



**SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL
FOR THE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION**

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MENTOR AND CANDIDATE GUIDELINE DOCUMENT

**FOR THE
SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR THE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION
(SACLAP)**

Date: April 2011

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1.0 GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES

1.1 Introduction

To become a registered SACLAP professional, a candidate must undergo a minimum two (2) year mentored candidacy under a SACLAP registered professional.

A candidate will need to develop clear and distinct ownership of his/her learning and development.

The candidate will learn 'on the job' – how to work most effectively on his/her own, as a team and with his/her mentor. The process should be ongoing and develop all the time.

1.2 Becoming a Candidate

To register as a SACLAP candidate the section in the SACLAP Registration Policy that can be found on the website (www.saclap.org.za/downloads/registration) is to be followed. The application process differs pending on each individual's qualifications and experience.

The entry approach would be to supply the Registrar with the following information to the address provided on the website:

- a. Complete the **application form** that is found on the website (www.saclap.org.za) and return a completed copy to the Secretariat / Registrar
- b. A certified copy of the applicant's **qualification certificate(s)**
- c. A certified copy of Identification Document
- d. A detailed **Curriculum Vitae**.
- e. A **letter from the applicant's mentor** confirming that he/she is willing to mentor the candidate for the candidacy period.

The registered candidate will be informed in writing of their registration as a candidate, the category of registration and the way forward will be set out. An invoice will be forwarded to the applicant in due course.

1.3 Choosing a mentor

A registered Candidate is required to be mentored. A mentor must be appropriately qualified and experienced according to the section below.

A mentor will be the person a candidate will mostly discuss areas for professional development and who will review the candidate's progress and ultimately make recommendations regarding the candidate's "readiness" to go forward to the professional registration examinations.

Candidates tend to choose a mentor who is either their manager or their employer. The benefits of this include the following:

- The mentor has an interest in furthering the candidate's professional development as a member of the organization.
- The candidate will naturally be in regular contact with the mentor as part of his/her work.
- The candidate may already have a working relationship with his/her mentor and know them well.
- Because the candidate is part of the same organization as the mentor, issues of business confidentiality should not arise.

Should the candidate change employers in the candidacy period the Registrar is to be informed accordingly and the candidates mentor confirmed to SACLAP i.e. the Registrar.

Some candidates, may be self-employed or in situations where they are not employed by a registered professional and will need to find a suitably qualified and experienced mentor. The same characteristics of the mentor as stated below are required for such individuals. If unable to find a mentor himself or herself, the candidate should approach the SACLAP secretariat for assistance.

The same mentor does not necessarily need to be kept for the entire candidacy period. The Registrar is to be informed in writing if the mentor changes together with a short explanation.

1.4 Responsibilities of a Candidate

The candidate is responsible for their own learning and professional development.

The candidate needs to:

- Initiate and organize regular meetings with the mentor
- Prepare for the meeting and think about the topics that need to be discussed and questions that may require answers.
- Prepare in advance to discuss current knowledge and experience in relation to the core competency table.
- Consider what the next step(s) will be in his/her progress as candidate.
- Consider how to deal with problems should they arise, develop an approach which is open and direct so difficulties can be dealt with clearly.
- Ask questions and seek clarification.
- Value the time that the mentor has available and use it wisely.
- Be clear about needs to achieve before the next meeting.
- Be open-minded about new challenges, ways of learning and working practices.
- Actively seek out ways of learning - arrange study groups with peers; visit other practices; attend study courses; set up a routine of planned study/reading; visit other projects; ask questions of other professionals with whom you come into contact; etc.

1.5 Expectations of a Candidate

The candidate is responsible for his/her own learning and professional development.

- You should expect to be responsible for your active learning from the outset.
- You should expect support and encouragement.
- You should expect to develop professionally and personally through your own initiative.
- You should expect to benefit from the knowledge and experience of your mentor.
- You should expect to make mistakes and learn from them.
- You should expect to work hard on developing your strengths and addressing your weaknesses.

1.6 What you should not expect as a Candidate:

- Don't expect to be given easy solutions to problems.
- Don't expect to be told what to do – expect to work out a course of action with your mentor.

2 GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

2.1 Introduction

There is an obligation on all registered landscape architectural professionals to mentor and support recent graduates and less experienced individuals in the profession over which they have a professional or employment responsibility.

Mentors are required to consider whether or not they are able to take on the roles and responsibilities expected of them by SACLAP.

There are direct benefits to mentoring, including the opportunity to:

- consolidate your own learning, knowledge and experience,
- learn from candidates,
- impart your valuable knowledge and experience and
- earn CPD points.

2.2 What is a mentor

A mentor is someone who helps candidates to develop professional skills and ethics. Using his/her experience, a mentor guides the candidate forward in terms of professional development while helping to develop the candidate's potential and equip him/her for the future. Within the process, the Mentor will be responsible for guiding the candidate or candidates through a very important period in their development including developing attitudes, strategies and skills that will shape his/her future as a professional. Mentors will help candidates deal with new challenges, provide a role model, discover and develop the candidate's abilities, help him/her negotiate difficult situations and steer him/her towards ways of working which will form the foundation for a successful career.

2.3 Becoming a mentor

To qualify as a mentor, one needs to be a SACLAP registered professional, for a minimum of three (3) years, in an equivalent or higher registration category than the candidate.

