



**Social Workers  
Registration Board**  

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**Kāhui Whakamana Tauwhiro**

# **ENTITLEMENT TO REGISTRATION ENOUGH PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE**

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

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## 1. Introduction and Obligations of the Board

The Social Workers Registration Act (2003) requires the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) to establish clear criteria for the registration of social workers.

- Section 6 entitles a person who has a recognised NZ qualification to be registered subject to meeting competence requirements; being a “fit and proper” person; being competent to practice social work with Maori and different ethnic and cultural groups, and that “he or she has enough practical experience in practising social work.” s6(d).
- Other criteria for registration on
  - Competence
  - Fit and proper person
  - Recognised New Zealand qualification
    - are contained in other policy statements published by the Board.
- Section 7 (e), in referring to registration of a person with an overseas qualification, also requires that “he or she has enough practical experience in practising social work”.
- Section 13 (b)( i) empowers the SWRB to fully register an applicant with neither a recognised NZ qualification nor an overseas qualification equivalent to a recognised NZ qualification where the Board is satisfied that “his or her practical experience in practising social work in New Zealand is enough to compensate for the lack of such a qualification”. Criteria such as fit and proper, competence and competence to practice social work with Maori and different ethnic and cultural groups in NZ still apply.

## 2. Social work practice

Persons whose job title is other than Social Worker will be able to demonstrate the application of skills, knowledge and practice in a manner that is consistent with the IFSW definition of Social Work and the Code of Ethics of the profession.

## 3. Enough Practical Experience as Social Workers

The Act enables the SWRB to develop a framework to determine what is “enough” experience. The SWRB has adopted the following guidelines.

- a) Prior to 1 October 2004  
For applicants for registration under Section 6 or 7, who have been practising as social workers for two years or more as at 1 October 2004.  
  
For applicants for registration under Section 6 or 7 who have been practising for a period of less than two years, as at 1 October 2004.
- b) After 1 October 2004  
For applicants for registration under Section 6 or 7 who are new to practice and who graduate with a NZ recognised qualification in social work or equivalent as at October 1 2004 or later.
- c) For applicants who are eligible for registration under Section 13 there is a specific policy paper on criteria for section 13 which has the amount of time required to be practising social work in New Zealand along with other measures that together are seen to compensate for the lack of a qualification.

### 3.1 Practical experience gained prior to 1 October 2004

The Board considers that:

- For a social worker in practice on 1 October 2004 who applies for registration under Section 6 or 7 “enough” practical experience will be defined as a minimum of two years practice of more than 15 hours per week.
- For a social worker in practice on 1 October 2004, who has not completed two years practice, “enough” practical experience will be defined as the period when the Social Worker has practised for two years at more than 15 hours per week, or has completed 2000 hours supervised practice, whichever is the sooner.

**Note:** A Social Worker may be provisionally registered s14 (i) until “enough” practical experience is gained.

**Note:** Practical experience does not include fieldwork experience during a programme of study.

**Note:** Supervised practice as defined in the Social Workers Registration Board policy on Supervision.

### 3.2 Practical experience after 1 October 2004 – Benchmark

The Board considers that:

- “enough” practical experience for a Social Worker who graduates with a recognised NZ social work qualification or equivalent on October 1 2004 or later, will be 2000 hours supervised practice, post-qualification.
- Evidence of both the number of hours worked and the supervision arrangement will be required when providing proof of practical experience. It is expected that the supervision criteria will meet acceptable professional criteria.

**Note:** 2000 hours has been calculated as a full-time new graduate social worker working 30 hours per week actual hands-on practice for 40 to 45 weeks per annum (1200 to 1350 hours per annum).

**Note:** 40 - 45 weeks per annum takes into account annual leave, sick leave, course and conference leave.

### 3.3 Rationale

- Supervised practice experience is considered paramount for competence to practice.
- A period of supervised practice following qualification complements the knowledge, skills and practical experience gained during the programme of study.
- The Board recognises practical experience gained prior to 1 October 2004 in years (2 years) as opposed to hours. Practical experience of 2000 hours is less than two years full time employment. This allows for full registration to be gained within two years of commencing practice.
- The required number of hours fits within a range when benchmarked with other professions. The required number of hours extends the benchmark set by the Social Work profession for membership of the professional body.