



PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION AWARD 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's Memorandum of Incorporation and the Corporate Counsel Association's 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 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 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 assessment process and has met the Corporate Counsel Association's 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's 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. **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 Corporate 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: 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.
- 1.14. **Legal qualification** – means degrees of Baccalaureus Legum, Baccalaureus Procuratoris 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 Corporate 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 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. **Progression pathway** – means a hierarchy of two or more related qualifications and/or professional designations that allow for vertical progression within a profession.
- 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 (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 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. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- 4.1 This policy describes the Progression Pathway making up the Corporate Counsel profession, the Corporate Counsel Association's certified Professional Designations, the application procedure which has to be followed in order to be certified and allowed to use the Corporate Counsel Association certified professional designations.
- 4.2 This policy also sets out the rules for the award of such Professional Designations and for the revoking of such Professional Designations.

5. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will apply to the Corporate Counsel Association and its Members including those applying for certification by the Corporate Counsel Association for the right to use and apply the Corporate Counsel Association certified Professional Designations.

6. PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS WITHIN THE CORPORATE COUNSEL PROGRESSION PATHWAY

- 6.1 The Corporate Counsel Association will award four (4) specific Professional Designations along the Progression Pathway of the Corporate Counsel profession. These are as follows:
- 6.1.1 Corporate Legal Support Practitioner;
- 6.1.2 Corporate Legal Counsel ;
- 6.1.3 Corporate Senior Legal Counsel;
- 6.1.4 Corporate General Counsel.
- 6.2 The Corporate Counsel Association's certified Professional Designations are voluntary and those members or non-members who have no Professional Designation are still entitled to practice as Corporate Counsel or Corporate Legal Support Practitioners. In addition, it is not a requirement that a Corporate Counsel Association member applies for a Professional Designation in order to be a Corporate Counsel Association member.



7. RULES FOR AWARDING AND REVOKING THE PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

7.1 These Professional Designations may only be awarded to a Member who:

- 7.1.1 is in good standing;
- 7.1.2 makes a formal application to be assessed by his/her peers;
- 7.1.3 meets the criteria for the awarding of the relevant Professional Designation;
- 7.1.4 subscribes to the Corporate Counsel Association's Codes, Policies and Procedures;
- 7.1.5 has paid the prescribed certification application fee.

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

7.3 The award of the Professional Designation is for a period of twelve months. The re-award of the Professional Designation after the 12-month period is subject to the holder complying with the Corporate Counsel Association's requirements for Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

7.4 The Corporate Counsel Association may revoke the holder's Professional Designation if the holder is:

- 7.4.1 no longer a Corporate Counsel Association Member;
- 7.4.2 no longer a Corporate Counsel Association Member in good standing;
- 7.4.3 found to be in breach of the Corporate Counsel Association's Codes, Policies and Procedures;
- 7.4.4 no longer actively practices as a bona fide Corporate Counsel or Corporate Legal Support Practitioner.

8. DESIGNATION APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

8.1 The Corporate Counsel Association Member (applicant) applies for certification and the right to use the relevant Corporate Counsel Association certified Professional Designation by completing the relevant application form.

8.2 The Corporate Counsel Association Member (applicant) submits the application form to the Corporate Counsel Association Secretariat, along with the following supporting documentation:

- A current CV, including full details of qualifications, prior learning, employment history, workplace experience, and current role;
- A detailed job description with associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
- Confirmation of employment from employer, verifying the applicant's current position within the organization;



- A testimonial from the applicant's line manager or direct supervisor, commenting on applicant's professional performance;
 - A testimonial from a colleague or peer;
 - A certified copy of applicant's Identity Document;
 - Certified copies of applicant's qualifications;
 - Applicant's CPD records for the past two years.
- 8.3 Upon receipt of the above, the application and supporting documentation will be processed to determine if the applicant meets the criteria for the relevant professional designation.
- 8.4 Applicant is notified of the outcome of their application within two weeks of the Corporate Counsel Association Secretariat receiving the complete application and all supporting documents and, in this regard, will:
- 8.4.1 advise the applicant, where applicable, of the provisions of the appeal procedure;
 - 8.4.2 advise the applicant of the rules relating to the retention of the professional designation including the CPD requirements;
 - 8.4.3 advise the applicant of the rules for the use of the Corporate Counsel Association certified professional designation.

9. FORMS

- 9.1 Application for the award of a Corporate Counsel Association certified Professional Designation in terms of the Corporate Counsel Association Professional Designation Award Policy.