



GRASSLAND SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

PROCEDURE FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PROFESSIONAL REGISTER

PREAMBLE

The Professional Register has been compiled in the spirit that the Society feels it is in the best interests of its members to order its own affairs, rather than have this done by some outside agency. Registration is voluntary and signifies the intent on the part of the member to abide by an agreed code of ethics as well as being an endorsement of the competence of the member by the Professional Affairs Committee (PAC). However, non-registration does not necessarily imply a lack of competence on the part of any member as registration is purely a voluntary matter.

1. Criteria for admission as a Professional Member of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa

Members of the Society who satisfy the following criteria may qualify as professional members of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa (GSSA):

- a. A PhD or Masters degree in grassland science or an associated discipline from a recognized university plus at least two years' relevant experience which taken together, in the opinion of the PAC, qualify the individual as competent in the discipline of grassland science.
- b. A Bachelors degree from a recognized university majoring in grassland science or some other associated discipline, plus a minimum of five years' relevant experience which taken together with any publications, in the opinion of the Board, are equivalent to (a).
- c. A diploma in agriculture or biological science from a recognized college or institution plus a minimum of ten years relevant experience which taken together with any publications, in the opinion of the PAC, are equivalent to (a).

2. Legal aspects associated with a register, including possible liability

The register will contain the following disclaimer: "This register is compiled and presented in good faith. Details submitted by registrants are checked insofar as is possible by the PAC of the GSSA. Whereas every care is taken in the compilation of the register, neither the GSSA nor its council nor any of its agents accept direct or indirect responsibility for any losses or damages arising from use or misuse of the register."

3. Disciplinary and debarring procedures

Any person registered as a professional grassland scientist shall be guilty of improper conduct if he/she fails to comply with any of the provisions of the code of professional conduct set out in paragraph 6.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION WHICH MAY BE IMPOSED IN RESPECT OF IMPROPER CONDUCT

A professional grassland scientist who has been found guilty of improper conduct shall be liable to one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- a. A reprimand or a caution or both.
- b. Removal from the register and,
 - i. temporary disqualification from registration or,
 - ii. permanent disqualification from re-registration.
- c. The PAC may, in its discretion and subject to such conditions as it may wish to prescribe, if any,
 - i. suspend the operation of any disciplinary action imposed in terms of paragraph 3(a) and (b) for a period not exceeding three years from the date on which such action was imposed; or

- ii. postpone the coming into operation of any such disciplinary action imposed in terms of paragraph 3 (a) and (b); or
- iii. reduce any disciplinary action imposed in terms of paragraph 3 (a) and (b); or
- iv. substitute any other form of disciplinary action referred to in paragraph 3 (a) and (b) provided that such action shall not be more severe than that originally imposed.

4. Functioning and administration of the Register

4.1. Management of the Professional Register

The Professional Register is managed by the PAC of the GSSA, a subcommittee of the Council of the GSSA.

4.2. Composition of the PAC

- a. EXCO nominates a chairman and 3 additional members, one of whom will serve as secretary of the PAC.
- b. Acceptance to serve on the PAC requires the nominee to serve for the duration of office of the current elected president of the GSSA, or part thereof.
- c. At the change of Council of the GSSA, EXCO shall nominate a new PAC that includes at least two members from the retiring PAC.
- d. At least one member of the PAC must serve on EXCO.
- e. The president and honorary secretary of the GSSA are *ex officio* members of the PAC.

4.3. Admission to the Professional Register

- a. Application for admission to the Professional Register requires submission of a completed application form (Appendix 1) to the honorary secretary of the GSSA together with certified copies of documents and the names of two referees, as specified on the application.
- b. Submission of a signed application signifies acceptance by the signee to

adhere to all the procedures and requirements laid down for the consideration of his/her application and for the functioning of the Professional Register, should the application be approved.

- c. The PAC may direct an applicant to submit such further documentary evidence regarding education and experience as it may require in order to consider such application.
- d. If the PAC, after consideration of an application and after such investigation and enquiry as it may deem necessary, approves an application, the PAC shall register the applicant by,
 - i. informing the applicant in writing of his admission to the register and issuing an appropriate certificate of registration, and
 - ii. entering the prescribed particulars in respect of the approved applicant in the register.

4.4. Maintenance of registration

Any registered person maintains such registration by

- a. paying the annual registration fee as specified in 5;
- b. on request from the PAC, for the purpose of investigation, make oneself available and make available to the PAC all reports, statements and correspondence pertaining to any service undertaken or activity that might, at the discretion of the PAC, appear to harm the image, standard or credibility of the register;
- c. informing the secretary of the PAC of any change in business or home address, within 60 days.

