

## **Social workers with non-UK qualifications**

Social work is a regulated profession in the UK. To practise as a social worker, you must be registered with the appropriate regulatory body. Each UK country maintains its own register. These are:

<b>In Scotland:</b>	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
<b>In Northern Ireland:</b>	Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)
<b>In Wales:</b>	Social Care Wales (SCW)
<b>In England:</b>	Social Work England (SWE)

You should apply to the regulatory body in the country where you plan to work. If you plan to work in more than one country, you should contact us for advice by telephoning 0345 60 30 891 or [email registration](#).

To practise in Scotland, you must be registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). To register, one of the criteria you must meet is [our qualification criteria](#). You can apply to register with a non-UK qualification. If you do, we must assess it against our criteria. You must pay an [application fee](#) and provide [detailed information](#) in English about your qualification as it was when you studied so that we can assess it.

For more information, please see the frequently asked questions below.

## **1. Is my qualification a social work qualification?**

Applying for registration using a non-UK qualification can take a lot of time and money, so it is important that you understand what we mean by a social work qualification in Scotland before you apply. Please refer to the [Standards in Social Work Education \(SiSWE\)](#). The SiSWE set out what student social workers must achieve to gain the Scottish Social Work honours degree and become professionally qualified. Assessing your qualification against the SiSWE is a fundamental part of every assessment we carry out. Does it look as though your qualification will align to these standards?

Please note also our requirement that your qualification contain at least 130 days or 780 hours of appropriately supervised and assessed practice. Will your qualification meet this requirement?

Please see our assessment criteria in more detail [here](#).

Take care also over the term 'social work' when it has been translated from another language. We often see applicants who refer to themselves as a social worker in another country, but whose qualification focuses more on what we would refer to as 'social care', or 'social pedagogy' or 'community education'.

Regardless of the title of your qualification, we must compare your knowledge, skills and values to those acquired from social work education in Scotland. These are set out in the SiSWE.

When applying to register using a non-UK qualification you must pay an application fee of £80 and a qualification assessment fee of £320. This is non-refundable, regardless of the outcome of the assessment. Please note also [additional costs](#) that you may incur

## **2. How will you assess my qualification?**

We must assess your qualification against our [assessment criteria](#). To do this we need detailed information about the curriculum you followed, how it was assessed and the ethics/values that underpinned it. If we find substantial differences or we do not have enough detailed information, we will consider the extent to which additional learning since you completed your qualification (post-qualifying learning) makes up for this.

The outcome of any assessment is to accept, refuse or require you to complete a [compensatory measure](#).

### **To accept**

Either your qualification alone, or a combination of qualifications, or a combination of your qualification and post-qualifying learning satisfies the qualification criteria for registration.

