




# ENSURING THE EXPERTISE TO GROW SOUTH AFRICA

## **Guideline to the Introduction of a new Specified Category**

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## DEFINITIONS

**Alternative Route:** Refers/applies to an applicant who does not have the accredited or recognised qualifications to become registered in a Professional Category but who proposes to meet the educational requirement through assessment.

**Assessor:** A professionally registered person who carries out the Experience Appraisal assessment.

**Competency Standard:** Statement of competency required for a defined purpose.

**Continuing Professional Development:** The systematic, accountable maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of work throughout an engineering practitioner's career.

**Engineering discipline:** A generally recognised major subdivision of engineering such as the traditional disciplines of Chemical, Civil or Electrical Engineering.

**Experience Appraisal:** A documentary assessment of the applicant's evidence of competence.

**Generic Baseline Competency:** The competence for a specified category defined in terms of outcomes, including the expected level of performance that can be demonstrated in a range of occupational and/or managerial contexts.

**Initial Professional Development:** Systematic participation in the activities typical of Continuing Professional Development but carried out prior to registration.

**Integrated Performance:** Demonstration of competence via an activity that requires several outcomes and specific requirements to be satisfactorily attained.


**Moderator:** A professionally registered person who carries out the moderation of the Experience Appraisal and Professional Review assessments.

**Practice Area:** A distinctive area of knowledge and expertise developed by an engineering practitioner via the path of education, training and experience followed.

**Prescribed standards:** The Competency Standards (outcomes) for the category and the discipline-specific requirements (if any) that must be satisfied by an applicant for registration.

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**Professional review:** An integrative assessment of the applicant's competence, including professional attributes specified in the standard and sub-discipline specific requirements for the category and the sub-discipline via a comprehensive review of the applicant's evidence and an interview.


**Reviewer:** A professionally registered person who carries out the Professional Review assessment.

**Standard:** In the educational context, see Qualification Standards in documents E-02-PN / E-02-PT / E-05-PT / E-06-PN/E / E-07-PN / E-08-PN / E-09-PGDip / E-09-PT/E-21-PN / E-22-P and in the registration context, see document Competency Standard R-02-STA-SC.

**Specified Category:** A category created for registered persons other than Professional and Candidate Engineers, Certificated Engineers, Engineering Technologists and Engineering Technicians who have specific training and experience pertaining to a specialised field that must be regulated. It is a category of registration created for persons who must be registered through the Engineering Profession Act, 46 of 2000 or a combination of the Engineering Profession Act, 46 of 2000 and external legislation as having specific competencies related to an identified need to protect the safety, health and interest of the environment in relation to engineering activity.

**Sub-discipline:** A generally recognised practice area or major subdivision within an engineering discipline, for example, Lifting Machinery Inspectors within Mechanical Engineering.


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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ECSA</b>	Engineering Council of South Africa
<b>EPA</b>	Engineering Profession Act, 46 of 2000
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>SC</b>	Specified Category
<b>VA</b>	Voluntary Association

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to guide ECSA in assessing the feasibility of creating new Specified Categories (SC) for registration. The methodology described in this document would also assist the steering committee or working group in conducting the feasibility study to ensure all the required information is provided.

This document, therefore, serves as a guide to the steering committees or working group to ensure the feasibility study does not lack substantially in content that may cause delays in the evaluation process. It also guides ECSA in the evaluation to provide all the critical research conducted and presented so that ECSA may make an informed, objective decision on the future of the proposed Specified Category.

## 2. EXISTING POLICY ON REGISTRATION FOR PRACTITIONERS IN SPECIFIED CATEGORIES

The registration policy for specified categories, as approved by Council and published has, under clause 5.3.5, provided the following criteria for establishing specified categories are:

### 2.1 Identified NEED


#### 2.1.1. The need to protect public safety, health and interest

Several elements provide the Public's Health and Safety; Council is required to protect Public Health and Safety related exclusively to engineering activities and problem-solving. Where the public interest is to be protected, and such protection is within the ambit of engineering, such may be provided for accordingly.

#### 2.1.2. The protection of the natural environment

As environmental assessments are a natural science endeavour for which professional registration is provided elsewhere, the protection of the natural environment shall only be within the sphere of engineering activities and require solving engineering problems.

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### **2.1.3. Promote the competent performance of practitioners in area**

Being a specifically defined area of engineering work, the policy is very explicit in that regard. There are a great number of specifically defined areas of engineering work

## **2.2 Identified Justification**

### **2.2.1. An existing legislative requirement**

Within the array of Acts of parliament and the regulations issued in terms of such Acts, the Council should identify and list requirements for engineering practitioners to be registered in terms of such legislation. This is by far the most pertinent justification to be considered by Council.

### **2.2.2. A need to ensure accountability among all practitioners in a specifically defined area of practice**

Where a need has arisen for an engineering practitioner to be accountable for their engineering judgement in executing work and no other framework exists within which such accountability may be expected, Council may consider this to be justification for creating a new SC.

