

Guide to Social Worker Registration

Ensuring higher standards of conduct and accountability



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
South Australia



Government
of South Australia

Acknowledgement of Country

The Social Workers Registration Board of South Australia (SWRB SA) acknowledges that the land we work on is the traditional lands of Aboriginal peoples and we pay our respects to elders, past and present.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the First Nations peoples of this country and recognise them as traditional owners and occupants of Australian land and waters.

The SWRB SA acknowledges the violence of the colonial past and social work's part in this history and the impacts colonisation continues to have on First Nations peoples.

We acknowledge the strong and enduring connection to land and culture for First Nations peoples.

Message from Dr Carmela Bastian Presiding Member of the SWRB SA



I am delighted to introduce this comprehensive resource designed to support social workers in South Australia as we transition to a regulated profession. This guide provides essential information on the registration process and the various pathways available to ensure that all social workers meet the high standards of practice required to safeguard the public.

The implementation of the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB SA) marks a pivotal moment for our profession. It reflects our collective commitment to maintaining the integrity and quality of social work services, ensuring that all practitioners are held to the same standards of competency and conduct.

This guide will help you navigate the requirements and make informed decisions about your professional journey.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Minister, the Director, and all our stakeholders for their continuing support and dedication to this initiative. Together, we are strengthening the social work profession and enhancing the quality of services provided to our communities.

Message from Professor Sarah Wendt Director of the SWRB SA



It is a privilege to be part of the first registration of social workers, and I commend the South Australian community, human service sector, and government for this leadership.

I thank the Board, Office of the Board, Government, and key stakeholders across the sector for their engagement as we work together to understand the complexities of registration, the workforce, and public safety. The Regulatory Framework that we have developed represents a fair and balanced strategy for its inception, and I look forward to continuing constructive work together to ensure registration promotes consistent, high-quality practice across the sector.

Regulating the provision of social work services is important to safeguard the public and ensure that all people undertaking social work services are regulated and held to the same standard. Registration recognises the broadness and diversity of social work and the knowledge, values and skills that underpin it.

We have created this guide to social workers registration to provide comprehensive information, but please reach out if you have any questions.

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This guide provides essential information about the registration process.

We look forward to working with both individuals and organisations as, together, we transition to social worker registration in South Australia. Further information is available on our website: www.swrb.sa.gov.au.

Background

The Social Workers Registration Board of South Australia (the SWRB SA) was established by [the Social Workers Registration Act 2021 \(the Act\)](#). The primary purposes of the Act are to maintain a public register of social workers and protect the public by ensuring high standards of practice and accountability.

The role of the SWRB SA is to regulate individuals who are working in social work services have the necessary competence to practice social work and are accountable for their conduct and practice. The Board is legally empowered to regulate registered social workers through the preparation of codes of conduct, professional standards and ethical guidelines, and through investigations and proceedings.

To regulate social workers, the Act mandates the SWRB SA to define and/or determine the following:

- A Scope of Practice
- The Definition of Social Work Services
- Approved Qualifications
- Options for Practice Experience Pathways
- Fees

The SWRB SA has consulted extensively to establish this new regulatory framework while supporting workforce stability and the delivery of essential services. The Board has also considered and honoured community expectations of the social work profession.

The SWRB SA is committed to ensuring that any actions or decisions regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the regulatory framework are informed by appropriate consultation. As part of this commitment, the Board has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Committee.

Rationale for Regulating Social Work Services



Public Safety

Safeguarding the public interest is central to the Act. Ensuring that registered social workers are accountable and maintaining competence and high professional standards of conduct is critical for the protection of public safety.



High-Risk Work

The definition of social work services, as described by the Board, describes the specific work that is protected, meaning that it can only be undertaken by a person registered with the SWRB SA. Regulation ensures that this high-risk work is performed by suitably educated and/or experienced professionals.



Experience Pathways

The Act provides for experience to be recognised as grounds for eligibility for social work registration. This will enable the registration of employees who are working, and have experience, in performing social work services, thereby ensuring continuity of service delivery across the sector. Critically, this will also ensure that all workers performing social work services are regulated.



Quality Practice

Regulating social work services assures the public that they are entitled to high-quality services delivered by appropriately qualified, competent, and accountable professionals. This regulation uplifts the practice of social work services and ensures that all individuals undertaking these services are held to the same standards.

Definitions for Registration

The Scope of Practice, Definition of Social Work Services & Exclusions

Scope of Practice

The scope of practice sets out the kinds of work social workers do. It encapsulates the breadth of social work, as well as its underpinning values and approach. Anyone registered with the SWRB SA is registered to practice within the scope of practice. For now, the SWRB SA has established one general scope of practice.

The SWRB SA has developed a comprehensive description of social work practice that intentionally reflects and respects the diversity and broad nature of the profession.

[View the full scope of practice.](#)

Social Work Services

Social work services sit inside the scope of practice.

