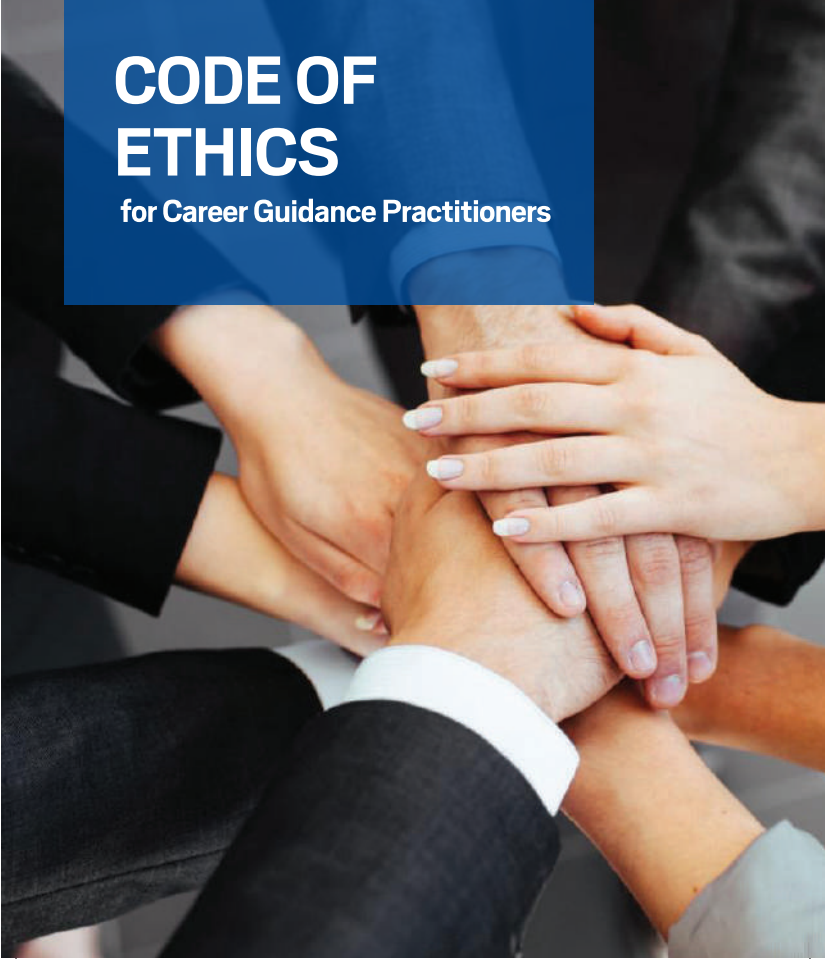




# CODE OF ETHICS

for Career Guidance Practitioners





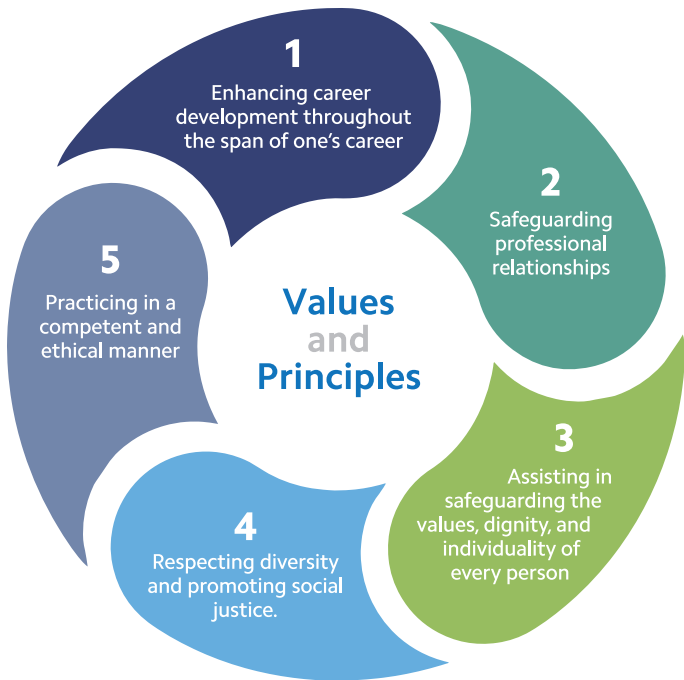
## Introduction

A Code of Ethics assists in defining the professional behaviour of an individual engaged in a particular profession, and serves to safeguard the public as well as the profession itself. The principles laid out in a Code of Ethics facilitate training within the profession, decision making related to personal life, and ethical conduct. Further, it brings a transparency to ethical conduct. This Code of Ethics was designed to provide guidance as well as to be an invaluable resource to practitioners. It has been prepared so as to cover a wide scope and provide a series of principles that can be applied to any circumstance, while not being complicated.

