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## SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL PROFESSION

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### **South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (SACLAP) Accreditation Visits to Universities and Technikons.**

#### ***Guidelines for the accreditation of academic programs and courses in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at Institutions of Higher Education.***

This document serves to outline the criteria against which courses offering professional qualifications (i.e. qualifications which give eligibility for professional registration will be evaluated.)

For graduate purposes of eligibility for Registration in SACLAP Categories:

Candidate/Professional Landscape Architect (NQF 7) and

Candidate/Professional Landscape Technologist (NQF 6)

Additional categories still to be defined (terminology / competencies)

**Accredit** means the process of evaluation and recognition by the council of educational programmes offered by educational institutions relating to the landscape architectural profession, and **accreditation** has a corresponding meaning; Landscape Architectural Professions Act, 2000 (Act 45 of 2000) LAPA, 2000

In the interests of aligning the SACLAP accreditation process (from the perspective of a Professional Council concerned with Professional Education) to that of the CHE, HEQC (Council for Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Committee), and the potential streamlining of these parallel processes into one, (through the signing of a memorandum of understanding) between SACLAP and the HEQC, please also refer to the Council for Higher Education (CHE) Documents:

HEQC Program Accreditation Framework  
HEQC Program Accreditation Criteria

## **A. Introduction**

On the invitation of the Registrar of the academic institution, through the Head of Department of the appropriate department, SACLAP will undertake an Accreditation Visit.

The purpose of the accreditation visit is to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of (professional) Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning education encapsulated by the particular programme in a systematic manner and within a well-defined framework, for the purposes of accreditation in terms of Section 13 of the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, 2000 (Act 45 of 2000).

It is the intention of the Accreditation Committee to conduct discussions with the Head of Department (Course Convener / Programme Director), Dean of the Faculty, Staff and Students to establish and verify the purpose, content and outcomes of the programmes offered in accordance with the above Act.

## **B. Instructions for compilation of information.**

Item C presents the Institution with a set of questions addressing the following nine aspects of the educational programmes and additional comments from the Department. The nine aspects are:

- General Requirements
- Goals and aims of the Dept
- Programmes offered: Curriculum design, organization and content, teaching and learning, and student assessment.
- Assessments
- Research
- Students
- Student Support
- Infrastructure and Resources
- Quality Management in the Department
- Student opinion

Please provide all information in the order of questions asked.

Number the sections in the same manner as the list of questions.

Provide appendices in the same order as the questions asked and number accordingly.

Fill in the checklist under section F in the back of the document to indicate which items have been provided and where shortcomings exist. Please provide reasons for non-submission of required items. Copy the chart as necessary to allow space enough to cover all subjects for all years of study.

## **C. Evaluation of the Programme**

### General

In analyzing the program, several aspects should be reviewed:

- The School philosophy in relation to the stated outcomes of the programmes offered
- The contents of the course and its constituent modules
- the organization and structure / sequence / progression
- teaching and learning (modes / methods)
- curriculum design
- assessments, including examinations
- how are the philosophy and educational approach of the Department translated into the program (theoretical position)
- delivery of the program and alignment with curriculum, program structure
- students
- supporting environment
- facilities
- staffing
- research
- output and outcomes
- stakeholder satisfaction

Underpinning these must be evidence to support that stated objectives and outcomes as set out by the Department in its report.

## **1. Goals and aims of the Department**

- 1.1 What aim has the Department set itself not only in terms of academic policies, but also relative to transformation dealing with equity, redress, and student profiles / demographic?
- 1.2 What is the philosophy of education that supports the program? How are other philosophies accommodated within the programmes? (Theoretical base)
- 1.3 How does it fit within the mission of the University / Technikon?
- 1.4 How are the outcomes of the program formulated? What is the process that is followed?
- 1.5 Does the labour market influence requirements that the graduates have to meet? To what extent do labour-market needs influence your program?
- 1.6 Is there a well-defined career path for the programme offered?
- 1.7 How are the Department's goals made known to students?
- 1.8 To what extent have your goals and aims been realized?
- 1.9 How are your goals and aims translated into knowledge, skills and attitudes for graduates?

