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SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)

In accordance with the National Qualifications Act, Act No 67 of 2008, the Directorate for Registration and Recognition at SAQA invites comment from interested parties on its intention to recommend the recognition of the following professional body and the registration of its designation on the NQF for the purposes of the said Act.

The application of the professional body was evaluated against the *Policy & Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the National Qualifications Framework Act, Act 67 of 2008* as approved by the SAQA Board. The evaluation focused on the following key areas as set out in the criteria:

- Governance, Management and Sustainability
- Disciplinary Matters and Accountability
- Data Management
- Continuing Professional Development
- Awarding of Professional Designations

Forum of Immigration Practitioners of South Africa (FIPSA)

Designation Title
Immigration Practitioner (South Africa) [IP(SA)]

The complete application is available for viewing at SAQA.

Comment regarding the application should reach SAQA at the address below **no later than 30 days after publication in the Government Gazette**. All correspondence should be marked and addressed to:

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**PROFESSIONAL BODY RECOGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION
REGISTRATION****EVALUATION REPORT****1. NAME OF BODY: FORUM OF IMMIGRATION PRACTITIONERS OF SOUTH AFRICA
(FIPSA)**

1.1 The Forum of Immigration Practitioners of South Africa (FIPSA) applied to SAQA for recognition as a professional body and for the registration of two professional designations on the NQF in terms of the NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008.

1.2 The Directorate for Registration and Recognition (DRR) evaluated the application against the *Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the NQF Act*.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROFESSIONAL BODY

2.1 The Forum of Immigration Practitioners of South Africa (FIPSA) is a voluntary association that was established by a group of immigration practitioners after the dissolution of the Association of Immigration Practitioners of South Africa (AIPSA). A need was identified for immigration practitioners to join forces in monitoring and improving the industry's professional standards and image, in its dialogue with the Department of Home Affairs and other third parties, as well as in networking with and amongst each other.

2.2 Some of the main objectives of the FIPSA are to:

- Promote the interests of the Immigration Practitioner profession;
- Unify and align Immigration Practitioners' voices and to represent them and speak with one voice on their behalf to third parties;
- Be an Association for exchange of experiences, information and advice;
- Promote the image of Immigration Practitioners in the industry;
- Contribute to a high standard of service delivery and business ethics by Immigration Practitioners in general;
- Support efforts towards ensuring national security; and
- Protect the public interest in relation to services and their associated risks provided by its members.

2.3 FIPSA Membership

The Institute has about 965 individual members which are divided into two classes; voting (members who hold full membership and honorary membership) as well as non-voting members (members who hold associate membership) respectively. Six hundred and three (603) of these are full members. Associate members are individuals who do not meet the minimum requirements for full membership and are required to write and pass a qualifying examination.

2.4 FIPSA National and International Affiliations

FIPSA has no national or international affiliations at present.

2.5 Education and Training

- FIPSA is not a registered or accredited training provider but recognises institutions that provide immigration-related training.
- FIPSA has no formal agreements in place with universities with regard to curriculum development.

3. EVALUATION AGAINST SAQA CRITERIA

3.1 Governance, Management and Sustainability

- FIPSA is governed by a Constitution and By-Laws.
- The FIPSA Management Committee is the highest decision-making body and Management Committee members are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to act on behalf of the members of the Association and to ensure mandates are carried out within the powers vested in it. An AGM is held once in every calendar year.
- In compliance with section 66 of the Companies Act and as determined by the AGM the Management Committee shall have a minimum of seven (7) directors, but not more than nine (9). Only full members in good standing are eligible for election to the Management Committee.
- Management Committee Members serve for a term of 2 years and may be re-elected. Election of Management Committee Members is conducted in terms of the Constitution of the Association.
- The Management Committee retains full and executive control over FIPSA's affairs, monitor the performance of the CEO and staff so as to ensure that decisions by the Management Committee are executed timely and in line with FIPSA's strategic plan.
- Whilst the Management Committee provides strategic leadership and ensure sound governance, the CEO and her/his team are responsible for the daily operations of FIPSA. The CEO have no voting rights.
- The following standing committees are established to assist the Management Committee with its oversight role:

Board Sub-committees	Mandate
Disciplinary Committee	The function of the disciplinary committee is to assist the Management Committee with disciplinary related matters.
Conference Committee	The function of this committee is to assist the Management Committee in organising the logistics of annual events such as conferences, seminars and workshops.
Education Committee	The function of this sub-committee is to assist in matters relating to the education, training, development and assessment of immigration practitioners.
Membership Evaluation Committee	The function of the evaluation committee is to assist the Management Committee in the evaluation of membership and professional designation applications.
Marketing & Communications Committee	The function of this committee is to assist the Management Committee in matters related to marketing and communications.
Nominations Committee	The function of the nominations committee is to assist the Management Committee with the evaluation of

	Management Committee and sub-committee nominations and the election of non-executive directors.
Member Development Committee	The function of this committee is to assist the Management Committee in planning and organising the logistics of development interventions.
Publications Committee	The Publications Committee will report directly into the Marketing and Communications Committee.

