

# DEFINITIONS OF TERMS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL BODY CONTEXT

## DESKTOP RESEARCH

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### 1. Introduction and Context

The South African Qualifications Authority's (SAQA) Research Directorate received a request from the Directorate: Registration and Recognition (DRR) to explore various definitions of terms used within the professional body context. The request was based on discussions at the *Qualifications and Standards Committee* meeting(s). Desktop research was undertaken to explore this topic and includes a focus on the following terms: ***professional body, association, profession, professional, designation, occupation, expert, expertise, and membership of a professional body.***

This paper provides some insights which can contribute towards guiding and informing discussions about the definitions of various terms used within the professional body context. The following section provides some definitions of the abovementioned terms in the literature, including policies, reports, journals, books, and credible online sources, among others.

### 2. Definition of Terms for the Professional Body Context

#### 2.1. ***Professional Body***

The *Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation* developed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) defines a "professional body" as "any body of expert practitioners in an occupational field and includes an occupational body and statutory council" (Clause 5) (SAQA, 2018b).

A professional body, as defined by James Speight (2014), is typically a not-for-profit organisation (NPO) registered under the tax code, and whose objectives are to:

- advance a particular profession;
- advance the interests of individuals engaged in that profession; and
- advance or maintain public interest in the profession.

The term “professional body” is used interchangeably with a professional association, a professional organisation, or a professional society in the context of the United States (US) (Speight, 2014, p.59). The *Nutritionist Resource* also uses the term “professional body” interchangeably with “professional association” in the context of the United Kingdom (UK).

A professional body is “an organisation created to monitor and regulate the practice of industry professionals” (Nutritionist Resource, n.d.). Membership fees of a professional body “go towards upholding the body’s reputation, which in turn helps uphold the industry’s reputation. There are usually a number of different bodies set up independently for each profession, and these tend to have differing standards of practice and ethical codes” (Nutritionist Resource, n.d.).

According to Rajcoomar (2017), as cited in Chetty, Adaken, and Mansoor (2019, p.8), a professional body can also be described as:

A proclaimed authoritative and trustworthy conglomerate, claiming exclusive rights to a profession attempting to provide sustainable service to expectant members through standardisation, whilst also trying to meet demands from stakeholders in regulatory autonomies and public circles.

A function-based definition quoted by Chetty *et al.* (2019, p.8) is from the UK-based *Professional Associations Research Network* (PARN), which notes that professional bodies are:

Dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge and practice of professions through developing, supporting, regulating and promoting professional standards for technical and ethical competence.

The PARN definition, as elaborated by Green (2015, p.7), goes further to say that professional bodies “are all concerned with the public benefit as well as the reputation of professionals. They aim to maintain and develop professionalism and thereby securing high-quality professional services for society”.

Moreover, PARN divides professional bodies into three types: professional associations, regulatory bodies, and learned societies. However, some professional bodies combine these organisational functions while for others, the functions are undertaken by clearly differentiated organisations (Green, 2015, p.7).

Harvey, Mason, and Ward (1995) acknowledge that professionals are claimed to be altruistic, but it is the professional body that is entrusted with protecting the public interest in the absence of effective checks on the activities or practices of professionals. Harvey *et al.* (1995) cite Eraut and Cole’s (1993) definition of a professional body as fairly established, which is:

An organisation formally recognised by charter or statute as having jurisdiction over a profession or a section of a profession. Criteria for full membership comprise professional examinations and a minimum period of assessed professional practice.

Harvey *et al.* (1995) argue that this definition is problematic as several organisations that self-define as a professional body do not meet the three core criteria. The criteria include:

- recognition by charter or statute;
- membership dependent on passing professional examinations; and
- membership dependent on a period of assessed professional practice.

The solution for this, Harvey *et al.* (1995) suggest, is to *identify the key role of professional bodies* rather than delimit them to a specified set of characteristics. Essentially, professional bodies control the professions by:

- controlling entry into the profession;
- specifying ongoing requirements to the practice; and
- providing and enforcing a code of practice based on acceptable professional values.