## **2. Programmes offered:**

### **Curriculum design; organization and content; teaching and learning; student assessment.**

- 2.1 Does the content of the program reflect the expected outcomes as stated in the report?
- 2.2 Is there a clear relationship between subjects in the program, is it coherent and does it demonstrate increasing complexity?
- 2.3 How has the program structure been chosen?
- 2.4 Do you rely on service departments for assistance and are their services satisfactory?
- 2.5 To what extent does the organisation of the programme contribute to an active and positive study attitude on the part of the student?
- 2.6 Does the department share an explicit teaching and learning concept?
- 2.7 Are the instructional methods used satisfactory for students? (seminars, practicals / studio work)
- 2.8 How is technology used in instructing?
- 2.9 How are teaching and learning methods evaluated? Is there sufficient variety in the methods used?
- 2.10 When do students come into contact with research for the first time?
- 2.11 How is the interrelation between education and research expressed in the program?
- 2.12 How are the results of student research included in the program?

### **3. Assessment**

- 3.1 How are assessments done in the Department?
- 3.2 Does the assessment process enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes of modules?  
(e.g. Clarity of design / appropriate to level)
- 3.3 To what extent do the assessments and exams cover the content of the subjects and the program outcomes?
- 3.4 Does the assessment of learners' output/products have a formative function in developing student abilities?  
(What forms of feedback are used / What is the quality of the feedback)?  
Are there clear rules for re-assessment?
- 3.5 Are the assessment and examination regulations clear; are the procedures clear to students?
- 3.6 Is there full confidence in the security and integrity of assessment procedures?
- 3.7 What is the impact of the Department's inter-disciplinary approach on students?  
How is this assessed and what criteria are used?

### **4. Research**

- 4.1 How are students supported on the following:
  - Student's responsibilities : attendance, progress reports, contact with supervisor
  - On choosing the subject and the thesis
  - In executing the research or assignment
  - When writing the final paper
  - How is the final assessment done?
- 4.2 What facilities and equipment is available to research students?
- 4.3 Are ethics and codes of research, plagiarism and scientific misconduct communicated to students?  
(University / Technikon policy)
- 4.4 What are the procedures for appointment of examiners, internal and external?
- 4.5 What mechanisms exist for feedback to students and appeals?
- 4.6 What procedures exist for dealing with student complaints?
- 4.7 Are external examiners reports available?

## **5. Students**

- 5.1 How are students selected for the programmes offered, what are the requirements and criteria used?
- 5.2 What measures are taken to affect the quality and size of the intake, and what are the effects of these measures?
- 5.3 Does the actual study load of the program correspond with the prescribed study load?
- 5.4 Is the study load equally divided over and within the academic years?
- 5.5 Can an average student complete the programme in the planned time?
- 5.6 Is the average standard of the graduate satisfactory?
- 5.7 Do the achieved standards cover the expected standards?
- 5.8 Do graduates get employed easily, and are they employed in the planning environment?
- 5.9 Are the jobs that graduates get in accordance with the level of qualification?
- 5.10 Have any changes been signaled in the labour market perspectives of graduates in the last few years?
- 5.11 Does the Department have contact with graduates after graduation?
- 5.12 Is information from graduates used to adjust the programme if necessary?  
(Feedback about programme, information of developments in the labour market etc)
- 5.13 What is the throughput rate for the programmes offered?
- 5.14 Are there fluctuations in the success rate in the last 5 years?
- 5.15 Is there a drop out rate? If so what are the reasons?

