



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

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FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Effective as from 18 March 2016

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY, EDUCATION
STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES**

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

The South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession has, under Section 13 of the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, 2000 (Act No. 45 of 2000) determined the Education Policy, Standards and Accreditation Procedures

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As amended by: Frans van Wyk and Bernadette Vollmer

SCHEDULE OF AMENDMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBE	Council for the Built Environment
CHE	Council for Higher Education
COUNCIL.....	South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession
EC.....	Education Committee
EXCO.....	Executive Committee of Council
FTE	Full Time Equivalents
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HOD.....	Head of Department
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
RPL.....	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA.....	South African Qualifications Authority
SER	Self Evaluation Report
VA.....	Voluntary Association

DEFINITIONS

Accredit - The process of assessment and recognition by the South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (Council) of educational Programmes relating to the landscape professions, and Accreditation has a corresponding meaning.

Accreditation Report - The report drafted by the Accreditation Panel and edited by the Accreditation Panel Chairperson containing the outcome of the Accreditation visit in accordance with an agreed template.

Accreditation Status - In accordance with Section 13(b) of the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, Act 45 of 2000 (The Act), the Council may either conditionally or unconditionally grant, refuse or withdraw Accreditation with regards to educational Programmes relating to the landscape professions.

Accreditation Cycle - An Accreditation Cycle is four (4) years, which is aligned with a Council term of office as per the Act.

Accreditation Panel (the Panel) - A panel constituted in terms of educational policy in order to conduct, for Accreditation purposes, a review/assessment visit to a Recognised Higher Education Institution and report to the Education Committee (EC) its recommendation. Accreditation Review Panel will have a corresponding meaning.

Act, the - unless stipulated otherwise, will mean the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, Act 45 of 2000.

Assessment - The process of seeking qualitative and quantitative evidence of compliance with or achievement of the criteria related to education standards and related requirements.

Compliance - Achieved when the Accreditation Panel concludes, after assessment of relevant criteria or other evidence, that a standard is substantially met or met with recommendation as defined below.

Core Competency Table - The table listing the core competencies required upon graduation and registration, respectively, in order to be eligible for registration in the relevant category.

Council – The South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession as set out in the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, Act 45 of 2000.

Curriculum - The planned and documented learning experiences of the students in the Programme, includes a description of the Programme plus the Module descriptions for all Modules in the Programme.

Criteria - Each education 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'.

Design – within the context of this Policy, design would refer to the competency, as set out in the core competency table, required for design orientated professions i.e. landscape architecture.

Education Committee – a committee appointed by the SACLAP to deal with education matters in terms of Section 13 of the Act.

Education Suite of Documents – Refers to the set of documents that pertains to educational policy, education standards and the processes involved in achieving and maintaining an accredited status i.e. Accreditation Procedure. This list is not exhaustive. Documents can be obtained from the SACLAP website (www.saclap.org.za).

First Professional Programme - encompasses the first professional Programme that a learner with a senior certificate enters, as a structured body of knowledge common to the profession and promotes acquisition of knowledge and competencies necessary to enter the profession as a registered candidate, either at a NQF level six or seven depending on the specific Programme.

Intent - Explains the purpose of the standard.

Institution- The Institution is the university, university of technology, college, institute or other parent body through which the Programme is administered. Recognised Higher Education Institution, has a corresponding meaning.

Landscape Professions - For the purposes of this document will deem to include the professional disciplines of design and management related to the establishment and/or sustaining of outdoor open space, whether natural or constructed/manicured.

Module - A discrete package of instruction, or a unit, within an academic Programme

Observer - Any person or body as allowed by the EC to be part of all Accreditation Visits and meetings during the Accreditation process but which has no say or influence in the final decision of an Accreditation. The function of the observer is to ensure that the Accreditation process is followed duly and fairly and/or could be in preparation of becoming a future panel member.

Professional Programme – A professional Programme encompasses a structured body of knowledge common to a profession and promotes acquisition of knowledge and competencies necessary to enter the specific profession through registration in the related category of registration, as a candidate professional, at NQF level six (6) through to nine (9).

Programmes - An inclusive term for the series of learning objectives, outcomes and other learning opportunities leading to a qualification, and for the purpose of this document includes the supporting administration, faculty, facilities and services which sponsor and provide those experiences leading to qualifications for students at higher education Institutions.

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

Programme Prerequisites – Are deemed to be the minimum essential requirements that pertain to Programme arrangements that need to be evident in order for a Programme to be eligible for Accreditation.

