cica
career industry council of australia

Professional Standards
for Australian Career
Development Practitioners

Contents

Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners

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Career Development Practitioners provide a wide variety of career development services to diverse client groups. They may deliver services in settings such as, but not limited to, schools, higher education (e.g., TAFE and universities), employment services, community organisations, professional athlete wellbeing, business organisations, government agencies, and private practice in various formats, including one-on-one, small groups, online, large classes, and self-help materials. Such services may include career counselling, career education, job placement, employment services, recruitment, career coaching, training, mentoring, and coordinating work experience or internship programs.

Career Development Practitioners may work at either a professional or associate level.

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) is the peak body for the Australian Career industry. CICA's members are Australian Career Development Associations.

The inaugural Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners were launched in 2006 and were fully implemented in conjunction with CICA's Member Associations in 1 January 2012, outlining the minimum requirements needed by Australian Career Development Practitioners.

Digital Tools

Career Development Practitioners operate in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), are transforming the way career development services are delivered, accessed, and experienced.

The Professional Standards acknowledge the increasing importance of digital tools, particularly those that utilise AI capability, and their implications for ethical, effective, and inclusive practice. AI-powered tools can enhance career development practice by:

- Supporting personalised career planning and labour market exploration.
- Automating administrative and screening tasks.
- Enhancing access to information through chatbots, career assessment platforms, and virtual career assistants.
- Generating insights from large datasets to inform decision-making and career education programs.

However, the use of AI also introduces new responsibilities and risks. Career Development Practitioners must critically engage with these technologies to ensure they:

- Uphold ethical standards, including privacy, transparency, and informed consent.
- Understand the limitations, biases, and potential impacts of AI-driven tools on clients.
- Maintain professional judgment and client-centred practice in all technology-assisted services.
- Acquire appropriate training to interpret, evaluate, and integrate AI tools responsibly and effectively.

Practitioners are encouraged to stay up to date with technological developments, evaluate digital tools against professional standards, and advocate for the responsible design and use of AI in career guidance. Developing and maintaining digital literacy, including competency with AI, is essential to ensuring that career development services remain relevant, accessible and effective in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

CICA Member Associations may provide specific guidance, training, or codes of practice to support members in navigating digital change.

A significant development in this space is the rise of Generative AI, including tools such as ChatGPT and other large language models. These technologies can create tailored career resources, simulate interview practice, generate job application materials, and support reflective dialogue. While powerful, they raise additional considerations regarding the accuracy of content, client dependence, and the practitioner's role in interpreting and contextualising outputs.

CICA's Responsibility to Member Associations

CICA ensures that membership requirements for Career Development Practitioners within its Member Associations align with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners. In collaboration with its Member Associations, CICA monitors the industry and, when necessary, revises the Professional Standards to ensure they remain current, relevant, and reflective of international best practice.

Member Associations' Responsibility to CICA

CICA Member Associations apply and monitor the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners through their membership requirements. The Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners may be supplemented by the CICA Member Associations to more accurately reflect their particular constituencies, but they must not be reduced. Additionally, Member Associations ensure that any changes to their career development practitioner membership requirements align with the Professional Standards and notify CICA of such changes.

What are Professional Standards?

A profession is a group of people who possess specialised skills and knowledge that are founded in research and developed through high level education and training. Professional standards guide the work of a profession.

The Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners outline the systems and procedures that define the career industry, its membership, and its services. By recognising the necessary skills and knowledge required of Career Development Practitioners, the Professional Standards facilitate entry into the field by providing a foundational basis for training, qualifications and the National Register of Professional Career Development Practitioners.

Elements of Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners

The key elements of the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners include:

- Terminology
- Membership of the Profession
- Code of Ethics
- Entry-Level Qualifications
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Competency Framework that informs the development of entry-level qualifications.

Terminology

"Career development" was adopted in 2006 as the overarching term within the Australian career industry. Internationally, the terms "career development" and "career guidance" are used synonymously.

Membership of the Profession

The Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners apply to anyone providing career development services and/or programs who is a member of a CICA Member Association. Such practitioners meet the minimum standards set by the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners and the specialised competencies relevant to their role.

Code of Ethics

Purpose

The Code of Ethics defines the ethical principles and professional conduct expected of Australian Career Development Practitioners. It promotes quality practice, builds public trust, and ensures that career services are delivered with integrity, fairness, and respect for all individuals.

Career Development Practitioners are expected to apply these ethical standards in all areas of their work and in alignment with the professional guidelines of their relevant CICA Member Association.

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1. Professional Competence and Conduct

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Hold and maintain appropriate qualifications to deliver career development services, including any specialist knowledge required to work with specific populations or perform specialised tasks.
- Accurately represent their qualifications, professional experience, and scope of practice.
- Provide services only within the boundaries of their training, experience, and professional competence.
- Commit to continuous professional development to remain current with the core competencies of the Professional Standards.
- Evaluate and ensure the currency and accuracy of all career development resources, including printed materials and digital content.
- Explain services, assessments, and interventions clearly and in language that is appropriate to the client's needs.
- Engage in ethical, evidence-based research consistent with professional and scientific standards.

2. Practitioner–Client Relationships, Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Responsiveness

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect, recognising and valuing diversity in culture, identity, beliefs, abilities, and life experience.
- Provide services that are culturally appropriate, accessible, and responsive to individual needs and stages of career development.
- Avoid all forms of discrimination, bias, and stereotyping in practice and communication.
- Use inclusive and non-discriminatory language and resources across all media and delivery modes.
- Honour the client's right to make informed, independent decisions and to take responsibility for their career choices.
- Inform clients of the goals, techniques, processes, and ethical considerations of the services they receive.
- Avoid judging, coercing, or imposing personal values or beliefs on clients.

3. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Informed Consent

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Maintain a current understanding of laws, policies, and professional obligations regarding confidentiality, privacy, mandatory reporting and client rights.
- Clearly inform clients of the boundaries of confidentiality and obtain informed consent for any disclosure of personal information.
- Protect clients' personal information and preserve their right to privacy at all times.
- Declare any conflicts of interest that may compromise professional judgment or client wellbeing and take steps to manage or avoid them.

