

Post-qualifying learning: guidance for applicants trained overseas

Social workers

When carrying out an assessment, we must assess against 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. A summary of the SiSWE is in Appendix A of this guidance but this is only a summary. You should refer to the full standards which can be found here:

<https://learn.sssc.uk.com/siswe/siswe.html>

First and foremost we must assess your qualification. However, as part of every assessment we can also assess learning completed since you gained your qualification. We call this post-qualifying learning. You do not have to tell us about this but if your qualification does not fully meet the criteria, we can consider the extent to which post-qualifying learning makes up for this.

We consider how this learning has contributed to your continuing professional development (CPD). (We use the term 'continuing professional development' to describe ways in which you continually update your skills and knowledge to remain professionally competent.)

It is most important that you show how this learning has impacted on your current practice. We will not normally consider post-qualifying learning undertaken more than five years prior to your application.

This document contains the following sections.

1. How to tell us about your post-qualifying learning
2. Types of post-qualifying learning
3. Writing reflective accounts
4. An alternative way to tell us about post-qualifying **formal** learning (ie learning normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic, intentional way within a school, college or university.)

Appendices

A: Guide to referencing

1. How to tell us about your post-qualifying learning

You must **submit a minimum of three reflective accounts** to demonstrate how your learning has contributed to your continuing professional development and helped you develop and inform your practice.

You should reflect on:

- how this learning has helped you become more knowledgeable in your practice
- how you have used this learning in your working practice
- how you will use this learning in your future practice.

Your reflective accounts should:

- refer to appropriate theory and legislation
- be referenced according to the guide provided in Appendix B
- be authenticated by your manager, supervisor or assessor, who could also provide supplementary information about how you have applied your learning in practice
- have personal details removed to protect the confidentiality of people who use services.

2. Types of post-qualifying learning you can tell us about

You can reflect a range of formal and informal learning.

Worked-based learning

- Learning through experience in your practice.
- Additional skills training.
- Peer/student supervision or mentorship.
- Project work or management (eg leading a new position).

Formal educational activities

- Short courses.
- Larger further education programmes.
- Attendance at conferences or seminars.

Self-directed learning

- Reading journal articles/relevant literature.
- Reviewing books or articles.
- Updating knowledge through the media.

You must to show a reflective style in your work.

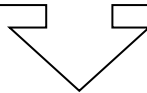
3. Writing reflective accounts that illustrate aspects of the SiSWE

The aim of your reflective accounts is to demonstrate that your knowledge, skills and values meet aspects of the SiSWE. You should familiarise yourself with the SiSWE. The suggested process for writing a reflective account follows.

Choose a piece of your post-qualification learning/training

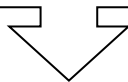
For example:

- a piece of professional practice you have undertaken
- a unit of study you have completed
- a training course you have attended
- a publication you have read
- a journal or government policy document you have read.



Think

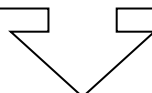
- How your learning and training have helped you to develop your professional knowledge, skills and understanding.
- How you have applied your learning and training in practical contexts, especially in contexts that include a degree of unpredictability and/or specialism.



Theory/research

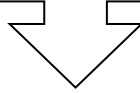
Link your learning/training with:

- current theories, concepts and principles
- techniques of enquiry, and/or research methodologies
- current policies
- current law
- previous experience.



Evaluate your chosen piece of learning/training.

- What aspects of your learning/training have you taken forward into your own practice?
- Why?
- What aspects of your learning/training were not so positive?
- Why?
- How you gained and used support from others.



Future practice

- How do you intend to make use of your learning to change your future practice?
- What benefits will your learning make to the service you work in, and to the service user?

Reflection involves **thinking** about your practice, **learning** from what you have thought about and then **making use** of what you have learnt. Genuinely reflective thoughts often reveal areas for further development as well as strengths. The following is an example of reflective account focusing on group work. (The headings in bold would not usually be incorporated into a piece of written work. They are there to show you how a reflective piece of writing can be broken down into component parts.)

