

FACT SHEET



BOARD EXAMINATIONS:
A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD
FOR HR PROFESSIONALISATION

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management has evolved over the years to be considered now as a fundamental, strategic and value-adding function of an organisation. Moreover, practitioners lead by example in creating an ethical work environment. Sound HR practices based on the values of the profession reflect business integrity and support line managers who can become competent leaders.

The SA Board for People Practices (SABPP), as a professional and quality assurance body for HR profession, has taken a stance during the past three decades to ensure that the profession grows from all angles, creating practice standards that form good governance, promoting ethical values and initiating HR Audits for organisations. This SABPP approach has been designed to provide support to HR Directors and the HR community in general with the intention to ensure holistic professionalisation of HR management.

As stated in one of SABPP publications “The Human Resource practitioner transforms, sources, trains, retains talent and ensures harmonious work relationships. It is for this reason that the HR Practitioner is required to be a professional. The SABPP’s objective is to ensure that HR becomes an increasingly recognised and respected profession”. SABPP to this day has pursued its mandate to ensure continuous professionalisation of HR.

One of the core functions of the SABPP since inception has been to register practitioners at the various levels of the professional ladder, from HR Technician to Master HR Professional. The basis for registration has been a formal tertiary qualification in HR Management plus relevant experience in the profession. However, in this everchanging competitive world, it is vital to ensure that the profession is still relevant to changing market needs and that HR graduates are on par with not only technological changes but also social, economic and political developments.

For the HR profession to take its rightful place alongside the traditionally established professions such as health professions, law, engineering and similar disciplines, entry to the profession needs to become more rigorously scrutinized to ensure that new entrants meet the required standard and advancement to the higher levels of the profession must also become more rigorous.

For this reason, the SABPP will shortly be introducing Board examinations as a requirement for registration with two different levels. More details are in the November 2018 HR Voice. As an introduction to the idea of Board examinations, this Fact Sheet will examine the concept of Board examinations, how they are applied in other professions and how the examinations will contribute to improving the professionalisation of HR.



DEFINITION OF BOARD EXAMINATION

Board examinations are defined (<http://www.macmillandictionary.com>) as a set of tests you take to be allowed to work in a particular area, for example, as a doctor, nurse etc.

Furthermore, the Health Professions Council of SA defines a Board examination as a method of assessing the standard and/or the skills and knowledge level achieved by a candidate in a discipline and/or profession.

DESIGNATED PROFESSIONS WITH BOARD EXAMINATIONS (SOUTH AFRICA)

South Africa has many recognised professional bodies. In ensuring good governance, accountability and ethical conduct by designated members, board examinations in many of these professional bodies form part of the procedure for individuals to be endorsed as professionals. Some examples of such professional bodies are listed below:

LSSA (THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA)

The Law Society of South Africa requires that before a person is admitted as an attorney, he or she must be regarded as fit and proper. "The requirements for attorneys in South Africa are currently prescribed by the Attorney's Act of 1979 and the rules promulgated in terms of the Act. These are an academic qualification, service under articles of clerkship or service contract, compulsory legal training and personal fitness. All these must be complied with before a candidate can be admitted as an attorney. **Further, all persons wishing to enter the profession must pass the attorney's admission examinations.** (<http://www.lssa.org>) **(boldface mine)**

MARKETING PROFESSIONALS

The Marketing Association of South Africa, like the SABPP, offers registration at approved levels for professional recognition. (The Marketing Association of South Africa- MASA: <http://www.marketingsa.co.za>). On their level of Chartered Marketer, a member goes through the **preparatory workshop and a board examination.** **(boldface mine)**

THE HPCSA (Health Professions Council of South Africa)

The Health Professions Council of South Africa is another professional body and has statutory status. This means that a person may not practice in the 12 health professions unless he or she is registered. The HPCSA's mandate is carried through by determining **standards of professional education and training (boldface mine)** and through a set and maintenance of standards of ethical and professional conduct(<http://www.hpcsa.co.za>). The Council endeavours to attain its objectives and to determine if the practitioner possesses adequate knowledge, skills and competencies to practice as a professional through the National Board Examinations.

