

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Notes of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee on Qualification Assessment and Registration

Date: 23 February 2016

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room, 26/F Eastern Commercial Centre, 83 Nam On Street,
Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong

Present: Mr. SHIU Ka-chun (Convener)
Mr. KWAN Wing-shing, Vincent
Dr. LEUNG Chuen-suen
Ms. LUK Ka-mei
Mr. LUN Chi-wai

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

Notes

1. The Convener welcomed members to the Committee on Qualification Assessment and Registration. It was the first Committee meeting of the new tenure of the Board from 2016 to 2019.
2. Members took note of the last meeting held on 7 January 2016.
3. Matters arising
 - 3.1 Paragraph 3 – Discussion on measures to remind local training institutions to comply with the requirements on staff-student-ratio (SSR)
 - 3.1.1 The Registrar briefed that at the Board meeting on 13 January 2016, Board members agreed that the suggestion to request tertiary institutions to submit annual reports on SSR should be considered and decided by the Board of the new term. In the meantime, a letter should be issued to all tertiary institutions as a general reminder on the need to comply with the SSR under the Board's Principles and Criteria at all times. When making the above decision, Board members had the following considerations:
 - (a) The two social work programmes of (anonymised) were the

only programmes that failed to meet the SSR requirements after the completion of the first round regular qualification recognition review. The shortfall of SSR in (anonymised) was a single incident only.

- (b) Calculation of SSR was a complicated work involving lot of workload of the tertiary institutions.
- (c) The introduction of the annual reports on SSR might spoil the working relationship between the Board and the tertiary institution.

3.1.2 The Committee agreed to honor the decision made at the previous meeting and the tertiary institutions were not required to submit annual reports on SSR. Instead, the Board office should issue a general reminder to the tertiary institutions to meet the Principles and Criteria.

3.2 (Business Information Deleted)

3.3 Report on the Social Work Qualification Recognition Assessment / Review being conducted or to be conducted

3.3.1 The Registrar walked through the list of the social work qualification recognition review/assessment being conducted or to be conducted from 2015/16 to 2018/19. During the period, the Committee was required to process regular qualification recognition review exercises for twenty social work qualifications. The upcoming reviews would be conducted in April 2016 on three social work qualifications from (anonymised). The Registrar also reported that the (anonymised) had ceased the Higher Diploma in Social Work and its last student intake was in 2014/15. As such, no review was required for the programme in 2016/17. For new social work programmes, two new social work programmes were being assessed by the Assessment Team currently and one new social work programme at Bachelor level would be forthcoming.

3.3.2 The Convener briefed that for any new social work programmes applying for qualification recognition assessment, the pre-requisite was to obtain approval from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications (“HKCAAVQ”) or the Senate of its tertiary institutions. The Registrar added that the roles of HKCAAVQ and the SWRB were

different. HKCAAVQ was to ensure the programmes having fulfilled the academic standards while the Board was to ensure the professional standards. When the Board received any application for social work qualification recognition assessment, the Board would assign an Assessment Team (AT) to conduct the assessment. The AT would include five members who were from local and overseas academic, employing agency, social workers and other professional sectors. A professional consultant would provide secretariat support to the AT. The AT would conduct 2-day on-campus visit to the tertiary institution. After collecting all information, the professional consultant would prepare and submit the Interim Report to the Committee for consideration and then to the Board for endorsement. The endorsed report would be sent to the territory institution for responses. If the AT accepted the tertiary institution's responses, a Final Report would be submitted to the Committee for consideration and then to the Board for approval.

3.3.3 The Registrar updated that the first round of regular social work qualification review was completed and majority of work had no complication. The number of upcoming assessment / review was seventeen and there were five professional consultants. The Committee had to consider whether to increase the number of professional consultants in the pool.

3.3.4 The Registrar briefed that the professional consultants provided services on project basis. In the last tenure, the Board approved to recruit more professional consultants. The Board office had published the recruitment advertisement and so far fourteen applications were received. The selection process was left to this tenure of the Committee. The Committee agreed that it was necessary to expand the pool of professional consultants for handling future assessment and review exercises. The Committee agreed to form the interview panel and start the selection process. Following the usual practice, the interview panel would consist of Chairman, Vice-chairman of the Board and the Convener of the Committee on Qualification Assessment and Registration.

