CORPORATE COUNSEL

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Membership Policy

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1. GLOSSARY AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1. This document must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Counsel Association Memorandum of Incorporation, the Corporate Counsel Association Professional Designation Award Policy, the Corporate Counsel Association CPD Code and Guidelines and the Corporate Counsel Association Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

1.2. Unless otherwise stated, or the context indicates to the contrary, terms, words and expressions defined and used under the Corporate Counsel Association MOI and Code and used in this document shall have the same meanings and descriptions when used in this document as have been ascribed to them under the Corporate Counsel Association MOI and the Code.

1.3. **Board** – means the Board of directors of the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa NPC.

1.4. **Corporate Counsel Association** – means the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa NPC, a Company which was incorporated on 12 September 2019 as a Non-Profit Company as defined in the Companies Act, 2008 and which represents Corporate Counsel and the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa.

1.5. **Certified Corporate Counsel professional** – means a member of the Corporate Counsel Association who has undertaken the Corporate Counsel Association assessment process and has met the Corporate Counsel Association standards and requirements which have been set for the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa and who are permitted to refer to themselves as certified 'Corporate Legal Support Practitioner' or 'Corporate Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate Senior Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate General Counsel', as the case may be, and use the designations: 'Corporate Legal Support Practitioner' or 'Corporate Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate Senior Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate General Counsel', as the case may be.

1.6. **Client** – means the person, entity or employee who makes use of the expertise and skill of Corporate Counsel and/or a Legal Support Practitioner.

1.7. **Code** – means the Corporate Counsel Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct.

1.8. **Corporate Counsel** – means qualified legal practitioners who are employed by a Client or Employer for the purpose of providing that Client or Employer with a dedicated source of Legal Services and Advice in exchange for a salary or remuneration, and phrases and names such as "legal advisor", "general counsel", "in-house counsel" and "legal counsel" attract the same meaning.

1.9. **Corporate Counsel profession** – means the profession made up of Corporate Counsel and Legal Support Practitioners who are employed by a Client or Employer for the purposes of providing that Client or Employer with a dedicated source of Legal Services and Advice.

1.10. **CPD** - means continuous professional development, being the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of one's business and legal knowledge, experience, skills and the development of personal qualities helpful in the execution of one's legal professional duties, whereby a person makes a deliberate effort to ensure that his/her skills, knowledge and professional competence are kept current and in line with generally acceptable professional standards.

1.11. **CPD hours** – means 1 CPD point for every hour of CPD undertaken by the Member or certified Corporate Counsel professional.

1.12. **Employer** – means the person or entity who/which employs and makes use of the expertise and skill of Corporate Counsel and Legal Support Practitioners.

1.13. **Legal profession** – means the profession made up of persons holding specific legal skills, qualifications and expertise, including, without detracting from the generality thereof: Legal Support Practitioner, legally qualified legal practitioners, admitted legal practitioners, Corporate Counsel, state advocates, public prosecutors, magistrates, judges and/or legal advisors who provide Legal Services and Advice to the public and/or the private sector.

1.14. **Legal qualification –** means degrees of Baccalaureus Legum, Baccalaureus Procurationis or Baccalaureus Iuris from any University in South Africa or an international equivalent thereto.

1.15. **Legal Services and Advice** – means the services provided to a Client or Employer by Corporate Counsel and/or Legal Support Practitioners.

1.16. **Legal Support Practitioner** – means paralegals, risk managers, assistant company secretaries / company secretaries, compliance officers, internal audit, HR legal advisors, legal interns and legal secretaries and assistants who are employed by a Client or Employer for the purposes of providing that Client or Employer with a dedicated source of Legal Services and Advice.

1.17. **Member / Corporate Counsel Association Member** – means a registered member of the Corporate Counsel Association.

1.18. **MOI** – means the Memorandum of Incorporation of the Corporate Counsel Association.

1.19. **Professional designation** – means a title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person's expertise and/or right to practice in an occupational field.

1.20. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** – means the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.

1.21. **South African Qualifications Authority** ("**SAQA**") - means the Authority established by the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008).

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. The Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa is the SAQA-recognised professional body representing the Corporate Counsel profession across South Africa. This profession encompasses a wide range of roles including Corporate Counsel, paralegals, risk managers, company secretaries, compliance officers, internal auditors, HR legal advisors, legal interns, legal secretaries, and assistants, operating in both the public and private sectors.

2.2. The Corporate Counsel Association's vision is to elevate the standing and value of Corporate Counsel nationally and internationally and to be the association of choice for all Corporate Counsel professionals in South Africa.

