



New professional designations recognise skills and experience in the broadcast and AV industry



In February 2015 SACIA was formally recognised by SAQA as the professional body for the broadcast and professional AV industry in Southern Africa. Professional bodies are required to develop and award industry certification programmes that recognise the skills and talents of individuals working in their sector.

SACIA has registered three professional designations for the audio-visual sector, an Associate level designation for entry-level technicians who can demonstrate a broad understanding of the AV industry, a Practitioner level designation for industry technologists who can demonstrate a deeper understanding of the science and technology behind today's modern AV systems, and a Professional level designation for individuals able to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge in an area of specialisation related to audio or visual communications technology.

In each instance, the candidate needs to prove that they have the requisite qualifications and work experience to qualify for the designation. Individuals also need to sign and abide by a Code of Professional Conduct that commits them to a higher level of ethics and service.

Individuals awarded a professional designation are listed on the National Learners Records Database so it's a formal recognition of an individual's skills and experience, but it's important to understand the difference between an academic qualification awarded by a University or College, and a professional designation awarded by a SAQA-registered professional body. In the case of a degree or diploma awarded by a University, the qualification is awarded based on an evaluation of skills and knowledge. The qualification is held indefinitely by the recipient without any requirement for further training or professional development.

In the case of a professional designation, recipients start with a relevant qualification but are only awarded the designation when they can demonstrate related work experience, are a member of their professional body, and have made a commitment to a code of ethics and professional conduct. Furthermore, in order to maintain their professional designation, individuals need to participate in a continuous programme of professional development.

In order to fast-track this process, Nic Bonthuys, previously general manager with the SABC's Outside broadcast division, has been appointed to establish an independent certification council to draft

guidelines to be used for the award of professional designations. Under Nic's guidance, the Council has identified an initial group of 125 industry professionals who have been invited to apply for the CertAVprof designation. These individuals can all demonstrate 15+ years relevant work experience in the audio visual sector and are recognised as experts in their field.

Since it was established in 2009, SACIA's primary membership base has been made up of corporate, government and institutional members. Since its recognition as a professional body, SACIA had a growing number of individual members and over the next few years, we anticipate that it is the individual membership that will shape the future of the Association.

As individual membership increases, it's also important to recognise the difference between SACIA as a professional body and the many trade unions active in our marketplace. Membership in a trade union is open to all workers in an industry sector and their primary purpose is to engage in collective bargaining on behalf of members. SACIA does not engage in collective bargaining and individual membership is only open to industry professionals who hold a professional designation and agree to abide by the Association's Code of Professional Conduct. Our members promote the adoption of professional standards and ethical business practices for audio-visual professionals working in the industry. We also back up this commitment with a disciplinary process that holds members accountable for their actions.

| | ASSOCIATE | PRACTITIONER | PROFESSIONAL |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| QUALIFICATION | NQF-4 | NQF-5 | NQF-6 |
| EXPERIENCE | Min 1 YEAR | Min 3 YEARS | Min 7 YEARS |
| EXAMINATION | YES | YES | EXAM + SPECIALISATION |

The SACIA Certification Council is also aware that many professionals working in the audio visual industry lack formal training and qualifications, and have learned their craft through on-the-job training and real-life work experience. In order to recognise these individuals, we have introduced an RPL programme (Recognition of Prior Learning) that allows people who do not hold an underlying academic qualification to earn a professional designation based on proven competence . ▶



SACIA Code of Professional Conduct

Members of SACIA who are practitioners and professionals practicing in the broadcast, communications and professional AV industry are required to subscribe to the code of professional conduct.

Five **values** underpin this code, namely:

- 1. Honour:** Showing respect for myself, my organisation, my industry and the community of clients that I serve by behaving in a manner that reflects favourably on my profession. Acting above reproach. Avoiding compromise of professional judgement by conflicts of interest.
- 2. Integrity:** Acting with honesty and openness. Displaying trustworthiness. Showing consistent good behaviour over time. Ensuring that my words and actions correspond.
- 3. Reliability:** Undertaking what I am competent to do and fulfilling commitments that I have made to my organisation, my industry and the community of clients that I serve.
- 4. Honesty:** Being truthful and accurate when executing my job even when it sometimes might be difficult. Not misrepresenting my own or my associate's academic or professional qualifications. Only undertaking assignments that I am competent to perform by way of my education, training and experience.
- 5. Accuracy:** Ensuring that what I say, do and write are correct and reflect the information that is required to complete the job. Where this is not possible, ensuring that my organisation or my client understand the factors that could influence the accuracy of the information I have provided.

SACIA identifies that a practitioner interacts with various stakeholders when delivering their services. To this end, it is important that professional conduct be upheld when engaging with colleagues, peers, employers as well as industry role-players. To this end, a practitioner needs to uphold certain **principles** when practicing in this industry, namely:

- 1. Avoiding conflict of interest:** This means understanding when a conflict of interest arises and speaking up to the parties present about the possible conflict to ensure that my integrity and honesty are not brought into question. This includes opportunities when I might be given information that I could use to my own advantage, but that could undermine my integrity and honesty.
- 2. Building and enhancing relationships:** When acting in the best interest of my client, my focus is on building and enhancing long term relationships that are built on trustworthiness and reliability.
- 3. Upholding safety, health and welfare of the public:** As a competent practitioner who is proficient in what I do, I have the required insight and understanding into the laws, codes and principles governing safety, health and welfare of the public within my area of responsibility. I therefore ensure that the work I complete is compliant with these laws, codes and principles to ensure the well-being of my client, as well as the public that I affect.
- 4. Remaining in good standing:** As a practitioner in this industry, I need to remain in good standing in terms of the laws governing South Africa. I also need to ensure that I abide by the codes set out by international counterparts within this industry.

Finally, it is important that I realise that the certificates, logos and marks entrusted to me as a member of SACIA remain their property. Should, for any reason, our relationship be terminated, I am responsible to return this property to their care. ▶

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