

The Five Characteristics of a Professional

What is considered a profession and what is not?

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I guess my two choices as to what jobs would be considered a profession would be Physicians and Attorneys. These particular titles both possess the five characteristics of a professional. Both of these professions require mastery of an esoteric body of knowledge, which must be obtained through higher education. They both have a great deal of autonomy in their work where they make the decisions instead of taking orders from those who don't have the knowledge that they have. Each one of these professions have a single unifying, formal organization recognized by state and/or federal government, which controls admission to these particular professions. The American Medical Association has control over who can or cannot be a practicing physician, while the American Bar Association has control over who can or cannot be a practicing attorney. Both of these professions have a code of ethics and professional conduct that they must adhere to. Physicians and Attorneys both fulfill an important social function, where physicians promote health and attorneys strive to achieve justice.

Someone who is a gas station attendant or a clerk at a grocery store would not be considered a professional in their jobs because neither one possesses the five characteristics of a professional. They are both required to take orders instead of giving them. Neither of them is controlled by a formal organization. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to pump gas or run a cash register. They both may have a code of ethics to adhere to concerning with dealing with the public, but neither one of these jobs fulfill an important social function.