Example: As a social work practitioner working in a multidisciplinary team in a health centre in an inner city area I took part in a discussion about women with issues around depression and loss who present frequently with health issues. Members of the team felt that often the health problems presented were associated with loss. I suggested establishing a time-limited group where the women could explore their issues about loss together and move to an outcome where if possible they could make plans about their future.

Choose a piece of post-qualification learning

The piece of practice I have chosen is to establish a time-limited group to enable a group of women who have experienced loss to move forward with their lives. This practice required learning in relation to group work and loss. I kept a written record both of my learning and of group process as a tool for the evaluation of progress and practice.

Theory/research

The thinking and planning of the group used theory from a number of sources which I learned about during my social work training, at two courses I have taken since qualifying (group work and loss) and through additional reading, multidisciplinary discussion and discussion with my supervisor during supervision sessions and informally. In terms of group work I referred particularly to the work of Doel in Davies (2013). He stresses the importance of planning the first session and of group process. In terms of loss I used theories of Murray Parkes and Prigerson (2010) and Worden (2010), all of whom drew attention to states of grief and tasks associated with the grieving process. An outcomes approach is fundamental to all of my work and although I didn't determine particular outcomes before the group I perceived potential broad outcomes as supporting the choices, potential, dignity and wellbeing of group members as they dealt with loss and its consequences.

I was conscious that group participants had all been referred because they appeared not to have resolved difficulties associated with loss and continued to show signs of depression and/or experience health difficulties after a considerable period of time. I planned for up to 10 participants to attend, in the first instance, six sessions one week apart. In the event six women agreed to come along to the first meeting. The initial aim was for the group of women to work through their feelings of loss and to make plans for a more hopeful future but I remained flexible about outcomes depending on what the participants themselves wanted

from the group. I planned the first session on the assumption those attending would be apprehensive and would want to see the group had the potential to help them. In the first session I aimed to put people at their ease, providing refreshments and a comfortable, private environment. I asked people to introduce themselves and to say three things about themselves that they felt comfortable to share with others. I shouldn't have worried about how this session would go. Once participants appreciated the non-threatening environment and could see there were other people who were experiencing difficulties too, they were (some more than others) open about what they had experienced and anxious to get to a better place. One participant seemed particularly distressed and reluctant to share her feelings but I noticed that another participant agreed to meet her at the bus stop the following week and on that occasion they arrived together. In the end four of the participants, all on the same bus route came in together on the same bus, whilst the other two made their own way to meetings. All six participants stayed for the six sessions though some missed a session or two for reasons not apparently associated with the group.

At the end of each session we summarised what had been discussed, what participants had felt about the group and what they would like to talk about the following week.

In terms of loss, all of the participants had got beyond Murray Parkes' and Higerson's first stage of grief before the group started, in that they had accepted the person they had lost was dead; they had mostly also gone through pining but they had not reached a stage of 'acceptance and recovery'. In terms of Worden's theory members were working either towards the third task of 'adjusting to a world without the deceased' or the fourth task of 'finding an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life'. This mixture of stages could have been both an advantage and a disadvantage, though it turned out mainly advantageously. Some of the group were anxious to move on to the

fourth stage but had got stuck. They were able to agree tasks for themselves at the end of each session in terms of what they would do once the group came to an end. Two members decided they would return to learning and another that she would try to get part-time work as a hairdresser which is what she had done before she lost her husband. Three members still had a lot of grief work to do and talked a lot about the person they had lost, both positively and negatively. The advantage of the mixed group was the ones who had moved a stage further on helped these women. The mutual support was quite humbling. The disadvantage could have been that those who wanted to move on were held back by those at an earlier stage of grieving, though this did not actually appear to be the case. In fact everyone went backwards and forwards with their stages of grief and those ready to move on still sometimes went back to an earlier stage and task of grieving and talked at length about the lost person. At our last session we organised a tea and among themselves group members agreed to stay in touch. Everyone summarised where they had been and where they were now, indicating that for all of them their wellbeing had improved. Each member identified two things they were going to do in the future. For one member in particular, the group was a lifeline, since before the group she had been very isolated. This final session was very important in terms of enabling people to disengage from the group in an encouraging way.