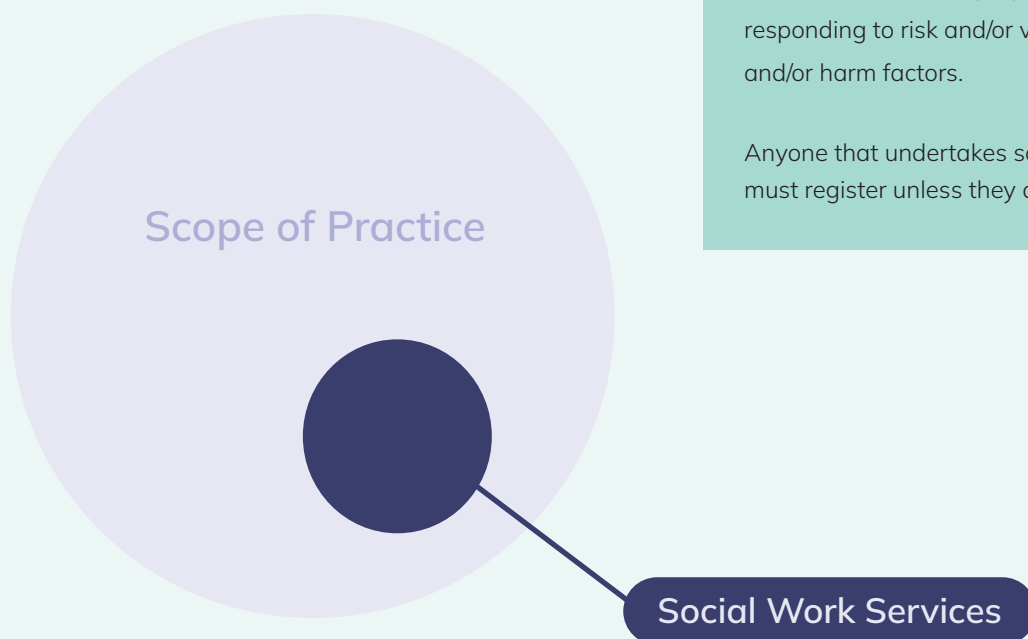
Social work services refer to the work that only a registered social worker can do based on their training and experience.

Social work services are defined more narrowly than the scope of practice. The definition of social work services, as required in the Act, establishes clear boundaries for the protection of this work.

Legal Definition

Social Work Services means a natural person undertaking psychosocial assessments, analysis, and interventions to holistically evaluate the context of a person's or people's situations and their environments for the purpose of identifying and responding to risk and/or violence and/or trauma and/or harm factors.

Anyone that undertakes social work services must register unless they are excluded.



Definitions for Registration

The Scope of Practice, Definition of Social Work Services & Exclusions

The SWRB SA Scope of Practice

Social work is undertaken in a variety of settings and roles, whether remunerated or not. Social work is not restricted to the provision of direct client services. It also includes using professional knowledge in non-direct contexts such as working in management, administration, tertiary education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles, and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession.

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline promoting social change driven by a need to challenge and change those structural conditions that contribute to marginalisation, social exclusion, and oppression. Social Work promotes social development, social inclusion and cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people.

Respect for inherent worth & dignity of human beings, doing no harm, respect for diversity, collective responsibility, and upholding human rights and social justice are the guiding principles of social work.

Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, and humanities, social work engages people and structures to address the impact of social problems and enhance wellbeing. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges belong to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are ways of being, doing, and knowing. Non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers cannot claim to be 'knowers' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, however they must be aware of, engage with and respect, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. Social Work has a responsibility to contribute to research and knowledge building to advance theories that are applied and emancipatory.

Social work as a profession and academic discipline engages in critical thinking which means that social workers are skilled at questioning, examining, interpreting, and evaluating information and situations. Critical thinking is not criticism but rather it is maintaining a questioning and evaluative stance, informed by analysis of power relations in practice and decision making. Critical reflection is the link between thinking and doing which enables a social worker to make decisions that can be scrutinised by others, ensuring accountability as the basis for better practice in the future. Critical thinking and reflection are grounded in self-awareness. Self-awareness requires a high level of understanding about who we are and how we behave as individuals and as a society.

As a relationship-based profession, social work requires an advanced level of interpersonal, and communication skills, underpinned by strong self-awareness to assess and intervene in people's lives. Social workers therefore aim to establish caring and respectful relationships with authenticity, intention, and purpose, to strengthen, restore and uphold the safety and wellbeing of those they work with. Social Work operates and collaborates within and across service systems and other professional disciplines to enhance service delivery.

Social work's grounding in social justice distinguishes it from other professions. This is expressed through social work's central concern with the interrelationships between people and their environments, people and state systems and structures, and its commitment to challenging the structural conditions that maintain inequality and exclusion. The ability to work with complexity and uncertainty, across a range of fields and settings, is a key strength of the social work profession.

Definitions for Registration

The Scope of Practice, Definition of Social Work Services & Exclusions

Exclusions

'Exclusion' is a legal mechanism that allows certain non-social workers to undertake social work services without being registered with the SWRB SA.

Exclusions have been put in place to recognise existing regulation and other arrangements for professionals already doing this work.

The following professional categories are excluded from the definition of social work services and therefore not required to register:

- Practitioners registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency (AHPRA) who are working within their professional scope of practice; and
- Counsellors accredited with the Australian Counselling Association or the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia, or rehabilitation counsellors accredited with the Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counselling who are practising within their professional scope of practice; and
- Accredited Family Dispute Resolution practitioners as defined in Family Law (Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners) Regulations 2008, and
- Police officers acting in their capacity as a Police officer; and
- Cultural advisors, and others employed for their cultural knowledge and expertise, in so far as they are providing cultural advice and/or guiding conversations on cultural business using cultural knowledge.

The following groups are also not required to register because they do not fall within the definition of social work services:

- Those undertaking caring duties such as providing foster care, kinship care, residential care, or other duties to support individuals with activities of daily living and not providing social work services.
- Support workers, youth workers, peer support and lived experience workers, and other paraprofessionals providing support and assistance using their skills and knowledge from their training and not providing social work services.

Clear boundaries exist between people who deliver social work services and those who are not permitted or should not be expected to deliver social work services.

Using the Title 'Social Worker'

Full registration with the SWRB SA entitles you to use the title of, and identify as, a social worker. This means that, even if you have completed the social work qualification, you cannot refer to yourself as a social worker unless you are also registered. This is important because, without regulation, anyone could call themselves a social worker, potentially putting vulnerable people at risk.