Recognised Higher Education Institution -

- (i) A higher education Institution which has formal approval in terms of the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997, to operate as a public or a private Institution of higher education in South Africa.
- (ii) In the case of foreign Institutions, an Institution which has formal approval by an official body, set up or recognised by that country's government, to operate as an Institution of higher education in that country and to award higher education qualifications. Adequate quality assurance mechanisms and human resources exist in that country to safeguard academic standards of qualifications.

Recommendation Affecting Accreditation - Are issues of serious concern, directly affecting the quality of the Programme. Recommendations are derived from the identified areas of weakness in meeting a standard that are described in the rationale sections of the Accreditation Panel Report. The Programme 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.

Significant Progress – Important, noteworthy, momentous or substantial, and sufficiently great progress towards a goal.

Standards - Qualitative statements of the essential conditions that an accredited Programme must meet. A Programme must demonstrate adequate evidence of substantially meeting all standards to achieve Accreditation.

Standard Met - Evidence shows that overall Programme performance in this area meets the Council's standards substantially. A standard may be judged as being met even though not all indicators/criterion are met.

Standard Met With Recommendation(s) - Deficiencies exist in an area directly bearing on Accreditation. The deficiencies have observable effects on the overall quality of the Programme.

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

Substantially Met – Will mean considerably, significantly, noticeably, markedly and greatly met.

Substantive Change - is any change that effects one or more of the Standards approved and published by Council or has implication upon any of the Programme prerequisites related to Accreditation, listed in this document.

Voluntary Association – An association established as a juristic person with a vested interest in the profession (landscape professions) that it represents, with the main objectives including the promotion of the professional interests of its members.

SECTION A – HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Context

In accordance with section 13(a) to (k) of the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, No. 45 of 2000, hereafter referred to as the Act, the Council is mandated, in providing Accreditation for Higher Education Institutions hosting Programmes related to professional registration, the South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession (Council) through the Education Committee (EC) is committed to the importance of quality education as being the essential pathway to professional registration.

Furthermore, the Higher Education Act of 1997 assigns responsibility for quality assurance in higher education in South Africa to the Council on Higher Education (CHE). This responsibility is discharged through its permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). The mandate of the HEQC includes quality promotion, Institutional audit and Programme Accreditation. As part of the task of building an effective national quality assurance system, the HEQC has also included capacity development and training as a critical component of its Programme of activities.

1.2 The Purpose

Accreditation is a voluntary system of assessment, monitoring and reviewing of higher education Programmes, in which Programmes and/or Institutions are benchmarked against specified requirements for the education of future 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. To this end, the Higher Education Policy provides the framework whereby the Council delegates its function to evaluate, advocate for, and advance the quality of education through professionally recognised higher education Programmes.

The Council, through its Accreditation processes, aims to advance measurable levels of knowledge and competencies, sufficient for graduates to enter the professional realm in as far as being ready to begin a period of mentorship through their employment. At the same time the Council in working closely with Institutions, ensures that the initial education and training, provided for prospective professionals, remains up to date, aligned with registration categories and relevant to the needs of the workplace and professional landscape fraternity as a whole. The ultimate outcome, in alignment with the intention of the Act, being the protection of the public, through working towards ensuring quality professional service delivery.

The Council has in place the EC to oversee and to inform the Accreditation of higher education Programmes and Modules. A core feature within the Accreditation framework is the Council's Education Standards which have been developed to guide the assessment of higher education Programmes. The Council welcomes applications from higher education Institutions who wish to have Programmes reviewed in order to seek Accreditation status.

The Council has committed to the Accreditation processes as it:

- Recognises that the future of quality professional services delivery in South Africa, as it relates to the various registration categories, depends fundamentally on the quality of the higher education feeder Programmes;
- Acknowledges the key role of educators within the professional realm in South Africa;
- Works in partnership with the higher education Institutions to achieve the shared goal of striving towards and maintaining quality education as a basis to professional registration;
- Encourages and supports the tertiary Programmes in the provision of a standard of education that effectively prepares students for their employment and mentorship as candidates;
- Encourages links and partnerships across the spectrum of education and research activities that relate to progression in professional service delivery;
- Recognises that professional service delivery gains from continual advancement of related study fields, competencies and recognising innovation within Programme delivery.

The broader objective of promoting the standard of higher education Programmes, is to benefit the broader community through the design, planning construction/establishment and management of

quality environmental and social solutions addressing the open space issues related to the provision of sustainable, safe and healthy living and working environments.

1.3 Council Education Suite of Documents

The Council Education Suite of Documents outline the requirements for professional recognition of Programmes throughout South Africa and comprises of four (4) components to be read in conjunction with each other.

