

Proposed Professional Development Standards -2022

Strengthening a Commitment to Life-long Learning





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Executive Summary

This document outlines **proposed** changes to the professional development requirements for NSCSW social workers. Upon consultation and approval by Council and the Board of Examiners **these requirements would come into effect January 2022 and are applicable for the reporting period ending December 2022.**

These changes are intended to:

- Provide greater clarity of expectations and support to social workers regarding required professional development activities to enable successful registration;
- Promote professional competency of registrants and;
- Enable the College to fulfill its mandate to regulate the profession in effort to protect the public.

The proposed changes are grounded in our professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, are aligned with CASWE-ACFTS Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards. These are consistent with the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (NSRHPN) Continuing Competency Recommendations for Professional Development. The changes also reflect evidence-based research regarding current best practices. Feedback from NSCSW members will be integrated into this policy to ensure that professional development requirements are meaningful and relevant for Nova Scotia social workers.

There are three categories of Professional Development Activities: Mandated, Formal, and Informal. These are further described in the document.

1. Mandated PD activities relate to competencies the College has deemed to be essential
2. Discretionary formal professional development activities
3. Discretionary informal professional development activities....

Glossary of Membership Categories

Active Social Workers= All Registered Social Workers, Social Worker Candidates and Provisional Registered Social Workers

Associate Social Workers= All registered social workers who are currently not practicing (on parental leave, sick leave, unemployed or retired)

First-time members= All active social workers who were registered in the past year, and therefore have pro-rated fees and professional development expectations

Requirements for Active Social Workers

All active social workers registered with the College must complete **40 hours of professional development**, some of which include required content, and some of which reflect members' own interests or areas of expertise. For ease of reference details of mandatory and discretionary training and activities are further clarified fully outlined in this document. Recording requirements and verification processes, as identified in this document, speak to the need for social workers to be accountable to their profession and the public's interest. Membership renewal is conditional upon successful completion and documentation of these requirements.

Mandatory PD activities (minimum of 6 hours)

- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training in ethics
- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training in anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice
- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training and/or activities related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations
- 2 hours (minimum) of mandatory training and/or activities related to mitigating against vicarious trauma and secondary stress
- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training and/or activities related to social justice

Discretionary PD activities

- 20 hours (minimum) of training from the activities listed in the formal professional development category
- 14 hours (maximum) of activities from the informal professional development category

Note: Annual professional development requirements are adjusted based upon registration status. Recording requirements and verification processes, as explained on p.8 to ensure protection of the public. Membership renewal is conditional upon successful completion and documentation of these requirements.

Table for Active Registered Social Workers

Professional Development Standards	2019 Professional Development Standards	2022 Professional Development Standards Active Status
Mandatory Training	5 hours mandatory ethics every 5 years <i>*in addition to required 40 hours</i>	1 hour of mandatory ethics training 1 hour anti-racist/anti-discriminatory practice training <i>*included in required 40</i>
Mandatory Training and/or Activities	None	1 hour/TRC & 2 hours/ prevention of vicarious trauma and secondary stress & 1 hour/social justice <i>*included in required 40</i>
Formal Professional Development	20 hours	20 hours
Informal Professional Development	20 hours	14 hours
Total Hours	40 hours <i>+5 hours ethics every 5 years</i>	40 hours

NOTE: For members who have already completed ethics requirements according to the 5 year cycle previously in place, this requirement is waived until they are eligible for a new cycle.

Requirements for All Associate Social Workers

All associate social workers must complete **20 hours of professional development**, which includes the 6 hours of required training and activities, and a maximum of 10 hours from the informal professional development category. Membership renewal is conditional upon successful completion and documentation of these requirements.

