



BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMMES

ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARD

INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT REPORT

Name of institution	
Name of programme	
Date submitted	

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Details of the programme

Mode(s) of delivery *	
If contact, site(s) of delivery	
If distance, administrative centre	
Exit level on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	
Total number of credits	
Normal duration of study (full-time)	
Normal duration of study (part-time)	
(For CHE use only) Reference number	

- **The mode of delivery should be indicated according to the institutional Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) and Council on Higher Education accreditation. Any modification, particularly as a consequence of recent pandemic lockdown, may described below, in Section 4.**

Verification

I confirm that the National Standard Alignment Report has been prepared after appropriate consultation with members of staff involved in the programme and has the approval of the School and Faculty.

Head of Department/School

Name	Signature	Date

Dean of Faculty

Name	Signature	Date

I confirm that the National Standard Alignment Report has been endorsed by the institution.

Institutional comment (optional)

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Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for academic affairs or designate

Name	Signature	Date

Introduction

In July 2022 higher education institutions offering a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) qualification were informed that the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) had decided that the Council on Higher Education (CHE) should undertake a special alignment evaluation of BSW programmes to support a transition from an SGB qualification to a national standard developed by the CHE. The aim is to ensure that BSW programmes are aligned with the requirements of the national benchmark standard. The alignment evaluation is developmental in nature and not a re-accreditation exercise.

The process was affirmed in August 2022 at a meeting between the CHE and Heads of Social Work Departments. Members of a CHE Reference Group were nominated and affirmed. The Reference Group provides the CHE with the necessary academic and professional support and expertise, including clarification of the scope of the alignment evaluation process, and assistance with the development of the evaluation instruments. This includes development of the Alignment Report template. The project is overseen by the CHE Directorate: National Standards and Reviews.

The institutional Alignment Reports will be subjected to a desktop evaluation by suitably qualified and experienced peers. Site visits will be conducted only if deemed necessary. Should evaluation panels identify areas needing improvement, the institution will be required to prepare, submit to the HEQC, and implement an improvement plan to address the issues.

Information submitted by institutions will be handled in accordance with the CHE's Privacy Policy. As stated in the Policy, 'the CHE respects your constitutional right of privacy and processes personal information lawfully and in a reasonable manner that does not infringe the privacy of data subjects, in compliance with applicable data processing legislation.' The Privacy Policy may be accessed at <https://www.che.ac.za/privacy-policy>.

The national Qualification Standard for the Bachelor of Social Work is included with this template as an annexure.

Guidelines for completion of the National Standard Alignment Report (NSAR)

The report should be written in narrative form, accompanied, where requested, with data tables. Each claim representing compliance with the Standard should be accompanied by evidence embedded in the narrative. If deemed appropriate by the institution, additional figures and tables may be included, preferably as annexures to the report.

If and where multi-year evidence is required or deemed appropriate by the institution, unless otherwise requested, the data should be restricted to the period 2018-2022.

Documentation annexed to the National Standard Alignment Report (NSAR) should be restricted to information fundamental to a comprehensive reading of the report. Other supporting documentation may be requested by the CHE following a desktop evaluation of the NSAR.

Where evidence for a claim made in the NSAR is available in documentary annexures, please ensure that the relevant source is accurately referenced.

In most cases, the Report narrative should deal with each of the questions asked below. Each response should be clearly headed with reference to the relevant question. There may be cases, however, where there is a need, for reasons of coherence and continuity, to integrate responses to more than one question. In such cases, ensure that the questions are clearly identified and that each is comprehensively answered.

The CHE will, in due course, provide institutions with information concerning the process of online submission of the NSAR and the due date.

Optimal involvement in development of the NSAR by an adequate representation of staff members involved in the Bachelor of Social Work programme is fundamental to the process. Staff involved in the development of the NSAR and accompanying documentation would normally comprise full-time members but need not be limited to that category. Of greatest importance is ensuring that all aspects of the programme that relate to the Qualification Standard are adequately represented, and that input fully and fairly covers the programme. Consultation with students and, if possible, recent graduates, while not compulsory, is greatly encouraged.

The National Standard Alignment Report

1. Describing the Report development process

Please provide a brief introduction describing the process followed: the main parties involved, the methods and forms of consultation, and the timelines along which the drafting of the NSAR was conducted (including pre-draft consultation, drafting of the report, procedures for the draft(s) to be made available for academic and support staff input, and the process of approval of the final version submitted to the CHE).

2. Preamble (refer to the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Standard)

How does your Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree address the values and ethos expressed in the preamble? Your response should have particular reference, but is not limited, to the following aspects:

- responsiveness to local, regional, national and global realities and transitions;
- awareness of past complicity in the implementation of unjust laws and practices, and subsequent emancipatory thrusts;
- responsiveness to individual rights and socio-economic equality in the context of cultural diversity;
- contextual flexibility, complexity, and the upholding of ethical standards.

