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# Preamble

## **Our vision**

Working together for professional excellence and social justice.

*AASW Strategic Plan 2018–2021*

## **Our purpose**

To promote the profession of social work, advance social justice, uphold standards and build capacity of members.

*AASW Strategic Plan 2018–2021*

## **Our commitment to reconciliation**

The AASW acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their families and communities, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we now all share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures that deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.

*AASW Code of Ethics 2020*

The Australian Association of Social Workers' vision for reconciliation is one of increased understanding and appreciation across the Australian social work profession about the histories and cultures of the First Australians.

*Reconciliation Action Plan November 2017–2019*

# 1

# Context and principles

## AASW principles and values

As in other jurisdictions, social work in Australia is a complex and wide-ranging profession. Social workers practise in a variety of roles with diverse client populations: in statutory and voluntary settings; in metropolitan, rural, regional and remote geographical locations; as employees; and as private practitioners.

The social work profession in Australia adheres to the definition of social work jointly approved by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) General Meeting and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) General Assembly (July 2014):

*Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>*

Informed by principles of human dignity and worth, social justice and fairness, social workers work with, and on behalf of, individuals, families, groups and communities to:

- enhance their individual and collective wellbeing and social development
- resolve personal and interpersonal problems
- improve and to facilitate engagement with the broader society
- address systemic barriers to full recognition and participation
- protect the vulnerable from oppression and abuse.

## The AASW as professional accreditor

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is Australia's independent national regulator of the higher education sector. The role of TEQSA is to safeguard the interests of all current and future students studying within Australia's higher education system. It does this by regulating and assuring the quality of Australia's Higher Education Providers (HEPs). TEQSA is responsible for the registration and re-registration of HEPs and the academic accreditation and re-accreditation of courses of study. It applies the Higher

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ifsw.org/get-involved/global-definition-of-social-work/>

Education Standards Framework 2015 (HESF)<sup>2</sup> for regulatory purposes that include a requirement for providers to oversee course approval and self-accreditation processes by peak institutional academic governance processes.

In the absence of a legislated regulatory framework in Australia, the social work profession is self-regulating. Over time, the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) has become the body nominated by members, HEPs and the broader professional community to set and maintain standards of professional conduct for social workers educated or seeking to work in Australia. Since 1998, the AASW has had a Services Contract with the Commonwealth Government, whereby the Government devolved assessment of international qualifications to the AASW.

ASWEAS does not seek to duplicate the role of these bodies and does not assess against the standards in the HESF. However, it does acknowledge the baseline acceptable requirements for the provision of higher education in or from Australia under the seven domains of the HESF.

The professional accreditation of university courses of study is intended to ensure that a course of study linked to a professional discipline equips graduates from that discipline to achieve the professional competencies and learning outcomes necessary for entry into the relevant level of professional practice.<sup>3</sup> The AASW acknowledges the new directions in the national accreditation processes encouraging flexibility and responsiveness to changes in the professional workplace. The accreditation standards aim to accommodate a range of educational models and variations in curriculum design and teaching methods, focusing first and foremost on HEPs demonstrating that students achieve learning outcomes and graduate attributes expected for entry-level social work professionals.

In meeting its responsibilities as a professional accreditor of social work programs, the AASW is guided by the principles of transparency, fairness and collaborative engagement with HEPs and other stakeholders. It acknowledges emerging good practices in accreditation, including the need to reduce the burden of accreditation processes on HEPs. To this end, the AASW is committed to an increasingly collaborative and collegial approach in working with HEPs with the aim of ensuring that graduate social workers are ready for professional practice.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639>

<sup>3</sup> Universities Australia and Professions Australia, Joint Statement of Principles for Professional Accreditation (2016, March), <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Joint-Statement-of-Principles-for-Professional-Accreditation.pdf>

## Context and principles

By mutual agreement with HEPs, since the 1960s the AASW has been charged with the professional accreditation of social work programs. The professional accreditation process has several purposes. These include:

- serving the public good by maintaining the integrity and accountability of the profession
- providing assurance to employers, government and the public
- delivering an independent quality-assurance process for evaluating social work programs provided by HEPs
- describing the base-level standard of practice that clients and service users should expect from social workers
- assisting student and graduate mobility, both within Australia and overseas.

The requirements for HEPs are set out in the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). These accreditation standards are, in turn, informed by the principles, values and professional competencies outlined in the *AASW Code of Ethics* (2020)<sup>4</sup> and the *AASW Practice Standards* (2013).<sup>5</sup>

Meeting ASWEAS standards ensures HEPs design and deliver social work programs that clearly equip entry-level social workers to practise safely and effectively, thus making them eligible for membership of the AASW.

These Accreditation Standards are informed by the principles, values and professional competencies outlined in the:

- *AASW Code of Ethics* 2020
- *AASW Practice Standards* 2013.

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4 <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/code-of-ethics>

5 <https://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/practice-standards>

## 2

# Graduate attributes, learning outcomes and assessment

Social work is a growing and rapidly evolving profession. The AASW seeks to ensure that the next generation of social workers is equipped for new and diverse roles in a changing workplace. The AASW recognises its ongoing responsibility to ensure that graduates are equipped for this challenging environment. The Graduate Attributes and learning outcomes specified in the ASWEAS are intended to ensure that entry-level social workers have the foundational knowledge, skills and professional attitudes necessary for safe and ethical practice across all settings.

