

Caritas Institute of Higher Education

Qualification Recognition Review on Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)

THE FINAL REPORT BY THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Executive Summary

The Assessment Team (AT) appointed by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB or the Board) reviewed the documentation submitted, met with various stakeholders of the Programme and conducted on-campus visit to Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) on 5-6 January 2023 for the Qualification Recognition Review (QRR) of the Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) (Part-time) Programme (BSW or the Programme), based on which the following condition, commendations and suggestions for enhancement are made. The AT also recommends on the period of qualification recognition and student intake quota for the Programme.

The AT is of the view that the BSW Programme meets the standards and requirements laid down by SWRB in the *Principles, Criteria and Standards for Accrediting Qualifications in Social Work for Registration of Registered Social Workers* (7th edition), thereby qualifying its award holders for registration as Registered Social Workers for a period of three years from AY2023/24 to AY2025/26 subject to CIHE's fulfilment of the one condition made. The AT also recommends that the student intake quota be capped at 120 with effect from AY2023/24.

Condition

To ensure the quality of the Programme and CIHE's capacity to offer such a Programme, CIHE is to submit to SWRB, on or before the 31st of December of the Year 2023, 2024 and 2025 respectively, an Annual Programme Report which should cover various aspects of the Programme, including but not limited to:

- i. Progress on the improvement of the Programme Quality Assurance mechanism;
- ii. Admission information including actual student intake of the year; and
- iii. How various aspects of the Programme (e.g. individual attention to students, minima for persons providing professional teaching, etc.) comply with the respective criteria and standards laid down by SWRB.

Separate from the one condition, the AT has a serious concern about the calculation of the staff-to-student ratio during the review period, made two commendations, and afforded six suggestions for enhancement to the Programme. Details are as follows:

Serious Concern about Calculation of Staff-to-Student Ratio

The AT has a serious concern about the calculation of academic staff-to-student ratio (SSR) of the Programme. While it does not appear that the SSR adopted by CIHE has violated the relevant requirements set by SWRB, the AT considers that factoring in the number of students (class size) in the calculation of the full-time equivalent (FTE) of teachers while counting only the percentage of credits of social work courses may not reflect the actual staff resource input. Therefore, CIHE is strongly advised to submit in

writing to SWRB before commencement of the coming new academic year on the rationale for such calculation.

Commendation 1

The AT commends the senior management of CIHE for its commitment in attaching importance to the development of social work programmes, including the BSW Programme under review. In addition, the senior management has clearly demonstrated an aspiration for quality academic personnel to strengthen its social work programmes with a view to nurturing competent social work graduates to meet the needs of society.

Commendation 2

The AT commends the students for the enthusiasm and commitment displayed in the BSW Programme. Their pursuit of academic advancement in order to meet the increasing demand of the social work profession in Hong Kong is to be applauded.

Suggestion for Enhancement 1

Both English and Chinese Language courses should be further strengthened to ensure the contents and teaching materials cater for the professional needs of social work students in the field setting.

Suggestion for Enhancement 2

To ensure comprehensiveness of the fieldwork coordination system and seamless communication with fieldwork supervisors, relevant guidelines and contingency measures (e.g. those related to health emergency) are suggested to be included in the Fieldwork Handbook. In addition, any internal moderation with respect to the assessment of fieldwork (e.g. grade-point conversion) is recommended to be included also in the Fieldwork Handbook and be made known to students.

Suggestion for Enhancement 3

In view of the heavy workload involved in the overall development and implementation of fieldwork, CIHE should ensure adequate staff resources are deployed in the coordination of fieldwork placement.

Suggestion for Enhancement 4

Student assessment, especially for courses taught by part-time teachers and/ or by more than one teacher, is recommended to be administered and marked in a consistent and standardized manner. A mechanism should be in place to ensure the fairness of grading and/ or marking among teachers of the same course for enhanced assessment reliability.

Suggestion for Enhancement 5

To ensure progressive learning takes place, feedback on written assessments should be given in a timely manner so that students can benefit from the teacher's evaluation

before preparing for the next assessment. The sequence of assessments should also be made available to students at the beginning of the course.

Suggestion for Enhancement 6

CIHE is suggested to commit additional resources to reinforce clerical and administrative support for teaching staff so that more efforts can be directed towards programme development and the improvement of teaching and learning.

THE FINAL DECISION OF THE BOARD

The Board has resolved to accept the recommendations of the Assessment Team to recognise the qualification for a period of three years from 2023/24 to 2025/26 with 1 condition, 2 commendations and 6 suggestions for enhancement.