The Act protects the title of 'social worker,' meaning only those holding full registration can legally use it:

s38(1) 'A person must not knowingly or recklessly take or use the title "social worker" in a way that could be reasonably expected to induce a belief the person is a registered social worker, unless the person is in fact a registered social worker.'

s38(2) 'A person must not knowingly or recklessly take or use the title "social worker" in relation to another person in a way that could be reasonably expected to induce a belief the second person is a registered social worker, unless the person is in fact a registered social worker.'

Definitions for Registration

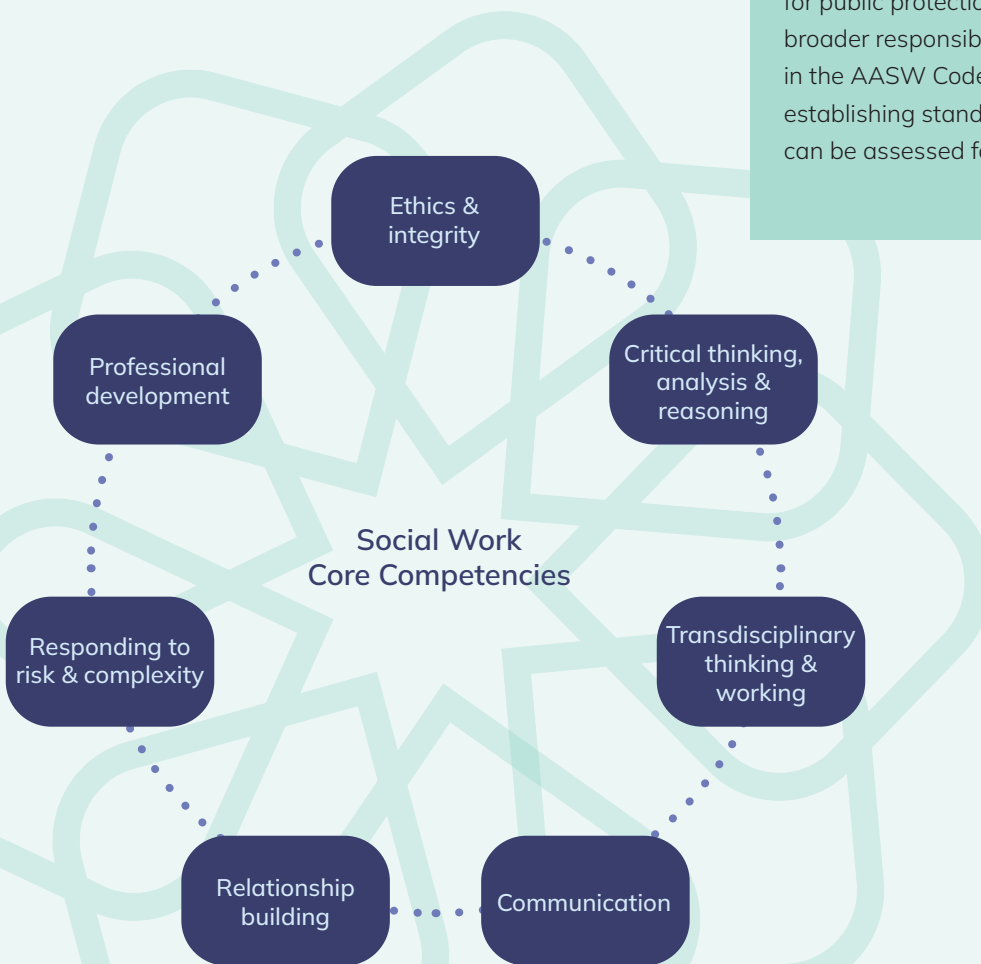
Conduct & Competence

The SWRB SA has developed a Quality Practice Framework to ground the regulation and registration of social workers in South Australia. Consisting of the Social Work Core Competencies and Code of Conduct, the framework is consistent with the primary objectives of the Act, namely, maintaining high professional standards of competence and conduct and ensuring professional accountability (Part 1, 3c-3d). It is informed by the SWRB SA definition of Social Work Services and Scope of Practice.

The framework takes an outcome-focused approach, emphasising end-results and impacts. It highlights the integration of knowledge, skills, values, and social work identity.

Competencies articulate profession-specific knowledge, skills and values in relation to the work performed; competencies are not tied to a particular role or setting but, rather, are transferable across situations and contexts. As interrelated and transferable sets of knowledge, skills and values, competencies construct competence. The seven areas of competency that make up the social work core competencies thus represent the essential elements that, together, make up – or ‘add up to’ – social work competence.

The Code of Conduct sets out base expectations of behaviour and practice that constitute the core requirements for professional, safe and quality service. In line with its legislated responsibility for public protection, the Code complements the broader responsibilities and principles articulated in the AASW Code of Ethics (2020) while also establishing standards against which performance can be assessed for regulating the profession.



Categories of Registration

Full & Provisional Registration

The SWRB SA has three categories of registration:

Full registration

Provisional registration

Limited registration

All categories of registration come with conditions.

Full Registration

Full registration entitles you to use the title 'social worker' and perform social work services. The completion of [CPD and supervision](#) are conditions of all types of registration (see below). Registration must be renewed annually.

In addition to fulfilling the general eligibility criteria, applicants for full registration must have:

- completed a prescribed qualification, or
- completed the requirements to transition from provisional to full registration, or
- be registered in New Zealand (see [eligibility](#)).

Provisional Registration

Provisional registration is a category held by people completing one of two pathways to full registration.

Pathway 1: [Practice Experience Pathway \(PEP\)](#)

The PEP provides a registration option that honours and values those who have experience performing social work services for a significant length of time and wish to continue towards full registration.

Pathway 2: [Qualification and Experience Pathway \(QEP\)](#)

The QEP provides a registration option for those who are delivering social work services whilst completing their prescribed social work qualification.