**2.1** HEPs are required to show that assessment of students' professional knowledge and skills accords with the ASWEAS. They should be able to demonstrate that graduates have achieved:

- the generic academic Graduate Attributes specified at AQF Level 7 – BSW, Level 8 – BSW (Hons), or Level 9 – MSW(Q)
- the profession-specific Graduate Attributes identified in ASWEAS that address entry-level fitness for practice.

**2.2** The ASWEAS profession-specific Graduate Attributes (presented in full in Appendix 1) are itemised under the eight Domains of Practice specified in the *AASW Practice Standards (2013)*:

1. values and ethics
2. professionalism
3. culturally responsive and inclusive practice
4. knowledge for practice
5. applying knowledge to practice
6. communication and interpersonal skills
7. information recording and sharing
8. professional development and supervision.

The Graduate Attributes specify entry-level expectations of social workers against the Practice Standards listed under each of the Domain headings. Assessment of student performance against these eight Domains is central to ensuring that professional learning outcomes have been met and that the graduating students are equipped to practise ethically and safely as beginner practitioners.

**2.3** HEPs are expected to provide clear evidence that all academic units within the social work program are conducted and assessed at a level of English appropriate to a linguistically demanding professional workplace.

# 3

## Required curriculum

Social work graduates at all relevant Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels must demonstrate:

*a broad and coherent body of knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning.*<sup>6</sup>

To ensure that students graduate with the required profession-specific body of knowledge, social work programs are required to include the following curriculum content:

1. constructions of social work purpose, place and practice
2. power, oppression and exploitation
3. the history and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
4. culture, identity and discrimination
5. psychosocial health and wellbeing across the life cycle.

The teaching of each of these core curriculum areas must include explicit consideration of the immediate relevance to social work practice of the material presented to students. Teaching must also equip students with the skills, values and attitudes required for the effective translation of knowledge and understanding into professional performance.

Details of the required curriculum are presented in full in Appendix 2.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf-2nd-edition-january-2013.pdf>

## Introduction

Field education aims to provide students with a robust and fulfilling learning experience from which they gain a strong sense of professional competence and the confidence that they are ready to enter the profession. To achieve this outcome, providers will ensure that the field education experience is a collaborative endeavour between the provider, the student, host organisations and supervisors. They will also ensure that the focus of activities is on learning outcomes directly linked to AASW practice standards.

Field education is a distinctive pedagogy for social work education. It enables students to integrate classroom learning with professional practice so that students reflect on and refine their ways of thinking, doing and being. Field education socialises students into the profession through immersion in real practice contexts, while allowing a constructive and reciprocal learning space to develop. Students make sense of what it means to be a social worker by developing their professional identity, integrity and practice frameworks.

Supported by field education partners in practice settings, students achieve deep learning through the application of knowledge, reflection, feedback and critique of practice experiences. Through this process of engagement and refinement of their understanding of their role, and of themselves as professionals, they understand the complex, changing and ambiguous nature of practice. (Adapted from National Field Education Network Statement (2016))

TEQSA provides overall advice and guidance on the Higher Education Standards Framework (2015)<sup>7</sup> requirements that must be met by all HEPs.

The TEQSA Guidance Note on Academic Quality Assurance (2017)<sup>8</sup> requires that where course delivery involves other parties, such as learning in a workplace, providers must ensure that arrangements for supervision of students are quality assured, and in particular that care must be taken that students are not subject to indifferent supervision or left to fend for themselves resulting in poor learning outcomes and/or loss of well-being. The TEQSA Guidance Note on Work Integrated Learning (2017)<sup>9</sup> provides further information on the intent of the standards and risks to quality. The ASWEAS Field Education Standards aim to complement the national standards without duplicating them.

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7 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639>

8 <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-academic-quality-assurance>

9 <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-work-integrated-learning>

#### **4.1 Field education learning experiences will enable graduates to demonstrate their ability to meet AASW practice standards across a range of diverse client groups and environments.**

- 4.1.1 Students will complete 1,000 hours of professional practice learning involving no more than three placements.
- 4.1.2 At least two placements will involve distinctly different practice learning experiences.
- 4.1.3 At least 500 hours of placement experience must be undertaken in Australia.
- 4.1.4 No placement will be less than 250 hours.
- 4.1.5 500 hours of placement time will be undertaken in a direct practice role involving the application of professional interpersonal skills.
- 4.1.6 Students will complete at least one placement in a professional practice setting with an onsite social work field educator.
- 4.1.7 Students in employment will not have a placement in their current work role or under their current supervisor.
- 4.1.8 All placements will involve the active involvement of the student in social work roles.

#### **4.2 The scope of assessment of field education activities will cover all learning outcomes required to ensure graduates are safe, ethical and competent to practise.**

- 4.2.1 The assessment tasks will be designed and implemented using a range of agreed assessment strategies with contributions from all parties involved in the placement.
- 4.2.2 Contemporary, evidence-informed assessment activities are used, including direct observation of the student in academic and practice education settings.
- 4.2.3 Assessment of student performance on placements will provide clear evidence that they have achieved the specified learning goals and performance standards required.

### **4.3 The contributions of the classroom and field settings are clearly integrated and reflect the philosophy and purpose of the program.**

- 4.3.1 Each placement will have the status of at least one full academic subject.
- 4.3.2 Each placement will be accompanied by a HEP program of structured learning activities focused on integrating theory and practice.
- 4.3.3 The HEP program of practice–theory integration activities may be included within the required hours of the placement up to a maximum of 7 hours per 250 hours of placement, with a maximum of 28 hours across all field education placements.
- 4.3.4 Placements will be undertaken over at least two years of the professional social work program of study.
- 4.3.5 Students will successfully complete prescribed academic prerequisites prior to and between each placement.