Note

When responding to a question dealing with a number of aspects, such as this one, the report may deal with each aspect separately or, if it is in the better interests of narrative cohesion and coherence, in an integrated manner, as long as each aspect is adequately addressed.

3. Purpose (refer to the BSW Standard)

3.1 How does your qualification equip graduates with the ability to engage with people from micro- to macro-levels of social work, within dynamic socio-political and economic contexts?

3.2 Explain how your graduates are prepared for professional engagement and problem-solving, while promoting social cohesion, empowerment, diversity, social justice and other principles enumerated in the Purpose statement.

- 3.3 To what extent, and in what ways, is your BSW programme underpinned and benchmarked by local and global theories of social work and cognate disciplines?
- 3.4 How does your programme provide graduates with eligibility for registration as a student social worker with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)? Describe the process of registration as a student social worker. If relevant, outline any assistance provided by the institution to enable registration as a social worker upon completion of all qualification requirements.

4. NQF level and Credits (refer to the BSW Standard)

- 4.1 Explain how your BSW degree is designed (through logical sequencing and increasing complexity of module content and assessment) in order to ensure appropriate progression through ascending levels of competency, culminating with NQF level 8.
- 4.2 How is the credit rating of the modules constructed in terms of the student workload? How is the credit allocation related to the variety of learning and teaching activities?
- 4.3 How does this credit rating relate to the notional study hours undertaken in the BSW degree?
- 4.4 Does the total number of credits awarded for the degree exceed the minimum of 480? If so, provide a rationale for the extra credits.
- 4.5 Have there been any programme (curriculum) changes since it was last accredited by the Higher Education Quality Committee of the CHE? If so, give a brief outline of the main changes made.

A narrative response to questions 1, 2 and 3 should be accompanied by a table such as the following. The table should represent the programme currently accredited and offered as in 2022.

The table should include information (accompanied, if necessary, by narrative) on how classroom-based learning and work-based learning in field placements are incorporated in the curriculum and linked with credit allocation. The table should include only those activities that are embedded in the programme, and are therefore regarded as compulsory activities. It should not include optional support initiatives.

Where conventional modes of learning and teaching were modified during pandemic lockdown, indicate in the narrative what modifications were introduced, and the extent to which they have been temporary measures or will continue to be practised going forward. In cases of online delivery, indicate whether lectures, tutorials and workshops have been/are synchronous or asynchronous. Modifications may include simulated learning and teaching on real-life issues.

Skills development workshops include small-group, classroom-based workshops to develop skills, but exclude individual, group or other forms of supervision.

Table: modules, credits and learning and teaching activities

Module title	Code	Year of Study and duration	Credits	Core/elective	Activities included			
					Lectures	Small-group tutorials	Skills development workshops	Field-based practice

5. Graduate Attributes¹ (refer to the BSW Standard)

Knowledge

- 5.1 Referring to the table above, what evidence is there to show that the programme meets the requirement that at least 50 per cent of the curriculum represents the core of the social work discipline?
- 5.2 Referring to the table above, provide a rationale for the set of cognate disciplines offered in the programme, and for the inclusion of each as a core or elective component.
- 5.3 How are fundamentals such as communication studies, computer literacy and academic literacy addressed in the programme? (If there are other fundamentals included in the programme, whether credit-bearing or not, compulsory or optional, please mention them.)

Core social work knowledge

5.4 The Standard sets out 16 ‘knowledge’ aspects (in bullet format). Provide a detailed description of how each of the aspects is addressed in the programme. This should be provided

¹ “The term ‘graduate attributes’ refers to the extent to which the blend of learning domains (knowledge, skill and applied competence) reflect the purpose of the qualification type, and the extent to which the blend is reflected in the competence of the graduate.” (*Framework for Qualification Standards in Higher Education*, CHE, 2013, page 33). The BSW graduate attributes are set out below.

in the form of a narrative with reference, where appropriate, to the curriculum design represented in the table above. The aspects may be discussed separately or, should it enhance the clarity and coherence of the narrative, aspects may be integrated, with identification, in each case of integration, of the aspects being combined. In cases where a graduate attribute is embedded throughout the programme, indicate where and how it is assessed.

The description should include explanation of how addressing the knowledge attributes is linked to progression in the programme from NQF 5 to NQF 8.

The 'knowledge' aspects relate to:

- 1. comparative welfare policies;
- 2. the developmental social welfare paradigm
- 3. influence of historical eras;
- 4. transition in social welfare service delivery and social work;
- 5. South African demographic diversity;
- 6. structural determinants of poverty and inequality;
- 7. international and regional conventions, and national policies and legislation;
- 8. structures for delivery of social welfare services;
- 9. relevant theories, perspectives and models;
- 10. human behavior and social environment;
- 11. service beneficiary assessment;
- 12. the various fields of service;
- 13. ethical requisites of the profession;
- 14. the Self vis-à-vis professional practice;
- 15. social work management, administration and supervision;
- 16. research paradigms/methods, designs, and strategies.

