

Social Workers Registration Board
Supplementary Explanation of the 8th Edition of the Principles, Criteria
and Standards for Recognising Qualifications in Social Work
(“PCS”)

(1) Small Class Teaching (“Individual Attention to Students” of sub-section 4.3 of PCS)

- (a) Section 4.3.1 states that “Tertiary Institutions (“TIs”) should provide ample individual attention to its students in nurturing them into professional social workers, that for courses embedded with subject areas specified under sub-sections 4.1.3(a) or 4.1.3(b), regardless of the weight of such subject areas in the courses concerned, small class teaching is required for not less than one-third teaching hours of such courses.” In operation, the requirement is not necessarily applied to individual courses. Tertiary Institutions can count the aggregate teaching hours of all courses under the said subject areas provided for students in each academic year.

Example 1:

In the academic year 2022-2023, TI “A” provides students of a Degree Programme of 4 cohorts with 12 courses specified under sub-section 4.1.3(a), for which the total teaching hour are 468 hours. According to the PCS, small class teaching is required for not less than one-third teaching hours of these 12 courses, which are 156 hours. These 12 courses can be arranged as follows:

Course	Total teaching hours of the course	Teaching hours of small class teaching
A	39	12
B	39	9
C	39	15
D	39	15
E	39	15
F	39	6
G	39	9
H	39	21
I	39	24
J	39	18
K	39	6
L	39	6
Total:	468	156

Example 2:

In the academic year 2023-2024, TI “B” provides students of a Diploma Programme of 2 cohorts with 8 courses specified under sub-section 4.1.3(b) for which the total teaching hour are 312 hours. According to the PCS, small class teaching is required for not less than one-third teaching hours of these 8 courses, which are 104 hours. Those 8 courses can be arranged as follows:

Course	Total teaching hours of the course	Teaching hours of small class teaching
A	39	10
B	39	12
C	39	18
D	39	12
E	39	0
F	39	39
G	39	13
H	39	0
Total:	312	104

- (b) Regarding sub-section 4.3.2, the “respective caps on number of students of each and such small class” is prescribed as the definition of the number of students for small class teaching, as mentioned in sub-section 4.3.1.
- (c) The administrative arrangements as mentioned in the Board’s letter of 24 November 2021 (i.e. a tolerance of a deviation by 5% to allow operational flexibility for various caps prescribed; and after rounding, the respective caps on number of students of each small class can be increased by one) is only applicable to the calculation of number of students in small class in individual course, but not applicable to the calculation for all courses based on the same subject area in each academic year (i.e., the explanation in (1)(a)).

(2) Designated Staff (Sub-sections 4.2.5(b) and 4.2.6(b) of PCS)

The definition of Designated Staff as indicated in sub-sections 4.2.5(b) and 4.2.6(b) is referred to section 1.1, i.e., Teaching Staff who are engaged by Tertiary Institutions to teach courses on subject areas specified in sub-section 4.1.3(a). Hence, the requirement in sub-sections 4.2.5(b) and 4.2.6(b) (TIs should ensure that, by headcount, not less than 40 percent of their Designated Staff members are under its full-time engagement), is not applicable to the social work subject areas not specified in the sub-section 4.1.3(a).

(3) Transitional Period (Sub-section 3.1 of PCS)

According to Section 3.1 “Applicability of the Document”, for all TIs with qualification recognition reviews conducted after 1 September 2022, TIs need to provide an action plan to the Assessment Team to comply with the new or modified criteria or standards if they could not completely meet the new or modified criteria or standards of PCS. The reasonableness of the action plan will be considered by the Assessment Team, among other factors, when deciding the period of continual recognition. Since the 8th edition of PCS was announced in 15 April 2021, the Board considers that TIs have already had more than 1 year to prepare for the implementation of the PCS, and the Assessment Team will take, at most, 2 years as a transitional period. Therefore, TIs with qualification recognition reviews to be held in 2022-2023 academic year should completely meet the 8th edition of PCS on 1 September 2024 at the latest.

9 August 2022

(English version prevails over Chinese version if there is any discrepancy.)