

Code of Professional Conduct for Financial Advice Services

Submission Template

Submissions close Monday 30 April 2018

Please send submissions to:

code.secretariat@mbie.govt.nz or

Code Working Group
c/o Code Secretariat (Poppy Haynes and Max Lin)
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
PO Box 1473
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Submissions process

The Code Working Group (CWG) seeks written submissions on the issues raised in this document by **5pm on Monday 30 April 2018**

We welcome submissions on any or all consultation questions. You are welcome to comment only on the issues most relevant to you.

Where possible, please include evidence to support your views, for example references to independent research, facts and figures, or relevant examples.

Please direct any questions that you have in relation to the submissions process to code.secretariat@mbie.govt.nz.

Use of information

The information provided in submissions will be used to inform the CWG's development of the draft Code. We may contact submitters directly if we require clarification of any matters in submissions.

Release of information

The CWG intends to upload PDF copies of submissions received to MBIE's website at www.mbie.govt.nz. The CWG will consider you to have consented to publication of your submission, unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submission.

If your submission contains any information that is confidential or you otherwise wish us not to publish, please:

- indicate this on the front of the submission, with any confidential information clearly marked within the text
- provide a separate version excluding the relevant information for publication on our website.

Submissions remain subject to request under the Official Information Act 1982. Please set out clearly in the cover letter or e-mail accompanying your submission if you have any objection to the release of any information in the submission, and in particular, which parts you consider should be withheld, together with the reasons for withholding the information. The CWG will take such objections into account and will consult with submitters when responding to requests under the Official Information Act 1982.

Private information

The Privacy Act 1993 establishes certain principles with respect to the collection, use and disclosure of information about individuals. Any personal information you supply to the CWG in the course of making a submission will only be used for the purpose of assisting in the development of the draft code. Please clearly indicate in the cover letter or e-mail accompanying your submission if you do not wish your name, or any other personal information, to be included in any summary of submissions that the CWG may publish.

Information about you

<i>Share your details</i>	
i.	Michael King, FSP23521, Prosperity Systems Limited
ii.	S 9 (2) (a)
iii.	Our business comprises 3 advisers, all AFAs but concentrating on risk advice & implementation.
iv.	No confidential informai

Principles for drafting the Code

<i>Share your views</i>	
A.	What comments do you have regarding the overarching theme of “good advice outcomes” and the underlying principles? We applaud the principles-based rather than a rules-based approach.
B.	Are there any further principles that should be included, or existing principles that should be removed?

Ethical behaviour

Act with honesty, fairness and integrity

Share your views

C.	<p>Do you agree with a requirement to act with honesty, fairness and integrity? If not, please set out your reasoning.</p> <p>Yes, naturally.</p>
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Keep the commitments you make to your client

D.	<p>Should minimum standards for ethical behaviour for the provision of financial advice extend beyond strict legal obligations, to include meeting less formal understandings, impressions or expectations that do not necessarily amount to strictly legal obligations? If no, please give reasoning. If yes, please propose how a standard for such commitments might be framed.</p> <p>No. The 'less formal understandings' approach would, in our view, lead into a morass of different expectations and the possibility of being accused of something when there is no clear definition of the behaviour being criticised.</p>
E.	<p>If there was a minimum standard requiring Financial Advice Providers – or Financial Advice Providers in some situations – to have their own code of ethics in addition to the Code, how would you frame the requirement for it to deal with keeping commitments?</p> <p>No. The Code should be agreed to and widely applied.</p>

Manage and fully disclose conflicts of interest

F.	<p>Should the Code include a minimum standard on conflicts of interest in addition to the legislation?</p> <p>Yes.</p>
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Do no harm to the client or the profession

G.	<p>Do you agree that a person who gives financial advice must not do anything or make an omission that would or would be likely to bring the financial advice profession into disrepute? If not, please set out your reasoning.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
H.	<p>Is an additional minimum standard on doing no harm to the client necessary? If so, what standard do you propose?</p> <p>No, it is unnecessary.</p>