2.3. The Corporate Counsel Association is committed to upholding the highest standards of legal and business integrity, ethics, and professionalism, which underpin the profession and are expected of all practitioners, including Corporate Counsel Association Members. Ethical and professional conduct is a cornerstone of the legal profession, requiring members to act with integrity, impartiality, and in full compliance with the law, free from conflicts of interest or undue influence.

2.4. To support this mission, the Corporate Counsel Association is dedicated to the continuous development and improvement of the profession through research, education, advocacy, recognition of prior learning, and professional upliftment. The Corporate Counsel Association ensures its Members are equipped with the necessary ethical foundations, legal knowledge, and practical skills to effectively meet their professional responsibilities. Prior learning and professional experience are formally recognised to enable members to apply their competencies in the workplace.

2.5. A comprehensive Code of Ethical Standards and Behavioural Guidelines, aligned with the Corporate Counsel Association's Memorandum of Incorporation (MoI), reinforces a culture of ethical conduct and accountability.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1. Overarching Purpose

The Corporate Counsel Association exists to promote the collective interests and professional value of Corporate Counsel and to highlight the diverse and evolving roles they fulfill. Its key goals include:

- Acting as the recognised voice and public representative of the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa.
- Providing leadership and support to in-house legal practitioners.
- Empowering members with resources, networking, and tools to enhance service to their organisations.
- Establishing, upholding, and developing common professional and ethical standards.
- Promoting proficiency, credibility, and professional recognition of Corporate Counsel in both public and private sectors.
- Regulating qualifications and standards for professional designation.
- Monitoring and responding to national and international trends in in-house legal services delivery.

3.2. Strategic Objectives

Aligned with its MoI, the Corporate Counsel Association pursues the following strategic objectives:

3.2.1. Establish a Unified National Framework

Develop a single, integrated national framework for qualifications, learning achievements, prior learnings, skills, and professional expertise within the Corporate Counsel profession.

3.2.2. Promote Access, Mobility, and Progression

Facilitate access to, mobility within, and progression through education, training, and career pathways, including the recognition and integration of workplace-based prior learning into formal qualifications.

3.2.3. Enhance Quality of Education and Training

Continuously improve the quality, relevance, and recognition of education and training for Corporate Counsel professionals.

3.2.4. Advance Transformation and Redress

Actively support the redress of historical inequities in education, training, and employment, with particular focus on previously disadvantaged groups.

3.2.5. **Support Personal and Economic Development**

Contribute to the holistic personal development of Corporate Counsel Association Members and foster the social and economic growth of the Corporate Counsel profession at large.

3.3. **Recognition and Development of the Profession**

The Corporate Counsel Association voluntarily undertakes responsibility for:

- Recognising and enhancing the credibility of the Corporate Counsel profession.
- Acknowledging and crediting prior workplace learning, irrespective of formal qualifications.
- Driving continuous professional development through a structured, progressive system integrating:
    - Legal-related educational outcomes;
    - Formal qualifications;
    - Workplace experience and learning;
    - Training curricula, workshops, informal courses, development programmes, on-the-job training, and best practice guidelines.

These initiatives are delivered collaboratively with select legal education and service providers and are rolled out nationally for the benefit of Corporate Counsel professionals, particularly Corporate Counsel Association Members.

3.4. **Professional Designation Framework**

The Corporate Counsel Association oversees four coordinated and integrated sub-frameworks, each corresponding to a specific professional designation or level within the Corporate Counsel profession. These frameworks include qualification standards, experiential criteria, assessment requirements, and development pathways, and are governed by the Corporate Counsel Association Board and Secretariat.

3.5. **Ethical, Social, and Global Commitments**

To strengthen public trust and professional accountability, the Corporate Counsel Association aims to:

- Promote public confidence through regulated recognition systems and thorough assessment procedures for professional designation.
- Encourage ethical conduct, professional responsibility, and social accountability within the profession.
- Ensure Members provide ethical, reliable legal services to organisations, communities, and individuals.

- Uphold standards protecting the public from substandard legal services and professional malpractice.
- Foster respect for the Corporate Counsel profession nationally and internationally.
- Encourage adoption of international best practices.
- Support the development of a national career guidance system for Corporate Counsel professionals.
- Facilitate legitimate access to profession-related data while safeguarding confidentiality and privacy.
- Promote Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a core professional obligation.