4.5. Termination of registration

Registration of a person is terminated if:

- a. he/she fails to pay the prescribed fee for maintenance of his registration within 30 days after the date of a written request from the PAC addressed to his permanent postal address as entered in the register;
- b. he/she has so requested in writing and it has been duly acknowledged by the

PAC and no investigations in terms of section 3 are pending;

- c. he/she has obtained his registration fraudulently, or
- d. he/she has been registered in error.

On termination of registration:

- e. the PAC shall inform the person concerned in writing, addressed to the permanent postal address as entered in the register;
- f. delete the particulars entered in the register in respect of such person, and
- g. the person shall return his certificate of registration to the GSSA honorary secretary within 3 months of the date of correspondence posted to the person as in 4.6 (e).

4.6. Information recorded in the Professional Register

- a. Full names and title
- b. Date of birth
- c. Employer/Company/Business
- d. Business address
- e. Business telephone number
- f. Fax number
- g. Permanent postal address
- h. Permanent residential address
- i. Residential telephone number
- j. Tertiary academic qualification including the awarding institution, date of award and major subjects
- k. Brief description of field of expertise
- l. Availability for consulting, either privately or through business or institution
- m. Keywords
- n. Name and address of two referees

4.7. Administration of Register

- a. The Professional Register is located with and kept up-to-date by the administration of the GSSA on instruction from the PAC.
- b. Although continually updated, bound copies of the register are compiled and printed at least biennially and obtainable from the secretary of the GSSA.

- c. The most up-to-date register is obtainable on written request from the honorary secretary of the GSSA.
- d. All correspondence with the PAC is confidential.

4.8. Privileges

Registered persons are entitled to,

- a. display their certificates of registration in their place of business;
- b. use the registered emblem and the abbreviation, MGSSA (member of the Grassland Society of Southern Africa), on their professional stationery.

5. Registration costs and administration charges

An initial registration fee of R50 plus and annual fee of R25 will be applied.

6. Code of ethics

All professional members of the GSSA shall abide by the following code of ethics. Failure to comply may result in their removal from the Professional Register.

- (1) Members will not represent themselves as spokesmen for the GSSA without the full authority of the EXCO.
- (2) Members will avoid and should counter the spread of false, erroneous, biased, unwarranted or exaggerated statements concerning the discipline.
- (3) Members may advertise their services in a dignified and factual manner, and shall take particular care that no false or misleading claims are made. At no time shall a member canvas or advertise in such a manner as to lower the status of the profession.
- (4) Members shall not accept a client unless they can give such client adequate service in the matter upon which such client requires service which they know or ought to know they cannot render to such client.
- (5) Members shall not attempt to render services to a client which require knowledge not possessed or which cannot reasonably be acquired, so that such member shall be unable to

adequately perform such services. Should such situations arise in the course of rendering such services, they shall inform such client and if required, the member shall recommend a person, firm or company whom or which, to the best of their knowledge and belief, may adequately render such services.

(6) Members shall not allocate to a person with a lesser level of competence than such a member, any services which they know or ought to know requires the level of competence possessed by such member.

(7) A member shall be responsible for any services to or on behalf of clients, by assistants who are employed by such member.

(8) Whilst recognizing that direction from unqualified persons is necessary in some situation, a member shall not permit any such directions to compromise their professional judgement.

(9) Members shall not disclose information obtained from a client which they know or ought to know is confidential to such client. However, where a client is engaged in activities which are deemed to be in contravention of any statute or common law, members are obliged to report such activities to the PAC and/or relevant authorities.

(10) Members will inform a prospective employer or client of any professional or personal interest which may impair the objectivity of their work.

(11) Members shall not recommend to their clients any business, process, substance, material or matter in which such member has a personal or financial interest, without first informing such client of such interest.

(12) It shall be a breach of these rules if a member is found to be guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect (as defined in the courts of law), or be convicted of a felony or other crime.

(13) Members shall not refer to their academic qualifications or status in the

Professional Register of the GSSA, unless such reference shall be specific and accurate.

(14) Members shall acknowledge the source of any material published by them, except where such acknowledgement shall offend against the provisions of Rule 9 of these Rules and they should, where necessary, obtain permission to publish such material.

(15) Members will report truthfully, accurately, fully and clearly, all information pertinent to a given project.