



Equivalence of Qualifications – Team Leader Positions – Integrated Mental Health Services

Human Resources Policy

Effective Date: April 2010

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1 PURPOSE

To outline arrangements for the determination of equivalence of qualifications in Queensland Health.

2 APPLICATION

The policy applies to Queensland Health employees engaged in team leader roles in integrated mental health services.

3 GUIDELINES

Guidelines may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. The guidelines must be consistent with this policy.

4 DELEGATION

The 'delegate' is as listed in the Queensland Health Human Resource Delegations Manual as amended from time to time.

5 REFERENCES

- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Health Services Act 1991*
- Health Practitioners (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 1) 2007
- District Health Services Employees Award – State 2003
- HSD 1/99 – Determination of Equivalence of Qualifications – Queensland Health
- Directive 03/97 – Determination of Equivalence of Qualifications

6 SUPERSEDES

- IRM 1.8-3 Guidelines for the Determination of Partial Equivalence of Qualifications - Team Leader Roles - Integrated Mental Health Services

7 POLICY

This policy is to be interpreted in conjunction with specific Awards, Agreements, administrative arrangements and HR policies applying to occupational groups.

8 TEAM LEADER ROLES – INTEGRATED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

8.1 Guidelines for the determination of partial equivalence of qualifications

The guidelines for the determination of partial equivalence of qualifications for team leader roles of integrated mental health services are outlined in attachment one. This applies to registered nurses and social work associates who wish to apply for team leader roles in integrated mental health services.

The flowchart for the equivalence of qualifications process is in attachment two.

8.2 Application for partial equivalence

Applications for partial equivalence are to be submitted as follows:

Role	Send application to
Registered nurse	Mental health nurse advisor
Social work associate	Manager, Mental Health Workforce

Attachment three outlines the preparation of application for partial equivalence against a social work degree.

9 HISTORY

April 2010	Developed as a result of the HR policy consolidation project.
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TEAM LEADER ROLES – INTEGRATED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Guidelines for the determination of partial equivalence of qualifications

This applies to registered nurses and social work associates who wish to apply for team leader roles in integrated mental health services.

Team leader roles created within integrated mental health services are established under the professional stream of the District Health Services Employees Award – State 2003. This stream comprises a number of roles to which a mandatory degree qualification or equivalent is attached. The mandatory clinical degree qualification or equivalent is the first key skill requirement of the team leader role description.

In addition to undertaking a managerial role, team leaders within integrated mental health services are required to maintain a clinical case load, and are therefore to come from the clinical disciplines so as to work as independent clinicians employed in mental health services. These disciplines can include registered nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, social workers and social work associates.

Team leaders are required to perform clinical duties relevant to their discipline and are therefore to retain their registration (when applicable) or eligibility for membership of the relevant professional association.

Applicants for team leader roles are to demonstrate that they meet the level of clinical and managerial competence and possess the relevant experience required to function as a team leader.

Each integrated mental health service is to ensure that every team leader role description accurately reflects the duties and responsibilities of the role and the amount of clinical and management competence required to function as a team leader.

All of the above clinical disciplines, with the exception of **registered nurses** and **social work associates**, are employed within the professional stream and therefore already meet the mandatory degree qualification requirement.

The purpose of these guidelines is to describe the process available for those registered nurses and social work associates who do not have a degree qualification, and who are seeking assessment for partial equivalence of qualifications when applying for the role of team leader within integrated mental health services.

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the *Health Services Act 1991* and HSD 1/99 – Determination of Equivalence of Qualifications – Queensland Health.

1 NEED FOR ASSESSMENT OF PARTIAL EQUIVALENCE OF QUALIFICATIONS

1.1 Registered nurses

Registered nurses who possess a recognised nursing degree automatically meet the mandatory degree requirement for entry to the professional stream as a team leader (these guidelines apply only to those registered nurses who do not have a degree qualification). To be considered for appointment, registered nurses are to be registered with the Queensland Nursing Council (QNC) to practice in Queensland.

Registered nurses who do not possess a nursing degree need to seek partial equivalence against a nursing degree to meet the qualification requirement of a team leader. It is not necessary to seek full equivalence.

Nurses are required to address standard criteria that have been determined as forming a basis of the Bachelor of Nursing qualification from the ANCI national competency standards.

When working as team leaders, registered nurses are required to maintain registration and perform clinical duties appropriate to that of a registered nurse.

1.2 Social work associates

Social work associates are eligible for membership with the Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers, and are to possess a relevant qualification (diploma, associate diploma or equivalent) that allows allocation to the technical stream.

