

AFROTEQ ACADEMY CONTINUES TO GROW FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Recently launched OCFM course attracts learners from different industries and career levels



Interest in Afroteq Academy's recently launched **Occupational Certificate in Facilities Management (OCFM)** continues to grow and attract learners from a wide range of different industries, ages and career levels. Despite facing challenges such as the COVID-19 lockdown that was announced shortly after the first group of students enrolled at the beginning of last year, Afroteq Academy has successfully enrolled four groups of learners for this course, with the 5th intake being planned for April 2021.

About the OCFM Course

The OCFM is a two-year course, NQF level 6, outcomes-based programme that was designed specifically for the industry, by the industry. The content is targeted at professionals who have already gained experience in the FM field, e.g., building managers, facilities coordinators, maintenance managers, project managers and technical managers, but who need the formal qualification to take them to the next level.

Afroteq Academy was part of a team of FM experts who started developing the training content for the Occupational Certificate in 2018. They were the first FM training company to offer this qualification after the South African Facilities Management Association (SAFMA) registered it with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupation (QCTO), enrolling the first group of learners at the beginning of 2020.



According to **Portia Mkhabela**, Manager at the Afroteq Academy, the strategy for programme delivery is to ensure that learners are able to apply the outcomes-based knowledge directly to their workplace after each module, and that they are supported throughout their study period. Content is delivered in a classroom facility or via a stable, online e-learning and training platform.

Requirements for entry to the OCFM are training up to NQF level 4 or equivalent, Introduction to FM and a minimum of four years' experience in the FM environment. Each module is presented over a period of 5 days per module (10 days for module 4).

Creating opportunities for career advancement

“Facilities Management has become highly specialised and competitive in recent years. It is a fast-growing profession with exciting career opportunities around the world. Trained and qualified FM Managers are in high demand and we therefore took great pains to ensure that the course content is applicable to international best practices and standards. One of our primary objectives in designing this qualification was to ensure that occupations in the facilities management industry are seen to be viable career options and attractive to new entrants to the market. Today, we are proud to say that we are offering an occupational qualification that not only equips industry leaders with skills and knowledge that are practical, cutting-edge and relevant to our own socio-economic context, but is also internationally recognised and applicable. This plays an important role in enhancing the role and responsibility of facilities managers in South Africa, by elevating it from operational to strategic importance in the organisation,” Portia says.

She reports a marked increase in the number of individuals who are enrolling themselves for the course, as opposed to the more traditional approach of companies paying for their staff members to further their studies and improve their qualifications. Portia attributes this to the fact that learners are recognising the value of the qualification and the doors it is able to open for them in the future.

Impact of COVID-19 on Facilities Management

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the delivery of FM services. The OCFM course has therefore been expanded to address changes in operations and strategies as a result of the pandemic and includes a new component which relates to the National Disaster Act and the Communicable Diseases Act. It also includes practical examples and theory of how FM services were flexible and adaptable to provide a safe, healthy and hygienic environment.

The learners have spoken

“The uptake for this course has exceeded our wildest expectations. Many of the learners have enrolled as a result of word of mouth, or are repeat business from companies who have sent their employees on courses in the past. Afroteq Academy has become a trusted brand in the industry with facilitators who are held in high regard. As a result, we are now seeing learners from a wide range of different industries, ages and backgrounds – ranging from facilities management and property, to government departments and parastatals, regulatory councils, chartered accountants and even IT. They also hold a wide variety of positions, such as operations directors, FM directors, senior facilities managers, team leaders, junior facilities managers, handymen and procurement managers,” Portia says.

Feedback received from these students confirm that they find the course informative, relevant and easy to grasp. Evidence from workplace integration ensures there is no delay in implementing and monitoring new best practices and processes, while designated mentors guide the learners to ensure they meet the highest standard. Feedback received from the students include:

- “I have learned many new things that have allowed me to adapt my way of thinking”
- “The group discussions made me understand more of the topic. I enjoyed learning more about the industry in which I work”.
- “The facilitator was excellent. She used real-time examples which helped us complete group exercises and achieve the required outcome”
- “The facilitator is well-informed on the FM industry and made sure everyone was involved and contributed in the group”

Register now for April intake

“We are seeing great results from learners who are being impacted with new skills, important knowledge transfer and who are experiencing growth on a personal and professional level. We are inviting learners interested in enrolling in the course to contact us as soon as possible. Applications for the April intake will close on Thursday, 8 April 2021. The course will commence on Monday, 12 April 2021. This is a valuable investment in your future and our industry that will continue to bear fruit for many years to come,” Portia concludes.

For more information visit www.afroteqacademy.co.za/qctofm or call 086 099 5396
E-mail enquiries can be directed to info@afroteqacademy.co.za

Afroteq Academy is ISO9001:2015 and ISO45001:2018 certified and endorsed and accredited by the South African Facilities Management Association (SAFMA), The South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE), Project Management South Africa (PMSA) and the South African Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (SAIOSH).