

## Editorial

# The importance of embracing professional nursing organisations for career growth



Although the daily routine at a hospital or healthcare facility may seem repetitive, subtle changes are constantly occurring, gradually transforming the way nursing care is delivered and evolving the practice of all healthcare professionals. Do we truly recognise the vital importance of professional organisations in our daily practice and the future advancement of the nursing profession?

Do nurses know the difference between a professional organisation and a statutory organisation/regulatory body? The South African Nursing Council is our statutory organisation or regulatory body established by law to regulate our profession whereas "A professional organisation is a group of individuals from the same industry who come together to promote professional standards, provide resources, and support each other's career development".<sup>1</sup>

A professional nursing organisation promotes and advances their nursing specialist group by setting and enforcing standards, providing professional development and networking opportunities for its members, and often influencing public policy related to their domain.

Some of the **key reasons and benefits** to become a member include:

- **Professional Development:** Access to training sessions and educational events, publications, and the latest industry information helps members grow their expertise and adapt to evolving technology and health standards. It provides access to exclusive resources and sector-specific information which are essential for enhancing skills and staying current with health industry trends.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Members can meet mentors, experts, and peers to build relationships that support career growth, knowledge sharing, and collaborative ventures.

Membership also offers numerous networking opportunities through events, conferences, and online forums, allowing members to connect with peers, mentors, and industry leaders.

- **Credibility and Recognition:** Being part of a recognised professional nursing body enhances credibility, adds a stamp of quality to one's CV, signalling competence and dedication to continuous improvement.
- **Career Advancement:** Opportunities to hear about job openings, gain work experience, and attend industry-specific events support career progression. Additionally, membership demonstrates credibility and commitment to professionalism, which can be attractive to employers and clients.
- **Community and Support:** Membership fosters a sense of belonging with peers who share similar professional interests and values. Overall, joining a professional body boosts professional standards, supports continuous learning, and fosters a sense of community among like-minded professionals.
- **Leadership development:** Serving on the leadership structures of professional organisations is an important pathway to develop leadership skills in a safe environment with likeminded professionals. While this certainly takes time and effort on my own side without any remuneration, the wealth of experience and knowledge become priceless.

Members of a professional organisation have several **key responsibilities**, which generally align with promoting the organisation's mission and actively participating in its activities. These responsibilities include:

- **Advancing the Mission:** Members should actively promote and advocate for the organisation's core mission, representing it in a positive and ethical manner to the public and within their networks.
- **Active Participation:** Members are expected to attend meetings, participate in committees or task forces, follow through on assignments, and contribute to decision-making processes.
- **Support and Advocacy:** They should help raise awareness of the organisation's goals, remain paid-up members, and assist in recruitment and retention of new members.
- **Maintaining Confidentiality and Integrity:** Members must uphold confidentiality policies and maintain the organisation's reputation through ethical conduct and loyalty.

These responsibilities ensure the professional body functions effectively, remains credible, and serves the interests of its members and the wider community it impacts.

Frequently asked questions when promoting a professional nursing organisation include:

*1. What are the different types of professional nursing organisations?*

The organisations are mostly specialist group organisations with activities focused on enhancing their area of specialisation e.g. nursing leadership, nursing education and clinical specialists – neonatal, midwifery, critical care, operating room, orthopaedic and oncology nursing.

*2. Do professional organisations require membership fees?*

Most do. Fees typically fund events, publications, training, and administrative costs. Member benefits often outweigh the cost.

*3. Can professional organisations influence legislation?*

Yes, many professional associations engage in lobbying and advocacy to influence industry-related legislation and regulations.

This blend of resources, recognition, and relationships makes membership in a professional organisation a valuable investment for a successful and sustainable career. Being a member of a professional nursing organisation holds significant value for personal and career development. For individuals, joining a professional nursing organisation can be a powerful step toward advancing their careers.

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## Reference

1. Upcouncil. 2025. What is a professional organisation and how to form one. Accessible at <https://www.upcounsel.com/forming-a-professional-association>