Keep your client's data confidential

I.	<p>In which situations, if any, should the retention, use or sharing of anonymised bulk customer data be subject to Code standards?</p> <p>In all cases.</p>
J.	<p>Do you agree that the Code should cover the various aspects of maintaining client confidentiality discussed in this paper?</p> <p>Yes.</p>
K.	<p>Are there other aspects of maintaining client confidentiality to consider?</p> <p>None that we can determine.</p>

Ethical processes in Financial Advice Provider entities

L.	<p>Do you agree that the Code should require the Financial Advice Provider to document and maintain its "ethical processes"?</p> <p>No. The code should be sufficient as a guide. The less layers the better.</p>
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M.	<p>Should the Financial Advice Provider be required to have a publicly available corporate code of ethics? Are there particular situations where a corporate code of ethics should be or should not be required?</p> <p>No, as above.</p>
N.	<p>Should Financial Advice Providers also be subject to additional standards in respect of leadership and culture? If so, how should these be framed?</p> <p>No. Who would determine these in the first place? It would simply further complicates the compliance processes we already have to meet.</p>
O.	<p>Do you propose other additional standards of ethical behaviour that should apply to Financial Advice Providers?</p> <p>No, other than that the Banks are subject to the same standards of disclosure and quality of advice as the rest of the market.</p>

Ethics training

P.	<p>Do you agree that Financial Advice Providers should be required to meet standards relating to ethics training? If not, please state your reasoning.</p> <p>Huh? What is “ethics training’ exactly?</p>
Q.	<p>Should ethics training requirements apply to all officers and employees of a Financial Advice Provider, as appropriate to their role and contribution to the process of financial advice provision? If not, please state your reasoning.</p> <p>No.</p>
R.	<p>Should there be a requirement for ongoing refresher training on ethics?</p> <p>No! Ethics are not something one ‘forgets from time to time’.</p>

Resolving ethical dilemmas

S.	<p>Do you agree that Financial Advice Providers should be required to have in place, and use, a framework for resolving ethical dilemmas that may arise in giving financial advice? If not, please set out your reasoning.</p> <p>No, as again the effect is to add hey more written compliance obligations.</p>
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Compliance functions

T.	<p>Should there be a requirement for explicit sign-off on the soundness of financial advice provided directly by a Financial Advice Provider?</p> <p>By whom? The adviser writing it? This makes sense in cases of Nominated Reps, but FAs are expected to have sufficient skill & diligence to operate effectively on their own.</p>
U.	<p>Do you agree that Financial Advice Providers should be required to have in place a compliance function aimed at following up on concerns raised by employees and other stakeholders? If not, please set out your reasoning.</p> <p>Yes – this is simply the existing complaints register/</p>
V.	<p>Should this extend further into an internal audit obligation, having in place processes to systematically test for and detect violations of ethical behaviour?</p> <p>Again, this is for larger FAPs with Ns, not smaller firms where each FA is self-employed</p>
W.	<p>Are there any potential compliance costs for small and/or large Financial Advice Providers that need to be considered?</p> <p>Yes – it is best kept to a minimum.</p>

Responsibility for the whole advice process

X.	<p>Do you agree that Financial Advice Providers should be required to be able to demonstrate that they meet the standards of ethical behaviour as if the Financial Advice Provider carried out the whole advice process directly itself? If not, please set out your reasoning.</p> <p>If you're referring to the big end of town, for sure.</p>
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Reinforcing good ethical behaviour

Y.	<p>What principle or mechanism do you propose the Code could include to reinforce good ethical behaviour on a day-to-day basis?</p> <p>Personal Responsibility should be sufficient</p>
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Conduct and client care

Advice situations

<i>Share your views</i>	
Z.	<p>Are there other delivery methods that should be considered when testing our thinking?</p>

Advice-giving standards

AA.	<p>How do the current client care standards work in practice, especially in advice-giving situations not previously covered by the AFA Code? In answering this question, please ignore "scope of advice" (CS-8) and "suitability" (CS-9 and part of CS-10).</p>
BB.	<p>Could any aspect of the current client care standards be worded better? (For example, we are aware that the definition of "complaint" could be improved.)</p>

CC.	Are there any aspects of the current client care standards that could be expanded or clarified (for example, in light of the published findings of the Disciplinary Committee)?
DD.	Are there any potential compliance costs for small and/or large Financial Advice Providers that need to be considered?
EE.	Are there any additional matters that should be addressed in the advice-giving standards? Those listed above? Others? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Advice in writing ➤ Where advising to replace insurance policies, a comparison of the two, in writing, should be provided.

