

PROGRAMME ENDORSEMENT POLICY

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1. POLICY PURPOSE

Endorsements are a form of external recognition obtained from professional bodies, industry partners, or subject matter experts, which may be reflected in institutional marketing material. Regarding the endorsement of learning programmes, these organisations promote a learning programme by using their name and/or logo on the iQ Academy website next to the learning programme information.

iQ Academy is committed to building its brand name through the endorsement of our learning programmes by professional bodies or industry partnerships. This way, iQ provides potential students with peace of mind that the curricula of the programmes they are enrolling in are aligned with the knowledge, skills, and competencies the industry requires.

This policy aims to create a mutual understanding of what professional body endorsement is versus industry endorsement. In addition, the policy explains the benefits of programme endorsement for the student and sets out the process to follow when applying for endorsement and when endorsement has been received from a professional body or industry partner. Programme endorsement does not constitute accreditation, approval, or quality assurance by the Council on Higher Education or any statutory authority and does not replace institutional or external quality assurance processes.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to the endorsement of all learning programmes offered by iQ Academy and outlines the processes for obtaining, managing and maintaining endorsements from professional bodies, industry partners and subject matter experts.

3. TERMINOLOGY

The following terminology is defined:

- **Endorsement:** The formal recognition of a learning programme by a professional body, industry partner, or subject matter expert, signifying that the programme aligns with industry standards, knowledge, skills and competencies.
- **Professional Body:** An organisation registered with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) that governs and promotes a specific profession, sets standards for training and practice and supports professional development through activities such as Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- **Industry Endorsement:** Recognition of a learning programme by a relevant company or organisation confirms that the programme meets industry needs and standards for training and development.

4. PROFESSIONAL BODY

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) oversees professional body registration and professional designation registration. South Africa has two types of professional bodies: statutory and voluntary. The practice of various occupations in South Africa is governed by statutory bodies, which are constituted as a consequence of an Act of Parliament. The South African Nursing Council and the Health Professions Council of South Africa are examples of such organisations. Whereas voluntary bodies create an enabling environment for professional development in a discipline and grow the maturity of that discipline by contributing to its body of knowledge, relevance, governing principles, and accessibility to new and existing practitioners, they also create an enabling environment for professional development in a discipline and grow the maturity of that discipline by contributing to its body of knowledge, relevance, governing principles and accessibility to new and existing practitioners. On topics pertaining to the discipline, a professional body functions as the impartial, autonomous representative of its different stakeholders.

Their purpose is to:

- aid in the promotion and protection of the profession;
- develop, administer, and govern policies related to the profession;
- control professional practice;
- control professional registration of persons;
- set standards for the training of intended practitioners;
- encourage and facilitate continuing professional development (CPD); and
- encourage professional practice in the context of South African democracy, equity, and equality.

Membership

There are various levels of membership within professional bodies. The level of membership an applicant will qualify for is determined by their work experience in years and their highest level and type of qualification. Professional bodies also offer student membership.

Benefits to students/alumni are:

- Students/alumni from a professional body contribute to their personal and career growth.
- Students/alumni join a community of people who want to improve their professional lives.
- Students/alumni will have access to opportunities created by the professional body for members to network with each other and important people in their profession.
- Students/alumni will gain access to exclusive resources.
- If the student/alumni's industry is highly impacted by legislation, then the professional body will keep them updated on legislation changes that impact their work environment. This may include communication through a newsletter, workshops, and webinars.
- Students/alumni may be eligible to receive CPD points or hours, subject to the professional body's requirements.

CPD points

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a programme designed to encourage members of professional bodies to develop their academic and professional skills. The main purpose is, therefore,

to encourage members to engage in lifelong learning. The professional body will record and monitor each member's professional learning and development.

The professional body may recognise CPD achievements in points or hours. A member of the professional body may be required to obtain a certain number of CPD points or hours in a two—or three-year cycle. In the past, professionals had to travel to specific venues for training to collect their CPD points or hours. However, in recent years, professional bodies have allowed online CPD programmes. They have become a more popular choice for obvious reasons (i.e., cost and convenience).

What does it mean for students/alumni?

CPD points or hours benefit members of professional bodies in the following ways:

- Keep their knowledge of the discipline current and up to date
- They are more equipped to provide a better service to their consumers
- It upgrades their professional credentials
- It enhances their CV which can open favourable employment opportunities
- It can expose them to new business opportunities
- It demonstrates their professional standing and compliance with clients and employers
- It shows their commitment to their profession and career

What does it mean for iQ Academy students?

iQ Academy students are encouraged to join the professional body for their discipline. Should they register for an iQ Academy learning programme that their professional body has endorsed, they will receive CPD points or hours that contribute to their personal and career development. Being a member of a professional body will open up opportunities for iQ Academy students to grow in their careers and network in their profession.