Those who are provisionally registered and allowed to use the title 'provisionally registered social worker.' They can continue to deliver social work services while they have provisional registration. They will need to renew their registration annually. Once a provisionally registered social worker meets all requirements, they can apply for full registration and if approved can legally use the title 'social worker.'

Categories of Registration

Provisional Registration

The Practice Experience Pathway (PEP) recognises the extensive experience and skills of people who are working in social work services but do not have a formal qualification.

Eligibility for PEP requires an applicant to:

- be currently employed undertaking social work services as defined by the SWRB SA, and
- have a minimum of 6 years (or full-time equivalent) practice experience in Australia in the delivery of social work services, obtained in the 20 years prior to application, and
- have employer endorsement, and
- meet the general eligibility criteria.

To move to full registration, eligible applicants will be required to pass a competence assessment against the Social Work Core Competencies.

The competency assessment will focus on the integration and application of contextually appropriate knowledge, skills and values, through a process involving:

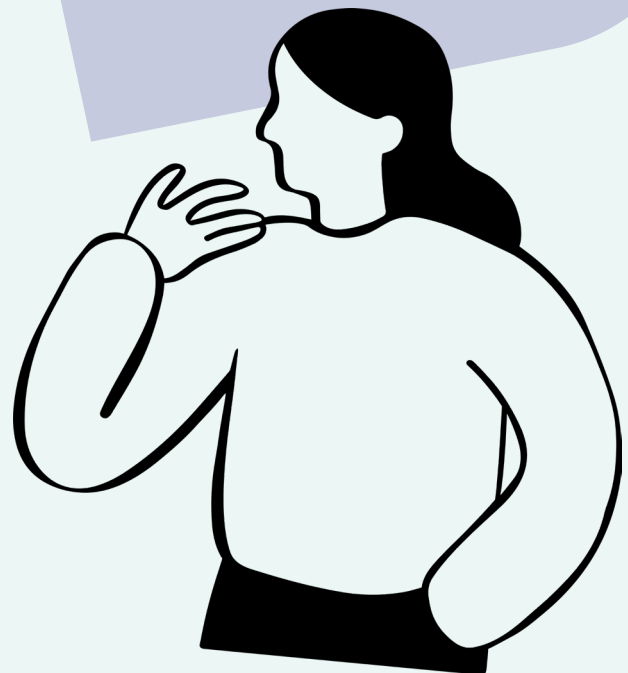
- submission of written evidence illustrating core competencies in practice, and
- contact with your employer to verify and discuss this evidence, and
- participation in a face-to-face interview with a SWRB SA Assessor.

Eligible PEP applicants will be provisionally registered while they work through the competence assessment process. Once they pass the competence assessment, they will be fully registered, entitling them to use the title social worker.

Aaliyah has worked in community services for 8 years delivering social work services to families within her community. She has obtained a Certificate IV in Youth Work and a Diploma in Community Service. Aaliyah has worked in many roles and is known by her colleagues and clients as a social worker.

Aaliyah is eligible for the Practice Experience Pathway because of her experience undertaking social work services.

Aaliyah will be provisionally registered to continue working in social work services while she completes the competency assessment process. She may refer to herself as a 'provisionally registered social worker' at work and in her dealings with the community but cannot use the title of social worker until she has completed the PEP and attained full registration.



Categories of Registration

Provisional Registration

The Qualification and Experience Pathway (QEP) enables people who are currently delivering social work services to obtain provisional registration while undertaking study towards a prescribed social work qualification.

Eligibility for QEP requires applicants to:

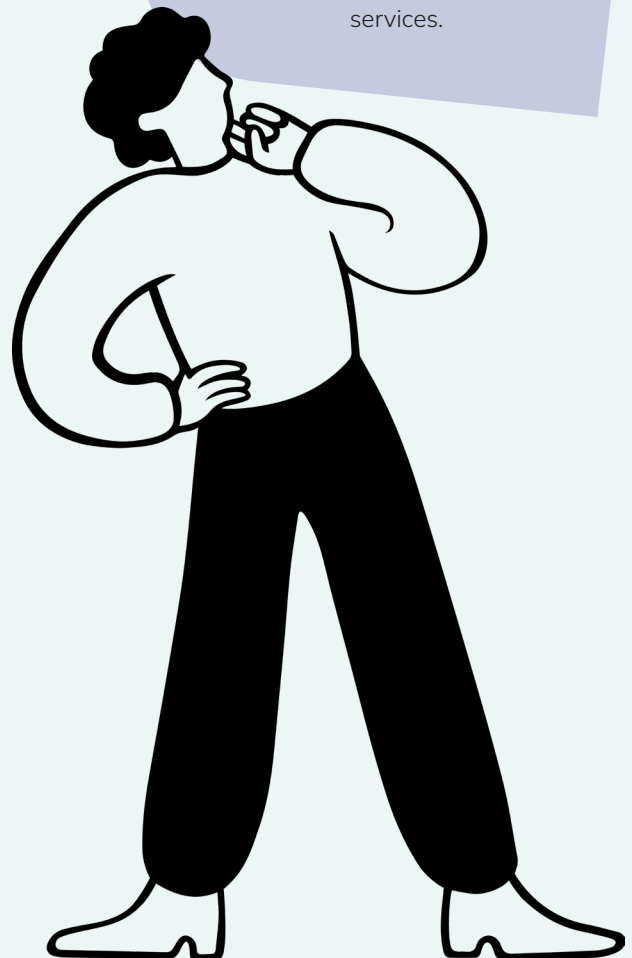
- be currently employed undertaking social work services as defined by the SWRB SA, and
- have employer endorsement, and
- have one year (or full-time equivalent) experience undertaking social work services obtained in the 20 years prior to application, and
- be enrolled in a prescribed qualification, and
- meet the general eligibility criteria.

Eligible QEP applicants will be provisionally registered and able to continue their work in social work services using the title 'provisionally registered social worker' while completing their qualification. Once they complete their qualification, they can apply for full registration.

