

# MoU boosts welding sector's technology credentials

A new technology and data sharing collaboration between the Southern African Institute of Welding (SAIW) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) will develop the role of welding in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), and boost the contribution of this scarce skill to rebuilding the South African economy.



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The memorandum of understanding (MoU) aims to merge CSIR development work within the 4IR technology sphere with the welding expertise and reach of the SAIW. The collaboration will see the SAIW feed the wealth of its welding-related knowledge and data into CSIR technologies to drive ongoing improvements. “As the world is propelled forward by technological innovation, the agreement is designed to scope the current and future landscape of our sector and utilise technology pilot projects to educate, support and ultimately advance welding for the future,” says SAIW executive director, John Tarboton.

## Hands-on learning

“Working with training institutions such as the SAIW, we aim to introduce 4IR technologies in a simple yet inclusive manner, and clearly illustrate the scope of innovation and growth in a range of manufacturing and fabrication sectors in which welding plays such a crucial role,” says Dr Ajith Gopal, acting cluster executive manager, CSIR future production: manufacturing.

“We are currently establishing a Learning Factory platform at the CSIR, designed to expose attendees to 4IR technologies and learnings that will open their minds to the potential of these technologies in their fields of study or places of work. The MoU will allow SAIW students to visit the Learning Factory and experience these 4IR technologies first hand,” he adds.

## Data mining

Elaborating on the importance of the knowledge and expertise that the SAIW brings to the table, Tarboton describes data as the “new gold standard”. For example, one of the projects that could form part of this new collaboration is the development of a specially designed app that will utilise 4IR technology to scan welds and provide useful feedback to students and fabricators in terms of their quality and areas of improvement.

“Overall we see our MoU with the CSIR as the start of a process of pinpointing knowledge and innovation touchpoints that

will provide an opportunity for broader industrial skills development as well as showcase technology-based training techniques already developed and in use, such as the SAIW's current robotic welding facilitation," he says.

## **Robotic welding**

"We are currently spearheading our new look robotic welding course, which will start in April 2021, and has been specially designed to equip students with the necessary skills to manage all aspects of a robotic welding operation by giving them the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge of this particular welding technology.

The course offers a broader career path for students by serving as a stepping stone to more advanced robotic welder training through its technology partners and is the perfect example of innovation being very much part of the institute's DNA," " Tarboton says.

To find out more about the robotic welding course or the SAIW's approach to innovation please email [info@saiw.co.za](mailto:info@saiw.co.za)

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