4. Ethical Use of Digital Tools

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Critically assess and responsibly integrate digital tools and platforms, including those powered by AI, into their practice.
- Ensure clients are informed of the ethical risks and benefits associated with digital tools, including data use, privacy, and content accuracy.
- Maintain professional judgment when using AI-generated outputs and support clients to interpret and apply these digital tools appropriately.
- Stay informed about emerging technologies and develop digital literacy to evaluate, use, and explain digital resources effectively.
- Avoid over-reliance on automation or tools that may compromise the quality, inclusivity, or ethical standards of career development services.
- Use only those digital tools that align with professional standards and uphold client-centred, ethical practice.

5. Scope of Practice and Referrals

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Deliver services only within areas in which they are qualified and competent.
- Make timely referrals to other professionals when client needs fall outside their expertise or when continuity of service is not possible.
- Adapt their practice to reflect the specific context, client group, and setting in which services are delivered.
- Ensure that ethical principles guide all modes of service delivery, including in-person, blended, and virtual environments.

6. Professional Relationships and Workplace Integrity

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Foster respectful, collaborative relationships with colleagues and other professionals.
- Acknowledge and support the contributions of others working to improve career development services.
- Address ethical dilemmas through reflective practice, consultation, and adherence to professional standards.
- Promote ethical, high-quality career development practices within their organisations and through advocacy to stakeholders and policymakers.
- Resolve conflicts of interest transparently and in the best interests of clients.

7. Breaches of the Code of Ethics

Breaches of this Code may be reported to the Career Development Practitioner's relevant CICA Member Association. Each association will follow its procedures for investigating and addressing such breaches, which may include educational responses, professional development requirements, or disciplinary action, including termination of membership.

Entry-level Qualifications

Entry-level Qualifications

Entry-level qualifications ensure that those entering the career development profession possess the necessary career development-specific skills, knowledge, and competencies to perform work in the career development field. These qualifications determine membership in the CICA Member Associations. The content of the entry-level qualifications is guided by the CICA Competency framework.

Professional Career Development Practitioners work across various settings, coordinating teams that include Associate Career Development Practitioners and taking on supervisory roles.

Entry-level qualifications for Professional Career Development Practitioners are either

a) CICA endorsed Graduate Certificate in Career Development or higher
b) Equivalent International Career Development Specific Qualification.

Associate Career Development Practitioners work in support roles.

Entry-level qualifications for Associate Career Development Practitioners offer an introduction to career development and are either

a) CICA endorsed Certificate IV in Career Development or
b) Equivalent International Career Development Specific Qualification.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Overview

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a vital aspect of professional practice for Career Development Practitioners. It encompasses the deliberate and ongoing acquisition, refinement, and application of knowledge, skills, and competencies to ensure quality, ethical, and future-focused service delivery.

CPD improves individual capability, enhances client outcomes, and strengthens the overall career development profession.

CICA sets a minimum standard of **15 hours of CPD** per year for Professional and Associate members of its Member Associations.

Expectations of CICA Member Associations

CICA Member Associations must:

- Embed CPD requirements within their own professional standards frameworks, aligning with the CICA Professional Standards.
- Require Professional and Associate members to confirm their compliance with CPD requirements as part of their annual membership renewal.
- Provide, or endorse, a relevant and accessible programme of CPD activities that promotes the maintenance and development of practitioner competencies.
- Establish systems for members to record and validate their CPD activities, including digital tracking and documentation tools where practical.
- Ensure CPD offerings address both core and specialised competencies, including emerging areas such as digital literacy, ethical AI use, and evolving labour market dynamics.
- Collaborate with other associations, where suitable, to expand CPD opportunities and facilitate practitioner mobility.

Expectations of Professional and Associate Practitioners

Career Development Practitioners must:

- Actively engage in CPD according to the requirements of their CICA Member Association.
- Choose CPD activities that match their individual learning needs, service context, and the evolving demands of the field.
- Maintain accurate records of their CPD participation and be prepared to provide evidence of compliance when asked.
- Confirm their CPD compliance annually as part of their membership renewal process.
- Seek opportunities that broaden their knowledge of the Core Competencies of the Professional Standards and Specialised Competencies as relevant to their work

Competency Framework

Overview

The CICA Competency Framework contains Core Competencies and Specialised Competencies.

Core Competencies are the skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential for all Australian Career Development Practitioners regardless of their work setting.

Specialised competencies are the additional skills, knowledge, and attitudes that some career development practitioners may require to undertake specific career development roles or address the needs of particular client groups. Appropriate training must be undertaken to develop these specialised competencies.

The CICA Competency Framework guides the content of the CICA-endorsed entry-level qualifications and alternative entry pathways.

The Core Competencies are:

- Career development theory
- Labour market information
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Ethical practice
- Diversity and inclusion
- Digital Literacy, Emerging Technologies, and Information Management
- Professional practice application

The Specialised Competencies are:

- Career assessment
- Career counselling
- Program delivery
- Working with diverse clients
- Project management
- Employer liaison
- Research skills

Core Competencies

An overview of the Core Competencies is provided in the table below.

Core Competency 1	Career development theory
1a	Describe major career development theories, concepts, research, and associated models and frameworks
1b	Apply career development theories, concepts, research, and associated models and frameworks to practice in hybrid, digital and physical environments.
1c	Integrate AI powered tools, digital platforms and emerging technologies when applying career development theories to support diverse client needs and preferences.
Core Competency 2	**Labour market information**
2a	Source, understand and apply credible, reliable labour market information that is free of bias including real-time data from multiple digital sources
2b	Use labour market information to assist clients in job search strategies and career planning
2c	Use online and AI-driven labour market platforms to access and interpret current trends, forecasts and skills demand.
2d	Understand the impact of automation, AI, and technological disruption on various career paths and industries
Core Competency 3	**Communication and interpersonal skills**
3a	Establish and maintain rapport
3b	Communicate effectively across diverse audiences and platforms, adapting your verbal and written approaches to match varying levels of digital literacy and accessibility needs.

Core Competencies

Core Competency 3	Communication and interpersonal skills
3c	Work effectively in hybrid team environments, including remote, in-person, and AI-assisted collaboration
3d	Model professional digital interactions to communicate effectively using virtual platforms,

Core Competency 4	Ethical practice
4a	Apply the CICA Code of Ethics
4b	Demonstrate commitment to professionalism
4c	Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning
4d	Apply ethical principles to the use of digital tools.