Chris has been employed in a family violence service for 3 years. They undertake work described in the definition of social work services and have a Diploma of Community Services. Chris is enrolled in a prescribed Bachelor of Social Work qualification and has completed two topics while studying part-time.

Chris is eligible for the QEP because they are enrolled in a prescribed qualification and have met all other requirements.

Chris will be provisionally registered while they complete their Bachelor of Social Work and remain working within the definition of social work services.



Categories of Registration

Limited Registration

Limited Registration

Limited registration is designed to mitigate the impact of regulation on the human services sector by enabling existing employees to continue to work within social work services. Limited registration is available for individuals who are not eligible for the PEP and/or do not wish to undertake a prescribed qualification. Those with limited registration will be subject to additional conditions prescribed by the SWRB SA.

Eligibility for limited registration requires applicants to:

- be currently employed undertaking social work services as defined by the SWRB SA, and
- have been employed in the delivery of social work services for at least one year (or full-time equivalent) obtained in the 20 years prior to application, and
- have employer endorsement for registration, and
- meet the general eligibility criteria.

Limited registration will be reviewed every three years to determine whether the grounds for this category of registration remain. Those with limited registration will also be supported to transition to full registration, should they wish to do so. They can apply for provisional registration once they are enrolled in the required qualification or have accumulated sufficient practice experience to be eligible for the PEP.

The availability of limited registration will also support the sector in maintaining workforce capacity by enabling the continued employment of staff in social work services where positions cannot be filled by a full or provisionally registered social worker/s.



Non-Practising Registration

A person who holds non-practising registration as a social worker under this Act must not undertake social work services. Non-practising registration will therefore become an option for those who have held a full annual certificate of registration once the first annual renewal commences.

A person is eligible to hold non-practising registration as a social worker under the Act if the person:

- (a) holds or has held general registration as a social worker under this Act; and
- (b) is a suitable person to hold non-practising registration as a social worker.

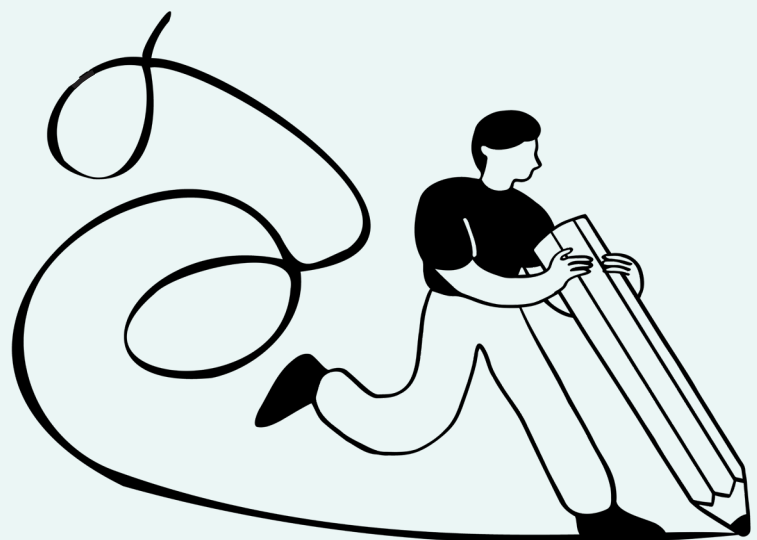
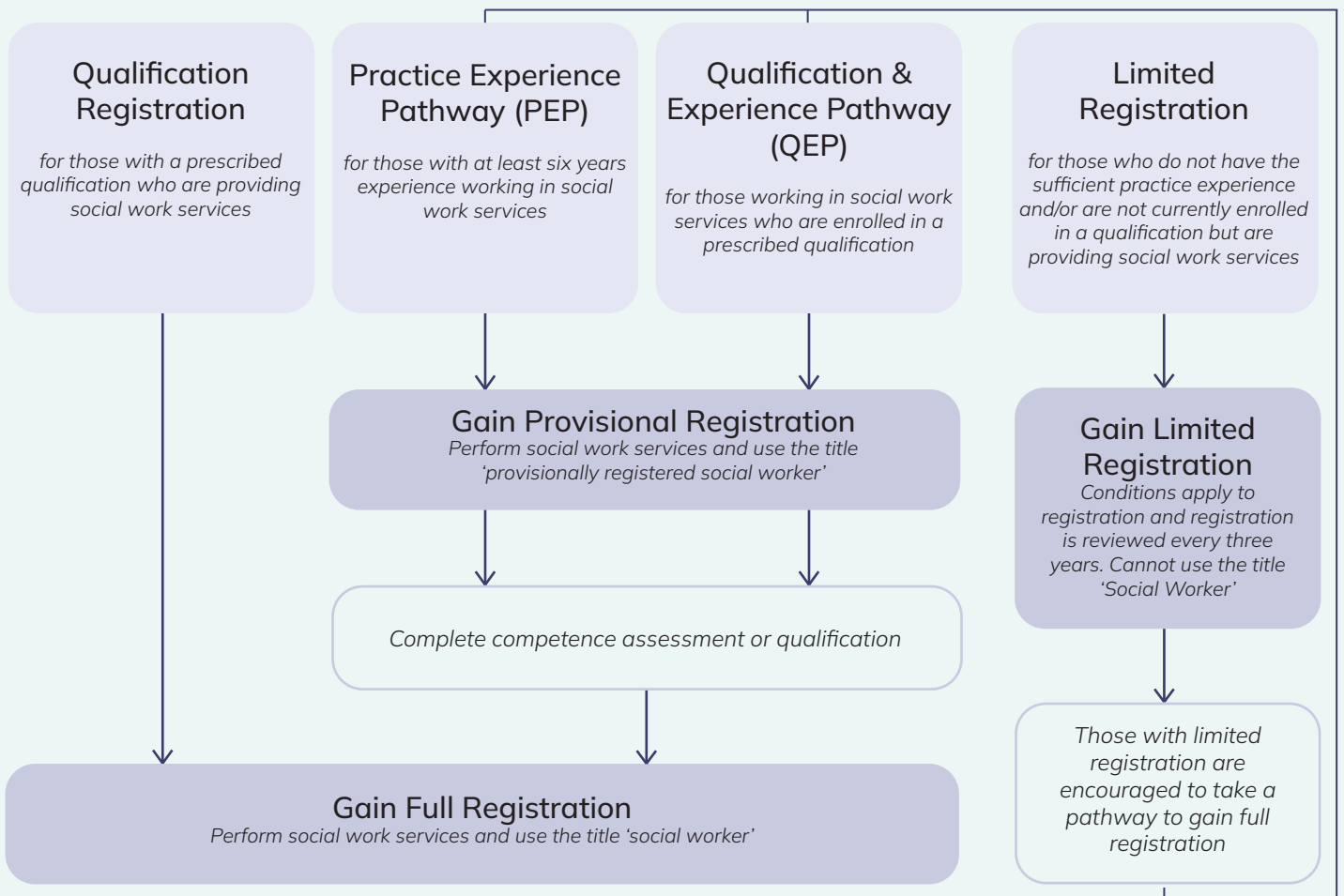
Sharnee has worked within the scope of practice for several years. As her career has progressed, she has been given more responsibility, is working with increased complexity and, over the past fifteen months, has found herself working within the definition of social work services.

