



The ACS Professional Standards Platform

Australian Computer Society Inc.

ABN 53 156 305 487

National Secretariat

Level 27, Tower One, 100 Barangaroo Avenue, Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box Q534, Queen Victoria Building, Sydney NSW 1230

T +61 2 9299 3666 | F +61 2 9299 3997

E accreditation@acs.org.au | W www.acs.org.au

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1. Introduction

ACS is the professional association for ICT professionals in Australia. The Society is responsible for setting, promulgating, and maintaining professional standards within ICT.

The Society has prepared this Professional Standards Platform to ensure the coherence of a range of ACS standards-based activities, and to provide a basis for interaction with other institutions in the ICT industry,

1.1 Standards of an ICT Professional

Professions Australia defines a profession as being:

“... a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as, possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.”

(Australian Council of Professions (2003) *What is a profession?*)

<https://www.professions.org.au/what-is-a-professional/>

Professional Standards Schemes are legal instruments under the Professional Standards Act 1994 (NSW) that bind occupational associations to monitor and improve the professional standards of their members. The [ACS Professional Standards Scheme](#) is recognised by the [Professional Standards Council](#) which administers the Act.

2. The ACS Professional Standards Platform Components

The ACS Professional Standards Platform is an integrated set of components that specify how the ACS sees the ICT profession and the standards that apply to professional ICT practice. This includes the ACS view of the ICT profession and its professional roles, the ACS Code of Ethics, and the ACS Core Body of Knowledge (CBoK) for ICT Professionals.



2.1 The ACS view of the ICT Profession and its Professional Roles

Since the 1950s information technologies have developed to the extent that they are now pervasive in the global economy and society. ICT captures *data and information* and uses *computational processes* within a *socio-technical system* for control in cyber-physical systems, for routine data processing, for providing information for human thinking and for knowledge-based activity and support such as diagnosis and advice. The ICT industry develops, systematises, deploys, and

maintains information technologies while other industries and services including, health, transport, finance, government and so on, use these technologies as part of wide range of different activities.

The ICT profession is that part of the ICT industry comprising the 'disciplined group of individuals' who occupy responsible roles in the industry. The ICT professional has advanced knowledge and skills in one or more professional roles. Professional roles evolve over time, more so in ICT than in most professions as the technology changes rapidly, as do the contexts of its application (the annual *ACS Australia's Digital Pulse* reports). The roles, and the professional skills needed for practice, are the subject of international standards frameworks notably

The European framework for ICT Professionals ([e-cf](#))
and relevant parts of

The Skills Framework for the Information Age ([SFIA](#))

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations ([ANZSCO](#))

2.2 The ACS Code of Ethics

A hallmark of a profession is its Code of Ethics. The **ACS Code of Ethics** recognises the distinguishing features of ethics in the ICT context and requires that

that the work done by an ICT professional is ethically justifiable
(eg. that it is in the public interest)

that the behaviour of the ICT professional is ethical
(eg. no conflict of interest, honest, competent, objective)

2.3 The ACS Core Body of Knowledge

The 'special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning' required of an ICT professional is specified in the **ACS Body of Knowledge (CBoK)**. Three types of knowledge are identified in CBoK are Professional ICT Knowledge, Core ICT knowledge and in-depth ICT Knowledge specified in specialist bodies of knowledge (such as SWEBoK, ISBoK, etc.)

3. ACS Standards Operations Based on the Platform

The ACS carries out a range of operations that involve assessment of professional standards. These currently include:

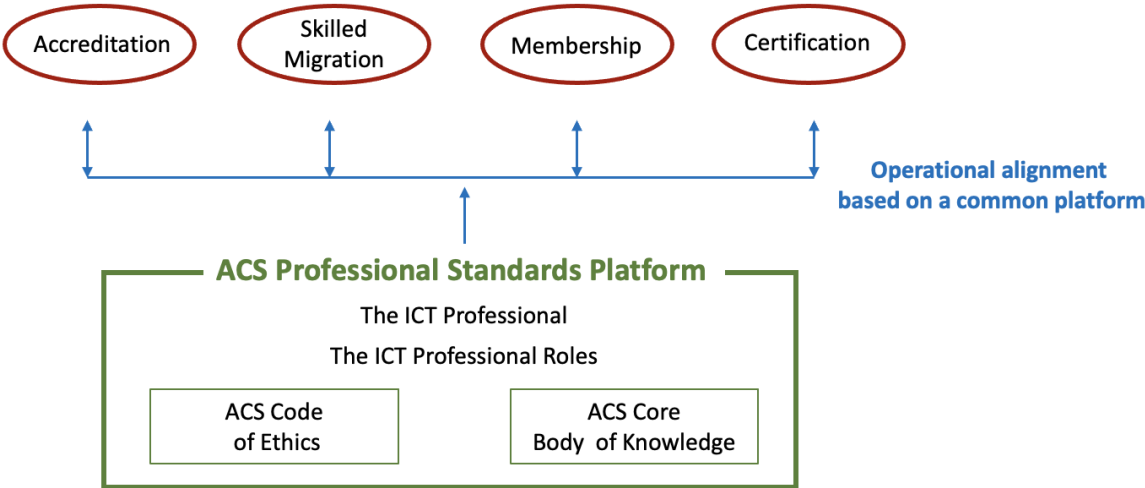
- Accreditation of educational programs aimed at graduating ICT professionals
- Assessment for skilled migration
- Assessment for ACS membership
- Assessment for Certification (CP, etc).

Other ACS operations such as workplace SFIA assessments, education for professionals, etc involve parts of professional standards.

Each of these operations has its own purpose and context. This Professional Standards Platform articulates the common baseline which can be interpreted appropriately within each operation.

3.1 Alignment of Operations Based on the Platform

The ACS aims for coherence and justifiability in its various standards operations. In addition to this specification of its Standards Platform, the ACS has a process for aligning the use of the platform by the various operations. Through this process the operational rules in the various operations are harmonised to produce the required coherence and justifiability.



4. A Living Platform

This Standards Platform functions to provide a stable but evolving base for a range of ACS standards-based activities. It has been designed as a living document that is expanded and adapted as the ACS further evolves and refines its standards activities.