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Actuarial Society Update – January 2021

ASSA 2021 Calendar

With uncertainties concerning the lockdown restrictions through 2021 and our determination to maximise on the benefits of both physical and online events, the events calendar – especially the venues for events – is not finalised. The dates and venues published here are provisional and are subject to changes. All changes will be reflected on the calendar on the ASSA website as soon as they are confirmed (https://www.actuarialsociety.org.za/calendar/) and reported in future Updates.

Event	Date	Venue
Seminars		
Life (Jhb)	7 May	Johannesburg
Life (CT)	14 May	Cape Town
Health	21 April	Johannesburg
Investments		
Retirement		
Short term	2 September	Johannesburg
Risk Mgt	6 August	Johannesburg
Banking	May (date TBC)	Johannesburg
Education		
Wider fields	11 June	Johannesburg
Alternative investments	25 August	Johannesburg
Public interest	10 June	Pretoria
Insurance data science	13 September	Johannesburg
IAA meetings	May 11 – 15 October	Virtual Seoul, South Korea (TBC)
AGM	23 June	
Convention		
Africa seminar		
A1/A2 & F106 exams	12 – 23 April 13 – 28 September	
A311 exams	06 & 07 May 11 & 12 October	
N211 exam	11 May TBC	
F2 exams	20 (F202) & 21 May 18 (F202) & 19 Oct	

ACTUARIAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Event	Date	Venue
F1 exams (excl F106)	02 – 11 June TBC	

Exam registrations open during February (check the calendar for dates for different subject groups (https://www.actuarialsociety.org.za/calendar/).

Membership renewals

Members who have not yet renewed their membership for 2021 are urged to do so urgently as this was due by the start of the year. https://login.actuarialsociety.org.za/account/login. Please contact the Member engagement team if you have any queries about the renewal process: memberservices@actuarialsociety.org.za.

Fellow and Associate members can complete their CPD certification for the year at the same time. The deadline for CPD submission is 31 March 2021.

End of an era

After 20 years with ASSA based at UCT and, before that, more than 10 working with the actuarial team at Southern Life, **Irene Petrony** will be leaving ASSA at the end of March 2021.

Irene has supported, guided and encouraged hundreds of students as they have laboured over their exams or worked to complete their degrees with many remaining in contact with her many years after they qualified. There are many who credit a frank but empathetic discussion with Irene as a pivotal moment in their careers when their fortunes changed and their exam results started to improve. Colleagues who have worked with her, describe her as caring, patient, humble, empathetic, friendly, loyal, compassionate, understanding, elegant and totally trustworthy.

It is a testament to Irene's success in this role that we are now focusing on providing a level of support to students in actuarial programmes at all ASSA accredited universities.

Members are invited to contribute to a volume of memories for Irene by sending their reminiscences to Nicky September (nseptember@actuarialsociety.org.za).

Convention chair

Marcé Marx will be stepping down as chair of the convention committee after the 2021 convention. In order to ensure a smooth transition to the 2022 convention, the next chair will shadow Marce through 2021. Any members interested in succeeding Marce as convention chair must email their applications to Jo Coetzee (jcoetzee@actuarialsociety.org.za) by 8 February. Recent experience on the convention organising committee is strongly recommended for this role.

Members wishing to join the committee for the 2021 convention are also invited to contact Jo. Please make it explicitly clear on your application whether you are applying for membership of the committee or for the role of chair of the committee.

Debates and discussions

The debates and discussions amongst actuaries concerning corona virus highlighted the wide range of opinions and analytical approaches within the profession. While this is not the first issue to attract such diverse opinions and methods, it is the first in the full glare of the media, social media and public discourse.

More importantly, it will not be the last as potentially contentious issues like the National Health Insurance System, Road Accident Fund, land reform, vaccination policies and others will continue to rage in Society and within the profession. It is important that members can express divergent views in a manner that is respectful and enhances the standing of the profession and that we can continue to give sound professional advice and modelling that can support decision makers as they navigate these challenges.

It is important that all engagements be consistent with the standards set out in the code of professional conduct. The following broad guidelines should help ensure an appropriately respectful level of discourse that enhances the standing of the profession:

- Deal with the issues in a respectful manner.
- Do not resort to personal attacks or abusive language.
- Be willing to explain your methods and assumptions.
- Be open to challenges to your approach or conclusions.
- Be willing to learn from others – especially those who reach different conclusions.
- Offer others the same respect that you believe is due to you.

The Public Interest Governance Committee is developing a guidance document for members engaging the public interest debates. Should you have any queries, please contact Niel Fourie (nfourie@actuarialsociety.org.za).

Empowering new members to succeed

The ASSA Rage programme has attracted a record number of attendees with 156 attending the Induction programme and an additional 114 on the Workshop Wednesday. This Induction programme covers core office skills as well as motivation from icons of the profession and guidance on the adaptation from full time study to work and study. The Workshop Wednesday had 114 participants who attended workshops on skills as diverse as R coding, data analytics, study and exam techniques, CV's and job interviews and adapting to the "new normal".

Workshop Wednesday was made possible due to sponsorship from 4 significant actuarial employers – Discovery, Liberty, Old Mutual and Sanlam.

We emerge from the challenges of 2020 to face the challenges and opportunities of 2021. I wish you every success as you embrace those challenges and opportunities.

Regards

Mike McDougall

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