Based on these, Harvey *et al.*'s (1995) working definition of a professional body is one that:

- specifies the requirements for entry to the professional body, including initial educational or professional qualifications;
- identifies requirements for continued membership, including continuing professional membership and work experience; and
- has a set of regulations or code of professional ethics to which members must adhere or risk the sanction of expulsion from the professional body.

There are two types of professional bodies. The first is that in which membership is *compulsory* for practice within the profession (such as solicitors or medical doctors). Secondly, those where membership serves as an advantage, but where it is possible to practice without being a member of a professional body (such as electrical engineers). Chetty *et al.* (2019) differentiate these as statutory and non-statutory professional bodies.

## **2.2. An Association**

As Speight (2014, p.59) alluded to above, the terms “professional body” and “professional association” have been used interchangeably. Chetty *et al.* (2019, p.10) note that, in defining a professional body, the term “professional” appears to be a common denominator, when used together with either the term “association”, “body”, “organisation”, or “society” – they have a similar connotation.

There are, however, distinctions between a professional body and an association worth noting. Arnesen and Associates (2016), as cited in Chetty *et al.* (2019, p.10),

offer a distinction between a professional body and a trade association in the context of South Africa as follows:

A professional body has the primary goal of ensuring a standard for the sector it represents. They can be statutory and non-statutory. That standard is a 'guarantee' of competence of the duly designated members of the professional body. A trade association is in the simplest of terms, a body set up to serve and protect its members. Trade associations are not established in terms of any overarching education legislation.

Harvey *et al.* (1995) also draw an essential delineation between a professional association and a professional body and note that the former does not have control over professions while the latter does. Professional associations do not provide professional qualifications and membership is not a prerequisite to practice. Membership is based only on subscription and occupational allegiance. A professional association is a community of practitioners who exchange ideas, information and practices and who act in mutual support of their *own interest*. They thus have characteristics similar to 'learned societies' such as the *Royal Economic Society*, which is "a professional association that promotes the interests of economists in academic life, government service, banking, industry and public affairs" in the UK.

The distinction between professional associations and professional bodies is, however, not always as clear-cut. This is especially the case where the professional body does not have close control vested through extensive statutory powers. It is, for example, debatable whether the *Royal College of Nursing* or the *Royal College of Midwives* are professional bodies or professional associations. Professional associations, for example, often have codes of conduct. Misconduct can lead to expulsion and membership is sometimes advantageous in terms of employment, and so on.

### 2.3. Profession

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a “profession” as a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification.<sup>1</sup> According to Harvey *et al.* (1995), the definition of “profession” takes two broad forms: explanatory and conceptual.

The explanatory definition identifies characteristics of professionals and derives a definition inductively, while the conceptual attempts to encapsulate the essence of a profession in the definition. The explanatory approach leads to all-encompassing, cumbersome definitions. For example, “professions are defined as non-manual full-time occupations, which presuppose a long, specialised, and tendentiously also scholarly training which imparts specific, generalisable and theoretical professional knowledge, often proven by examination”.

The conceptual approach to the definition of “profession” tends to be more concise; for example, defining a profession as socially idealised occupations organised as closed occupational communities. Such definitions are elegant in addressing complex issues with an element of simplicity. Furthermore, they allow room for individual interpretation and are more flexible. However, they can be criticised on the basis that “rather too much is left unsaid and too many questions are left begging” (Harvey *et al.*, 1995)

In the *Analytic Quality Glossary*, Harvey (2004) offers core, explanatory, and analytical definitions of concepts including ‘profession’, that are also worth noting. As a core definition, a profession is “a group of people in a learned occupation, the members of which agree to abide by specified rules of conduct when practising the profession” (Harvey, 2004). The explanatory definition suggests that “there are many professions, and they are controlled to varying degrees by professional, regulatory or governmental bodies” (Harvey, 2004). Professions such as medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, architecture, social work, nursing, and accountancy are cited as examples. Harvey

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of a “profession” by Oxford English Dictionary can be accessed at <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/profession>

(2004) further notes that most definitions of a profession identify “working for the public good” as among the defining characteristics of a profession.

