

YMCA College of Careers

Qualification Recognition Assessment on Higher Diploma in Social Work

THE FINAL REPORT BY THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Executive Summary

This qualification recognition assessment is related to the Higher Diploma in Social Work Programme (Full-time & Part-time) [“HDSW” or “the Programme”] of the YMCA College of Careers [“YMCACOC” or “the College”]. It is an entry social work training proposed to be commenced in September 2023, with the full-time mode being two years and the part-time mode being three years. The assessment is guided by the Board’s most updated Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognizing Qualifications in Social Work (8th edition).

Relevant documentation of the Programme submitted by YMCACOC was perused. An on-campus visit was conducted on 23rd & 24th November 2022 with interviews held with senior management of the College, the Programme Team, potential fieldwork supervisors, potential placement agencies, the External Examiners, and the External Advisor. A campus tour was also guided to examine the facilities and resources supporting the teaching and learning of the programme staff and students.

Upon cautious deliberations of all data and with opinions from the Committee on Qualification Recognition of SWRB incorporated, the Assessment Team concluded in an Interim Report that qualification recognition might be approved to graduates of the Programme, for a period of two years for both full-time and part-time modes, starting the academic year 2023/24 under the following conditions:

1. The maximum quota of admission would be capped at 20 students per year per mode of the Programme.
2. A progress report should be submitted to SWRB by 31st December 2023. Its contents should cover the updated student numbers of respective modes of the Programme and updated teaching and administrative manpower as on 30th November 2023, with information on the qualifications and experience of the teaching staff. There should also be a confirmed membership list of the Programme Advisory Committee, and information on special issues encountered while implementing the Programme.

A pre-condition to refine and re-write the programme documentation was also posted, to be submitted on or before 30th April 2023, to ensure that it would serve as a solid guide for the teachers and students to steer the implementation of the Programme.

In addition, 14 suggestions for enhancement of the Programme were proposed. The next review of the qualification would be conducted in the academic year 2024/25.

The Interim Report was sent to YMCACOC on 31st January 2023 for response. An elaborative reply was received from the College dated 27th February 2023. The pre-condition and conditions YMCACOC HDSW 2022 (Final Report) 6 for the

qualification recognition were positively accepted. Suggestions for improvement of the Programme were well-acknowledged with intended changes and action plans described.

The Assessment Team is satisfied with the affirmative reply of the College and is pleased to confirm its recommendations to the Board for social work qualification recognition of the Programme graduates to register as RSWs, for two academic cohorts covering the years 2023/24 and 2024/25, under the pre-condition and conditions specified.

YMCACOC should notify the Board formally in writing as soon as possible of all major changes related to the Programme, which include curriculum contents and design, for necessary endorsement.

Recommendation on the Approval of Qualification Recognition

The Assessment Team recommends to the Social Workers Registration Board [“the Board”] that qualification recognition be granted to graduates of the Higher Diploma in Social Work Programme (Full-time & Part-time) [“the Programme”] of the YMCA College of Careers [“YMCACOC”] for social work registration, for a period of two years which will cover the cohorts of students admitted in the academic years starting 2023/24, with one pre-condition and two conditions attached:

Pre-condition:

To refine and re-write the existing programme documentation, to highlight the Programme characteristics to make it clear to the teachers and attractive to the target students, and to enhance its contents and presentation to become a solid guide to steer the implementation of the Programme, to be submitted to the Board on or before 30th April 2023. (Paragraph 8.2.3)

Condition 1:

The maximum quota of admission should be capped at 20 students per year per mode of the Programme. (Paragraphs 8.1.1, 8.1.2 & 8.2.1)

Condition 2:

A progress report should be submitted to SWRB by 31st December 2023, with contents covering the followings:

- (a) Updated student numbers of respective modes of the Programme as on 30th November 2023;
 - (b) Updated teaching and administrative manpower of the Programme as on 30th November 2023, with information on the qualifications and experience of the teaching staff;
 - (c) A confirmed membership list of the Programme Advisory Committee for the Programme; and
 - (d) Special issues encountered while implementing the Programme.
- (Paragraphs 8.1.1, 8.1.2 & 8.2.2)

During the period of recognition, YMCACOC should notify the Board formally in writing of all major changes related to the pertinent training programme, which include curriculum contents, design, and quota of admission, for necessary endorsement.