Evaluate

I think the most positive learning that came from the experience of facilitating the group was recognition of the power of the group to help people with similar difficulties and that people can help one another through difficulties, it isn't all up to the social worker. For me the most important factors were preparation and the development of knowledge and skill. Preparation, especially before the first session in terms of deciding the parameters of the group and preparing the environment; knowledge of group process and in this instance the stages and tasks of

grieving; I also used my knowledge of task-centred work. Before the group I didn't have much skill as a group worker apart from role play during my group work training course and establishing the group was a bit of a gamble; I showed confidence where actually I didn't have very much, though doing as much preparation as I could did help. I also had the support of my supervisor who worked in a neighbouring health centre. She had run groups herself to assist people with various difficulties and was supportive of both the idea of the group and in providing support for learning and useful guidelines. I discussed the group in detail with her before starting and after the third and final sessions.

I was fortunate in the group membership in that only one isolated member was experiencing difficulties that at times it was quite difficult for the group to deal with. She was suffering from quite an entrenched depression that may even have been present before her current loss. She wasn't cheerful by the end of the group but she was supported, not as isolated as she had been and had some hope for the future.

I think the outcomes of the group were largely achieved. We explored what choices people had for the future and people made decisions about what to do next in their lives. Dignity, potential and independence were respected by all group members and in the last session everyone summarised where they had been and where they were now, indicating that for all of them their wellbeing had improved. Each member had their own outcomes to carry forward to the future.

Future practice

Although the group worked for the members who attended, I did feel some of this was more from luck than judgement. This was especially so in terms of the composition of the group, though it would have been difficult to exclude anyone. I do wonder what would have happened if all the members had been at an earlier stage of grieving. However, what the group did do was give me the confidence to try group work where a group

of people are experiencing problems. It requires a degree of flexibility to adapt to group dynamics, a recognition that group members help one another and it can provide choices for them that would not otherwise have been available. It will certainly be an option that I will use again.

Relevance to the SiSWE

This practice met many aspects of the SiSWE. It especially met most aspects of 2e 'Working with groups to promote choice and independent living'. The aspects of SiSWE met by this practice are summarised in the table below in Section 2. There were also aspects of 1a 'Preparing for social work contact and involvement', 2b 'Working with...groups to achieve change, promote dignity, realise potential and improve life opportunities, 2d 'Developing networks to meet assessed needs and planned outcomes'.

Part of SiSWE	Evidence	Learning	Date
2.6 Work with groups to achieve effective outcomes	Facilitation of a group to assist six women deal with loss.	The importance of group development, beginnings, processes and endings; helping a new group to develop; recognition of how groups can promote choice, potential and well-being.	Jan/Feb 2015
1.1 Prepare for social work contact and involvement, including in the context of inter-professional and integrated services.	Evaluation of available information to identify the best form of initial involvement.	Recognition of the importance of preparation to group process in terms of knowledge, skill and understanding of group dynamics and the states and tasks associated with grief and loss.	Jan/Feb 2015
2.3 Work in an ethnically and culturally sensitive manner with people receiving services, carers and communities, to achieve change, promote	Theoretical ideas of group process including bringing the group to a satisfactory ending.	Importance of establishing outcomes that achieve change and of respect for dignity and establishment of relationships.	Jan/Feb 2015

dignity, realise potential and improve life opportunities.			
2.5 Develop collaborative and effective networks to meet assessed needs and planned outcomes.	As well as formal group sessions an informal network of contacts was developed and carried into the future.	Flexibility to build on and support foreseen and unforeseen group developments.	Jan/Feb 2015
4.1 Through critical analysis and reflection, evaluate and use up to date knowledge and national and international research.	Use and evaluation of theoretical frameworks.	Learning about the work of Murray Parkes and Higerson (2010) in relation to states of grief and of Worden (2010) in relation to tasks of mourning, all updated in the light of up-to-date research. I kept my own record to evaluate application of their theories and of group process.	Jan/Feb 2015
4.2 Work ethically within agreed standards of social work practice using personal and professional knowledge and skills.	The social work value base including the Code of Practice for Social Service Employees underpinned all work. Critical reflection used to evaluate the effectiveness of practice.	The value base is as important in group work as in all aspects of social work practice. It is important to be aware of potential sources of discrimination and misuse of power in myself and members of the group and work to counteract these.	Jan/Feb 2015
5.1 Manage own role in as a professional social worker in an ethical and accountable way.	Use of professional knowledge and judgement, supervision and discussion, as well as keeping written records.	Learning to handle difficult situations which are potentially stressful through improving knowledge and skills and constructive use of supervision.	Jan/Feb 2015

