

A Note on Roles and Responsibilities in the Engineering Profession

A number of role-players and stakeholders have an interest in the regulation of the engineering profession: government, the profession itself (statutory and voluntary), industry, higher education and the public. *Government* recognised the need to regulate the profession and legislated the establishment of a *professional regulatory body*, Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) to perform defined functions.

ECSA's core functions are: setting standards for education and professional competence, evaluating and accrediting education programmes, assessing the competency of applicants for registration, maintaining a register of registered professionals, setting and enforcing codes of conduct and practice, and investigating misconduct.

ECSA operates closely with the *voluntary associations (VAs)* whose task is to promote the interests of their members and discipline with due regard to the public interest. VAs promote technical, professional and ethical behavior in the practice. They promote education, training, render services to their members and recognise their achievements.

The table below lists various responsibilities for ECSA and the VAs

It is important to note that not all voluntary associations perform all the functions listed. VAs work closely with the statutory body and are in fact, the main source of nominations for persons to serve on council, committees, as programme evaluators, assessors and mentors who also make inputs into policy development.

The input of the VAs is a critical success factor for ECSA to achieve decision making by peer judgment. Individuals play roles in one or more of the areas identified above: education, industry, the voluntary associations or the statutory regulatory body.

Table: ECSA and Voluntary Associations

Mission and Functions of ECSA	Generic mission and functions of a VA having individual members
<p>To regulate the profession of engineering in the public interest through the following specific functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting standards for education and competence of engineering professionals and specified categories • Quality assuring and accrediting educational qualifications • Seek and maintain international mutual recognition of accredited qualifications • Evaluates qualifications that are not accredited or recognised 	<p>To act for the benefit of members and in the public interest through some or all of the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote education and training and the renewal of the profession • Maintain contact with appropriate national and international organizations • Advance the science, technology and professional knowledge and improve practice in the discipline • Be a source of programme and qualification evaluators for ECSA • Be a source of expertise for setting standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing guidance on training toward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a source of (external) mentors for

<p>registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing applicants for registration • Maintaining a register of registered persons in the categories • Publish and enforce a code of professional conduct • Identify work reserved for registered persons • Investigate complaints about registered persons and conduct disciplinary action as required • Participate in international mobility agreements; maintain a section of the International Register • Setting CPD requirements and monitoring achievements • Provide engineering leadership and advice to society & government • Act in the public interest in any way necessary • Be a voice for the profession in common and regulatory matters • Develops policies, positions and guidelines • Communication and provision of information • Uphold the status and public recognition of the profession • Contributes to the common interests and welfare of the engineering community through recognition and close co-operation with engineering VAs 	<p>candidates and assessors of registration applicants for ECSA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a list of members • Advance and uphold the professional ethics • Uphold the profession's image, status and interests • Advocacy for the discipline and profession • Advance best practice in engineering • Encourage members to strive for excellence in engineering practice. • Participate in mutual recognition agreements and maintain contact with international organizations • Promotion and provision of CPD and validation of CPD offerings • Contributes to development of national policy • Act in the interest of the sector or public in relation to sector • Represent and render services to members • Enhance the recognition of the discipline as a highly respected profession and a desirable career • Contribute to and comments on government policies and white papers on discipline specific issues. • Facilitate national debates, conferences and colloquiums • Facilitate information exchange (Journals etc) • Recognise achievement by advancement of individual members by higher grades of membership and awards • Contributes to the common interests and welfare of the engineering community through close co-operation with ECSA.
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