



# **National Standards and Accreditation of Career Practitioners Project**

## **Briefing Paper 4: Codes of Ethics/Professional Conduct**

This paper has been written as part of the National Standards and Accreditation of Career Practitioners project commissioned through the Career Industry Council of Australia by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education, Science and Training.

*This paper is the fourth in a series of briefing papers that will be distributed by CICA to all career practitioners who belong to the member associations of CICA. The purpose of these papers is to assist career practitioners to be well informed and updated on the project. All papers produced in the project may be downloaded from the CICA website: [www.cica.org.au](http://www.cica.org.au)*

### **What are Codes of Ethics/Professional Conduct?**

Common to the standards employed in most professions is a code of ethics or a code of professional conduct. A code of ethics is

A practical guide for professional behaviour and practice for those who offer direct service in career development and to inform the public which career development practitioners serve (National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004)

### **Why do we need a code of ethics?**

Professions Australia stresses the importance of a code of ethics to govern the activities of professions. It claims that "Such codes require behaviour and practice beyond the personal moral obligations of an individual. They define and demand high standards of behaviour in respect of services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues. Further these codes are enforced by the profession and are acknowledged by the community" (Professions Australia, 2004). In guiding the professional conduct of association members, codes of ethics also frequently provide a basis for complaints procedures or procedures for dismissal or expulsion of members.

### **Information gathered in Stages 1 and 2 of the project**

The adoption of a code of ethics was strongly supported at the National Forum of Career Practitioners and in the Stage 2 Consultation process. In addition, the term preferred by most respondents was code of ethics rather than code of professional conduct. Three quarters of all respondents in the Stage 2 Consultation also thought a complaints procedure should be included in the quality standards.

## How have Codes of Ethics been implemented elsewhere?

Appendix 1 contains examples of the elements contained in the ethical codes of a number of career practitioner organisations. Further examples include the Code of Practice of the National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers (<http://www.nacgt.org.uk/resources.html>) and the Standards for Ethical Practice of the Association of Career Professionals International (<http://www.iacmp.org/about/ethics.html>). Elements such as those reflected in these codes will be considered by CICA.

## The Task Ahead

CICA will develop a set of core ethical principles that it believes should guide the work of all career practitioners. Member associations of CICA will ensure that their Code of Ethics accords with the principles agreed to by the member associations of CICA.

## References

Professions Australia. (2004). *About Professions Australia*. Retrieved July 15, 2004, from <http://www.professions.com.au/body.cfm?subID=41>

### Appendix 1: Comparison of elements of ethical codes

The table below depicts the titles of ethical codes of selected case study examples. In addition, the elements of each of the ethical codes are listed.

Organisation	Title of ethical code	Elements of ethical code
International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG, 1995)	Ethical Standards	The Ethical Standards contain 5 sections titled: Responsibilities to clients Colleagues and professional associates Government and other community agencies Research and related processes Responsibilities as an individual practitioner.  Each section contains several sub-points.
National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards (2004b)	Code of Ethics	The Code of Ethics contains a preamble followed by three sections titled: Ethical principles for professional competency and conduct Ethical principles for career development practitioner-client relationships Ethical principles for professional relationships.  Each section contains several sub-points. In addition, a section of the

Organisation	Title of ethical code	Elements of ethical code
		Code presents an Ethical Decision-Making Model that contains five sub-points.
Ordre des Conseillers et des Conseillères en Orientation et des Psychoéducateurs et Psychoéducatrices du Québec (OCCOPPQ, 2004).	Code of Ethics of Guidance Counsellors and Psychoeducators	The Code of Ethics of Guidance Counsellors and Psychoeducators contains six sections titled: General provisions Duties and obligations towards the public Duties and obligations towards clients Duties and obligations towards the profession Restrictions and obligations with respect to advertising Graphic symbol of the Ordre des Conseillers et des Conseillères en Orientation et des Psychoéducateurs et Psychoéducatrices du Québec.
Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC, 2004)	Code of Ethics	The Code of Ethics contains 7 sections titled:  Preamble Competence Conduct Confidentiality Consent Testing and evaluation Research.  Each section contains several sub-points. In addition two appendices describe recommended procedures for:  Ethical decision-making Data protection.
Institute of Career Guidance (ICG, 2003)	Code of Ethical Practice	The Code of Ethical Practice contains 4 sections titled:  The context The Principles The Practice Implementation.

Organisation	Title of ethical code	Elements of ethical code
		Each of the first three sections contains several sub-points, and the fourth section contains a statement.
National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2003)	Ethical Standards	<p>The Ethical Standards contain a brief preamble followed by 6 sections titled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General</li> <li>Counseling relationship</li> <li>Measurement and evaluation</li> <li>Research and publication</li> <li>Consulting</li> <li>Private practice.</li> </ul> <p>Each section contains several sub-points. In addition, there is a section titled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures for processing ethical complaints.</li> </ul>
Australian Association of Career Counsellors (AACC, 2004)	Code of Professional Conduct	<p>The Code of Professional Conduct lists the principles of professional conduct developed to safeguard the welfare of consumers of career services and the integrity of the profession.</p> <p>The code has been developed from the Association's Ethical Code and contains 8 sections titled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General principles</li> <li>Consulting relationships</li> <li>Assessment procedures</li> <li>Use of information</li> <li>Training and supervision in career counselling</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Public statements</li> <li>Violation of the code.</li> </ul> <p>Each section contains either several sub-points or a statement.</p>