

**Environmental Assessment  
Practitioners Association  
of South Africa**

*Advancing environmental assessment practice in South Africa*



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## **EAPASA Mentorship Programme**

**Version 2, 09 March 2021**

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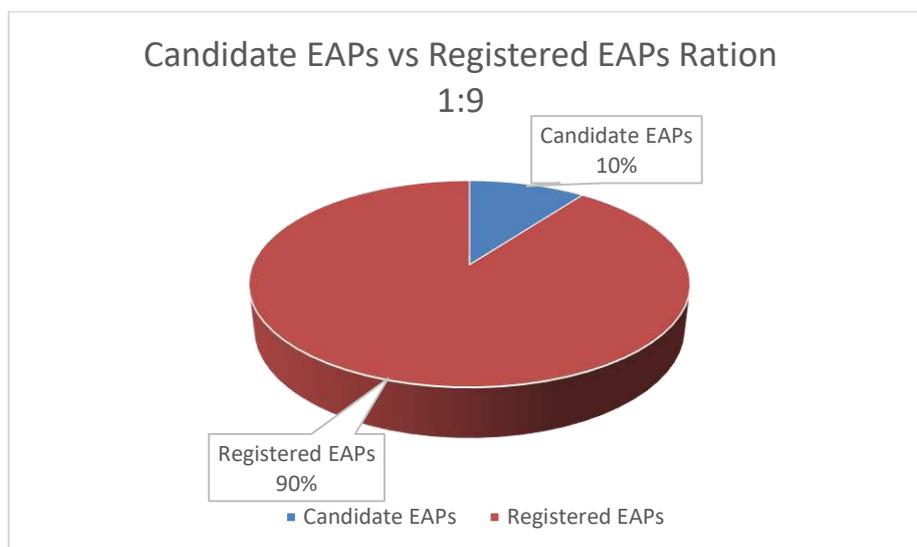
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## 1. Introduction

The EAPASA Mentorship Guidelines, June 2020, state that EAPASA has made specific provision for the professional development of Candidate Environmental Assessment Practitioners (EAPs). Registered Candidate EAPs, working towards registration as EAPs, should plan their professional development and work towards meeting the requirements for registration. The support and assistance of employers, supervisors and/or mentors is important to ensure that a Candidate EAP progresses to become a Registered EAP. Employers and the self-employed should ensure that adequate resources are allocated to appropriate training and relevant work exposure, recognising that professional development will benefit their employees and organisation through strengthening their professional competence.

Professional development for Registered Candidate EAPs is done through the EAPASA mentorship programme. Mentoring is the development of a professionally supportive relationship between two individuals. The term 'mentoring' can cover a broad spectrum of activities such as moral support and guidance, coaching, skills development, and buddy-like systems. The 'mentor' will be an individual who is already a Registered EAP, with work experience in a particular area, a strong set of skills, or special training that they can use to impart knowledge and advise the 'mentee', who will typically be looking for guidance in a specific area. Although mentoring is driven by a mentee's goals, the relationship is designed to be mutually beneficial. In return, the mentor can obtain fresh perspectives on current problems, projects and overall industry changes and direction, as well as build on their leadership and communication skills. Both individuals also gain valuable networking opportunities.

The EAPASA Mentorship Guidelines of June 2020, indicate that the Candidate EAP applicants to Registered EAPs ratio to be 1 to 9. This is a significant gap which the implementation of the Mentorship Programme can assist with closing and increase the number of Registered Candidate EAPs.



## **2. Purpose of the Mentorship Programme**

Mentorship is being implemented as part of the EAPASA Transformation Strategy and Plan, 2020. The programme is primarily aimed at enhancing the Historically Disadvantaged Individual (HDI) profile of the EAP Register, and thus address thereby addressing the inequality gap within the sector. A Candidate EAP Mentorship Plan will be implemented under the guidance and monitoring of the supervisor/mentor who will manage the process of developing the skills necessary for a subsequent Applicant to obtain registered EAP status and career development. Mentorship can be done internally (within the same organisation) and/or externally (outside the organisation). Where mentorship is done internally, the plan requires that adequate resources be allocated to the Candidate EAP for appropriate training and exposure to relevant work experience be effected recognising that professional development will benefit the employer's organisation through strengthening of the professional competence of its employee. This means that the employer must provide opportunities such as project management skills and/or lead EAP roles for the Candidate EAP under the strict supervision of the manager or mentor. In the case of external mentorship, mentors are requested to include project management skills and/or lead EAP role in EIAs in the mentorship plan so the Candidate EAP can share the plan with their employer. The plan will focus on how a Candidate EAP may grow their limited practical experience of the 6 EAP core competencies. This will also include career guidance and support for the candidate EAP.