SAICA (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants)

SAICA is another professional body that governs Chartered accountants. Entry to the profession is through recognized qualifications, an on-the-job supervised training programme and an Assessment of Professional Competency (Board examination) (<http://www.saica.co.za>).

The Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA) is separate to SAICA and controls the registration of qualified public auditors. A new model recently adopted by IRBA requires qualified CA's to undertake a specialized training programme for 18 to 30 months after which a Portfolio of Evidence will be assessed.



DESIGNATED PROFESSIONS WITH BOARD EXAMINATIONS (INTERNATIONAL)

Board examinations are not only undertaken in South Africa, but in most other countries of the world. The UK's Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is a leading example of an HR professional body. Members are classified into different designations, as with other professional bodies, and the members go through extensive assessments to be deemed as professionals. They are benchmarked in accordance with the professional standards. In addition to setting its own entry examinations, the CIPD has raised the bar for Chartered Professionals, which is recognised as a designation with high skills and competence level. As explained by CIPD, "A Chartered professional is a person who has gained a specific level of skill or competence in a particular field of work, which has been recognised by the award of a formal credential by a relevant professional organization. Chartered status is considered a mark of professional competency, and is awarded mainly by chartered professional bodies and learned societies. Common in Britain, it is also used in Ireland, the United States and the Commonwealth, and has been adopted by organizations around the world." CIPD members have to undergo an in-depth Experience Assessment before they can be awarded the Chartered Professional status.

THE IMPACT OF BOARD EXAMINATIONS ON PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS

The HR profession must be an example of good governance and ethical leadership. By introducing board examinations, a degree of competence level, skills and high level of knowledge will be assured. Qualifications and work experience alone cannot be a demonstration and maintenance of high competence levels. The examinations will be a door keeper to ensure optimal professional competency.

With HR Management Standards in place enabling HR executives to demonstrate good governance within their function, the Board examinations will enable HR executives to staff their function with competent professionals, as the examinations are based on the knowledge and abilities that are required within the HR profession. In essence, the person who succeeds at the board examination becomes the pride of the profession in that they can demonstrate a degree of skills, knowledge and a sense of professional responsibility to practice within the discipline; they have shown that they can continuously integrate professional skills with deeper knowledge.

THE BENEFITS OF BOARD EXAMINATIONS

Benefits of being a member in a professional body

It is significant to join a professional body especially in human resource. Irrespective of whether you are a student, graduate, seasoned HR professional, it is necessary to join a professional body that will provide credibility, depth and breadth of all HR resources that HR professionals need. This will allow you to be able to associate yourself with a wide variety of latest trends in HR which qualify your organisation to make critical decisions affecting organisation's profit margin and the most important asset, people.

The following are a range of benefits of joining a professional body:

• Earn Professional Recognition

In most cases organisations recognise HR professionals, and SABPP as the professional body is also recognised by the business leaders. Being a member of the professional body demonstrates commitment to the HR profession and enables you to continue with professional development. SABPP is dedicated to serving human resource professionals at all levels and functions and serves as an important resource for organisations and academic institutions that work close with HR and handle strategic issues. Additionally, being a member of the professional body means that you are truly recognised as a qualified professional in the field of Human Resource Management. Achieving professional membership demonstrates to employers, clients and peers that you meet the rigorous requirements and professional standards for good practice in the HR profession. This enables members to be marketable in the world of work since talent requisition specialists normally target people that are recognised by professional bodies.

• Continuous professional development

Just like all the professional bodies, SABPP conducts training sessions from time to time with the aim of continuous professional development at discounted rates to their members. This is a very good benefit to enjoy such professional development and being abreast with the changes within the field of Human Resource Management. This also enables rich knowledge for its members. This increases much needed competencies and skills and the ability to be ahead of other HR professionals who are not members. Additionally, this will give the member access to growth and a vibrant community of HR, leading edge resources and professional development tools.