### **4.4 A Field Education Unit will be responsible for the quality, conduct and integration of the field education program within the social work program.**

- 4.4.1 The Field Education Unit will have an appropriate level of staffing and administrative support dedicated to the management of partnerships and the student experience.
- 4.4.2 The HEP will appoint a Field Education Unit Academic Lead with responsibilities for leadership, research and educational innovation in field education.
- 4.4.3 The Academic Lead must be appointed at Level B or above, a qualified social worker with at least five years post-qualifying experience and eligible for membership of the AASW.
- 4.4.4 The HEP will appoint one or more staff as designated Field Education Coordinator(s) with responsibility for ensuring that all placements meet ASWEAS requirements for student learning outcomes.
- 4.4.5 The Field Education Coordinator (s) will have a minimum of five years (FTE) of post-qualifying practice experience and be eligible for membership of the AASW.

#### **4.5 All participants involved in field education experiences will be provided with timely induction, training and support processes.**

- 4.5.1 For each placement a Field Education Liaison Officer (FELO) will be appointed to provide oversight and support for the student and Field Educator.
- 4.5.2 The FELO will be on a permanent or contract appointment, with a minimum of five years full-time, post-qualifying practice experience, and eligible for membership of the AASW.
- 4.5.3 The FELO will meet with the student and Field Educator at least twice during the placement on-site or online face-to-face meeting.
- 4.5.4 The Field Educator will be the primary supervisor of the student during the placement with direct responsibility for the assessment of the learning outcomes from the experience.
- 4.5.5 Field Educators will be qualified social workers with a minimum of two years (FTE) post-qualifying practice experience and eligible for membership of the AASW.
- 4.5.6 Field Educators will provide a minimum of 1.5 hours of formal, structured supervision of students during every 35 hours of placement, at least half of which is on a one-to-one basis.
- 4.5.7 Externally appointed Field Educators will meet the same requirements, have the same role responsibilities, level of oversight and support, as those employed in agency-based positions.

#### **4.6 Students and Field Educators will have the information they need to fully engage in the field education experience.**

- 4.6.1 A Field Education Manual will provide all participants with a detailed framework and administrative arrangements for placements, including attendance and assessment requirements, and roles and responsibilities of all parties.
- 4.6.2 The Manual will include a Learning Management Plan with the learning goals and performance expectations of students specified for each placement according to the AASW Practice Standards and ASWEAS General and Profession-Specific Graduate Attributes.

#### **4.7 The conditions under which work experience may be recognised as credit for prior learning will ensure that students can achieve the learning outcomes of the program.**

- 4.7.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) can be used only for part or all of the first placement.
- 4.7.2 A student who is approved for RPL must undertake a final placement in an organisation that provides onsite supervision by a qualified social worker.
- 4.7.3 The student must have worked for at least the equivalent of three full-time years in a setting deemed appropriate as a field education setting required for a first placement student and demonstrate competencies against AASW practice standards.
- 4.7.4 At least the final year of the student's work experience will be within three years of applying for RPL.
- 4.7.5 Assessment of applications for prior learning will be undertaken by a social worker eligible for AASW membership with at least five years post-qualifying experience including as a Field Educator of students on first placement.

#### **4.8 Field placements undertaken overseas will provide a student experience of equivalent quality to that of an Australian setting and will meet all ASWEAS requirements.**

- 4.8.1 Direct responsibility for the placement and onsite supervision will be assigned to a qualified social worker.
- 4.8.2 The supervisor will have a minimum of two years of practice experience and be eligible for membership either the AASW or the equivalent professional association.
- 4.8.3 The onsite placement will be managed in conjunction with an appropriate in-country auspice such as an in-country accredited social work education program.
- 4.8.4 The program provider must appoint a staff member to liaise directly with their international counterpart.

# 5

# Degree requirements and admissions

## Meeting the requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework

Under TEQSA, Australian social work programs are academically accredited to award degrees at Level 7 (Bachelor), 8 (Honours) and 9 (Master) of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Degree titles are respectively:

- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)
- Bachelor of Social Work with Honours (BSW (Hons))
- Master of Social Work (Qualifying) (MSW(Q)).

Unless precluded by the regulations of their HEP, master's degrees should apply the terminology Master of Social Work (Qualifying) to differentiate them from programs offering advanced social work degrees by research.

Regardless of academic status, graduates of all social work programs are professionally qualified as entry-level social workers.

Where the HEP offers multiple social work programs at different AQF levels, these will be separately accredited.

## Acknowledging the accreditation status of programs

The AASW requires that all HEP publications and marketing material correctly and prominently display the following acknowledgement of accreditation for each accredited program:

*This is an AASW-accredited qualification. It is an entry qualification into the social work profession and has been determined to meet the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards.*

HEP publications and marketing material should make explicit the level of accreditation awarded to a social work program: Provisional, Full or Conditional.

## 5.1 Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Social Work (Hons)

Bachelor programs combine an academic social and behavioural science curriculum with social work specific professional education. Programs are accredited on the assumption that graduates are able to meet the criteria for membership of the AASW.