The *Australian Council of Professions* (n.d.), which represents more than 20 professional associations/bodies and more than 420,000 professionals in Australia, defines a profession as:

A disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special[ised] knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others. It is inherent in the definition of a Profession that a code of ethics governs the activities of each Profession. Such codes require behaviour and practice beyond the personal moral obligations of an individual. They define and demand high standards of behaviour in respect to the services provided to the public and in dealing with professional colleagues. Further, these codes are enforced by the Profession and are acknowledged and accepted by the community.

Boone (2001), as cited in Harvey (2004), states that professions are based on scientific and philosophical facts acquired through scholarly endeavour. Individuals who enter a profession do so for reasons that distinguish them from other work or vocations. They understand that their work renders a unique public service with a scientific or philosophical basis and/or body of knowledge that requires an extended period of academic and hands-on preparation (Adeyemi & Fagbemi, 2011, p.148; Harvey, 2004). Professions are also based on specialised skills necessary for the professional to perform the public service. Southern Illinois University (2004) proposes that professions have the following common characteristics:

- associated with a profession is a great body of specialised knowledge;
- preparation for a profession includes training in applying that knowledge;
- the standards of a profession are maintained at a high level through the force of organisation or concerted opinion; and

- each member of a profession recognises his or her responsibilities to the public over and above responsibilities to clients or other members of the profession.

This proposal matches the views of Burbules and Densmore (1991) who, according to Harvey (2004), identify the characteristics of a profession as professional autonomy; a clearly defined, highly developed, specialised, and theoretical knowledge base; control of training, certification, and licensing of new entrants; self-governing and self-policing authority, especially with regard to professional ethics; and a commitment to public service.

Pratte and Rury (1991), as cited in Harvey (2004), focus more on status and remuneration in their list of the characteristics of a profession: remuneration, social status, autonomous or authoritative power, and service. The *UK Inter-professional Group* (UKIPG) defines a profession as “an occupation in which an individual uses an intellectual skill based on an established body of knowledge and practice to provide a specialised service in a defined area, exercising independent judgement in accordance with a code of ethics and in the public interest” (Harvey, 2004).

Adams (2010) notes that defining a profession is not an easy task. In the 1950s and 1960s, research tended to follow what Adams (2010, p.53) calls the “trait approach,” which provided a list of characteristics that distinguishes professions from other occupations. However, traits identified varied slightly across studies. For example, some scholars stressed work that required “a specialised technique supported by a body of theory,” the pursuit of careers supported by professional associations, and status supported by community recognition.

According to Adams (2010, p.53), “the most-used definition considered the key traits to be the presence of professional associations, advanced training and education, an esoteric knowledge base, a service orientation and a code of ethics”.

Definitions advanced beginning in the 1970s emphasised power. What distinguishes professions from other occupations was practitioners’ ability to control their occupation, their work, and the labour of those who worked with them. For others, cultural authority, and ability to shape the market for their services further distinguished

professions. Overall, it was professions' social influence and power in relationships with clients and other workers that distinguished them from other occupations.

Where did professionals get their power? Freidson (2001), as cited in Adams (2010, p.52), held the view that professions got their power from the state, but other researchers have contended that professions' organisation and social closure practices granted them autonomous sources of power. Research done from a "power" perspective revealed the historical processes that created professions in the US and the UK and provided a clearer and more dynamic view of professions, professional work, and professionals' relationships with clients, the public, and other workgroups. While the "power approach" has been very influential, it has not contributed a widely accepted, alternative definition of "professions". Typically, power approaches did not completely reject trait definitions and still tended to view professions as elite, organised occupations with specialised expertise and extensive training. Such approaches underlie the "de-professionalisation" literature where "power" is regarded as the key trait possessed by professions" (Adams, 2010, p.52).

Adams (2010, p.53) states that "although a growing body of research shows that the nature of professions varies across time, place, and field, the search for an overarching definition or ideal type has not abated".

Adams (2010) further notes that the most sophisticated recent contributions come from David Sciulli (2005, 2007) who, rather than provide a simple list of traits, seeks to identify overarching structural qualities that appear to differentiate professional occupations from other expert occupations across time and place. While other scholars see professional development as being linked with the rise of the modern state and the spread of capitalism, Sciulli (2005) identifies professional development as a far back as the mid-seventeenth century among Parisian painters and sculptors.

