



# ergonomics

## SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

ESSA NEWSLETTER: ESSA & PAB UPDATES

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**The Ergonomics Society of South Africa (ESSA)**



**Ergonomics Society of South Africa**



**@ErgonomicsSA**

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear ESSA Community

As the globe and South Africa continue to grapple with flare-ups of COVID-19 and we try to find some degree of normalcy amidst what's been a very disrupted year, I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well.

This letter serves a few purposes. Firstly, it's my privilege to introduce the new ESSA council, who were elected at the recent AGM held towards the end of October. Sma Ngcamu-Tukulula assumes the role of Vice-President of the society, while Andrew Todd, Andrew Thatcher, Jessica Hutchings, Josie King, Elizabeth Bassey-Duke and Lesedi Milanzi constitute the rest of the council.

The council will meet in the next week to finalise the allocation of portfolios and our strategic objectives as a group, which we will update the society about in due course. To the previous council members, Sethunya Matsie, Sally Claasen, David Goble, Claire Deacon, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to you all for your service to the society during your tenure. To Jessica Hutchings, the outgoing president, who has served on the council for nearly a decade, thank you for your mentorship, leadership, support and for your service to ESSA. I know that your institutional knowledge will be key in taking ESSA forward.

Secondly, the PAB recently held their AGM to elect a new board. I wish to congratulate Andrew Thatcher on his election as the chair of the PAB - I look forward to working with him in this capacity. With the changing of the 'guard', I also wish to acknowledge and thank Swantje Zschernack and Jan Ryno Smith, both of whom served on the PAB for six years. Your time, effort and expertise in this role are sincerely appreciated. Andrew offers more insights into the new structure and activities of the PAB in this contribution of the newsletter.

Thirdly, as 2020 rapidly draws to a close, one cannot help but reflect on what a year it has been and how much has changed in the way we live, work and interact.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT (cont)

The 'new normal' has forced us to adapt and work in ways that we'd never thought we'd have to (or want to for that matter). While the personal interaction we are used to is and may remain different for now, it has become evident that the use of various technologies has enabled us to continue to move forward, and in some ways, become more efficient. However, in some ways, this has also upset and blurred the lines between our personal and our professional lives, which, for some, has created an imbalance between the demands of work and our need for rest and recuperation. Unfortunately, the pandemic and associated lockdowns have also left many with questions about their future in the world of work, with a need to reinvent or reimagine what and who they are. As we go into the December break, hopeful of the prospect of a COVID-19 vaccine and a very different and hopefully better start to 2021, I hope that you all have the opportunity to find the balance again, whatever that means for you.

Stay safe,

Jono

## PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS BOARD UPDATE

The triannual meeting of professional ergonomists took place on Thursday 26 November where an incoming Professional Affairs Board (PAB) was elected. Congratulations to my colleagues Miriam Mattison, Sarah Bannatyne, and Megan Sunshine for their election to the Professional Affairs Board and thank you for your commitment to upholding professional standards for ergonomics in South Africa.

The following portfolio positions have been decided amongst the PAB members:

- PAB Chair: Andrew Thatcher
- Treasurer/Secretary: Sarah Bannatyne
- CPD portfolio: Miriam Mattison
- Recertification Project: Megan Sunshine

I would also like to thank outgoing Chair Swantje Zschernack and Board member Jan Ryno Smith for their six years of service on the PAB. They were both there from the initiation of the PAB and helped develop the constitution and the assessment processes, giving the incoming PAB a solid base from which to work.

### WHAT DOES THE PAB DO?

1. We consider applications for four different certification categories:
  - I. Certified Ergonomics Associate (an Honours equivalent qualification with at least 360 hours of education in ergonomics and two years of professional practice)
  - II. Certified Ergonomics Associate in-training (the same educational requirements but is still working on their two years of professional practice)
  - III. Certified Professional Ergonomist (a Masters' equivalent qualification with at least 660 hours of education in ergonomics and four years of professional practice)
  - IV. Certified Professional Ergonomist in-training (the same educational requirements but is still working on their four years of professional practice)

### WHAT DOES THE PAB DO?

2. We monitor Continuing Professional Development requirements of professional ergonomists to ensure that they always try and keep up with new and emerging developments in the profession.
3. Uphold professional standards and investigate alleged transgressions of professional practice through holding formal professional disciplinary hearings where necessary.

In short the PAB is responsible for facilitating high quality ergonomics practice in South Africa.

### WHY SHOULD I BECOME CERTIFIED?

Becoming certified means that you understand and agree to behave according to the professional code of good practice for ergonomics which includes having a solid knowledge of ergonomics theory and practice and you agree to take all means necessary to assure the wellbeing of the recipients of your services. In essence, you may only use the titles of Certified Ergonomics Associate and Certified Professional Ergonomist if you have been certified by the PAB. This may give you an advantage over other practitioners in the ergonomics space (of which there are many) in South Africa because you have the backing and recognition of the PAB. At this stage there are no legal protections to certification, but this may change once we receive SAQA accreditation.

### HOW DO I APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION?

Applications start by looking at the materials available on the ESSA website (<https://ergonomicssa.com/pab-certification/>). Here you will find all the necessary documentation to apply, including the application forms. It is not necessary that your degree was specifically in ergonomics, but it is required that you have covered all the relevant ergonomics theoretical areas for your certification level, either in a degree or in short courses. If your degree/s or short course/s are from overseas you will need SAQA accreditation for these courses. Check with the PAB if you are not sure. The most difficult area to demonstrate competence is in your portfolio of work experience. You are required to submit at least one large work sample (where you have spent more than 300 hours working on an ergonomics project and one small work sample of shorter duration). In your work sample you must clearly demonstrate what you have done (especially if there are multiple contributors to a project) and you must demonstrate the following competencies through your work:

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| 1. Investigates and analyses the demands for ergonomics design to ensure appropriate interaction between work, product and environment, and human needs, capabilities and limitations. |
| 2. Analyses and interprets findings of ergonomics investigations.  |
| 3. Documents ergonomics findings appropriately.  |
| 4. Determines the compatibility of human capabilities with planned or existing demands.  |
| 5. Develops a plan for ergonomics design or intervention.  |
| 6. Makes appropriate recommendations for ergonomics changes.   |
| 7. Implements recommendations to improve human performance, health and well-being.   |
| 8. Evaluates outcomes of implementing ergonomics recommendations.  |
| 9. Demonstrates professional behaviour and does not work outside his/her area of competence.   |

If in doubt, you can include more than two work samples. You should clearly mark where you think you have met these competencies in your work sample. If you have any questions you can always email the PAB at: [ergonomicssa.pab@gmail.com](mailto:ergonomicssa.pab@gmail.com)

By: Andrew Thatcher