
**Professional Practice Committee
Guide to Interpreting Professional Standards
August 2025**

Contents

A. Introduction.....	2
B. Power to resolve a Professional Standard's interpretation issue	2
C. Making a request for guidance.....	2
D. Confidentiality of guidance request	2
E. Powers of PPC in resolving an interpretation issue	3
F. Amendment of a Professional Standard after guidance request.....	3
G. Where no guidance is provided	3
H. Recording guidance	3

A. Introduction

1. All Professional Standards are required to contain this clause:

“If a Member believes that this Professional Standard is ambiguous or wishes to seek clarification of it, then they may consult the Institute’s Professional Practice Committee for an interpretation.”
2. Accordingly, the Professional Practice Committee (“PPC”) has produced this Guide primarily to assist Members in understanding:
 - a. how to seek guidance on interpreting a Professional Standard;
 - b. the process the PPC undertakes to provide such guidance; and
 - c. the powers of the PPC in providing that guidance, or in otherwise resolving the interpretation issue.

B. Power to resolve a Professional Standard’s interpretation issue

3. If there is an ambiguity in a Professional Standard, then the PPC may take any steps it thinks reasonably necessary to resolve the ambiguity. For example, it may provide guidance on an interpretation or it may refer the matter to Council.
4. However, the PPC:
 - a. may choose to do nothing (if, for example, it believes the meaning is clear); and
 - b. must not give private guidance.

C. Making a request for guidance

5. Any concerned party may request guidance on the interpretation of a Professional Standard. To do so, they must write to the Chair of the PPC.

D. Confidentiality of guidance request

6. The PPC may agree with a party requesting guidance to keep certain information confidential. However, the PPC may not agree to keep its guidance confidential.

E. Powers of PPC in resolving an interpretation issue

7. When the PPC is deciding whether, and if so how, to resolve the interpretation of a Professional Standard, it may do any one or more of the following:
 - a. consult with any Members of the Institute who have relevant experience and skills;
 - b. convene a Panel made up of any Members of the relevant Practice Committee and/or any Members who have special skills and knowledge relevant to the issue;
 - c. if a request for guidance raises legal matters, seek legal advice with the approval of the Institute's Chief Executive Officer;
 - d. refer the matter to Council if it believes doing so is necessary.

F. Amendment of a Professional Standard after guidance request

8. If the PPC has given guidance about an interpretation issue, then the PPC will, if it thinks an amendment to the Professional Standard is necessary, refer the Standard to the relevant Practice Committee for amendment in accordance with the Policy for Developing Professional Practice Documents.

G. Where no guidance is provided

9. If the PPC does not provide guidance or do anything else to resolve an interpretation issue, then it may communicate with Members about the issue and the PPC's response to it. For example, the PPC might do this if it believes the meaning is clear and so simply wishes to confirm that view.

H. Recording guidance

10. The PPC is to arrange for the Professional Standards Manager to promptly record guidance and responses about interpretation issues with the Institute.

END OF GUIDE TO INTERPRETING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Guide to Interpreting Professional Standards – Version Control

Version	Key changes	Effective date
1.0	Original issued by Professional Standards Committee	July 2013
2.0	Rebranded; updated nomenclature	August 2025