If a question arises as to whether a specific action complies or does not comply with this Code of Ethics, instructions shall be obtained from an individual who is competent provide such judgement of such behaviour. If you have reservations regarding such action, you shall not take any further measures without professional consultation. Reviews of peers shall not always be appropriate instructions. However, you shall allow others to provide their views on the ethicalness of a certain behaviour or a decision before you act in such manner or make such decision. The safety and strength you require is in the deepest part of your mind, and you shall appeal to such intuition before conducting yourself in any manner.

## Professional Values and Principles

Professional values are one aspect that reflects an individual's commitment towards ethical behaviour. Career Guidance Practitioners shall pay attention to the following values.



These professional values provide a conceptual basis to the ethical principles given below. These principles provide a foundation for ethical conduct and decision-making.

The basic principles related to professional ethical conduct are;

- Fostering an individual's autonomy or their right to control the direction of their own life.
- Working productively towards the benefit of the individual and the society by promoting mental health and well-being.
- Treating every individual with equality.
- Being accountable, respecting the views of others, being trustworthy, and honouring the promises of fulfilling responsibilities in maintaining professional relationships.
- Acting with integrity towards all clients that reach out to Career Guidance Professionals.



## This Code of Ethics aims to fulfil 5 main objectives

**01**

Clarifying the ethical responsibilities of professionals who are currently engaged in the profession and those who intend to join the profession in the future.

Contributing towards duly fulfilling the duties of the profession.

**02**

**03**

Acting as a code of principles that defines ethical behaviour.

Designing a process of professional development, and providing a guide of professional values within the profession to improve the quality of service provided to the clients.

**04**

**05**

Contributing towards identifying the requirements of the clients, and understanding the rights of a client and the responsibility of a professional towards such.

## Historical Development of Career Guidance

Career guidance has been a focus in the past as well. Ever since the establishment of the first-ever training institution, which was situated in a coffee storeroom in a rail yard in Maradana, consisting of a small factory, a laboratory, a lecture hall and 25 students, by the government in 1893, the attention of the technical vocational education and training field has been focused on career guidance. Career guidance has been recognized as a field within the field of education that deserves a wide focus in the Sri Lankan education system, and in 1930 when State Councils were in effect, career guidance was recognized as a main aspect that should become a focal point in order to avoid the gap between education, training and the labour market. Accordingly, the education authorities had recognized the importance of skills training, and had taken steps to include it in the subject curriculums of the school system as well.

Measures to methodically initiate career guidance for the school system were initiated by a circular issued in 1957 which assured that career guidance is a field that warrants its main focus. Under such measures, a method to teach technical subjects to students and maintain information of such students was introduced, but it had not been implemented within the school system continuously.

In 1970, technical education had faced changes within the methodology that included pre-vocational subjects, but it too had been abandoned eventually. In 1983, the Assessment, Guidance and Research Division was commenced by the Ministry of Education, and it had implemented career guidance and counseling services together with the National Youth Services Council. Even as at present, this career guidance service is in effect

as per Circular No. 16 which was issued in 2006, and revised in 2013, and it has evolved beyond a service that provides guidance to individuals, and is being implemented as a guidance service that prepares students to meet the requirements of the labour market of the future.

In the latter part of the 1990s, a development had been seen in the methodologies that were in effect in relation to the career guidance services during its early stages in the technical vocational education training field, and measures had been taken to recruit a staff of officers to be placed in jobs relating to career guidance. Accordingly, parallel to the career guidance services carried out in the school system, a career guidance service is being implemented in the technical vocational education service as well.

Measures to methodically initiate career guidance for the school system were initiated by a circular issued in 1957 which assured that career guidance is a field that warrants its main focus. Under such measures, a method to teach technical subjects to students and maintain information of such students was introduced, but it had not been implemented within the school system continuously.





Further, in addition to the career guidance services carried out in the technical and vocational education training field, career guidance services are carried out within the government system in institutions such as the Ministry of Education, Department of Manpower and Employment, government and private universities, various education institutions, non-governmental organizations and other institutions as well as by various individuals as at present.

