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FOR THE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION**

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EDUCATION POLICY

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

FINAL

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1. KEY TERMINOLOGY

Accredit - The process of evaluation and recognition by the SACLAP of educational programs offered by educational institutions relating to the landscape architectural profession, and accreditation has a corresponding meaning

Assessment - Each criterion has one or more questions that seek qualitative and quantitative evidence used to assess the level of compliance with or achievement of the related criteria.

First Professional Program - A first professional program encompasses the body of knowledge common to the profession and promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary to enter the professional practice of landscape architecture i.e. at the bachelor's level in a context enriched by the liberal arts and natural and social sciences and at the master's level by providing instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.

Competency/Criteria: Each criterion requires qualitative evidence, and in some cases also quantitative evidence, to demonstrate an acceptable level of performance. Such performance is to be demonstrated by a combination of:

- Student work outcomes;
- Documented curriculum content;
- Review of documentation of internal reviews;
- Interviews with the students, lecturers and administrator by the accreditation panel;
- Documented assessment events;
- Demonstrated active participation leading to documented outcomes;
- Other documented evidence-based indicators.

Compliance - Achieved when the SACLAP EC concludes, after review of relevant indicators or other evidence, that a standard is met or met with recommendation as defined below. To achieve accreditation a program must demonstrate to the SACLAP EC, through the Self Evaluation Report, site visit, and technical accuracy review by the visiting Accreditation Panel, that it complies with all standards.

Course: A discrete package of instruction, or a unit, within an academic programme.

Course outline: The written description of the scope, inclusions, timetable or learning schedule, assessment criteria, and expectations of students completing the course.

Curriculum: The planned and documented learning experiences of the students in the programme, includes a description of the programme plus the course outlines for all courses in the programme.

Criteria - Each standard has one or more criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard. Not satisfying a criterion does not automatically lead to an assessment of a standard as 'not met'. To be accredited a program demonstrates progress towards meeting the criteria

Intent - Explains the purpose of the standard.

Observer - any person or body as allowed by the SACLAP EC to sit in on all reviews and meetings during the accreditation process but which has no say or influence in the final decision of an accreditation other than to confirm that the accreditation process has been followed duly and fairly.

Programme - An inclusive term for the coursework and other learning experiences leading to a qualification and the supporting administration, faculty, facilities and services which sponsor and provide those experiences leading to graduation of students.

Programme Head/Director: The academic responsible for management and academic leadership of the programme.

Recommendation Affecting Accreditation - Are issues of serious concern, directly affecting the quality of the program. Recommendations are derived from the identified areas of weakness in meeting a standard that are described in the rationale sections of the visiting team report. The program is

required to report progress regularly on these issues. Recommendations Affecting Accreditation identifies issues, and do not prescribe solutions.

Shall - is defined as mandatory.

Should - is defined as prescriptive.

Standards - Qualitative statements of the essential conditions that an accredited program must meet. A program must demonstrate adequate evidence of compliance with all standards to achieve accreditation.

Standard Met - Evidence shows that overall program performance in this area meets the SACLAP EC's minimum standards. A standard may be judged as met even though one or more indicators are not minimally met.

Standard Met With Recommendation - Deficiencies exist in an area directly bearing on accreditation. The problem or problems have observable effects on the overall quality of the program.

Standard Not Met - Cited deficiency is so severe that the overall quality of the program is compromised and the program's ability to deliver adequate landscape architecture education is impaired.

Suggestions for Improvement - Areas where the program can build on strengths or address areas of concern that do not directly affect accreditation at the time of the Accreditation review.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE POLICY CONTEXT

As the professional body mandated in providing accreditation for the landscape architectural institutions programmes in terms of Section 13 of the Landscape Architectural Profession Act 45 of 2000, the South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (SACLAP) Education Committee (EC) is committed to the importance of quality university and university of technology education as being the essential pathway into the landscape architectural professions. Accreditation is a non-governmental, voluntary system of monitoring and review of education, in which programmes and/or institutions are benchmarked against specified requirements for the education of professionals. There is typically a high degree of self evaluation and self regulation, which is overseen by an accrediting body or organisation that represents the profession that is served by the educational programme. The SACLAP EC's Education Policy provides the framework whereby the SACLAP EC evaluates, advocates for, and advances the quality of education through professionally recognised programmes.

