



Australian Government

CHCFIN008 Apply professional standards in financial counselling

Release: 1

CHCFIN008 Apply professional standards in financial counselling

Modification History

Not applicable.

Application

This unit describes the skills and knowledge that financial counsellors require to maintain standards of professional practice in the provision of financial counselling.

This unit applies to financial counsellors who work in agencies and organisations that meet the requirements for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) exemptions from holding a financial services or credit licence.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State or Territory legislation, Australian Standards and industry codes of practice.

No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

Pre-requisite Unit

Nil

Competency Field

Financial Counselling

Unit Sector

Community Services

Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENTS

Elements describe the essential outcomes

1. Establish context for financial counselling work.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.

- 1.1. Apply understanding of national professional supervision requirements.
- 1.2. Apply understanding of professional development activities required to meet State peak body and organisational requirements.
- 1.3. Maintain knowledge of current industry information and best practice in financial counselling and use in professional practice.

- 1.4. Maintain currency and completeness of available resources.
 - 1.5. Interpret and implement the Australian Financial Counselling Code of Ethical Practice and the Agency Practice Standards.
 - 1.6. Identify the role of financial counselling peak bodies.
2. Review client progress.
 - 2.1. Undertake regular reviews of all aspects of the client case plan including contact with and response from creditors.
 - 2.2. Undertake research into issues arising from case work as needed, including legal frameworks, industry policies and complex client needs.
 - 2.3. Write letters for representation and advocacy.
 - 2.4. Use financial counselling sector resources.
3. Maintain accurate client records.
 - 3.1. Review structure and function of a client case file and associated requirements.
 - 3.2. Ensure all written documentation produced is in line with financial counselling sector standards and practices.
 - 3.3. Create case notes for each client and creditor interaction, taking into account professional and legal requirements.
 - 3.4. Use record keeping processes to monitor creditor response times and other key dates, such as limitation periods.
 - 3.5. Maintain confidentiality of records in accordance with professional and legal requirements.
 - 3.6. Prepare and maintain statistical records.
 - 3.7. Maintain and document regular contact with the client to ensure the client remains informed about progress.
 - 3.8. Document potential structural or systemic issues based on client experiences.
4. Close client case file.
 - 4.1. Work with the client to devise an exit strategy.
 - 4.2. Terminate the financial counselling process in line with organisational procedures and professional role requirements.
 - 4.3. Secure client records for storage, archiving and destruction as per organisation and privacy requirements.

Foundation Skills

Foundation skills essential to performance in this unit, but not explicit in the performance criteria are listed here, along with a brief context statement.

SKILLS

DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Reading skills to: | • source and interpret information from a range of complex documents. |
| Writing skills to: | • produce written materials in the required format, style, structure according to the intended audience and purpose of correspondence. |
| Oral communication skills to: | • participate in a variety of spoken exchanges with others using clear and direct language to convey, request and confirm understanding of information. |
| Numeracy skills to: | • access required information from familiar and unfamiliar financial reports. |
| Problem-solving skills to: | • identify and analyse discrepancies in information gathered. |
| Technology skills to: | • use main features and functions of technology and software programs to complete work tasks. |

Unit Mapping Information

Supersedes and is not equivalent to CHCFIN003 Develop and use financial counselling tools and techniques.

Links

Companion Volume implementation guides are found in VETNet - -

<https://vetnet.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=5e0c25cc-3d9d-4b43-80d3-bd22cc4f1e53>

Assessment Requirements for CHCFIN008 Apply professional standards in financial counselling

Modification History

Not applicable.

Performance Evidence

Evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit in the context of the job role, and:

- review five different client case files presenting with multiple and complex needs to:
 - document the client journey through case notes
 - review and follow organisational checklists and check statistical records
 - document all interaction with stakeholders and the client
 - confirm action plan is complete
 - close the file
- perform the activities outlined in the performance criteria of this unit during a period of 220 hours of work in a financial counselling agency that has met the requirements for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) exemptions from holding a financial services or credit licence or in an appropriate simulated environment. These 220 hours may be applied collectively across all units of competency that include the requirement for workplace hours for the purposes of assessment.

Knowledge Evidence

Demonstrated knowledge required to complete the tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit:

- national standards including:
 - national and state supervision policies
 - national and state guides to continuing professional development
 - National Standards for Membership and Accreditation
 - Australian financial counselling code of ethical practice
 - National Agency Practice Standards
- key sources of information and resources including:
 - websites recommended by the financial counselling sector
 - state peak body resources
- structure and role of peak bodies in the financial counselling sector
- principles of writing case notes, including:
 - when to make a case note
 - what information should be included
 - professional standards and practices for case notes

- case review
- documentation associated with casework including:
 - client case notes
 - open file checklists
 - income and expenses statement/s
 - advocacy letters
 - action plans
 - close file checklists
 - file closure letters
- National, State or Territory legislation, codes of practice and guidelines including but not limited to:
 - consumer protection laws, regulatory guidance and industry codes affecting consumers and small business
 - National Consumer Credit Protection Act 2009 (particularly Schedule 1, National Credit Code and the provisions relating to responsible lending, hardship requirements)
 - Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (particularly Schedule 2, The Australian Consumer Law)
 - State or Territory Fair trading acts
 - Social security law
 - Taxation law
 - Privacy Act (and credit reporting code)
 - Bankruptcy Act 1966
 - ASIC regulatory guides, ASIC/ACCC debt collection guidelines
 - Banking Code of Practice, Customer Owned Banking Code of Practice, Telecommunications Consumer Protection Code, energy codes, Buy Now, Pay later (BNPL) Code
 - Open data and the consumer data right
- general principles in the law in relation to confidentiality and privacy and any agency policies that may interact with these
- use and purpose of electronic databases, including:
 - communicating with colleagues
 - facilitating smooth hand over between financial counsellors
 - as the basis for reporting to funders
- rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and clients
- indicators of the presence of systemic issues, including:
 - unfair outcomes permitted by existing systems
 - poor outcomes associated with one creditor or industry
 - poor outcomes for clients associated with new products
- terminating the financial counselling process, including:
 - by agreement with the client
 - terminating the engagement before matter is concluded when:

- client no longer engaging with the process
- matter becomes too complicated or risky
- a conflict of interest has arisen
- the client is abusive or manipulative
- the matter has become a legal matter and requires legal advice
- content of a file closure letter or email, including:
 - the date the file was closed
 - notice that all original documents have been returned or there is none held
 - notice that the file may be destroyed after 7 years
 - details of any settlement and provide relevant documents to the client
 - any next steps or actions for the client to undertake including relevant referrals
 - time limits that may apply and where to get legal advice if applicable
 - feedback survey if applicable.

Assessment Conditions

Skills must be demonstrated in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment. Where a simulated environment is used for the purposes of assessment, simulations and scenarios must be included that provide the full range of context and situations that would occur in the workplace.

Assessment must ensure access to:

- suitable facilities, equipment and resources, including:
 - client information
 - organisational policies, procedures and resources
 - interactions with clients
 - where necessary - scenarios and case studies that involve complex financial situations and problem solving
 - interaction with other people.

Assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations' requirements for assessors.

Links

Companion Volume implementation guides are found in VETNet - -

<https://vetnet.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=5e0c25cc-3d9d-4b43-80d3-bd22cc4f1e53>