



MEDIA STATEMENT:

4IR AND THE NQF: SAQA TO LEAD THE CURRICULUM AND INNOVATION DIALOGUE AT THE UPCOMING 2022 THENSA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

DATE: 14 MARCH 2022

On Wednesday, 16 March 2022, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) will join experts from higher education, business and government in discussing the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) solutions for the post pandemic reality in education and training, at the 2022 THENSA International Conference to be held at Montecasino, Johannesburg South Africa.

In its deliberate effort to continue sharing relevant knowledge and innovations in the “new normal” with its stakeholders, SAQA partnered with THENSA in the hosting of the 2022 conference. At this conference, SAQA CEO, Dr Julie Reddy will lead a panel discussion titled **Curriculum, Innovation for the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR)**. This session will be used as a platform to raise provocative issues, uncomfortable and disquieting questions to compel delegates to consider new ways of “thinking and doing” things in the fast-evolving education and training space post the pandemic.

The SAQA session will host three presenters, Dr Divya Singh, Chief Academic Officer at STADIO Holdings Ltd; Mr Neil Butcher, Director of Neil Butcher & Associates and Mr Kevin Bingham, Director of the award winning FGG Architects Inc. who are some of the authors of the recently published SAQA Bulletin. The SAQA Bulletin focused broadly on 4IR and the South African NQF.

In responding to the topic of Curriculum, Innovation for the 4IR, Dr Singh will provide a cautionary tale for universities adopting artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in their selection and recruitment processes. While she supports that universities should adopt technology – specifically artificial intelligence and machine learning – Dr Singh cautions against implementing without fully understanding the new systems and its implications.

Drawing from his experience of working in education systems around the world, Mr Butcher, will explore the extent to which the NQF and its associated structures remain relevant in their current form, given the many competing pressures for social transformation, including the 4IR and other forms of economic transformation. Meanwhile, Mr Bingham, will discuss the

preparedness of Architecture Graduates for practice within 4IR. Because of many changes in the architecture profession and the needs within a developing country, Mr Bingham feels there is a need to refocus and review the architecture practice that is relative to the NQF and 4IR.

Dr Reddy believes that the THENSA conference will allow participants to explore meaningful and sustainable interventions to embrace the 4IR solutions post the COVID-19 pandemic. She advises that, “While we ponder and deliberate on 4IR issues to craft solutions in higher education provisioning, we must keep in mind that in our country digital technology can both connect and divide along economic and social lines, so we must offer human-centered connectivity to the tools required to engage with 4IR”.

SAQA as mandated by the NQF Act, 2008 oversees the further development and implementation of the NQF, a key national policy tool that is instrumental in the transformation and integration of South Africa’s education and training system.

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Enquiries: Nosipho Damane, Manager: Communications

Cell: 083 628 4917, Email: ndamane@saga.co.za

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