Matrix showing the variations of requirements for the post-qualifying (PQ) and post-registration education and training in social work for the four UK countries

Originally prepared by SWAP (Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Social Policy and Social Work), with assistance from the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), Care Council for Wales (CCW) and the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

Updated in 2013 by the HEA in 2013 with assistance from NISCC, SSSC, CCW, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the College of Social Work (TCSW).

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<th>England</th>
<th>Northern Ireland</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Wales</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equivalence of initial qualification and eligibility for the respective registers of social workers</strong></td>
<td>A memorandum of understanding sets out a framework for the working relationship between the Care Council for Wales (CCW), the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) (collectively the Four Councils) in relation to the regulation of social workers and the approval of social work education across the UK. The Four Councils recognise:- • that an honours degree in social work or its equivalent is the contemporary level of threshold qualification required for entry to a Register across the UK for social workers qualified in the UK; and • social work training programmes which are approved by each of the other Councils in its respective country. This recognition allows social workers who have trained in any country in the UK to seek reciprocal entry to a Register in a different UK country to that in which they received their training.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hpc-uk.org/Assets/documents/10038BCDSocial-work-Memorandum-of-Understanding.pdf">http://www.hpc-uk.org/Assets/documents/10038BCDSocial-work-Memorandum-of-Understanding.pdf</a> For further information go to <a href="http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/regulators/socialwork/">http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/regulators/socialwork/</a></td>
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<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td>Since the General Social Care Council (GSCC) closed on 31 July 2013, post-qualifying social work education and training is no longer regulated. The only variation to this is Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) training</td>
<td>Health and Personal Social Services (NI) Act 2001 Rules: Rules for the Approval of Post Qualifying Education and Training in Social Work in NI 2012 (in final draft) Standards/Guidance:</td>
<td>Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 Rules/Guidance: Specific approved course fall under Rules and Requirements for Specialist Training for Social Service workers in Scotland 2005</td>
<td>Care Standards Act 2000 Rules: approved by the National Assembly for Wales 2012 Programmes forming part of the approved framework of</td>
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which must be approved by the HCPC as post-registration training. AMHP courses approved under GSCC have been transferred to the HCPC and there will be a rolling programme of HCPC approvals. HCPC have consulted and will publish criteria for approval for AMHP programmes in September 2013. See: [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000402D enc07-outcomesoftheconsultationoncriteriaforapprovingAMHPprogrammes.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000402Denc07-outcomesoftheconsultationoncriteriaforapprovingAMHPprogrammes.pdf)

HCPC and TCSW will carry out separate or joint approval/endorsement at the request of the university. AMHP programmes may require Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) approval. Endorsement for any continuing professional development (CPD) course from the College of Social Work (TCSW) can be sought voluntarily by HEIs, other education and training organisations, individual education and training practitioners and for specific programmes. HEIs may apply for endorsement for specific courses or as a CPD training provider. See: [http://www.tcsv.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/_CollegeLibrary/Reform_resources/BriefingOverarchingCriteriaEndorsement.pdf](http://www.tcsv.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege/_CollegeLibrary/Reform_resources/BriefingOverarchingCriteriaEndorsement.pdf)

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<tr>
<th>What is the new</th>
<th>None apart from AMHP regulated</th>
<th>Northern Ireland Post Qualifying</th>
<th>SSSC launched the Continuous</th>
<th>Continuing Professional Education and Learning or the wider approved post-qualification (PQ) framework must meet the requirements contained in the rules.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NISCC Arrangements for Candidate Enrolment, Progression and Awards January 2012</td>
<td>NISCC Requirements and Guidance for Approval within the NI PQ Framework January 2012</td>
<td>NISCC Standards and Guidance for Assessment in the Individual Assessment Route January 2012</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Framework for Education and Training Regulated by NISCC – Approval, Monitoring, Re-Approval and Inspection Arrangements for Post Qualifying Education and Training Programmes January 2012</td>
<td>The rules contain general requirements but also make provision for specific programme where the CCW wishes to be more prescriptive about level, volume, learning outcomes or assessment methods. ‘specified named course requirements’ can be set. These include the programmes forming part of the Continuing Professional Education and Learning framework and the Approved Mental Health Professional Programme.</td>
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### provision for PQ social work training?

Former post-qualification (PQ) courses may continue unregulated as part of general CPD provision (subject to internal and periodic reviews and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) oversight).

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) provides a CPD structure for social workers, and education and training provision may be linked to relevant levels in this. See:

http://www.tcsv.org.uk/professional-capabilities-framework/

### Links to post-registration training and learning? (PRTL)

At the point of renewing registration with HCPC, individual Social Work registrants are required to produce evidence of continuous professional development. See: http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/

Learning gained through HEI awards provides positive evidence of CPD but is not a specific requirement for re-registration.