Sharnee wants to continue in this role but is neither in a position to take on studies for the QEP nor, given her limited experience, is she eligible for the PEP.

To continue working in her current role, Sharnee, with the support of her employer, will need to apply for limited registration. She knows that in the future she may become eligible for the PEP and/or she may choose to start the QEP and move towards full registration.

Categories of Registration

Pathways & Timelines to Registration



Applying for Registration

Eligibility

The Social Workers Registration Act 2021 specifies the eligibility criteria for registration in Part 4 – Section 25. Your application will be assessed against the following criteria to determine whether you are eligible for registration with the SWRB SA.

Qualifications

To apply for full registration, ensure your qualification is accredited by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). The SWRB SA refers to these AASW-accredited programs as prescribed qualifications.

The SWRB SA will also honour courses that are now discontinued but were accredited by AASW at the time of award.

Overseas Qualifications

If you studied outside of Australia, your degree must be positively assessed by the AASW as equivalent to an accredited Australian social work degree to apply for registration in SA. You will be asked to provide a copy of your AASW Migration and Eligibility Assessment (MEA) Outcome Letter along with your overseas qualification.

Mutual Recognition with SWRB NZ

If you are currently registered with the Social Workers Registration Board New Zealand (SWRB NZ), you can register with SWRB SA under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act. You will be asked to provide a current SWRB NZ Practising Certificate and provide certain assurances.

Experience

If you do not have a prescribed qualification and are applying for provisional or limited registration, you must meet the experience criteria determined by the Board for the relevant category of registration. See [Provisional Registration](#) and [Limited Registration](#).

Working with Children Check

To be eligible for registration, you must have a current South Australian Working with Children Check conducted by the Department of Human Services Screening Unit. This is a statutory requirement for all applicants.

Criminal History Checks

Applicants must also provide the information necessary for the conduct of a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC). The Act compels the SWRB SA to request an NCCHC on your behalf which will be returned directly to the SWRB SA as part of the application process.

Applicants who have lived overseas for 12 or more consecutive months in the last 10 years are also required to provide an International Criminal History Check (ICHC) for their countries of previous residence. Applicants must apply and pay for their own ICHC using one of the SWRB SA's approved ICHC suppliers.

Any disclosable court outcomes that are returned to the SWRB SA may be used to consider whether an applicant is a fit and proper person.

Applying for Registration

Eligibility

Fit & Proper Person

To be eligible for registration, you must be 'fit and proper' to practice.

The Board is guided by the following principles when considering the requirements of a 'fit and proper person':

- the health, safety, and wellbeing of the public and the social worker,
- adherence to principles of human rights, natural and social justice,
- ethical decision making,
- public trust and confidence in the social work profession and
- cultural responsiveness and valuing of difference.

In assessing whether you are a fit and proper person to practice social work, the SWRB SA takes into consideration:

- your ability to communicate,
- your proficiency in the English language,
- your criminal history,
- your character and reputation,
- your implication in current or previous professional disciplinary proceedings,
- any mental and/or physical health condition/s that prevents you from performing the functions required to practise as a social worker, and
- anything else that might endanger public health or safety.

In your application for registration, you will be asked to make a series of declarations about your criminal history, issues of professional misconduct, and mental and physical health.

Providing false or misleading information is an offence and may lead to disciplinary action and/or prosecution.



English Language Proficiency

Applicants must be able to sufficiently comprehend and communicate in English.

- Applicants who have completed a prescribed qualification in Australia are assumed to have the English language proficiency necessary to protect the health and safety of the public.
- The SWRB SA accepts the AASW Migration and Eligibility Assessment Outcome Letter for the purpose of demonstrating English language proficiency for applicants with overseas qualifications.
- The SWRB SA accepts the SWRB New Zealand Practising Certificate for the purpose of demonstrating English language proficiency for applicants with overseas or New Zealand qualifications.

Applicants are not required to provide their English language test results with their applications as the above documents satisfy the SWRB SA requirements.

Applying for Registration

How to Apply

To apply for registration, you will need a MySAGov account. You can then access the SWRB SA Portal and open an account.