4. Consideration of terms of reference of the Committee on Qualification Assessment and Registration

4.1 The Registrar walked through the terms of reference which had been used in the previous term of the Committee. Members noted that the quorum of meeting was three members or one-third of the membership, whichever

was greater. Members adopted the terms of reference.

5. Proposal on appointment of co-opted members

5.1 The Registrar briefed that in the term of 2013-2016, there were nine members in the Committee including five Board members and four co-opted members. Three of the five Board members came from the tertiary institutions. At that time, the Board had appointed four co-opted members from different fields including one medical practitioners and three RSW familiar with training. As majority of discussion involved confidential and sensitive information, the Board appointed co-opted members by invitation.

5.2 A list of suggested considerations was circulated to the Committee as a reference to work out its own arrangements in co-opting members. The Committee decided to adopt the followings:

(a) To co-opt one member from other profession by invitation.

(b) To co-opt three members through an open nomination exercise. These three co-opted members could be any stakeholders of social work e.g. frontline RSWs or senior management of employing agencies.

5.3 The Committee also discussed whether there should be any criteria for nomination as candidate for appointment as co-opted members to the Committee through the open nomination exercise. After discussion, the Committee proposed that no specific criteria would be required and the candidate would need to provide a written submission on why he wanted to join the Committee on Qualification Assessment and Registration as a co-opted member and why the Board should so appoint him as a co-opted member to the Committee.

5.4 The proposal would be put forward to the Board for endorsement.

6. (Business Information Deleted)

7. (Business Information Deleted)

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9. (Business Information Deleted)

10. (Business Information Deleted)

11. Review of SSR and qualifications of fieldwork supervisors

11.1 In the previous meetings, both tertiary institutions and AT requested the Board to review the SSR and qualifications of fieldwork supervisors. An AT appreciated the tertiary institution's good practice that the academic staffs were involved in fieldwork supervision. The AT strongly recommended the Committee to review the current SSR calculation method which excluded fieldwork supervision from calculation. In another assessment exercise, a tertiary institution requested the Committee to make the calculation method of SSR clear in the Principles and Criteria.

11.2 The Registrar briefed members the historical background:

- (a) The SSR requirement of 1:15 for degree programme and 1:25 for sub-degree programme were adopted since the implementation of the mechanism to appoint Assessment Team to conduct qualification recognition assessment/review exercise. Tertiary institutions had different views on the ratio. The Committee had consulted the TIs but no consensus could be reached.
- (b) Different tertiary institutions had different practices. Some TIs separated the manpower of teaching staff and fieldwork supervisor while some TIs involved teaching staff in fieldwork supervision.
- (c) A few years ago, the Committee had studied the calculation methods of SSR adopted by different TIs. The methods included computation by headcount, workload, or teaching hours, etc.

11.3 Members exchanged views as follows:

- (a) As one of the options, manpower of fieldwork supervisors could be included in SSR and at the same time raise the requirement on staff input.
- (b) The qualification requirement of fieldwork supervisors might be lowered so that the TIs could employ those RSWs with extensive social work experience but possessing diploma qualification.
- (c) The Board might review the mechanism for qualification recognition and amend the Principles and Criteria from time to time as it considered appropriate. As the last review was completed in 2014, it

was the appropriate time to start the review again.

- (d) Consultation with different stakeholders including TIs and RSWs should start in earlier stage.
- (e) The Board office would collect comments from the Professional Consultants.
- (f) The Committee would work out the timeline and way forward at the subsequent meetings.

12. Any other business

12.1 Review the Honorarium of Assessment Team for Qualification Recognition Assessment / Review Exercises

A Professional Consultant expressed her view that the honorarium to the Assessment Team was too low and it should be reviewed. The Registrar briefed that the current level was (deleted) per member per day. Members agreed that the honorarium was low and it should be increased to a reasonable level on the principle of cost recovery. The Committee on Administration would examine the financial status of qualification assessment/review exercises and put forward the proposal to the Committee on Qualification Assessment and Registration and the Board.

12.2 (Business Information Deleted)

12.3 (Business Information Deleted)

13. Date of next meeting

Members agreed that the next meeting would be scheduled on 25 April 2016 at 7:00pm.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 10:35pm.

16 March 2016