Summary of Commendations

Apart from the recommendation on the approval of qualification recognition, the Assessment Team is pleased to commend YMCACOC and its HDSW Programme on the below:

1. The mission and vision of CYMCA to develop the Programme to meet the needs of the society are impressive. Their commitment, internal resources and extensive network to support the Programme and the students are commendable. (Paragraphs 2.1.5 & 2.1.6)
2. The Assessment Team congratulates the College for being able to recruit a group of very experienced and enthusiastic fieldwork supervisors. With their passion and rich experience, they will be good coaches to support the students in their practice learning. (Paragraphs 3.1.3 & 3.1.4)
3. The Assessment Team recognizes the College for the arrangement of 20 students per class for all courses, except the language modules. Although it may be costly in terms of manpower input, the students can be better supported in both academic and personal aspects. (Paragraphs 4.1.1, 4.1.2 & 4.1.3)
4. The Assessment Team acknowledges the unyielding determination and commitment of the CYMCA to make the Programme feasible and successful, to train social workers for the profession as well as to create synergy across different segments of the organization, eventually benefitting the people of Hong Kong. (Paragraphs 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3 & 5.4.4)
5. The Assessment Team applauds the College for having appointed the Acting Assistant Chief Social Services Officer of CYMCA to be the Programme Leader to kick start the Programme. He is capable and experienced. His vision and commitment, network, ability and wit to lead, explain, elaborate and convince are notable. (Paragraphs 5.5.2, 5.5.3 & 5.5.4)

Summary of Suggestions for Programme Enhancements

YMCACOC is strongly encouraged to consider the following suggestions for assuring and enhancing the quality of the HDSW Programme:

1. To focus the Programme to be training for social workers at a higher diploma level so that the curriculum and other supports will be more specific and tailor-made for the purpose. (Paragraphs 2.1.3 & 2.1.4)
2. To review all syllabuses and re-write as necessary, taking into account the special needs of the target groups of students, specifying course objectives, refining teaching/learning/ assessment details, and aligning all module contents to avoid overlaps, for clear guidance for the frontline teachers. (Paragraphs 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 2.2.7 & 2.2.8)
3. To update the reading lists in the existing Module Outlines and to review them constantly according to societal changes and new academic and practice findings.

More indigenous publications by local scholars and professionals should be included to support the teaching and students' learning and practice. (Paragraph 2.2.9)

4. To review rigorously the module objectives and contents of HSW216 Youth at Risk to cover overall marginal youth issues and problems, and to align the module name with its deliverables for a comprehensive learning of the students on the subject to prepare them for future work. (Paragraph 2.2.10)
5. To incorporate mental health knowledge into different relevant courses such as HSW206 Working with Individuals & Families, HSW214 Working with the Elderly, and HSW216 Youth at Risk, to meet changing needs of the society. (Paragraph 2.2.11)
6. To pool the expertise of CYMCA and maximize its utilization to become special attractions in the Programme to support relevant courses, such as youth and sports, adventure-based counselling, recreational and mental health, etc., where CYMCA staff may serve as teachers and instructors. Course electives related to such expertise may be also considered for the Programme in a long run. (Paragraphs 2.2.12 & 2.2.13)
7. To update the curriculum contents constantly according to policy changes and emerging social needs. Knowledge related to new social work practices is suggested to be included, e.g., interdisciplinary collaborations, project-based social services, non-government-funded YMCACOC HDSW 2022 (Final Report) 10 initiatives, social enterprises, social housing, etc. (Paragraph 2.2.14)
8. To review the existing Fieldwork Placement Handbook critically and thoroughly, which may involve re-writing and elaborations on necessary parts, to ensure its comprehensiveness, appropriateness and effectiveness in guiding and supporting the students and the Fieldwork Supervisors in fieldwork placements. Scrupulous enhancement of its contents is necessary. (Paragraph 2.2.15)
9. To set up a Language Centre with full-time stationing language teachers to support the students in both English and Chinese, for course coaching and assistance in writing for submission of assignments. (Paragraphs 2.3.2 & 2.3.3)
10. To refine all feedback forms related to the Programme, and to have a graduate survey to collect data on their satisfaction level with the study and their employment situations, as well as to gather employers' feedback, for close reflection of limitations and specific needs to facilitate improvements in different aspects of the Programme. (Paragraphs 5.3.3 & 5.3.4)
11. To have a high-level person from the central of CYMCA coordinate among different units of the organization, to guarantee active and fruitful liaisons and resource mobilization in support of the Programme and its ongoing development. (Paragraph 5.5.5)
12. To devote extra efforts to strengthen the library resources and environment prior to the start of the Programme and to continue thereafter, to meet the basic

requirements for tertiary education with quality, to support quality teaching and learning. (Paragraphs 6.3 & 6.4)

13. To build and appropriately equip a student common room on the campus, where students may work, read, rest, relax and interact casually and comfortably, to meet the fundamental need of college life and cultivate their sense of belonging. (Paragraphs 6.3 & 6.4)
14. To dedicate incessant effort for continuous improvement of the Programme, in its curriculum contents, teaching strategies, and resources input in support of teaching, learning and student development, to establish a solid foundation for the Programme to move on and prosper, for nurturing quality social work professionals to serve the society and the people. (Paragraph 7.2)

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 two years from 2023/24 to 2024/25 with 2 conditions, 1 pre-condition, 5 commendations, and 14 suggestions for enhancement. The Board also accepted that the institution has fulfilled the requirement of the pre-condition.