BSW and BSW (Hons) graduates are required to complete:

Four years full-time of a Bachelor of Social Work degree at AQF Level 7 or 8, or its part-time equivalent, that includes at least one year of full-time studies in the social and behavioural sciences. A four-year program may include an embedded Honours program in accordance with AQF Level 8.

OR

Two years full-time of a Bachelor of Social Work degree at AQF Level 7 or 8, or its part-time equivalent, following a minimum of two years of a relevant undergraduate degree that includes at least one year of full-time studies in the social and behavioural sciences.

## 5.2 Admission requirements: BSW and BSW (Hons)

5.2.1 Applicants for BSW and BSW (Hons) programs must meet the entry requirements as specified by the HEP and consistent with the requirements for admission to AQF Level 7 or 8 degree courses'

The Higher Education Standards Framework notes that:

*Admissions policies, requirements and procedures are ... designed to ensure that admitted students have the academic preparation and proficiency in English needed to participate in their intended study, and no known limitations that would be expected to impede their progression and completion. (HESF 2015 Admission 1.1)*

Social work students require a sufficient level of English to enable them to engage in agency-based learning with vulnerable peoples.

5.2.2 To be accepted into the program, international students who have not completed a Year 12 or equivalent secondary school level qualification or higher qualification in the English language consistent with the requirements for admission to AQF Level 7 degree courses in Australia must have a minimum score of 7.0 or higher in each component (listening, reading, writing and speaking) of the Academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, or equivalent, upon application.

### 5.3 Credit transfer: BSW and BSW (Hons)

The standards on credit transfer policies and related procedures of HEPs are covered by the national compliance requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (including the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy)<sup>10</sup>, the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 and the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS).<sup>11</sup> The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy notes that credit decisions must ensure that integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained and that there is consistency, fairness and transparency in the decision-making process.

Although recognising the autonomy of HEPs, the AASW considers that once requested by a HEP to accredit a program, the AASW has a responsibility to the public, to students and to its members to confirm that credit decisions ensure that the integrity of social work programs and qualification outcomes is maintained.

- 5.3.1 HEPs should ensure that all students undertake the core elements of the program. To meet the ASWEAS accreditation requirements all students must complete all core social work subjects. Students cannot be exempted from these core social work subjects on the basis of the qualification that led to their initial acceptance into the program.
- 5.3.2 Students transferring from one AASW accredited program to another of the same AQF level, will get credit for equivalent courses up to the maximum credit allowed by a HEP.

### 5.4 Master of Social Work (Qualifying)

The AASW supports diversity and innovation in approaches to Master of Social Work programs, which are configured in a variety of ways. These programs typically attract applicants who have undertaken prior study in the social sciences, social welfare, psychology, or related fields and who also have relevant prior learning experiences. MSW(Q) graduates are required to complete two years full-time of a Master of Social Work degree at AQF Level 9 or its part-time equivalent.

### 5.5 Admission requirements: MSW(Q)

- 5.5.1 Students admitted to the MSW(Q) are required to have completed a relevant three-year AQF Level 7 degree course that contains at least one year, or the equivalent, of full-time studies in the social and behavioural sciences.
- 5.5.2 To be accepted into the program, international students who have not completed a Year 12 or equivalent secondary school level qualification or higher qualification in the English language consistent with the requirements for admission to an AQF Level 9 degree course in Australia must have a minimum score of 7.0 or higher in each component (listening, reading, writing and speaking) of the Academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, or equivalent, upon application.

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10 AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy [https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf\\_pathways\\_jan2013.pdf](https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf_pathways_jan2013.pdf)

11 Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A00757>

## 5.6 Credit transfer: MSW(Q)

The standards on credit transfer policies and related procedures of HEPs are covered by the national compliance requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) (including the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy)<sup>10</sup>, the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 and the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS).<sup>11</sup> The AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy notes that credit decisions must ensure that integrity of qualification outcomes is maintained and that there is consistency, fairness and transparency in the decision-making process.

Although recognising the autonomy of issuing organisations, the AASW considers that once requested by a HEP to accredit a program, the AASW has a responsibility to the public, to students and to its members to confirm that credit decisions ensure that the integrity of social work programs and qualification outcomes is maintained.

- 5.6.1 HEPs should ensure that all students undertake the core elements of the program and not exempt students from core social work subjects on the basis of the qualification that led to their initial acceptance into the program. Candidates entering a Master of Social Work program who have completed a three-year social welfare program are to be granted a maximum of 25% credit or one semester of four as long as the AOU can ensure that graduates meet all required learning outcomes for Australian social work graduates as defined in ASWEAS.
- 5.6.2 Students transferring from one AASW accredited program to another of the same AQF level, will get credit for equivalent courses up to the maximum credit allowed by a HEP.

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<sup>10</sup> AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy [https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf\\_pathways\\_jan2013.pdf](https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf_pathways_jan2013.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A00757>

# 6

# Governance, staffing and program delivery

## 6.1 Governance arrangements

The purpose of setting standards for governance arrangements is to assure both HEPs and the profession that mechanisms are in place and operating effectively to maintain the quality and integrity of the program over time. Good governance provides stakeholders, especially students, with confidence that the standing of the program is supported within the institution, that it is appropriately resourced and organisationally located, and enjoys parity of esteem with other professional programs.