The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission which was established under the Tertiary and Vocational Education Act No.20 of 1990, has been delegated the powers to regulate the overall system that provides vocational guidance services under Section 3(j) of the Amendment Act No.50 of 1999.

Accordingly, the National Vocational Guidance Regulation Committee was established in 2017 with the participation of all the institutions that provide vocational guidance, and measures have been implemented to take the necessary steps to regulate and standardize the vocational guidance service.

Thus, a competency standard of level 4 of National Vocational Qualifications has been established for Career Guidance Practitioners, and the expectation of this Code is to introduce a Code of Ethics for such Career Guidance Practitioners.

In order to implement the Career Guidance Service most effectively in par with higher standards, those who are engaged in the profession shall act in compliance with this professional code of ethics, which will in turn lead to the welfare of the professionals providing such services as well as the welfare of the clients.

This Code of Ethics which has been designed by an erudite committee consists of four basic foundations



### **Respecting the Rights and the Dignity of the Client**

Career guidance practitioners shall respect the fundamental rights, ethical and cultural values, personal dignity and worth of clients. They shall also respect the client's rights to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination and autonomy in consistent with the existing laws. Further, practitioners shall understand the client as best as possible and come to an agreement regarding whatever career decision proposed by the client.



### **Competence**

Career guidance practitioners shall voluntarily maintain and update their professional competencies. They shall recognize the limitations of their competence and practice self-care, and obtain the necessary assistance and supervision to maintain the standard of the service provided by them. Further, they shall only provide services that they have been certified for or qualified for based on their education, training and experience.



## Professional Responsibility

Career guidance practitioners shall be well-informed regarding their professional responsibility to act with integrity and in an accepted and responsible manner towards their clients, colleagues and the community in which they work and live. They shall follow a methodical approach in resolving issues and dilemmas in an ethical manner by preventing the cause of any harm and accepting the responsibility of their professional process.



## Honesty and Authenticity

Career guidance practitioners shall constantly attempt to establish honesty. They shall accurately represent their profession, and shall treat others with honesty, directness and equality. They shall deal with conflicts of interest with understanding and proactivity, avoid misusing the trust of others, and be vigilant of inappropriate behaviours of their peers.

By developing further behavioural factors to elaborate on these four foundations, ethical behaviours based on each of those foundations are discussed hereinafter in this Code of Ethics. Career guidance practitioners shall pledge to constantly act within the ensuing ethics and behaviours in all respects when they engage in providing these services.



# CODE OF ETHICS



## Respecting the Rights and the Dignity of the Client

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### 1.1. General Respect

- 1.1.1. Career guidance practitioners shall have a sensible regard for the moral and cultural values of the clients. They shall not allow their services to differ based on the gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, religion/beliefs, race, ethnicity, caste, age, national origin, political biases, social status or class of the client.
- 1.1.2. In making decisions that affect the client, the professional shall obtain active participation of the client to the maximum extent possible.
- 1.1.3. The practitioners shall respect the clients' rights to receive a comprehensive explanation of the nature, objectives and results of evaluations and assessments, in a language the client comprehends.
- 1.1.4. When they engage in research and assessments, they shall protect the dignity, privacy and well-being of the participants.

## **1.2. Privacy and Confidentiality**

- 1.2.1. The career guidance practitioners shall take every reasonable measure to assure that discussions with clients are carried out subjected to the relevant privacy conditions.
- 1.2.2. They shall avoid distressing the client by exceeding their psychological tolerance.
- 1.2.3. They shall take all necessary measures to protect the information regarding clients obtained during the provision of services. If they are to discuss information relating to a client with another individual, it shall only be for professional purposes and shall be only with relevant individuals who have the qualifications and permission to offer such advice.
- 1.2.4. If there are any limits to confidentiality, the professionals shall clarify such to the clients.
- 1.2.5. All reasonable measures shall be taken to ensure that colleagues, line managers and other individuals working with these professionals comprehend and respect the requirement for confidentiality.
- 1.2.6. They shall take measures to prevent the misuse of information during the communication of information including results of psychometric instruments. Appropriate actions in such situations include: avoid recording data that may be misinterpreted / misused, avoid making assumptions, and using a language that the client clearly comprehends. (See Clause 4.1.3)

- 1.2.7. Practitioners shall take all reasonable measures to recognize the importance of keeping sufficient records in accordance with all relevant legal provisions (e.g.: data safety, Right to Information), and safeguard the storage, retrieval and disposal of clients' records in written and electronic forms.
- 1.2.8. The professionals shall keep necessary and sufficient reports on activities related to clients and, maintain and store them for an appropriate amount of time.

