

**Notes of the 201st Meeting of the Advisory Committee on
Social Work Training and Manpower Planning (Advisory Committee)
held on Monday, 24 February 2025 at 3:30 p.m.
at Room 918, 9/F., Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai**

Present:

Professor MOK Ka-ho	(Chairman)
Mr LO Kin-tak	
Ms CHAN Siu-lai	
Dr Jess LEUNG Lam-ming	
Miss Mandy YAU Tze-man	
Ms Catherine WONG Pui-yee	
Ms Grace CHAN Man-yee	
Miss CHU Lai-ling, M.H.	
Ms Joyce LEE Yuen-sum	
Professor NG Siu-man	The University of Hong Kong (representing Professor Amy CHOW Yin-man)
Dr Cherry TAM Hau-lin	City University of Hong Kong (representing Professor Matthew Garnet MANNING)
Professor Eric CHUI Wing-hong	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Dr Steve FONG Fu-fai	Hong Kong Shue Yan University
Dr CHENG Kam-yuen	UOW College Hong Kong
Ms Amy LAI Yuk-yee	Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)
Ms Jerry JI Sang	Education Bureau (EDB)
Miss Shirley CHUNG Yuk-fong	Social Welfare Department (SWD)
Mr Roland LEUNG Kam-ming	SWD (Secretary)

In attendance:

Miss Tiffin CHUNG	
Mr Jasper POON	
Mr Bernard KAN Tze-yeung	SWD
Ms Coby CHAN Mei-yi	SWD
Mr Joseph CHAN Tat-kuen	SWD
Ms Grace LEUNG Kwai-yuen	SWD
Miss Wendy MAK Wing-yan	SWD
Mr Andrew KWAN Kai-ming	SWD
Mr Henry NGAI Yu-tin	SWD

Absent with apologies:

Prof Bessie CHONG Pui-san	
Professor TO Siu-ming	The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Professor Shirley HUNG Suet-lin	Hong Kong Baptist University

Item 1: Matters arising from the 200th meeting held on 20 May 2024

Letter to the President of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities

1. SWD representative recapitulated members' concern over probable shortage of social work manpower. It was agreed at the last meeting that the Chairman would issue a letter to the Presidents of UGC-funded universities providing social work training programmes and copied to self-financing Training Institutions (TIs), with a view to appealing to addressees for increasing the number of self-financed taught postgraduate intake places for social work discipline in order to secure stable supply of social work manpower for maintaining quality social welfare services. The letter was issued on 21 August 2024, with a sample letter sent to members on 26 August 2024 for information.

Task Force on reviewing methodology of Social Work Manpower Requirements System

2. SWD representative reported that a Task Force (TF) was set up under the Advisory Committee in June 2023 to review the data collection method, parameters and assumptions of the Social Work Manpower Requirements System (SWMRS). In the 2nd TF meeting held on 15 July 2024, TF recommended the Advisory Committee to further explore the feasibility of collecting registered social workers (RSWs) registration number for SWMRS, while the parameters and assumptions should remain unchanged.

3. The Secretariat touched base and met with the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) in December 2024 to explore the feasibility of collecting data of RSWs from the latter for the purpose of the annual updating exercise. The Secretariat was examining the issue and would report further to the Advisory Committee in the next meeting.

Sharing session on Welfare initiatives

4. SWD representative reported that a Sharing Session of "Handling of Suspected Child Maltreatment and Elder Abuse Cases" was held on 12 September 2024 and attended by 93 staff from TIs and eight from SWD. Among the possible topics for future sharing sessions and other activities to be organised by SWD, TI participants suggested the Department to organise further sharing session on the handling of mandatory reporting of suspected child maltreatment cases. Some TI participants suggested SWD to organise short tours to the Mainland for social work teaching staff of TIs, with a view to strengthening their understanding of the latest development of the welfare services in the Mainland.

TI Mainland Tours

5. SWD representatives reported that having regard to TIs' suggestion that teaching staff played a pertinent role in enhancing the understanding of national affairs and promoting patriotic values of social work students which was very crucial for safeguarding national security, SWD would arrange three 3-day Mainland tours for TI social work teaching staff in 2025-26. The tour aimed at enhancing participants' understanding of national affairs, national security and welfare development in the Mainland. The 1st tour was tentatively scheduled for mid-May 2025. TI representatives were encouraged to join the tours, and further details would be announced in due course.

6. Participants of the 1st tour would have the opportunity to conduct exchanges with their counterparts at the Sun Yat-sen University or South China University of Technology, which were considered as esteemed universities for social work disciplines in the Greater Bay Area. Plans for holding seminars with the related association and visits to the relevant government offices and welfare service units in Guangzhou were also under consideration.

7. Members shared that the Hong Kong Association of Schools of Social Work would organise in June 2025 a 5-day tour to the Shandong Province for TIs teaching staff, and TIs would probably face difficulties in arranging teaching staff to join Mainland tours if they were to be organised during the same period.

8. SWD representative shared that the Mainland tours to be organised by SWD would be a 3-day tour to the Greater Bay Area with the aim of fostering deeper academic exchanges between local TIs and their counterparts in the Mainland. SWD would take note of the teaching schedule of TIs when arranging Mainland tours as far as practicable. While TI teaching staff remained the target participants, field work instructors were also welcome to join the tours.

9. The Chairman invited members to actively participate in the upcoming Mainland tours and encourage their teaching staff to join at the same time so as to enhance their understanding of national affairs, national security and welfare development in the Mainland.