### **To require a compensatory measure**

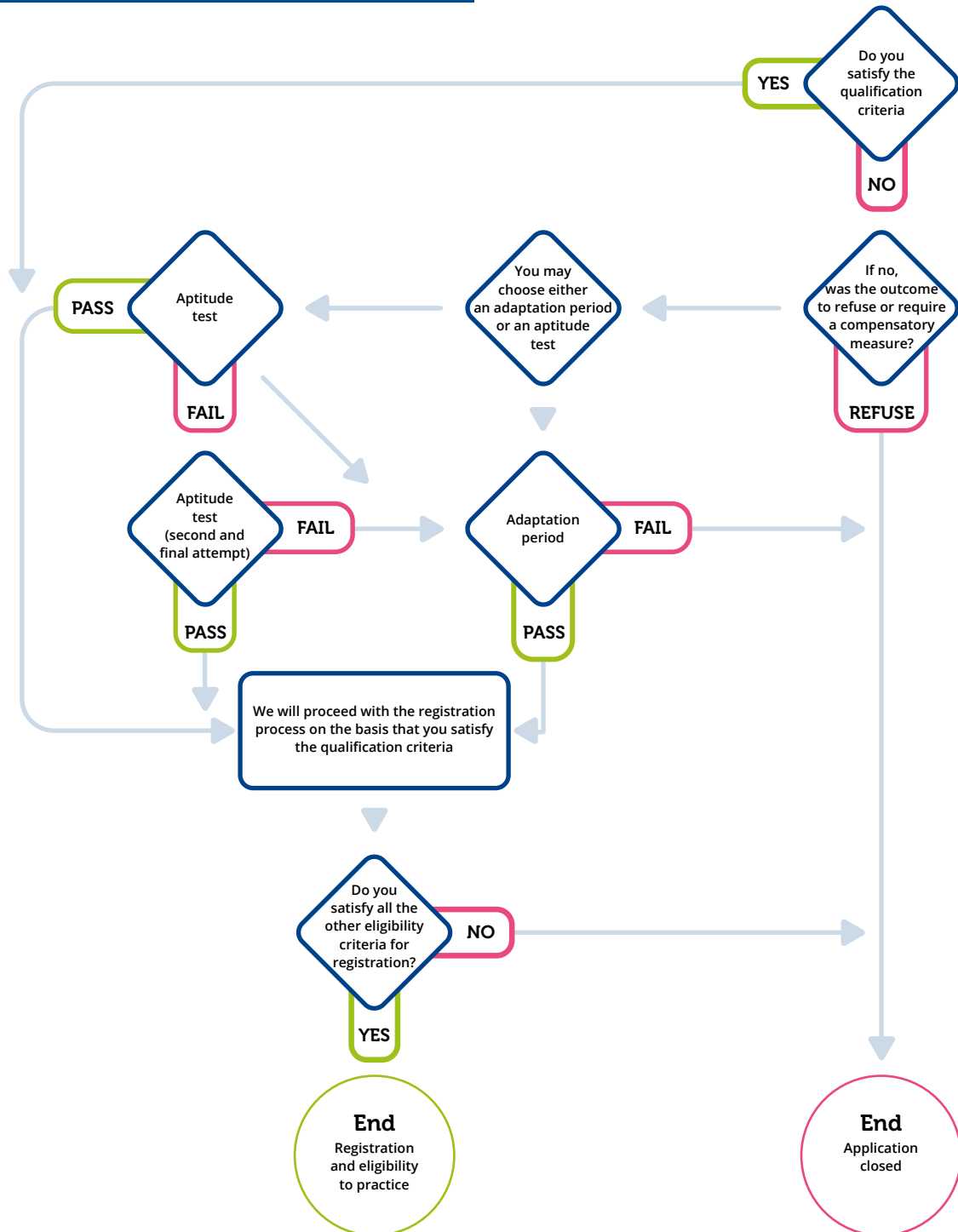
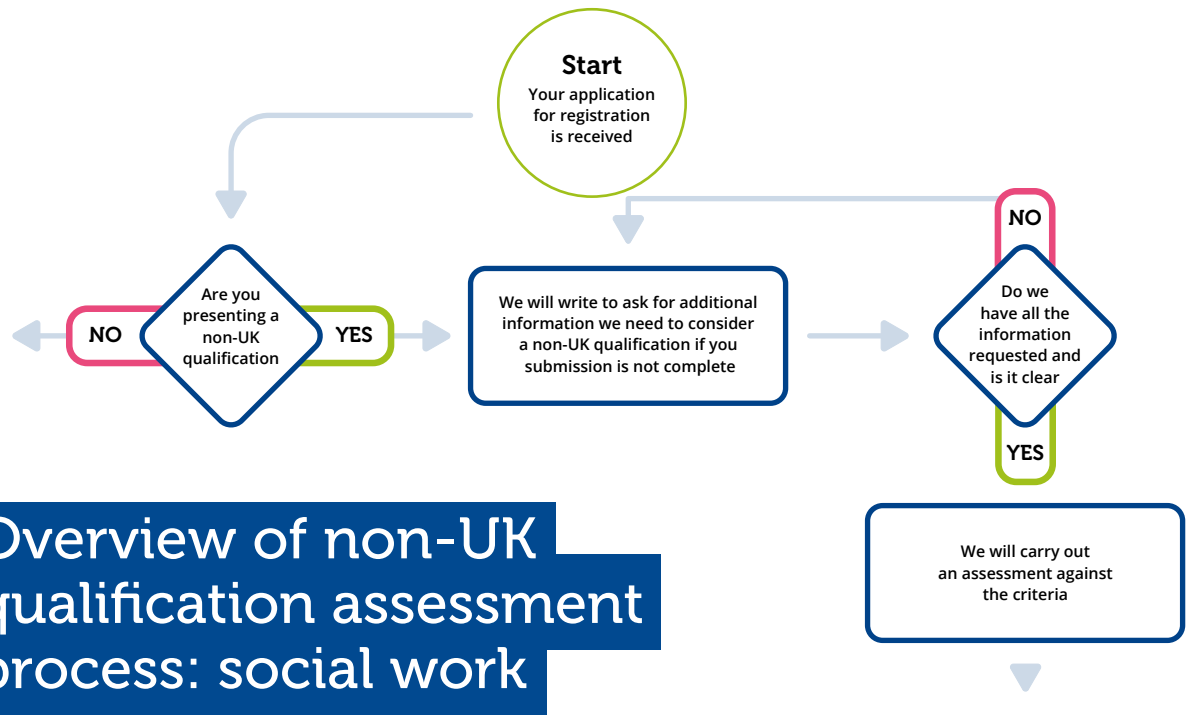
Your qualification does not fully meet the criteria and post-qualifying learning does not fully make up for this. We would ask you to successfully complete a compensatory measure in Scotland before we could proceed any further with your application. This would take the form of either an adaptation period (a period of further training or a supervised and assessed practice placement) or an aptitude test.

