



May 2002

PQ – Post Qualifying Education and Training

A candidate's guide

The PQ framework was established by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) to support the continuing professional development of qualified social workers. This framework has been adopted by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), the General Social Care Council (GSCC), the Care Council for Wales (CCW), and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The framework encompasses two Awards in Social Work - the Post Qualifying Award and the Advanced Award - built upon two different levels of competence:

- **The Post Qualifying Award (PQSW)** which builds on the standards of the DipSW and is designed to recognise the developing skills and expertise of social work.
- **The Advanced Award (AASW)** is the qualification that recognises high skills of practice, policy making, leadership and management.

The aim of the framework is to support education, training and qualifications for social workers that will ensure users of the personal social services receive the highest possible standards of service and care.

Structure

The PQ framework is based on a system of credit accumulation and transfer (CATS) and on the assessment of a worker's practice competence as the result of learning. The UK standard for PQ is linked to academic awards. The PQ framework is managed by consortia formed by local collaborations of agencies and educational institutions. There are currently 20 PQ consortia in the UK and they have systems for:

- registering and assessing candidates;
- providing support and guidance to candidates;
- credit rating of courses and training programmes;
- providing information to workers, employers and other consortia.

The four Regulatory Councils (GSCC, CCW, NISCC and SSSC) work together to maintain common systems for approving and monitoring the work of consortia to ensure that a UK-wide standard of post qualifying education and training is maintained.

What's in it for you?

- The opportunity to work for qualifications which have a UK-wide standard.
- The formal recognition of your professional skills and competence.
- Credits for different forms of learning including in-service training programmes, work-based learning, distance learning or college courses.
- Portfolio route which will allow you to acquire credits over time and pace your study to fit with other commitments and with changes of workplace.
- Opportunities to use your professional credits towards academic awards.
- A fast track if you have already done ASW/MHO training or have the Practice Teaching award.
- Bursaries to help with the costs of study may be available through the consortia.

How to register for the awards

The awards are open to you if you hold the DipSW, CQSW, CSS or equivalent. You will need to register with the PQ consortium which covers the area where you work, or if you are not currently practising, the area where you live. The consortium will be able to advise you of the cost of registration and of the availability of bursaries. You may find that your employer will be able to help with some of the costs.

The consortium will help you decide and plan the best route to the appropriate award and provide support and guidance to take you through to assessment. The consortium will also be responsible for allocating credits, including any initial claims for prior learning. The award itself will be issued by the appropriate Council.

Further Information

For more information about PQ training in Northern Ireland, please contact:

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