3.6. **Commitment to Transformation and Justice**

The Corporate Counsel Association embraces and promotes transformation within the legal sector, with commitments to:

- Diversity and inclusivity;
- Recognition of prior learning;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Broader social justice.

4. CORPORATE COUNSEL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

4.1. The Corporate Counsel Association Board shall, on application for membership in accordance with the rules, admit and enrol any person as a member of the organisation if it is satisfied that such person has met all the membership requirements as set out in this Membership Policy.

4.2. Upon registration of membership, Members shall be obliged to comply with the various the Corporate Counsel Association Codes and Policies issued from time to time, and which are available on the Corporate Counsel Association website.

4.3. Membership of the Corporate Counsel Association is on an annual basis and subscription fees are payable annually in advance.

4.4. Membership is renewed automatically at the beginning of each year.

5. MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

The Corporate Counsel Association has four membership categories, namely:

- ordinary members;
- associate members;
- honorary members; and
- corporate members.

6. ADMISSION AND QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

6.1. Ordinary membership

The Board shall, on application for ordinary membership in accordance with the rules, admit and enrol any person as an ordinary member of the Company if it is satisfied that such person:

6.1.1 is a fit and proper person to be so admitted;

6.1.2 is 21 (twenty-one) years of age or older;

6.1.3 is a South African citizen or is ordinarily resident in South Africa;

6.1.4 actively and bona fide practises as a Corporate Counsel; and

6.1.5 is or is entitled to be admitted to practise as an advocate or as an attorney in South Africa; or has satisfied all the requirements for the degrees of Baccalaureus Legum, Baccalaureus Procurationis or Baccalaureus Iuris of any university in South Africa, or any degree which, in the opinion of the Board, is equivalent thereto; or by virtue of his training and experience is, in the opinion of the Board, qualified to practise as a Corporate Counsel in South Africa.

6.2. Associate membership

The Board may, on application in accordance with the rules, admit and enrol any person as an associate member of the Company if it is satisfied that such person:

6.2.1 satisfies the requirements referred to in 6.1.1 and 6.1.2;

6.2.2 is ordinarily resident in South Africa or any other country that the Board in its discretion deems appropriate;

6.2.3 by virtue of his current or past employment has, in the opinion of the Board, a bona fide interest in the Company; and

6.2.4 by virtue of his membership will, in the opinion of the Board, contribute to the attainment of the objects of the Company;

6.2.5 provided that no person who qualifies for ordinary membership of the Company in terms of 6.1 shall be entitled to be admitted to associate membership.

6.3. **Honorary membership**

The Board may, by unanimous resolution of the members of the Board, elect as an honorary member of the Company any person who is not a member of the Company and who has made a significant contribution to the attainment of the objects of the Company.

6.4. **Corporate membership**

It shall be permissible to admit juristic persons ("entities") to corporate membership. Such admission shall only be permissible in the event that:

6.4.1 the entity or any of its subsidiaries employs ten or more Corporate Counsel;

6.4.2 the entity is, in the opinion of the Board, an organisation of sound reputation committed to ethical business practices.

7. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

7.1 **Ordinary members** shall:

7.1.1 enjoy the full and unrestricted rights which this Membership Policy and the Corporate Counsel Association MOI may confer, in particular:

7.1.1.1 the right of audience at any meeting of the Company;

7.1.1.2 the right to vote at any meeting of the Company, each of whom has an equal vote in any matter to be decided by the Members of the Company;

7.1.1.3 the right to be elected to any office for which this MOI provides;

7.1.2 be liable for the payment of any subscription, levy, fee or other charge prescribed by the Board.

7.2 **Associate members** shall:

7.2.1 enjoy the same rights as those to which ordinary members are entitled in terms of 7.1.1, with the exception of:

7.2.1.1 the right to vote;

7.2.1.2 the right to be elected to any office; and

7.2.1.3 the right to nominate persons to any office.

7.2.2 be liable for the payment of any subscription, levy, fee or other charge prescribed by the Board.

7.3 **Honorary members** shall:

7.3.1 enjoy the same rights as those to which ordinary members are entitled in terms of 7.1.1, with the exception of:

7.3.1.1 the right of audience at any meeting of the Company, save at the invitation or with the consent of the person presiding;

7.3.1.2 the right to vote;

7.3.1.3 the right to be elected to any office; and

7.3.1.4 the right to nominate persons to any office.

7.3.2 not be liable for the payment of any subscription, levy, fee or other charge.