Core Competency 5	Diversity and inclusion
5a	Recognise and respect diversity in all its forms, including digital divide considerations
5b	Conduct career development practice in culturally sensitive ways
5c	Ensure digital resources and platforms are inclusive, accessible, and appropriate for diverse client backgrounds.

Core Competency 6	Digital literacy, Emerging Technologies, and Information Management
6a	Apply and Evaluate Digital Literacy and Emerging Technologies in Career Development Practice
6b	Collect, analyse and use information
6c	Keep up-to-date with emerging technologies and innovations

Core Competencies

Core Competency 6	Digital literacy, Emerging Technologies, and Information Management
6d	Identify relevant support organisations, resources and services
6e	Maintain digital security and protect client information across all technological platforms
Core Competency 7	Professional practice application
7a	Conduct needs assessment
7b	Follow case and/or project management procedures
7c	Use enterprise skills
7d	Evaluate the service provided to clients
7e	Where appropriate use digital assessment tools to identify client goals, strengths, barriers, and levels of digital literacy

Core Competencies

Core Competencies are the skills, knowledge and attitudes required by all Career Development Practitioners regardless of their work setting.

A detailed description of the Core Competencies is provided in the table below.

1. Career Development Theory

These competencies address the theoretical base that informs the work of Career Development Practitioners.

1a. Describe major career development theories, concepts, research, and associated models and frameworks	**To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:** • Understand the constructs of major career development theories and their application • Keep up-to-date with the latest developments in theory, associated models, and research • Understand models of career decision-making and their application
1b. Apply career development theories, concepts, research, and associated models and frameworks to practice in hybrid, digital and physical environments.	**To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:** • Integrate career development theories, concepts, research, and associated models and frameworks into practice. • Apply a theoretical framework developed from a range of career development theories, associated models, and research to provide a sound context for practice. • Use a theoretical framework through which to understand client career development. • Assist clients to understand the career development process. • Assist clients to understand and balance their multiple life-roles.

- Apply models of career decision-making to practice.
- Use theory to inform program development.
- Incorporate into practice theory and research-informed strategies, resources, and processes that reflect the needs of the setting and client group.
- Adapt career development practice to suit delivery across hybrid, digital, and physical service environments.
- Evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of theoretical frameworks when applied via online platforms or AI-enabled tools.
- Embed ethical, inclusive, and culturally responsive practices when applying theory in technology-rich or remote delivery settings.

1c. Integrate AI powered tools, digital platforms and emerging technologies when applying career development theories to support diverse client needs and preferences.

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Select and use appropriate AI-powered and digital tools (e.g. career assessment platforms, job matching algorithms, or LMI dashboards) aligned with relevant career development theories and client goals
- Guided by career theory, tailor digital and AI-enabled resources to suit individual client contexts, including accessibility, language preferences, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds
- Stay informed about emerging technologies and evaluate their ethical implications, effectiveness, and alignment with career development theories and best practice

2. Labour Market Information

These competencies address the integral role of labour market information in career development practice.

2a. Source, understand and apply credible, reliable labour market information that is free of bias

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Understand how to access local, regional, national and international labour market information

- Keep current about labour market trends and information

- Comprehend local, regional, national and international labour market information and their application to work search and career objectives

- Critically evaluate and interpret labour market statistics and trends

- Understand current workplaces, workers' rights, conditions, and employment and recruitment practices

- Understand educational and training opportunities and resources and transition pathways as appropriate to work setting

- Utilise real-time labour market data from multiple digital sources (e.g. job scraping tools, government dashboards, AI-enabled LMI platforms) to inform client support

- Evaluate the reliability, relevance and potential bias of digital labour market information and its sources

- Tailor labour market insights to individual client goals, context and capability using accessible formats and language

- Integrate emerging LMI tools into career practice, enabling clients to explore occupations, industries, and pathways informed by live market trends

2b. Use labour market information to assist clients in job search strategies and career planning

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Expose clients to various career search strategies
- Assist clients in interpreting labour market information in the context of their career decision-making and aspirations, skills, knowledge and needs
- Apply accurate labour market information to assist clients in developing labour market informed career plans
- Assist clients in self-management and self-promotion
- Assist clients in creating their opportunities, including entrepreneurial opportunities
- Help clients expand their search for prospective jobs
- Identify hidden job markets
- Identify cultural differences in expectations of the job search process
- Assist clients to use job search strategies such as self-marketing, using portfolios, personal presentations, job interviews, networking, letters of application, addressing selection criteria, assessment centre preparation, use of recruitment agencies, use of online resources, the role of professional associations, the preparation of application forms, online application preparation, online presence, resume and portfolio preparation.
- Integrate real-time labour market data and digital job search platforms to help clients align their applications with current demand
- Support clients in navigating emerging digital tools such as AI-powered resume builders, job aggregators, and skills-matching platforms

2c. Use online and AI-driven labour market platforms to access and interpret current trends, forecasts and skills demand.

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Use real-time digital labour market intelligence platforms to identify emerging industries, in-demand occupations, and skills shortages
- Interpret AI-generated labour market data with a critical lens, considering potential biases, limitations, and source credibility
- Translate complex labour market insights into clear, accessible information that clients can understand and apply to their own decision-making
- Incorporate labour market intelligence tools into career practice, career planning sessions, and group workshops to enhance evidence-based guidance
- Apply data from digital platforms to inform program design, resource development, and service planning for specific cohorts or regions
- Continuously update practice by engaging with new and evolving labour market intelligence platforms and participating in professional learning on data literacy and tech-enabled tool

2d. Understand the impact of digital automation, AI, and technological disruption on various career paths and industries

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Stay informed about current and emerging technologies that are reshaping industries, job roles, and skill requirements
- Use up-to-date labour market and workforce trend data to anticipate the effects of automation and AI on occupational demand
- Support clients to explore future-focused careers and transition pathways aligned with sectors experiencing growth or transformation
- Help clients assess their current skills and identify transferable or upgradeable capabilities to remain competitive in evolving job markets

- Encourage lifelong learning and digital literacy to future-proof career development in a changing world of work
- Integrate tools and resources that forecast the impact of technological disruption on specific industries and career paths
- Promote awareness of the ethical, social, and cultural implications of AI and automation in the workplace

3. Communication and Interpersonal Skills

These competencies address the high-level communication and interpersonal skills that are required in the work of Career Development Practitioners to interact effectively with clients.