TCSW provides for its members an electronic portfolio in the required HCPC format.

All achievement within the NI PQ Framework is considered relevant to PRTL. Those who have achieved two or more PQ requirements within the three-year cycle will automatically be exempt from PRTL audit.

NISCC registration rules 2011 require:

- Social workers in the first three-year period post AYE to complete a minimum of two requirements of the NI Specific Award within the registration period.

The rules further require:

- newly appointed first line managers to undertake training in professional


The NI PQ Framework was reviewed in 2012: Review of NI Post Qualifying Education and Training Framework June 2012. It made a number of recommendations for further development of the framework.

Programme of reform of the NI PQ Framework 2013-14 is being implemented that will see closer links between CPD and PQ recognition.

### Learning Framework (CLF) in December 2008.

This model is a continuum of professional development for the entire social services workforce, including formal and informal post-qualifying learning.

The Continuing Professional Education and Learning framework supports the national career pathway for social workers in Wales and defines courses for:

- newly qualified social workers
- experienced practitioners
- senior social work practitioners
- consultant social work practitioners

All social workers are required to demonstrate 15 days or 90 hours of PRTL. Guidance on this is available from the CCW website. PQ provides one way of demonstrating this, but it is not a requirement at present.

All newly qualified social workers must complete a minimum of 24 days or 144 hours of PRTL within the first 12 months from date of registration of which five days must focus on working effectively with colleagues and other professionals to identify, assess and manage risk to vulnerable people.

### general framework for approval of courses designed for qualified social workers.

The Continuing Professional Education and Learning framework supports the national career pathway for social workers in Wales and defines courses for:

- newly qualified social workers
- experienced practitioners
- senior social work practitioners
- consultant social work practitioners
<p>| How will training be commissioned? | On an individual, local authority or sub-regional basis. Individual social workers may also choose to pay for their own training and education course to gain further awards for career progression. | PSS training is commissioned by Health and Social Care Board. Commissioner sits on NISCC’s PQ Partnership (employers and providers) to oversee the implementation of the NI PQ Framework and agree gaps and priorities for development within the framework. All commissioned professional training can be recognised within the NI PQ Framework. | Any future training will be placed within the rules and requirements. Any commissioning process would be agreed in consultation with the Scottish Government. The Sector Skills Agreement and the process re skills gaps should enhance the potential for employers to commission what they feel are the gaps out-with those courses that the SSSC might approve. | Many PQ programmes can be commissioned by employers or preferably developed in partnership with a training provider. Aspects of the framework of Continuing Professional Education and Learning are commissioned by the Care Council. |
| What closing date | Closed | Registrations stopped on 31 March | March 2008 | Programmes approved |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Has been set for closure of existing arrangements?</td>
<td>2007, except for PQ1 which continued for another year. The final date for awards is 30 September 2010. The UK PQ Framework closed in NI in September 2010. The NI PQ Framework has been operational from April 2006 and will continue as the professional framework for social work.</td>
<td>under the 1997 requirements are now closed. Programmes under the 2007 rules continue to be approved under the 2012 rules.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will PQ consortia continue to operate after this date?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>What form do the new arrangements take?</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>NISCC delivers the PQ Framework through a formal partnership with social work commissioner, employers from all sectors and settings, and education providers. The PQ Partnership is a committee of council, chaired by a member of council.</td>
<td>Employer-led continuum of professional development.</td>
<td>The CCW approves programmes under the general rules and any specified named course requirements that may apply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What academic level has been set?</td>
<td>No mandatory level apart from AMHP which must be at PG Dip level or above.</td>
<td>The entire Framework is at M level. There are opportunities for both academic and professional awards.</td>
<td>Specialist training will be available from SCQF 7 – SCQF 11 (M Level). PLQ (SS) is based on these levels and the new MHOA award is set at Level 11.</td>
<td>All programmes will consist of or comprise modules capable of being built into qualifications at level 6 or level 7. The academic level of the different parts of the Continuing Professional Education and Learning framework is set by the Care Council.</td>
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<td>Is there a module that provides for consolidation of practice?</td>
<td>No, although many HEIs will continue to provide similar CPD courses. Graduates are eligible to register with HCPC having qualified and</td>
<td>No. This is covered during the Assessed Year in Employment (AYE) before candidates enter the NI PQ Framework. On completion of AYE social workers are then</td>
<td>There is a range of programmes for this purpose including child and adult protection.</td>
<td>Guidance has been produced on “Making the most of the first year in practice” for both social workers and employers (the</td>
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prior to practising. A voluntary assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) has replaced the NQSW programme, and includes key features, such as links to an appropriate level on the PCF, specified levels of support and workload. Some HEIs continue to offer an ASYE ‘consolidation module’ linked to the ASYE, and this may be the first stage of a higher post-registration award. The ASYE is not compulsory but was endorsed by the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) and is supported by the Government, Skills for Care and TCSW.