- 6.1.1 Social work programs are clearly located within a discrete Academic Organisation Unit (AOU) such as a faculty or school with aligned or cognate disciplines.
- 6.1.2 The HEP is able to demonstrate that the organisational structure of the AOU is appropriate to ensure the achievement of the standards for accreditation required across all social work programs.
- 6.1.3 Where the HEP offers multiple pathways into and through the social work program, it should demonstrate how each pathway meets the accreditation requirements set out in ASWEAS.
- 6.1.4 Where elements of the same social work program are offered across several sites and modes of delivery, the HEP should demonstrate that student learning is supported by resources and staffing at an equivalent level.
- 6.1.5 The HEP should demonstrate the presence of a formal mechanism through which major stakeholders are consulted regularly to inform the design, development, regular oversight and improvement of the programs.

## 6.2 Staffing

The purpose of the staffing standards is to ensure that student learning outcomes are achieved through working with academic staff who can model the behaviour expected of professional social workers in their teaching, research, scholarship and service. Being taught by a clear majority of academics qualified and experienced in social work theory and practice supports graduates in developing the foundations for a strong sense of professional identity. The standards for student–staff teaching ratios are intended to ensure that the student experience will be characterised by close contact with fully qualified and experienced academics: this applies in particular to the teaching of foundational knowledge set out in the required curriculum content, specific practice areas and professional communication skills. Where social work practice skills are being taught the student-to-staff ratio will not exceed 16:1 or demonstrated equivalent.

- 6.2.1** The Head of the Social Work Academic Organisation Unit (AOU) must be eligible for membership of the AASW and is expected to hold an academic position at Level E. In exceptional circumstances, this appointment can be at Level D.
- 6.2.2** The responsibilities of the Head of the Social Work AOU include:
- oversight of the governance structure of the Social Work AOU
  - delegation of roles and responsibilities for academic and professional staff within the AOU
  - provision of academic oversight of all subjects including field education
  - ensuring that academic programs are compliant with appropriate AQF level and ASWEAS standards.
- 6.2.3** Each AOU should employ a minimum of five full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff members at Level B or above who have primary responsibility for teaching the social work program and research, with a minimum of eight FTE for programs delivered across multiple campuses. These FTE academic should be eligible for AASW membership. In the case of new programs, evidence should be provided to show staff increases commensurate with growth of the student cohort such that at least five FTE Level B staff have been appointed by the time the first cohort reaches their final year of study.
- 6.2.4** Staffing levels should demonstrate that the student experience is characterised by opportunities to engage effectively with academic staff with regular contact.
- 6.2.5** All teachers of required social work theory and practice curriculum content should be eligible for membership of the AASW.
- 6.2.6** Where academic staff numbers teaching on the social work program exceed the minimum number (five FTE), at least 50% of additional staff members should be eligible for membership of the AASW.

## 6.3 Program delivery

In setting the standards for program delivery the AASW acknowledges diversity and innovation in approaches to teaching and learning and the enhancement of the student experience in the contemporary university. The benefits of student-centred learning strategies, including blended learning through e-learning, online and simulated approaches, are also acknowledged.

The aim of the standards to ensure that modes of program delivery designed to achieve the specified learning outcomes for social work graduates are appropriate to the task.

Therefore, the standards seek assurance that the modes of delivery are adequately resourced and supported to achieve the outcomes.

**6.3.1** HEPs should be able to demonstrate how the modes of delivery used are integrated into the program to facilitate student achievement of the learning outcomes.

**6.3.2** All students, in all programs are required to complete a minimum of 140 hours (20 days) of face-to-face classroom-based learning, the focus of which is professional practice skills. The required 140 hours (20 days) may be spread over four years for BSW programs and two years for MSW(Q) programs. At least 35 hours (5 days) of face-to-face professional practice skills teaching must occur before the first placement.

**6.3.3** The learning outcomes from the professional practice skills training in accordance with the Graduate Attributes should include core professional competencies but are not limited to:

- advanced oral communication skills and professional documentation
- assessment, engagement and decision-making with individuals and groups
- developing the personal and professional insight and emotional intelligence required for effective use of self as a professional.

# Glossary of terms

**Academic Organisation Unit (AOU):** A unit formed by a higher education provider to undertake as their primary objective teaching only, research only or teaching and research functions, or which is used for statistical reporting purposes. Such units are referred to by various names, such as schools and departments.

**Accreditation:** Programs are fully accredited when they meet all the requirements of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS).

**Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW):** The peak professional body representing social workers in Australia.

**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):** The national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

**Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS):** The compliance requirements for HEPs are set out in the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). These standards establish the process against which HEP accreditation compliance will be measured.

**Bachelor of Social Work:** An entry-level qualification to the social work profession taken at an undergraduate level.

**Conditional Accreditation:** The accreditation ascribed to a social work program that has not met one or more of the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS).

**Credit Transfer:** The process of assessing the initial program, course or subject that the individual is using to claim access to or credit in the destination course to determine the extent to which it is equivalent to the required learning outcomes, performance outcomes or standards in a qualification. The AQF has established agreed and consistent credit outcomes based on equivalence in content and learning outcomes between matched qualifications.

**Direct Practice:** Interventions with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups and communities aimed at achieving the most effective outcomes for their health, wellbeing and life chances through:

- resolving or preventing personal, interpersonal and circumstantial issues
- addressing abuses of power
- mobilising resources through collective action.

This work requires an understanding of micro-level personal and interpersonal dynamics and also of macro-level systemic factors impacting psychosocial, physical, legal and spiritual wellbeing. It also requires significant skills in engaging, involving and influencing service users and other stakeholders in problem identification and resolution. Advanced communication skills and a capacity to work with conflict, heightened emotions and resistances are essential.

