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FOR THE
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION**

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EDUCATION STANDARDS

**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.

2. DEFINING THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Each of the Tertiary Accreditation Standards provides the description of one of the essential conditions that a programme must meet in order for it to be accredited by the SACLAP.

A program must provide adequate evidence that each standard has been met in order to obtain and maintain accreditation.

Each standard has performance criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard.

To be accredited, a program must provide evidence that:

- Criteria have been met, or;
- Progress towards meeting the criteria has been made, or
- Alternative criteria have been used to meet the required standard.

3. ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

3.1. STANDARD ONE - PROGRAMME MISSION AND OBJECTIVE

The programme has a clearly defined mission statement supported by goals and objectives appropriate to and aligned with the South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (SACLAP) and shall demonstrate progress towards their attainment.

The programme literature, website, and other public information sources accurately and clearly reflect the programme's aims and objectives.

Performance Criteria

- The programme has a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the programme;
- The programme aims and objectives are clearly stated;
- Programme aims are consistent with the objectives of the profession of Landscape Architecture and with the SACLAP's policies;
- Public programme information and marketing, particularly web based material, clearly and accurately promote the profession of Landscape Architecture, its values and goals and its current directions;
- Programme material clearly outlines the career paths being targeted and which discipline area(s) of the profession have been identified as the core of the program;
- Public programme material is clearly states which programmes are accredited by the SACLAP;
- The published curriculum details a sequence and emphasis on its individual courses that relate to the programme objectives.

3.2. STANDARD TWO - GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Authority and Resources

The programme has the authority and resources to achieve its educational objectives.

Performance Criteria

- Where the programme is a stand alone Landscape Architecture programme, the programme is structured as a discrete professional programme with the authority, leadership and adequate control of resources; Where the programme has multiple exits (into other allied professional careers, e.g. planning), the Landscape Architecture stream must be structured as a discrete professional programme with the authority, leadership and adequate control of resources;
- The discipline leadership and resource management of accredited programmes and streams is divested to persons holding relevant landscape architecture qualifications;
- The programme is adequately resourced to meet programme objectives, provide for academic staff development, support for academic research and to provide student support.

Academic Staff

Research and publication are integral activities of an accredited Landscape Architecture programme.

Sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced academic staff are employed to provide the appropriate level of academic expertise across all aspects of the teaching and management of the programme, including active engagement with the profession.

Where appropriate the programme is encouraged and supported to develop partnerships with the profession to undertake research.

Performance Criteria

- Landscape Architectural and other academic staff have appropriate mix of tertiary qualifications and/or professional experience in the field of the landscape architectural professions;
- The programme must employ at least one academic staff member on a permanent or long-term contract basis per year of full-time programme; or to ensure that at least 50% of the face-to-face teaching hours in the programme is carried out by permanent or long-term contracted academic staff;*
- The lecturer:student ratio in studios and tutorials is not greater than 1:25 for undergraduate programmes; i.e. one equivalent full time academic staff : twentyfive equivalent full-time students; 1:20 for postgraduate programmes i.e. one equivalent full time academic staff : twenty equivalent full-time students *
- There is a demonstrated commitment to involve practicing professionals with appropriate expertise in the programme.

* For Accreditation purposes the SACLAP EC would require the accredited programme:

- to supply biennially the tertiary institution's policies relevant to staffing of the programme (or web link to same),
- to demonstrate how the programme is working to reach the target of having the stated staffing ratios for studios
- to demonstrate how the programme is maintaining a satisfactory level of permanent/ long term contract Landscape Architecture staffing across the programme.

The above evidence would form the basis of discussions with the SACLAP EC biennially and with the accreditation panel to identify that the programme is being staffed to a level acceptable to the SACLAP EC (in accordance with policy directions) and in line with addressing the targets as stated.

3.3. STANDARD THREE - PROFESSIONAL CURRICULUM

Standard

The curriculum includes the core knowledge, skills, and applications of Landscape Architecture, with a designed structure to allow for progression, integration, and variety.