### **1.3. Right of Autonomy and Respecting Such Right**

- 1.3.1. Career guidance practitioners shall take all reasonable measures to obtain the consent of the clients regarding proposed interventions. (If the client is a minor the consent of the parents/guardians may be required; any established policies of the school/place of employment may apply too.)
- 1.3.2. They shall protect the right of the client to withdraw his/her consent after beginning the intervention.
- 1.3.3. Information about the clients shall only be disclosed with their consent. However, the client shall be made aware of the fact that such information may be disclosed if concealing such information could cause harm to the client or other individuals, or when it is ordered by the law or defined by the law, or if it is necessary for professional consultation or supervision.

- 1.3.4. When obtaining the informed consent of clients, the professionals shall ensure that the clients are provided with a reasonable amount of information sufficient to make a decision prior to giving their consent, and that such information is provided in a language the client comprehends. (see Clause 4.3.1)
- 1.3.5. With the exception of public behaviour, if a professional intends to obtain any audio, visual or photographic/video recordings of a client or make a record including such, the professional shall obtain prior written consent for the recording of such from the client as well as define conditions relating to accessing and exhibiting such recordings, before and after creating such record, and the client shall be given a copy of such record.
- 1.3.6. Verbal and written information about clients shall only be published with their consent. If not, such information shall only be used for such purposes if the identities of the relevant people and groups involved have been concealed prior to publishing them.
- 1.3.7. When providing professional career guidance services, the practitioners shall obtain the consent of the clients regarding the attendance or participation of career guidance practitioner trainees and other third parties who are not directly involved in the process.







## Competence

Career guidance practitioners shall voluntarily maintain and update their professional skills. They shall recognize the limitations of their competence and practice self-care, and obtain the necessary assistance and supervision to maintain the standard of the service provided by them. Further, they shall only provide services that they have been certified for or qualified for based on their education, training and experience.

### 2.1. Limits of Competence

- 2.1.1. Career guidance practitioners shall identify the limitations of their education/training and experience, and bear in mind to not exceed such boundaries. If at any point, they perceive a shortcoming in or uncertainty of their competence; they shall refer their clients to professionals within or outside of their profession.
- 2.1.2. If the professional judgment of a career guidance practitioner becomes impaired due to a physical or mental condition, he/she shall ensure to limit, suspend or terminate his/her career guidance process at every such instance, and follow due professional instructions regarding such condition.
- 2.1.3. The practitioners shall only utilize psychometric instruments for which they have acquired a proper training.

## **2.2. Limitations of Procedures**

- 2.2.1. Career guidance professionals shall not intervene once the client has achieved the objectives of the career guidance process. Further, they shall not intervene if it is evident that the objectives cannot be achieved. In such instances, if the client prefers it, the professional shall refer him/her to another relevant professional.
- 2.2.2. When making decisions/providing recommendations based on psychometric instruments, career guidance practitioners shall bear in mind the limitations of such instruments, and make the client aware of such limitations.

## **2.3. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

- 2.3.1. Career guidance practitioners shall voluntarily take measures to maintain and develop their professional competence by acquiring relevant professional knowledge and expertise on a continuous basis.
- 2.3.2. Career guidance practitioners shall engage in self-care practices in order to prevent conditions (e.g.: physical and mental fatigue, addiction etc.) which could impair their judgement and obstruct in their ability to function in a professional capacity.
- 2.3.3. Career guidance practitioners shall obtain the assistance and/or supervision of their colleagues when they experience mental stress or face risks due to their professional duties.

2.3.4. Career guidance practitioners shall obtain supervision for their counselling activities as well as counselling supervision activities. They shall maintain the amount of their supervision sessions in proportion to the amount of their career guidance cases.





## Professional Responsibility

Career guidance practitioners shall be well-informed regarding their professional responsibility to act with integrity and in an accepted and responsible manner towards their clients, colleagues and the community in which they work and live. They shall follow a methodical approach in resolving issues and dilemmas in an ethical manner by preventing the cause of any harm and accepting the responsibility of their professional process.

### 3.1. General Responsibility

- 3.1.1. Career guidance practitioners shall engage in professional activities in a manner that does not harm the aspirations of clients and does not undermine the public confidence in the profession.
- 3.1.2. They shall ascertain whether the policies, principles, applications and regulations of their place of employment are consistent with any of the principles in this Code of Ethics, and notify their superior officers/ relevant parties if inconsistencies are found.
- 3.1.3. The practitioners shall assist their colleagues. They shall provide them with the specific and appropriate professional assistance and /or supervision they require.