The mentorship programme contributes to the professional development of both the mentor and the mentee. Mentoring of Candidate EAPs can be used by experienced professionals to claim CPD credits. Participation in CPD and providing Mentorship as a CPD activity is a compulsory professional obligation for all Registered EAPs.

## **3. Mentorship Plan**

The EAPASA mentorship plan has two categories. The first one is for graduates who wish to become Registered Candidate EAPs and the second one is for a Registered Candidate EAP who intend to work towards becoming a Registered EAP. The plan will provide mentees with additional support and guidance from a manager and/or Registered EAP who has the required experience. If the Manager is not a registered EAP, EAPASA would need to approve them as Mentors to a candidate EAP. Manager expertise will be considered and other professional body registrations such as SACNASP, ECSA, etc.

A mentee and mentor relationship is designed to be flexible in order to meet the mentee support needs and the expertise of the mentor. The mentee and mentor can use the plan to develop their own goals but at the same time ensuring focus is kept towards the areas that are identified by the plan. EAPASA mentoring streams largely fall under two categories:

- goal-orientated mentoring, and
- general mentoring.

Goal-oriented mentoring entails providing mentees who want professional registration with additional support and guidance from a already Registered EAP who has experience. General mentoring entails support around professional development. The expected outcome of the mentorship plan should be to support the mentee to gain the necessary skills and expertise that will enhance their chances of getting into the sector, gaining career guidance, and working towards professional development. The two main focus areas of the mentoring programme are discussed in the sections that follow.

### **3.1. Graduate / Into work mentoring**

This mentoring stream targets new graduates. The mentoring stream connects the mentee with an experienced Registered EAP who can help the mentee to start their career and achieve their career aspirations. This mentoring stream will suit the experience and education of mentees and the usual requirements of the desired field/sector. Mentors can provide support and guidance in several areas with the intention to help mentees develop key employability skills to support their entry to the sector.

Typical areas for mentoring:

- Determining the suitable assessment route (report, interview or both) for Candidate EAP registration
- Understanding how to frame your experience within the competencies framework
- Exposing the candidate to key principles and aspects within the environmental field
- Preparing the long-form CV
- Receiving feedback on your written report or practice interviews
- Insight into a different specialisation in the environmental sector
- Managing new priorities and navigating a different work-life balance
- Support with job applications
- How to frame your career break or change on your CV
- Interview practice
- Insight into the environmental sector
- Increased awareness of day-to-day roles
- Advice on where to find suitable jobs
- How to build your professional network

- Feedback on job applications
- Preparing for interviews
- Identifying potential career paths
- Gaining appropriate working/professional skills

### **3.2. Registered Candidate EAP mentoring**

This mentoring stream targets Registered Candidate EAPs. The mentoring stream will connect the mentee with an experienced Registered EAP who can help the mentee with their professional development towards getting the Registered EAP status. Mentors can provide support and guidance in several areas with the intention to help mentees to develop experience in all the 6 Core Competencies. Mentors will provide a range of support thereby helping to ensure that mentees are well prepared to submit their Registered EAP application and have the tools to undertake or review EIA at the work place.