See: [http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/ASYE/WhatistheASYE/WhatistheASYE.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/ASYE/WhatistheASYE/WhatistheASYE.aspx)
and [http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/social/developing/b00211051/asye](http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/social/developing/b00211051/asye)

TCSW is proposing a quality assurance scheme for the ASYE.

There is no direct link between registration, regulation and the ASYE. Social workers are not required to complete the ASYE to register as a social worker. However, the learning undertaken during an ASYE can count towards a social worker’s CPD requirements.

required to enrol in PQ and undertake the NI Specific Award, either via an approved programme (e.g. the Initial Professional Development programme) or via the individual assessment route.


The Continuing Professional Education and Learning framework has a consolidation programme, (minimum 30 credits at level 6) to be completed within the first period of registration (three years). The programme has three elements with defined learning outcomes.

### Can other social service/care and professional groups access post-registration provision?

AMHP courses are open to:
- registered social workers
- nurses whose field of practice is mental health or learning disabilities
- occupational therapists
- chartered psychologists

Many HE programmes and/or modules are open to other professions.

Enrolment for a PQ award is restricted to registered social workers. A wide range of multi-disciplinary programmes are approved within the PQ Framework thereby offering professional recognition to the social workers alongside academic recognition.

The Continuous Learning Framework applies to the entire social services workforce. New specialist courses (e.g. MHOA) will allow modular access for those not pursuing the full award. In the Practice Learning Qualifications the rules allow for access by other professionals although the award they receive will have a different title. This is due to legislation only allowing SSSC to approve courses for social services workers who are either registered or for whom the register is open.

Yes, in some instances but potential candidates will need to check the selection criteria with the individual HEI. Generally, wide access is encouraged, but only social workers can be awarded a post-qualifying award in Social Work.

Some programmes such as AMHP will specifically target a wider range of professional groups.

### AP(E)L

**Accreditation of prior (experience) Learning**

Will be considered under higher education institution (HEI) standard procedures (not regulated).

Arrangements are in place to offer recognition of both experiential learning (AP(E)L) and certificated learning (AP(C)L) within the NI PQ Framework.

Any new developments under the rules will need to fit within SCQF and to include Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Recognition of Prior (Informal) Learning and credit transfer.

AP(E)L arrangements are required by the rules for approval. All modules must have a statement of level and credit value as defined by the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales. A system of mutual recognition is being encouraged.

### What standards will awards be based on?

Evidence of CPD will be necessary for re-registration; the HCPC will randomly sample CPD portfolios from 2014. Standards for re-registration with the HCPC are at: [http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/standards/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/standards/). HE providers, social workers and their employers may also make reference to the different levels of the PCF to enable career progression.

Awards are based on the standards of the NI PQ Framework. Standards for approval of programmes and for assessment on an individual basis have been set by NISCC.

For SSSC approved awards, specialist standards are developed. The CLF includes a set of personal capabilities that are described across four stages of progression, enabling the monitoring of improvements in standards of practice.

All modules must reflect current research and evidence, the service user and carer perspective, current legislation and policy, the Welsh context of Social Work and the inter-professional context. Modules must indicate the relevant NOS.

Additionally, modules must reflect the social care codes of practice, provide the ability to learn and be
| **How will UK agreed national occupational standards be used?** | The PCF at qualifying level has been accepted as broadly equivalent to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for social workers.

AMHP is based upon National Occupational Standards for Mental Health (NOSMH) approved by Health Sector Skills Council.

Courses designed for particular groups of mental health social workers, for example forensic social workers or those who work in children’s and adolescents’ mental health services (CAMHS), will need to ensure they have fully embedded all relevant occupational standards in their programmes.

See also Mental Health Act 2007 and the Mental Health (Approval of Persons to be Approved Mental Health Professionals) (England) Regulations 2007. | The revised NOS have been mapped to the NI PQ Framework and the three PQ Awards. The revised NOS are compatible with the Framework.

