SARIMA

PROVIDING PATHWAYS FOR
PROFESSIONALISATION OF RESEARCH
MANAGERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA), a non-profit organisation established in 2002, aims to promote and facilitate best practice in research and innovation management in the Southern African region. One of SARIMA's focal points is the professionalisation of research management in Southern Africa.

Effective research management is a crucial enabler of excellent research. Competitive research environments require efficient and responsive research support teams with specialised administrative, managerial and strategic skills.

In Southern Africa, professionals working in this field are as diverse as the research agendas they support. Many have a range of skills and experience, and are seeking recognition for the skills they already have. Others wish to further their studies in ways that will help them be more effective at work and enhance their career prospects in research management.

In response, and in collaboration with practitioners, SARIMA have developed a Professional Competency Framework (PCF) for research managers in the Southern African region. Stakeholder organisations and individuals may use the PCF to help them assess skills levels, write job descriptions, plan professional development and career paths, benchmark practices, design organisational training interventions, ensure considered succession planning, and guide individual professional development. SARIMA draws on the PCF for the development of training and professional development offerings that range from stand-alone training opportunities or courses to curricula and a mechanism for the recognition of prior learning and experience.

About professional recognition

SARIMA, through its International Professional Recognition Council (IPRC), promotes professional recognition as one option for the professionalisation of research managers in Southern Africa. By submitting a portfolio of evidence, candidates can have their prior learning and experience, as well as their current competencies, reviewed by their peers on the IPRC. The submission of portfolios is voluntary, and candidates can apply for recognition in one of two designations.

Two options for the recognition of prior learning and experience

Research Management Professional (RMP)

This category is for mid-career to experienced research managers who hold either an undergraduate qualification and have a minimum of three years of relevant work experience OR have a minimum of five years of relevant work experience as mid-career research management practitioners. They are typically employed in a research management position in which they support the research mission and intentions of their organisation. They either support researchers directly or indirectly through aspects of the research process or they support research-policy and strategy development within their organisation.

Senior Research Management Professional (SRMP)

This category is for senior research managers serving in a leadership or strategic capacity in research-management. They hold a postgraduate qualification at a Master's level or beyond with more than five years of relevant work experience. Seniority in this context is based on achievement, and not necessarily on time spent in the profession.

Portfolio of evidence – employment history, details of qualifications and relevant training completed, professional activities, description of the organisational type and background, self-assessment of competencies, statement of professional commitment.

After being awarded, the designations RMP and SRMP remain valid for five years. A re-recognition process after this period can be followed if they maintain their membership, accumulate sixty continuous education points and provide evidence of their ongoing leadership and contributions to the profession.

Applying for professional recognition

1. Download the relevant application form from the SARIMA website, then complete and submit the application and proof of payment of the application fee.

2. The review panel will verify the information provided and use established evaluation criteria to make a determination. Your experience, training and qualifications will be assessed on a flexible case-by-case basis.

3. If your application is successful, you will be notified of this via a formal letter and a certificate confirming your professional status.

4. If your application is not successful, you will receive written feedback. If you are unsatisfied with the panel's finding, you can lodge an appeal.

5. Applications are accepted for review by 31 March and 31 August each year.

Why become recognised?

• Demonstrates your competence as a professional research manager to current or potential employers

• Affirms your standing in the global research management field and clarifies your future career path

• Widens your options for career advancement and job mobility

• Brings your skills to light before a panel of experts and your peers

In addition, the body of knowledge accumulated via the applications review process will help to further substantiate and refine the PCF and thus contribute to shaping and defining the parameters of this crucial new profession in ways that are relevant to the Southern African region.

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