Follow-up on enquiry about Lump Sum Grant review

10. SWD representative reported that in response to the enquiry of the former Member raised at the last meeting concerning the provision of more information on service reviews, Subventions Branch subsequently passed the relevant information to the concerned Member including schedule, methodology and process of service reviews. The former Member was also informed of the communication channels established between SWD and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating subvented welfare services, and was reassured that SWD would consider the views of NGOs during the conduct of service reviews as appropriate. Besides, implication to additional social work manpower arising from service reviews, if any, would be reflected in the SWMRS annual updating exercises.

Cultural sensitivity in social work curriculum training

11. SWD representative shared that the Secretariat issued an email on 4 June 2024 to those TIs which did not have representatives sitting on the Advisory Committee inviting them to consider and incorporate “cultural sensitivity” in their social work curricula. In response to members’ enquiry concerning “The survey on children and adolescent” raised at the last meeting, supplementary information on the subject matter was provided to members via email on 25 September 2024 for reference.

Survey on Employment Situation of Social Work Graduate

12. SWD representative recapitulated that SWD had conducted the “Survey on Employment Situation of Social Work Graduates” (Survey) annually since 1997 in order to have an overview of the employment situation of local fresh graduates. The response rate to the Survey had been declining and sometimes fell below 20% in recent years. Noting the above and coupled with the fact that similar surveys were conducted by individual TIs and UGC

with overlapping contents with the one conducted by SWD, the meeting proposed in the last meeting the cessation of the Survey to which TI representatives raised no objection. To that end, SWD ceased the conduct of the survey upon the release of the Survey Report 2023 in December 2024. For the avoidance of doubt, cessation of the Survey would not affect the conduct of the SWMRS annual updating exercise.

Item 2: Enhancing functions of Advisory Committee ***(Paper ACSWTMP/1/2025)***

1. SWD representative briefed members on the revised membership and proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Advisory Committee. By enhancing its functions, the Advisory Committee would hold three regular meetings per annum to strengthen its communication with TIs and NGOs.

Revised Membership

2. Member A noted that self-financing institutions rotated as members of the Advisory Committee once every two years, and it took about ten years for them to complete the entire rotational cycle. With the increasing significance of self-financing institutions in social work programmes, it was suggested to revisit the rotation pattern with a view to achieving a more balanced participation of self-financing institutions in the Advisory Committee.

3. SWD representative responded that it was important to strike a balance between a more balanced self-financing TI representation in the Advisory Committee on the one hand while averting frequent changes in membership to ensure continuity of service on the other. To this end and prior to this meeting, the Secretariat had contacted various self-financing TIs to brief them on the proposed rotational membership arrangement to which they considered as reasonable.

TOR

4. Member B appreciated the move to enhance the functions of the Advisory Committee to meet its changing needs. She shared that the turnover rates and salary data in the NGO salary surveys conducted by HKCSS since 2003 could be a useful reference for the Advisory Committee. She would like to share the information in future Advisory Committee meetings so that other members could have more information about the salary and employment conditions of non-governmental organisations' employees.

5. Member C said that the Advisory Committee was a useful platform for TIs and NGOs to discuss social work manpower issues. NGOs could share those issues at the meeting and TIs could convey valuable information to students through teaching and other interactions with the latter.

6. Member D shared that NGOs were facing significant challenge in hiring SWP to fill Social Work Assistant (SWA) posts which had high turnover rate. In light of budget cut in the coming years, it would be even more difficult for NGOs to retain SWA staff especially in the elderly and rehabilitation service settings. Member E furthered that the vacancy of social work posts of her organisation could only be filled when a new batch of social work graduates

became available in Summer.

7. The Chairman highlighted the importance of the enhanced functions and role of the Advisory Committee. Through the collective wisdom of members and representatives, the Committee could provide timely and balanced advice to the government on matters relating to education and training of social workers and social work manpower.

8. Member F highlighted the need for multidisciplinary collaboration between healthcare /medical professionals and social workers and particularly in mental health and elderly services, and invited TIs to consider strengthening the training to social work students in those two areas. Thanking the suggestions of Member F, Member G shared that TIs provided both general and specialised training to social work students to prepare and develop them for future service needs.

9. Member D suggested that training on service performance monitoring system and key performance indicators for social work students facilitated them to discharge duties in workplaces effectively and manage work expectation.

10. The Chairman remarked that taking into consideration the stringent manpower situation faced by the social work sector, it was important to retain talents to remain in the social work profession and to manage students' expectation of the workplace. It was considered that the Advisory Committee was a useful platform to discuss social work manpower needs, and would facilitate TIs to prepare students for their future jobs. It was viewed that content of the training programmes might be further discussed in future meetings.

11. SWD representative reiterated that the Advisory Committee served as an important platform connecting all stakeholders in the social work field. With its enhanced functions, the Advisory Committee could foster more constructive dialogue among stakeholders and facilitate TIs to nurture talents to address the changing needs of the society.

12. After deliberations, members endorsed the revised TOR.

Item 3: Any other business

Sharing on the latest welfare initiatives

1. SWD representative shared with members the latest welfare initiatives as announced in the Policy Address 2024 covering targeted poverty alleviation, care for the elderly, child protection, support measures to working parents, carers and persons with disabilities, and the Dedicated Fund.

Future mode of meeting

2. SWD representative said that while the Advisory Committee meetings would continue to be held in traditional physical mode, proper use of information service technology to facilitate a mixed or hybrid meeting mode might become the new normal.

Date of next meeting

3. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 2025, with the actual date to be confirmed in due course. The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

**Advisory Committee Secretariat
July 2025**