

SAIOH newsletter

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Hennie van der Westhuizen: SAIOH President
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As part of the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene's (SAIOH's) service to our members, we provide feedback below on the latest developments within the society. SAIOH exists due to, and for, its members and is reliant on them to continue to serve this noble profession, ethically. Therefore, we invite your inputs and feedback on any matters communicated in this newsletter.

Occupational hygiene and academia

In the spirit of growing its own timber, SAIOH recognises the sterling contributions by academic and training institutions that nurture the saplings that are in the process of becoming solid oaks in occupational hygiene – and in the community. Their input is instrumental in developing and honing the knowledge, skills, competence, and attitudes of future occupational hygienists. When comparing these attributes to the eight characteristics of professionalism described in Mind Tools,¹ one cannot but acknowledge the invaluable contributions of these tertiary institutions. The characteristics or attributes listed in Mind Tools are competence, knowledge, conscientiousness, integrity, respect, emotional intelligence, appropriateness, and confidence. It is not surprising how the Council on Higher Education's (CHE's) philosophy of knowledge and skills,² and the execution thereof by tertiary institutions, resonate in the attributes of a professional.

Several academic institutions offer formal tertiary courses in occupational hygiene. These courses are aimed at meeting the varying needs of contenders seeking a future in occupational hygiene. Prospective students may find more information about trainers and approved training providers on the SAIOH website.³ SAIOH has a designated forum – the Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF) – to which training institutions may apply for recognition of their courses. This is not a complicated process; the basic criterion is that the curriculum comprises at least 50% occupational hygiene content.

Although details of the academic institutions are available on the website, SAIOH wishes to strengthen the alliance between itself and these institutions by offering them an opportunity to share relevant information about their curricula in this newsletter. This will be done in a structured manner. Each newsletter will allow the opportunity for one SAIOH-approved institution to showcase its courses. This opportunity will be extended to institutions as and when their curricula are approved.

Reminder

From January 2023, all SAIOH-certified members will be required to provide proof that they have completed an acceptable occupational hygiene ethics training course. There will be a one-year phase-in period during 2022. During 2022, there will be further ethics training sessions organised in conjunction with the SAIOH branches, and again at the 2022 annual conference in Gauteng.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FEEDBACK

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Strategic plan

The current SAIOH strategy (five-year plan) is steered by Jaco Pieterse. The strategy is discussed, and progress thereof is evaluated, at each monthly SAIOH Management Board meeting, and at the quarterly Council meetings. Several objectives/targets have already been met. The next five-year strategy plan will be finalised at a special Management Board meeting in July 2022.

Ethics

As previously mentioned, SAIOH entered into an agreement with a well-known legal advisor to represent the Institute when required. The first task was to develop a memorandum of incorporation (Mol) to replace our current Constitution. SAIOH has already received the second draft of this important document. Our legal advisor's next task will be to review the SAIOH Ethics Policy and Procedure(s), thus enabling the Ethics Committee to start its work in earnest. The Ethics Plan forms an important part of the SAIOH strategy.

SAIOH branch activities

Virtual meetings and workshops present numerous opportunities to SAIOH members. All SAIOH members are automatically invited to attend any SAIOH branch meeting (or event), regardless of their branch affiliations. We encourage all our members to support their branches, and to participate in branch activities and earn continuing professional development (CPD) points. Members can submit topics for discussion to the various branch Chairs, for consideration for future webinars/meetings and/or workshops.

The Western Cape branch hosted its second face-to-face meeting on 10 June 2022, where Rinus Kriel gave an interesting presentation on autotoxins; 42 persons attended. The Gauteng branch(es) held a virtual meeting (their second meeting) on 24 June 2022. Sean Chester gave an excellent presentation on toxicology ('Human biology and target organs'); 53 persons attended. The KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) branch held their second meeting via Zoom, on 23 June 2022. Four KZN branch members presented on the new Hazardous Chemical Agent Regulations; 51 persons attended. The Botswana branch held a virtual meeting on 14 July 2022. There were two presentations, i.e. 'Mine ventilation during COVID-19'; and 'The effects on women working in open cast mines'.

With regard to online events by our stakeholders, the University of Pretoria (UP) held a public health webinar on *Total Worker Health – an integrated, holistic approach to worker safety, health, and well-being* (24 June 2022), and the International Commission

on Occupational Health: Scientific Committee on Mining Occupational Safety and Health (ICOH SC-MinOSH) hosted an international webinar on an *Update on Silicosis Detection and Relief – sharing experiences* (29 June 2022).

SAIOH would like to revive stagnant branches, starting with the Mpumalanga and Namibian branches. Members who would like to assist with, or contribute ideas towards, this initiative are requested to contact Moses Mokone (SAIOH Branch Co-ordinator) at Mokonemoses2@gmail.com.

IOHA and OHTA feedback

The Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) recently published its May 2022 *Global Link* newsletter. SAIOH e-mailed the link to all its members and posted it on the SAIOH website: www.saioh.co.za. It was also published in *Occupational Health Southern Africa*. Note that OHTA has a new website: www.ohtatraining.org.