The SACLAP EC through its accreditation processes aims to advance measurable levels of knowledge, skills and abilities sufficient for graduates to enter the landscape architectural professions ready to begin a period of mentorship through their employment. At the same time the SACLAP working closely with its accredited institutions, ensures that the initial education and training provided for the landscape architectural professions of the future remains challenging, exciting and relevant to the needs of the workplace.

A clear distinction needs to be made between the SACLAP Core Competencies and the Education Outcomes of the educational institutions. The SACLAP Core Competencies are the benchmark by which candidates after a minimum of two years professional experience and the required qualifications are evaluated against in order to meet the minimum requirements for professional registration in the prescribed category of registration. The Education Outcomes on the other hand is informed by the learning outcomes of a registered qualification on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and complying fully with the rules and regulations as stipulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

The SACLAP EC has in place a committee to oversee and to inform the accreditation of landscape architectural programmes and related programmes and courses. A core feature of the accreditation framework is the Education Standards generated by the SACLAP EC that have been developed to guide the evaluation of landscape architectural programmes. The SACLAP welcomes applications from institutions who wish to seek accreditation for their courses and from existing institutions who wish to extend their accreditation.

1.2. SACLAP EC'S SUITE OF DOCUMENTS

The SACLAP EC's suite of documents outline the SACLAP's requirements for professional recognition of Landscape Architectural tertiary education programmes throughout South Africa and comprise four (4) documents to be read in conjunction with each other.

- The **Education Policy** document sets out the SACLAP EC's education aims with regard to the programmes and courses.
- The **Education Standards** document describes the specific standards expected by the SACLAP from accredited landscape architectural programmes.
- The **Accreditation Procedures** outlines SACLAP EC's expectations of the programmes in relation to the SACLAP Accreditation Committee panel reviews and visits.
- The **Self Evaluation Report Format**, outlines the manner in which the self evaluation of institutions is to be prepared prior to the visit by the SACLAP Accreditation Panel

The SACLAP EC, in partnership with the profession and educational institutions, shall regularly update the Standards to ensure that they allow for a basis for flexible and innovative approaches to the delivery of education and to allow for the diversity and changing nature of the profession in South Africa.

The SACLAP EC has committed to the accreditation processes for particular programs because the SACLAP EC:

- Recognizes that the future of the landscape architectural profession in South Africa depends fundamentally on the quality of the tertiary education programmes available;
- Acknowledges the key role of educators within the landscape architectural profession in South Africa;
- Works in partnership with the tertiary institutions to achieve the shared goal of maintaining the highest possible standards of tertiary education for future landscape architectural professionals;
- Believes that accreditation of landscape architectural programmes plays an important function in maintaining an appropriate standard of education for students of the programmes while providing for diversity and innovation within the programmes;
- Encourages and supports the tertiary programmes in the provision of a standard of education that effectively prepares students for their profession of landscape architecture;
- Encourages links and partnerships across the spectrum of education and research activities that relate to the landscape architectural profession;
- Recognises that the landscape architectural profession gains by continually advancing standards of knowledge and competency and recognising innovation within programme delivery.

1.3. LINK BETWEEN STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

Linked with the Education Policy and the Accreditation Standards documents is the Accreditation Procedures, a document which sets out the required documentation and procedures for accreditation, re-accreditation or validation and biennial reporting required of the institutions and SACLAP EC.

