



2025 Review of the CICA Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners

Briefing Paper 4

Changes to the Code of Ethics

This paper provides an overview of the changes made to the Code of Ethics as part of the 2025 review of the CICA Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

Ethical practice is a central component of professional career development practice. Career development practitioners regularly work with individuals who are making significant decisions about education, employment, and life direction. These conversations often involve personal information, complex circumstances, and major transitions.

The Code of Ethics provides the ethical framework that guides professional conduct and decision making for career development practitioners in Australia.

Why the Code of Ethics Was Updated

The review acknowledged that the environments in which career development practitioners work have changed significantly in recent years.

Practitioners now commonly deliver services through a mix of in-person, online, and hybrid formats, with many services integrating digital tools and online career information platforms. At the same time, Artificial Intelligence tools are increasingly used by individuals seeking career information and by practitioners supporting career development processes.

These developments have opened up new opportunities to improve career development services, but they have also raised new ethical considerations.

The revised Code of Ethics reflects these changes and offers clearer guidance to assist ethical decision making in modern practice settings.

Structure of the Updated Code of Ethics

The revised Code of Ethics is now structured around seven clearly defined ethical domains, offering clearer guidance for practitioners.

The domains address the following areas of professional responsibility:

- Professional competence and conduct
- Practitioner–client relationships, equity, inclusion and cultural responsiveness
- Confidentiality, privacy and informed consent
- Ethical use of digital tools
- Scope of practice and referrals
- Professional relationships and workplace integrity
- Breaches of the Code of Ethics.

This revised structure makes the Code easier to navigate and enhances the guidance provided to practitioners when responding to ethical challenges.

Ethical Use of Digital Technologies

One of the most important developments in the updated Code of Ethics is the inclusion of clearer guidance on the ethical use of digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence.

The review recognised that practitioners are increasingly working within technology-supported environments. Consequently, the Code now highlights the importance of:

- protecting client privacy and personal information
- ensuring informed consent when digital tools are used
- recognising the limitations and potential bias of AI-generated information
- maintaining professional judgement when using technology
- ensuring transparency about how digital tools are used within services

These additions reinforce the principle that technology should support professional practice while maintaining a strong commitment to ethical and client-centred service delivery.

Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The revised Code of Ethics also emphasises greater focus on equity, inclusion, and cultural responsiveness.

Career development practitioners work with individuals from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. The revised code reinforces the responsibility of practitioners to provide services that are inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the needs of all individuals.

This involves recognising barriers that individuals may encounter when accessing career development services, including disability, cultural and linguistic diversity, geographic location, and digital access.

Strengthening Ethical Practice

The updated Code of Ethics enhances the ethical foundations of the career development sector in Australia. It offers clearer guidance to practitioners, supports organisations providing career development services, and boosts public trust in the profession's integrity.

Updating the Code of Ethics ensures that ethical practice continues to guide career development services in environments increasingly influenced by technological change and shifting client needs.