Advice process

FF.	Do you think there are any other components that should be included in the design considerations of an advice process?
GG.	Should the Code include guidance material to help determine what needs to be considered when designing an advice process?
HH.	Are there any other important aspects you think should be included in the advice process for all types of financial advice activities under the new regime?
II.	Should any of the key aspects that we have listed above be removed? If so, why?
JJ.	Are there any situations in which an advice process need not be followed? No

Personalised suitability

KK.	What comments do you have about a proposed minimum standard on personalised suitability analysis? What are your views on the example above?
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Organisational standards

LL.	What are the practical advantages and disadvantages of including organisational standards as described? What explanatory material or examples could we provide in the Code that might help to make these standards easier to comply with in practice?
MM.	Would implementing these organisational conduct and client care standards create a particular compliance burden for your firm? If yes, please explain why.

General competence, knowledge and skills

<i>Share your views</i>	
NN.	Do you agree with our interpretation of the meaning of “competence, knowledge, and skills”? If not, why not? Yes
OO.	Are there other factors, which contribute to combined expertise , that we have not listed? We are particularly interested in factors that are relevant to financial advice that is given by a Financial Advice Provider directly, including by digital means.
PP.	What do you think are the advantages of this approach to general competence, knowledge and skills?
QQ.	What do you think are the disadvantages of this approach to general competence, knowledge and skills?
RR.	In what ways do you think this proposed standard contributes to, or detracts from, the legislative purposes (for example ensuring the quality and availability of advice, avoiding unnecessary compliance costs, and promoting innovation and flexibility)?
SS.	What factors should we consider in determining whether to make the proposed unit standard a renewing obligation?

Particular competence, knowledge and skills

<i>Share your views</i>	
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TT.	<p>What are the advantages and disadvantages of our approach of identifying two types of financial advice? What impact would it have on the type of advice you give and on your compliance costs?</p> <p>Why have two? As an insurance focussed RFA, I already provide written advice to the same standard as an AFA is required to do. I have my Level 5 and have a practice management in terms of client records etc, that complies with that standard. I am also competent enough to provide sound advice around Kiwisaver and identify the qualities most desired in a Provider and so feel I am in a position to recommend an option.</p>
UU.	<p>How should RFA's experience be recognised?</p> <p>A close look at all qualifications taken since starting in the business, including all papers provided by the likes of Adviserlink in the past & Strategi more recently. The frequency and level of such voluntary qualifications could somehow be credited towards whatever Competency Standards are finally set.</p>
VV.	<p>What do you think are the advantages of this approach to particular competence, knowledge, and skill?</p> <p>Recognition of long service and commitment to professional behaviour & standards.</p>
WW.	<p>What do you think are the disadvantages of this approach to particular competence, knowledge, and skill?</p> <p>Subjectivity of assessment</p>
XX.	<p>In what ways do you think this proposed standard contributes to, or detracts from, the legislative purposes (for example ensuring the quality and availability of advice, avoiding unnecessary compliance costs, and promoting innovation and flexibility)?</p> <p>Make it too hard and the industry will wither to only a few, who will also be forced to charge heavily for the service. This will clearly cause a greater drive to the Banks et al, which have little in the way of advice or decent products. A lose-lose for the community.</p>

YY.	<p>What alterations, if any, would you suggest to the baselines we have nominated: specialist strand for product capability, Level 5 for discipline capability, and relevant degree (or other degree plus Level 6) for planning capability?</p> <p>“Planning” capability – even in insurance, I am undertaking financial planning. Having a new or higher qualification wont make much difference to what I do now, but if further study is required, then I would have to think about other options.</p>
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Other comments

<i>Share your views</i>	
ZZ.	<p>Are there any other comments you would like to make to assist us in developing the Code?</p>