

NZCS SFIA Professional Certification

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Abstract

At the 2008 NACCQ conference, NZCS leadership explained planned use of SFIA. This paper summarizes and comments on the proposed practitioner certification process. It is an unknown road ahead.

Keywords: Certification, Body of Knowledge, SFIA, Computer Society.

1 Introduction

ICT practitioners is emerging internationally. The current NZCS proposal implies a journey of several years. It is hoped to grow and be used on large scale. Some of the shortcomings also makes the approach more acceptable!

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“CERTIFICATION”

The major objectives of the Professional Certification Programme are to recognise and define what it is to be an ICT Professional in New Zealand, as well as recognise those that have reached this level of competence, to provide recognition of excellence, ensure international respectability of New Zealand, and to provide assurance to the public.

This certification will:

- Help recognise and reward those that are senior in the field of ICT.
- Embed the concept of professional practice, an important step in defining ICT as a true profession.
- Provide a valuable, and internationally recognised, progression roadmap and professional development pathway for those in, or seeking to join, the profession.
- Enhance career opportunities for New Zealanders seeking recognition for their skills and competencies internationally. NZ ICT professionals deserve the same opportunity of professional accreditation as those in other countries.
- Provide opportunities to more accurately match particular skills shortages of concern to employers, with clearer information on the skills and competencies of New Zealand IT professionals, and potential immigrants.

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WHAT IT IS NOT...

The programme is not mandatory, nor intended as a barrier to ICT professionals. NZCS have no current plans to seek legal backing for the Certification Programme to make it compulsory for ICT professionals.

It is also NOT intended to replace NZCS membership classes or become a pre-requisite for membership. Whilst a scheduled review of membership classes will occur within the next 12 months, this is independent from this programme.

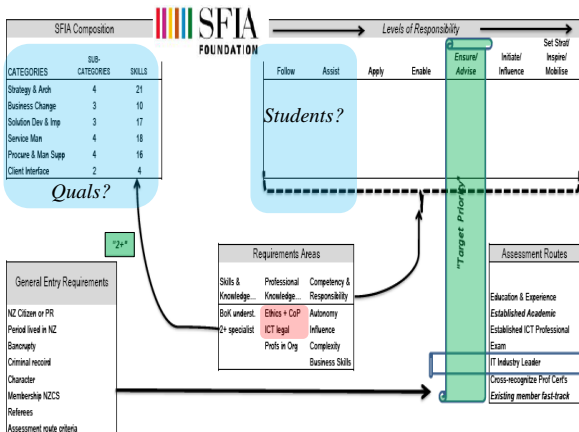
Professional Certification is not intended to address the whole profession at every level. The process is not seeking to replace existing technical or academic qualifications, rather, it is seeking to provide an umbrella, or framework, around existing certifications and help raise awareness of the importance of professional development.

It is not, for the most part, about additional courses or exams, but an assessment in many cases of the qualifications and experience that professionals are already demonstrating.

Yes (?) a marketing tool to get more students?
 Yes (?) a tool for transitioning staff from other disciplines?
 Yes (?) a benchmarked framework for job evaluations?
 Yes (?) automated into a software tool for self assessment
 Yes (?) a tool usable without involvement of HR dept.....

2 Overview

Consists of skills areas, each with levels of “maturity”, against which various groups of people/experiences can be assessed systematically.



3 Route for academics

The procedure provides specifically for academics, with clarity due on several matters, such as seniority, who will asses and exactly how. Costs/Fees also possible concern.

ESTABLISHED ACADEMIC ROUTE

The Established Academic Route is for full-time career academics, working at Senior Lecturer level or above at a recognised NZ tertiary institution.

GUIDELINES OF APPLICANTS

- Applicants will be a senior academic currently based in New Zealand.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must:

- Meet the General Entry Requirements of the NZCS Certification Programme;
- Hold an academic position in a Computer Science (CS) or Information Systems (IS) department or equivalent at a New Zealand Tertiary Institution and have held the position of Senior Lecturer or above (or equivalent) for the previous 2 years; and
- Be established in their field, and contributing significantly in 2 out of 3 of:
 - Teaching, including course design used by other lecturers;
 - As a peer-reviewed published researcher; or
 - Contributed significant service to their discipline and/or profession;

ASSESSMENT OF ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants will submit a 2-3 page written document outlining how they are established and contributing significantly to the academic and/or professional communities in at least 2 of the 3 areas outlined, to be assessed by the NZCS Assessment Team and an independent tertiary advisor from a different tertiary institution to that of the applicant.
- The NZCS Assessment Team will finally determine whether the applicant meets the stated criteria.

SASM/PASM?

Spectrum of academic roles

Only 2-3 pages

4 Conclusion

It is early days.

Comments

- Who will believe or already believe what...?
- Specific examples of details in assessment?
- WIIFM? CV enrich; Self-assessment; Career planning...
- Map the qualifications we teach?
- For students? Baseline; Pathways; Range/Scope
- Use in course and programme review?
- Cost of operations vs value created?
- What if it did not exist...?
- Research opportunities next two years?
- WHAT NOW?????????

5 References

NZCS Certification framework. Available at www.nzcs.org.nz.

SFIA (Skills Framework for the Information Age). Available at www.sfia.ork.uk.