To be appointed as a team leader, social work associates need to seek partial equivalence against a social work degree (it is not necessary to seek full equivalence) for the purpose of meeting the qualification requirement of a team leader. Full equivalence against a social work degree does not allow a social work associate to be employed as a social worker in Queensland Health as it does not make a social work associate eligible for membership with the Australian Association of Social Workers'.

In the application for a team leader role, as with all other relevant disciplines, social work associates need to demonstrate their ability to meet the other key skill requirements required to function as a team leader.

Social work associates are also required to maintain eligibility for membership with the Australian Institute of Welfare and Community workers and perform clinical duties appropriate to those of a social work associate.

2 KEY SKILL REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Registered nurses

Registered nurses seeking assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications are required to prepare a written application addressing the key skill requirements for the team leader role.

2.2 Social work associates

Assessment of partial equivalence against a social work qualification involves the following:

Criteria	Relevance and supporting evidence
Assessment of formal qualifications	<p>Documented evidence that the applicant holds a qualification that allows employment as a social work associate within the technical stream of the District Health Services Employees Award – State 2003.</p> <p>Evidence that the applicant is eligible for membership of the Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers.</p>
Case presentation to be made at interview	<p>Applicants are required to deliver a 30 minute presentation that addresses four key criteria. The presentation is to focus on outcomes the applicant has achieved in previous roles or experience. A hard copy of the presentation is also required at interview.</p>
Evidence of relevant continuing professional development and education	<p>Written evidence of relevant professional development completed in the past 12 months. Evidence of a history of ongoing commitment to professional development over an extended period. Examples of relevant activities are described in attachment 3.</p>
Referee report	<p>Written report against four key criteria. The referee is to be an immediate supervisor or have knowledge of the applicant's performance sufficient to address the criteria.</p>

3 INDEPENDENT ASSESSORS

3.1 Registered nurses

Applications for equivalence against a nursing degree are to be forwarded to the mental health nurse advisor.

The mental health nurse advisor is to identify a senior nurse (NO5 or above) to assess the application.

3.2 Social work associates

Applications for equivalence against a social work degree are to be forwarded to the Manager, Mental Health Workforce who is to identify an appropriate social worker to assess the application.

4 HOW TO APPLY FOR ASSESSMENT OF PARTIAL EQUIVALENCE OF QUALIFICATIONS

4.1 Common processes

Information on the assessment of partial equivalence is to be included in the application kits for team leader roles in integrated mental health services, or is available from the district's People and Culture Unit.

The applicant seeking assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications is to contact the chair of the selection panel to advise them that they are seeking assessment of partial equivalence and of the target qualification against which they are seeking equivalence.

The chair of the selection panel is to contact one of the Independent Assessment Advisors to receive direction in relation to the process to be followed. The chair of the selection panel is then to guide the applicant through the equivalence process.

When applying for a team leader role in integrated mental health services, and when assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications is being sought for this purpose, **social work associate** applicants are to lodge two applications. The first application is to address the key skill requirements for the role of team leader, and the second is to address the relevant criteria for seeking partial equivalence of qualifications.

Applications seeking assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications are to be lodged at the same time as the application for the role of team leader.

5 ADDITIONAL PROCESS – REGISTERED NURSES

Prior to the interview registered nurses may submit additional information in support of their application to the chair of the selection panel for assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SELECTION PANEL AND THE HEALTH ADVISORY UNIT (HAU) – SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATES

Once the applications have been received by the chair of the selection panel, the chair is to immediately forward the application for assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications to the Manager, Mental Health Workforce, Corporate Office.

The Manager, Mental Health Workforce is to:

- nominate two independent internal assessors to interview the applicant. The manager is to provide the assessors with a copy of the applicant's equivalence application
- inform the chair of the selection panel of the names of the assessors and of interview details (date, time and venue)
- advise the applicant of their interview details (date, time and venue) with the independent assessors.

Following the interview with the applicant, the independent assessors are to consider the application and, based upon pre-determined criteria, make an assessment that either recommends or does not recommend partial equivalence.

The assessor is to inform the chair of the selection panel of their determination. The chair of the selection panel is responsible for notifying applicants of the outcome of their application for assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications.

When the selection panel has been advised by the independent assessors that the applicant's application is recommended as satisfying the criteria and process for partial equivalence of qualifications, the panel is then to determine whether the application for the role of team leader is sufficient to be short listed for interview.