**E-learning:** An educational model based on the use of electronic media and devices as teaching-and-learning tools.

**Field Education Coordinator:** The HEP staff member responsible for the coordination and oversight of field education placements including academic oversight for field education ensuring compliance with AQF Levels 7,8 and 9 and the ASWEAS.

**Field Education Liaison Officer:** The staff representative charged by the HEP with oversight of a field education placement.

**Higher Education Provider (HEP):** Accredited by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to provide qualifications at AQF Levels 7, 8 and 9 and who meets the standards and the requirements set out in the ASWEAS.

**International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW):** An international association of institutions of social work education, organisations supporting social work education and social work educators.

**International English Language Testing System (IELTS):** English Language Proficiency Test used to assess competency in the English language to meet entry requirements prior to enrolment.

**International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW):** The peak international body for the social work profession, with a focus on social justice, human rights and social development.

**Master of Social Work (Qualifying) (MSW(Q)):** An entry-level qualification to the social work profession taken at the post-graduate level.

**Off-campus (distance) Education:** The situation in which the teacher and student are separated in time or space throughout the unit of study. Distance education may include online learning and/or be undertaken through written correspondence and exchange of hard copy materials.

**On-campus:** An education facility or site of the registered provider where classroom-based teaching or off the job training occurs.

**Provisional Accreditation:** The accreditation ascribed to a social work program that has not yet delivered its first graduates.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** The judgement by an institution of the calibre of previous learning in the workplace (both voluntary, such as volunteer work or field placement or paid), separate from formal learning, and whether to credit such learning.

**Reconciliation:** Unity and respect between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. Respect for the heritages of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.

**Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP):** A framework for organisations to realise their vision for reconciliation.

**Social Work Academic Organisational Unit (SWAOU):** The HEP organisational structure that is directly responsible for the teaching and learning elements of the social work program.

**Social Work Qualification:** Named qualifications in social work, including a Bachelor of Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) or a Master of Social Work (Qualifying).

**Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA):** Australia's regulatory and quality agency for higher education. The agency's primary aim is to ensure that students receive a high-quality education at any Australian higher education provider.

**Universities Australia:** A committee of vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors and pro vice-chancellors from all Australian universities (previously known as the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee).

# Profession-specific graduate attributes

Practice Standard	Able to:	Evidence of ability to:
1. Values and ethics	1.1 Practise in accordance with the AASW Code of Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Follow ethical guidelines and principles outlined in the <i>Code of Ethics</i> in their interactions with clients, colleagues and other stakeholders</li> <li>– Recognise the moral and legal rights of individuals, groups and communities to the protection from abuse, exploitation and violence</li> <li>– Uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of all those with whom they work and advocate for and engage in practices to further human rights and social justice</li> </ul>
	1.2 Manage ethical dilemmas and issues arising in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognise and manage personal values and bias</li> <li>– Work within the boundaries of their professional role and mandate</li> <li>– Identify and respond to situation-specific ethical dilemmas, for example, the potential conflicts between principles of <i>duty of care</i> and <i>dignity of risk</i>, and between <i>individual rights</i> and <i>social responsibility</i></li> </ul>
2. Professionalism	2.1 Represent the social work profession with integrity and professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recognise and understand the power and authority inherent in the social worker's role, and use it with responsibility and compassion</li> <li>– Articulate their professional purpose taking account of context, clients and service users' needs and capacities, and professional knowledge, theory, skills and values</li> <li>– Establish working alliances with clients and service users based on mutual respect and accountability</li> <li>– Establish clear and appropriate boundaries in professional relationships</li> </ul>
	2.2 Behave in a professional manner and be accountable for all actions and decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Apply relevant policy and legislation pertinent to the area of practice</li> <li>– Make explicit the judgements and evidence-informing decisions and actions</li> <li>– Behave professionally in heightened emotional circumstances</li> </ul>
3. Culturally responsive and inclusive practice	3.1 Work inclusively and respectfully with cultural difference and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Critically analyse social context and barriers as foundational to understanding individual/community issues and change efforts</li> <li>– Recognise the complexity of personal, social and cultural identity, and avoiding homogenisation of clients and service users' experience</li> <li>– Identify and address inappropriate behaviour and discriminatory practices as they impact clients and service users</li> <li>– Acknowledge different belief systems as they impact clients and service users' understanding of mental and physical health</li> <li>– Avoid 'cultural collusion' in situations where culture is used as a reason for family violence or other forms of abuse</li> <li>– Work with interpreters to maximise service users' rights and involvement</li> <li>– Consult with Elders and cultural experts when required</li> </ul>

