

Social Workers Registration Board
2nd Supplementary Explanation of the 8th Edition of the Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognising Qualifications in Social Work (“PCS”)

Pilot Scheme on the Recognition of Non-local Social Work Qualifications

Section 5 of the PCS stipulates the mechanism for recognising offshore and non-local social work qualifications. At its 205th Meeting, the Board resolved to implement a Pilot Scheme for recognising such qualifications in response to regional developments in social work education.

1. Eligibility for Application

Under the Pilot Scheme, applications for recognition are confined to eligible tertiary institutions and social work qualifications below.

Eligible Tertiary Institutions (TIs)

TIs in Hong Kong either (i) established under its respective ordinance or (ii) registered under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320), that currently offer recognised social work qualifications in Hong Kong.

Eligible Social Work Qualifications

- (i) Social work qualifications awarded by eligible TIs (with or without a joint award conferred by another institution), where the programmes leading to the qualifications are delivered within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) but outside Hong Kong SAR; or
- (ii) Social work qualifications awarded solely or jointly by non-Hong Kong institutions, where the programmes leading to the qualifications are co-delivered by an eligible TI within the GBA.

Remark: The above eligibility for TIs applies throughout the Pilot Scheme. If the TI concerned no longer delivers a local social work qualification recognised by the Board, any non-local social work qualification delivered by the TI will no longer be eligible for the subsequent qualification recognition review.

2. Process and Standards

- (i) An initial application stage will be introduced before the formal qualification recognition assessment process begins, and the process and standards of the qualification recognition assessment and review follow the current PCS, with adaptations, if needed, to address non-local delivery contexts.

Initial Application Stage

- (ii) Discretion may be applied to requirements that cannot reasonably be met because of geographical constraints. For example, fieldwork placements may be conducted entirely outside Hong Kong.
- (iii) Where eligible TIs opt to apply for the above discretion, they must submit the scope and details of the adaptations sought, together with concrete and practicable alternative arrangements, as part of their initial applications.

- (iv) The Committee on Qualification Recognition will review and determine whether such discretion should be recommended to the Board for approval, with the aim of ensuring that the quality of the qualifications reaches the stipulated standards.
- (v) It should be noted that any approval granted by the Board is, in principle, for eligible TIs to commence the qualification recognition assessment and review process. The appointed Assessment Team (AT) will be responsible for examining the alternative arrangements proposed for the adaptations sought, as well as other criteria and standards stipulated in the PCS. Where the quality of the qualification, including the alternative arrangements, are found to be unsatisfactory, the AT may recommend non-approval to the Board.
- (vi) The procedural differences between the existing assessment and review process and the Pilot Scheme are illustrated in the workflow in the Appendix.

3. Operational Arrangements and Additional Cost

On-campus Visits

The AT may adopt a hybrid approach when conducting the assessments and reviews, but at least half of the AT members must participate in person, with the remainder joining online.

Additional Cost

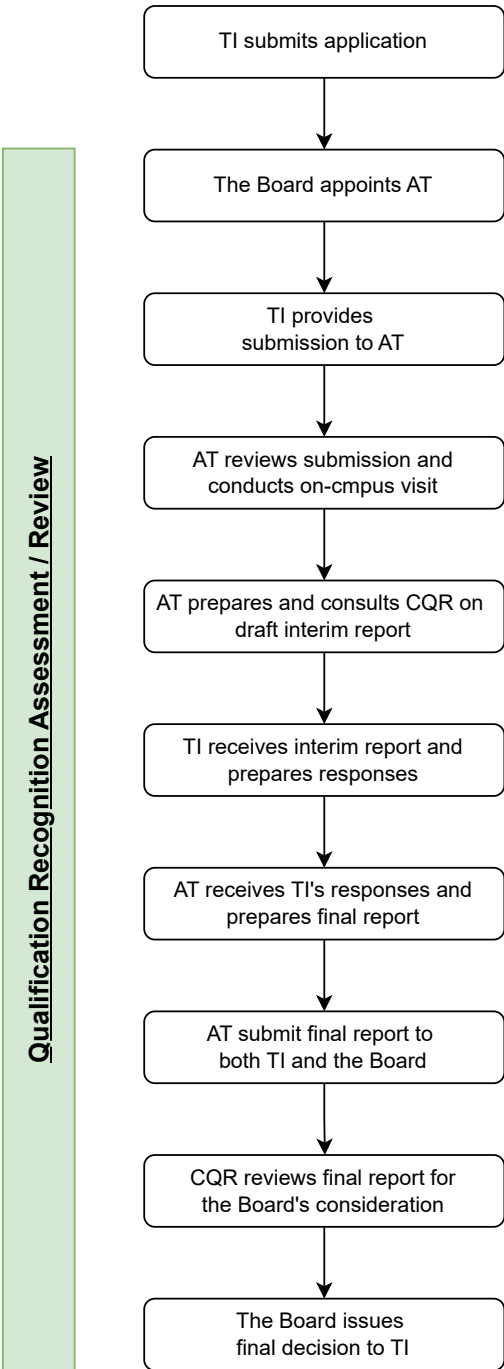
Owing to the increased workload and travelling expenses, the fee for assessments under the Pilot Scheme will exceed that for local programmes. The additional costs will be borne by the eligible TIs and the amount to be worked out when initial application is received.

Issue on 1 May 2026

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

Workflow for the Qualification Recognition Assessment / Review

For Local Social Work Qualifications



AT: Assessment Team
 Board: Social Workers Registration Board
 CQR: Committee on Qualification Recognition
 ETI: Eligible Tertiary Institution
 TI: Tertiary Institution

For Non-local Social Work Qualifications

