

GUIDELINES FOR ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY TO PROFESSIONAL STATUS POLICY AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT CAREER INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

POLICY STATEMENT

The Career Industry Council of Australia (herein referred to as the “Council” or “CICA”) undertakes to develop guidelines for CICA Member Organisations, in particular those member organisations that are career practitioner associations, to make an informed assessment and judgement of individuals’ qualifications, experience, and professional development for the purposes of admitting individuals to membership of a CICA Member Organisation with the status of a Professional Career Development Practitioner in alignment with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

BACKGROUND

CICA is the peak body responsible for the development and promulgation of the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*.

CICA is not empowered to monitor and control the practice of individual *Career Development Practitioners*—this is the purview of the member organisations of CICA. CICA is empowered, however, to ensure that an appropriate standard of education, training and continuing professional development for Career Development Practitioners is maintained. This responsibility includes ensuring that key stakeholders of the Australian career industry (e.g., including, but not limited to, consumers, practitioners, education and training providers, government and delegated agencies, professions with an interest in career development practice) have access to information which would indicate whether qualifications, which are purported to serve as appropriate for meeting the requirements of the Standards, are sufficiently so aligned.

Member organisations of CICA are concomitantly responsible for ensuring that their members practice within the realm of the Standards and that their membership criteria comply with the requirements of the Standards.

CICA recognises that there are three formal pathways to recognition as a Professional Career Development Practitioner under the Standard 4.3 of the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, and these include:

1. Graduate Certificate endorsed by CICA;
2. Vocational Graduate Certificate endorsed by CICA;
3. Alternative Pathway to Professional Status deemed appropriate by CICA Member Associations;
4. Certificate IV; and
5. Alternative Pathway to Associate Status deemed appropriate by CICA Member Associations

The **endorsed Graduate Certificate (and higher) qualification** is recognised as the primary entry-level qualification for professionals who are relatively new to the career industry or who are planning to enter the industry, and for attaining the status of Professional Career Development Practitioner as defined by the Standards. Nevertheless, CICA does not discourage established and advanced professionals for taking a Graduate Certificate (or higher) qualification.

The **endorsed Vocational Graduate Certificate** is recognised as another entry-level qualification for the status of Professional Career Development Practitioner, as defined by the Standards. The Vocational Graduate Certificate is an alternative to the Graduate Certificate in career development. The Vocational Graduate Certificate relates to the provisions for Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) contained within the Standards. The RPL provisions were established to enable significantly experienced and competent career development practitioners who did not hold a Graduate Certificate (or higher) qualification in career development, to obtain a formally recognised qualification that fully accounts for their knowledge and skills, apropos of the competencies of a career development practitioner defined within the Standards.

The **Alternative Pathway to Professional Status, or to Associate Status, deemed appropriate by a CICA Member Association** is recognised as another entry-level route to the status of Professional Career Development Practitioner, or to the para-professional status of Associate Career Development Practitioner, as defined by the Standards. The Alternative Pathway was established to enable significantly experienced and competent professionals who did not hold a Graduate Certificate (or higher) nor a Vocational Graduate Certificate qualification in career development, or para-professionals who did not hold a Certificate IV (or higher) qualification in career development, but who, nevertheless, were able to demonstrate formal equivalent qualifications at a professional or para-professional level in a discipline related to career development, in addition to significant career industry experience, and continued professional development.

CICA Member Organisations are responsible for admitting individuals to their organisation as members, using a process that aligns with the qualification requirements of the Standards.

The Alternative Pathway to Professional Status is the subject of this policy and procedures statement. This policy will set out the recommended means by which CICA Member Organisations, in particular those member organisations that are career practitioner associations, can operationalise Standard 4.3 Australian Minimum Standard, so as to admit individuals to membership and to confer status as a Professional Career Development Practitioner on the basis of the alternative qualifications, experience, and continued professional development.

OBJECTIVES

CICA undertakes to support its Member Organisations' assessment of individual's qualifications, career industry experience, and continued professional development, for the purpose of being accepted as a member using the Alternative Pathway to Professional Status.

