ENSURING THE EXPERTISE TO GROW
SOUTH AFRICA

Training Academy and Certification Policy

A-01-POL

REVISION No. 3: 20 August 2020
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DEFINITIONS

**Accredited Qualification:** A qualification awarded upon successful completion of an accredited programme.

**Assessment:** The process of determining the capability or competence of an individual by evaluating performances against standards.

**Assessor:** A professionally registered person who carries out the Experience Appraisal assessment.

**Category:** A mode of registration defined in or under the ECSA Act that has a distinctive purpose, characteristic competencies, defined principal routes to registration and designated educational requirements.

**Certification:** Formal recognition awarded to an education or training programme through a quality assurance procedure specifying that it meets the criteria laid down for the type of programme.

**Certification criteria:** Statements of requirements that must be satisfied by a programme in order to receive certification.

**Certified training programme:** A programme that has been evaluated and recognised by the ECSA as meeting the stated criteria.

**Competency Assessment:** A summative assessment of an individual’s competency against the prescribed standard based on evidence in the individual's work, reports by qualified observers and other tests that may include a Professional Review.

**Competency Standard:** Statement of competence required for a defined purpose.

**Continuing Professional Development** (referred to in this standard as CPD): Refers to continuing education and training as contemplated in Section 13(k) of the Engineering Profession Act (No. 46 of 2000). Continuing Professional Development also refers to the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of the necessary personal qualities for the execution of professional and engineering duties throughout a person's engineering career. It is the learning and
development that takes place after completion of educational studies and through which registered persons maintain and develop competencies to continue to perform their roles efficiently.

**CPD Licensed Bodies (CPD validator):** Refers to bodies determined and licensed through the powers of delegation of the ECSA for the purposes of verifying CPD Service Providers and validating CPD Activities for Category 1 CPD Activities in the main.

**Engineering problem solving:** The process of finding solutions through a conscious, organised process that relies on the application of engineering knowledge and skills in addition to generic competencies.

**Evaluation:** Determining compliance of a result with prescribed criteria based on documentation, inspection and the application of judgement supported by reasoning.

**Exercise judgement, take responsibility and act ethically:** Be responsible for making sound decisions and act ethically in part of or all engineering activities.

**Final Visit:** Visit held at a time within the cycle stated by the Central Registration Committee relating to the decision on the findings of the previous visit.

**Final Report:** An evaluation of the aspects of a training programme for an organisation that has been given notification of termination of certification by the Central Registration Committee after the previous visit; this may require a further visit.

**Graduate:** A qualifying learner, irrespective of whether qualification is a degree or a diploma.

**Level:** A measure of learning demands expressed in terms of level descriptors for types of problems, knowledge required, skills and responsibility.

**Impacts of Engineering Activities:** Recognise and address the reasonably foreseeable social, cultural and environmental effects of engineering activities.

**Initial Professional Development:** Undertake sufficient accredited or non-accredited professional development activities to maintain and extend the competence of the candidate during the candidacy phase.
Interim Report: An evaluation of the aspects of a training programme as required by the Central Registration Committee in making the decision on the findings of the previous visit; this may require a further visit.

Interim Visit: Visit held at a time within the cycle stated by the Central Registration Committee in the decision regarding the findings of the previous visit.

Managing Engineering Activities: Management is directed at achieving engineering results through the management of people, resources, processes, systems and money; this involves planning, organising, leading, implementing and controlling activities.

Mentor: A professionally registered person who guides the competency development of a candidate in an appropriate category.

Programme: A structured, integrated teaching arrangement with a defined purpose and pathway leading to a qualification.

Practice Area: A distinctive area of knowledge and expertise developed by an engineering practitioner by virtue of the path of education, training and experience followed.

Qualification: The formal recognition of a specified learning achievement usually awarded on successful completion of a programme.

Reviewer: A professionally registered person who carries out the Professional Review assessment.

Relevant Legislation, Standards and Codes of Practice: Understanding the applicable legislation, standards and codes of practice for the practice areas of the candidates.

Regular Visit: A visit that is held on a four-year cycle after the Training Academy has been certified by the ECSA.