SAIOH has a representative (Garth Hunter) on the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) Board and its National Accreditation Recognition Committee (NARC), providing the Professional Certification Committee (PCC) with valuable feedback from the IOHA and IOHA NARC meetings. The issue of ISO 17024 accreditation, as a requirement for any national occupational hygiene association to become a member of IOHA, was also discussed in detail at the IOHA and NARC meetings. The overwhelming majority of the IOHA and NARC national associations voted to align their quality management systems (QMS) to the ISO 17024 quality management system.

SAIOH Technical Committee feedback

The SAIOH Technical Committee is still busy with its research on welding fumes, i.e. the measurement and analysis thereof. We anticipate completing this procedure and finalising a SAIOH technical and position paper in the near future. The next position paper will be on heat stress equations.

SAIOH 2022 Annual Scientific Conference

The 2022 SAIOH Annual Scientific Conference is scheduled for 25–28 October 2022, in Gauteng. The Conference will be a hybrid event, i.e. face-to-face and via livestreaming, and will be hosted by the Gauteng branch(es). The Conference Organising Committee has met several times and, after careful evaluation of the shortlisted venues, entered into a contract with the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre. A subcommittee also met to develop the draft Conference programme. The theme will be centred around control (i.e. *Occupational hygiene: controlling the future*); a Conference banner has been designed and is in use.



New SAIOH website

SAIOH engaged website developers to overhaul the current website – specifically to allow integration with our current member management system (MySAIOH). The administration teams are progressing well with the implementation and population of the new website.

SAIOH has started the process to implement an online credit card payment system on an accredited international platform, like PayU, to make electronic payments easier for members. As soon as this is finalised, SAIOH will notify all members with a guideline on how to use it. Special thanks go to Kate Smart for driving this initiative.

Communications

SAIOH publishes its newsletter and President's address in two electronic media, namely *Occupational Health Southern Africa* (OHSA), and the *African Occupational Safety and Health* magazine (A-OS&H). These publications are issued every two months; the links are sent to all members via a Mailchimp and posted on our website. Three issues of these two publications have been sent to all SAIOH members this year.

SAIOH communicates daily with its stakeholders (e.g. the Department of Employment and Labour, Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC), Mine Ventilation Society of South Africa (MVS SA), Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA), South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM), South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN), Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), OH AIA Association, South African Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Saiosh), South African National Accreditation System (SANAS), National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOOSH), International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) and the IOHA NARC, OHTA, Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists (AIOH), British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS), American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH), University of Cape Town (UCT), etc.) i.e. via webinars, communicating important news, technical information, legislation changes, new standards, etc.

FROM THE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE (PCC)

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Certification assessments

A summary of results from the first quarter's assessments for 2022 is provided in Table 1.

The second round of PCC written assessments took place on 24 June 2022, again mostly online. A total of 63 candidates wrote the assessment. Results are pending:

- OH assistants: 29
- OH technologists: 15
- Occupational hygienists: 19

Table 1. Results for oral/final assessment (17 May 2022)

	Assessed	Passed	Failed	Pass rate
Certification category	n	n	n	%
OH assistant	59	53	6	89.8
OH technologist	20	14	6	70.0
Occupational hygienist	12	8	4	66.7
Total	91	75	25	82.4

A special PCC technical team is hard at work revising the PCC oral assessment format and questions, in line with the occupational hygiene self-assessment tool, ensuring not only that the growing field of occupational hygiene is covered, but also that the assessment format and tools continue to improve over time and are not subjective.

Occupational Hygiene Skills Forum (OHSF)

The SAIOH OHSF was initiated to co-ordinate all aspects related to the recognition of occupational hygiene training materials (e.g. the AIHA Basic Industrial Hygiene Course at the registered occupational hygiene assistant (ROHA) level, OH training providers and institutions, and the development and management of assessment and examination systems, where required. Another function of the OHSF is to evaluate applications from tertiary institutions for recognition of their occupational hygiene-related qualifications. The OHSF is progressing well with this.

North-West University's and the Tshwane University of Technology's four-year bachelor's degrees were recognised by the OHSF as

meeting the criteria at the registered occupational hygienist (ROH) level. The OHSF is currently evaluating the University of the Witwatersrand's and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's programmes.

All tertiary institutions that offer OH qualifications are encouraged to contact the PCC administrator for information regarding application for recognition (lee@saioh.co.za).

Details of recognised training providers and recognised qualifications will be posted on the SAIOH website (www.saioh.co.za). This will make it easier for potential students and certification candidates to select suitable occupational hygiene training programmes that meet SAIOH and international requirements.

REFERENCES

1. Mind Tools. Professionalism; undated. Available from: <https://www.mind-tools.com/pages/article/professionalism.htm#:~:text=The%20eight%20core%20characteristics%20of,wherever%20you%20find%20yourself%20working> (accessed 28 Jun 2022).
2. Council on Higher Education. Framework for Qualification Standards in Higher Education. Brummeria: CHE; 2013. Available from: https://nr-online-1.che.ac.za/html_documents/2.Framework%20Qualification%20Standards%20Development_2015.pdf (accessed 28 Jun 2022).
3. The Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene. Courses and training; 2022. Available from: https://www.saioh.co.za/page/OH_Training (accessed 28 Jun 2022).