



POLICY ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR NATURAL SCIENTIFIC PROFESSIONS

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SECTION 1

BACKGROUND

SACNASP is responsible for regulating the practice of natural science in South Africa. Registered persons are required by their Code of Conduct to practice strictly within their area of competence and to maintain and enhance this competence. They therefore have the responsibility to keep abreast of developments and knowledge in their areas of expertise in order to maintain their competence. In addition to maintaining their own competence, they should strive to contribute to the advancement of the body of knowledge with which they practice, and to the profession in general.

SACNASP is charged by the Government in terms of the Natural Scientific Professions Act, 2003 (Act 27 of 2003) (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) to serve and protect the safety and health of the public by establishing and maintaining minimum standards of practice, knowledge and skills of registered natural science persons in the country as well as to establish and maintain standards of professional ethics among them.

Section 23(1) of the Act imposes a duty on a registered person to apply for the renewal of his/her registration with SACNASP “at least three months prior to the prescribed expiry date of his/her registration”. Subsection (2) of this section confers the power on the Council to determine conditions for renewal of registration. Section 13(e) of the Act empowers Council to determine conditions relating to continuing education and training. The discretion provided for in the Act to make use of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a mechanism to determine renewal of registration, gives Council the opportunity to comply with both the renewal of registration and CPD requirements. However, it is not SACNASP’s intention to “police” each and every registered person’s career. SACNASP’s point of departure is to assist with the creation of a culture of CPD for the South African Natural Scientific professions.

SACNASP will therefore institute a system of CPD, starting in 2017, which will be linked to renewal of registration from 1 April 2017 for all registered persons according to the policy set out in this Document.

SECTION 2

OBJECTIVE OF THE CPD SYSTEM

CPD is introduced for all registered persons in order to:

- Ensure, through the creation of a culture of CPD, that all registered persons maintain their competence throughout their period of registration.
- Meet the requirements of the Act.
- Be the acceptable means for renewal of registration.

SECTION 3

WHAT IS CPD

CPD can be defined as the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout a person's professional natural scientific career.

SACNASP's definition is widely drawn and not prescriptive so as to remain flexible enough to be relevant to all registered persons at all stages of their careers. The emphasis for meeting CPD requirements is not on the acquisition of credits for the attendance of academic or theoretical courses alone, but has been spread over three categories of activities, which would contribute to meeting the minimum CPD credits needed for renewal of registration. The categories are fully described in Section 9.

SECTION 4

ADMINISTRATION

The CPD system is administered by SACNASP in terms of its obligation under the Act.

However, the responsibility to provide CPD activities according to specific criteria and guidelines is outsourced to recognised voluntary associations and accredited tertiary educational institutions and other recognized providers.

SACNASP ensures that the responsibilities outsourced are carried out in a fair, equitable and responsible manner. SACNASP therefore retains the right to review or withdraw any outsourced responsibilities from providers, should the circumstances so require.

SECTION 5

ROLE OF EMPLOYERS OF REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NATURAL SCIENCE PERSONS

Employers are responsible for creating a suitable work environment, which supports and promotes the participation of registered persons in activities that maintain their competence. Employers also share a responsibility to maintain a work environment in which the continued development of registered persons is assured.

SECTION 6

APPLICATION OF POLICY FOR ONLY ONE CATEGORY OF REGISTRATION IN VARIOUS FIELDS OF PRACTICE

Professional Categories

This policy is applicable for all persons who are registered, viz. Professional Natural Scientist.

SECTION 7

POSSIBLE EXEMPTIONS FROM CPD REQUIREMENTS

Registered Persons Undertaking Postgraduate Studies

Registered persons who are undertaking full or part time postgraduate studies are not exempt from the CPD requirements. However, following the award of a post graduate qualification, CPD credits may be claimed as indicated in Section 9, Category 3, as specified by the various fields of practice. (See annexures, defined by the recognized VA's).

Registered Persons Abroad

Registered persons who are practicing abroad should meet the same requirements as those in South Africa and will not be granted deferment. However, documentary proof of compliance with CPD requirements in any particular country, where such requirements apply, will be accepted for CPD purposes in South Africa. In the absence of such proof of compliance with CPD requirements, documentation on activities attended outside South Africa will have to be submitted to SACNASP for evaluation and, if approved, the registered person will qualify for the specified CPD credits.

Retired Registered Persons

Retired registered persons, who no longer carry out any part-time consulting or natural scientific work, are exempted from CPD requirements.

Retired registered persons, who are listed as "retired" on SACNASP's database, and who carry out part-time consulting or natural scientific work within the limits of the SACNASP policy, are not exempt from CPD requirements, but they will be required to accumulate 3 credits per year and the requirement of at least 5 credits in a full five year cycle in Category 1 will not apply.

In the event of either of the above retired registered persons electing to return to active natural scientific practice, at least 3 credits for CPD activities should be presented to SACNASP in order to change their registration back to active in the category concerned.