CICA will establish an *Endorsement Register* which will be a public record attesting to CICA's endorsement of listed qualifications. The *Endorsement Register* will be made public through the CICA website. Postgraduate Degree qualifications that have received consistent acceptance by CICA Member Organisations and CICA, under the provisions of the *Alternative Pathway* process, will be listed on the Endorsement Register as degrees that have been demonstrated as acceptable (in combination with significant professional experience and continuing professional development) for the processing of *Alternative Pathway* applications.

CICA will establish a process to advise stakeholders that the *Endorsement Register* is active and that it should be used as an additional source of information for stakeholders' inspection of postgraduate degree qualifications that purport to partially meet the Standards.

CICA Member Organisations may call upon CICA and its Qualification Endorsement Committee for advice on a particular postgraduate degree qualification that has been submitted for acceptance under the process of an assessment for *Alternative Qualification* by an individual member or applicant for membership of a CICA Member Organisation.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY

CICA acknowledges that individuals who are currently practising in the career industry and who aim to gain membership of a CICA Member Organisation, in particular those member organisations that are career practitioner associations, as a Professional Career Development Practitioner may have previously undertaken degree qualifications that are:

- (a) not specified in the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners as an endorsed Graduate Certificate or Vocational Graduate Certificate, and
- (b) that may be suitable for partial fulfilment of the professional membership requirements of a CICA Member Organisation, and
- (c) in combination with:
 - a. significant professional experience (of at least two years full-time or equivalent duration), and
 - b. other formal and certified postgraduate qualifications, and
 - c. a record of continued professional development,

may be taken to reasonably satisfy the minimum learning requirements for the Core Competencies stipulated in the Standards, according to the judgement of the Member Organisation.

CICA recommends that Member Organisations give consideration to an individual's application for acceptance through the Alternative Pathway, only if:

- (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.

Therefore, this policy specifies three parts as Part A: Degrees; Part B: Significant Experience; and, Part C: Continuing Professional Development.

Part A: Degrees

CICA Member Organisations arise from the collective interests of professionals who have education and training in various intellectual and professional disciplines (e.g., psychology, education, human resources, and rehabilitation). Thus, CICA assumes that further studies may relate to the activities of a Professional Career Development Practitioner and the competencies outline in the Standards even though the degree

may be derived from a broader discipline than the specialised area of career development.

Whilst not indicating CICA's endorsement by listing them here, the following prototypical qualifications serve as examples of those which contain curriculum requirements which may approximate a number of the Core Competencies of the Standards:

- (a) Postgraduate Diploma with a major in a relevant field exemplified in the following higher degrees;
- (b) Master of Education (with a major in guidance counselling or training and development);
- (c) Master of Guidance and Counselling;
- (d) Master of Rehabilitation Science (with a major or content in rehabilitation counselling);
- (e) Master of Psychology (with a major in educational psychology, counselling psychology, or occupational psychology);
- (f) Master of Counselling;
- (g) Master of Human Services (with a major in counselling);
- (h) Master of Social Science (with a major in counselling);
- (i) Master of Science (with a major in counselling);
- (j) Master of Arts (with a major in counselling); or,
- (k) Master of Business Administration (with a major in human resources development, or training and development); or,
- (l) Doctoral degrees in a cognate area represented in the examples (a) to (j).

Although CICA regards postgraduate qualifications as the main qualification under the *Alternative Pathway*, it is recognised by the Council that a number of undergraduate degrees have been awarded with a specialised major in career development. Those degrees are not listed here, but should be given due consideration and scrutiny by Member Organisations.

CICA recommends that CICA Member Organisations provide periodic reports to the Council describing how they have operationalised the policy and procedures. Such reporting should include listing of degree qualifications which have routinely been accepted or rejected for the purposes of the *Alternative Pathway*. This feedback will enable the Council to enter qualifications onto the *Qualification Endorsement Register* as *Alternative Qualifications*.

Part B: Significant Experience

Individuals who apply under the Alternative Pathway provisions must demonstrate to their prospective Member Organisation that they have been working in a segment of the career industry for a period of not less than two years full-time equivalent in the five-year period preceding the date of application.

Part C: Continuing Professional Development

Individuals who apply under the Alternative Pathway provisions must demonstrate to their prospective Member Organisation that they have engaged in at least 15 hours of professional development in the two-years preceding the date of application.