Standards: Statements of outcomes to be demonstrated, level of performance, and content baseline requirements in the context of engineering training programmes.

Stage 1: A point in the process of professional registration at which a person’s qualification is assessed against the required qualification educational outcomes.
Supervisor: A person who oversees and controls engineering work performed by a candidate.
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Central Registration Committee</td>
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<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum vitae</td>
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<td>ECSA</td>
<td>Engineering Council of South Africa</td>
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<td>ER</td>
<td>Engineering Report</td>
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<td>EPA</td>
<td>Engineering Profession Act (No. 46 of 2000)</td>
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<td>Higher Education Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>IPD</td>
<td>Initial Professional Development</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Professional Review</td>
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<td>QMS</td>
<td>Quality Management System</td>
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<td>RPS</td>
<td>Research, Policy and Standards</td>
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<td>TER</td>
<td>Training and Experience Report</td>
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<td>VA</td>
<td>Voluntary Association</td>
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<td>WIL</td>
<td>Work Integrated Learning</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) is a Statutory Body established in terms of Section 2 of the Engineering Professions Act, No. 46 of 2000 (EPA). This Council operates within the ambit of the Built Environment Profession.

As part of ECSA’s continuous review and improvement of its value proposition to the engineering profession and the effective execution of its legislative mandate, the ECSA embarked on national roadshows during 2015 and 2016; these provided constructive feedback to the ECSA on its role and its continued relevance and effectiveness. The engineering profession also communicated its expectations of the ECSA. It was during these nationwide public consultation roadshows that the ECSA gained insight into the lack of training for candidates in the engineering profession.

Many employers of engineering practitioners and institutions that procure engineering services do not have adequate training, development and mentoring programmes that provide support and exposure for aspirant engineering professionals to be equipped for professional registration with the ECSA. Therefore, as a direct response to the abovementioned stakeholder engagement and feedback, the ECSA is taking active steps to rectify the lack of support regarding skill development of engineering practitioners from graduation stage to full professional registration by embarking on a number of projects.

This Training Academy and Certification Policy is, therefore, intended to give effect to ECSA’s strategic objectives and respond to stakeholder expectations regarding Candidate Training, Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes. The policy further seeks to define the role of the ECSA in Candidate Training by providing guiding principles in establishing and certifying academies.
2. BACKGROUND

The illustration below defines the documents that comprise the ECSA system for Training Academy establishment and certification. The illustration also locates the current document.

![Diagram of document structure]

Figure 1: Documents defining the ECSA Training Academy and Certification system

3. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document defines the policies set by the ECSA that govern the establishment and certification of Training Academies for the WIL of candidates and students. The policy gives effect to the provisions of the Engineering Profession Act, No. 46 of 2000 (EPA) regarding Section 13(i). The standards, criteria, policies and procedures that define the Training Academy establishment and certification system are defined in a set of documents, the structure of which is shown in Figure 1.
This policy encompasses the following:

- Policy Provision: Criteria for Establishing and Certifying a Training Academy
- Progression of training for candidates
- CPD
- Transparency, confidentiality, publication of decisions and costs
- Awards Ceremony

This policy is supported by competency standards, competency guidelines, processes for assessments, training and mentoring guidelines, discipline-specific training guides, application guidelines, standard forms, CPD and information specific to particular work contexts. Relevant documents are referred to within this policy.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy outlines the requirements with which organisations need to comply in order to be certificated as Training Academies.

5. APPLICABLE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The following legislative documents are applicable to this policy:

- Engineering Profession Act, No. 46 of 2000
- National Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998
- Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)

6. POLICY PROVISIONS

6.1 Criteria for establishing and certifying a Training Academy

This section defines the criteria for establishing and certifying engineering training programmes that are generic and are applied to the different organisations for each category of registration and each discipline.