3a. Establish and maintain rapport

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Build rapport and relationships with clients
- Create a climate of respect, confidence, openness, trust, confidentiality, positivity and comfort
- Demonstrate empathy through genuine concern for clients' wellbeing, welfare and future
- Ascertain, acknowledge, validate, and respect clients' beliefs, values, opinions, contexts, perceptions, and learning styles
- Promote a cooperative and productive environment
- Mutually determine and evaluate expectations, needs, and goals
- Continuously demonstrate personal integrity, honesty, and sincerity

3b. Communicate effectively across diverse audiences and platforms, adapting your verbal and written approaches to match varying levels of digital literacy and accessibility needs.

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Use verbal communication skills including reframing, questioning, reflection and active listening skills
- Use communication skills to assess clients' needs
- Allow for the transfer of required information
- Use written and verbal language appropriate to the audience and context

- Use digital communication ethically and effectively
- Model, support and encourage effective communication
- Write and maintain accurate client records
- Produce effective resources
- Tailor communication strategies to suit clients with varying levels of digital access, literacy, and assistive technology requirements
- Use inclusive and plain language approaches across all formats, including online, video, print, and AI-enabled channels
- Apply accessibility principles (e.g. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) when designing digital content, presentations, or resources for diverse audiences
- Evaluate and adjust communication methods based on feedback, cultural considerations, and client preferences

3c. Work effectively in hybrid team environments, including remote, in-person, and AI-assisted collaboration

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Develop appropriate client, colleague, agency and community relationships
- Work cooperatively and respectfully with team members to create a healthy and productive work environment where team members are kept informed
- Work with the team in the client's best interests
- Be aware of the boundaries of team roles and avoid conflicts of interest
- Promote and market services to clients, employers and other agencies
- Foster links with and gain cooperation of key stakeholders and external communities including employers, professional associations and peak organisations

- Adapt communication and workflow practices to suit hybrid and remote team contexts, ensuring clarity, accountability, and responsiveness
- Use collaborative digital tools (e.g. shared documents, project boards, team messaging platforms) to enhance teamwork and service delivery
- Leverage AI-enabled tools to streamline administrative tasks, coordinate shared work, and enhance team productivity
- Maintain professional and ethical conduct in virtual environments, respecting confidentiality, cultural norms, and team expectations

3d. Model professional digital interactions to communicate effectively using virtual platforms.

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Use video conferencing and virtual meeting tools confidently and appropriately for client sessions, team meetings, and stakeholder engagement
- Demonstrate professional etiquette in digital spaces, including punctuality, appropriate dress, tone of voice, and active engagement
- Ensure clarity and inclusivity in virtual communication by using accessible formats, plain language, and visual aids where appropriate
- Maintain confidentiality and ethical standards when interacting online, including appropriate use of secure platforms and private settings
- Support clients and colleagues in becoming confident and effective digital communicators
- Troubleshoot common technical issues and help create a supportive, user-friendly virtual environment
- Model digital literacy, safe online behaviour, and respectful communication in all virtual interactions

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4. Ethical Practice

These competencies address the ethical standards that guide the work of Career Development Practitioners.

4a. Apply the CICA Code of Ethics	**To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:** • Understand, reflect on, and adhere to the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners' Code of Ethics in their practice • Engage in ethical practice with other practitioners, clients, employers and the public
4b. Demonstrate commitment to professionalism	**To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:** • Act as a role model for the profession • Show respect to others • Act responsibly and within professional scope of practice • Offer quality service to clients • Liaise with relevant bodies to identify best practice relationships and professional networks • Demonstrate reflective practice to identify areas for improvements that will enhance practice • Understand how public policy, legislation, and regulation relevant to career work impact on their role and practice • Obtain feedback on, and conduct evaluation of, services provided

4c. Demonstrate commitment to and evidence of lifelong learning

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Maintain currency through further education and continuing professional development
- Plan, and retain a record of, own professional development

4d. Apply ethical principles to the use of digital tools.

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Understand and apply ethical frameworks when using digital and AI-powered tools in career development practice
- Ensure informed client consent before using digital platforms, assessments, or AI-generated content
- Maintain strict data privacy and confidentiality protocols in digital environments, including secure storage, transfer, and deletion of client information
- Recognise and address potential algorithmic bias when using AI-based systems for career matching, labour market analysis, or client profiling
- Clearly communicate the purpose, limitations, and risks of digital tools and platforms to clients
- Establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in online communications, including outside business hours and on social media
- Regularly review and reflect on the ethical implications of emerging technologies and update practice accordingly

5. Diversity and inclusion

These competencies address the need for Career Development Practitioners to demonstrate respect for the diversity of Australian people and conduct their work in culturally sensitive ways. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, geographic location, sporting prowess, culture, religion, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, refugee and migrant backgrounds, socio-economic status, mental health, and exceptional ability e.g., in sport, the arts or academic achievement.

5a. Recognise and respect diversity in all its forms, including digital divide considerations

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Be knowledgeable about legislation related to discrimination
- Accept and work respectfully, effectively, appropriately and ethically with diverse clients
- Appreciate that clients may not share the practitioner's personal or professional perspectives
- Understand the influence and impact of the client's cultural, geographic, social and economic environment or context in career decision-making
- Promote access to services for diverse clients
- Demonstrate awareness of, reflect on, and self-critique cultural beliefs, values, and historical positioning, and how these impact on one's practice with clients from other cultural backgrounds
- Recognise how limited access to digital devices, internet connectivity, or digital literacy may affect clients' ability to engage with services and opportunities
- Adjust communication and service delivery methods to ensure equitable access for clients impacted by digital exclusion
- Advocate for inclusive policies and practices that reduce barriers created by the digital divide, especially for clients from regional, remote, or marginalised communities

5b. Conduct career development practice in culturally sensitive ways

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Address the needs of clients with unique needs
- Ensure pre-judgment and biases are not affecting service delivery
- Identify, and work with clients to overcome systemic biases that limit their career development
- Provide an inclusive environment when working with clients
- Determine whether clients' needs are within the scope of practice of the practitioner and, if not, determine an appropriate referral

5c. Ensure digital resources and platforms are inclusive, accessible, and appropriate for diverse client backgrounds.