Performance Criteria

- The curriculum addresses the programme's mission, goals and objectives;
- The knowledge, skills, abilities and values of the programme are systematically arranged throughout courses and course combinations to ensure that all graduates achieve at least the expected core competencies and to maximise integration of subject areas, allow flexibility and provide a systematic framework of courses;
- The graduate attributes align with the SACLAP policy directions and code of conduct;
- The curriculum has a stated core within the discipline areas of Landscape Architecture;
- Students receive training and experience in scholarly research methods and report writing;
- The programme encourages student and staff exchanges between universities and other organisations;
- The programme encourages students to participate in appropriate practical experience, mentorship, internship and/or practicum in the Masters programmes;
- Students have opportunities to engage in regular multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary studies;
- Students have opportunities to engage in an organised and complimentary study exchange scheme that is not necessarily in the Landscape Architectural profession.

Education Outcomes

A programme offers students education opportunities sufficient to enable an understanding and appreciation of the range of competencies expected of a professional landscape architect. Particular emphasis in relation to the core performance criteria listed below.

Performance Criteria

A programme may choose to develop particular emphasis in relation to the core performance criteria listed below provided that the programme outcomes demonstrate evidence that students are able to access instruction and guidance to develop an appropriate understanding of skills in the following core competencies:

History & Theory

- The history, theory and cultural context of landscape architecture;
- Natural and cultural landscapes and their conservation and management;
- The social, cultural and economic aspects of landscape values;
- Indigenous people's cultural and spiritual relationships to country, landscape, and place.
- Awareness and understanding of the national legislation

Landscape Design and Planning

- Design skills, including aesthetic literacy relevant to landscape planning, landscape management, landscape design and/or urban design;
- The design, planning and management of rural, regional, remote landscapes;
- Site analysis and appraisal;
- Problem solving and critical thinking;
- Sustainable community design.
- Legislation, processes or guidelines

Construction Technology, Implementation and Management Technical Skills

- Landscape materials, construction methods and technologies relevant to discipline area(s);
- Standards and processes to enable the implementation of landscape projects;
- The implementation of landscape management policies and the management of designed landscapes necessary to maintain landscape systems.
- Attain an understanding of National Building Regulations

Natural and Cultural Systems i.e environmental planning aspects

- Planning, management and design solutions to address climate change adaptation and mitigation requirements;
- Natural sciences, especially of plants, botany, horticulture, ecology and basic earth sciences;
- Ecological, cultural, economic and land management issues;
- Ecosystem services/natural capital and land management.
- Legislation, processes or guidelines

Communication and research

- Relevant research skills and techniques;
- Communication and report writing skills, including graphic, hand drawing, visual communication skills, verbal and presentation skills and the ability to present a coherent argument;
- Critical thinking and analytical skills;
- Application of computers and advanced technology.

Professional Conduct

- The South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (SACLAP) Code of Conduct.

Professional Conduct and Practice

- Attain an awareness of the role and responsibilities of professional registrations bodies;
- The diversity of the practice of Landscape Architecture;
- The roles of the Built Environments Professions and the allied professional disciplines and specialist fields of knowledge;
- The essence of the Identification of Work and the implications thereof;
- The SACLAP core competencies that are expected to enable graduates to professionally register after due experience has been obtained;

- Attain an awareness of procurement systems and processes;
- Attain an awareness of techniques and skills required in for all stakeholder consultation and engagement;
- Attain an awareness of the institutional context which governs the practice of Landscape Architecture including national, regional and local planning policy and procedures, and environmental law;
- Attain an awareness of project management skills and techniques;
- Attain an awareness of business and managerial skills required to practice relevant to discipline area(s);
- Attain an awareness of office practice and procedures.

Electives Units

- Opportunities for elective units in related areas of practice;
- The electives should be based on extending from the core units of the programme into allied and related specialist streams;
- Opportunities for electives to assist in defining the particular strengths and focus of a programme;
- Opportunities for electives to broaden the student study experience.