Mandatory PD activities (minimum of 6 hours):

- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training in ethics
- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training in anti-oppressive practice
- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training and/or activities related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations
- 2 hours (minimum) of mandatory training and/or activities related to mitigating against vicarious trauma and secondary stress
- 1 hour (minimum) of mandatory training and/or activities related to social justice

Discretionary PD activities

- 4 hours (minimum) of training from the activities listed in the formal professional development category
- 10 hours (maximum) of activities from the informal professional development category

Table for Associate Social Workers

Professional Development Standards	2019 Professional Development Standards	2022 Professional Development Standards
Mandatory Training	None	1 hour of mandatory ethics training 1 hour anti-racist and anti-discriminatory training * included in required 20
Mandatory Training and/or Activities	None	1 hour/TRC & 2 hours/ prevention of vicarious trauma and secondary stress & 1 hour/social justice * included in required 20
Formal Professional Development	None	4 hours
Informal Professional Development	20 hours	10 hours
Total Hours	20 hours	20 hours

NOTE: Members who are first-time registrants and members who split the year between associate and active status should calculate the percentage of the year spent as each, and pro-rate their requirements accordingly. For members who have already completed ethics requirements

according to the 5-year cycle previously in place, this requirement is waived until they are eligible for a new cycle.

Overview of Current Research and Best Practice Recommendations for Professional Development Standards

This document outlines changes to the professional development requirements for NSCSW social workers. These changes are intended to:

- Provide greater clarity of expectations and support to social workers to enable successful registration;
- Promote professional competency of registrants and;
- Enable the College to fulfill its mandate to regulate the profession in effort to protect the public.

The changes are grounded in our professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, are aligned with CASWE-accredited social work curricula, and are consistent with the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (NSRHPN) Continuing Competency Recommendations for Professional Development in their 2021 Continuing Competency Report. The changes also reflect evidence-based research and current literature regarding current best practices. Feedback from NSCSW members was integrated into this policy to ensure that professional development requirements are meaningful and relevant for Nova Scotia social workers.

The goal of these standards is to support each social worker to achieve their fullest potential. The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers strives for constant quality improvement and is member driven organization committed to transparency and accountability members should always feel free to provide input on standards and other ways that we can support our members in their ongoing professional development.

Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (NSRHPN) Continuing Competency Recommendations

In June of 2021, the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (NSRHPN) working group on continuing competency presented a report of best practices based upon a literature review of best practices in assuring ongoing competence of registrants. An annotated bibliography of twenty-seven selected references on continuing professional development (CPD) and continuing competence was developed.

Current literature and best practice recommend adjusting regulators' current standards or policies for continuing professional development (CPD) for their registrants to demonstrate continuing competency requirements that are relevant to their scope of practice and meet re-licensure criteria. **In addition to demonstrating a minimum number of practice hours in a specified period and a specific number of education hours, practitioner reflective practice can ensure that continued learning contributes to growing competencies.**

The Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) has developed [guidelines and resources](#) for both practitioners and organizations to implement reflective practice. The HCPC describe

reflective practice as "... a process which helps you gain insight into your professional practise by thinking analytically about any element of it."

This recommendation can be found in several of the new NSCSW Professional Development Standards:

- Reflective practice is included in a larger reflective process that will also protect practitioners from vicarious trauma and secondary distress, as well as additional requirements to build resilience and compassion satisfaction that are included in the informal professional development requirements. Questions to facilitate reflective practice will be included for all video recordings of training opportunities provided by the College and are incorporated into the forms to be submitted in order to receive continuing education certificates.
- The new requirements, along with the existing requirements in ethics training are all designed to ensure that the deepening and enhancement of critical thinking skills amongst practitioners, as well as, to ensure the protection of the public, given new research in this area.

Aligning Professional Development Requirements with CASWE-ACFTS Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)

A central goal of any continuing professional development process is the need to ensure that practitioners in the field continue their learning in a way that is aligned with their evolving profession. The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) is developing a new code of ethics to reflect a commitment to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as, ensure anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice for social work with marginalized populations. The Canadian Association for Social Work Education/Association Canadienne pour la formation en travail social (CASWE-ACFTS) Domain 3 of the CASWE/ACFTS Educational Policies and Standards articulates the curricular framework and content consistent with the College's Vision statement- a statement committed to social justice, democracy, and equity. These new requirements reflect this new understanding of the ways in which social workers have supported and participated in the oppression of historically marginalized populations.

Consequently, it is imperative that ongoing continuing education and professional development requirements mirror current guidelines and recommendations, and that competencies and values that are being taught in the university setting to social work students also be shared with practitioners in the field, in order to ensure that NSCSW members have the most current knowledge and understanding of their work. This also serves the NSCSW's mandate to protect the public.