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Select and recommend digital tools that meet established accessibility standards (e.g. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) and support users with disability, low literacy, or language barriers
- Review digital content to ensure it reflects cultural diversity and avoids stereotyping or exclusion
- Provide alternative formats or support where clients face barriers to accessing or navigating digital platforms
- Test and evaluate the usability of online resources with clients from different backgrounds to ensure relevance and ease of use
- Collaborate with clients and communities to identify digital preferences, limitations, and opportunities for engagement
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of inclusive design principles and apply them when developing or sharing online career resources
- Advocate for equity in digital service provision across the career development sector

6. Digital Literacy, Emerging Technologies and Information Management

These competencies address the integral role of current and emerging technologies, relevant and effective information and resources, and their management, to meet client needs.

6a. Apply and Evaluate Digital Literacy and Emerging Technologies in Career Development Practice

To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Understand the role and potential of digital tools, including artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, in enhancing career development services.

- Critically evaluate the relevance, reliability, inclusivity, accessibility, and ethical implications of digital platforms, applications, and AI tools before and during integration into practice.

- Maintain up-to-date digital literacy skills, adapting to and navigating new technologies with a reflective, evidence-informed approach.

- Integrate technology strategically to increase accessibility, engagement, scalability, and client outcomes, while ensuring alignment with professional standards and client needs.

- Apply ethical principles to technology use, including safeguarding data privacy, addressing algorithmic bias, ensuring transparency, obtaining informed consent, and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries online.

- Ensure tools and resources are inclusive and appropriate for clients with diverse cultural, linguistic, and accessibility needs, adapting delivery methods to match varying client digital capabilities.

- Support clients in developing their own digital literacy to enhance employability, access labour market information, and participate effectively in an evolving workforce.

- Monitor and review the effectiveness, security, and client-centred nature of digital tools, adjusting practice based on feedback and measurable outcomes.
- Stay informed about technological developments, contributing to sector-wide discussions, knowledge-sharing, and professional learning related to digital innovation and AI in career development.
- Apply best practices in online safety and digital ethics to protect client confidentiality, ensure secure record keeping, and comply with legal and professional standards

6b. Collect, analyse and use information

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Identify and critically evaluate the range, sources, and types of information available
- Apply appropriate research strategies to retrieve information needed, including the ethical and transparent use of information technology (e.g., social media, online information sources, AI tools, and Generative AI outputs)
- Access and exchange information relevant to one's practice
- Maintain, retrieve and interpret information effectively to assist clients
- Develop and apply information management strategies
- Manage and organise career development information in a way that is accessible for use by intended audiences
- Assist clients to become discerning users of social media, digital platforms, AI tools, and Generative AI outputs by developing their skills to evaluate reliability, bias, and ethical implications

Career Development Practitioners may also:

- Produce career information and resources that support their work

6c. Keep up-to-date with emerging technologies and innovations

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Remain current and have a sound understanding of emerging technologies and their application to practice
- Use appropriate forms of electronic communication and social media
- Are aware of changing contexts, including the political, economic, technological, social, environmental, and organisational contexts
- Are adaptable and flexible, using and applying technology in their own context
- Recognise the impact that digital technology and social media are having on the world of work and career development practice

Career Development Practitioners may also:

- Create, deliver, and adapt information and resources using technology (e.g., presentations, videos, webinars, podcasts, interactive modules, and multimedia resources), incorporating digital and AI-enabled tools to enhance accessibility, engagement, and personalised learning experiences.

6d. Identify relevant support organisations, resources and services

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Identify and source relevant organisations, resources, and services that address the unique needs of clients
- Utilise technology and digital platforms to research, access, and share information about services and resources
- Identify service gaps in the community
- Make appropriate referrals

6e. Maintain digital security and protect client information across all technological platforms

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Adhere to legal, organisational, and ethical requirements for storing, handling, and transmitting client information across digital systems
- Use secure and encrypted platforms for online communication, data entry, and document sharing
- Implement strong password practices, multi-factor authentication, and regular software updates to reduce cyber risk
- Inform clients about how their data is collected, stored, and protected, and seek informed consent when using digital tools
- Limit data collection to what is necessary, and securely delete outdated or unnecessary client records
- Remain alert to potential cybersecurity threats (e.g. phishing, data breaches) and know how to respond appropriately
- Stay current with digital security guidelines and participate in ongoing professional learning related to digital privacy and protection

7. Professional Practice Application

These competencies address the practices required to maintain professional standards in career development work.

7a. Conduct needs assessment

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Determine the career needs of clients
- Determine whether clients' needs are within the scope of expertise and practice and, if not, determine appropriate referral
- Negotiate and agree the services and support to be provided to achieve the outcomes for clients
- Understand and apply appropriate methods to conduct needs assessment e.g. Surveys, interviews

7b. Follow case and/or project management procedures

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Monitor client's situation and progress
- Maintain client confidentiality
- Work in the client/client group/class's best interests
- Ensure accountability
- Coordinate and cooperate at intra- and inter-agency levels
- Fulfil responsibilities to clients, colleagues, employers and self
- Store information that can be easily retrieved for decisions or future needs
- Understand the implications of record-keeping, including legal implications

7c. Use enterprise skills

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Provide innovative responses to the changing political and organisational contexts and emerging career development needs of clients and the community
- Be adaptable and flexible in a constantly changing world
- Promote and market services to clients, employers and other organisations
- Advocate on behalf of the career development profession

Career Development Practitioners may also:

- Apply sound business practices

7d. Evaluate the service provided to clients

To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Understand and apply a range of evaluation strategies
- Evaluate cases and/or projects to ensure accountability
- Measure and improve client satisfaction
- Use evaluation to identify new client services
- Provide evidence to assist in service promotion and enhancement

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7e. Where appropriate use digital assessment tools to identify client goals, strengths, barriers, and levels of digital literacy

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To demonstrate this competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Select and use appropriate online tools to assess client career interests, values, skills, and readiness for change
- Apply digital self-assessments to understand clients' existing knowledge of and comfort with digital technologies
- Use results from digital tools to collaboratively identify client goals, barriers, and support needs
- Adapt assessment delivery methods to suit clients with lower digital literacy, using guided or assisted approaches as needed
- Interpret assessment data to tailor career development interventions and support plans
- Monitor client progress using follow-up digital tools and adjust goals or strategies accordingly
- Ensure that digital assessments used are valid, reliable, inclusive, and culturally appropriate

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Specialised Competencies

Specialised Competencies are the additional skills, knowledge and attitudes that may be required by some Career Development Practitioners to undertake specific roles or to meet the needs of particular client groups, contexts, or service settings. These competencies go beyond the Core Competencies and reflect practice in areas that may require further qualifications, experience, or professional development.