## **6. Student Support**

- 6.1 What role do staff members play in providing information to students and mentoring of students?
- 6.2 What role do staff members play in integrating students in the Department?
- 6.3 How are students informed about study facilities? How is information provided to students with regard to the program?
- 6.4 Is attention given to study progress? How?
- 6.5 Are there specific facilities for study skills for students with problems?  
Are these present within the Department, the Faculty or on a central level?  
How is this organised?
- 6.6 Is information provided on career prospects?

## **7. Infrastructure and Resources**

- 7.1 Are there any problems concerning staffing?
- 7.2 What is the teaching load of staff? What is the staff: student ratio? What is the staff: graduate ratio?
- 7.3 Does the Department service other departments / do other departments service the Department?  
What are the contact hours?
- 7.4 How are lecturers prepared for their teaching task?  
How are they prepared to deal with OBE (outcomes based education) as part of their teaching practice?
- 7.5 Do you have sufficient lecture rooms, seminar rooms, studios, reading rooms, computer facilities, related software, audio visual aids etc? Do these meet the requirements for the programmes offered?
- 7.6 Is the library sufficiently equipped for the programmes offered by the Department?  
Are there any constraints?
- 7.7 Is the library easily accessible for students - location, hours of operation?
- 7.8 Do you have sufficient studio facilities including support personnel?
- 7.9 To what extent do the facilities/infrastructures promote the delivery of programmes?

## **8. Quality Management in the Department**

- 8.1 Give a brief indication of how the Department assures quality. Is there a structured system for quality assurance?  
If so, describe it.
- 8.2 What is the input of students in the committees involved in internal quality assurance?
- 8.3 How is the program evaluated? (Subject level / curriculum level?)
- 8.4 How are students involved in the evaluation of teaching?
- 8.5 How, and to whom, are the results made known?
- 8.6 Is something done with the results?
- 8.7 Who is responsible for the design of the curriculum?  
Is there benchmarking with other institutions?
- 8.8 What is the contribution of staff and students?
- 8.9 What is the involvement of the labour market in curriculum design?

**9. Student Opinion**

- 9.1 Does the Department know what students think about the subjects / programme / teaching / examinations?
- 9.2 Is there regular student evaluation? How is it done?
- 9.3 How does the Department respond to the outcome of the evaluation?
- 9.4 How does the Department cope with complaints from students?

**10. Summary of points that the Department considers are its strengths.**

**11. Summary of points the Department considers are challenges that require improvement.**

## **D. Questions and issues to raise with students in the Department**

1. Level of satisfaction with the course
2. What inputs do students have in the programme re:
  - Design of curriculum?
  - Evaluation of courses?
3. Are objectives of the course clearly communicated to students?
4. Are student guidelines available for all subjects?
5. What structures are there for students to communicate with the Department? Are they satisfactory?
6. Are students satisfied with the way that assessments are carried out?
7. Are students satisfied with how they are supported for their dissertation?
8. Are students informed about job prospects?
9. Are there any complaints?
10. What are the strengths of the Department?

## **E. Questions for staff:**

1. What input do you have in the development of the programme, curriculum design and philosophy of the Department?
2. Are you satisfied with the leadership of the Department?
3. How do you deal with personal complaints? Are they dealt with satisfactorily? What are the impediments?
4. Is there anything that restricts you in developing your potential and delivering of the programme?
5. What is the student's response to the programme?
6. How do you get feedback from the courses you teach?  
What happens to that feedback and how does this influence the way you teach and what you teach?
7. Given that the Department has adopted an OBE (outcomes based education) approach, how has this influenced your teaching methodology?
8. What do you think are the strengths of the Department?
9. Are there any issues you would like to raise with the Committee?

# F. CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTATION

PROGRAMME:

<b>Subjects</b>												
Subject files available												
Student guidelines												
Assignments and project briefs												
Completed student projects												
Assessments a. criteria spelt out												
b. feedback to students												
c. dissertation, thesis												
Program review reports												
Examination papers												
Moderators report												
Learning material												
Subject review reports												
Student feedback												

**Overall evaluation and general comments:**