

# **Hong Kong Shue Yan University**

## **Qualification Recognition Assessment on Master of Social Work**

### THE FINAL REPORT BY THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

#### Executive Summary

Hong Kong Shue Yan University sought recognition of the new Master of Social Work (MSW) programme (full-time and part-time mode) from Social Workers Registration Board in January 2023. The qualification recognition assessment exercise is guided by the Board's *Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognising Qualifications in Social Work (Principles, Criteria and Standards) (8th edition)*. The Assessment Team appointed by the Board reviewed the documentation submitted and conducted an on-campus visit on 12-13 July 2023 to meet with various stakeholders of the programme to support the following recommendation. Taking into consideration the data gathered from the documentation, findings from the on-campus visit, views of the Board's Committee on Qualification Recognition, and the positive response made by Hong Kong Shue Yan University to the Interim Report of this qualification recognition assessment, the Assessment Team made the following recommendation for the approval of the Board.

#### Recommendation of the Assessment Team

The Assessment Team is of the view that the Master of Social Work (full-time and part-time) programme meets the standards and requirements laid down by the *Principles, Criteria and Standards (8th edition)*, and recommends that the Master of Social Work qualification be recognised, thereby qualifying its holders for registration as Registered Social Workers, for a period of three years from 2024/25 to 2026/27. In addition, the Assessment Team makes three commendations and six suggestions for enhancement with a view to further improving on the programme.

#### Commendations and Suggestions for Enhancement

##### *Commendations*

The Assessment Team commends the programme for:

1. Developing a social work programme vision that integrates digital and interdisciplinary collaborative social work practice. This has the potential to bring new value to social work practice.
2. Having a strong external advisory group that is a true champion of the newly proposed social work programme and the University's strategic directions.
3. The University's investments in technology infrastructure (including person power), combined with the resources of the Teaching and Learning Development Office, to realise the aims of a new social work programme that are aligned with the strategic goals of the University to reinvent digital education.

### *Suggestions for Enhancement*

The Assessment Team believes that the proposed programme has all the potentials and with the right implementation can have the impact on the vulnerable in Hong Kong society through innovative social work practice. Based on this, the Assessment Team has the following suggestions for enhancement:

1. Develop a clear narrative of the philosophy and epistemology of the MSW programme, especially on how the courses, research projects, university labs, field placement and supervision work are in synergy to produce a new generation of social work practitioners who are capable of integrating technologies with conventional social work practice and eventually transforming it in the present and for the future. This will be helpful in connecting the seemingly discrete projects, courses, field placement opportunities and university technical resources with glitzy technology. This will also help orient new faculty staff in the years to come.
2. Develop clear guidelines and policy procedures regarding who will be required to take SW100 *Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare*; when students will be informed that this is a requirement before they start the programme; what the criteria for pass/fail are; and any contingencies for those who fail the non-credit bearing pre-requisite course.
3. Given the diverse target group of students admitted to this programme, and the particular emphasis on using Pre-Placement Exposure (PPE) as a mechanism for levelling their basic social work practice skills and understanding of field placement, it is suggested that PPE be more intentionally designed. Outline clear objectives for each component of the PPE to align with the skills and exposure needed for the first and the second placement.
4. Draw on the diverse experience and background that the incoming students will be bringing to strengthen interdisciplinary training and learning.
5. Consider the external advisory group as a tremendous source of strength in connecting the educational programme with the practice partners in the field.
6. Supply of an innovative social work curriculum and new social work practitioners have to be complemented by strengthening the demand side, i.e. social service and other allied agencies. The Department should strengthen placement agencies' understanding of the type of innovative training being provided and where the opportunities lie for field placement to leverage the innovative social work training received by students.

### 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 2024/25 to 2026/27 with 3 commendations and 6 suggestions for enhancement.