Accreditation of relevant programmes offered by educational providers is the means by which graduates of those programmes can successfully demonstrate that they have achieved the required minimum education in the landscape architectural profession as a first step on a pathway towards being recognised as a registered professional of the landscape architectural profession in South Africa.

The broader objective of maintaining the standard of landscape architectural education is to benefit the broader community through design, planning, environmental and social solutions addressing the issues within the provision of sustainable settlements.

2. KEY DOCUMENTS

The SACLAP EC has key policy documents, which inform the Education Policy processes. These include:

- South African Landscape Architectural Professions Act 45 of 2000
- The SACLAP Constitution
- The SACLAP Identification of Work (in the final drafting stages)
- The SACLAP Core Competencies
- The SACLAP Code of Conduct (in the process of being revised)
- The present SACLAP Accreditation Visits to Universities and Technikons
- Council for the Built Environment Accreditation Framework (in the process of being finalised)

The above listed current documents are available on the web site: www.saclap.org.za/downloads

The following documentation has influenced the thinking of the proposed policies

- The International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA):
 - 2010 Accreditation Standards and Procedures
 - 2010 Self Evaluation Report Format
 - 2010 Visiting Team Guidelines
- Guidance Document for Recognition or Accreditation
- Charter for Landscape Architectural Education
- American Association of Landscape Architects: Accreditation and LAAB documents:
 - 2010 Accreditation Standards and Procedures
 - 2010 Self Evaluation Report Format
 - 2010 Visiting Team Guidelines
- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects:
 - The AILA Education Policy
 - The AILA Education Standards
 - The AILA Accreditation Procedures
- Landscape Institute Accreditation Guidelines
- IFLA Charter for Landscape Architectural Education

3. SACLAP PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The SACLAP EC recognises a university, university of technology and a SAQA qualified school/college qualification as the standard tertiary educational requirement for entry into the landscape architectural profession in South Africa.

The minimum professional entry requirement i.e. to register as a candidate landscape architectural professional that is recognised by the SACLAP EC are as follows:

Registration Category	NQF Level	Qualification Example
Professional Landscape Architect	9 and 10	PhD, MLArch, ML(Prof), BL
Professional Landscape Technologist	8	BScLA(Hons), BL(Hons), BSc, BTech
Professional Landscape Technician	7	Adv.Dip, H.Dip 2 years
Professional Landscape Assistant	6	Advanced Certificate

4. RECOGNITION OF ENTRY PATHWAYS IN ACCREDITED MASTERS PROGRAMMES

Accreditation of a master's degree includes an appraisal of the entry pathways into the degree. Such pathways include prior qualification in a landscape architectural field or other relevant field, evaluation of prior knowledge and competencies, or the provision of bridging courses.

The purpose of the appraisal is to provide a method of assurance that the graduates from the masters programmes are at least commensurate with those of the four year bachelor degree which was the minimum requirement up to 2001.

The SACLAP EC relies on the programmes to provide the assurance of appraisals and therefore the SACLAP EC has provided the following as guides across a range of possible pathways:

4.1. PRE-REQUISITES FOR TWO YEAR SACLAP ACCREDITED MASTERS

A two year Masters in Landscape Architecture (Professional) may be offered to graduates of three year undergraduate landscape architecture bachelor degrees or graduates of a SACLAP endorsed three year degree or diploma (Design/Environment) as presently offered and/or being proposed by several programmes.

4.2. RECOGNITION OF THREE YEAR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OR DIPLOMA

Graduates of an endorsed three year undergraduate programme, part of the three plus two suite of programmes, are recognised by the SACLAP as having the pre-requisites for entry into any SACLAP accredited two year Masters in Landscape Architecture or one Honours plus one year Masters programmes.

Such three year undergraduate degrees are to be assessed by the SACLAP EC through the Accreditation processes in order to be granted the status of a SACLAP endorsed pre-requisite programme for entry to any SACLAP accredited two year Masters in Landscape Architecture or one Honours plus one year Masters programmes.