### **2.2.3. A need identified for the regulation of the work and the behaviour of SC practitioners in an industry in the absence of specific legislation**

It is justified for Council to consider an SC where legislation does not require it but where such individuals perform engineering work that may affect nature.


## **3. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW SPECIFIED CATEGORY**

### **3.1. Feasible quantum required for registrations in a proposed SC**

Stakeholders to the proposed SC must be engaged through a public participation process to which ECSA is a party. The feasibility of the proposed category must be linked to the registration cost of an applicant as incurred by the Registration Business Unit and auxiliary service.

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The registration process as described in **R-03-PRO-SC** indicates the following process and numbers of peers involved in the various steps:

2. Experiential Assessment (4 assessors)
3. Experiential Assessment Moderation (1 moderator)
4. Professional Review (3 reviewers)
5. Professional Review Moderation (2 moderators).

The minimum pool of assessors, moderators and reviewers must be at least 10 peers from this process.

In the initial stages, peers may handle an application more than once, which does not comply with R-03-PRO-SC. Therefore, until sufficient practitioners are registered within the category and have been trained by the Registration Business Unit, practitioners registered in other categories that have the required in-depth understanding of the fundamentals and practices in the proposed category will be permitted to act.


It is therefore proposed that a minimum of 10 practitioners to be registered in a new specified category be identified prior to consideration of a new category.

### **3.2. Training and mentoring opportunities**

The SC Qualifications Standards for Higher Certificate in Engineering for Specified Categories: NQF Level 5 (**E-07-SC**), as revised by Council, covers the requirements the benchmark qualification for an SC requires. The specific institutions of higher learning presenting or working towards presenting an accredited Higher Certificate at NQF level 5 applicable to the new SC must be provided for consideration by Council.

The Registration Policy (**R-01-POL-SC**) allows for an alternative route to registering without the benchmark qualification. The Criteria and Processes for Recognition of Educational Qualifications for Specified Categories (**E-17-PRO-SC**), as revised by Council, provides for the recognition of prior learning of an applicant that does not have the benchmark qualification in Sections 4 and 5. Where the applicant has an equivalent qualification, the processes of Section 4 of E-17-PRO-SC will be

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applied, and where the applicant does not have an equivalent qualification, the processes of section 5 of E-17-PRO-SC will be applied.

The potential mentoring opportunities and work-integrated learning opportunities for candidates requires careful consideration. The pool of peers available to the Registration Business Unit will invariably be limited initially, with the prospect of expanding mentoring and work-integrated learning opportunities.

### **3.3. Initial Professional Development and Continuous Professional Development**


The provision of accredited professional development activities from recognised Voluntary Associations needs to be established to ensure the relevant and applicable skills development for the SC practitioner. Established Continuous Professional Development activities must be presented to Council for consideration when a new SC is proposed. The proposed SC must furthermore be linked to relevant Voluntary Associations that would serve the interests of the SC practitioners.

### **3.4. Distinction – SC and sub-discipline of engineering**

The EPA requires the registration of practitioners to execute engineering activities in line with the identification of engineering works. Practitioners conducting specifically defined engineering are required to be registered in a Specified Category or Professional Category, as applicable. Similarly, practitioners conducting well-defined, broadly defined or complex engineering are required to be registered in a Professional Category.

A sub-discipline of engineering where practitioners conduct well-defined, broadly defined, or complex engineering does not justify an SC unless required by legislation other than the EPA. Alternatively, should legislation other than the EPA require a practitioner to be registered for a specifically defined engineering activity, and such legislation does not accept ECSA's Professional Category registration to satisfy its requirements, Council may consider a new SC for such practitioners.

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#### 4. SUMMARY OF CONSIDERATIONS

The table below is a summary of the consideration process for the creation of a proposed Specified Category:

**Table 1: Summary of the consideration process for the creation of a proposed Specified Category**

<b>REGISTRATION POLICY FOR SPECIFIED CATEGORIES AS APPROVED BY COUNCIL</b>				
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1	Protection of the public safety, health and interests;			
2	Protection of the natural environment			
3	Promotion of competent performance in specifically defined areas of engineering work			
4	Existing legislative requirement or A need identified for regulation of the work and behaviour of SC Practitioners			
5	A need to ensure accountability			
6	Training and mentoring opportunities			
7	Professional development and continuous professional development			
			<b>Existing</b>	<b>Comment</b>
8	The number of registrations envisaged			
		<b>Comments</b>		
9	Concise explanation of why the proposed discipline is not accommodated in the professional registration disciplines already established			


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Draft A	1 April 2021	A complete report from the Research Business Unit	MB Mtshali
Draft B	4 April 2021	Customization to ECSA format and preparation for approval by RPSC	MB Mtshali
Rev. 0	12 April 2022	Consideration and approval	RPSC
Rev. 0	23 June 2022	Consideration and approval	Council

### Guideline to the Introduction of a new Specified Category

Revision 0, dated 12 April 2022, consisting of 12 pages, was reviewed for adequacy by the Business Unit Manager and approved by the Acting Executive: Research, Policy and Standards (**RPS**).



Business Unit Manager

2022/07/19

Date



Acting Executive: RPS

2022/07/20

Date

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