• Network with Highly Respected HR Professionals

The ability to get expert advice from highly respected HR professionals is another great benefit to be associated with an HR professional body. This platform can also afford members with networking, new ideas and even new jobs for HR professionals. There is also an opportunity to meet with subject matter experts at seminars and conferences and through our HR Professional Body. Professional bodies broadcast many relevant opportunities to their members including opportunities for recruitment, consultancies, professional development and so on.



- **HRM Student Chapters**

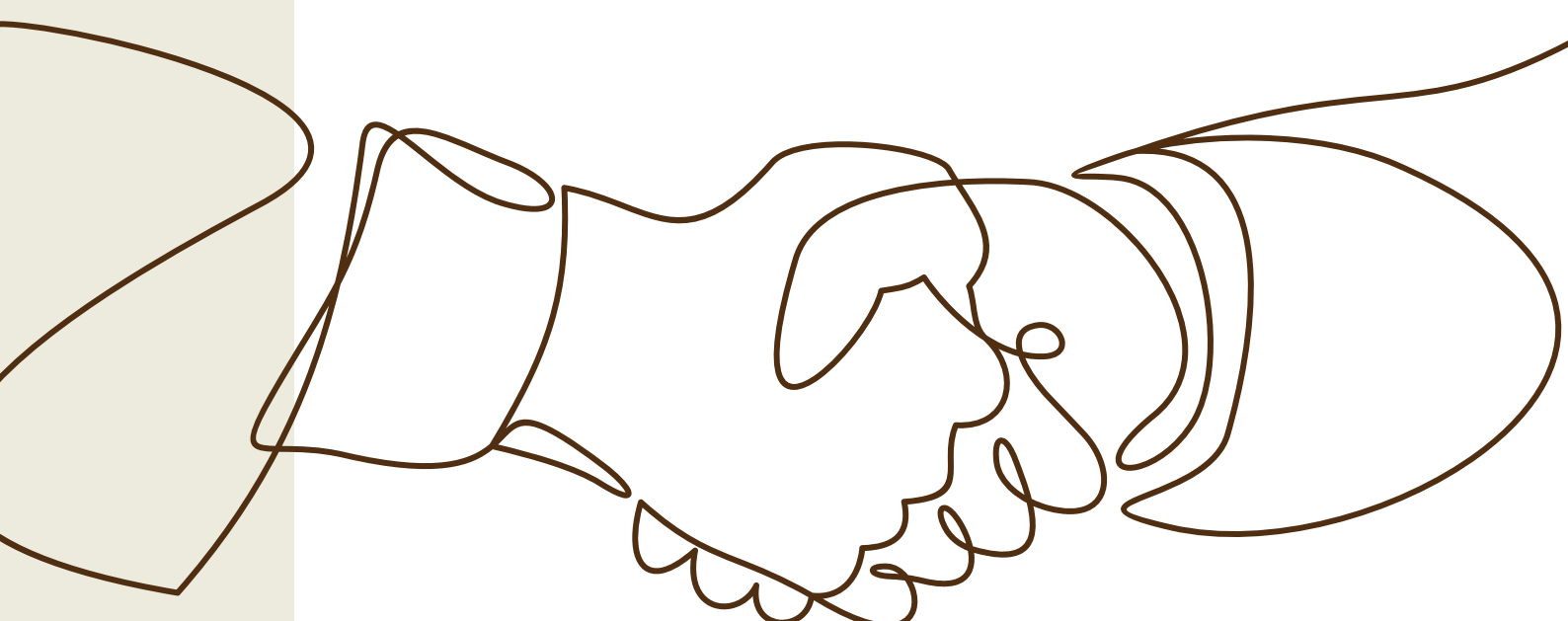
SABPP organises student chapters with accredited and non-accredited institutions of higher learning. This initiative inspires offspring HR professionals and their future employers through support, development and networking opportunities for university students. This enable young professionals the ability to excel in their field of specialisation since prospective employers give insights on what they expect from graduates. This platform also promotes the HR profession.