Professions, according to Sciulli, as cited in Adams (2010), can be distinguished by the following:

- the provision of expert services in structured situations to dependent clients;

- a commitment to advancing client and community well-being and ‘fiduciary responsibility for institutional design’;
- collegial organisation and advanced training and education; and
- provision of expert services consistent with prevailing standards of truth, and orientation of disinterest.

There may not be a definition of “profession” that works across time and place. Instead, researchers should explore how people in specific social-historical contexts “determine who is a professional and who is not, and how they ‘make’ or ‘accomplish’ professions by their activities”(Freidson cited in Adams, 2010, p.53).

The label or term “profession” is socially valued but its application is socially contested. “Freidson’s approach has been criticised for its failure to identify a clear set of characteristics that define professions. Nonetheless, his approach is useful in historical research that aims to understand how professions have been defined in specific social-historical contexts (Adams, 2010).

According to Adams (2010, p.54), combining the insights of Freidson (1983), Weber (1978), and others, we can see that while exactly what a profession is may vary across time and place, the definition of profession need not be free-floating. Professions are, in essence, organised occupational groups with a somewhat accepted claim to legal and/or social status.

Freidson (1986), as cited in McGaghie (1991, p.3), issued a reminder that historically, professions (in contrast with occupations) have been characterised by two broad features:

- acquisition and especially schooled application of an unusually esoteric and complex body of knowledge and skill; and
- an orientation toward serving the needs of the public, with particular emphasis on an ethical or altruistic approach toward clients.

## 2.4. Professional

A “professional” is a person engaged or qualified in a profession – professionals such as lawyers and surveyors (*Oxford English Dictionary*)<sup>2</sup>. Wikipedia expands on this to define a professional as “a member of a profession or any person who earns their living from a specified professional activity. The term also describes the standards of education and training that prepare members of the profession with the particular knowledge and skills necessary to perform their specific role within that profession”.<sup>3</sup>

The *Australian Council of Professions* (n.d.) states that, traditionally, a “professional” is someone who derives their income from their specific expertise or talent, as opposed to an untrained hobbyist or amateur. This meaning still carries through today to areas such as sport. However, in the professions, a “professional” has a broader meaning, typically around some moral or ethical foundation within the practice of a specific and usually established expertise – a professional is a member of a profession. Professionals are governed by codes of ethics and profess a commitment to competence, integrity and morality, altruism, and the promotion of the public good within their expert domain. Professionals are accountable to those they serve and to society (Australian Council of Professions, n.d.).

Lee (1995, p.48) uses the term “professional” to “denote occupations organised in institutional form, whose practitioners are committed explicitly to serve the public interest, and who offer client services related directly to an intellectually-based body of knowledge”. According to Lee (1995, p.48), professions emerged as institutionalised occupations in a Victorian (Era) Britain coping with economic and social changes such as population shifts, the industrialisation of commerce and trade, decline of the church and involvement of the state in matters of poverty, health and education.

Organised professions were the “means by which the middle class exercised cultural control and established their social status. The professional was perceived as an independent and knowledgeable practitioner with an explicit obligation to act in the public interest” (Lee, 1995, p.49).

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<sup>2</sup> Definition available online at <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/professional>

<sup>3</sup> The definition can be viewed at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional>

Hurd (1967) asked, “what kind of person must we be in order to be regarded as a worthy member of the profession” – a “professional”, in the context of extension/agricultural workers? In response to this question, Hurd lists a few qualities or characteristics of a professional worth mentioning:

- the real professional has a sense of history. The real professional has probably defined for himself, in line with the known objectives of his profession, a set of basic values he should seek to achieve in his work;
- the real professional recognises the relevance of the emerging patterns of relationships, which stress interdependence rather than independence, cooperation rather than isolation, and an increasing centralisation of the sources of action rather than the old pattern of a maze of autonomous units, each operating by itself;
- the professional has an understanding of the complexity of the world and knowledge, and consequently of the work he does;
- a professional is continuously at work on his own growth and development. He never stops studying. He seeks to develop within himself not only new knowledge but also new wisdom that comes from continuous study and reflection; and
- the professional must, through training and competence, be able to assist in guiding the layman in social planning.

