

New Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications launched for individuals to future-proof their careers in the social service sector

SkillsFuture initiatives for the social service sector to be rolled out by 2016 to grow pipeline of skilled social service professionals

Singapore, 10 October 2015 – As part of ongoing efforts to attract quality professionals and strengthen career development pathways in the social service sector, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) are launching two new Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) at the Social Service Institute (SSI)'s "Grow your Future with the Social Service Sector" career and education fair held today. SSI is the human capital development arm of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).

The WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service and the WSQ Diploma in Social Service are jointly developed by MSF and WDA, in consultation with social service industry stakeholders, to provide learners with a comprehensive and firm foundation of knowledge and skills required in the social service sector. It also provides a training and progression pathway for individuals from different educational backgrounds and work experience, to become social workers. Graduates of the WSQ Diploma in Social Service can apply for the Bachelor of Social Work offered by SIM University.

These two new WSQ programmes were developed based on two flagship programmes offered by SSI - the Diploma in Social Service (DSS) and the Higher Diploma in Social Service (HDSS). Close to 300 individuals have graduated from both programmes since their inception in 2008 and 2010 respectively.

The classes for WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service and the WSQ Diploma in Social Service will commence in February 2016 and application for both programmes opens on 10 October 2015. WDA course fee support of up to 95 per cent is available for Singapore Citizens (SC) and Permanent Residents (PR). Please refer to **Annex A** for more information on the two new WSQ qualifications.

Mr Alvin Chua, Honorary Treasurer & Ex-officio Member of Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW), said, "The new Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) in Social Service will allow more mid-careerists to join the sector, and also provide an upgrading pathway for in-service staff interested to pursue the social work profession." As the former President of SASW, Mr Chua chaired an Industry Skills and Training Council that worked closely with MSF, SSI and WDA when they were reviewing the course content of DSS and HDSS, and had provided advice and endorsed the training content of WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service and the WSQ Diploma in Social Service.

To further encourage Singaporeans in the social service sector to deepen their skills and maximise their potential, NCSS will administer the SkillsFuture Study Awards for the Social Service Sector. The SkillsFuture Study Awards for the Social Service Sector will provide each recipient with \$5,000 to help defray the cost of attending work-related training.

The SkillsFuture Credit will also be available in the first quarter of 2016 to provide Singaporeans aged 25 and above with a credit of \$500 to cover fees for a wide range of social service skills-related courses. Individuals can use the SkillsFuture Study Awards or SkillsFuture Credit to support their studies in WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service and WSQ Diploma in Social Service.

Mr Ng Cher Pong, Chief Executive of WDA added "The skills required in the social service sector are evolving in response to the changing needs of Singaporeans. Therefore, new entrants to the sector and existing practitioners must continue to strive towards skills mastery through knowledge, application and experience. The SkillsFuture initiatives, together with the two new WSQ qualifications for the social

service sector, will enable Singaporeans to deepen their skills, enhance their professionalism and advance their careers in this sector.”

Mr Fermin Diez, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Group Director for Human Capital Development, NCSS said, “The WSQ is an important recognition of the value of the courses run by SSI. The competency-based modules under the WSQ programmes will provide learners with a comprehensive and firm foundation of knowledge and skills required in the social service sector. NCSS hopes that with these two programmes, many more existing sector practitioners and those keen to join the sector will be motivated to upgrade themselves through participation in them. These well-trained professionals will be a great boost to creating a more dynamic social service sector.”

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National Council of Social Service

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 member voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in social services, to enhance the capabilities of social service organisations, and to promote strategic partnerships for social services.

Singapore Workforce Development Agency

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today's economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, the Union and training organizations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers - young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives - to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives. For more information, please visit www.wda.gov.sg.

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FACTSHEET

WSQ ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN SOCIAL SERVICE AND WSQ DIPLOMA IN SOCIAL SERVICE

1 Background

The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) is a national credentialing system that trains, develops and assesses individuals for key competencies that companies recognise and look for in employees. Since 2014, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) has been working with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and key industry stakeholders to develop new qualifications under the WSQ framework for Social Service (Social Service WSQ), to better serve the training needs of the industry and enhance its professionalism.