New evidence-based recommendations regarding ongoing professional development suggests that a **mixture of formal and informal training and activities is most effective**, when the following is taken into account:

- (1) Work-based learning, such as reflecting on experiences at work, giving and receiving feedback or being a member of a committee,

- (2) Professional activity such as joining one's professional body in advocacy on a topic related to one's practice,
- (3) Formal education
- (4) Self-directed learning or guided self-reflection activities such as those included in the informal professional development categories.

These recommendations are grounded, both in current research and best practices related to ongoing professional development, as well as, those related to preventing burnout and compassion fatigue amongst social workers.

Promoting Best Practice and Optimal Professional Satisfaction

The NSCSW's recent report on Repositioning Social Work Practice in Mental Health in Nova Scotia found that 95% of NSCSW social workers interviewed reported significant moral distress. This finding is in keeping with most contemporary research regarding social workers and other caregiving professionals, which shows that they are at a high risk for vicarious trauma and burnout.

Compassion fatigue and burnout can lead to serious concerns regarding one's professional practice, and indeed, a majority of the complaints brought forth to the College reflect professional decisions that are influenced by members' own unresolved issues and ways in which vicarious trauma and secondary stress impacts their practice.

Given the College's mandate to promote the profession and protect the public, evidence-based preventative measures are included in the mandatory requirements for professional development. Consequently, several of the ongoing learning activities recommended above, that are designed to promote self-reflection, are integrated into activities that can also build resilience and compassion satisfaction for social workers. These are based upon current research and best practices in the field.

Fulfilling the College's Mandate

In addition to representing the best practice recommendations outlined by the NSRHPN, the professional development standards outlined in this document aim to fulfill the College's legal mandate, as outlined by the Social Workers Act, as well as the recommendations by the Truth and Reconciliation commission.

The Social Workers Act mandates NSCSW to regulate the practice of social work and advance the practice of social work in the public interest; as well as to encourage members to participate in activities that will be in the public interest, improve social conditions and promote social justice. In addition to representing the best practice recommendations outlined by the

Amongst the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission includes the provision of education to public servants and health care professionals, as well as those charged with child welfare, specifically on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. An additional and necessary component to this recommendation includes skills-based training in

intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism to ensure anti-oppressive practice.

Recording and Verification

Recording Requirements

Members of NSCSW are required to record and submit professional development activities to the College yearly. For formal activities, this may include copies of documents such as a syllabus or a certificate of completion. For informal activities, this can be as simple as writing down the details (date, hours, title, author, facilitator, etc.) for later reference. A form to assist members in recording is provided.

We encourage tracking each activity immediately afterwards, to make record-keeping easier and increase accuracy. Activity tracking must be entered in the online member profile, and the completed inventory is submitted to the College during the annual registration renewal process. Registration renewal cannot be granted until all requirements for professional development have been met. If the professional development inventory does not meet the regulatory requirements, the renewal cannot be completed and the member will not be registered and licensed as a social worker for the upcoming year. It is each individual member's responsibility to ensure their own professional development is completed, recorded, and submitted to the College on time each year.

These requirements are necessary in order to ensure NSCSW's ability to protect the public by ensuring that all social workers have received the most up to date and current professional development.

Verification Process

The College may, at any time, verify members' records to ensure the validity of data that is recorded on applications to the College respecting the professional development hours have been completed. Verification processes are in place to ensure social workers meet the required professional development expectations and are accountable to their regulatory professional body whose mandate is to protect the public. Verification processes also help the college to plan future professional development activities, by being able to identify trends and interests of our members.

Members must therefore keep a record of their professional development hours, and verification of their formal activities. Most formal activities will have credentials listed on their promotional material, such as certificates that are provided upon completion. Records should be kept for the previous three years. The College also provides forms and documents to assist members in tracking their learning and growing journey.

Mandate of Professional Development

Annual professional development reflects a commitment on the part of every social worker to ensure that their practice is rooted in the most up to date and current research of their

profession. Professional development requirements reflect the College's mandate to protect the public and to ensure that every social worker's training is rooted in the profession's code of ethics.

The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers recognizes the broad scope of the social work profession. There are many methods of learning new skills and knowledge. We encourage our members to seek varied opportunities that reflect the NSCSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice so that they combine professional development with contributions to the field of social work and the quality of life for the residents of Nova Scotia.

Central to these requirements is the ethical obligation of each social worker to promote social justice.