### **2.5. Designation**

A “designation” is defined as “an official name, description, or title” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*<sup>4</sup>. According to the *Casualty Actuarial Society*, a professional body for actuaries based in the UK, the term designation means a reference to specific membership status within an organisation.

A professional designation is a “stamp of approval” that a person can earn from an organisation, demonstrating to employers and their clients that the person has

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<sup>4</sup> Definition of a designation can be found at <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/designation>

achieved a particular standard of excellence in their field of work (University of Toronto, 2015).

According to SAQA (2018a), a professional designation is 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.

In Canada, part of the professionalisation agenda was the establishment of “professional designation”. Through this, “professional bodies hope to ensure public recognition by adopting professional designation in the form of post-nominal letters, indicating earned qualifications and adherence to ethical standards” (Phelan, 2010, p.319). The professional designation allows the public, for example, to distinguish between the generic acts of instruction (teaching), carried out by the likes of piano, karate, bridge, golf and yoga teachers, and the more specialised form conducted by a certified professional.

Professional designations are, according to Phelan (2010, p.319), thought to serve as “public statements of earned qualification” and to “signify adherence to a code of ethical standards”. The use of the term “earned qualifications” is intended to indicate that the designee “holds a body of knowledge and skills unique to those who have completed the requirements demanded” by profession – in other words, he or she is considered a professional (Phelan, 2010, p.319).

## **2.6. Occupation**

An occupation is defined as “a person's regular work or profession; job or principal activity” by the *Collins Dictionary*<sup>5</sup>. Cruess, Johnston, and Cruess (2004, p.75) note that “knowledge-based occupations” such as law, the clergy, accounting, architecture and engineering have been termed *status professions*. In other words, the traditions and the laws relating to them are similar to those in medicine. Evetts (1999, p.119) writes that, in Anglo-American research, professions are usually interpreted as being a distinct category of (privileged) occupations.

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<sup>5</sup> This is a definition of “occupation” by the Collins Dictionary, which can be viewed at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/occupation>

Professor Wedekind writes, in the Chairperson's Lecture (2018),<sup>6</sup> that the term occupation comes from the Latin word *occupare* or *occupatio*, which is descriptively understood to mean "taking possession" or "to occupy". An occupation, Wedekind (2018, p.6) further notes, is "something that occupies your time, whether you like it or not, whether it is high status or low status". Wedekind (2018, p.6) referred to the foregoing as he defines the term "occupational", which is often used in "an educational and therapeutic sense, when forms of activity are used to remediate, punish or keep people busy or usefully occupied because they are not able to perform according to some predetermined norm due to a disability". This definition underpins occupational therapy in health sciences and psychology.

Apart from the health sciences definition, the *International Labour Organisation* (ILO, 2007, p.1) defines occupation as a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity. A person may be associated with an occupation through the main job currently held, a second job or a job previously held.

The *NQFpedia* (SAQA, 2018a, p.46) offers a similar definition of occupation, in the context of South Africa, as a set of jobs or occupational specialisations where the main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity (skill specialisation) and are grouped together on the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) as an occupation; occupations include trades and professions.

The *Technical Education and Skills Development Authority* (TESDA, 2010, p.16) in the Philippines also uses a somewhat similar definition of occupation: a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity.

The UNESCO *Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (2014) – a specialised international centre for technical and vocational education and training – has adopted the three definitions above by ILO, SAQA and TESDA for its use.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Entitled "Vocational versus occupational qualifications: Is there a difference, and does it does it make a difference?" delivered in 2018.

<sup>7</sup> The three definitions adopted by the UNESCO Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training can be seen at <https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=TVETipedia+Glossary+A-Z&id=336>

The Enterprises University of Pretoria (Pty) Ltd distinguishes a “job” from an “occupation”. It defines a job as “a set of tasks and duties to be carried out by an employee,” while it defines occupation as “a set of jobs whose main task and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity (skill specialisation) (2018, p.10).