If the retired registered person is still active in natural science, doing part-time consulting or natural scientific work, and who does not comply with the requirements for being listed as "retired" on the SACNASP Database, full compliance is required.

Deferment

Registered persons may apply for deferment of CPD and SACNASP will review such applications individually. If reasons given are acceptable to SACNASP, deferment may be granted. Registered persons experiencing physical disability, illness or other extenuating circumstances as reviewed and approved by SACNASP may be exempt. Supporting documentation must be furnished to SACNASP.

SECTION 8

CPD REQUIREMENTS

CPD will run in 5-year cycles, during which period every registered person will be required to accumulate 25 credits in order to retain registration. In any one year, the registered person will be required to accumulate a minimum of 3 credits. Details of the different categories of CPD activities are given in Section 9.

With the exception of persons covered by possible exemptions (Section 7) and the registration categories for which this policy applies (Section 6), all registered persons will be required to record their CPD activities electronically to the dedicated website for CPD at <https://cpd.sacnasp.org.za/> - on an annual basis. (not later than 30 (thirty) days after completion of an annual cycle).

The number of credits accumulated in respect of each category of CPD activity during the specific annual cycle will be electronically recorded. Registered persons may access their personal record on the SACNASP website. In view of the possibility for audit, registered persons should keep verifiable evidence of all their CPD activities for at least five years. (The records should be uploaded to the website).

In order to comply with the requirement that all renewals of registration from 1 April 2017 onwards will require CPD credits.

SECTION 9

CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES FOR CPD CREDITS

CPD credits must be obtained in at least two of the three categories listed below, with at least 5 credits per five year cycle from Category 1. The maximum credits, which may be accumulated annually in each category is also indicated.

Category 1:

Developmental Activities: 1 credit = 10 hours (No Max credits)

Category 2:

Work-based Activities:

- Natural Scientific Work: 1 credit = 400 hours (Max 800hrs/2credits)
- Mentoring of Candidate practitioners: 1 credit = 50 hours (Max 50hrs/credit)

Category 3:

Individual Activities:

- Membership of a recognized Voluntary Association: 1 credit (not linked to hours)
- Other activities: 1 credits = 10 hours (Max 30hrs/3 credits)

In order for this policy to meet the needs of all registered persons, the requirements for CPD need to be as flexible as possible. SACNASP expects that when registered persons are deciding on the contents and value of their CPD activity, they will ensure a balance in their CPD activities between the following three categories.

Category 1: Developmental Activities:

Refer to the policy annexures, where applicable. (The recognized voluntary associations drafted their own specific developmental activities). Where a VA did not specify the activities then this policy will apply.

Attendance of structured educational/developmental meetings will be credited with one credit per 10 hours of attendance. A full day activity will be regarded as being for 10 hours and a half-day activity will be regarded as 5 hours and hence a half a credit.

Activities:

- Conferences
- Congresses
- Large group workshops
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Refresher courses
- Symposiums

Category 2: Work-based Activities:

Refer to the policy annexures, where applicable. (The recognized voluntary associations drafted their own specific wok-based activities) Where a VA did not specify the activities then this policy will apply.

A different formula is used to calculate credits in this category. Since registered persons also remain current by performing their day-to-day natural scientific responsibilities, a weighting of one credit for every 400 hours per year for natural scientific related work (including management) is awarded for this category. A maximum of two credits for 800 hours per year may be earned in respect of this activity.

In addition, the mentoring of candidate persons in the workplace will be recognised as CPD with a maximum of one credit for 50 hours of mentoring per year. In-house skills training sessions organised by an employer/natural scientific company and career guidance for candidates may also be presented under this sub-category.

Category 3: Individual Activities.

Membership of a SACNASP recognised voluntary association (natural scientific society/institution or institute) will result in a maximum of 1 credit per annum.

Other Activities:

Refer to the policy annexures, where applicable. (The recognized voluntary associations drafted their own specific category 3 activities pertaining to the field of practice.) Where a VA did not specify the activities then this policy will apply.

If the VA did not draft a list of other activities, specific to the field of practice, then the registered individual can select from the following credited list:

- Part-time lecturing to undergraduate and postgraduate students: one credit for every 10 hours of lecturing.
- Supervision of students undertaking postgraduate studies: 2 credits per year.
- Oral examinations of final year and postgraduate students: 1 credit for every 10 hours of active involvement.
- Evaluation of M dissertations and PhD theses by external examiners: 2 credits per year.
- Evaluation of final year students by external examiners: 1 credit per year
- Publication of research in peer reviewed journals: a single author: 2 credits per publication. Where paper has a number of authors: 1 credit per publication per author.
- Publication of technical articles: 1 credit per article published.
- Papers presented at conferences or congresses / poster presentations: 1 credit each.
- Participation in statutory, professional, institutional, technical or non-technical committees or task groups: one credit for every 10 hours of active participation.
- Evaluation of educational programmes at Universities and Universities of Technology (Technikons) for accreditation purposes: 1 credit for every 10 hours of active involvement.
- Evaluation of educational qualifications for SACNASP's Qualifications Examination Committee: 1 credit for every 10 hours of active involvement.
- Evaluation of competence and applications for registration for SACNASP's Registration Committees and Professional Advisory Committees: 1 credit for every 10 hours of active involvement.
- Relevant additional qualifications (these are exceptional allocations): A completed postgraduate qualification: 5 credits.
- Self-study which includes, but is not restricted to studying of journals or electronic or computerised material, one credit for every 10 hours of study. All activities under this item must be verified.

