

**INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CONSULTATION REPORT 2**

15, February, 2009

In Responding To

**Revision of Curriculum of the Social Welfare Course at Doshisha
University Graduate School, December 2008**

Prepared by

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1. Comments on developments at Doshisha Education and Research Center

We are very pleased to learn about the developments at the Center since November 2007. Six international conferences, two special lectures and workshops and two case conferences and supervisor training courses have been hold.

Seven research projects are going on and they represent the core of the Center and the broad competences among the Professors. Students take part in the projects and this is a good way of learning about research in realistic settings and getting material for thesis work. Having students in the projects is laudable.

Students are also taking part in discussions about revisions of curriculum. Students are of course important stakeholders and letting them have a say in revisions is in line with international trends.

In addition, the Center has an ambitious publication policy with four Newsletter publications as yet.

In short, we are impressed by the developments during this quite short period the Center has existed. We also appreciate the ambitious plans for the 2009 School Year.

2. Comments on Revision of Curriculum

Our comments here follow the points in the paper Revision of curriculum based on the Report of January 19 2008, III Proposals for Current Issues.

1) Adoption of a system of compulsory subjects

A compulsory system will not be adopted this time. Instead the subjects in the curriculum will be divided into four groups and a system of “elective compulsory subjects” will be implemented in which students will be required to earn four or more credits from each group.

We like this idea as it complies with the broad definition you have of “Social Welfare”.

But in our opinion “practical training” should be compulsory as one of your aims is to train highly specialized professionals. Other subjects could also be compulsory, first of all research methods. This is important when the students

are planning the Master`s thesis. Which tools can be used? Knowledge of research methods is also of importance for professional social workers if they want to work evidence-based, communicate with researchers or read scientific journals and reports.

2) Field work will become diversified and be compulsory

A compulsory system will not be adopted this time. Instead, a lecture class “Social Welfare Survey Methods” will be established.

If field work will not be compulsory such a lecture class could be some kind of substitute. In our opinion this lecture class should be compulsory and give credits.

If in the future field work would be compulsory, it could be categorized as a new subject e.g. called “practical training”.

Overseas practical training can be important for some students and could also be categorized as “practical training”. Credits will not be given this time but we do not see the difficulties in giving credits. Credits could provide the students with incentives to do field work abroad.

3) Regarding the principal supervisor system

Deciding the principal supervisor during the autumn of the first year seems to be an appropriate decision. We guess that the old system tended to delay the start of the students` research towards writing their Master`s thesis.

4) Regarding seminars

Classes will now be established in which full-time teachers will provide guidance for Master`s thesis and time will be provided for students to receive thorough individual guidance.

Group-supervision can be beneficial for learning as the students are supposed to have similar research-questions and perhaps similar theories or methods. And so they can learn from each other.

At our universities it is natural that most guidance for the student`s master`s thesis is given outside classroom hours. Guidance normally takes place in the supervisor`s office and supervisors are often not teaching the students in the class-room. Supervisors are normally appointed as being some kind of expert in the field of the thesis-work.

5) Regarding case conferences and supervisor workshops

We are not sure that we understand the meaning of “case conference” and “supervisor workshop”. If it is a kind of seminars, where students make presentations or discuss their experiences from field-work, it is very good. If credits are given, students have incentives to attend these seminars.

6) Regarding undergraduate subjects and subjects from other courses

Students from faculties outside those related to welfare studies will be instructed to take subjects in the Department of Social Welfare but they will not earn any credits. We agree but a more radical solution would be to make it compulsory for students without a Bachelor degree in Social Welfare to take certain basic undergraduate subjects without getting credits. This is important for keeping a high academic level in the Master course.

Having passed such basic subjects could perhaps be part of the admission requirements.

Students should be actively encouraged to take subjects of other Graduate Schools. Up to ten credits can be earned in two years.

We agree with this proposal. There are a lot of possible subjects to be studied here e.g. psychology, management, sociology, statistics etc.