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Dear Members

### **IMPORTANT ADVISORY: VERIFYING THE ACCREDITATION STATUS OF POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN DENTISTRY**

SADA wishes to draw the attention of all members to an important matter concerning the accreditation status of postgraduate programmes being offered within the dental sector. It has come to SADA's attention that certain course providers are marketing their programmes using qualification descriptors - such as "diploma," "degree," or "certificate" - in a manner that may not accurately reflect the formal accreditation status of those programmes under South African law. SADA urges all members to exercise due diligence before enrolling in any postgraduate or advanced training course.

#### **Why This Matters**

In South Africa, the use of qualification descriptors such as "diploma" is governed by the Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, No. 67 of 2008, and related legislation. A qualification may only be formally designated as a diploma, degree, or higher certificate if it has been:

- Registered on the NQF by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- Accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) as the relevant Quality Council for higher education qualifications; and
- Offered by an institution duly registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

Programmes that do not meet these requirements, regardless of their clinical value or the expertise of those delivering them, are not formally recognised qualifications and cannot lawfully be described as such. Enrolling in a programme based on a misleading descriptor may have serious professional and financial consequences for members.

### **Potential Risks to Members**

Members who enrol in unaccredited programmes marketed under protected qualification descriptors may face the following risks:

- Non-recognition by the HPCSA: The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) may not recognise the qualification for the purposes of scope of practice, specialist registration, or professional advancement.
- Non-recognition by medical schemes: Qualifications not registered on the NQF may not be accepted by medical schemes when motivating for procedure tariffs or specialist billing codes.
- Reputational risk: Practitioners who reference unaccredited qualifications in marketing materials or patient communications may inadvertently mislead patients and could face complaints to the HPCSA or the Advertising Regulatory Board.
- Financial loss: Members may invest significant time and money in programmes whose credentials do not carry the professional weight or recognition they were led to expect.

### **What to Check Before You Enrol**

SADA encourages members to ask the following questions of any course provider before committing to a postgraduate or advanced training programme:

- Is the programme registered on the NQF? If so, what is its NQF level, and can the provider supply the SAQA qualification ID?
- Is the programme accredited by the CHE, or by another recognised Quality Council such as the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)?
- Is the institution offering the programme registered with the DHET as a private higher education institution, or affiliated with an accredited public university?
- If the programme is described as a “diploma,” “degree,” or “certificate,” can the provider demonstrate that these terms are used in accordance with the NQF Act and not merely as marketing descriptors?

Members are also encouraged to verify accreditation status independently by searching the SAQA qualifications database, available at [www.saqa.org.za](http://www.saqa.org.za) or by contacting the CHE directly at [www.che.ac.za](http://www.che.ac.za)

### **A Note on CPD Programmes**

SADA recognises that not all continuing education offerings are intended to confer formal qualifications, and that many valuable CPD programmes are offered legitimately outside of the formal NQF framework. Such programmes play an important role in the ongoing professional development of dental practitioners. The concern raised in this communiqué is specifically directed at programmes that use protected qualification descriptors without the requisite accreditation, thereby creating a misleading impression of formal recognition. Members should feel confident in participating in CPD activities that are accurately described and transparently presented.

### **SADA's Commitment to Members**

SADA is committed to protecting the professional interests of its members and to ensuring that the public can place their trust in the qualifications and credentials of South African dental practitioners. Where SADA becomes aware of course providers using qualification descriptors in a manner inconsistent with applicable legislation, we will engage those providers directly and, where necessary, refer the matter to the relevant regulatory authorities.

Members who are aware of, or have concerns about, a specific programme or provider are encouraged to contact SADA at [clinical@sada.co.za](mailto:clinical@sada.co.za) so that the matter may be investigated appropriately.

### **SADA WHATSAPP NUMBER**

SADA is excited to advise that we now have an official WhatsApp Number through which you can engage directly with our Teams. Please join us on WhatsApp using this number: +27 (0)61 853 7681. Stay connected and never miss an update—simply save the number, select the relevant Team you wish to engage with, and receive real-time updates directly on your phone.

### **HPCSA FEES 2026/27 AND CPD COMPLIANCE REMINDER**

Reminder, the HPCSA annual fees have been gazetted, and payments are valid until 31 March 2027 of the following year.

Payments can be made using the [HPCSA self-service portal](#) or via [direct deposit](#). In the latter case, remember to use your HPCSA registration number as a reference when making the deposit. This will allow the easy allocation of payments.

Payments from outside South Africa:

- Must include provision for bank charges and exchange rate.
- In the event of problems with the self-service portal, payments can be made via direct deposit into the HPCSA bank account.

It is the practitioner's responsibility to check their HPCSA statements for the correct fees payable.

Paid-up practitioners will be able to access proof of registration online.

Practitioners whose HPCSA registration cards appear blank can [click here](#) for guidance on how to remedy the problem.

Annual fees are different from registration fees, which are paid upon registration with the HPCSA.

### **CPD Compliance reminder**

Practitioners are reminded of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements in line with their ethical and professional responsibilities. This requires ongoing participation in CPD activities and regular review of compliance status through the HPCSA online portal to confirm that records are accurate and up to date.

Please note that although CPD compliance remains a practitioner's critical component for maintaining registration, this year it will not be mandatory when renewing annual registration. Further information regarding this matter will be communicated in due course.

Practitioners are still required to maintain their CPD compliance to ensure continuation of registration.

**How to log a service request**

The HPCSA self-service portal empowers registered practitioners to efficiently manage key aspects of their professional registration online. This includes applying for or renewing registration, changing registration categories, viewing and making payments, downloading certificates, and submitting applications to restore registration.

If you encounter any challenges or require assistance with registration-related matters, simply [log a service request directly through the portal for prompt support from our team.](#)



REMINDER EARLY BIRD FEE OFFERING ENDS 30 APRIL 2026 - ONLY 6 DAYS LEFT TO USE THE EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT



# DENTAL & ORAL HEALTH CONGRESS AND EXHIBITION

21 - 23 AUGUST 2026

CAPE TOWN CTICC

See you in  
Cape Town  
South Africa



**EARLY BIRD FEES AVAILABLE UNTIL**



SCAN TO REGISTER



For more Information



SADA +27 (0)11 484 5288

INFO@SADA.CO.ZA

WWW.SADACONGRESS.CO.ZA

Yours in Oral Health  
**KC Makhubele**  
Chief Executive Officer

23  
May

SADA Western Cape Branch - 23 May 2026 (WC070)

13 Jun	<b>SADA Mpumalanga Branch – Skukuza Mini Congress (MP023) - 13 -14 June 2026</b>
21 Aug	<b>2026 SADA Dental &amp; Oral Health Congress and Exhibition</b>
22 Aug	<b>SADA AWARDS &amp; GRADUAND GALA DINNER 22 August 2026</b>



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