All programmes seeking approval are required to demonstrate that the provision meets any relevant policy, requirements, rules and standards. This would include relevant NOS. | Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE) based on the NOS form the basis of the SW degree and are integrated fully in the CLF. References to NOS are made where appropriate when approving new specialist training courses. | The rules require an indication of which NOS are relevant at unit level. |
| **Arrangements for practice assessment?** | N/A apart from AMHP practice which requires supervision by an experienced AMHP. | Practice assessors are trained to assess at M Level. | This will be dependent on the course. We expect all provision to have a strong emphasis on the assessment of practice. | This will be dependent on the course being undertaken but the rules require a statement showing how assessment in practice is relevant to particular modules. |
| **Practice education** | The Practice Educator (PE) Professional Standards set out requirements for PE education and training and a timescale for implementation.  
https://www.tcsvw.org.uk/uploadedFiles/TheCollege_CollegeLibrary/Ref orm_resources/Practice-EducatorProfessional(edref11).pdf | Completion of the NI Practice Teacher Training Programme is required for all practice teachers. The programme provides the NI Specialist Award. | The Practice Learning Qualification (Social Services) – PLQ (SS) – has four stages equivalent to SCQF levels 7, 9, 10 and 11.  
The Continuing Professional Education and Learning programme for experienced practitioners includes a mandatory module on enabling others. This can contribute to a practice assessor qualification.  
Specified named course requirements for practice assessment and learning have been developed. |
| **External examiners** | Appointed by the HEI. | An external member is appointed to the NISCC PQ Partnership to oversee the standards of the NI PQ Framework. External assessors are also appointed to the PQ Approval Panel and the PQ Assessment Panel. Each of the PQ approved programmes has an external examiner. All externals contribute to the quality assurance process. | As in the rules, examiners acceptable to the SSSC will be professionally qualified and have expertise and experience relevant to the course provision.  
The EE is required to produce an annual report on the results of their evaluation. |
| **Making PQ courses relevant – user involvement** | Following consultation, HCPC has proposed a new SET from 2014 (subject to approval by council in 2013) requiring the involvement of service users and carers in programmes. The SET will be non-prescriptive with regard to types of involvement.  
http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000402Benc05-serviceuserandcarerinvolvementineducation.pdf | NISCC’s participation partnership is represented on the steering group for the Programme of Reform of the NI PQ Framework.  
Capacity building is being undertaken with the participation partnership to enable contribution to the PQ Approval Panel.  
The standards for approval within the NI PQ Framework require providers to demonstrate that a range of stakeholders, including service users and carers, must be involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of the course provision and in approvals. The role of service users is particularly important and this is evidenced in the design of the PLQ, which is structured to enable access and achievement by users and carers. The CLF assists individuals and employers to ensure that users and carers are fully involved in the planning and delivery of services and in the evaluation of the quality assurance.  
The CCW is also piloting service user and carer involvement in the quality assurance of programmes. | Service users and carers must be involved in the development and delivery of the programme. It must also be shown how they will receive induction and ongoing training to enable their contribution. The CCW is also piloting service user and carer involvement in the quality assurance of programmes. |
| **End of course recording – transcripts** | Follows HEI standard. | NISCC transcripts of achievement within the NI PQ Framework are issued on an annual basis to all social workers who have PQ achievement within the previous year. NISCC certificates for each of the three PQ Awards are issued on an annual basis and presented at a formal award ceremony. | In respect of PLQ this is supplied by the provider, including HEI standard where applicable. The MHOA follows HEI standard. | Students must be provided with a transcript of learning outcomes at the end of a module. |
| **International recognition of social work qualifications and PQ** | Prospective registrants from other countries should apply to the HCPC using their International Application Procedure. [http://www.hcpc-uk.org/apply/international/](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/apply/international/) | International Recognition Service (IRS) equivalency issues will have been considered at the registration stage. Any post-qualifying qualifications can be considered via an accreditation of prior learning (APL) process for recognition within the NI PQ Framework. | Needs to recognise the statutory differences while taking this into account. For example, for the MHOA – IRS equivalency issues will have been considered at the registration stage. Anyone registering for a course approved by SSSC either needs to be registered or currently eligible for registration in terms of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, section 44. | A process for assessing equivalence of qualifying programmes is in place for purposes of registration. |
| **Review and redefinition of social work** | Social Work Reform Board recommendations have gone forward to the College of Social Work. | The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Services (DHSSPS) published: *Improving and Safeguarding Social Wellbeing, A Strategy for Social Work in Northern Ireland 2012-2022.* The Strategy has identified ten strategic priorities under three areas:  
- strengthening the capacity of the workforce  
- improving social work | SSSC launched the *Continuous Learning Framework* (CLF) in December 2008. This model is a continuum of professional development for the entire social services workforce, including formal and informal post-qualifying learning. | Welsh Assembly Government document: [http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance/services/?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/socialcare/guidance/services/?lang=en) defines the overall direction, including a strong focus on the workforce. |
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<td>• building leadership and trust</td>
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