### **3.2. Prevention of Harm**

- 3.2.1. They shall discontinue any professional activity that proves to be more harmful than benefiting.
- 3.2.2. They shall take the necessary measures to ensure those psychometric instruments are being performed by qualified individuals only, and to safeguard the validity of these tests.

### **3.3. Continuous Care**

- 3.3.1. In an instance where a client has been referred to a certain institution or individual, the professional shall hold the responsibility of coordinating and cooperating with the client until the commencement of his/her professional relationship with such institution/ individual.
- 3.3.2. Career guidance practitioners shall contribute to the prevention of creating unnecessary professional competition or working with ulterior objectives, by communicating and coordinating with other career guidance services providers.

### **3.4. Broad Responsibility**

- 3.4.1. Career guidance practitioners shall accept the moral responsibility of the professional activities of the individuals they supervise (e.g.: students/trainees/peers/employees etc.). This responsibility includes supervising the activities of subordinate officers and educating them of their ethical responsibility.

- 3.4.2. The practitioners shall provide counselling to career guidance practitioner trainees and apprentices regarding their work, and facilitate their productive growth by providing them feedback.
- 3.4.3. When performing their duties as supervisors, the practitioners shall take appropriate measures to ensure extremely high professional standards in instances where supervisors and clients are to work together.
- 3.4.4. When engaging in research activities, the practitioners shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all parties involved and all participants are treated in an ethical manner.

### **3.5. Resolving Dilemmas**

- 3.5.1. A systematic procedure shall be followed to investigate errors and issues that may occur during the process of up-keeping moral standards, and to resolve their complexities.
- 3.5.2. In the event of a real or potential conflict of interest, appropriate measures shall be taken to educate all parties of the need to resolve such issue in compliance with this Code of Ethics and reach a solution.
- 3.5.3. In case of a conundrum or conflict between the law and ethical principles, the practitioners shall discuss such situation with their colleagues or superior officers. If it is an emergency or if there is not enough time to consult anyone, the practitioners shall act according to their best professional judgement.



## Honesty and Authenticity

Career guidance practitioners shall constantly attempt to demonstrate honesty. They shall accurately represent their profession, and shall treat others with honesty, directness and equality. They shall deal with conflicts of interest with understanding and proactivity, avoid misusing the trust of others, and be vigilant of inappropriate behaviours of their peers.

### 4.1. Integrity and Accuracy

- 4.1.1. Career guidance practitioners shall ensure that they represent their education, training, experience and their relationship with the institution accurately.
- 4.1.2. In addition to the payments or benefits agreed upon under contract with the institution, the practitioners shall not obtain or receive substantial gifts that may compromise their un-biasness. (See Clause 4.3.2)
- 4.1.3. Career guidance practitioners shall ensure that they provide verbal and written reports based on true facts without being influenced by their personal opinions. (See Clause 1.2.6)
- 4.1.4. The practitioners shall be dedicated to research on career guidance, conduct honest and open research accordingly, and shall clearly communicate to the relevant parties regarding the requirements or financial, institutional and personal interests that could affect such research.

4.1.5. In case of written works, the practitioners shall protect the participation and copyrights of others, and provide them the copyrights in proportion to the professional contribution they had provided to such work.

## 4.2. Directness and Openness

4.2.1. The practitioners shall respect the rights of the clients to receive an accurate explanation regarding the results of their instruments and the nature of interventions provided in a manner that the client could comprehend. (See Clause 1.3.4)

4.2.2. The practitioners shall act with transparency when they come to an agreement with clients and supervisors about matters such as payments (if a fee will be charged from the clients), objective and nature of the services provided, confidentiality, consent, experience that may be gained and results that may be achieved. (See Clauses 4.1.2 and 4.2.3)

## 4.3. Conflict of Interest and Abuse

4.3.1. The practitioners shall be extensively informed about the conflicting nature of dual relationships (e.g.: the responsibility towards the client as a professional and the responsibility to the institution as an employee), and accept that such situations cannot always be avoided. In such situations, the practitioners shall make their bias explicit to all parties and take appropriate measures to safeguard the requirements of the client.



4.3.2. The practitioners shall not misuse professional relationships to benefit their personal, political or business requirements. Above all, the practitioners shall ensure that they do not abuse their clients emotionally, sexually, financially or in any other manner. (See Clauses 4.1.2 and 4.2.2)

4.3.3. When acting in the capacity of counselling supervisors, the practitioners shall offer services of the same standard whether they are being paid for the supervision process or they are providing voluntary services.

