



FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS 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 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 Corporate 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 Corporate 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. **Employer** – means the person or entity who/which employs and makes use of the expertise and skill of Corporate Counsel and Corporate Legal Support Practitioners.
- 1.11. **Legal profession** – means the profession made up of persons holding specific legal skills, qualifications and expertise, including, without detracting from the generality thereof: Corporate 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.
- 1.12. **Legal qualification** – means degrees of Baccalaureus Legum, Baccalaureus Procuratoris or Baccalaureus Iuris from any University in South Africa or an international equivalent thereto.
- 1.13. **Legal Services and Advice** – means the services provided to a Client or Employer by Corporate Counsel and/or Corporate Legal Support Practitioners.
- 1.14. **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.
- 1.15. **Member / Corporate Counsel Association Member** – means a registered member of the Corporate Counsel Association.
- 1.16. **MOI** – means the Memorandum of Incorporation of the Corporate Counsel Association.
- 1.17. **Prospective member** – means an applicant who is applying for Corporate Counsel Association membership.
- 1.18. **Qualification** – means a qualification or part qualification registered on the NQF.
- 1.19. **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 (Mol), 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 fulfil. 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. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This policy, therefore, establishes and sets out the Corporate Counsel Association policy for establishing the equivalence of qualifications obtained in other countries when dealing with the Corporate Counsel profession in general, considering Corporate Counsel Association membership applications received from persons holding international/foreign qualifications and/or when considering an application for accreditation from a person holding an international/foreign qualification.

5. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will apply to the Corporate Counsel Association and its members and its prospective members as well as to persons holding international/foreign qualifications, who wish to engage with the Corporate Counsel Association.

6. SUBMISSION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

- 6.1 The Corporate Counsel Association will deal with each application for Corporate Counsel Association membership / certified Corporate Counsel professional designation by a person who holds a foreign qualification (hereinafter referred to as “applicant”) on its own merits and in accordance with the SAQA Foreign Qualifications Procedures.
- 6.2 In this regard, the applicant referred to in paragraph 6.1 above must submit his/her Foreign Qualifications and related documents which have been verified by the Directorate - Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services for the South African Qualifications, including the following:
 - 6.2.1 Certified copies of the degree/s;
 - 6.2.2 Certified full transcript of the applicant’s results together with the curriculum that the applicant completed;
 - 6.2.3 Bona fide proof that the qualifications are accepted by the country that has granted the qualification as being a requirement enabling the applicant to operate in the Corporate Counsel profession and/or Legal Profession.
 - 6.2.4 Proof of registration as a Legal Professional in the country of origin;
 - 6.2.5 Certified translations of all documents if in a foreign language;
 - 6.2.6 A letter or equivalent from the Directorate - Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services for the South African Qualifications Authority attesting to the equivalence of the applicant’s qualification to relevant South African qualifications;
 - 6.2.7 The applicant’s record of experience as a Legal Professional, including the dates, a full list of Employers or Clients, a referee for each Employer or Client who can verify the applicant’s experience and a description of the range of Legal Services and Advice the applicant has provided as a Legal Professional;



- 6.2.8 Proof of competence in English;
- 6.2.9 Proof of relevant courses undertaken in South Africa by the applicant which relate to the range of legal services and advice which the applicant will provide in South Africa in his/her capacity as a Legal Professional.

7. CRITERIA FOR RECOGNISING A FOREIGN QUALIFICATION AS EQUIVALENT

- 7.1 The Corporate Counsel Association will review such application according to the following criteria:
 - 7.1.1 the qualification is genuine and was awarded to the applicant;
 - 7.1.2 the equivalence to South African qualifications as determined by the unit of SAQA responsible for this task;
 - 7.1.3 the qualification to which the legal system of the originating country is compatible with the legal system in South Africa;
 - 7.1.4 proof of relevant courses undertaken in South Africa by the applicant which relate to the range of legal services and advice which the applicant will provide in South Africa in his/her capacity as a Legal Professional.
 - 7.1.5 the ability of the applicant to provide the required legal services and advice to the client or employer.

8. THE EVALUATION PROCEDURE FOR FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

- 8.1 The applicant applies for Membership and/or certification in the usual way;
- 8.2 In the event of the application including a Foreign Qualification, the Corporate Counsel Association secretariat will inform the applicant of the process required to establish the equivalence of the qualification and the additional documentation that will be required, as laid down by the Directorate - Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services for the South African Qualifications Authority;
- 8.3 The applicant submits the letter or equivalent from the Directorate – Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services and the additional documents required to the Corporate Counsel Association Secretariat;
- 8.4 The Corporate Counsel Association Board appoints an ad-hoc committee/Membership Adjudication Committee to evaluate each application relating to a Foreign Qualification. The committee will consist of at least three persons. Persons may be selected from the Corporate Counsel Association Board or the Corporate Counsel Association's membership. Preference will be given to any such Member who has experience of or insight into the qualifications of the legal system where the applicant obtained his/her qualification;



- 8.5 The ad hoc committee/Membership Adjudication Committee evaluates the documents and makes a recommendation to the Corporate Counsel Association Board;
- 8.6 The Corporate Counsel Association secretariat thereafter informs the applicant of the Corporate Counsel Association Board's decision and if relevant, a copy of the Appeals procedure.

9. FORMS RELATED TO FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

- 9.1 The following forms may be used (not exclusive):
 - 9.1.1 Application for Corporate Counsel Association Membership and/or certification;
 - 9.1.2 Guidelines for submitting foreign qualifications.