

## **School of Continuing and Professional Studies, CUHK**

### **Qualification Recognition Review on Higher Diploma in Social Work**

#### THE FINAL REPORT BY THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

##### Executive Summary

The Assessment Team appointed by the Social Workers Registration Board (the Board) reviewed documentation and conducted site visit to the School of Continuing and Professional Studies of CUHK on 22nd – 23rd November 2022 for qualification recognition review of the Higher Diploma in Social Work (HDSW).

##### Assessment Team's Recommendation

Assessment Team is of the view that the HDSW qualification has met the basic requirements laid down in the Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognizing Qualifications in Social Work for Registration of Registered Social Workers (8th edition); and recommends the Board to recognize HDSW qualification awarded by the School of Continuing and Professional Studies of CUHK, thereby qualifying its holders for registration as Registered Social Workers, for a period of four years from 2023/24 to 2026/27.

##### Commendations

1. AT appreciate SCS's effort in successfully fulfilling the basic requirements laid down in the new edition of PCS despite the challenges faced during this transition period for a self-financing tertiary institution in Hong Kong, and the difficulty in recruiting qualified teaching staff in response to staff turnover.
2. Students and graduates interviewed are generally satisfied with their study at the SCS. Students received good support from a small team of teaching staff in relation to both study and personal issues. Although they admitted there were occasional problems in SCS's administrative arrangement, including timetabling and library resources, SCS staff resolved the issues to their satisfaction. Communication channels, be it formal or informal, are well in place for students to provide feedback to SCS staff.
3. It is also found that there is well-established relationship between SCS and placement agencies. Fieldwork coordinators and supervisors worked proactively with placement agencies to support students' fieldwork practice. There are also mechanisms in place for matching students with placement units, and moderation and appeal mechanism on fieldwork grade.
4. AT appreciates SCS's effort in adopting necessary and appropriate measures in response to the pandemic. Various e-learning platforms have been utilized to facilitate students' participation in group discussion via online platform. Video recorded demonstration was allowed for students to present their skill laboratory project. External funding project has also been successfully secured in supporting SCS's e-learning platform. It was found that the standards of teaching and learning

during pandemic in the past years have been successfully maintained. Scores of Sub-degree Student Experience Questionnaire in the past two years remained stable suggesting that students' learning experiences were not much affected by the interruptions.

5. AT also appreciates SCS's effort in addressing some of the concerns arisen from the last QRR exercises. For example, there are improvements on IT infrastructure supporting students' e-learning and accessibility to CUHK library resources. An advisory committee is being established comprising various stakeholders, on top of the positive comments from existing external advisors. Besides, in response to recommendations 1 & 2 of the last QRR, the conceptualization framework regarding programme intended learning outcomes has been soundly revisited and in general well aligned with a variety of learning activities, assessment methods and rubrics.

#### Summary of Suggestions

1. To make proper record of regular review on updating of course outlines and course materials, and to ensure consistent understanding among teaching staff and adherence of course delivery according to the agreed and most updated evidence of social work theories and practices from time to time.
2. To revisit the curriculum in general, and teaching strategies in specific courses related to social work values and ethical practice in particular, so that the teaching of social work values and ethics are embedded in the whole curriculum, delivered in a pedagogically appropriate sequence, with valid and reliable assessment method assessing the attainment of competence in social work values.
3. To strengthen the connection with agencies in the field in order to widen the coverage of service nature of placement units to cater for a variety of students' learning needs.
4. To enforce students' awareness of the principle of confidentiality in fieldwork practice and to ensure completeness and proper records of signed consent forms on personal data recording and disposal.
5. To review the assessment method of all the courses in HDSW so that there are appropriate and balanced mix of different assessment methods to measure students' competencies in knowledge and skill. Possible changes include but not limited to adopting more continuous assessments to replace final examination, and reflective paper or skill-based assessment method to replace class participation in assessing practice competencies.
6. To review class and exam timetabling mechanism to facilitate students' learning; and to explore ways of further enhancing resources supporting students of HDSW including but not limited to securing more campus space for student activities and self-study; and expanding students' accessibility to wider coverage of e-learning resources of CUHK library and other sources.

## 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 four years from 2023/24 to 2026/27.