

# SOUTH AFRICAN NURSING COUNCIL

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## LANGUAGE POLICY



**South African Nursing Council**  
*Regulating nursing; advocating for the public*

**Drafted by:**  
Senior Manager: Marketing & Communication  
Language Editor

## Document revision history

Version nr	Policy name	Revision date	Pages affected	Approval date
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## 1. Introduction

The South African Nursing Council (SANC) recognises the diversity of its stakeholders, and encourages inclusiveness in all of its dealings. However, for practical purposes and for reasons of cost effectiveness, the SANC requires that its employees converse in and provide written communication in **English** as it is the designated *language of engagement*.

This Policy aims to provide details of how the Language Policy will be implemented in practice, and address the areas where the organisation will endeavour to, where practically possible and financially feasible, provide services in other official South African languages.

## 2. Definitions

- **“Act”** – The *Use of Official Languages Act, 2012* (Act No. 12 of 2012)
- **“Language of engagement”** – means the language used by the SANC for business purposes
- **“Policy”** – The Language Policy of the SANC
- **“Regulations”** – The Regulations in terms of the Act
- **“SANC”** – The South African Nursing Council

## 3. Legislative instruments

- *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*
- *The Use of Official Languages Act, 2012*
- Regulations in terms of section 13 of the *Use of Official Languages Act, 2012*

## 4. Scope

This Policy is applicable to all employees of the SANC including Council members, and to all documents published (electronically as well as printed material) by the SANC.

## 5. Context and purpose

### 5.1 Legislation:

Section 4(1) of the Act requires that every national department, national public entity and national public enterprise must adopt a language policy on its use of official languages; and

Section 4(2) provides that a language policy adopted in terms of subsection (1) must:

- (a) Stipulate how official languages will be used in effectively communicating with the public, official notices, government publications, and inter and intra-government communication;
- (b) Describe how the national department, national public entity or national public enterprise will effectively communicate with the members of the public;
- (c) Describe how members of the public can access the language policy; and
- (d) Identify at least three languages that the national department, national public entity or national public enterprise will use for government purposes.

### 5.2 Status of the SANC in terms of the Act

The “national public entities” and “national public enterprises” that are required by the Act to conform to the regulations as above, are listed in the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Schedules 1, 2, 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D. Since the SANC is not listed in the above schedules, the SANC does not fall under the Act and therefore the organisation is not required to adopt more than one official language.

However, as the custodian of nursing standards and education in South Africa and as a responsible, people-centric and service oriented organisation, the SANC will endeavour to promote access to information in South African languages other than its adopted language of engagement where practically possible and financially viable.

In this context, the SANC Language Policy sets out to provide details of the following:

- The selected official language (*language of engagement*) of business and communication to international entities, internal and external stakeholders and the general public; and the rationale behind this choice;
- The use of other official languages and the support for members and stakeholders that are speakers of languages other than the selected official language of engagement; and

- The recognition by the SANC of the diversity of its constituency and the public at large, and its commitment to promote inclusivity.

## 6. The nature of the services provided by the SANC

The South African Nursing Council is the body mandated to set and maintain standards of nursing education and practice in the Republic of South Africa. It is an autonomous, financially independent, statutory body, initially established by the *Nursing Act, 1944 (Act No. 45 of 1944)*, and currently operating under the *Nursing Act, 2005 (Act No. 33 of 2005)*.

In terms of section 3 of the Nursing Act, 2005, the Nursing Council is to establish, improve and control conditions, standards and quality of nursing education and training.

Section 4 of the Nursing Act makes provision for the accreditation and inspection of nursing education institutions, the monitoring of assessments conducted by accredited institutions, the conducting of nursing examinations, and the granting of diplomas and certificates.

Section 58(1)(f) of the Nursing Act, 2005 provides for the making of regulations relating to qualifications and the conditions to be complied with, which entitle a person to be registered as a nursing practitioner (education and training regulations).

**The South African Nursing Council is involved in the monitoring of nursing standards by:**

- registering nurse practitioners, therefore permitting them to practise as nurses;
- accreditation of new nursing education institutions and nursing education programmes;
- inspection of nursing education institutions and clinical facilities;
- constantly reviewing nursing education and training to be in line with the needs of the Republic of South Africa; and
- providing counselling and guidance to the nursing profession regarding the implementation of nursing education and training policies.

**The objectives of the South African Nursing Council are to:**

- promote the health standards of the inhabitants of the Republic of South Africa;
- control and exercise authority in respect of all matters affecting the education and training of all categories of nursing practitioners registered in terms of section 31(1)

- of the Nursing Act and any other category of nursing practitioners as created and promulgated by the Minister of Health in terms of section 31(2) of the Nursing Act;
- control and exercise authority in respect of the manner of practices pursued by all categories of nursing practitioners registered in terms of section 31(1) of the Nursing Act;
  - promote liaison of the education and training, and the manner of the exercise of the practices referred to above, both in the Republic of South Africa and elsewhere, and to promote the standards of such education and training and the manner of the exercise of such practices in the Republic;
  - advise the Minister of Health on any matter falling within the scope of the *Nursing Act, 2005*;
  - communicate to the Minister of Health information on matters of public importance acquired by the Council of the SANC in the course of the performance of its functions under the *Nursing Act, 2005*; and
  - advise the Minister of Health on the amendment or adaptation of the Nursing Act, 2005 so as to support the universal norms and values of the nursing profession and to place greater emphasis on professional practice, democracy, transparency, equity, accessibility, and community involvement.