Practice Standard	Able to:	Evidence of ability to:
	3.2 Respect and strive to understand and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Apply principles of cultural respect in their professional practice</li> <li>– Identify and challenge discriminatory stereotypes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</li> <li>– Recognise and manage the impact of institutionalised racism on how they may be perceived in their role by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, service users and other stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>4. Knowledge for practice</b>	4.1 Understand higher level systemic influences on people with respect to area of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify linkages between situation/problem and life conditions, with particular attention to issues of oppression and discrimination</li> <li>– Identify how the dominant norms and values may oppress, marginalise, alienate and impoverish some members of society</li> <li>– Critique the potential discriminatory aspects of legislation, policy and practice in Australian institutions</li> <li>– Critically analyse the social context and barriers as foundational to understanding individual/community issues and change efforts</li> <li>– Understand the impact of bio-psychosocial history, including social isolation and marginalisation</li> <li>– Advocate for equitable access of all persons to resources, services and opportunities</li> </ul>
	4.2 Understand and articulate social work and other relevant theories and concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrate an integrated understanding of the core curriculum as it applies to their professional practice</li> <li>– Identify, critique and apply a range of practice frameworks</li> </ul>
	4.3 Understand the role of research and evaluation in obtaining and generating new knowledge for practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Demonstrate a critical appreciation of research and evidence-based practice</li> <li>– Incorporate innovative approaches and new knowledge into practice</li> </ul>
	4.4 Understand and articulate how and when theories, knowledge bases and knowledge sources inform practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Present a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas</li> <li>– Transfer, adapt and apply knowledge and skills in diverse contexts</li> </ul>
<b>5. Applying knowledge to practice</b>	5.1 Assess and analyse needs to inform practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Gather pertinent information by systematic questioning and discussions, incorporating the clients and service users’ perspective</li> <li>– Apply initiative and judgement in planning, problem-solving and decision-making</li> <li>– Recognise the need for assessments and interventions to be informed by the lived experience of clients, service users and other stakeholders</li> <li>– Assess and adjust interventions in the light of ongoing monitoring and feedback</li> <li>– Motivate and engage clients and service users in the development of intervention plans</li> </ul>
	5.2 Work collaboratively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work inclusively and respectfully with client and service users to promote client involvement in decision-making</li> <li>– Ensure clients and service users know and understand their legal and moral rights and responsibilities</li> <li>– Manage collegial relationships respectfully</li> <li>– Represent the profession credibly with other disciplines</li> <li>– Manage self appropriately in conflictual and heightened exchanges</li> </ul>

APPENDIX 1: Profession-specific graduate attributes

Practice Standard	Able to:	Evidence of ability to:
<b>5. Applying knowledge to practice (cont.)</b>	5.3 Use a range of social work methods and techniques appropriate to the area of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand responsibilities and mandates associated with professional context and organisational role</li> <li>- Apply a variety of techniques to collect, organise and interpret and make informed decisions regarding service eligibility, planning and delivery</li> <li>- Select interventions most likely to address clients and service users' needs and circumstances</li> <li>- Identify external considerations likely to facilitate or impede successful service delivery factors, provide strategies to create, identify and use</li> </ul>
	5.4 Apply critical and reflective thinking to practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply critical thought and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence</li> </ul>
<b>6. Communication and interpersonal skills</b>	6.1 Communicate with a diverse range of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish respectful and accountable relationships with clients and service users across their life course</li> <li>- Engage in effective professional dialogue with a diverse range of clients, consumers and other stakeholders, taking into account their varying communication capacities and needs</li> <li>- Use the services of interpreters when required</li> </ul>
	6.2 Communicate the details and nature of the service offered to people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate role and mandate to clients, service users and other stakeholders clearly and unambiguously</li> <li>- Ensure that clients and service users are provided with clear details of the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in service provision</li> <li>- Engage and work inclusively with clients in both voluntary and involuntary settings</li> </ul>
	6.3 Work with others in a team environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrate an understanding of group dynamics as they apply to teamwork</li> <li>- Understand and contribute positively to the team dynamics</li> <li>- Maintain an appropriately empowered stance in hierarchical team structures</li> <li>- Demonstrate a capacity to engage constructively with colleagues to manage professional differences and disputes</li> <li>- Work effectively with colleagues from other disciplines</li> </ul>
	6.4 Use information technology to communicate and provide services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the strengths and limitations of IT-assisted communication as a mode of service delivery</li> </ul>
<b>7. Information recording and sharing</b>	7.1 Record and manage information appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formulate and document assessment conclusions</li> <li>- Keep accurate, comprehensive records</li> <li>- Prepare professional reports as required</li> </ul>
	7.2 Keep and maintain information in accordance with the ethical principles and relevant legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrate awareness of the legal and operational parameters of Information Privacy Regulations and confidentiality policies</li> </ul>

Practice Standard	Able to:	Evidence of ability to:
<p><b>8. Professional development and supervision</b></p>	<p>8.1 Actively participate in professional supervision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor and manage own professional development, attitudes and behaviour to promote and advance social work practice</li> <li>- Participate in professional development and self-reflection to maintain currency of social work knowledge</li> <li>- Receive and use supervision to enhance practice</li> </ul>
	<p>8.2 Engage in continuing professional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demonstrate understanding of and commitment to continuing, career-long professional learning</li> <li>- Actively engage in and manage professional learning opportunities</li> </ul>
	<p>8.3 Where appropriate, to contribute to the professional development of others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learn collaboratively with peers</li> <li>- Consult appropriately</li> </ul>

# Required curriculum content

## 1 Constructions of social work purpose, place and practice

To include, but not exclusive to:

- 1.1 The complex history of social work, in Australia and internationally, with a particular focus on the historical and contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the implications of this for social work practice.
- 1.2 Methods of social work intervention including: community work; counselling and interviewing; advocacy and direct action; policy development and implementation; and research. To include consideration of:
  - the need for multilevel interventions, individually and collectively, to raise awareness, build resources and create change
  - the relationship-based nature of social work, and the need to engage and work collaboratively with clients and service users, and with other stakeholders, to achieve positive outcomes
  - the universal requirements for advanced communication skills across all areas of practice.
- 1.3 Competing macro-level theoretical frameworks for defining the purpose and place of social work.
- 1.4 The tensions inherent in the location of social work practice at the interface of private problems and public concerns.
- 1.5 Dominant 'identity' discourses, such as radical social work, feminist social work and eco-social work.
- 1.6 Social work and the law.
- 1.7 The organisation of health and welfare provision over time and the changing role of social workers as service providers, to include a consideration of:
  - working collaboratively in multidisciplinary contexts and across service agencies
  - the growing utilisation of information technology as a means of service delivery.
- 1.8 Ethical codes and principles underpinning social work practice, to include explicit consideration of the inherent tensions involved in choosing between courses of action.