The following sections present the criteria for training programmes that have produced cohorts of professionals.
6.1.1 Criterion 1: Competency outcomes

A detailed training programme must be planned to address the key training areas as defined in the Competency Standards and are in principle, divided into five groups as follows:

- Knowledge-based engineering problem solving
- Managing Engineering Activities
- Impacts of Engineering Activities
- Exercise judgement, take responsibility and act ethically
- IDP

6.1.2 Criterion 2: Work horizon

The organisation must have a work horizon within the training programme that must fulfil the following:

- Is set at the appropriate level as defined in the standards for professional registration for each category;
- Has the variety of work activities that is necessary for proper development of a candidate;
- Allows all candidates to complete the training programme;
- Is not less than the minimum certification period of four [4] years; and
- Allows for increase in responsibility and accountability of the candidate within the organisation.

6.1.3 Criterion 3: Qualified Mentors

The organisation must provide qualified mentors as evidenced by the following:

- Be professionally registered with the ECSA in an appropriate category and discipline.
- Have contextual knowledge in the area of the applicant’s offered evidence.
- Have not been subjected to any misconduct or found guilty of any offence.
- Have not been refused registration on all grounds stated in Section 3(i-vi) of the EPA.
- Have not had their registration cancelled as contemplated in Section 20 of the EPA.
- Be compliant with all ECSA registration requirements as a professional.

Where a WIL is required for credit towards the qualification, the mentor must ensure that
learning is executed effectively:

- Learning objectives and outcomes to be achieved are defined and agreed with the academic provider.
- There is ongoing communication with the academic provider.
- Monitoring and recording of the relative objectives are executed.

6.1.4 Criterion 4: Resourcing to ensure sustainability of the training programme
The training programme must be adequately planned, resourced, led and executed to ensure that it is sustainable over the period of certification as evidenced by the following:

- The number of candidates admitted is conditional on the work horizon of the organisation to offer good quality training to meet the professional requirements.
- The selection and admission of candidates is linked to the organisation’s equity and diversity plans.
- The organisation must provide the following:
  - A desk for each candidate allocated to the training programme
  - A personal computer/laptop that has the relevant licensed software loaded for each candidate allocated to the training programme to carry out the necessary work as required
  - Internet facilities for each candidate allocated to the training programme to enable each candidate to conduct research and upload their reports to the ECSA as required

- The organisation must have a work horizon that allows candidates to complete their relevant training on engineering activities. There must be a horizon of work for at least one certification cycle (i.e. the next four [4] years).
- A strategy for recruitment, development and retention of mentors is in place and is aligned with the diversity plan of the institution.
- The number of mentors is sufficient for the programme and does not exceed the following:
  - 1 mentor to 4 graduates (1:4) if the mentor is from the organisation; or
  - 1 mentor to 10 graduates (1:10) if the mentor is sourced externally.
• The organisation must also have qualified and/or experienced supervisors to coach candidates on the work assigned to them.

• Funding for the training programme must be adequate.

• Budgetary allocations for the training programme including mentor remuneration must be adequate and effectively utilised.

• Staff responsible for the training development programme must be adequately qualified, experienced and skilled in line with the Skills Development Act.

• The training programme must be quality assured.

• The organisation must be able to recruit disabled candidates/students.

6.2 Certification

The objective of certifying academy training programmes is to establish whether a training programme meets the relevant certification criteria for such a training programme. Certification serves several functions, which are outlined below:

• Assures the public of the quality of the training programme for the relevant category and discipline.

• Encourages improvement and innovation in engineering training in response to national and global needs.

• Speeds up the registration period.

6.2.1 Stages for training programme certification

Training programme certification is classified into three stages:

a) Initial Desktop Evaluation – Desktop evaluation of proposed training programme

b) Provisional Certification – Visits held two [2] years after Initial Desktop Evaluation

c) Certification – Visits according to the certification cycle

a) Initial Desktop Evaluation

The ECSA offers Initial Desktop Evaluations (endorsement) for new training programmes subject to Provisional Certification after two [2] years of implementation. An Initial Desktop Evaluation on a new training programme considers the extent to which the programme

• Satisfies Criterion 1, as judged from a fully detailed proposed programme

• Presents a scheduled work horizon plan that demonstrates how the organisation
meets Criterion 2

- Presents detailed curricula vitae (CV) of all proposed mentors to meet the sub-criteria of Criterion 3
- Presents evidence of planning and institutional commitment to the programme and provides resources for both the start-up of the programme and on an ongoing basis against the sub-criteria of Criterion 4
- Has a minimum of one person to lead who has experience and is qualified according to the Skills Development Act

b) Provisional Certification

_Provisional Certification_ is a form of certification that may be awarded to a new or extensively revised training programme through a quality assurance process evaluation after two [2] years of implementation.

