

FAQs - Professional Standards

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who produced the Professional Standards?

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the national peak body representing national, state and territory career practitioner organisations, supported by the Australian Government, developed and published the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*.

2. When were the Professional Standards published?

The Professional Standards were first published in 2006 after an extensive consultation process with career development practitioners and other stakeholders. CICA views the Professional Standards as a living document that will be reviewed from time to time to reflect best practice and needs within the field.

For example, in 2007 during the implementation phase, CICA revised Section 4 of the Professional Standards concerning the minimum qualifications required to be recognised as a professional, or associate, career development practitioner in order to simplify it and to clarify CICA's role in relation to accredited courses as one of endorsement or providing a 'tick of approval' (see also Question 9 below).

The revised Professional Standards are available on the [CICA website](http://www.cica.org.au) (www.cica.org.au)

3. Why bother to have Professional Standards?

The publication of the Professional Standards represents a landmark in the history of Australian career development and a benchmark for career development practitioners.

The Professional Standards

- 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 other stakeholders
- Establish a professional benchmark against which career practitioners can be assessed, evaluated and judged by their peers and by others
- Require career practitioners to undertake continuing professional development
- Create an agreed terminology for the industry.

4. How will the Professional Standards be phased in?

The phasing in period began on 1 January 2006 and will continue until 1 January 2012 at which time all career development practitioners belonging to a CICA member association will meet minimum Entry Level Qualifications (Professional Standards 4.3).

The timeline for the phasing in period is as follows:

- 2006 – Code of Ethics adopted
- 2006 – Complaints procedure policy developed
- 2007 – Complaints procedure policy implemented
- 2007 – Trial of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- 2008 – Trial (continuing) or implementation of CPD
- 2012 – Completion of phasing in period.

The Professional Standards are being implemented through the Member Associations of CICA.

5. Who will the Professional Standards apply to?

The Professional Standards apply to any person who provides career development services and/or programs and who belongs to a CICA Member Association.

Through their association membership, career development practitioners will meet the minimum standards and qualifications defined by the Professional Standards; and for the areas of specialisation, the specific requirements of the relevant CICA Member Association (Professional Standards 2.3).

6. What will I need to do?

You will need to:

- Work according to the code of ethics of your professional association.
- Meet the minimum entry level qualifications
- Meet the Continuing Professional Development requirements of your association.

7. Where can I get a copy of the Professional Standards and other related documents?

The revised Professional Standards and other related documents are available as downloadable PDFs from the [CICA website](http://www.cica.org.au) (www.cica.org.au)

8. What do I have to do to be recognised as a Career Development Practitioner?

The Professional Standards recognise two levels of career development practitioners, specifically Professional career development practitioner and Associate career development practitioner.

Professional career development practitioners - (according to the revised Professional Standards) work in the field of career development and have completed and had recognised as a minimum qualification

(a) an **endorsed**:

- Graduate Certificate; or
- Vocational Graduate Certificate

or

(b) an alternative pathway to Professional status as may be approved on a case by case basis by the Member Associations in line with Policy and Procedures developed by the Council.

Associate career development practitioners - (according to the Professional Standards) work in the field of career development and have completed and had recognised as a minimum qualification

(a) an **endorsed**

- Certificate IV

or

(b) an alternative pathway to Associate status as may be approved on a case by case basis by the Member Associations in line with Policy and Procedures developed by the Council.

9. What courses are endorsed?

See [list of endorsed courses](#) on CICA website. Higher education and training providers may now apply to CICA for endorsement of the courses they deliver.

Universities and Registered Training Organisations seeking endorsement are required to submit material relevant to their courses to CICA. Information on the endorsement procedure is downloadable from the CICA website (www.cica.org.au)

Only courses endorsed by CICA will meet the Professional Standards.

Course application forms are available on the CICA website..

10. What will happen if I don't have any endorsed qualifications and I want to be recognised as a career development practitioner?

Career development practitioners in this situation will need to apply to a CICA member association for membership. The application will be assessed according to CICA's *Alternative Pathway to Professional Status Policy and Procedures Statement* (see CICA website).

As part of the revision of Section 4 of the Professional Standards, CICA developed the *Alternative Pathway to Professional Status Policy and Procedures Statement* to provide guidelines for member associations to assess whether career development practitioners without endorsed qualifications are eligible for professional status.

The criteria against which such practitioners will be assessed are:

- (a) the individual's postgraduate qualifications have been awarded by an Australian or New Zealand university (or government-registered higher-education provider), which are held in combination with,
- (b) significant professional experience, and
- (c) continuing professional development that is associated with career development.

11. Will my professional association be told what Professional Standards to adopt?

No. CICA has developed a national framework of minimum Professional Standards against and within which member associations develop their own standards. All member associations have contributed to the development of the national framework.

12. How do I comply with the continuing professional development (CPD) requirements of the Professional Standards?

Professional and Associate career development practitioners are required to undertake a minimum of 15 (nominal) hours CPD each year. Refer to the CICA website to access [CICA's CPD Policy](#).

Within a common broad framework, CICA member associations will determine the specific tasks, activities, and events that career development practitioners may undertake to meet the CPD requirements.

CICA has funded the development of an online CPD tracking/recording system that individual members of CICA member associations will be able to access directly in order to record, maintain and update the CPD they undertake. This database became operational in 2008. Contact your relevant association for details and access.

By entering your participation in a CPD activity once, it will appear in the CPD records of all of the CICA Member Associations to which you belong.

In general terms, the process that member associations are adopting to monitor compliance with the CPD requirements comprise:

- (1) Self-assessment by Professional & Associate Members by signing a declaration on their annual membership renewal form that they have complied with the CPD requirements for the previous year
- (2) Professional and Associate Members self-managing, maintaining and updating the online CPD database
- (3) Professional and Associate Members maintaining relevant substantiating evidence and documentation that supports the online records, and which they can produce at audit.
- (4) Conducting annual audits of Professional & Associate Members by Associations on an occasional/ad hoc basis to ensure completion of CPD requirements and the maintenance of supporting relevant evidence and documentation.

13. What about career development practitioners who do not belong to CICA member associations?

Most career development practitioners belong to at least one of the CICA member associations, and in so doing will comply with the Professional Standards.

As the Professional Standards become more widely adopted and promoted it is likely that employers and government departments awarding contracts will prefer career development practitioners who meet the Professional Standards over those who do not.

It is also likely that as the general public becomes more informed about the Professional Standards that they too will prefer to consult career development practitioners who are recognised as professional practitioners according to the Professional Standards over those without such recognition.

14. Will the Professional Standards affect my terms and conditions of employment and/or my status within the workplace?

Not necessarily. Employers are free to determine your employment conditions and workplace status.

Should an employer adopt the Professional Standards, then, they may impact on your employment conditions and workplace status.

Since 2009, some employers have included "ability to meet CICA Professional Standards" as a Key Selection Criteria.

15. Are the Professional Standards connected to other 'registration or regulatory boards'?

No. The Professional Standards operate completely independently of other professional, state or territory 'registration or regulatory boards'.

However, these 'boards' may choose to allow compliance with the Professional Standards, in particular, concerning continuing professional development, to contribute to or count towards their own professional development requirements.