The occupations in the OFO represent a category that encompasses a number of jobs, for example, the occupation “General Accountant” also covers the specialisation “Debt Manager”. An occupation descriptor always either indicates the unique service the occupation renders or the unique product the occupation produces in executing some or all of the related tasks in a specific context” (Enterprises University of Pretoria (Pty) Ltd, 2018, p.10).

## **2.7. Expert**

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines an “expert” as a person who is very knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area.<sup>8</sup> Garrett *et al.* (2009, p.93) also note that an expert “is widely considered to be someone having extensive knowledge or experience in an area”.

From a psychological point of view, Cianciolo *et al.* (2006, p.614) define an expert as “someone whose level of performance exceeds that of most others”. To study what an expert is, one needs to find out what characteristics distinguish these outstanding individuals from the “less” outstanding in some domain of activity (Cianciolo *et al.*, 2006, p.614).

According to Case, Harrison, and Roskell (2000, p.15), “studies have provided evidence to support the notion that performances differ from experts and novices”. They argue that there is no universally accepted definition of an expert and that there is disagreement in the literature as to how long it takes to reach “expert status”. Generally, an expert is seen as having extensive knowledge and skills, but these attributes can be elusive and difficult to measure.

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<sup>8</sup> Definition of an “expert” by Oxford English Dictionary online: <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/expert>

However, an expert, unlike a novice, “has an enormous background of experience, has an intuitive grasp of the situation and zeros in on the accurate region of the problem without wasteful consideration of a large range of unfruitful possible problem solutions” (Case *et al.*, 2000, p.15).

Grundmann (2017, p.26) draws a list of issues that define an expert:

- There is a fundamental difference between experts and non-experts;
- Experts are located in professions and science;
- Experts possess technical skills, including manual and intellectual skills;
- Experts are impartial which makes their advice trustworthy

## **2.8. Expertise**

Expertise is defined as “expert knowledge or skill in a particular subject, activity, or job” in the *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*.<sup>9</sup> Bourne, Kole, and Healy (2014, p.1) note that expertise is consensually defined as elite, peak or exceptionally high levels of performance on a particular task or within a given domain, and those who achieve this status are called *experts*.

According to Grundmann (2017, p.27), “the word expert has its root in the Latin verb *experiri*, to try. An *expertus* is someone who is experienced, has risked and endured something, is proven and tested”.

Garrett *et al.* (2009) note that “each discipline that has approached the study of expertise brings its own background and focus, which has led to a variety of definitions that are difficult to generalise across domains and disciplines. Within the field of psychology, the definition of ‘expertise’ has encompassed a range of ideas, such as the ‘extent and organisation of knowledge and special reasoning processes to development and intelligence’”. Cianciolo *et al.* (2006, p.614) refer to similar characteristics: general information-processing capabilities, such as strategising and problem-solving, and the nature, quantity and organisation of expert knowledge.

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<sup>9</sup> Oxford Learner’s Dictionary online:  
[https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/expertise?q=expertise](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/expertise?q=expertise)

Grundmann (2017, p.26) writes that “definitions of expertise usually revolve around the specialist craft or knowledge a person is said to possess”. A synonym often used for “expertise” is “specialist”, whose antonym is an amateur, layperson, or novice. With that in mind, “the characteristics of being a specialist apply to several roles in modern society, especially the professional and the scientist” (Grundmann, 2017, p.26).

Expertise, from a *relational* perspective, is delivered at the request of someone else who wants it. Expertise, therefore, relates to clients and their needs, which often is the need for guidance in decision-making. Experts mediate between the production of knowledge and its application, define and interpret situations, and set priorities for action. Importantly, “experts are primarily judged by clients, not necessarily by peers (professional or scientific); and they rely on trust by their clients” (Grundmann, 2017, p.27).

Taasoobshirazi and Carr (2008, p.151) write that “expertise is most often described as a collection of characteristics that discriminate experts and novices”. Moreover, “within their domain of practice, experts use more goal-directed strategies for solving problems, have greater knowledge, more organised knowledge, greater motivation, engage in more deliberate practice, tend to receive more social support, and are better monitors of their performance” (Taasoobshirazi & Carr, 2008, p.151).