Short listing is the process of making an initial determination of which candidates have the strongest claim against the key skill requirements of the vacancy. Applicants recommended for partial equivalence of qualifications may not be short listed for interview to a team leader role if they do not meet the key skill requirements contained in the role description. An applicant recommended as satisfying assessment for partial equivalence of qualifications does not automatically qualify for further assessment for the role of team leader. However, an applicant need not seek re-assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications when applying for team leader roles in subsequent applications governed by this partial equivalence process, provided there has been no change to the target qualification and the applicant can demonstrate continuity of work performed since the initial recommendation for which partial equivalence was made.

When an applicant has been advised they have not been successful in obtaining partial equivalence of qualifications, their application for the role of team leader is not able to be considered further by the selection panel as part of the recruitment and selection process, as they are not to be able to meet the key skill requirement relating to professional qualifications.

The unsuccessful applicant may contact the independent assessors to arrange a feedback interview. The independent assessors are to provide feedback to the unsuccessful applicant seeking assessment for equivalence of qualification, identifying:

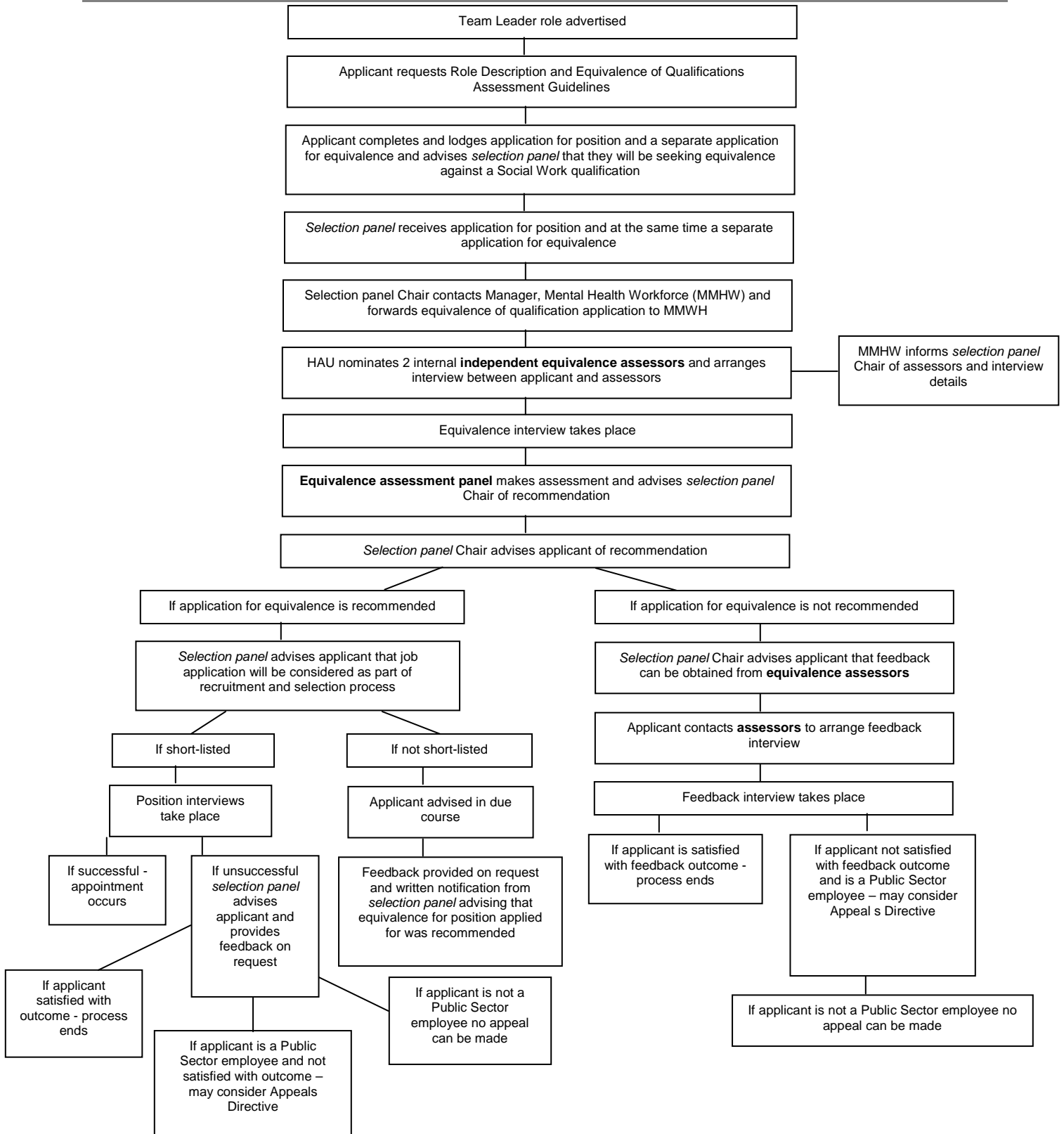
- the reasons why the application for assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications was unsuccessful
- the learning outcomes which were not met
- what would represent an acceptable standard for meeting the criteria for assessment of partial equivalence of qualifications
- what the applicant would need to do to meet the required standard, e.g. develop further skills or knowledge.