- **Custom research**

Being a member in a professional body also gives you insight on the research activities offered by the professional body. Recent research in the HR field, salary survey and benchmarking data which can assist your organisation.

- **HR Legislations Updates**

Perhaps no other profession is as intertwined with the law as HR and these laws change constantly. The professional body updates its members to be aware of proposed legislation which could affect HR professionals and to develop relationships with those involved in legislation such as business organisations, lobbyists, legislators, and their staff, so that they may better understand the issues from an HR perspective.



CONCLUSION

Board examinations have been a mark of quality assurance for many professions, providing a benchmark to bring a sense of competency and integrity to those who undergo the process. By introducing the examination, SABPP will be in the right position to know that its members are of a high competency level and therefore relevant to the industry with the knowledge needed. SABPP has worked hard throughout the years to ensure professionalisation of HR nationally, with the Standards that are World-first. It cannot be articulated enough; the journey still continues for the professional body, with much anticipation. Membership of the professional body carries comprehensive benefits. Members become knowledgeable about HR Standards, leadership standards, ethics, good governance and receive a lot of information pertaining to the HR profession. Over and above these benefits, the idea of a board examination comes at the right time to enhance the knowledge, credibility and competency within the profession.

"Take a closer look at the work of Marius Meyer at the SA Board for People Practices (SABPP). They have comprehensive national standards, within a framework that ties it all together. They have a national auditing unit for evaluating organisations against the standards. They focus on more than just certification of individual practitioners. They have case studies that show the positive benefits of moving to professionalise HR through Standards" (<http://www.hrexaminer.com/why-have-hr-standards>).

The Journey
Continues

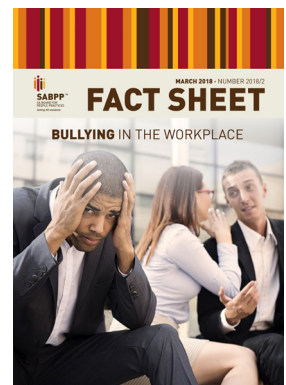
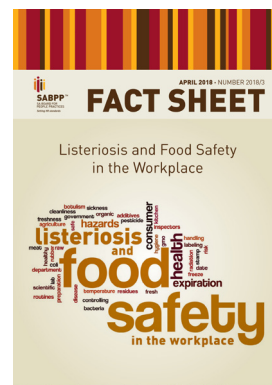
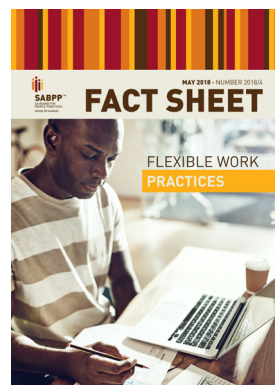
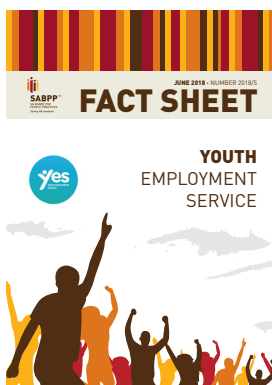
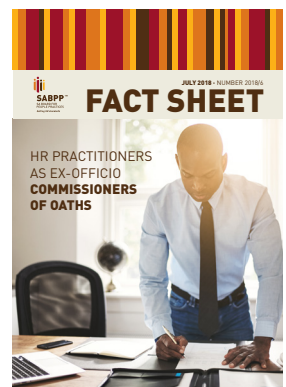
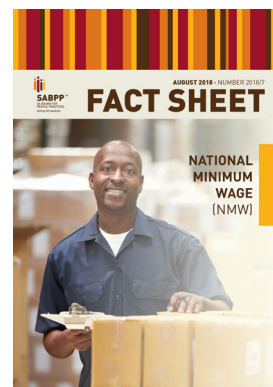
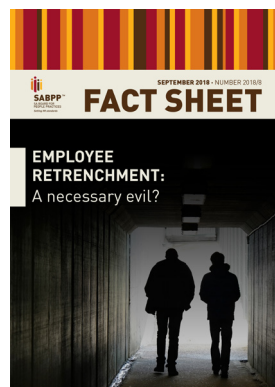
This Fact Sheet was written by Kgomotso Mopalami: SABPP Head of Research and Innovation and Dr Mzwenhlanhla Calvin Mabaso: Lecturer, UJ.