You will need the following documents to complete an application:

- Identity documents such as a drivers license or passport
- A current South Australian Working with Children Check
- Proof of your social work qualification (if applicable), being either a certified academic transcript from your institution using eEquals or a paper copy verified by a certifying officer (e.g. Justice of the Peace or similar)
- For recognition of an overseas qualification, the AASW Migration and Eligibility Assessment (MEA) Letter of Outcome
- For registration under the Trans-Tasman Agreement, your current SWRB NZ Practising Certificate.
- A current CV
- Details of your current employer
- If you have lived overseas for more than 12 months in the last 5 years, an International Criminal History Check (IHC) from an SWRB SA approved supplier

The application process will also require you to:

- Provide consent for a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check to be conducted
- Complete a Fit and Proper declaration

Once you have completed your application form, you will be asked to confirm that the information you have provided is true and accurate. You will then be prompted to pay initial fees.

You'll receive email confirmation once you've completed your application and will be able to track its progress through the SWRB SA Portal.

What Happens Next?

Once you have set up an account you can use the SWRB SA Portal to monitor your application. If the SWRB SA requires additional information to assess your eligibility, this will be requested via the SWRB SA Portal. A staff member will assess your application against the relevant eligibility criteria.

Outcomes of your application

Approved

If you are approved for registration, you will need to log into the SWRB SA Portal to acknowledge the conditions of registration and pay your annual certificate of registration fee. Your details will then appear on the public register on the SWRB SA website. If applicable, the QEP and limited registration ongoing assessment fee will also be paid at this point.

Approved with Additional Conditions

The SWRB SA may place additional conditions on your registration which are specific to you and your circumstances. If you are willing to proceed with registration with to the additional conditions, you will need to log into the SWRB SA Portal to acknowledge your conditions of registration and pay your annual certificate of registration fee. If, however, you are dissatisfied with the additional conditions, you should log into the SWRB SA Portal to request a Review of Decision within 28 calendar days of receipt of the outcome.

Refused

If the Board determines to refuse your application, you will be advised of the reason for refusal. If you believe this outcome is unreasonable or has been made unfairly or inaccurately, you should log into the SWRB SA Portal to request a review of decision within 28 calendar days of receipt of the outcome.

Applying for Registration

Fees

While the final registration fee structure is still under development, the Government is committed to ensuring that any costs are fair and affordable. The sector will be updated as soon as information is available.

Registration fees directly support the work undertaken by the SWRB SA. Fees are subject to automatic annual indexation (unless indicated otherwise) which will be applied to the previous year's amount and rounded to the nearest dollar.

There are three fee components that apply to all applications:

- Application fee,
- Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC) fee, and
- Annual Certificate of Registration fee.

An additional assessment fee applies for provisional registration and limited registration.

More information about registration fees will be released in due course.

Application Fee

The application fee is a once-off payment, required at the time of initial application (or upon re-application if your registration has lapsed). This fee is for processing your application, reviewing your documents, and setting up your individual application information in the SWRB SA digital registration portal.

Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC) Fee

This fee is prescribed by the National Police Checking Service (NPCS) for the conduct of a NCCHC. The SWRB SA will request this check on your behalf as part of the application process.

Annual Certificate of Registration Fee

The Certificate of Registration confirms that you are legally able to undertake social work services in South Australia. It must be renewed every year.

Applicants for provisional and limited registration will be issued a certificate of provisional registration, or limited registration as applicable. The certificate will clearly show your category of registration and the title you can use.

You are required to make an application for renewal one month before the expiry of your registration. The expiry date is 30 June each year for all registrants (unless sooner is specified on your certificate). This means that you must submit your renewal before the 1 June each year.

Assessment Fees

Assessment fees are charged to cover the additional costs associated with provisional and limited registration categories.

The assessment fee for the PEP covers the competence assessment to move from provisional registration to full registration. The non-refundable fee will be paid to begin the competence assessment.

The assessment fee for QEP and limited registration covers the additional ongoing assessment costs specific to QEP or limited registration and will be paid once-off when the first annual certificate of registration fee is paid.

Assessment fees are not refundable.

Applying for Registration

Fees

Consideration of Financial Hardship

The SWRB SA may adjust the payment of fees associated with registration if an individual is deemed to be in financial hardship.

Applicants must pay the application fee in full but may be approved by the SWRB SA for a 50% reduction on the Annual Certificate of Registration fee.

The SWRB SA applies the Australian Tax Office definition of financial hardship, as below, for this purpose.

You are in financial hardship if you are unable to provide the following for yourself, your family*, or other dependents:

- food
- accommodation
- clothing
- medical treatment
- education, and/ or
- other basic necessities.

This can be because of an unexpected event or unforeseen changes outside your control.

*The SWRB SA's interpretation of 'family' includes kinship responsibilities and other diverse family compositions.

Applicants should refer to this definition of financial hardship when outlining their circumstances.

Requests for consideration of financial hardship should be accompanied by a statutory declaration witnessed in accordance with the guidelines published by the Attorney-General's Department.

Requests for consideration of financial hardship must be submitted to the SWRB SA once the individual's application is approved and payment for the annual certificate is requested.

The SWRB SA will confirm the payment amount with the applicant in writing.

The SWRB SA expects that most considerations for financial hardship will be once-off, applying only to the current registration period. The SWRB SA will consider a consecutive application for financial hardship on a case-by-case basis, however further supporting evidence may need to be provided.

Non-payment of Fees

An applicant who has not paid the relevant fee will be unable to receive or maintain their registration. The SWRB SA may initiate collection proceedings for any unpaid fees.

Maintaining Registration

Conditions of Registration

Conditions of Registration

1. Working with Children Check

A working with children check must be conducted at least once every five years and it is your responsibility to ensure you have currency.

2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

You must complete and record the SWRB SA prescribed hours of continuing professional development, further education, and training.

3. Supervision

You must complete and record the SWRB SA prescribed hours of regular professional supervision.

