

## IChemE in South Africa: 2019 onwards

### Background

IChemE exists to advance the contribution of chemical engineering worldwide for the benefit of society.

We can only achieve this goal by working with our key partners across the globe. Over the past decade, we have entered into several agreements with national entities that have explored how, by working together, we are able to advance the knowledge and practice of chemical engineers.

In 2014, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with our sister body the South African Institution of Chemical Engineers (SAIChE). This agreement created a joint SAIChE and IChemE membership under a single subscription. The agreement allowed joint members access to IChemE and SAIChE member resources and included the options to professionally register as a CEng with the Engineering Council, or as a PrEng with Engineering Council South Africa (ECSA). The agreement expired at the end of July 2019.

In the IChemE Annual Review 2017, published in May 2018, I advised that one of my first moves as Chief Executive was to review the Institution's registration processes and ensure that we operated them in a fair and consistent manner. This comprised a variety of measures including; addressing the length of time that it took to lapse a member for non-payment, through to ensuring that subscription rates were consistently applied across the globe, and as a minimum were sufficient to cover costs. I also highlighted that we had been operating international agreements with some of our partners that were not delivering in-line with these expectations and therefore needed to be reshaped. This included the Institution's relationship with SAIChE.

Since then, IChemE has been working with SAIChE to review our collaborative arrangements. New arrangements are now being put in place, coming into effect in line with the 2020 annual subscription run which begins in Q4 2019.

Whilst the new collaborative arrangements respect each organisation's subtle but important differences, the outcome will be a move towards closer collaboration than ever before.

### New arrangements

The below briefly outlines key aspects of the new arrangements for members in South Africa or members of SAIChE based outside of South Africa.

- **Membership of IChemE:** IChemE's standard membership offering is available to all members, globally. Arrangements between IChemE and SAIChE have no bearing on this as SAIChE is an independent third-party.
- **Membership of SAIChE:** IChemE provide a full membership service to SAIChE which includes maintaining its membership roll. Those who wish to be a member of SAIChE will be required to hold membership of IChemE. The cost of membership will be at the IChemE rate applicable to a member's grade and domicile. There will be no additional charge for membership of SAIChE.
- **Membership applications:** IChemE's online membership application system should be used to apply to join IChemE, or to apply for a new grade of membership. Those who wish to be a member of SAIChE should apply to join IChemE in the first instance. As IChemE operate the SAIChE membership roll it will not be possible to be a member of SAIChE without joining and maintaining membership of IChemE.

- Being a member of SAIChE based outside of South Africa: Existing SAIChE members are recorded on a SAIChE membership roll on the IChemE database. Being based outside of South Africa does not impact this. Those wishing to join or be removed from the SAIChE membership roll should contact [saiche@icheme.org](mailto:saiche@icheme.org).
- Member Group support: The Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape Members Groups had access to IChemE staff support under the previous agreement and this will continue.
- Governance: An IChemE National Board is being created in South Africa to connect the membership in the country with IChemE's broader programme of activity, through a standardised structure. Governance of SAIChE will be separate but the two bodies will work closely to deliver activity locally.
- Engineering Council South Africa (ECSA): SAIChE will continue to work with ECSA as a Voluntary Association to serve the profession in South Africa.
- 2020 Annual subscription rates: All members globally will pay a rate, set by IChemE, to IChemE. At the time of writing the 2020 rates have not been announced but the below comparison, based on the 2019 rates, indicates how the revised rates will affect members in South Africa.

Rate band	SAIChE 2019	GBP @ 18.2*	IChemE 2019	Diff.
Fellow	2360	129.67	188.00	+58.33
Associate Fellow	2360	129.67	141.00	+11.33
Chartered Member	2175	119.51	150.00	+30.49
Associate Member	2175	119.51	104.00	-15.51
Technician Member	2175	119.51	70.00	-49.51
Affiliate	2175	119.51	70.00	-49.51
Reduced rate (Retired, unemployed, etc)	1095	60.16	40.00	-20.16
Postgraduate Rate	880	48.35	25.00	-23.35

\*the exchange rate SAIChE and IChemE agreed for 2019.

- Why are some members being asked to pay more? IChemE and SAIChE both wish to advance chemical engineering's contribution to society by supporting the development of chemical engineering professionals. We require income from membership subscriptions to deliver this and our rates reflect the increasing value of membership as individuals progress to a higher grade. To ensure we do not impose financial barriers on aspiring members, our rates also reflect the likely differing affordability for members in different grades.
- MechChem Africa: *MechChem Africa* is a third-party publication which SAIChE members have been receiving. SAIChE pay the MechChem Africa publishers, Crown Publications, for a double page spread in each publication and for hard copies to be mailed to members. For members in South Africa to receive this as an additional member benefit is not equitable to other members, particularly as IChemE can provide access to other communication channels without incurring a significant cost. SAIChE's leadership have, therefore, taken the decision to discontinue their association with the MechChem Africa magazine. Members who still wish to read the publication can visit [www.crown.co.za/mechchem-africa](http://www.crown.co.za/mechchem-africa) where digital issues are publicly available.

### **New arrangements – IChemE’s perspective**

The 2014 agreement between SAIChE and IChemE, whilst it resulted in an increase to IChemE’s total membership numbers, it saw a significant reduction in IChemE’s per member income in the country which ultimately mean the arrangements are unsustainable.

In recent years IChemE have been delivering a bespoke annual subscription process for members in South Africa, with payments being made to SAIChE in ZAR. As the IChemE seeks to become more efficient so that it can maximise member value, operating bespoke processes such as this are not sustainable or scalable.

Through the collaboration agreement, rates have in South Africa have been set by the SAIChE Council rather the IChemE Board of Trustees. The difference in rates has not been equitable to IChemE members in other countries.

As part of Strategy 2024, IChemE is restructuring its business architecture and investing significant resource in creating the infrastructure that can support its operations with greater equity. It is recognised that there will be some variables in different geographies that are relatively fixed, and it is our intention to accommodate these where possible providing that core operations are standardised. This approach ensures we have an operating model that is sustainable and scalable across the globe. Having discussed Strategy 2024 with SAIChE’s leadership we are delighted that the profession in South Africa will continue to be part of our professional community.

### **New arrangements – SAIChE’s perspective**

“SAIChE signed the 2014 agreement as we recognised that we had reached a level at which, as is typical with organisations of our size, it would require a change of approach for us to progress further. To realise SAIChE’s aspirations of a larger, more engaged professional community in South Africa, whom we were able to provide a greater level of service to, we needed to establish a more robust infrastructure and provide our volunteers with the support of paid staff. To create this requires a long-term plan, financial investment and is a significant task for volunteers to deliver alongside their personal and professional commitments. Working with IChemE, however, we had the opportunity to access infrastructure and support staff immediately. Since 2014 we have benefited from our relationship with IChemE but there have been challenges for both parties. Having developed a better understanding of each other’s needs in recent years the restructuring of our relationship is an opportunity to implement lessons learnt, providing a stronger platform from which we can support the delivery of Strategy 2024 and truly deliver on the sentiment of the original agreement.”

David Lokhat, SAIChE President

If you have any questions regarding SAIChE-IChemE please email [saiche@icheme.org](mailto:saiche@icheme.org).

Jon Prichard  
Chief Executive

27 September 2019