Typical areas for mentoring:

- Familiarised with NEMA S24H Regulations, 2016 requirements and guidance with application
- Identify the gaps between the requirements for EAP registration and the Candidate's current training, skills, competencies and experience
- Identify ways in which those gaps could best be met in one's current working environment (e.g. by undertaking specific activities that would address those needs)
- Prioritise activities related to the needs of the Candidate EAP (exposure to undertake EIAs)
- Arrange, as far as practicable, to undertake those activities during the subsequent year through ongoing implementation and monitoring of progress.
- Familiarising with NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014 and any other relevant environmental legislation
- Guidance to where to find environmental tools eg. Guidelines, screening tools, etc.
- Evidencing the competencies sufficiently
- Support in clear communication and presentation of skills  
Reflecting on skills and building a plan for further professional development
- Advice for tackling a specific challenge
- Developing 'soft' skills, such as project management and conflict resolution

## 4. Mentorship Requirements

The key requirements for mentorship are as follows

- Graduate mentoring for Candidate EAP registration. The applicant should have a relevant environmental qualification from a SAQA recognised tertiary institution.
- Candidate EAP mentoring for Registered EAP application. The applicant should have a SAQA accredited qualification:
  - Certificate in Environmental Assessment Practice or be deemed competent, based on a Recognition of Prior Learning assessment,
  - at least three years of appropriate professional experience undertaking or reviewing EIAs,
  - at least 3 Environmental Impact Assessments or EIA Reviews, at an appropriate scale, conducted while you held primary responsibility,
  - demonstrate that Core Competencies have been met, and
  - payment of an application fee.

## 5. Mentee-Mentor Matching

Continuing professional development (CPD) is important not only to keep abreast with industry development, but is also a requirement for a professional to maintain their professional registration and for re-registration purposes. Registered EAPs are expected to submit CPD Record sheets annually. Candidate EAPs should be part of the mentorship programme for their CPD and are expected to submit their mentorship progress report signed by the mentor every six months.

- Graduates can request for mentorship by sending an email and attaching their CVs to the EAPASA secretariat. The CVs are used to identify appropriate mentors.
- Candidate EAPs will be assigned a mentor once they are registered. Mentees are matched by location, consultants EAP, official EAP, field of interest, area of focus, industry, etc.

## 6. How to plan your Mentor – Mentee relationship

The following steps should be followed during planning between the Mentor and the Mentee in order to ensure alignment on the mentorship program and expectations from both parties.

### **6.1. Set goals**

This is where expectations from both the mentor and mentee are discussed in detail. While successful mentoring relationships often include an affinity between participants, it is important to remember that the aim is to function as a catalyst for the achievement or acceleration of the goals aligned with the two mentoring categories, Graduate and Registered EAP. The mentee should be setting clear, measurable, time-bound goals; the mentor should help sense check those goals and provide a check-in to keep mentees on track. The mentee should proactively establish key areas to focus on and should take the lead in contacting the mentor.

### **6.2. Schedule mentor session together**

It is important to establish a timeframe that works well for both participants. The time frames should allow for other aspects of life to be in balance, whilst being realistic with the goals set out. Importantly, ensure you have booked your next meeting in before the end of your current session and do your best to stick to that time – this ensures the mentorship relationship does not fall by the wayside during busy periods. If possible, keep your mentoring sessions regular, to the same time on the same day of the week for consistency and ease.

### **6.3. Share failures as well as successes.**

It is tempting to focus on our wins, either as exemplars of how to achieve similar career success or as a sense of proving your worth. Whilst successes should be celebrated, it is important to remember that failure is just as much a part of learning. Some of the best career lessons occur when we get it wrong. Mentors that share their failures demonstrate to the mentee that their journey is not linear. There will be ups and downs along the professional way but, great success can still be achieved. Mentees that share their failures offer an opportunity for the mentor to get to know the mentee more and understand areas to help focus on for improvement, either as skills, through experiences or building on knowledge. It also demonstrates the value of resilience and persistence when facing challenges and is how the best leaders self-reflect and audit their own actions to support improvement.

### **6.4. Be open and approachable.**

It is important that both mentor and mentee alike feel that the mentoring relationship is valuable. The mentor should feel comfortable being honest with their mentee, holding them to account with regards to their goals whilst maintaining a kind and supportive nature. Mentees in return should be hardworking and enthusiastic for the opportunities within the mentoring relationship, whilst respecting the guidance and time they are being given. Empathy, honesty, approachability, and openness are strong skills for both mentors and mentees to hone.

### 6.5. If it is not working, be honest.

Occasionally a mentoring relationship just might not fit as well as we hope. That is okay! We encourage all mentors and mentees to discuss their mentoring relationship first to find ways of overcoming any obstacles, but if there are concerns that the mentoring relationship is not going to work, EAPASA can help offer solutions or look at rematching.