### **To refuse**

Either we do not have enough information to make an informed assessment, or the difference between your qualification and the assessment criteria, taking into account post-qualifying learning, is so substantial that we judge you would need to complete the full Scottish social work degree to make up for this. Under these circumstances we must refuse your application.

### **Please note:**

You should not apply for employment as a social worker in Scotland until this process is complete and you are fully registered.



### **3. What are the qualification assessment criteria?**

The criteria consist of standards, duration of supervised and assessed practice, academic level, duration of study and our key criteria and principles.

#### **i. The standards we must assess against**

The requirements for all social work training in Scotland are detailed in [The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland](#).

The framework is made up of:

- the Scottish Requirements for Social Work Training
- an Introduction to the Standards in Social Work Education
- the [Standards in Social Work Education \(SiSWE\)](#).

The SiSWE set out what student social workers need to achieve to gain the Scottish social work honours degree and become professionally qualified. Assessing your qualification against the SiSWE is a key and fundamental part of every assessment.

#### **ii. The number of days/hours of supervised and assessed practice in your qualification**

The Scottish social work degree includes at least 200 days (6 hour days) of practice learning, of which 160 days must be appropriately supervised and assessed against the Scottish standard. Any non-UK qualification must contain a minimum of 130 days or 780 hours of practice, appropriately supervised and assessed against recognised social work standards. If your qualification contained slightly less than this, you must tell us about your post-qualifying learning. Please see our [guidance](#) on how to tell us about this. We must be able to assess this

against the [SiSWE](#) so that we can assess the extent to which your post-qualifying learning makes up for the shortfall in supervised and assessed practice. If your qualification contained substantially less than 130 days, your application will be unsuccessful.

### iii. **The academic level of your qualification**

Academic level tells us about the complexity of the learning you undertook to obtain your qualification.

The Scottish undergraduate social work honours degree is a qualification at [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF) level 10 or [European Qualifications Framework](#) (EQF) level 6. Undergraduate qualifications must be comparable to this level or above to meet the qualification criteria on their own merit (ie without the need to take into consideration post-qualifying learning).

The Scottish postgraduate master's social work qualification is a qualification at SCQF level 11 or EQF level 7. Postgraduate qualifications must be comparable to this level or above to meet the qualification criteria on their own merit (ie without the need to take into consideration post-qualifying learning).

If your qualification does not meet this requirement you must tell us about your post-qualifying learning. Please see our [guidance](#) on how to tell us about this. We must be able to assess this against the SiSWE so that we can assess the extent to which your post-qualifying learning makes up for the shortfall in academic level.

We use [UKENIC](#) to establish the academic level of non-UK qualifications. We have ready access to a range of information provided by UKENIC. You should not purchase a UKENIC equivalency statement, if this is purely for the purposes of applying for registration with us.

If you already have a comparability statement from UKENIC this will help us establish the academic level of your qualification, but no more. It will not tell us about your knowledge, skills and values that we can match to the SiSWE.

### iv. **The duration of your studies**

The Scottish undergraduate social work honours programme is a four year programme when studied full-time from its first year. Any non-UK undergraduate qualification must be of at least three years' duration full-time, or of equivalent duration if studied part-time.