Core Competencies Statement

Individuals who apply under the Alternative Pathway provisions must provide evidence to their prospective Member Organisation that they reach a minimum level of acceptability for each of the Core Competencies in the Standards using the *Core Competencies Statement* indicating whether the competency has been met through Part A, B, or C.

CICA recommends that Member Organisations direct individuals presenting foreign qualifications to CICA. Individuals presenting foreign qualifications will be able to have those qualifications assessed by CICA (see Policy and Procedure Statement on the Endorsement of Foreign Qualifications).

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Part A: Degrees

In the first instance, CICA Member Organisations should check the *Qualifications Endorsement Register* to determine if an individual's postgraduate degree qualification appears on the register. If the qualification is on the Register, then Member Organisations may assume that CICA has already accepted the qualifications. If the qualification is not on the Register, then Member Organisations should scrutinise the qualification.

CICA recommends that Member Organisations require the applicant to submit certified copies of the original documentation of their qualifications. These should include:

- (a) testamur or certificate, or
- (b) transcript or results statement, or
- (c) an official statement from the university addressed to the individual applicant indicating that he or she has passed all assessment and examinations for the qualification, and the date on which the individual was admitted to the degree.

CICA recommends that Member Organisations require the individual to provide a Core Competencies Statement (see below) on how the content of their degree qualifications align with the Core Competencies in the Standards.

Part B: Significant Experience

CICA recommends that Member Organisations require the individual to provide a Core Competencies Statement (see below) on how their professional experience and the curriculum of their qualifications align with the competencies in the Standards, so as to demonstrate how he or she possesses the Core Competencies of a Professional Career Development Practitioner.

CICA recommends that an applicant's statement should be accompanied by two referee reports which attest to the applicant's professional experience. Referee reports should be provided by an individual who is a Professional Career Development Practitioner and a member of a CICA Member Organisation (but not necessarily the same as the Organisation to which an application for membership has been lodged).

Part C: Continuing Professional Development

CICA recommends that Member Organisations require the individual to provide a Core Competencies Statement (see below) on how their professional development experiences align with the Core Competencies in the Standards.

Part D: Core Competencies Statement

Each Member Organisation shall require an individual to complete a Core Competencies Statement which enables the applicant to detail the relevance of their degree qualifications, experiences, and professional development to the Core Competencies of the Standards.

Partial Fulfilment

If in the case of an assessment in which an individual's degree qualifications, and/or experience, and/or ongoing professional development, has satisfied the majority of requirements set by the Member Organisation, but is assessed to be insufficient on only a minor number of items, then CICA recommends that the Member Organisation require the applicant to undertake minimal additional study or professional development activities so as to enable full satisfaction of requirements. This judgement will be left to the Member Organisation. A CICA Member Organisation may admit an individual as an "Associate" in the intervening period.

If all of the necessary information required for acceptance of the qualification is not supplied at the time of application, then the application for membership should be stalled until such information is provided.

CICA and the *Qualification Endorsement Committee* may be called upon periodically by a Member Organisation for advice on the properties of a particular qualification.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE LIMITATIONS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

This policy does not pertain to the RPL under the Standards. RPL is dealt with by a separate policy and procedure of CICA pertaining to Vocational Graduate Certificate qualifications.

Member organisations of CICA must maintain their own separate membership criteria in addition to the requisite qualifications of the Standards.

CICA will establish a separate process for individuals seeking endorsement of their foreign qualifications that are not aligned with the standards of the AQF. This process will be known as *Individual Foreign Qualification Review* and is documented as a separate policy and procedure.

DEFINITIONS

The terminology used in this policy is drawn from the Standards, unless otherwise stipulated within the text of the policy.

“Endorse” does not mean accredit in the usual sense for education and training terminology. Accreditation would refer to a process conducted by an educational or training provider necessary for a course to be approved for delivery by that provider. Endorsement of a course by CICA is a public statement, by CICA, that a course has been reviewed through a rigorous and transparent process, and that, according to the judgement of a tribunal which conducted the review, the stated objectives, content and delivery of a course would likely enable a student to be sufficiently exposed to learning opportunities for his or her development of the competencies listed in the Standards.

The “Standards” means the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

“Career Development Practitioner” within this policy means a “professional” as defined by the Standards.