## 7. The use of languages by the SANC

### 7.1 Background

South Africa is a multilingual country, with 11 (eleven) languages having been granted official status in terms of section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The official languages are isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu and isiSwati (referred to as the Nguni language group); Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana (referred to as the Sotho languages group); Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and Afrikaans. Language distribution in South Africa is as follows:

Language	Number of speakers*	% of total
IsiZulu	10 677 315	23.82
IsiXhosa	7 907 149	17.64
Afrikaans	5 983 420	13.50
Sesotho sa Leboa	4 208 974	9.39

Setswana	3 677 010	8.20
English	3 673 206	8.20
Sesotho	3 555 192	7.93
Xitsonga	1 992 010	4.44
SiSwati	1 194 433	2.66
Tshivenda	1 021 761	2.28
IsiNdebele	711 825	1.59
Other	217 291	0.48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44 819 777</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Census 2011

\*Spoken as a home language

## 7.2 Language of engagement

The official designated language of engagement of the SANC is ENGLISH. The rationale behind this choice is as follows:

- English is the primary language of Government and Commerce in South Africa;
- Educationally, it is a compulsory subject in all schools, and is the preferred medium of instruction in most schools and tertiary institutions - including Nursing Education Institutions (NEI's);
- Most South African citizens either speak English as a second language or have a working knowledge of the language;
- Foreign nursing practitioners seeking to practice nursing in the Republic of South Africa is required to provide an English proficiency certificate as proof of their ability to communicate verbally as well as in writing in English; and
- Internally, the reasons for adopting English as the main language of communication include the following:
  - Ensuring a standardised format to avoid confusion and misunderstanding on the part of our stakeholders and the general public;
  - Staff members are expected to be fully competent in English;
  - English is used for intra-governmental communication, including the Office of the Minister of Health, as well as the Department of Health; and
  - Cost effectiveness: reproducing the official work of the SANC in more than one language would necessitate an increase in personnel and would result in an additional financial burden.

### 7.3 The use of English by the SANC

#### Communication purpose and target audience:

- Inter-government communication (Government departments, public entities etc.);
- Internal communication (employees);
- Electronic communication (website, social media);
- Communication with members of the public (official written communication);
- Corporate publications of the SANC;
- All task directions and work directives will be provided in English. Employees engaged in team-related work efforts or project teams will be expected to communicate in English.
- All safety and security-related materials will be provided in English.
- All official meetings are conducted in English and the language of record and documentation related to meetings will be in English.

### 7.4 The use of other languages within the SANC

Although English will be the official *language of engagement* of the South African Nursing Council, the SANC will, where possible and financially viable, accommodate stakeholders and members of the public who are not competent in English as follows:

The Call Centre at the SANC, which is the main point of telephonic contact for members requiring information and with service-related queries, is staffed by officials able to converse in the Nguni and Sotho language groups and Afrikaans, in addition to English.

The SANC annually conducts provincial outreach visits across South Africa. Wherever possible, the SANC will endeavour for its Outreach team to include staff members able to converse in the main languages spoken in the region visited.

All participants at employee disciplinary hearings have the right to use any of the official South African languages (and South African Sign Language). A participant or employee at a disciplinary hearing must notify the SANC seven days prior to the commencement of the hearing that he/she will use a language other than English, to enable the SANC to provide translation.

All Defendants appearing before the Professional Conduct Committee of the Council are entitled to request an interpreter in the language of their choice as per the Nursing Act.

All nursing practitioners invited to appear before the Impairment Committee are entitled to request an interpreter in the language of their choice.

## 8. Principles

The SANC:

- Undertakes to support the Language Policy and its implementation in all business dealings;
- Undertakes to publish official documentation such as reports, brochures, regulations and electronic communication in reader-friendly language to accommodate the target audience;
- Employees having concerns or questions regarding this policy should address them to their line managers or the Human Resources Department.

## 9. Implementation

The implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of the Council of the SANC; while the Marketing and Communication Department will be the custodian of this Policy.

## 10. Access to the SANC Language Policy by members of the public

The SANC Language Policy will be available in English on the SANC website at <http://www.sanc.co.za>

## 11. Review

This policy should be reviewed every two years in conjunction with the Communication Committee, Language Editor and the Legal Department with final approval by the CEO and Communication Committee Chairperson.

## 12. Approval

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**Chairperson: Communication Committee**

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**Date**

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**Ms S Mchunu  
Acting Registrar**

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**Date**