2 WSQ Advanced Certificate and WSQ Diploma in Social Service

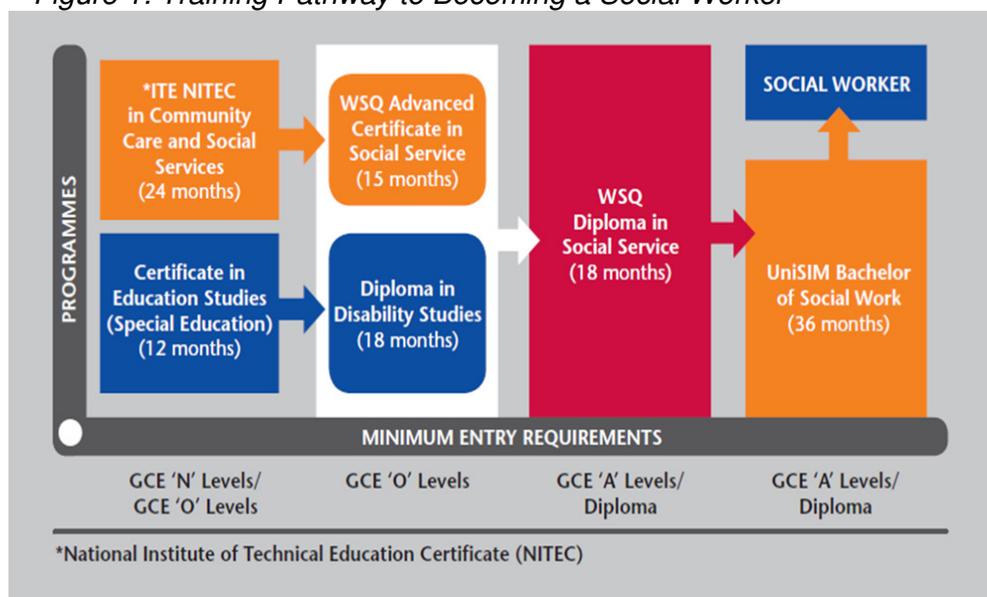
There are two WSQs under the Social Service WSQ Framework. They are:

- WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service, and
- WSQ Diploma in Social Service.

The WSQ qualifications were developed based on the Social Service Institute (SSI)'s flagship programmes – The Diploma in Social Service (DSS) and the Higher Diploma in Social Service (HDSS). They consist of competency-based modules that provide learners with a comprehensive and firm foundation of knowledge and skills required in social service.

Both WSQ qualifications are nationally recognised and form an articulation pathway into the Bachelor of Social Work offered by SIM University. Admissions will be subjected to other admission criteria / requirements set by SIM University. Please refer to www.unisim.edu.sg for the latest information.

Figure 1: Training Pathway to Becoming a Social Worker



3 Course Details

Table 1: Detailed Course Information

	WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service	WSQ Diploma in Social Service
Programme Duration	15 months (Part-time)	18 months (Part-time)
Modules	<p>11 Modules</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Interpret the service types and functions of key players in social service 2) Demonstrate understanding of legal provisions in social service 3) Organise and implement basic social-recreational activities 4) Apply relationship building skills in social service practice 5) Demonstrate understanding of group dynamics in social service 6) Work with volunteers 7) Provide support level service to families 8) Provide support level service to children 	<p>9 Modules</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Apply writing and presentation skills to facilitate social service practice 2) Apply human behaviour concepts to facilitate social service practice 3) Use online information to facilitate social service practice 4) Apply family life cycle concept to facilitate social service practice 5) Apply psychological concepts to facilitate social service practice 6) Apply sociological concepts to facilitate social service practice 7) Apply cultural concepts to facilitate social service practice

	9) Provide support level service to youths 10) Provide support level service to persons with disabilities 11) Provide support level service to seniors	8) Apply basic research methodologies 9) Apply a legal framework to protect vulnerable people
Type of Assessment	Written Assessment, Project Work & Role Play	
Entry Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 3 GCE 'O' level credits (inclusive of English) with at least 2 years of working experience OR NITEC in Community Care and Social Services (inclusive of English) with at least 1.5 years of working experience AND A minimum grade of C6 for GCE 'O' level English (or equivalent*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WSQ Advanced Certificate in Social Service OR SSI Diploma in Social Service OR Diploma in Disability Studies OR Specialist Diploma in Human Services OR Two GCE 'A' and two 'AO' Levels OR Local Polytechnic Diploma; AND At least two years of working experience; and A minimum grade of C6 for GCE 'O' level English (or equivalent*)
Career Prospects	Social Service Assistant (e.g. senior house parents, programme coordinators, volunteer coordinators, senior home helpers, home care workers)	Social Work Associate (e.g. project coordinators, youth workers, volunteer executives)
WDA Course Fee Funding	Up to 90% of Course Fees	Up to 70% of Course Fees
	Under the SkillsFuture Mid-Career Enhanced Subsidy , Singapore Citizens aged 40 and above can enjoy enhanced subsidies of up to 90% of course fees. Under the Workfare Training Support (WTS) scheme, Singapore Citizens aged 35 and above, earning \$1,900 per month or less, can enjoy subsidies of up to 95% of course fees.	

*List of current qualifications equivalent to the GCE 'O' Level English

1. A minimum score of 5.5. for IELTS; or
2. A minimum score of 79 for TOEFL Internet-based test; or
3. A minimum score of 213 for TOEFL Computer-based test; or
4. A minimum score of 550 for TOEFL Paper-based test; or
5. At least a Statement of Attainment at Level 5 in Workplace Literacy (WPL) –(Comprehensive) (covering Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing under the Employability Skills WSQ).

4 Social Service WSQ Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centre

The SSI was appointed by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) on 1 October 2013 to be a Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centre for Social Services. The Institute offers competency-based programmes aimed at enhancing the skills of its learners.

Since its inception in June 2003, the Institute has been offering an extensive range of services and programmes dedicated to building manpower capability and enabling social service professionals in the social service sector and non-profit sectors for upskilling and career progression and development.

The WSQ Advanced Certificate and Diploma in Social Service will be rolled out by SSI in February 2016. Interested participants can check with SSI for more information on course fees, schedules and funding support.

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