Practitioners must undertake appropriate training or professional learning to develop and demonstrate the Specialised Competencies relevant to their area of practice.

An overview of the Specialised Competencies is provided below:

Specialised Competency 1	Career assessment
S1	Assess, select, administer, interpret and apply career assessment instruments and processes to inform client understanding and support goal setting.

Specialised Competency 2	Career counselling
S2	Apply advanced career counselling skills to support clients through complex transitions, decision-making processes and change.

Specialised Competency 3	Career development program delivery
S3	Assess the need for, design, deliver and evaluate structured career development programs tailored to specific groups or contexts.

Specialised Competency 4	Diverse clients
S4	Work respectfully and effectively with clients from diverse backgrounds, adapting services to meet cultural, linguistic, social, and individual needs.

Specialised Competency 5	Project management
S5	Design, develop, implement, and evaluate projects related to career development services or client engagement.

Specialised Competency 6	Industry liaison
S6	Liaise with employers, industry groups and community organisations to build partnerships, identify opportunities, and support client transitions.

Specialised Competency 7	Research skills
S7	Conduct, interpret, and apply research to inform and improve career development practice and policy.

1. Career Assessment

Many Career Development Practitioners incorporate vocational and career assessment into their practice to support client self-awareness, decision-making, and planning. In addition to the Core Competencies, certain assessment instruments and processes require specialised qualifications, training, and professional learning to ensure they are used ethically, accurately, and in a way that meets the diverse needs of clients.

S1. Assess, develop and apply career assessment

To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Describe the purpose and role of assessment in career development practice
- Identify standardised and informal career assessment instruments appropriate to client needs and within the practitioner's knowledge and skill level, including digital and AI-enabled career assessment instruments
- Review and interpret assessment results in collaboration with clients to support decision-making and goal setting
- Understand and apply concepts of validity, reliability, and norm group relevance for all assessment instruments used
- Use assessment processes ethically, respecting confidentiality, informed consent, language and cultural appropriateness
- Apply assessment methods that are inclusive, accessible, and relevant for diverse client backgrounds, including those with varied digital literacy levels
- Evaluate the accessibility, inclusivity, and ethical implications of digital assessment instruments before use
- Apply tools to deliver, interpret, and share assessment results in a secure and client-friendly format
- Stay informed about emerging digital and AI-enabled assessment instruments, evaluating their reliability, accessibility, and ethical implications before use

2. Career Counselling

Career counselling is a core component of practice for many Career Development Practitioners. It involves supporting clients to explore their values, strengths, interests, and life roles, and to make informed career-related decisions. In addition to the Core Competencies, practitioners identifying as career counsellors are expected to hold the relevant Specialised Competencies in counselling, which require appropriate qualifications, training, and ongoing professional development to deliver this service ethically and effectively.

S2. Apply career counselling skills	**To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:** • Explain major counselling theories, models, and approaches relevant to career counselling • Apply counselling theory and evidence-based techniques to support clients in making informed and self-directed career decisions • Demonstrate theoretically driven career counselling that reflects the client's context, values, and needs • Adapt counselling strategies to suit diverse clients and delivery modes, including the use of secure video conferencing, virtual platforms, and AI-assisted instruments where appropriate • Recognise and address personal, social, and systemic barriers impacting client career development • Maintain ethical boundaries and confidentiality in all counselling interactions, including virtual settings • Evaluate and integrate emerging technologies that can enhance counselling sessions, while maintaining professional judgment and client-centred practice • Engage in regular supervision, mentoring, or peer review appropriate to support reflective practice and professional growth • Stay up-to-date with evolving counselling modalities, digital tools e.g. AI and Generative AI, and culturally responsive practices relevant to career counselling

3. Career Development Program Delivery

Career development program delivery is a core function for many Career Development Practitioners, particularly those working in educational, community, and organisational settings. Effective program delivery builds on the Core Competencies and requires additional skills and knowledge in needs assessment, program design, facilitation, and evaluation. Programs must be responsive to client needs, culturally inclusive, accessible, and adaptable for delivery across physical, digital, and hybrid environments.

S3. Assess the need for, design, deliver and evaluate career development programs

To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Conduct needs assessments to inform program goals, content, delivery methods, and participant engagement strategies
- Understand and apply models of group facilitation relevant to career development learning
- Use group facilitation skills to foster engagement, collaboration, and reflective learning
- Contextualise programs according to the work setting, target audience, and societal context
- Design and deliver theoretically informed programs that cater for diversity, inclusion, and varied learning styles
- Select and integrate instruments, techniques, and technology, including digital platforms, AI-powered resources, and virtual delivery instruments to improve scalability, access, and engagement
- Design and deliver programs specifically for online and blended environments, applying best practices in digital pedagogy, learner engagement, accessibility, and security.
- Prepare and present program proposals that address context, budget, objectives, and expected outcomes
- Monitor the progress and engagement of individuals and groups throughout the program
- Review, evaluate, and revise programs based on participant feedback, outcome data, and evolving needs

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www.cica.org.au   Professional Standards for Australian
Career Development Practitioners

- Employ digital and AI-enabled resources to evaluate program effectiveness, identify improvements, and ensure ongoing relevance
- Evaluate the effectiveness of digital and AI-enabled program components and adjust delivery to ensure inclusivity and relevance
- Apply technology strategically to enable scalability, flexibility, and accessibility in program delivery
- Ensure programs are inclusive and culturally responsive, removing participation barriers wherever possible

4. Diverse Clients

Career Development Practitioners may work in specialist areas with clients from diverse backgrounds and life experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, people with disability (including psychosocial disability and mental illness), those with refugee, migrant, or veteran backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, individuals with exceptional abilities (e.g., in sport, the arts, or academic achievement), and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

To provide effective and culturally safe services, practitioners require, in addition to the Core Competencies, particularly the Diversity and Inclusion competency, specific training and professional learning relevant to the client groups they support.