NSCSW Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

The NSCSW's categories of professional development reflect the profession's code of ethics and standards of practice. The Standards of Practice of the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) describes the responsibilities of Social Workers to their clients, colleagues, employers and society as a whole.

These standards:

1. Ensure professional development expectations as the basis of responsibility for Social Workers so that they may develop, control, evaluate and improve their own practice.
2. Promote the protection of the public, and specifically, of clients of Social Workers, by ensuring competent social work practice.
3. Provide a basis for professional development and continuing education within the social work profession.
4. Put into action the values, ethics, knowledge and skills expected of social work professionals, so that other professionals, employees, clients and the general public may understand the goals and methods of social work practice in Nova Scotia.
5. Enhance the value and credibility of the profession so that it may more effectively advocate for social change when deemed necessary. (Adopted from the NSCSW Standards of Practice).

Professional development activity requirements have been developed based upon the professional values, ethics and standards of the profession with input and feedback from NSCSW members and continue to evolve as new research and evidence emerges about best practices. These activities also align with the 2021 recommendations of the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network.

Mandatory Professional Development Training and Activities

The Nova Scotia College of Social Workers has established mandatory training and activities as part of its professional development standards. **These requirements are grounded in the profession's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and are applicable to all members, regardless of status.**

Our Code of Ethics mandates social workers to respect the inherent dignity and worth of every human person, and to reflect the values of integrity and competence in their practice, while advocating for social justice and dedicating themselves to the service of humanity, as defined in the Code.

As such, social workers registered with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers are required to complete certain mandatory annual requirements every year, in order to fulfill these expectations and ensure the protection of the public, especially those populations and communities that are traditionally defined as oppressed, marginalized or otherwise subjected to prejudice and bias.

Emerging research demonstrates the pervasiveness of unconscious bias, and the risk that this can bring to social work practice. The mandatory professional development training and activities have been developed to support social workers in examining their beliefs and assumptions, and to ensure that new content and best practices related to social work are effectively integrated into every member's practice. This ensures the College's legal obligation to protect the public.

The basis for professional development in any profession is the need for professionals to continue to learn and grow, as new learning and competencies emerge for the profession as a whole. By mandating professional development, the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers fulfills its governmental mandate to regulate the profession of social work in order to protect the public. In light of new learning that is emerging from contemporary social work research, this required content ensures that social workers' knowledge and practice is rooted in our values, code of ethics and professional standards.

The mandatory training and activities selected by a social worker may be either formal or informal. In addition to elective content that social workers are able to select, based upon their interests and professional areas of expertise, the following required content is mandatory for all social workers in Nova Scotia:

Social Work Ethics Training

Ethical behaviour is at the core of social work practice. It is a part of our everyday decision making, and paramount to guiding our actions.

All social workers registered with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers must complete 1 hour of professional development training in social work ethics every year. Professional development training in social work ethics are tracked separately but are included in the total hours of the annual professional development requirement, and all training in this category should be specific to social work ethics. Recorded webinars are available on the professional development webpage for viewing, and continuing education credit certificates are available to download upon viewing and completing the test to ensure completion and comprehension.

Anti-Racist and Anti-Discriminatory Practice: Diversity, Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety Training

This professional development training requirement is grounded in the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and our Code of Ethics' mandate to ensure anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice and ensure that every social worker is able to show respect for the inherent dignity and individual worth of all persons, as well as our professional mandate to work with individuals from oppressed, marginalized and stereotyped communities to reduce barriers and fight for equity and social justice. Our Code of Ethics further specifies that social workers must "strive for impartiality in their professional practice, and refrain from imposing their personal values, views, preferences, stereotypes/assumptions on clients", instead seeking "to understand the lived experiences of those whom they serve."

Therefore, as part of the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers' mandate to serve and protect the public, it has adopted this standard of professional development to encourage social workers to continuously learn and challenge their understandings and assumptions of traditionally stereotyped and marginalized groups and individuals. The goal of this training is to ensure that every Registered Social Worker is able to provide person-centered services with diverse communities that are culturally safe, competent, responsive and appropriate.

All social workers registered with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers must complete 1 hour of mandatory professional development training every year related to culturally competent practice, cultural safety and diversity in order to ensure anti-oppressive practice.