## 2 Power, oppression and exploitation

To include, but not exclusive to:

- 2.1 Theories and structures of power underpinning all social relationships, between individuals, groups and communities, with explicit consideration to the principles of human rights and social justice underpinning social work practice.
- 2.2 How social, cultural and political structures and institutions can create, maintain and enhance privilege and power, and can oppress, marginalise, and alienate individuals, groups and communities.
- 2.3 Oppressive and abusive behaviour as an aspect of interpersonal relationships, to include both consideration of the universal risk and of protective factors across all forms of abusive behaviour, and those specific to:
- family violence in all its manifestation
  - intimate partner violence
  - child abuse and neglect
  - elder abuse
  - sexual abuse
  - gender-based violence and abuse.
- 2.4 The power inherent in the social worker's role, to include consideration of:
- the regulatory power held by statutory social workers working with involuntary clients
  - dependency relationships between social workers and service users where social workers possess knowledge and material resources (including access to services) required by client populations and service users
  - the complex nature of relational power that underpins all social work transactions.

### 3 The history and contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

To include, but not exclusive to:

- 3.1 The complex, diverse and constantly changing nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contexts and experiences.
- 3.2 The enduring nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.
- 3.3 The critical elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and family life, including an understanding of country, language, and level of kinship.
- 3.4 The richness and breadth of knowledge and skills within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and communities.
- 3.5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.
- 3.6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's connection with land and country, and their commitment to safeguarding and repairing the physical environment.
- 3.7 The resilience and spiritual strength demonstrated by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities.
- 3.8 The worldview differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and Western perspectives, relating to time, identity, individuality and collective responsibility.
- 3.9 The intergenerational impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of racism and oppression, and the legacy arising from colonisation, dispossession and the Stolen Generations' experience.
- 3.10 Historical and contemporary perceptions of social work services among Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders as a consequence of these experiences.

### 4 Culture, identity and discrimination

To include, but not exclusive to:

- 4.1 The complexity and fluidity of cultural constructs, including culture as:
  - an 'identity' framework for locating individuals, groups and communities
  - shared values and patterns of thought, often unwritten and communicated across generations
  - normative assumptions about right and wrong behaviour (incorporating thoughts, feelings and actions) and relationships
  - rules of conformity and consequences for rule-breaking.
- 4.2 Social divisions and ways in which populations are categorised, located and stratified on the basis of their acceptance of and conformity to dominant cultural norms.

- 4.3 Theories of ethnicity, race and whiteness, diversity, intersectionality, sexuality and racism.
- 4.4 Historical and contemporary cross-cultural issues, in Australia and internationally, impacting on social work services.
- 4.5 Discriminatory structures and practices, in Australia and elsewhere based on dominant cultural norms; including consideration of class, gender, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, and gender identity and sexual orientation.
- 4.6 Discriminatory metrocentric assumptions, structures, institutions and practices.
- 4.7 The requirements and skills of culturally safe and sensitive practice, to include consideration of:
- culturally specific norms about family relationships and responsibilities
  - culturally specific understandings of and responses to mental and physical health problems
  - the use of interpreters and/or bicultural workers to minimise language barriers.
- 4.8 The need to address issues of interpersonal abuse and oppression as defined in Australia regardless of family and community norms; for example, addressing the issues of female genital mutilation and child marriage.

## 5 Psychosocial health and wellbeing across the life cycle

To include, but not exclusive to:

- 5.1 Human development, behaviour and needs across the life cycle, including consideration of:
- attachment relationships
  - major life stage transitions
  - gender identity and sexual orientation.
- 5.2 Dominant discourses and constructions of mental and physical health, with a critical awareness of the issues inherent in using deficit models.
- 5.3 The impact of socio-economic status, life opportunities, trauma and environment on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of individuals, groups and communities.
- 5.4 Knowledge of Australia's history of colonisation and its devastating impact on the wellbeing and ways of life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 5.5 The continuing health and social inequalities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.
- 5.6 The sociopolitical, economic and practice discourses impacting thresholds and modes of intervention, including consideration of geographical location, for example, providing service in regional and remote communities.

## APPENDIX 2: Required curriculum content

- 5.7 The organisation of health provision and the role of social workers in health settings.
- 5.8 The medicalisation of personal and social problems and the reduction of complex, multidimensional situations to a matter of 'illness' or 'disorder'.
- 5.9 The interconnectedness of spiritual, mental, physical and environmental health and wellbeing.
- 5.10 Loss, grief and trauma as it impacts individuals, groups and communities.
- 5.11 The relationship between abuse of alcohol and other drugs and mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- 5.12 Personal and interpersonal relationships impacting mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- 5.13 The relationship between people and their physical environment, the implications for physical and mental health and wellbeing of local and global environmental circumstances.

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