S4. Working with diverse people	**To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:**
	• Reflect on and understand their own cultural background and biases, and how these may influence practice
	• Understand theory, models, and practices relevant to working with diverse people and apply them appropriately in career development contexts
	• Conduct specialised career counselling that is culturally responsive, inclusive, and grounded in practices that respect and reflect clients' cultural values, lived experiences, and identities
	• Apply career development theories in ways that are relevant to people with functional limitations or disability
	• Provide career guidance, job search skills training, and job placement support tailored for diverse people.
	• Use applied counselling approaches suited to the needs and goals of diverse people.
	• Demonstrate understanding of psychosocial factors related to disability, mental health, and life transitions
	• Facilitate reasonable adjustments and accommodations, including digital accessibility features, assistive technology, and alternative formats to ensure equitable participation in technology-mediated services
	• Recognise and address the digital divide, ensuring clients have equitable access to and skills for using technology in career development processes

Specialised Competencies

Some Career Development Practitioners may also:

- Understand rehabilitation theory, models, processes, and practices
- Apply working knowledge of vocational and occupational rehabilitation systems
- Facilitate rehabilitation case management to support client career outcomes
- Conduct specialised vocational evaluation and assessment
- Understand the functional implications of injury and disability in relation to career and work opportunities

5. Project Management

Project management is a key area of professional practice for some Career Development Practitioners, particularly those responsible for designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating system-wide projects within their own organisation or in partnership with others. In addition to the Core Competencies, practitioners undertaking this work require specific training and professional learning to ensure projects are delivered effectively, ethically, and with measurable outcomes.

S5. Design, develop, implement, and evaluate projects	**To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:** • Understand and apply project management processes, instruments, and methodologies to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate projects effectively • Prepare project plans that include clear objectives, timelines, budgets, risk management strategies, and measurable outcomes • Establish and maintain strong communication with clients, stakeholders, and management through timely reporting, review meetings, and presentations • Manage third-party relationships and partnerships to ensure effective project implementation and collaboration • Monitor progress, manage risks, and make informed adjustments to ensure project success • Ensure all deliverables meet quality standards and align with customer, stakeholder, or community expectations • Use project evaluation findings, including data from digital platforms and analytics instruments, to inform continuous improvement and future project planning • Incorporate digital solutions, project management software, and AI-assisted instruments to improve efficiency, collaboration, and data tracking

6. Industry Liaison

Industry and employer liaison is a key area of practice for some Career Development Practitioners, particularly those whose roles involve building relationships with employers, industry groups, and other organisations. This work may include providing information about employment, training, and career opportunities, as well as facilitating work-based learning experiences for students and other clients. In addition to the Core Competencies, practitioners undertaking industry liaison activities require specific training and professional learning to ensure these partnerships are effective, sustainable, and mutually beneficial.

S6. Liaise with employers and other organisations

To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:

- Demonstrate a high level of client focus
- Apply effective networking, presentation, negotiation, and influencing skills
- Collaborate with diverse internal and external stakeholders, including recruitment agencies, employers, and peak industry groups to maximise benefits for clients
- Manage data effectively using secure digital platforms, customer relationship management systems, and labour market analytics instruments
- Leverage digital networking instruments, online forums, and virtual events to build and maintain employer and industry connections

7. Research Skills

Research skills are essential for some Career Development Practitioners whose roles involve conducting career development research that contributes to theory, informs best practice, and supports policy development. In addition to the Core Competencies, practitioners undertaking this work require specific training.

S7. Conduct research	**To demonstrate this Specialised Competency, Career Development Practitioners:**
	• Design and conduct research projects relevant to career development
	• Apply appropriate research methodologies, including digital research instruments, online surveys, data analytics platforms, and AI-assisted literature reviews
	• Analyse and interpret research findings to inform practice and policy
	• Disseminate research outcomes to relevant stakeholders through reports, presentations, and publications
	• Stay up-to-date with emerging research and trends in career development
	• Critically evaluate digital data sources for reliability, bias, and relevance
	• Appropriately acknowledge the use of AI in reports, publications, and other professional outputs where necessary

Glossary of Terms

Algorithmic Bias

Systematic and repeatable errors in a computer system that create unfair outcomes, such as privileging one group over another. In career services, this may arise from AI tools used in hiring, resume screening, or job-matching that reflect biased training data. Practitioners must be vigilant about fairness, transparency, and equity in digital environments.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

A branch of computer science focused on creating systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as pattern recognition, decision-making, and natural language processing. In career development, AI is used in tools for labour market analysis, chatbots, resume screening, and personalised recommendations.

Associate Career Development Practitioners

Hold a CICA-endorsed Certificate IV in Career Development and work in support roles, ideally under the supervision of a professional career development practitioner.

Benchmarking

The process of measuring the performance of products, services, or processes against those considered to be industry best practices. Benchmarking identifies strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Career

A lifestyle concept that involves work, learning and leisure activities across the lifespan. Careers are dynamic, unique to each person, and involve balancing paid and unpaid work and personal life roles.

Career Adviser

Career Advisers hold Professional Qualifications in Career Development and provide a service that facilitates career decision making. They provide timely and authoritative advice and information to students, parents and colleagues in educational settings.

Career Assessment

A process that gives meaning to quantitative test results and informal qualitative career assessment instruments.

Career Counselling

A process that assists people by emphasising self-awareness and understanding in order to develop a satisfying and meaningful career direction that guides learning, work and transition decisions and manage changing work and learning environments over the lifespan. Career counselling may be conducted individually or in small groups, and increasingly via digital platforms and virtual tools. Career Counsellors hold Professional Qualifications in Career Development as well as Specialised Qualifications in career counselling. Practitioners must ensure ethical, culturally appropriate, and secure use of digital and AI-enabled supports.

Glossary of Terms

Career Development

The process of managing life, learning, work, leisure, and transitions across the lifespan in order to move towards a personally determined future.

