What makes a profession?

Eight connected attributes - expertise, conduct and responsibility

Attribute	Practical meaning
Systematic theory and knowledge	Reliable methods are supported by a developed body of knowledge, rather than habit alone.
Extensive education process	Initial education, experience and continuing development sustain the ability to use that knowledge.
Ideal of service to the community	Expertise supports sound decisions and society's wellbeing; unpaid work requires the same professional care.
Autonomy and independence	The profession has conditional regulatory authority; individuals exercise judgement free from improper influence.
Code of ethics	Formal principles establish expected professional conduct and responsibility to the public interest.
Distinctive ethos or culture	Shared values, norms and symbols create identity; everyday behaviour should put those values into practice.
Application of professional judgement	Knowledge and experience are applied to uncertain, complex situations involving competing interests and values.
Existence of a governing body	A professional organisation supports entry standards, ongoing competence, conduct and member discipline.

Use the attributes together

Knowledge explains the options. Ethics guides responsible conduct. Autonomy supports resisting improper pressure. Judgement connects them to the actual problem.

> Professional judgement remains accountable to evidence, ethical principles and applicable requirements. Neither a title nor a correct calculation alone establishes professional conduct.

Module: 1 > 1.4 What is a profession? > Page: 9-10; 1.8 Attributes of a profession > Page: 13-19. Original teaching summary.