5.2 Take responsibility for own continuing professional learning and development.	Learning and development undertaken and implemented in relation to group processes, grief and loss.	I undertook additional post-qualifying learning in group processes and loss.	2013/2014
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References

Davies, M. (ed.) (2013) The Blackwell Companion to Social Work, 4th edition. Oxford, Blackwell, pages 369 – 378.

Murray Parkes, C. and Prigerson, H. (2010) Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life, 4th edition. London. Penguin.

Worden, W. (2010) Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner. 4th edition. East Sussex. Brunner-Routledge.

4. An alternative way to tell us about post-qualifying formal learning

By formal learning we mean additional qualifications or further training you may have received that is normally delivered by trained teachers in a systematic, intentional way within a school, college or university. You may submit reflective accounts to tell us about this learning. However, you may also tell us about this type of learning by providing information from the training provider.

To do this, please list any post-qualifying formal learning you want to tell us about in a table like the one below and send this to us along with the following supporting evidence.

- A copy of your final award certificate or certificate of successful completion.
- Information from the training provider to tell us about the content of the training. We cannot assess your training without this. Ideally we are looking for learning outcomes (ie what you had to know, understand and be able to do successfully to complete the training).

- Confirmation from the training provider of the academic level of your training.

The following is just an example of how you might fill in this form.

Name of formal training	Training provider	Date achieved	Learning outcomes and the standard(s) within the SiSWE they support
<p>Certificate in group work skills (Four day course over two weekends plus distance learning, for qualified social work and health professionals.)</p>	<p>Institute of Leadership and Group Work</p>	<p>03/11/14</p>	<p>To gain the knowledge and skills of tools and techniques to develop myself as a group worker and group leader.</p> <p>Relevant to: SiSWE Standards 1 and 2, especially 2e.</p>
<p>Grief and loss</p> <p>Post-qualifying two day course for social work and health professionals.</p>	<p>Government sponsored course</p>	<p>29/10/13</p>	<p>To gain the knowledge and skills to participate in a multidisciplinary approach to grief and loss using up-to-date research and literature.</p> <p>Relevant to: SiSWE Standard 4.</p>

Appendix A: Citing references

The following guidelines are based on the Harvard system of referencing. When you cite references in your work and provide a reference list at the end of your work, you should adopt a Harvard style. There are many variations on the Harvard system of referencing. The one detailed here is the most simple. If you are familiar with another form of Harvard referencing, you are welcome to use it.

Adopting accurate referencing procedures and conventions is important for several reasons.

- Using references demonstrates the range of reading you have undertaken.
- Referencing provides evidence and support to the statements or arguments you bring forward.
- Correct referencing enables the reader of your work to locate the publications you have engaged with.
- To add someone's work to yours without acknowledgement is plagiarism.

Presentation of references

At the end of all written submissions, you should list all the references you have used in alphabetical order by the author's surname. You should list these under the heading **References**. The following is an example.

References

Casey, T (2010) *Inclusive Play: Practical Strategies for Children from Birth to Eight*, London: Sage.

Callan, S. and Reed, M. (2011) *Work-based research in early years*, London: Sage.

Hughes, G and Ferguson, R (2000) *Ordering lives: family, work and welfare*, The Open University, London and New York.

1. Books

1.1 In the Harvard system, references in the text (in-text citations) are referred to by the **author's name** and **year of publication**. For example:

It is stated that... (Casey, 2010)

or

Casey (2010) states...

In your reference list at the end of your work you should then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Casey, T. (2010) *Inclusive Play: Practical Strategies for Children from Birth to Eight*, London: Sage.

