

★ Professional standards and alternative pathways

How 'professional' is a professional careers practitioner? Can standards be demonstrated through Alternative Pathways? Pip Jamieson outlines some of the issues under consideration by the CDANZ Executive and the Professionalism Team.



Currently CDANZ Executive and the Professionalism Team are looking at Professional Standards and an Alternative Pathway. It has been recommended by some that the qualification criteria and standard should be set at Levels 7 to 10. This would take the current requirement of Level 6 (Diploma level) to a Degree or Post Degree level.

Others recommend the level should remain at Level 6, or even be lowered so that CDANZ can increase the potential membership base and be more inclusive.

And whatever standards are agreed upon some members are questioning the criteria required to demonstrate that standard. Does a formal qualification have to be the test?

Professional membership of CDANZ currently requires an applicant to hold a career specific qualification at Level 6 or above. This standard has been seen by some potential (and current) members as too high. However others believe that the reputation and credibility of CDANZ's Professional status can only be upheld by its representatives, i.e. members reflecting that high standard. And others may consider that the relevant standard can be met regardless of holding a formal qualification.

Regarding standards, take Immigration Advisers in New Zealand as an example. To practice as an Immigration Adviser requires holding a licence or hold an exemption.¹ Licences are awarded by the Immigration Adviser's Authority and awarding of the full licence now requires completion of the Post Graduate Diploma in New Zealand Immigration Advice. New Zealand currently has over 1,100 licensed advisers and the only qualification provider (Bay of Plenty Polytechnic) has continuously had a waiting list of students wanting to complete the qualification.

Immigration Advisers use their knowledge of or personal experience in immigration matters to advise, assist, direct or represent a person. This could include, for example; using publicly available information to advise a person on an immigration matter; advising a person what visa they qualify for; advising a person how best to answer a question in the application form, or what additional information might best be included with the application; writing a covering letter to accompany the application; acting as their representative.

Many of these tasks are in parallel with those of a Career Practitioner with a similar outcome in mind – i.e. to assist the client or clients make well informed future career and life decisions.²

We challenge you as a CDANZ member to test this out on your colleagues, clients, employers, CDANZ Branch members and invite you to tell us yours and their views.

Email me at pjp@pjamieson.co.nz or head over to the CDANZ LinkedIn page to have your say.

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Notes:

1. Exempt advisers include lawyers, and Citizen's Advice Bureaux.
2. For more Ezine articles on how other professions are tackling professional standards, see Gabrielle O'Connell on alternative pathways to Social Worker registration (19 2 Winter 2015) and Grant Verhoeven about career coaching qualifications (19 2 Winter 2015).