_Provisional Certification_ indicates to the organisation and the candidates in the training programme that the parts of the training programme that have been already implemented are generally consistent with the applicable criteria. The certification also specifies that if the remainder of the training programme is implemented as planned and identified deficiencies and concerns are addressed, the training programme is likely to gain full certification. The ECSA gives no commitment to certify the training programme at this stage.

_Provisional Certification_ is granted for a maximum period of two [2] years. _Provisional certification_ may be converted to certification of the training programme by means of an evaluation visit after a minimum of four [4] years of implementation of the training programme. Thereafter, regular certification visits take place as scheduled for the organisation.

c) Certification of the training programme

Within this policy, _Certification_ signifies formal recognition by the ECSA through a quality assurance procedure that ensures the training programme meets the certification criteria.

_Certification_ of the training programme means that the training programme is judged to
satisfy the prescribed criteria and is able to continue to produce candidates who meet the competency outcome criteria for a defined period of up to four [4] years.

Should a training programme not satisfy all criteria but evidence exists of commitment and capacity on the part of the organisation to achieve full compliance within a stated time, the training programme may be certified for a period not exceeding two [2] years.

### 6.2.2 The Certification Team

a) Types of assessors

The following types of assessors are involved in a certification process:

- **Lead Evaluator**: A person appointed to lead the training programme certification team.
- **Team Member**: A person appointed into a training programme certification team.

### 6.2.3 Lead Evaluators

An individual on the list of assessors may be identified by the Regulatory Functions Division of the ECSA as a designated Lead Evaluator provided the person satisfies the following criteria:

- Is registered in the relevant category
- Has three years post registration experience
- Has been identified by the Regulatory Functions Division and ratified by the Central Registration Committee (CRC) as a potential Lead Evaluator
- Has completed the initial mandatory training in the method of certification
- Attends further refresher training

A Lead Evaluator should have experience in being a member of the CRC. Alternatively, the CRC should co-opt persons designated as Lead Evaluators who are likely to be called upon to lead visits over the subsequent three years.

**Team Member**

An individual on the list of assessors may be identified by the Regulatory Functions Division of the ECSA as a designated Team Member provided the person satisfies the following
criteria:

- Is registered in the relevant category
- Has completed the initial mandatory training in the method of certification
- Attends further refresher training

The Regulatory Functions Division must ensure a representative composition in terms of diversity, experience, disciplines and competencies.

b) Composition of the Certification Team

To evaluate a training programme, the certification team must be constituted as follows:

- A certification team is appointed for each training programme that is to be evaluated providing the following are implemented:
  
  o The CRC shall play an oversight role in the selection of the certification teams.
  o In consultation with the CRC, the Regulatory Functions Division shall select and appoint the Lead Evaluator.
  o In consultation with the Lead Evaluator, the Regulatory Functions Division shall select and appoint Team Members.
  o Where necessary, the Regulatory Functions Division in consultation with the Lead Evaluator shall co-opt competent persons to fill whatever vacancy may be required.

- The team must have not less than five [5] members who are currently active in the industry or professionally involved in the discipline of the training programme being evaluated.
- The Team Member’s individual specialities should be spread as evenly as possible across the disciplines of the training programme(s) under evaluation.
- The Lead Evaluator may designate a Team Member as rapporteur but the Lead Evaluator retains final responsibility for the report.
- Additional requirements for the composition of the team are defined in Schedule 1 for each type of programme.
Schedule 1: Composition of the Certification Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>Composition</th>
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<tr>
<td>All training programmes</td>
<td>1. A single certification team with the required mix of disciplines appointed to evaluate the training programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. An appropriate mix of Professional Engineers, Professional Engineering Technologists and Professional Engineering Technicians as required for the training programme being evaluated</td>
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For details of the certification process for Training Academies, refer to document A-03-PRO.

c) Composition of the Central Registration Committee

The composition of the CRC to evaluate certification visit reports is defined in the Terms of Reference for the CRC. The CRC must co-opt members as necessary to ensure the following criteria are met:

(i) There are no less than three members who are currently active in the industry or professionally in the category of the training programmes being certified.