3.4. STANDARD FOUR – STUDENT AND PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Students are prepared, through educational programmes and other academic and professional opportunities, to pursue a career in landscape architecture upon graduation.

Performance Criteria

- The programme provides for student annual reviews of projects involving juries that include practicing Registered Landscape Architectural Professionals;
- Students are to be aware of professional opportunities, registration, professional development, advanced educational opportunities and continuing professional development requirements associated with professional practice;
- Students undertake projects that demonstrate competencies from concept and design to documentation and construction;
- Environmental factor - recommendation
- Students are to be actively encouraged to participate in related professional and community activities, such as ILASA events, community activities, associated professional societies or special interest groups;
- Final year student work demonstrates the competency required for entry level positions in the profession of Landscape Architecture.

3.5. STANDARD FIVE – FACILITIES

Facilities and Equipment

The SACLAP values the shared learning experiences that occur in studio environments.

Landscape Architectural programmes must be supported through the provision of resources and facilities to ensure effective programme delivery.

As Landscape Architectural education has its core studio-based teaching, students must have access to adequate and suitable studio space.

Programmes are to ensure students have adequate access to Information Technology (IT) facilities and this including relevant industry software and support services. Students are to be exposed to and encouraged to explore current and emerging information technologies.

Performance Criteria

- Adequate computers, software, electronic and other technical equipment are available, maintained and updated;
- Students have access to study and meeting rooms, and project work facilities;
- Student studio, teaching, and study spaces are suitably furnished and equipped;
- The correct and safe use of necessary equipment is integrated in the curriculum;
- Students have adequate storage space in line with courses requirements, particularly for model making and other project work;
- Students have out-of-class, safe access to facilities.

Information Resources

A library collection and information of diverse and varied resources must be provided to support the program.

Library and learning resources, both physical and digital, should be accessible to students.

Performance Criteria

- The library collection is sufficiently up-to date, adequate and diverse in its forms (books, journals, maps and other print media, digital and photographic media, electronic media) to support the programme and all areas of programme specialisation – and regular acquisitions supplement the existing collection as required by academic staff;
- Library operating hours, loan and study facilities, allowing for appropriate access for staff and students. On-line access is to be provided to library resources;
- Curriculum integrates library use with coursework.

3.6. STANDARD SIX – OUTREACH

Professional Institutes and Associations

The programme has established effective relationships with the SACLAP, and other relevant associations and institutes, in order to provide learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and professional guidance.

Performance Criteria

- The programme regularly liaises with the SACLAP Education Committee chair with a commitment to keeping it informed of programme responses to SACLAP's accreditation evaluation and course directions as per the biennial meetings;
- The programme provides an annual report and accreditation documentation in accordance with the SACLAP's Accreditation Procedures;
- The programme establishes appropriate professional links where relevant with other professional institutes and associations.

The Landscape Architecture Profession

The programme actively promotes positive relationships with the profession (practicing Registered Landscape Architects) and maintains currency through on-going interaction with the profession.

The SACLAP advocates to its members to offer support to the programmes, for example through offering opportunities for mentoring, participating in reviews, assessment and by providing access to practices and their project work as applicable and for the programme to utilise this support.

Performance Criteria

- The programme utilises the resource of practitioners.
- The programme encourages student involvement with the profession:
 - Members of the profession are invited to participate in the programme's teaching and research activities;
 - Academic staff members actively seek opportunities for involvement with the profession;
 - The programme includes members of the profession on design juries or other opportunities for direct feedback to students on their work;
 - The programme encourages the profession to provide students with information about their work;
 - The programme provides the students with information about members of the profession who achieve awards, professional accolades, or other notable recognition of their contributions to the profession;
 - The programme actively encourages student participation in the profession's activities, including ILASA and SACLAP activities.

Community Engagement

The programme pursues relationships with the community and the public.

Performance Criteria

- The programme encourages students and staff to participate in community activities which showcase or contribute to aspects of Landscape Architecture;
- The programme seeks opportunities for real professional interaction for its students.