1.2 References in the text for two authors are referred to by **both authors' names** and **year of publication**. For example:

Hughes and Ferguson (2000) discuss...

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Hughes, G and Ferguson, R (2000) *Ordering lives: family, work and welfare*: The Open University, London and New York.

1.3 For more than two authors give the surname of the **first author followed by et al.** Et al. means 'and others'. For example:

Katz et al. (2000) demonstrated that...

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Katz, J. Peberedy, A. and Douglas, J. (2000) *Promoting Health, Knowledge and Practice*: The Open University, London.

2. Quotes

If you are directly quoting material (ie using the exact form of words used in the original text), you will need to include the **author's name, year of publication** and **page number**. Clearly indicate where the quotation begins and finishes by using quotation marks. For example:

According to Casey (2010, p. 27) 'the play environment is made up not just of physical features but also of the atmosphere and this has a significant influence on how children play'.

Larger quotes should be displayed in a separate paragraph. For example:

Casey (2010, p.37) discusses participation:

Play spaces should be allowed to evolve in an organic fashion through children's own play. We are not aiming for a fixed and static environment but one that can change through children's use of it, in a very immediate form of participation. The aim is that the play environment, both physical and organizational, should support all children to access play opportunities alongside each other in the way they would chose for themselves.

If you do not name the source in the lead-in to the quote, then it must be given after it.

Discussion around participation leads us to consider that:

Play spaces should be allowed to evolve in an organic fashion through children's own play. We are not aiming for a fixed and static environment but one that can change through children's use of it, in a very immediate form of participation. The aim is that the play environment, both physical and organizational, should support all children to access play opportunities alongside each other in the way they would chose for themselves. (Casey, 2010, p. 37)

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Casey, T. (2010) *Inclusive Play: Practical Strategies for Children from Birth to Eight*, London: Sage

3. Secondary referencing

You may want to use a quotation or an idea from a source referenced in a work you have read. You haven't read the original piece of work but have discovered it through a secondary source. This is known as secondary referencing. Recognition is given to both the original author and the current author within the text. For example:

Cohen cited in Jenkinson (2001) refers to the benefits of imaginative play.

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Jenkinson, S. (2001) *The Genius of Play: Celebrating the Spirit of Childhood*, Gloucestershire: Hawthorn Press.

4. Reports

Workforce planning is vital in order to meet the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff, particularly in remote and rural areas. NHS Scotland (2007)

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

NHS Scotland (2007) *Better Health, Better Care: Action Plan*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

5. Journals and newspaper articles

5.1 Printed journal articles

Discussion by Brown and Morrison (2009) of the work undertaken by play specialists in a theatre setting highlights the diversity of the role of the Hospital Play Specialist.

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Brown, B. and Morrison, C. (2009) Theatre Made Fun, *The Journal of the National Association of Hospital Play Staff*, Issue 46, Autumn 09, p13-15.

5.2 Ejournal articles

Walker (2014) suggests that poor planning has failed our children.

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Walker, C. (2014) Nursing Children and Young People Vol 26, no 1. pp.5 [Online] available at <http://www.nursingchildrenandyoungpeople.com> (accessed 12 February 2014).

5.3 Websites

The most obvious differences from other referencing conventions are:

- the use of the term 'accessed'

- the crucial importance of getting every detail (letters, symbols and no spaces) of a website address.

For example:

When considering aspects of discrimination that many disabled people face (DDA, 1995) includes a section on children with disabilities which can help inform the professional practice of a Hospital Play Specialist.

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Accessed 6 May 2010

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/rightsandobligations/disabilityrights/dgl>

6. Referencing to legislation

The Statute (Great Britain Data Protection Act 1998) laid down...

In your reference list at the end of your work, you would then provide full details of the source you read it in. For example:

Great Britain (1998) *Data Protection Act 1998*. Chapter 29. London: HMSO.

7. CD-ROMs

Author, Date, Title of item, Title of CD-ROM, Place, Publication of the CD-ROM, Publisher of the CD-ROM. For example:

Shaw, P. Cancer/Leukaemia Interactive CD Edinburgh, Sick Kids Friends Foundation. CD-ROM.