


Practice Note

MCSW, Employer, Union – What is the difference?

The Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW, the College) is legislated to regulate and support social work practice through the *Social Work Profession Act* and Social Work Profession Regulation. MCSW's General Operating By-laws, policies, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice guide the practice of social work.

MCSW often receives requests to provide support and services to Social Workers in areas that fall outside the legislative mandate of the College.

This information is intended to provide an understanding of the role differences between MCSW, Employers and Unions.

<p>MCSW</p> 	<p>MCSW has an Integrated Mandate: Regulation and Association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of the Public • Regulate professional conduct of RSWs • Set registration, renewal and continuing competence requirements • Establish professional requirements through the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, Continuing Competence Program and other guiding documents • Promote professional knowledge, skill and proficiency of members • Promote awareness of the social work profession
<p>Regulation</p>	<p>Association</p>
<p>A regulatory organization represents the interests of and protects the public by ensuring social workers meet minimum standards of conduct and ethical practice.</p>	<p>An association acts advocates on behalf of the profession they represent.</p>
<p>Employers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and compensate employees for their work • Define the responsibilities and requirements of the position • Support social work practice through employer-specific requirements • Establish Human Resources requirements
<p>Unions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent collective interests of workers • Establish bargaining relationship between employers and employees • Negotiate wages, benefits, job security, and working conditions • Create or renew Collective Agreements • Process employee grievances under Collective Agreement

I have specific questions/concerns, who do I call?

Scope of Practice & Professional Conduct	MCSW	Employer	Union
Questions about scope of practice and professional expectations	✓		
Concerns regarding the conduct of a social worker	✓	✓	
Questions about MCSW complaints evaluation process	✓		
Duty to report concerns to MCSW	✓		

Education, Registration Requirements, Professional Development:	MCSW	Employer	Union
What educational criteria is necessary to become an RSW?	✓		
Who is required to be registered as a social worker?	✓		
Who is entitled to use the title or represent as a “social worker”?	✓		
Ethics and practice consultations	✓		
Maintaining record of professional development for Continuing Competency Program (CCP)	✓		
Educational events (workshops, webinars)	✓	✓	
What training is required for specific role in the workplace?		✓	

Wages and Benefits	MCSW	Employer	Union
How is my wage scale determined?		✓	✓
Concerns about wage disparities		✓	✓
Do I get a wage premium for working weekends, evenings or nights?		✓	✓
Do I get an increase in wages if I obtain a higher level of education (ex. BSW to MSW)?		✓	✓
Are benefits Employer or employee paid?		✓	✓
What is included in my benefits?		✓	✓
Will my Employer pay my MCSW registration fee?		✓	✓

Changes in job description, deletion of positions:	MCSW	Employer	Union
Concerns about deletion or changes of job descriptions and duties?		✓	✓

Advocacy	MCSW	Employer	Union
Advocating for the Social Work profession, raising awareness about Social Work Practice	✓		
Concerns/questions about work conditions		✓	✓
Collective Agreement bargaining			✓
Strike mandates		✓	✓

References and Resources:

MCSW Code of Ethics

In Particular:

Guideline 4 – Ethical Responsibilities to the Workplace

MCSW Standards of Practice

In Particular:

Standard 3 – Integrity of Professional Practice

Accessing Practice Support: Associations and Regulatory Organizations – CAOT. [Accessing Practice Support: Associations and Regulatory Organizations - CAOT](#)

“Frequently Asked Questions”, Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals. [Frequently Asked Questions - Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals \(mahcp.ca\)](#)

Labour Union: Definition, History, and Examples. (2024). The Investopedia Team.

Manitoba Employment Standards Code: An overview for Employers (2023). O. Cicchini.

Understanding the Difference: Regulator, Association, Union, and Employer, College of Licenced Practical Nurses of Alberta (2023), [Info-Sheet-Regulator-Association-Union-ID-28925.pdf \(clpna.com\)](#)

What is an Employer? (2022). Indeed. [FAQ: What Is an Employer? | Indeed.com](#)

Practice Notes provide support and information for Manitoba social workers, employers, and members of the public regarding social work practice issues. These notes offer general guidance only and are not a substitution for legal advice. College members with specific inquiries are invited to consult the College.

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