Approved topics include: 2SLGBTQIA+, antiracist practice, ableism, antisemitism, islamophobia, trauma-informed practice, training regarding inter-generational trauma and other related content to ensure culturally responsive and appropriate practice with diverse communities. Effort should be made to vary topic areas each year in order to ensure greater cultural competence and cultural safety.

Professional development in this area is tracked separately from the annual professional development requirement but are included in the total hours. Recorded webinars approved to meet this requirement are available on the professional development webpage for viewing, and continuing education credit certificates are available to download upon viewing and completing the test to ensure completion, comprehension and critical reflection.

Truth and Reconciliation Training and/or Activities

In 2019, The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) acknowledged its "role in supporting the implementation of residential schools and affirming the approach to child welfare that led to the 60s scoop through the promotion of discriminatory policies with the underlying motivation to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their land".

In recognition of the importance of this apology which acknowledges the many "ways in which CASW was – and in many ways still is – responsible for the systemic denial and inequality that has been apparent in the field of social work", the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers has adopted this standard of professional development to encourage social workers to fulfill its commitment to work toward truth and reconciliation.

We, as social workers, must acknowledge that while an apology has been offered, there is still much that needs to be done. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission outlined required TRC education that is needed for all those working in public service, education, health care and child welfare. **Consequently, all social workers registered with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers must complete 1 hour of professional development in mandatory professional development training and/or activities related to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission every year.**

Professional development in this area is tracked separately from the annual professional development requirement but are included in the total hours of professional development, and all trainings and activities in this category should be specific to furthering the knowledge of social workers and to strengthen Indigenous communities. Recorded webinars related to Indigenous content are available on the professional development webpage for viewing, and continuing education credit certificates are available to download upon viewing and completing the test to ensure completion, comprehension and critical reflection. Other approved activities include membership of Indigenous communities and other related activities that are designated to build resilience, reconciliation, healing and understanding.

Prevention of Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Stress Training and/or Activities

Emerging research shows the high risk of compassion fatigue and burnout for caregiving professions such as social work. Symptoms such as forgetfulness, inattention and errors are common amongst those exposed to constant levels of stress and trauma as a result of their work. Many of the complaints made to the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers can be traced back to a social worker's burnout that led them to a boundary violation, lack of empathy or other forms of professional misconduct.

As part of its mandate to protect the public and support social workers, this requirement ensures that all social workers are able to receive support in preventing or managing vicarious trauma and secondary stress arising from their work. Approved activities reflect current research in this area.

This professional development requirement is grounded in our Code of Ethics and professional standards, and reflect the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers' mandate to protect the public. **All social workers registered with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers must complete 2 hours of professional development in mandatory professional development training and activities every year related to the prevention of vicarious trauma and secondary stress.**

Approved training and/or activities include: education regarding compassion fatigue, burnout, vicarious trauma or compassion satisfaction, personal therapy, engagement in the NSCSW Peer Accountability Process, Indigenous healing rituals and group practices such as sharing circles.

Social Justice Training and/or Activities

This professional development requirement is grounded in the Social Workers Act and our Code of Ethics' mandate to work for the overall benefit of humanity and to afford them protection from

harm. It also fulfills the College's mandate to encourage members to "advocate for the development, enhancement and promotion of policies to improve social conditions and promote social justice".

This requirement is in addition to a social worker's employment duties and can take a number of different forms. Our Code of Ethics calls on us to promote social fairness and the equitable distribution of resources, and act to reduce barriers and expand choice for all persons, with special regard for those who are marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or have exceptional needs. We are tasked to promote social justice in a number of areas, and social workers can fulfill this mandatory requirement by choosing a social justice activity related to one of the following, as delineated in our profession's Code of Ethics:

- Fair and equitable access to public services.
- Equal treatment and protection under the law and challenge injustices, especially injustices that effect the vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- The client, when services in the best interest of that client are not available or accessible.
- The elimination of all forms of discrimination and make reasonable efforts to promote conditions that respect the diversity of people.
- The elimination of poverty.
- The equitable distribution of society's resources to all persons, by bringing to the attention of employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practices are oppressive, unfair or harmful.
- Universal entitlement and access to the services and opportunities to meet basic human needs in the areas of housing, health care, child care, education and old age security.
- A clean and healthy environment and the development of sustainable environmental strategies.

