

No. 489

12 June 2015

**SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)**

In accordance with the National Qualifications Act, Act No 67 of 2008, the Directorate Registration and Recognition (DRR) 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/s on the NQF for the purposes of the said Act.

SAQA evaluated the application of the professional body 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

**SOUTH AFRICAN DENTAL TECHNICIANS COUNCIL (SADTC)**

Designation Title
Dental Technician
Dental Technologist

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: SOUTH AFRICAN DENTAL TECHNICIANS COUNCIL (SADTC)

1.1 The South African Dental Technicians Council (SADTC) applied to SAQA for recognition as a professional body and for the registration of two professional designations 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 Dental Technicians Board established by Section 2 of the Dental Technicians Act 30 of 1945, continues to exist as the South African Dental Technicians Council (SADTC) under the Dental Technicians Act, Act 19 of 1979, as amended. The Act mandates the SADTC to keep and maintain separate registers for practicing dental technicians, dental technologists, dental traders, dental laboratories and student dental technicians as well as student dental technologists. Furthermore, the Council is tasked to oversee the practices involved in the supplying, manufacturing, altering and repairing of artificial dentures or other dental appliances or any work pertaining to such dentures or appliances.

SADTC's key objectives, among others, are to:

- Ensure effective/proper governance and administration of the organisation;
- Promote good relations between dentists, clinical dental technologists, dental technicians and dental technologists and other supplementary dental health services personnel;
- Contribute to the development of oral health of the South African population;
- Govern and to regulate the education and training of the profession;
- Guarantee effective communication with the sectorial stakeholders; and
- Advance transformation imperatives in the profession.

#### 2.2 SADTC Registered Persons

The Council has 1678 registered persons, including natural and juristic persons across all nine provinces in the following registration categories:

- Dental Technicians/Dental Technologists	651
- Dental Laboratories	680
- Dental Laboratories owned by Dentists	90
- Dental Traders	10
- Student Dental Technician	292
- Student Dental Technologist	45

#### 2.3 SADTC's Affiliations

- Forum of Statutory Health Professional Councils

SADTC is a member of the Forum of Statutory Health Professional Councils consisting of the chairpersons of the statutory health professional councils and the registrars or chief executive officers, as the case may be, of such councils. This Forum serves as an advisory body to the National Minister of Health on, among others, the development of coherent policies relating to the education and training and optimal utilisation and distribution of health care providers.

- Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)  
SADTC has informal working relationships with two of the HPCSA's professional boards – namely, the Professional Board for Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene and the Professional Board for Medical and Dental Professions to promote good relations between dentists, clinical dental technologists, dental technicians and dental technologists and other supplementary dental health services personnel.
- Dental Technology Association of South Africa (DENTASA)  
SADTC has an informal working relationship with DENTASA in connection with matters related to the dental technology industry.
- South African Dental Association (SADA)  
SADTC has an informal working relationship with SADA in relation to matters pertaining to the dental technology industry.
- The South African Dental Technicians Council has no international affiliations.

#### 2.4 Education and Training

- SADTC approves and recognises the learning programmes offered at the point of application by Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Durban University of Technology and Tshwane University of Technology based on the recommendation of its Education Committee.
- SADTC does not act as a workplace provider but recognises workplaces for the delivery of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities.
- SADTC contributes towards the development of curricula for learning programmes with regard to dental technology offered by the abovementioned training providers based on the input and cooperation of the profession as represented by DENTASA.

### 3. EVALUATION AGAINST SAQA CRITERIA

#### 3.1 Governance, Management and Sustainability

- Section 5(1) of the Dental Technicians Act 19 of 1979 makes provision for the appointment of a Council by the Minister of Health on a five-year term, comprising the following members:
  - the Director of Oral Health of the Department of Health;
  - five persons appointed by the Minister, of whom –
    - one shall be a dentist attached to a university having a dental faculty;
    - one shall be a dental technician or a dental technologist attached to an institution at which dental technicians or dental technologists are educated and trained; and
    - three shall be members of the public who shall be appointed after calling through the media for nominations by the public and who are