The Scottish postgraduate master's social work programme is a two year programme when studied full-time from its first year. Any non-UK postgraduate qualification must be of at least two years' duration full-time, or of equivalent duration if studied part-time.

If your qualification does not meet this requirement you must tell us about your post-qualifying learning. Please see our [guidance](#) on how to tell us about this. We must be able to assess this against the [SiSWE](#) so that we can assess the extent to which your post-qualifying learning makes up for the shortfall in the duration of your studies.

v. **The SSSC key criteria and principles when considering qualifications for registration**

The SSSC uses key criteria and principles when considering any qualification, UK or otherwise, for registration.

The key criteria are that any award must:

- include direct observation of naturally occurring practice throughout the assessment process
- be based on National Occupational Standards (NOS), designed for the needs of the social work, social care and children and young people's workforce
- be included at the relevant level on either the:
  - the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)
  - the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) for England Wales and Northern Ireland and endorsed by Skills for Care
- be accredited by regulated, approved and quality assured awarding bodies.

The key principles are that any award must:

- integrate observed, assessed practice and learning
- support safe and effective care that aims to enhance the wellbeing of individuals
- reflect the standards of practice, values and behaviour that are consistent with the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers.

#### **4. Will you take into account my professional experience and any additional training?**

Yes, in addition to your social work qualification, as part of every assessment we will also take into account relevant learning completed since you gained your qualification (post-qualifying learning).

Examples of this type of learning include worked-based learning (such as experiential learning through your practice, additional skills training, supervision or mentorship, project work or management), self-directed learning (such as reading relevant literature, updating knowledge through the media) and further formal education courses.

We ask you to reflect on how this learning has helped you become more knowledgeable in your practice, how you have used this learning in your working practice and how you use this learning to change future practice.

You do not have to tell us about your post-qualifying learning, but if your qualification does not fully meet the qualification criteria, we can consider the extent to which post-qualifying learning makes up for this. Please refer to the [guidance on how to tell us about post-qualifying learning](#).



## **5. What is a compensatory measure?**

There are two types of compensatory measure. One is an adaptation period. This can be either a period of further training or a supervised and assessed practice placement. The other is an aptitude test.

If your qualification and any post-qualifying learning do not fully meet the criteria for registration, we may ask you to complete a compensatory measure in Scotland before we proceed any further with your application. You would choose which type of compensatory measure to take. If you chose an adaptation period, you would have to organise this yourself and cover any costs involved. If you chose an aptitude test, you would pay a test fee of £790. If you did not pass a first test, it is possible in some cases to sit a second test or take an adaptation period. If you chose a second test you would pay a second test fee.

- **Adaptation period**

Adaptation periods often take the form of study on the Scottish social work degree. You would have to apply to one of the universities in Scotland that deliver the degree. The Scottish social work degree is a four year programme when studied from the first year full-time. While we would make a recommendation as to how much of the degree you would have to study (for example, we might recommend the final two years), it is the universities themselves that decide whom they admit and what exemption they can give in recognition of prior learning.

Where appropriate, adaptation periods may also take the form of successfully completing a supervised and assessed practice placement. This placement may be subject to specific requirements in respect of the standards that must be met, the way in which the placement is supervised and assessed, the settings in which it must be undertaken, the service user groups with whom you work with and the duration of the placement. You would be responsible for setting up the placement. We would have to approve arrangements for the placement before you began. At the end of the placement, you would have to submit all assessment materials, a reflective report from yourself and your assessor's final report to us.

- **Aptitude test**

This is a test of professional knowledge and practice competence limited to those elements of the qualification criteria either not existing or not satisfactorily evidenced in the information you provide.

We run two rounds of testing each year. The process of arranging, designing, conducting, marking, standardising and reporting tests takes several weeks. Tests consist of several parts. We ask you to prepare a portfolio of written practice evidence over a set period of time, undergo unseen written tests under examination conditions at our offices in Dundee, deliver a presentation and then attend an interview with assessors. Tests are prepared to address the specific requirements of each candidate's assessment. They are designed at [Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF) level 10.

**Please note**

Passing an aptitude test would not give you a qualification. It would simply allow you to satisfy the qualification criteria for registration.

## **6. How do I apply to register?**

Please apply [online](#). If you are unable to apply online please contact us at: [registration@sssc.uk.com](mailto:registration@sssc.uk.com) or telephone 0345 60 30 891.