Career Development Practitioner

Career Development Practitioners provide a wide variety of services to diverse client groups in order to foster their career development. They may work in schools, higher education, business, government, or private practice, delivering services one-to-one, in groups, online, or through resources. Services may include career counselling, advice, education, job placement, employment services, recruitment, coaching, training, mentoring and coordinating work experience or internships programs. Career Development Practitioners may work at either a Professional or Associate level. Practitioners also use digital and AI-enabled tools (e.g., online assessments, labour market dashboards, generative AI applications) and are responsible for their ethical, equitable, and client-centred application.

Career Development Services

A wide range of programs and services provided in many different jurisdictions and delivery settings to stimulate career development learning so that clients gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to manage their life, learning and work in self-directed ways. Career development services may be delivered face-to-face, through digital platforms, or in hybrid formats, with attention to digital equity, accessibility, and inclusion.

Career Education

The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences in education and training settings to assist students make informed decisions about their life, learning and work options and enable their effective participation in working life.

Career Guidance

An umbrella term for the services provided by Professional Career Development Practitioners, intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

Career Information

Occupational and industry information, education and training information and social information related to the world of work sourced from resources such as computer-based career information delivery systems, the Internet, print and media materials, informational interviews, workplace speakers, and AI-enabled information systems (e.g., predictive analytics, personalised recommendations). Practitioners play a key role in verifying accuracy, mitigating bias, and applying data ethics when using digital sources.

Career Management Skills

The knowledge, skills and behaviours required by all citizens to manage and develop their learning and employment across their working lives. These include gathering, analysing, synthesising and organising self, educational and occupational information as well as skills for making and implementing career decisions and transitions.

Code of Ethics

Guide the professional behaviour and practice of Australian Career Development Practitioners and inform the public about the ethical standards to which Australian Career Development Practitioners adhere.

Competency

The ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in employment.

Core Competency

The skills, knowledge and attitudes required by all Career Development Practitioners regardless of their work setting as set out in the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners. Core competencies now include digital literacy, ethical use of AI tools, and responsible management of digital information as essential capabilities.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The ongoing maintenance and growth of professional excellence through participation in learning activities based on self-assessment and implemented for the benefits of participants, clients and the community.

Data Ethics

A framework for responsible data use, including principles like transparency, accountability, privacy, and informed consent. As digital tools in career services collect and process client data, practitioners must adhere to data ethics to protect client rights and foster trust.

Digital Career Assessment

An assessment delivered through an online or software-based platform, often enhanced by AI to provide dynamic or adaptive responses. Practitioners must ensure these assessments are valid, reliable, culturally appropriate, and used in line with ethical standards.

Digital Equity

The condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in society, democracy, and the economy. In career development, this includes equitable access to digital tools, support for digital literacy, and inclusive design practices that accommodate diverse users.

Glossary of Terms

Digital Literacy

The ability to confidently and critically use digital technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. In career development, digital literacy enables both practitioners and clients to engage effectively with online tools, virtual services, and AI-enabled platforms and to navigate digital environments safely and ethically.

Digital Tools in Career Development

Technology-based platforms or applications that support, deliver, or enhance career services. These may include online assessments, virtual career fairs, AI-enabled job search platforms, and interactive e-learning resources. Practitioners should ensure these tools align with ethical and professional standards.

Employability Skills

Generic skills and attributes that are required to gain employment and may be transferred from one situation to another.

Entry-level Training

Training undertaken to enter the workforce or further learning.

Evaluation

The process or results of an assessment or appraisal in relation to stated objectives, standards, or criteria.

Generative AI

A subset of artificial intelligence that can generate original content such as text, images, video, or audio. In career guidance, generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) may be used to simulate interview practice, draft resumes, provide career exploration support, or personalise learning content. While generative AI can enhance engagement and accessibility, practitioners must critically evaluate its accuracy, potential bias, and ethical use.

Human-in-the-Loop (HITL)

An approach where human judgment is incorporated into AI systems to guide, validate, or override automated decisions. In career development, this ensures that practitioners remain central in interpreting AI-driven recommendations and providing personalised, context-sensitive support.

Job

A job is the work a person does to earn money.

Labour Market

The market in which employers look and compete for workers and in which workers look and compete for employment.

Labour Market Information

Labour market information includes all quantitative or qualitative data and analysis related to employment and the workforce.

Learning

Learning is a holistic process involving thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving as individuals relate with experience and interaction with the world throughout their lives. Learning may be formal, informal, non-formal, intentional or unintentional.

Lifelong Learning

Purposeful learning activity undertaken on an ongoing basis to improve knowledge, skills and competence through education, training, work and general life experience.

Occupation

A set of jobs that require the performance of similar or identical sets of tasks.

Profession

A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to, and uphold, ethical standards and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills learned from research, education and training at a high level, and who exercise this knowledge and skills in the interest of others.

Professional Career Development Practitioners

Hold a CICA endorsed Graduate Certificate or higher qualification in Career Development, work across various settings, coordinate teams including Associate Career Development Practitioners, and take on supervisory roles.

Professional Standards

The systems and procedures in the career industry that: define the career industry, its membership and its services; recognise the diverse skills and knowledge of career practitioners; guide practitioner entry into the industry; provide a foundation for designing career practitioner training; provide quality assurance to the public and stakeholders; and create an agreed terminology for the industry. Professional standards also require competence in the ethical and responsible use of digital tools and AI, including transparency, accountability, bias mitigation, and privacy protection.

Qualification

Certification awarded to a person on successful completion of a course in recognition of having achieved particular knowledge, skills or competencies.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Assessment of a person's relevant skills and knowledge gained from training, work or life experience (including formal, informal and non-formal learning) to grant status or credit in a subject or module.

Self-assessment

A process of assessing performance against particular standards, criteria, or competency standards to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Skill

An ability to perform a particular mental or physical activity which may be developed by training or practice.

Specialised Competencies

Skills, knowledge and attitudes, in addition to the Core Competencies, that may be required by some Career Development Practitioners to undertake specific career development roles or cater for the needs of specific client groups. Appropriate training must be undertaken to develop the Specialised Competencies.

Virtual Career Guidance

Career development services delivered remotely through digital means, including video conferencing, chatbots, learning platforms, and mobile apps. Practitioners delivering virtual services must consider engagement strategies, client privacy, accessibility, and inclusivity.

Work

A set of activities such as paid employment, parenting, care work, or volunteering from which it is hoped a person will derive personal satisfaction.