- not registered in terms of this Act or the Medical, Dental and Supplementary Health Service Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974), of whom at least one shall be appointed on account of his or her knowledge of the law;
  - two dental technician contractors nominated and elected by dental technician contractors in the prescribed manner;
  - two dental technicians or dental technologists who practice the profession of dental technician or dental technologist, as the case may be, as employees and who are nominated and elected in the prescribed manner by dental technicians or dental technologists, as the case may be, thus practicing that profession; and
  - one dentist nominated and elected by dentists in the prescribed manner.
- The Council appoints the Registrar who is responsible for carrying out the SADTC mandate, providing strategic direction and leadership to staff and managing the daily functioning of the organisation.
- Section 10(1) of the Act provides for the establishment of an Executive Committee (EXCO) comprising the President, the Vice-President, the Treasurer and other members as the Council may designate in which case, of whom at least one must be a dentist and one a dental technician or a dental technologist.
- The SADTC also established the following sub-committees to assist the EXCO in its oversight function:
  - Disciplinary Committee
  - Education Committee
  - CPD Committee
  - Finance Committee
  - Audit And Risk Committee
  - Service Conditions Committee
  - Tariffs Committee
- The Registrar, who acts as secretary to the Council, is appointed by the Council in accordance with Section 13(1) subject to the approval of the Minister.
- The office of the Registrar is responsible for the management, administration and execution of the Council's day-to-day operations and the implementation of SADTC's policies relative to its statutory roles and functions.
- SADTC's offices are at 954 Arcadia Street (corner Arcadia and Hill Streets), Arcadia, Pretoria.
- Funding for SADTC is generated primarily through annual registration fees paid by all registered persons of the dental technology profession and some dentists.
- The SADTC received an unqualified audit for the year ended 28 February 2014. Council is on a financially sound footing to acquire adequate assets, meet its financial obligations and deliver on its statutory mandate.

### **3.2 Disciplinary Matters and Accountability**

- The Council derives its disciplinary powers from Sections 35 - 43 of the Dental Technicians Act, Act 19 of 1979. All registered persons must subscribe to the regulations.
- The regulations lay down standards for professional conduct and practice which must be adhered to by registered persons. Failure to comply would lead to an investigation and could result in a disciplinary hearing.

- Members of the public and employers or clients may lodge formal complaints against registered persons in writing.
- The Council or the Disciplinary Committee may institute an inquiry into any complaint, charge or allegation of improper or disgraceful conduct against any person registered under this Act.
- The following penalties are applicable to a registered person who has been found guilty of any complaint, charge or allegation of improper or disgraceful conduct:
  - a caution or a reprimand or a reprimand and a caution; or
  - suspension for a specified period from practising or performing acts specially pertaining to his or her profession; or
  - removal of his or her name from the register; or
  - in the case of a student dental technician or a student dental technologist, extension of the prescribed period of education and training; or
  - a fine not exceeding R10 000.
- Upon finding the registered person guilty and a penalty imposed, such person must be afforded an opportunity to tender an explanation to the Council in extenuation of the conduct in question.

### 3.3 Data Management

SADTC maintains an extensive electronic database of its members, consisting of personal details, designations awarded and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. Registered persons log onto the website using their secret code to view their personal data and load their CPD points as required.

### 3.4 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- Any person registered under the provisions of Sections 20, 23(a) and 28 of the Act is required to comply with the conditions of the CPD regulations (Regulation R.37627 of 2014).
- The Continuing Education Units (CEUs) sometimes also referred to as CPD credits, can be accumulated by way of different educational or developmental activities accredited by the SADTC in any categories and sub-categories as determined by the CDP Committee, and reflected in document CPD-005.
- Some CPD activities are referred to as measurable meaning those that have a measurable outcome and include structured learning or a formal programme that is planned, recorded and presented by an accredited training institution, evaluated by an accredited assessor.
- Other CPD activities are non-measurable meaning they do not have clearly measurable outcomes and may include serving on council structures or doing advisory committee work related to dental technology, quality audits, special interest groups, programme reviewing, or attending formal national and international trade exhibitions, member of an appropriate accredited associations, etc.
- Dental Technicians and Dental Technologists are required to accumulate a prescribed number of CEUs. At this point no differentiation is made in the number of CEUs required from dental technicians and dental technologists in a cycle.
- In the event of a registered person not complying with the requirements specified in the regulations referred to above within the prescribed period of

time, the Council may impose any one or more of the following conditions, namely:

- grant the registered person deferment; and/or
  - require the registered person to follow a remedial programme of continuing education and training as specified by the Council; and/or
  - require the registered person to write an examination as determined by the Council; and/or
  - register the registered person in a category of registration which will provide for supervision regarded as appropriate by the Council; and/or
  - remove the name of the registered person from the relevant register.
- The Council established a CPD Accreditation Sub-committee who is tasked with the approval of all CPD activity applications and the assigning of CEUs based on the CPD document CPD-005 as approved by the Council from time to time. This structure reports directly to the CPD Committee.
  - Applicants of CPD activities may appeal to the CPD Committee if dissatisfied with a decision of the CPD Accreditation sub-committee in writing within 30 days (thirty days) after receiving such decision.

#### 4 PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

##### 4.1 Designation Awarding Process

- Applications from candidates to be awarded a designation are assessed by the Education Committee in terms of the set criteria for recommendation to the Council.
- Council considers the recommendation and makes a final decision in this regard.
- An ad hoc Specialist Registration Panel is appointed by the Council to consider applications from foreign professionals who wish to practice in South Africa. Candidates must have their foreign qualifications evaluated by SAQA as a first step in the application process.
- A designation certificate, bearing a unique registration number, is issued to successful applicants. An Appeals process is in place for unsuccessful applicants.

##### 4.2 Designations to be Registered

**Designation Title:** Designation Title: Dental Technician

<b>Underlying Qualification(s)</b>	National Diploma in Dental Technology at Level 6 (pre-2009 NQF)/Diploma in Dental Technology at Level 6 (post-2009 NQF)
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<b>Experiential Learning and Practical Experience</b>	An approved institution, in collaboration with its advisory committee, shall ensure that the proficiency acquired through practical laboratory exposure and other practical work, together with academic training, is sufficient for a candidate dental technician to be employed as a dental technician, once all formal education and training is completed. The approved institution provides a certificate of completion of professional studies to the council before full registration as intended in sec (18) of the Act can be considered.
<b>Board / Admission Examination / Assessment</b>	An admission (registration) examination may be set by SADTC or the summative practical assessment, as approved by Council and offered by an approved institution, must be passed before registration to practise professionally as a dental technician can be considered.
<b>Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Requirements</b>	A CPD cycle at present is two years starting in January and ending in December. The present cycle started in 2014 and will end in 2015, with 20 CEUs required in 2014 and 30 CEUs in 2015. At the end of the cycle all registered persons will be audited for compliance.
<b>Application of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</b>	All approved institutions allow applications for RPL. These are based on national norms and applicants can be granted recognition or part recognition of subjects which may lead towards a qualification. Full programme recognition will only be considered if that will lead to the pursuing of a higher qualification. Every University of Technology has an internal application and approval process in place which the Council subscribes to.
<b>Restriction/s</b>	The bearer of the Dental Technician designation may only work as an employee unless this designation was earned prior to the designator "dental technologist" as the latter was only introduced with the inclusion in the Act 19 of 1979. Professionals who were registered prior to this inclusion had the right to conduct and or supervise a dental laboratory. This right is protected in terms of the amended Act of 1997.

**Designation Title: Dental Technologist**

<b>Underlying Qualification(s)</b>	B. Tech in Dental Technology at Level 7 (pre-2009 NQF) [a new qualification type is being developed aligned to the HEQSF]
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<b>Experiential Learning and Practical Experience</b>	An approved institution, in collaboration with its advisory committee, shall ensure that the proficiency acquired through practical laboratory exposure and other practical work, together with academic training, is sufficient for a candidate dental technologist to be employed as a dental technologist, once all formal education and training is completed. The approved institution provides a certificate of completion of professional studies to the council before full registration as intended in sec (18) of the Act can be considered.
<b>Board / Admission Examination / Assessment</b>	An admission (registration) examination may be set by SADTC or the summative practical assessment, as approved by Council and offered by an approved institution, must be passed before registration to practise professionally as a dental technologist can be considered.
<b>Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Requirements</b>	A CPD cycle at present is two years starting in January and ending in December. The present cycle started in 2014 and will end in 2015, with 20 CEUs required in 2014 and 30 CEUs in 2015. At the end of the cycle all registered persons will be audited for compliance.
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<b>Restriction/s</b>	The bearer of this designation may work as an employee or own and/or supervise a dental laboratory.