSWs who chose the electronic means. It might help to reduce the expenses in postage.
- (g) During peak season of registration for example from June to August and November to December, additional workforce might be required to handle additional workload generated from the rebate scheme.

- (h) Implementation of the scheme should not affect daily operation of the Board Office particularly on the registration matters.

8.6 After discussion, members agreed the followings:

- (a) To address the issue of fairness, RSWs who did not have computers could entitle the rebate of registration fee by making a declaration to the Board office.
- (b) According to the audit report, the financial condition of the Board was healthy with surplus of \$700,000 in 2015/16. It was sufficient to cover the expense of the rebate scheme.
- (c) To protect the environment, we should encourage RSWs to use electronic means for communications.
- (d) To implement the rebate scheme, temporary staff would be employed.
- (e) Before putting the proposal to the Board for further discussion, the Board office would write to the Labour and Welfare Bureau to seek for advice and comments on the proposed rebate scheme.

*(Post meeting note: business information deleted )*

9 Consideration of the draft auditors' report for the financial year ended 31 March 2016

9.1 The surplus for the financial year 2015/16 was \$700,677. The Honorary Treasurer confirmed that the auditors' report for the financial year 2015/16 was fair and true.

10 Any other business

10.1 Update on Recruitment of New Registrar

(Anonymised), the new Registrar, would report duty on 14 November 2016 and the handover period with the current Registrar would be two weeks. From 14 November 2016 to 30 November 2016, the new Registrar would be the Registrar (Designate). The last day of current Registrar would be on 30 November 2016. (Anonymised) would take over the position of Registrar with effect on 1 December 2016.

11 Date of next meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled on 26 October 2016 at 7:15 pm.

*(Post meeting note: due to other commitment of the Convenor, the meeting time would start at 7:30pm)*

13 October 2016