4.3. RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS STUDENT HOLDING THREE YEAR UNDERGRADUATE QUALIFICATION IN THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

Graduates of an overseas three year undergraduate landscape architecture programme, part of the three plus two suite of landscape architecture programmes, may be recognised as having the prerequisites for entry into any SACLAP accredited two year Masters in Landscape Architecture (Professional). The SACLAP looks to the programmes to make an assessment of these applicants and to equate them to the equivalent graduates from the South African 'recognised' three year programmes.

4.4. RECOGNITION OF BRIDGING PROGRAMMES

Universities may offer bridging programmes, usually titled Graduate Diplomas, as bridging programmes whereby graduates may then apply to enter the two year accredited Masters in Landscape Architecture (Professional).

Such bridging programmes will not be assessed by the SACLAP through the Accreditation processes in order to be granted the status of an SACLAP endorsed pre-requisite program for entry to any SACLAP accredited two year Masters in Landscape Architecture (Professional) unless such programmes and course content are not accredited by another CBE Council.

4.5. ARTICULATION FROM OTHER UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES

While articulation into the Landscape Architectural education must be in accordance with university standards, the course credit would equate to completion of areas of landscape

architectural study that match content and outcomes in an accredited landscape architectural programme.

4.6. ELECTIVES

The SACLAP EC encourages diversity within the programmes for students to be encouraged to take opportunities to undertake electives in relevant and related fields.

The SACLAP EC is mindful that the taking of electives should not impinge on the student's ability to undertake core subject areas and satisfy the SACLAP core competencies for the Landscape Architectural Professionals.

4.7. DOUBLE DEGREES

The undergraduate components of landscape architecture within a double or dual degree need to be clearly equivalent to other accredited programmes.

Where double degrees are offered in parallel with single degrees, separate accreditation is required for the landscape architectural degree.

5. STAFFING OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

The SACLAP EC requires that the level of staffing stated as part of the accreditation submission and subsequent agreements must be maintained at all times as a minimum for the period of accreditation.

The SACLAP, reserves the right to withdraw accreditation should there be significant reduction in resourcing to an accredited programme.

The SACLAP EC has a policy document, Guideline Policy Document for the Appointment of Permanent Tertiary Education Staff to SACLAP Accredited Courses, available on www.saclap.org.za/downloads, to assist tertiary institutions in the appointment of permanent personnel.

6. NOMENCLATURE

The preferred nomenclature for accredited programmes in Landscape Architecture is:

Degree Name	Period	Nomenclature
Bachelor of Landscape Architecture	Prior to 2002	BL
Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture	From 2002	BSc(LArch)
Bachelor in Landscape Architecture Honours	From 2002	BL(Hons)
Master of Landscape Architecture Professional	From 2002	ML(Prof)
Master of Landscape Architecture	From ?? (UCT)	ML or MLA
Master of Landscape Architecture by Research	Current	ML or MLA
National Diploma Landscape Technology	Prior to ??	NDip LandTech
Baccalaureus Technologiae Landscape Technology	Current	BTech LandTech
Magister Technologiae Landscape Technology	Current	MTech LandTech
Certificate Courses		

NOTE: These nomenclatures will be amended accordingly as the SACLAP expansion of categories of registration is ratified by stakeholders.

The SACLAP EC will give due consideration to accrediting programmes that, while not necessarily having the words 'Landscape Architecture' as part of its main nomenclature, are able to demonstrate that they match the SACLAP EC policy accreditation requirements.

The SACLAP EC does not support the term 'Landscape Architecture' in the nomenclature of non-accredited programmes. The nomenclature is to relate to the SACLAP categories of registration as stated in the Act as well as the SACLAP Core Competencies Table, which sets out the required NQF level per registration category.

The SACLAP EC is to be formally notified of any changes to the nomenclature of any accredited programme.

The SACLAP EC reserves the right to not accept any changes to the nomenclature of an accredited programme.