The selection panel is to document justification of their findings in relation to the applicant's two applications in their summary of the selection process.

A flowchart for the equivalence of qualifications process for social work associates is contained in attachment two.

Attachment three details the social work associate applicants need to do to prepare their application in seeking partial equivalence of qualifications against a social work degree.

Flowchart for equivalence of qualifications process



Note: If an applicant is recommended for equivalence and does not win Team Leader position on merit, equivalence does not need to be applied for when applying for future Team Leader roles provided that target qualification has not changed and continuity can be demonstrated

Guidance to applicants to prepare their application for partial equivalence against a social work degree

Clause 2.2 of attachment one lists the four criteria that an applicant is to address when making an application for assessment of partial equivalence against a social work qualification. Guidance on each of the criteria is provided below.

1 Assessment of formal qualifications

Applicants need to provide documented evidence that they:

- hold a qualification which allows them to be employed as a social work associate within the technical stream of the District Health Services Employees Award – State
- are eligible for membership of the Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers (AIWCW).

There is no specific format to follow for documented evidence. Applicants are to lodge their documented evidence with their application for the role.

As a guide only, applicants would generally include:

- copies of academic qualifications (eg. diploma)
- copies of professional association membership documents
- contact details of relevant educational institutions (e.g. names, titles, telephone numbers, addresses, email addresses).

Copies of original documents are to be certified by a qualified Justice of the Peace.

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all information including contact details for the relevant educational institution/s. Applicants without these qualifications (e.g. overseas trained applicants) and those with qualifications not recognised by the AIWCW, are to provide certified copies of their qualification, year conferred, transcript of subjects, studies and results (if available) and the conferring educational institution (including contact details).

2 Case presentation to be made at interview

Applicants are required to deliver a 30 minute presentation addressing the following four key skill requirements (KSRs). A hard copy of this case presentation is to be submitted with the application. The case presentation is to focus on the outcomes the applicant has achieved in previous roles or experience.

As a guide, the case presentation is to be in two sections of 15 minutes each, with the first section addressing KSR1 and KSR2, and the second section addressing KSR3 and KSR4.

KSR1 - Demonstrated ability to identify and think critically about significant issues likely to impact on clients/patients and other stakeholders

The applicant is to demonstrate to the panel:

- that they can conceptualise an issue(s) and identify the various elements/dimensions of the issue(s)

- an understanding of the context in which the issue(s) is located
- a recognition of the consequences of any course of action taken/completed in relation to the issue(s)
- an understanding of any relationship between the issue(s) and other issues.

KSR2 - Demonstrated knowledge of professional practice and ethical standards and the ability to apply them in practice

The applicant is to demonstrate to the panel:

- that they have a set of practice and ethical standards and be able to demonstrate how these have been derived
- that they are able to articulate key practice and ethical standards
- the importance/relevance of these standards
- how they can apply these standards in practice.

KSR3 - Commitment to continuing professional development

Refer to continuing professional development criteria for partial equivalence of qualifications.

KSR4 - Demonstrated experience in or the ability to acquire experience in the development and application of quality clinical management systems and/or the undertaking of practice based research

The applicant is to demonstrate to the panel:

- that they have knowledge of/experience in the conceptualising, planning, undertaking and evaluating quality activities designed to enhance the quality of existing clinical services
- an interest in/enthusiasm for undertaking appropriate and relevant research and identify the required skills
- how, as an individual in everyday work, they would ensure continued quality of service.

3 Continuing professional development (CPD)

At the team leader level within the mental health service (professional officer, level 4 (PO4)) it is considered highly desirable that CPD be undertaken by role holders. The panel of assessors is to assess an applicant for partial equivalence based on generic level statements within the District Health Services Employees Award – State. Specifically these are:

- possession of postgraduate qualifications or postgraduate developmental experience through attendance at specialist seminars or in-service presentations relevant to the discipline
- evidence of recognition by peers, industry or other client groups as shown by one or more of the following:
 - original in-service presentations
 - published papers
 - active involvement in conferences and seminars
 - consultancies

- recognition as a resource person who collects, collates and imparts knowledge in a particular area
- preparation of significant internal reports.