## 7. Mentorship Timeframes

Once a goal has been determined it is important to set a date by when it must be achieved. The graduates that wish to become Candidate EAPs are encouraged to get into a 12-month programme with the target to get their Candidate EAP application submitted at the end of the 12 months. However, support from the mentor is essential. Figure 1 shows the schematic flow diagram showing the mentorship programme.

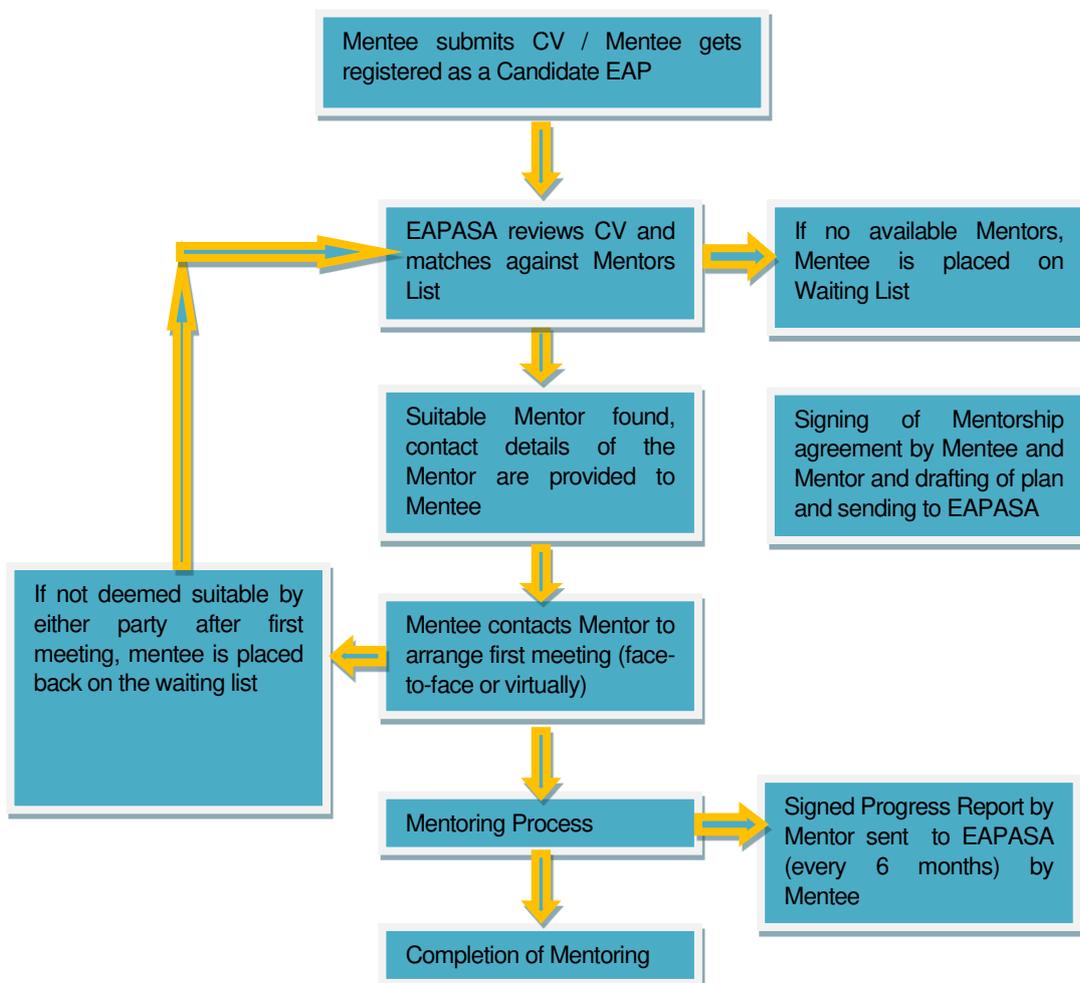


Figure 1: Schematic flow diagram showing the mentorship programme

The Candidate EAP that wants to be a Registered EAP can set their timeframe in line with the work experience they require as well as the number of EIA cases they need in order to meet the requirements for registration as a Registered EAP. For examples if a Candidate EAP does not have any work experience it is expected that the mentorship programme will be for 3 years which is the requirement for registration assuming that the Candidate EAP is employed. Should the Candidate EAP have the 3 years' experience and still missing the minimum requirement of 3 EIA cases, the duration of the programme will be determined by the EIA projects and the opportunity given to them to undertake these by their employer. Once 3 EIA cases have been obtained and the Registered EAP application has been submitted to EAPASA, the mentorship programme can be terminated. The mentor's report for completion of the mentorship programme will also be required.