All social workers registered with the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers must complete 1 hour of training and/or activity related to social justice one of the areas above. This may take the form of a training related to social justice advocacy or an activity, such as engaging in a volunteer community service activity or serving on a board or committee that is working to promote one of the issues above.

Discretionary Professional Development

In addition to mandatory training and activities, all NSCSW social workers are encouraged to pursue professional development experiences which can be comprised of entirely formal professional development, or can include a mixture of formal and informal professional development. These are entirely at the discretion of the social worker, and while they must be related to social work practice, they can be in a number of different content areas.

Formal Professional Development

Formal professional development is expected to orient social workers to current research and peer reviewed materials in a structured format. This can comprise both training and activities that can be recorded by submitting evidence such as:

- A syllabus or general outline of the course provided at the beginning
- A continuing education certificate
- An educational program with written educational goals and specific, measurable learning objectives.
- Website documentation of registration, payment, or certification from an online course.
- Other formal documentation of the event or activity (using NSCSW forms when possible)
- Evidence of formal professional development activities such as published research

For active members, a minimum of 20 professional development hours must be formal training and/or activities, and up to 40 hours can be in this category.

The mandatory training and activities selected by a social worker may be either formal or informal. For example, if a social worker chooses to fulfill their requirement for social justice by attending a formal training on a topic such as “strategies for community organizing”, then it would count as one of the 20 hours of formal professional development required. However, if that social worker were to choose to fulfill their requirement for social justice by participating in an activity, such as participating in a College committee, then that requirement would count as one of that social workers informal professional development requirements.

Formal professional development can take multiple forms: (1) formal continuing education training, (2) formal activities related to knowledge transfer, knowledge creation and contributing to the profession. Social workers bring valuable experience and expertise to their practice. The College wants to encourage members to reflect on that experience and find ways to forward their expertise to the profession.

Examples of formal continuing education training

- University courses related to the field of social work
- Seminars related to the field of social work
- Continuing education workshops related to the field of social work
- In-service education sessions related to the field of social work
- Online course work related to the field of social work
- Professional conferences related to the field of social work
- Webinars related to the field of social work

Examples of formal activities related to knowledge transfer, knowledge creation and contributing to the profession

- Teaching or presenting continuing education activities related to the field of social work
- Engaging in research, including interdisciplinary collaboration, or writing articles for peer reviewed publication related to the field of social work

Informal Professional Development

Informal professional development activities and independent learning which enhances social work and is related to furthering social work competencies can be counted for a **maximum of 14 hours for active social workers, and a maximum of 10 hours for associate members.**

While such activities are informal, to track these for the purpose of submitting them for professional development hours, all social workers must document these activities using the form provided. A variety of activities are recommended by the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network to ensure optimal professional development.

The mandatory training and activities selected by a social worker may be either formal or informal. For example, if a social worker chooses to fulfill their requirement for social justice by attending a formal training on a topic such as “strategies for community organizing”, then it would count as one of the 20 hours of formal professional development required. However, if that social worker were to choose to fulfill their requirement for social justice by participating in an activity, such as a College committee, then that requirement would count as informal professional development.

Examples of Informal Activities

- Reading (books, peer reviewed journals, etc) or watching documentaries on social work-related content, and documenting this activity in the form provided (**5 hours maximum**)

Supervision/Consultation

Social workers can track and submit supervision and consultation activities. These must be pro-bono and must not include job-related duties. **12 hours a year maximum are permitted.**

- Providing clinical supervision (separate from job-related duties/must be unpaid)
- Mentoring a Social Worker Candidate (must be unpaid to get credit)
- Supervising a social work student.
- Receiving clinical supervision (this can be paid or unpaid, must be in addition to job-related duties)

Volunteer Work

Social workers can track and submit volunteer contributions related to social work.

- Member of NSCSW committee (12 hours maximum per committee)
- Committee support / consultation (12 hours maximum)
- Attendance at NSCSW Annual General Meeting
- Direct volunteer service in a social service agency (12 hours maximum)
- Board and / or committee work in a social service agency (12 hours maximum)
- International volunteer social service projects (12 hours maximum)
- Social justice activism (12 hours maximum)

Personal

Social workers can track and submit personal activities that contribute to their growth and promote practitioner resilience against vicarious trauma and secondary stress (**12 hours maximum**).

- Engaging in one’s own therapy (individual or group)



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