Professional bodies can be located on the SAQA website: <https://www.saqa.org.za/recognition-of-professional-bodies>

Membership & Membership Renewal

Professional bodies endorse a specific curriculum which was presented to them. They allocate CPD points for the curriculum, and therefore, only students registered for this specific curriculum qualify to receive the CPD points as per the professional body certification. Students must complete the learning programme within the institution's registration period with the professional body (normally 12 months). iQ Academy commits to ensuring the membership is renewed annually to ensure that students who qualify for CPD points will receive them.

5. COMPANY/INDUSTRY ENDORSEMENT

Companies in the specific industry in which a learning programme falls will also be sourced by iQ Academy to endorse the learning programme. Obtaining industry endorsement for learning programmes will raise the institution's profile as a provider of relevant training and development

programmes, increasing opportunities for students and alumni. Such recognition shows stakeholders that iQ Academy adhered to high standards in developing our curriculum and that it is relevant to industry needs.

Benefits to students/alumni:

- Completing an endorsed learning programme will increase confidence that the programme is worthwhile and relevant to industry requirements.
- Students can be confident that an endorsed learning programme has been prepared at the appropriate level and is appropriate for the intended student profile.
- Course material and assessments are robust, secure and appropriate for the learning programme.

6. SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT ENDORSEMENT

If a subject matter expert (SME) was contracted to design and/or write the learning programme content, iQ Academy may request that they endorse it. In such a case, written consent must be received from the SME to indicate their willingness to endorse the programme.

7. APPLYING FOR ENDORSEMENT

The following steps should be followed when applying for programme endorsement:

- Professional Body
 - Visit the SAQA website. Search for a professional body that supports the discipline to which the programme is related.
 - If there is a professional body, then visit their website to learn more about endorsing provider learning programmes.
 - Contact the professional body to obtain application forms or more information regarding their endorsement process.
 - Complete relevant application documentation received from the professional body, and include the curriculum of the learning programme with the application.
 - Budget for payment of the annual registration fee and request a proforma invoice from the professional body for payment processing.
- Industry Partnership

In the case where there is no professional body for the discipline to which the learning programme belongs or if the professional body does not endorse provider programmes, then identify possible industry partners that may be willing to endorse the learning programme.

- Speak to the industry reviewers who reviewed the curriculum first to identify if their company will be interested in endorsing the learning programmes.
- Search for other possible companies with a good reputation that may be interested in endorsing the learning programme.
- Subject Matter Expert
If the learning programme was designed by an SME, iQ Academy may request the SME's endorsement.

In the Learning Programme Endorsement Matrix, record the professional bodies and companies that have been approached with the outcome of the discussions around endorsement. This information must be recorded in the matrix's 'Endorsement Application' sheet.

8. ENDORSEMENT RECEIVED

In the case where endorsement has been received, the following process should be followed:

- Professional Body
In the case of professional body endorsement, the information of the approved endorsement must be recorded in the Learning Programme Endorsement Matrix, under 'Approved Endorsements'.

All certificates bearing the logos of professional bodies must be stored in the Industry Endorsement folder on the Academic Programme Management (APM) site.

The course specification must be updated with the endorsement information.

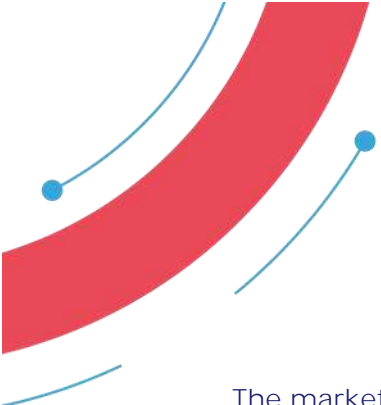
The marketing and enrolment teams must be notified about the endorsement. Marketing must receive the logo to place on the website.

In the case of professional body approval, the Registrar must ensure that the logo of the professional body is inserted on the iQ Academy Certificate for the learning programme that has been endorsed.

- Industry Endorsement
In the case of industry endorsement, the information of the approved endorsement must be recorded in the Learning Programme Endorsement Matrix, under 'Approved Endorsements'.

All logos and approval communication (e.g., emails) must be stored in the Industry Endorsement folder on the Academic Programme Management (APM) site.

The course specification must be updated with the endorsement information.

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The marketing and enrolment teams must be notified about the endorsement. Marketing must receive the logo to place on the website.

With industry endorsement, the company logo will not be printed on the iQ Academy Certificate for the learning programme that has been endorsed.

Annually all endorsements must be updated according to the recorded expiry date of the endorsement certificate.

9. LIMITATIONS OF ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement by a professional body, industry partner, or subject matter expert does not imply accreditation, regulatory approval, or recognition by the Council on Higher Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training, or SAQA. Endorsement relates solely to relevance or alignment as determined by the endorsing party.