## **8. Progress Reports**

Section 5 of the programme mentions the importance of CPD. Candidate EAPs are required to submit their progress report showing their continuing professional development to EAPASA every six months.

## **9. Evaluation**

The mentor is requested to submit an evaluation of the progress made on the set goals. Where the goals have not been met, mitigation measures must be identified and shared with the mentee in order to improve. A final report certifying the completion of the mentoring programme will be required from the Mentor. This should be submitted to EAPASA with the application for registration by the mentee.

## **A. ADDEDUM A – Mentorship Agreement Form**

Mentoring is the development of a professionally supportive relationship between two individuals. The one-to-one relationship enables one person (the Mentor) to share their insights, experience and knowledge with another individual (the Mentee) in order to assist in their professional development.

This agreement is designed to outline your commitments to one another over the period you will be working together and provide an opportunity to establish shared expectations of the relationship and identify key areas to focus on during your time together. The agreement will support the following:

- Clear expectations from the outset and shared accountability
- Establishing goals and identifying key areas of support needed
- Agreeing an initial timeline for the relationship
- Specifying how communication will be managed, i.e. what channels will be used
- Plan for how to evaluate progress towards goals

This document should be filled out at the initial meeting between Mentor and Mentee and referred to throughout the duration of the relationship. (Please send the signed document to EAPASA)

The role of the Mentor:

- To provide the best support they can in the areas identified at the initial meeting
- To provide time to regularly meet
- Provide insight and signpost to relevant resources which can support the Mentee's skills and knowledge in line with their career goals
- Providing timely and constructive feedback
- Listening to and questioning the Mentee to encourage reflection on progress towards their career goals
- Evaluate mentee progress

The role of the Mentee:

- Taking the lead in organising meetings; the onus is on the Mentee to do this
- Developing and communicating key goals
- Recording progress towards goals and achievements in the Progress Report

- Sharing both successes and failures relevant to your career goals with your Mentor

### **Mentorship Agreement Template**

Mentoring category, key areas and goals for mentoring:

*What types of support is the Mentee seeking from the Mentor? What areas of expertise does the Mentor have of relevance? What are your overarching goals for your mentoring relationship?*

Measuring progress:

*How will progress towards the goals be monitored and measured?*

Duration and timeline of the relationship:

*How often will you meet? What platform will you use for meetings and to communicate between meetings? How long do you envision the relationship lasting?*

Expectations of Mentee/Mentor:

*What will be the ground rules for discussions (e.g. accountability, candour, feedback etc)? If problems arise, how will they be resolved? How will you know when the mentoring relationship should be completed?*

This agreement outlines the goals and expectations agreed upon by the Mentor and Mentee. Although the thoughtful completion of this form is a requirement, it is understood that items will change and adjust naturally to fit the needs of both parties as the mentoring relationship grows.

If, at any time during the duration of the mentoring contract, one member of the mentoring pair does not feel like the other is able or willing to fulfil the items agreed to above, they can get in contact with the EAPASA office at [regsupport@eapasa.org](mailto:regsupport@eapasa.org)

Signed by Mentee:

Date:

Signed by Mentor:

Date:

## B. ADDENDUM B - Progress Report

This document should be completed by the Mentee after each meeting to keep track of the mentorship relationship and progress towards the Mentee's goals.

Date of meeting	Goal(s) discussed	Activity (e.g. discussion, practice interview, application feedback)	Feedback / outcome(s) from activity	Actions before next meeting	Additional notes from meeting	Progress towards goals	Date of next meeting

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Name of Mentee:

Name of Mentor:

Signed by Mentee:

Date:

Signed by Mentor:

Date:

