

InfoComm CTS certification in Southern Africa

For the last few years SACIA has delivered InfoComm training in Southern Africa under license from InfoComm International. At this stage there are 30 AV professionals in South Africa who have earned the CTS credential, including three specialist AV designers who have gone on to earn the advanced CTS-D credential. There are many more people who have earned the InfoComm recognised AV Technologist certificate, an online certificate programme that gives AV practitioners an opportunity to prove their knowledge in the science and technology behind today's modern audio, video and display systems. In order to earn the InfoComm CTS certificate, AV practitioners are required to commit to a code of conduct and pass an exam written at an independent Pearson Vue testing centre. There is no requirement to attend any training programme although SACIA host courses designed to help individuals prepare for the written InfoComm examinations.

SACIA training programmes

The value of SACIA training is underscored by feedback from Dimension Data's John Mills CTS-D who prepared for both the CTS and CTS-D examinations by attending SACIA training programmes. "InfoComm's CTS credential is the global standard for excellence in the AV industry. I'd been planning to write the CTS exam for the last few years but for whatever reason I just kept putting it off," he says. "Participating in the SACIA-run CTS Prep course in 2010 helped me prepare myself – knowing what to expect from the exam removed the inertia and gave me the boost I needed. Within two weeks of completing the course I'd written the exam and earned the CTS certificate with a 90% pass rate. In 2011 I attended the InfoComm DES courses for advanced audio-visual design and was again impressed by the depth of information shared. I went on to earn the CTS-D credential in 2012 and haven't looked back since. The CTS programme is more than a certificate to hang on the wall – it's recognition from the global AV market that I can deliver the goods. I view myself as a professional in audio-visual design and the investment I've made in earning the CTS



credential reflects my personal commitment to continuous professional development in an industry that is changing at a rapid pace."

Worthwhile investment

Another well-known integrator who has attended the SACIA courses is Natal Video's Ian Thornhill. "After more than 25 years in the industry I thought I knew it all and was quite sceptical about the value of attending the programme," he says. "How wrong could I have been. At the end of three days my head was spinning. Most enjoyable. Very informative. Well presented. I now know a lot more and highly recommend that anyone in the industry, no matter how many years of experience, sign up for this course. It formalizes what you 'may' already know and gives a good base for the next level. Did I waste my money? No way, the course is worth every cent and more."

Common standards

Whilst the majority of CTS holders in the country are employed within the supplier community, a number of corporate and institutional users have also made a commitment to training and skills development. There are three CTS-certified AV professionals employed within the University of KwaZulu Natal, while staff from UNISA, University of Johannesburg, North West University, Tshwane University of Technology and the University of the



Witwatersrand have all attended training and earned the InfoComm recognised AV Technologist certificate. Marius de Beer, head of AV Technology at North West University explains that NWU was established in 2004 through the merger of two universities with very different histories, personalities and cultures: the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of the North-West. The staff and students of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University were also incorporated, adding further to the richness of the University's heritage. "Each University had an established audio-visual unit and over the last decade our objective has been to merge these into one working department that embraces common standards and work practices based on international best-practice. By joining SACIA and participating in their training programmes we've established a common training platform for each campus (Potchefstroom, Mafikeng and Vanderbijlpark) and InfoComm's CTS certification programme provides everybody in the department with a formal mechanism for career development," he says. Marius attended the InfoComm DES training programme in 2011 and is currently preparing to write the CTS examination. 