Taasoobshirazi and Carr (2008, p.151) further write that “research examining expertise suggests that it takes approximately 5 to 10 years to develop expertise in a domain”. Novices, on the one hand, are typically defined as those who have only “rudimentary competence in the domain”. Experts, on the other hand, are defined as individuals with advanced degrees and years of practice within their domain of expertise.

Novices in the field of physics, for example, are “typically found in the literature to be high school or introductory-level college physics students whereas experts are typically found to be physicists, physics professors, or doctoral physics students” (Taasoobshirazi & Carr, 2008).

## **2.9. Membership of a Professional Body**

The *Higher Education Better Regulation Group* (HEBRG, 2011, p.8) states that “professional bodies interact with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in a number of ways, from low-level involvement such as offering student membership, to a very high level of involvement if the body is a statutory regulator with responsibility for setting standards and participating in quality assurance”.

An example of a low-level of involvement relates to Canada’s *Association of I.T. Professionals* (CIPS) that offers candidate membership, which “pertains to those individuals who successfully have completed a relevant education program, but have not yet accumulated the professional experience requirements”.<sup>10</sup> This suggests that membership of professional bodies has different categories. For example, the *Institute of Chartered I.T. Professionals* (ICITP) in South Africa, like other professional bodies, offers various types of membership: student member, associate member, member, professional, and fellow member.<sup>11</sup>

Membership, HEBRG further states, may be mandatory, for example, if there is a ‘licence to practice’ requirement in a specific profession. The authority of professional bodies might restrict the use of protected titles to registrants, and individuals may be removed from the register if their fitness to practice is found to be impaired or compromised.

Writing about “A Good Professional Society Activities”, Ponnusamy and Pandurangan (2014, p.16) state that “many professional bodies are involved in the development and monitoring of professional educational programs and the updating of skills, and thus, they perform professional certification to indicate that a person possesses qualifications in the subject area”.

They further note that, sometimes, membership in a professional body is synonymous with certification, though not always. Membership in a professional body, as a legal

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<sup>10</sup> A definition of Candidate membership of Canada’s Association of I.T. Professionals (CIPS) can be accessed at <http://www.cips.ca/candidate>

<sup>11</sup> ICITP, like other professional bodies, offers different types of membership with different requirements. See <http://www.icitp.org.za/membership/>

requirement, can in some professions form the primary formal basis for gaining entry to, and setting up practice within, the profession. Professional bodies also act as learned societies for academic disciplines underlying their profession (Ponnusamy & Pandurangan, 2014, p.16).

As highlighted in the definition of a professional body earlier in the paper, membership of a professional is typically granted or maintained on the satisfaction of:

- requirements for entry to the professional body, including initial educational or professional qualifications;
- requirements for continued membership, including CPD and work experience; and
- adherence to regulations or code of professional ethics, failure of which members risk the sanction of expulsion from the professional body (Harvey *et al.*, 1995).

Harvey *et al.* (1995) also speak to different categories of professional body membership: “Many professional bodies have different levels of membership ranging from some form of associate membership (including student membership) through ‘ordinary’ membership to some form of ‘higher-level’ membership, such as fellowships of the organisation”.

It is also important to note, as alluded to earlier in the paper, that there are two types of professional bodies: those for which membership is *compulsory* for practice within the profession and those where membership is *advantageous* but where it is possible to practice without being a member of the professional body (Harvey *et al.*, 1995).

In drawing a distinction between a “professional regulatory body” and a “professional association”, Balthazard (2018, p.2) speaks to what determines or defines membership. First, what distinguishes a professional regulatory body from a professional association is “intent”. As mentioned in the earlier sections on a professional body and an association, the former’s intent is to promote and protect the *public interest* while the latter intends to protect *member interests*.

According to Balthazard (2018, p.2), a professional regulatory body, on the one hand, will usually refer to “registration” instead of “membership” indicating there is careful consideration of who is allowed into the profession. A professional association, on the other hand, opens up for membership (often without stringent requirements) to maintain a large membership.

### **3. Conclusion**

This paper has set out to provide some insights into the definitions of various terms used within the professional body context. These insights may guide and inform discussions within SAQA about the meaning of such terms.

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