(ii) The co-opted member(s) must meet the criteria of a Lead Evaluator as defined in Section 6.2.2(a)(i).

6.2.4 Observers

Observation of certification visits and CRC meetings plays an important part in validating and improving ECSA’s processes and informing interested parties about ECSA’s practices. Potential observers include the following:

- International observers
- Representatives of related standards and quality assurance bodies
- Persons approved by the Regulatory Functions Division

Observers at the CRC meetings may participate in the discussion with the objective of contributing their expertise and knowledge to the discussion. Observers may be present at all phases of the meeting but must not influence the committee’s final decisions.
6.3 Duties and functions of the Central Registration Committee and Regulatory Functions Division

6.3.1 Central Registration Committee

The obligations of the CRC are as follows:

- To operate within the framework of the ECSA’s Standing Orders for Council and Committees of Council.
- To ensure that there is sufficient capacity for the list of persons as Lead Evaluators and Team Members.
- To keep the Executive Committee and Council informed of decisions taken in terms of these delegated powers and to report on trends or other matters of professional and public concern arising from its activities.
- To withhold certification from non-certified training programmes and to withdraw certification from existing programmes.
- To grant certification for a defined period, to grant Provisional Certification to training programmes after consideration of the full report from the certification team, and to approve recommended interim or final reports and visits.
- To approve certification, visit schedules and reporting deadlines.
- To recommend reviews necessary to ensure that ECSA’s certification standards are of the highest standard.

6.3.2 Regulatory Functions Division

The obligations of the Regulatory Functions Division of the ECSA are as stipulated below:

- To draw up a preliminary certification visit schedule for approval by the CRC.
- To approve observer attendance.
- To appoint the relevant certification teams.
- To manage all administrative requirements pertaining to visits.
- To consult with the CRC and relevant role players for purposes of identifying potential assessors.
- To issue a list of training programmes certified by the CRC and to update the list as certification decisions are made.
7. ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE FOR THE REGISTRATION PROGRESS OF CANDIDATES

This section defines how the progress of candidates from the Certified Training Academies is assessed. This assessment determines if the candidate meets the necessary outcomes for professional registration as defined in the Competency Standards (R-02-PE/PT/PCE/PN) and Policy Document R-01-POL-PC and R-01-POL-SC.

Candidates must submit their Training and Experience Reports (TERs) and Engineering Reports (ERs) as defined in document R-01-POL-PC/SC to their mentors to be assessed by the ECSA. The certified academies are visited by the ECSA Assessors twice a year to check the progress of the candidates. During the visit, the mentors are required to submit the candidates’ relevant TERs and ERs for assessment by the ECSA Assessors.

The ER should indicate which outcomes have been met by the candidate. The ECSA will assess the individual TER and ER against each outcome as defined in document R-02-PE/PT/PCE/PN with the relevant guidance for each outcome given in document R-08-PE/PT/PN/PCE.

The candidate’s progress is assessed on an ongoing basis by both the supervisors and the mentors using the training record for documentation. The tool to assess the progress of the candidates by the mentors is provided in the process document A-03-PRO.

The benefit of following this process is that once the candidate has demonstrated the competence against all outcomes, he/she will proceed to Professional Review (PR) after the assessment of the TERs and ER by the ECSA Assessors according to the registration policy document R-01-POL-PC/SC.

8. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The standard for CPD Validators, Providers and Activities (document ECPD-01-STD) designates the ECSA as the sole custodian of CPD, with other role players such as Voluntary Associations (VAs), Higher Education Institutions and CPD Service Providers assuming important functions that are primarily delegated and monitored by the ECSA.
Furthermore, it should be noted that Accredited Academies can act as CPD Service Providers for Category 1 CPD Activities. Category 1 CPD Activities include conferences, congresses, large group workshops, lectures, seminars, refresher courses, colloquiums, E-Learning, additional relevant and completed qualifications, and completed postgraduate qualifications. The award of credits is based on notional hours of the CPD Activity. Ten notional hours are equivalent to one credit. A full day of activity is regarded as ten notional hours.

The Standard document **ECPD-01-STD** outlines the functions and processes for determining, verifying and appointing Licensed Bodies. It outlines the processes for the appointed Licensed Bodies to verify the Service Providers and to validate CPD activities and details associated with the review and auditing requirements needed to perform these functions. The document also lists the appeal process for Licensed Bodies and Accredited Service Providers in the case of a rejection or a revocation. It further provides clarity in the implementation of the Rules. The criteria required by the new ECSA CPD Standard to grant the status of Licensed Body, verified CPD Service Provider and validated CPD Activity are also outlined.

The high-level requirements or fundamentals that must be in place before a CPD Service Provider can apply for verification are summarised in this section. Detailed information is available in the Standard document **ECPD-01-STD**. Core requirements are as follows:

- Detailed company profile indicating capabilities pertaining to resources and including company registration documents
- Clear scope of what to validate
- Compliance issues such as Tax Clearance Certificate, letter of good standing, etc.
- Quality Management System (QMS) of the CPD Service Provider
- A broad outline of the programme for the forthcoming year
- Methodology for the CPD programme

The CPD Standard obliges the CPD Service Provider to have the capacity and the ability to produce high quality training events, and these must be established prior to the hosting of the CPD Activities. The CPD Service Provider must, therefore, meet certain core requirements to ensure that participants realise the full value/benefit of the CPD Activity.
The Standard (document ECPD-01-STD) covers in detail the criteria and the standard required to be a CPD Licensing Body and CPD Service Provider.

9. TRANSPARENCY, CONFIDENTIALITY, PUBLICATION OF DECISIONS AND COSTS

The certification process requires confidentiality in some aspects while being transparent in others. This section describes ECSA’s approach to achieving the correct balance between transparency and confidentiality. It further outlines the costs for the certification process.

9.1 Confidentiality
Apart from reflecting the outcome of each certification evaluation in the list of recognised programmes, the ECSA will not divulge details of investigations, documentation, correspondence and discussions between the ECSA, the certification team and the organisation concerned without the approval of the organisation.

9.2 List of Certified Programmes
After each set of certification decisions appropriate to the programme, the Regulatory Functions Division of the ECSA on behalf of the Council publishes the document A-08-GL, which contains a list of all the organisations that have both current and previous certified programmes. The list shows the initial and final year of the certification period(s). In the case of a programme being no longer certified, the previous period(s) of certification is shown. Provisionally certified programmes are identified in the list.

The list of certified training programmes must indicate the organisation and the associated discipline(s) and include the dates of validity of certification, which are specified in a month/year format.

9.3 Appeals
Document A-07-PRO defines the procedure to be followed to appeal a decision of the CRC.

9.4 Costs
From time-to-time, the ECSA may determine certification fees based on averaged costs to
be levied for conducting certification visits within South Africa. In addition, the organisation is expected to bear the costs of documentation, meals and refreshments during the visit.

10. AWARDS CEREMONY

The ECSA holds an annual Awards Ceremony to recognise the efforts of the stakeholders involved in the Certified Training Academies.
REVISED HISTORY

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<td>Rev 3</td>
<td>18 June 2020</td>
<td>Final Approval</td>
<td>RPSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev 3</td>
<td>20 August 2020</td>
<td>Ratification</td>
<td>Council</td>
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The Policy for:

Training Academy and Certification

Revision 3, dated 20 August 2020 and consisting of 24 pages, has been reviewed for adequacy by the Business Unit Manager and is approved by the Executive: Research, Policy and Standards (RPS).

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Business Unit Manager

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Executive: RPS

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Date 24/08/2020

This definitive version of the policy is available on our website.

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