As a mentor one is encouraged to assist the candidate with gaining professional skills in all categories of Professional Practice, Landscape Architectural Process and Public Realm Design and Environmental Planning Process. Refer to the SACLAP Core Competency Document for the details of each aspect ([www:saclap.org.za/downloads/registration](http://www.saclap.org.za/downloads/registration)).

As a mentor your responsibility is to guide your candidate to ownership of and responsibility for their learning process as part of an ongoing and supportive relationship.

2.4 Responsibility of a mentor

The mentor plays a key role in the context of the registration process.

The mentor is not responsible for the success or failure of the candidate and must make an honest appraisal when signing the Annual Logbook ([www:saclap.org.za/downloads/registration](http://www.saclap.org.za/downloads/registration)) and advising SACLAP on a candidate's exam eligibility. The mentors' responsibility lies in facilitating the Candidate's ownership of and responsibility of his/her own active learning during the process, and pointing them in the right direction when required. This is part of an ongoing and supportive relationship.

The minimum time required for candidates to gain experience under a registered SACLAP professional is two (2) calendar years or twenty four (24) working months from the date of employment (either by a co-worker that meets the requirements or a mentor elsewhere). This experience is to be substantiated by the submission of annual logbooks, annual detailed CV and portfolio (at the end of the two year candidacy). The candidate CV and logbook (signed off by the mentor) must be submitted with the Registrar in the month of November of each candidacy year.

The mentor needs to:

- Assess and understand the candidate's knowledge and experience in relation to the Core Competency Table. See "Assessing Candidates Knowledge" below.
- Consider how to best help the candidate take responsibility for and ownership of their active learning process.
- Allow enough time for the initial and subsequent meetings with the candidate.
- Think about targets and objectives for meetings with the candidate.
- Allow the candidate to ask questions.
- Be open and honest with the candidate.
- Address difficulties objectively and as soon as they arise.
- Use open questions to allow the candidate to give a full picture of his/her knowledge and experience.
- Create an appropriate atmosphere for evaluation and progress reporting for the candidate.

2.5 Expectations of a mentor

- To ACTIVELY LISTEN to candidates responses.
- To see your candidate on a regular basis.
- To be open and honest with your candidate.
- To guide your candidate in the process towards the professional registration examination.
- To provide clear aims, targets and boundaries, which are established in conjunction with the candidate.
- To maintain a confidential relationship.
- Be available for an in depth quarterly meeting and review with candidate, and available for ongoing questions and advise.

2.6 What you should not expect:

- To provide your candidate with answers all the time.
- A challenge free mentorship.
- Minimal involvement while the candidate progresses in his/her candidacy.

2.7 Administrative tasks of a mentor

The mentor of a candidate is required to:

- On commencement, sign a letter of acceptance of responsibility to guide the candidate to a level of competence as defined by SACLAP's Core Competency Table.
- Review and sign off the candidates Annual Logbook.
- On completion of a candidate's two (2) year internship, write a confidential letter to the Registrar advising of the candidate's suitability and eligibility, in all aspects, to sit the professional exam and if successful, becoming and practicing as a registered professional.

2.8 Assessing the candidate's knowledge

In making an assessment of a candidate's progress the mentor should:

- Review all areas of experience thoroughly with the candidate based on the core competencies required.
- Be objective about the standards expected from the candidate in relation to the levels of knowledge and understanding.
- Talk to other mentors about how standards are assessed.
- Use a variety of questions and allow the candidate to discuss and describe his/her experience as freely and fully as possible.
- Be consistent in the approach.

The aim is to assess, as fully as possible, the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate in relation to the Core Competencies. As a mentor, you have a responsibility to guide the candidate through the experience process and establish a path to their registration.

Both mentor and candidate need to be thorough and honest in assessing the candidate's level of knowledge and experience in relation to the Core Competency Table.

3.0 GROUND RULES FOR MENTORS AND CANDIDATES

3.1 Trust and confidentiality

This is vital to the ongoing good nature of the relationship. Always make sure that you are completely clear about your responsibilities and roles with everyone concerned. Care should be taken when discussing matters regarding a candidate-mentor relationship with persons outside that relationship. Before the first meeting, candidates should take time to think about what the boundaries of the relationship should be and then discuss those limits in the initial meetings. If you choose an external mentor, be aware that there will be issues of business confidentiality, competition or sensitivity in discussing the business in which you are placed with someone outside that business. CONFIDENTIALITY BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND WITH SACLAP IS TO BE UPHOLD AT ALL TIMES.

3.2 Time

The mentor as well as the candidate's time is valuable. The responsibility for managing time effectively and efficiently lies with the candidate. The mentor has a responsibility to ensure that they give adequate time to meetings but it is the candidate who is responsible for arranging the meetings, organizing a venue, getting the most from the available time etc. Some candidates and mentors may feel that a regular meeting of a fixed duration is the best way to proceed while others may want a less formal arrangement.

3.3 Place

Quarterly meetings will need a setting, which gives you enough time and space for an in-depth conversation with documents on hand. However, more informal meetings might be almost anywhere. The candidate should approach every opportunity as a learning experience.

3.4 Recording

There are certain formal procedures to do with recording achievement and outcomes. These are to be as accurate as possible.