7.4 **Corporate members** shall:

7.4.1 be entitled to enjoy their membership by way of representatives nominated by the corporate member concerned, which nominated representatives shall be required to meet the criteria for ordinary membership or associate membership of the Company, mutatis mutandis in terms of the Corporate Counsel Association MOI and this Membership Policy;

7.4.2 through their representatives enjoy:

7.4.2.1 the right to vote;

7.4.2.2 the right to be elected to any office; and

7.4.2.3 the right to nominate persons to any office,

7.4.3 provided that nothing in this 7.4 shall limit the rights of those representatives to enjoy personally the rights of ordinary membership set out in 7.1 or associate membership set out in 7.2 (as the case may be);

7.4.4 be liable for the payment of any subscription, levy, fee or other charge prescribed by the Board.

7.4.5 Without derogation from any specific provision of the Corporate Counsel Association MOI and/or of this Membership Policy, any representative of a corporate member shall be treated as a member in that category for which he qualifies in terms of 7.

8. LIABILITY OF MEMBERS

8.1 The Company holds its assets distinct from its members;

8.2 No member has any right, title, claim or interest in or to the assets of the Company by reason of its membership;

8.3 No member may directly or indirectly have any personal or private interest in the Company;

8.4 No member of the Company shall be liable in any way for the Company's debts or legal obligations;

8.5 No member of the Board or sub-committee, whether an office bearer or not, shall be liable for anything done or omitted to be done by him in carrying out his office or related directly or indirectly to that office, provided that nothing herein shall exclude any person from liability for his wilful or fraudulent act.

9. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

9.1 Membership shall terminate upon:

9.1.1 death;

9.1.2 resignation, disqualification or expulsion in accordance with the Corporate Counsel Association MoI, this Membership Policy, any other Corporate Counsel Association Policy or Guideline and/or the provisions of the Companies Act, 2008 (as amended);

9.1.3 should any subscription fee or other charge upon a member by the Company remain unpaid after the expiry of 2 (two) months from the date upon which such fee or other charge fell due, or from such extended date as the Board may, in its sole discretion, have allowed;

9.1.4 in the case of corporate membership, on the granting of any provisional or final order of winding-up of the entity or in the event that the Board, having regard to all the circumstances relating to the entity at any time, is of the opinion that the entity would not be entitled to admission to corporate membership upon a fresh application.

9.2 Notice of termination of membership must be in writing to the Corporate Counsel Association Secretariat.

10. PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION PROGRAM

10.1 The Corporate Counsel Association holds a formal recognition by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as the Professional Body that represents the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa. By virtue of this recognition, the Corporate Counsel Association offers four certified professional designations, namely:

- Corporate Legal Support Practitioner;
- Corporate Legal Counsel;
- Corporate Senior Legal Counsel; and
- Corporate General Counsel.

10.2 The application process and rules for awarding and revoking any of the Corporate Counsel Association's Professional Designations are set out in the Corporate Counsel Association Professional Designation Award Policy.

10.3 The Corporate Counsel Association's Professional Designations are voluntary and those members or non-members who have no Professional Designation are still entitled to practice as Corporate Counsel or Legal Support Practitioners.

10.4 No person who has not been awarded a Corporate Counsel Association certified Professional Designation by the Corporate Counsel Association may style themselves as such.

11. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

11.1 The Corporate Counsel Association is dedicated to the advancement of the Corporate Counsel profession through research, promotion, education, upliftment, guidance and strong relationships with the Legal profession in general. Following this, the Corporate Counsel Association has a related obligation to monitor and enforce standards that ensure the continuous development and maintenance of professional competence of its Members.

11.2 CPD is mandatory for all Corporate Counsel Association Members in line with the *Corporate Counsel Association CPD Code and Guidelines* which sets out the requirements for CPD which will apply to its Members.

11.3 Corporate Counsel Association Members are required to complete the minimum number of points of relevant CPD activities detailed below in a one-year period (1 January – 31 December), which may consist of a combination of verifiable and non-verifiable CPD activities as follows:

	Total points	Verifiable	Non-verifiable
Non-certified Corporate Counsel Association Members	5	3	2
Certified Corporate Counsel Professionals			
• Corporate Legal Support Practitioner	20	10	10
• Corporate Legal Counsel	20	10	10
• Corporate Senior Legal Counsel	15	10	5
• Corporate General Counsel	10	5	5

12. FORMS

Prospective members are required to complete a membership application form and submit that, together with copies of all qualifications and Identity Document to the Corporate Counsel Association Secretariat for processing.