A maximum of 3 credits (30 hours) may be accumulated under this portion of this category, with the exception stated above for postgraduate studies. (Refer to the annexures for more detail on activities).

SECTION 10

ROLE OF RECOGNISED VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND RECOGNISED TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In South Africa the voluntary natural scientific associations and recognised tertiary educational institutions render an invaluable service in offering a wide range of services that can be used by natural scientific persons to maintain and improve their competence.

SACNASP expects that the recognized voluntary associations should where possible as part of their activities assist their members in identifying CPD activities which meet their needs, present CPD activities as described in Category 1, Section 9. Recognized voluntary associations will also be responsible for the validation and monitoring of courses, seminars and conferences offered for CPD credits by other providers.

SECTION 11

APPROVAL OF PROVIDERS OF CPD ACTIVITIES

SACNASP has given approval to voluntary associations recognised as such in terms of the Act, as well as accredited tertiary educational institutions to run activities, which will be acknowledged for obtaining CPD credits. SACNASP regards these bodies as capable of ensuring that all their courses, seminars or conferences etc. would be of adequate standard. These activities are those described in Category 1, Section 9.

All other bodies, such as private companies or state organizations, would need to have the contents of every event they provide for in this Category of CPD approved by the recognised voluntary association for the discipline or category of registration concerned and for the assignment of the appropriate credits. The organisers of these courses, conferences or seminars etc would therefore have to register on the website, www.sacnaspcpd.org as a training provider and submit the material for validation. The appropriate VA will validate the activity and charge a fee for such evaluation and approval.

Registered persons, who intend participating in an activity provided by any other bodies, should ensure that the activity is approved, so that the credits awarded will be recognised by SACNASP.

In approving a Category 1 CPD activity, recognized voluntary associations will ensure that the following aspects are covered:

- The activity should serve to maintain or enhance the knowledge, skills and competence of all those who participate in it.
- The activity should meet an educational and developmental need and provide an effective learning experience for the participants.
- The participants or group of participants must be specified (e.g. professional natural scientist), and where appropriate, the field of practice should also be specified.
- The depth and breadth of the subject matter covered must be appropriate with sufficient time for discussion.
- The subject covered should provide a balanced view and should not be unduly promotional.
- The presenters should have proven practical and academic experience and be good communicators.

- Evaluation forms for obtaining feedback from participants on the activity must be provided for rating of the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the activity.

Private Providers of CPD activities will be required to register and submit their application for approval on the website, www.sacnaspcpd.org.

SECTION 12

PROCESS OF RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION

All registered professional natural science persons will be required to apply for renewal of registration on the prescribed form at least 3 months prior to the expiry of their registration. This renewal of registration every five years will be done via the website, <https://cpd.sacnasp.org.za/>

However, those registered persons who are identified administratively as having not met the requirements, will be advised accordingly that their deficient CPD record will be referred to the relevant Professional Advisory Committee for decision. Possible actions that may be taken by SACNASP are given in Section 14.

SECTION 13

AUDIT

SACNASP will conduct random audits of up to 10% of the CPD records of all registered persons in the different categories of registration annually.

If selected for audit, registered persons will be required to send, within four weeks of initial notification, verification of their CPD activities in the form of a certificate, list of results, record of attendance, receipt of course payment, or a written verification from the recognised voluntary association or accredited tertiary educational institution, which presented the developmental activity. Where the CPD activity was presented by any other provider, proof of approval of the activity from the recognized voluntary association together with proof of attendance must be submitted.

The audit of CPD submissions will be done by members of SACNASP's Registration and Professional Advisory Committees to ensure that the principle of peer group evaluation and judgment is maintained. Registered persons being audited will be advised of the outcome. Those who do not pass the audit, will have their record and verification documentation referred to the relative Registration Committee or Professional Advisory Committee for decision. Possible actions that may be taken by SACNASP are given in Section 14.

SECTION 14

NON-COMPLIANCE

In the event of a registered person not complying with the requirements of the CPD system, SACNASP may impose any one or more of the following conditions:

- Require the registered person to follow an approved remedial programme of continuing professional development within a period prescribed by SACNASP.
 - Removing the registered person's name from the relevant register.
-