- FIPSA leases offices at No 58 Twelfth Avenue, Edenvale, Johannesburg. The Association is funded through annual membership fees and proceeds from annual development events.

3.2 Disciplinary Matters and Accountability

- All disciplinary matters are administered in accordance with a Code of Conduct/Ethics contained in the Constitution of FIPSA. The Code is reviewed bi-annually.
- Members are required to sign a personal undertaking to abide by the terms and conditions laid down in the Code of Ethics. In sum, the Code require members of the Association at all times to display responsible, professional, and socially acceptable behavior in the execution of their duties.
- All complaints must be in writing and submitted to the CEO.
- After formally acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the CEO submits the complaint to the Disciplinary Committee.
- The Disciplinary Committee determines if there are sufficient substance and grounds for the complaint to warrant further action. This Committee recommends a finding and sanction(s) to the Management Committee which may include the withdrawal of a designation and termination of membership. The Management Committee confirms the finding and the sanction.
- An ad-hoc Appeals Panel, consisting of the Chairperson of the Management Committee and two (2) independent members drawn from other SAQA-recognised professional bodies handles appeals lodged by a member against whom a complaint has been upheld. The Appeals Panel may overturn the disciplinary decision, vary or uphold it.

3.3 Data Management

The FIPSA database which consists of members' information such as personal details, qualifications and CPD activities is adequate for data capturing on the National Learners' Records Database. Members have secure access to a website to view their personal data and load their CPD points as required.

3.4 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- All FIPSA members (excluding student members) are expected to complete to attend at least 70% of the seminars & workshops presented per year as part of theoretical training. Tasks and / or modules will be required to be submitted once a year as part of practical training. Members must complete a minimum of 40 CPD hours per annum.
- CPD is divided into verifiable and non-verifiable activities. In the case of verifiable units, the records shall include proof that the individual was involved in an acceptable CPD learning activity.

- Verifiable CPD points can be achieved through various activities including, but not limited to: structured courses; online learning; project work; work-based learning; discussion groups; coaching and mentoring; research, seminars and conferences; and visiting international immigration practices and reporting back.
- Non-verifiable activities generally include technical reading of articles in magazines, accredited journals, books, but can also include updating knowledge by visiting credible websites that share the latest developments relevant to the immigration profession.
- Members are required to maintain their own CPD records and make a submission annually ahead of their membership renewal. CPD non-compliance could result in disciplinary action including possible withdrawal of the Professional Designation.

4 PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

4.1 Designation Awarding Process

- The Evaluations Committee has the authority of considering applications and making recommendations for the awarding of designations. The Evaluation Committee comprises professional members of FIPSA, and of independent, knowledgeable professionals who safeguard the neutrality in the granting of designations.
- In order to qualify for the FIPSA designation, a minimum of a nationally recognised qualification at NQF level 5 (RPL may be invoked in the case of persons who have more than 10 years' experience of the industry); 5 or more years relevant immigration consulting work experience; and No criminal conviction related to fraud and corruption or crimes that place the applicant's ethical behaviour in question
- The transcript must include the official seal of the educational institution, signature of the Registrar and verification that the qualification was successfully completed. These are documents that are needed in order for FIPSA to confirm the authenticity of the qualification with SAQA.
- The Management approves designations on recommendation by the Evaluations Committee.
- Where an application for registration is denied, the applicant has the right to appeal the decision. If the Evaluations Committee upholds its original decision, further consideration of the applicant's appeal will be handled by an Appeals Panel of as per the Appeals Process.

4.2 Designation to be Registered

Designation Title: Immigration Practitioner (South Africa) [IP(SA)]

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
UNDERLYING NQF REGISTERED QUALIFICATION/PART-QUALIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NQF Level 5 qualification
PRACTICAL LEARNING	Applicants must have completed at least 5 years of relevant work experience within an immigration consulting environment in addition to the qualification.
BOARD / ADMISSION EXAMINATION / ASSESSMENT	Board exam is not applicable. However, applicants are required to submit a verified Portfolio of Evidence and a complete Curriculum Vitae or résumé.
CPD	40 CPD hours per year must be accumulated and recorded.
APPLICATION OF RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning is applied on a case-by-case basis and is undertaken by an accredited training provider. Recognition will also be granted to applicants in possession of the Section 46 Certificate issued by the Department of Home Affairs.