Requirements

Applicants for partial equivalence are required to:

- supply a log of CPD activities over the past 12 months. This log is to be lodged with the application for the role
- provide a brief written statement about how their CPD activities relate to the application for equivalence in two of the following areas:
 - a) Skill development**
 - Participation in skill development workshops or courses of training (in-service training can be included if it provides transferable knowledge and skills).
 - Conducting a skill development workshop (only actual presentation time in workshops that are presented outside of routine job requirements can be included).
 - Receiving regular and ongoing professional supervision (the supervision can be provided internally or externally to your employing organisation).
 - Peer supervision (formally structured supervision).
 - b) Contributing to knowledge and practice of the mental health service**
 - Reading professional publications (include details of journals/articles and a brief statement about what was learned and how it can be/is applied to the mental health service).
 - Attendance at conferences, information sessions and other relevant presentations (include only actual learning time).
 - Academic study or research (include details of any relevant study or research, e.g. postgraduate studies).
 - Publication or journal articles and/or books (original publications).
 - Presentation of conference papers or other presentations relevant to the mental health service (include only first time presentations).
 - Supervision of students within their professional field and in the employment role (relevant to the mental health service).
 - Provision of professional supervision (outside the employment role).
 - c) Contributing to the development of improved or new policies and services**
 - Active membership of professionally relevant committees and/or boards, e.g. AIWCW, community organisations, etc. (include only work outside routine job requirements and where the work done for these committees/organisations does not represent the employer)
 - Quality assurance activities and/or research (non-academic) (only include activities outside of the normal job requirements)
 - Other activities or courses (applicants may specify any activities and/or courses and programs in any category, provided they relate to the mental health service).

When providing written statement/s it is encouraged that applicants:

- identify the relevance of the education/training to the application and the criterion
- include information about the qualifications and reputation of the trainer, any accreditation of the course by the professional association or other body, the level of the target audience and any assessment or certification offered/gained to indicate uptake of knowledge and skills, type of in-service training (e.g. lecture, workshop, seminar, certificate) and the area of specialty/interest targeted
- provide evidence of how the knowledge and skills gained has been applied to the work.

4 Referee report

Applicants are required to lodge a completed referee report with their application for a role.

The referee report is to be aligned to the KSR detailed in the case presentation section of these guidelines. A referee is required to provide comments and a ranking for each KSR. Following is a sample format which may be used for the referee report:

Referee details

Name

Title

Organisation

Telephone

Facsimile

E-mail

How long have you known the applicant?

In what capacity do you/did you know the applicant?

.....

Signature

KSR1 - Demonstrated ability to identify and think critically about significant issues likely to impact on clients/patients and other stakeholders.

Referee's comments

Please circle one of the following to rank KSR1 (in your opinion):

- 1 Does not meet criteria
- 2 Minimally meets criteria
- 3 Partly meets criteria
- 4 Meets criteria
- 5 Exceeds criteria

KSR2 - Demonstrated knowledge of professional practice and ethical standards and the ability to apply them in practice.

Referee's comments

Please circle one of the following to rank KSR2 (in your opinion):

- 1 Does not meet criteria
- 2 Minimally meets criteria
- 3 Partly meets criteria
- 4 Meets criteria
- 5 Exceeds criteria

Sample letter to be forwarded to applicants regarding interview for equivalence

Enquiries to:
Telephone:
Fax:

Dear

RE: SOCIAL WORK PARTIAL EQUIVALENCE APPLICATION IN RELATION TO DIRECTIVE OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL NO 1/99: DETERMINATION OF EQUIVALENCE OF QUALIFICATIONS – QUEENSLAND HEALTH

You are invited to meet with the assessors, and for interview.

The interview is to be held at

Telephone:

Time:

Date:

As part of the partial equivalence process, you are required to deliver to the assessors a thirty minute presentation which should address all the key skill requirements (KSR). You are asked to focus on specific outcomes achieved in the course of your professional work experience in order to demonstrate how you meet each of the KSRs. The panel may request supporting evidence for any or all claims made.

Following your presentation, twenty minutes is to be allocated for the assessors to ask clarifying questions in relation to the key criteria and your presentation.

If you have prepared presentation material over and above that provided with your written application, at least one hard copy of this material should be made available to the receptionist on your arrival.

We will endeavour to make equipment such as a White Board, Video, Overhead Projector or Microsoft Power Point available if requested at least five working days prior to interview.

The assessors look forward to meeting you and wish you well.

Yours sincerely

.....
Health Advisory Unit representative
(Date)