#### 4.4. Conduct of Colleagues

4.4.1. The practitioners shall take necessary measures when it appears that a colleague is conducting themselves in an unethical manner. Such measures may include informally bringing up the issue to such colleague and obtaining a promise/assurance from such colleague that he/she will cease such conduct. However, if such unethical conduct continues, the career guidance practitioner shall report the situation to the relevant Professional Steering Committee.



## Glossary of Terms

### **Damage**

Harm or destruction

### **Dilemmas**

The difficulty of selecting the correct solution in an instance where there are multiple alternative solutions to an issue

### **Abuse**

Misuse or exploitation

### **Continuous Professional Development**

A professional participating in studies that develop his/her knowledge, ability and attitudes as and when it is due

### **Continuous Care**

The process of caring for a client from the initial point to the point where the client reaches his/her objective

### **Hide Identity**

When an individual hides his/her true nature or identity

### **Honesty**

The quality of being honest, truthful

### **Misuse**

Put to wrong use or exploit

### **Authenticity**

Genuineness; not being superficial

### **Supervision**

The process where an individual, generally a senior member, is named as supervisor, forms collaborative relationships with another individual or a group, a junior member is named as supervisee, and (a) the improvement in the growth and development of the supervisee, (b) the protection and welfare provided to the clients of the supervisee, and (c) the skills of the supervisee is evaluated

### **Excess**

Exceeding (a certain limit); surpass or go beyond

### **Public Behavior**

The manner in which an individual behaves in front of other people/ the public

### **Conflict of interest**

The psychological conflict an individual faces when his/her commitments are facing contradictory facts or are at two extremes

### **Transparency**

The state of anyone being able to see through someone's actions; not having hidden agendas

### **Psychometric tests**

Psychological instruments utilized to measure the intelligence, aptitude and personality of an individual

### **Intervention**

The act of intervening with the intention of settling a matter

### **Confidentiality**

The ethical responsibility of a counselling professional to protect the identity, characteristics and personal communications of a client

### **Directness and openness**

Communicating directly and without hesitation and without hiding one's opinions

### **Informed consent**

The process of assisting and exchanging relevant information so that the client may understand matters or implications of a procedure or action that could be applied in their case

### **Dual relationship**

Not limited to one relationship

### **Loyalty**

The state of being loyal; trustworthiness

### **Research**

Carrying out a deep investigation of something

### **Copyright**

The legal right to publish, print copies of and distribute a publication, music, picture or any other work by a creator

### **Accuracy**

Being correct; devoid of mistakes

### **Limitations of competence**

The limit of the control and the field or area of influence an individual has over a competence

### **Career Professional**

An individual engaging in a profession abiding by or acting according to its standards

### **Career Guidance**

A counselling service that provides guidance to clients who are interested in career selection, career inclination, career self-determination, upon obtaining proper training according to the standards, to resolve their issues and reach a self-determination regarding such matters

### **Professional peers**

Any individuals engaged in a particular profession who have equal qualifications and equal responsibilities parallel to any other individual in such organization or field

### **Career service**

All services provided by career professionals to individuals, groups and organizations. All services relevant to but not limited to career counselling, career planning, evaluation, assistance in job-hunting, skills development, conducting workshops and trainings, assigning homework assessments, preparing journals and development of programmes

### **Self-determination**

The process where an individual controls his/her own life

### **Self-Care**

The habit of actively practicing an action for one's own well-being and happiness (especially during stressful times)

### **Voluntary**

Giving consent to and engaging in something by one's own will

### **Privacy**

A state in which other people do not access an individual's private life or information without permission

### **Client requirements**

Various requirements relating to vocational decision-making that a client might possess

### **Client**

An individual expecting a service or a referral from the professional

### **Line Managers**

Managers with professional qualifications in relation to a certain task, who supervise other officers including executive or managerial level employees, e.g.: production manager, financial manager, training and development director etc.

### **Ethnicity**

The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition

### **National Origin**

The nationality an individual is born to, or where the individual's ancestors came from

### **Gifts or privileges**

A fee determined and/or published by an institution.

### **Fees agreed upon in the contract**

A fee determined and/or published by an institution.

### **Sexual Orientation**

The gender an individual is sexually attracted to; or the identity of an individual relating to their gender; whether an individual is heterosexual or homosexual etc.





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