4. Notification of Charges or Convictions

If you are charged with or convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, violence, or any offence punishable by imprisonment for 3 months or more, you must notify the SWRB SA in writing within 14 days.

5. Notification of Employment Changes

If you are dismissed or resign from employment due to allegations of unprofessional conduct, or in response to improper conduct relating to a child, you must notify the SWRB SA in writing within 14 days.

6. Completion of Courses or Experience

The SWRB SA may require you to complete specific courses or acquire certain experiences as a condition of your registration.

7. Service Restrictions:

The SWRB SA may impose conditions that restrict the services you may provide.

8. Period of Registration

The SWRB SA may limit the period for which your registration remains in force.

9. Provision of Further Evidence

The SWRB SA may require you to provide further evidence of your competence.

10. Audit and Compliance

The SWRB SA may audit you at any time to ensure compliance with the conditions of registration.

Penalties for Non-Compliance of conditions of registration

1. Failure to Notify the Board

If you fail to notify the Board of charges, convictions, or employment changes as required, you may be fined up to \$5,000.

2. Contravention of Conditions

If you contravene or fail to comply with a condition imposed on your registration, you are guilty of an offence and may be fined up to \$10,000.

3. False or Misleading Statements

Making a false or misleading statement in any information kept or provided under the Act is an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000.

4. Holding Out

Knowingly or recklessly using the title 'social worker' in a way that could reasonably be expected to induce a belief that you are a registered social worker, when you are not, is an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$60,000 or imprisonment for up to three years, or both.

Maintaining Registration

CPD & Supervision

Professional supervision and CPD are closely related. Supervision enables the identification of future goals and areas for development within the context of reflective, respectful and continuing conversations. CPD should be planned, rather than ad-hoc, respond to identified needs, and have a direct focus on building, strengthening and/or enhancing the social work core competencies.

CPD should be routinely documented and may be drawn on as valuable evidence should competence concerns be raised in the future.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

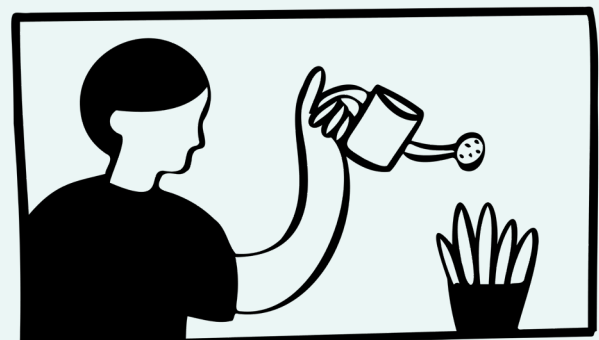
Maintaining currency and relevance of knowledge and skills is a key responsibility for registrants and critical for maintaining competence over time.

CPD also provides opportunities to broaden and strengthen core competencies and to build and maintain professional identity.

CPD can take a range of forms including structured and unstructured (or self-directed) activities in face-to-face or online settings. While it may relate directly to current practice, CPD can also focus on building and extending competence in new or emerging areas, ways of working and fields of practice.

CPD activities should address the core competencies and focus on maintaining currency, relevance and competence for practice. Examples of suitable forms of CPD may include:

- Employer provided professional development activities
- Post-graduate study
- Conferences
- Short courses or workshops
- Seminars and webinars
- Reading research outputs and/or publications and discussing with peers



Maintaining Registration

CPD & Supervision

Supervision

Professional supervision provides a safe, supported and professionally stimulating environment for critically reflecting on practice, competence and future growth. With an overarching focus on protecting public safety, and service-users in particular, professional supervision plays a critical role in promoting safe and accountable practice.

Professional supervision is not line-management nor is it operational in focus. Rather, the express purpose of professional supervision in social work is to generate reflective, critically informed, and practice-based conversations.

Supervision is a requirement for registration:

- Supervisors must be registered social workers with a minimum of 2 years experience.
- Supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring the competence and accountability of social work practice and services.
- Employing organisations are responsible for ensuring that registrants have protected time for supervision and access to appropriately qualified, registered and experienced supervisors.

Professional supervision should be informed by, and grounded in, the SWRB SA's key regulatory materials including the Code of Conduct and Social Work Core Competencies.

Record Keeping

Supervision should be documented and may be drawn on as valuable evidence should competence concerns be raised in the future.

To maintain registration, upload your completed CPD and Supervision hours and CPD details to your profile on the SWRB SA Portal. For SWRB SA auditing purposes you will also need to keep records of your CPD and Supervision for three years.

The regulations for the Social Workers Registration Act 2021 will contain further information on CPD and supervision, including the minimum number of hours that must be completed.



Information for Employers

Employing a SWRB SA registrant gives you confidence in their professional practice, competence and conduct. Your employees must be registered if they:

- are working within the definition of social work services, and or,
- are using the title social worker and or,
- are delivering social work services to clients in South Australia (either face to face or remotely).

As an employer, we encourage you to familiarise yourselves with the Act, so you understand your responsibilities, which include:

- Ensuring that employees undertaking social work services in organisations are registered with the SWRB SA.
- Ensuring that no unregistered person is 'holding out' as a registered social worker, or using the title inappropriately.
- Reporting to the SWRB SA any instances of dismissal or resignation for professional misconduct of an employee registered via the digital registration portal.
- Supporting registered employees to meet their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and professional supervision requirements as regulated.

The SWRB SA is committed to working closely with employers to support the transition to this new regulatory framework. We will provide guidance and resources to help you understand your obligations under the Act.

Conclusion

The SWRB SA is dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for social workers, service providers, and the community. By adhering to principles of respect, equality, and continuous improvement, the SWRB SA aims to enhance the quality of social work practice and ensure that services are delivered with integrity and professionalism, to benefit public safety.



**Social Workers
Registration Board**
South Australia



Government
of South Australia