Application of knowledge and skills

5.5 Provide a detailed description of how the application of knowledge and skills is addressed in the programme, and how measures are in place to ensure that all aspects will have been achieved by a graduate.

The Standard sets out the application in 9 sections, relating to:

- 1. professional identity;
- 2. core values and principles;
- 3. assessment and intervention;
- 4. ethical codes and moral impulse;
- 5. working in a range of diversities;
- 6. ability to undertake research;
- 7. practice skills and theories;
- 8. policy and legislation;
- 9. writing and communication of professional knowledge.

The description should, as far as possible, link the application of knowledge and skills with the inclusion of core social work knowledge in the curriculum.

Awareness of Graduate attributes

- 5.6 Describe how academic staff teaching the programme are made aware of the Graduate Attributes and how they relate to programme design, delivery and assessment.
- 5.7 Describe how students are made aware of the Graduate Attributes, during the course of studies, and how the Attributes are linked with specific assessment activities.

6. Contexts and conditions for assessment (refer to the BSW standard)

- 6.1 To demonstrate that an adequate student:staff ratio is available to ensure that students receive adequate individual and group supervision on a continuous basis, provide the following information (based on data for 2022):
- the number of full-time academic staff members active in the programme, and levels of appointment (professor, associate professor, etc.);
 - the number of part-time academic staff members active in the programme, and the extent of their involvement;
 - (if relevant) the number of external persons (not employed and remunerated by the institution) involved in the supervision of field-based practice;
 - the number of students enrolled in the programme, by year of study. ‘Year of study’ should be informed by the school/faculty/institutional rules of progression relevant to the qualification.
- 6.2 Referring to the table in Section 4 above, describe in detail how skills development workshops, and work-based learning in field placements, are included in the programme. The description should include a rationale for the timing (year(s) of study), duration and credit allocation (insofar as relevant) for development workshops and field placement activities.
- 6.3 Provide information on how the institution ensures that assessment (of taught courses and of field-based practice) is done by appropriately qualified and experienced institutional and/or field supervisors, and that, in all cases, they have adequate infrastructural resources available for assessment to achieve the purpose of the qualification.
- 6.4 How does the programme ensure:
- an appropriate variety of assessment strategies and types, including those used in formative, continuous and summative assessment;
 - a scaffolded approach to assessment throughout the programme from first to final year, to provide incremental integration of theory and practice, and capacity for reflexive practice;

- mechanisms for peer and self-assessment, particularly with regard to field practice.

7. Progression (refer to the BSW Standard)

7.1 What vertical articulation (for example, into a master's degree) and horizontal articulation (for example, into a post-graduate diploma or honours degree) options are available to the graduate? Indicate whether or not the options are available internally (within the institution). If not available internally, what information is made available to graduates about external availability?

8. Guidelines (refer to the BSW Standard)

8.1 Describe how the academic and professional suitability of students is monitored throughout the programme.

8.2 Describe the infrastructural resources available to the programme that ensure that taught modules, developmental workshops and field-based practice are adequate to maintain the quality of the programme and the needs of academic staff and students. The description should include, but need not be limited to:

- teaching venues and laboratory facilities;
- IT facilities;
- library resources (hard copy and e-resources);
- any other resources required for delivery of the programme.

8.3 Describe how the institution ensures that resources available to the students at sites of field placement are adequate for the needs of the programme and the learning of students.

8.4 Provide details of programme academic coordination, and fieldwork coordination including, in both cases, the allocation of responsibilities.

9. Above-threshold practice (refer to the BSW Standard)

Response to this section is optional. It may include outstanding aspects of the programme that the institution regards as above-threshold practice that have not been described above, including – but not limited to:

- exceptional impact of the programme on individuals and/or communities, including understanding and application of structural determinants that affect the lives of communities, families and individuals;
- innovative inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary features of the programme;

- heightened awareness of the power of use of the Self in social work interventions, including social work research;
- enhanced ability to facilitate innovative praxis, including capacity to challenge embedded assumptions and hegemonic discourses;
- any other aspect of the programme that is deemed to be above the Standard threshold.

10. Areas for improvement

In the event that the institution believes that its programme does not yet meet some aspects of the BSW Qualification Standard, or that the reporting process has revealed issues meriting attention, please respond to the following questions.

- 10.1 What aspects of the Standard need to be addressed?
- 10.2 What are the major obstacles to addressing those aspects? (Identify and distinguish between obstacles that are a) internal to the faculty/school, b) experienced at institutional level, and c) external to the institution.)
- 10.3 What plans does the institution/faculty/school/department have for addressing those aspects needing attention?
- 10.4 Within what timelines will those plans be put into action?
- 10.5 Within what timelines are the plans likely to be fulfilled?

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