

Who or what is ESCI? It is amazing how quickly news travels in our industry. Despite being in its implementation stages, everybody seems to have heard about the new Employment Services Certification Institute (ESCI) and naturally want to know what it will do and how it will affect current memberships and IPSC certification.



Some Questions and Answers!

Q: What is ESCI?

A: ESCI is the newly established Employment Services Certification Institute. It is a non-profit professional body that will be the custodian of Standards for Professional Practice within the labour recruitment industry. By serving its members it will create a vehicle for recognising professionalism and expert knowledge through certification and continuous professional development.

Q: What is the benefit of a certification institute?

As a member of ESCI you will be able to achieve certification as a Professional Labour Practitioner, earn and track continuing professional development hours, and access training opportunities dealing with current issues to enhance your industry knowledge and stay abreast of trends. Membership will also offer the perfect opportunity to network with others and learn from the experts.

Q: A large number of people have written the IPSC exam and hold the IPSC designation. Will it still be valid?

A: Although the IPSC exam will be replaced with a brand new, improved online learning programme to assist new starters in January 2010, the results achieved for past IPSC exams will be transferred to the new system. To maintain the designation you will be required to write a short online exam (20 questions) on the new Code of Ethics to qualify. This will be a free service to new members of ESCI.

Q: Does this mean I will have to destroy my business cards that say "IPSC"?

A: Definitely not! You will be able to use up those cards and then insert the appropriate designation on the next batch.

Q: I recently completed the Embedded Knowledge exam but I have not done the IPSC exam. How will that work?

A: You will qualify for the new entry level professional designation provided you write a short online exam (20 questions) on the new Code of Ethics to qualify. This will be a free service to new members of ESCI.

Q: I am participating in the RPL project for the Level 4 Labour Recruitment Qualification. Will that earn me a professional designation?

A: Successful completion of the qualification will earn you the professional designation of Labour Recruitment Consultant (LRC) once you register as a member of ESCI. It will also prepare you for the higher level professional designations on your career pathway.

Q: What is certification and how does it work?

A: To help you progress along a career and learning pathway within your professional development as a labour recruitment practitioner, you will be provided with opportunities to work towards or RPL against professional designations at progressively higher levels. Everybody who enters the industry will be required to complete the entry level exam. Following that you will be able to complete professional qualifications at level 4, 5 and 7 (equivalent to a masters) to earn the designation of a professional labour recruitment practitioner either through continued study or recognition of prior learning.

Q: What is a professional designation?

A: The professional designations have been created in line with the new Occupational Framework and are in the process of being registered with the South African Qualifications Authority. Awarding a professional designation officially recognises an individual's knowledge and skills and good standing within an industry.

Q: What is recognition of prior learning?

A: Recognition of Prior Learning is a process where someone's prior learning is formally recognised in terms of registered qualifications, regardless of where and how the learning was achieved. RPL acknowledges that people never stop learning, whether it takes place formally at an educational institution, or whether it happens informally, in the workplace. This means that you will be able to showcase your recruitment knowledge and achieve a professional designation simply by showcasing what you know in a portfolio of evidence.

Q: I have a degree. Do I really have to go through the RPL process?

A: You are welcome to discuss this with ESCI as each case is likely to have its own merits. As a rule of thumb "fast tracking" to higher levels will be based on years of experience in the industry rather than academic achievement. This does not mean that academic achievement is not important but as these are vocational qualifications it measures your ability to do a specific job.

For example, if you have been in the recruitment industry for many years and hold a management position you are likely to be able to RPL against one of the higher professional designations. If you have a degree and you have only been in the industry for a short while it would be far more beneficial for you to prove your competence to cement your career path towards higher qualifications.

Q: What is continuous professional development (CPD) and how will it benefit me?

A: If you have achieved your professional designation as a Labour Recruitment Practitioner you have already proven that you are a competent professional. However, achieving a qualification and certification does not mean that you will always be up to date with the newest developments and latest technologies. A variety of activities will be initiated by ESCI with the specific aim of providing you with many opportunities for CPD. You will earn points for your CPD activities and in that way you will keep your professional designation current.

Q: What will CPD entail?

A: You need to achieve 30 CPD points per year to keep your professional designation current. That will be roughly 30 hours of work except in the case of more complex learning activities where specific points will be allocated for the event.

If you think about it, it is only about an average of 2.5 hours per month!

Q: What kind of CPD activities will be available to me?

A: To ensure that you reap as much benefit as possible from the CPD activities, every effort will be made to ensure that the chosen topics are relevant and useful. You will be able to choose between traditional workshops, e-learning activities on the website, bi-monthly breakfast seminars, monthly webinars, articles from the online magazine to name but a few!

Q: How will membership work?

A: After joining initially, you will be required to renew your membership annually. To maintain your membership you will have to be up to date with your continuous professional development and re-confirm your commitment to the industry code of ethics.

Q: When will I be able to join?

A: ESCI will be fully operational by January 2010. In the meantime a dedicated website is being designed to accommodate membership, CPD activities. ESCI will be represented at the APSO conference in September 2009 so visit us there to find out more. However if you would like to be put on the database immediately so that you can be notified when membership applications open please send an e-mail to the address below.

Please contact Henriette van Twisk on 011 615 0718 or e-mail her on henriette@esci.co.za for any further information you may need. We will also keep you up to date with new developments so watch this space!