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DATE	NUMBER	SUBJECT
2013		
February	1	GAINING HR QUALIFICATIONS
March	2	ETHICS, FRAUD AND CORRUPTION
April	3	NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
May	4	BARGAINING COUNCILS
June	5	EMPLOYMENT EQUITY
July	6	HR COMPETENCIES
August	7	HR MANAGEMENT STANDARDS
September	8	PAY EQUITY
October	9	COACHING AND MENTORING
November	10	HIV/AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE
2014		
February	1	EMPLOYING FIRST-TIME JOB MARKET ENTRANTS
March	2	PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION ACT
April	3	QUALITY COUNCIL FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS
May	4	WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING
June	5	RECRUITMENT – SCREENING OF CANDIDATES
July	6	HR RISK MANAGEMENT
August	7	BASIC HR REPORTING (1)
September	8	BASIC HR REPORTING (2)
October	9	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
November	10	SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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DATE	NUMBER	SUBJECT
2015		
February	1	AMENDMENTS TO LABOUR LEGISLATION 2014
March	2	THE REVISED BROAD-BASED BLACK ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CODES OF GOOD PRACTICE
April	3	LESSONS LEARNED FOR EMPLOYERS FROM CCMA CASES
May	4	EMPLOYEE WELLNESS SCREENING
June	5	CHANGING THE EMPLOYMENT EQUITY LANDSCAPE
July	6	EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERING
August	7	DEPRESSION IN THE WORKPLACE
September	8	EMPLOYEE WELLNESS
October	9	EQUAL PAY AUDITS
November	10	BASICS OF EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION
2016		
February	1	PRODUCTIVITY BASICS
March	2	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
April	3	TALENT MANAGEMENT: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
May	4	BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES
June	5	CHANGE MANAGEMENT
July	6	INNOVATION IN HR
August	7	HR TECHNOLOGY
September	8	HR IN BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY
October	9	THE LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE IN SA
November	10	TOWARDS A CODETERMINATION MODEL FOR SOUTH AFRICA

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DATE	NUMBER	SUBJECT
2017		
February	1	MODERN SLAVERY
March	2	PENSION LAW FOR EMPLOYERS
April	3	THE GAME CHANGER: ROLE OF HR
May	4	HR GOVERNANCE
June	5	INTEGRATING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND B-BBEE TRANSFORMATION
July	6	STRESS MANAGEMENT
August	7	REMUNERATION: RECENT TRENDS
September	8	HOW CEOs AND CHROs CAN USE THE SABPP TO CREATE EXCELLENCE IN HR MANAGEMENT
October	9	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
November	10	RETRENCHMENT
December	11	THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERSHIP STANDARD
2018		
February	1	STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
March	2	BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE
April	3	LISTERIOSIS AND FOOD SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE
May	4	FLEXIBLE WORK PRACTICES
June	5	YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
July	6	HR PRACTITIONERS AS EX-OFFICIO COMMISSIONERS OF OATHS
August	7	NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE (NMW)
September	8	EMPLOYEE RETRENCHMENT
October	9	THE FUTURE OF YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA
November	10	BOARD EXAMINATIONS: A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD FOR HR PROFESSIONALISATION

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