## 7. What information do you need to assess my qualification?

To carry out an informed assessment, we must have a good understanding of the curriculum that you followed, how it was assessed and the ethics/values that underpinned it. You should not assume that we know all about your qualification.

If we don't have evidence that you meet any particular part of the assessment criteria, we must work on the basis that you don't meet that part of the criteria, so it is in your interest to provide as much information as you can.

Please find below a checklist of the information we need you to provide.

- Application to register.
- £80 application fee.
- £320 non-UK qualification assessment fee.
- Copy of the identity page of your current passport.
- Copy of your final qualification award certificate.
- Transcript from your university or college listing the units you studied and passed in each term or semester of your course.
- Information from your university or college about the content of each of the units listed on your transcript. Ideally we are looking for learning outcomes (ie what you had to know, understand and be able to do to successfully complete each unit). You may need to contact your university or college to obtain this.  
**We cannot assess your qualification without this.**
- Information from your university or college about the practice placements you completed as part of your course. Information should cover:
  - the settings in which you undertook your placements
  - the service user groups you worked with
  - your roles and responsibilities
  - how placements were supervised and assessed
  - the standards your placements were assessed against
  - how risk assessment and the protection of vulnerable groups was covered
  - whether you undertook statutory tasks
  - the number of days or hours you completed on each placement (we count on the basis that six hours equals one day).

You may need to contact your university or college to obtain this. **We cannot assess your qualification without it.**

You can also provide the following information if you wish.

- Any assessed pieces of work that you completed during your course.
- Accounts relating to learning since you gained your qualification ([post-qualifying learning](#)). If you would like to tell us about this, we ask that you provide accounts in which you tell us about a piece or pieces of learning, formal or informal, and write in a reflective style about how this has helped you become more knowledgeable in your practice, how you have used this learning in your working practice and how you will use this learning in your future practice. We must assess the extent to which this meets the requirements of the Standards in Social Work Education ([SiSWE](#)).

**Please note:**

1. We cannot make an assessment without information relating to the content of the units you studied. A transcript telling us the titles of the units you studied is not enough. Ideally we are looking for learning outcomes (ie what you had to know, understand and be able to do to successfully complete each unit). You should not apply unless you can provide this.
2. If your transcript is in a language other than English, you must provide both a copy of the original and a translation into English.
3. Courses of study often change over time. We can only consider information that relates to your years of study, even though that may be some years ago. We could only accept more recent information if you also provided confirmation from your university or college that their course had not changed since your years of study.
4. The element of the SiSWE that we find missing most often in non-UK qualifications is Key Role 3 'Assess and manage risk to individuals, families, carers, groups, communities, self and colleagues'. It may be that this was woven into the curriculum that you followed, but not detailed explicitly. If this is the case, you may wish to ask the university or college to confirm how this was covered.

## 8. How much will it cost?

Application fee	£80
Non-UK qualification assessment fee	£320
All applicants are required to become a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme unless they are already employed in Scotland by an employer who can provide Disclosure Scotland or a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme record check	£59

Please note further additional costs that you may incur.

- If the information you send us is not in English, you should also send us an English translation. It may cost you money to have information translated.
- The outcome of our assessment will be to accept, to refuse, or to require you to complete a compensatory measure. There would be no additional cost if the outcome were to accept or refuse. There would be additional costs if you had to complete a compensatory measure.

There are two types of compensatory measure. One is an aptitude test. We charge £790 for each test. The other is an adaptation period, which is further training or assessed practice. You would have to organise this yourself and cover any costs involved.

Please [click here for further information about our registration fees](#).

## **9. How long will it take to assess my qualification?**

Providing you send us all the information we request and it is clear, we will try to advise you of the outcome of your application within four months of receipt. Additional time may be required if we have to ask for further information or seek clarification.

## **10. Can I practice as a social worker while my application is being processed?**

No. You may not practice as a social worker in Scotland until you are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council.

The title 'social worker' is protected. It is an offence for a person in Scotland, with intent to deceive another, to:

- take or use the title 'social worker'
- take or use any title that implies s/he is a registered social worker
- take or use any description that implies s/he is a registered social worker
- in any way hold her/himself out as a registered social worker unless s/he is registered as a social worker by one of the four United Kingdom regulatory bodies.



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If you would like this document in another format,  
please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

We promote equality by removing unlawful and unfair  
treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic  
wherever possible.