- i. The **Higher Education Policy** sets out the EC's education aims with regard to higher education Programmes and Modules and the Accreditation thereof.
- ii. The **Education Standards** describes the specific standards expected by the Council for accrediting Programmes.
- iii. The **Accreditation Procedures** outlines the expectations Council has of the Programmes and procedures in relation to the Accreditation Panel assessment and review visits and subsequent reporting.
- iv. The **Self Evaluation Report (SER) template** outlines the manner in which the self-evaluation of Programmes is to be prepared by the Institution seeking Accreditation prior to the review visit by the Accreditation Panel.

The Council, working with the profession, the Institutions and relevant role players, regularly updates the set of documents to ensure that allowance is made for a basis of flexible and innovative approaches to the delivery of education and to allow for the diversity and changing nature of Landscape Professions in South Africa.

2. OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

The Council and the CBE has, apart from the mentioned Education Suite of Documents, key policy documents which inform the education policy aims, objectives and processes. These include:

- South African Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, Act 45 of 2000
- The Identification of Work
- The Core Competencies
- The Code of Conduct
- The Registration Policy
- The Continued Professional Development Policy
- Council for the Built Environment (CBE) Policy on Accreditation

(The above mentioned documents are available on the SACLAP web site: <http://www.saclap.org.za> under the downloads section.)

At national level, the drafting of education documentation also aims to align with the Council of Higher Education's Quality Committee's Programme Accreditation Criteria.

The Council also has an objective, the alignment in terms of international relevance and establishment of relations across border, to the benefit of the profession. For this purpose the Education Suite of Documents also took cognisance of international documentation where relevant and applicable, and in line with the Act.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

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

The minimum higher education requirements for eligibility, to register as a candidate professional, are aligned with the categories of registration as stipulated in the Council's Registration Policy and Core Competency Weighting Table. Eligibility for registration with the Council is largely dependent on the relevant Programme(s) accredited by Council. Registration Categories (professional and candidate) and National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels are as follows for individuals wishing to register with the Council once they have qualified:

- Candidate Landscape Architect/Manager and related others (NQF 9 and 10)
- Candidate Senior Technologists (NQF 8)

- Candidate Technologists (NQF 7)
- Candidate Technicians (NQF 6)

All additional or new categories of registration align with this basic structure. As Higher Certificate Programmes (NQF 5) do not directly relate to registration categories, but rather may provide for entrance into Programmes that might be accredited, higher certificate Programmes are not currently considered for Accreditation.

The EC may however, upon request and with approval from the Council under special conditions, i.e. in anticipation of new registration categories, conduct reviews of NQF level five (5) Programmes, upon request from Recognised Higher Education Institutions.

4. NEW PROGRAMMES

This section pertains specifically to new Programmes under construction for which there is no outcomes that could serve as a basis for assessment. The following requirements are to be met:

- i. In its submission for assessment of a new professional Programme, an Institution has to provide proof that it complies with the HEQC's requirements for the "candidacy phase" (the input criteria) as per the CHE's Criteria for Programme Accreditation documentation.
- ii. The Institution's application for provisional Accreditation status should be based on a critical self-evaluation of the new Programme measured against the expectancies associated with the Higher Education Standards as set out below and Programme Prerequisites.
- iii. The Institution has to submit a plan for the implementation of the new Programme. The plan could specify, for example:
 - Implementation steps for the new Programme, together with time frames and budgetary allocations for each phase and the human resources for managing the implementation.
 - Policies, strategies, conditions, etc. in order to ensure compliance with education standards, as well as provision of the required infrastructure;
 - Institutional strategies to ensure that the Programme outcomes align with the general expectations within the field of practice and professional registration with the Council.

An Accreditation Panel of peers will evaluate applications for new Programmes. The Panel or the EC Chairperson may also undertake a site visit, if necessary.

If the requirements for new Programmes are met, the Council will award provisional Accreditation status to the new Programme. Midway through the Programme, the Institution will be required to submit a progress report for evaluation by the EC. A site visit may be undertaken only where circumstances warrant such. The progress report should provide details of the following:

- Steps taken to address issues previously identified, for urgent attention, when the provisional Accreditation status was granted,
- Progress with the implementation of the Programme in relation to the implementation plan submitted upon application. This includes progress on the implementation of the policies, strategies, conditions, etc. as per the Higher Education Standards and associated criteria, as well as provision of the required infrastructure.
- Any other additional information that may present an early warning (to the Institution and to the EC) about problem areas, and an opportunity for appropriate developmental intervention, where necessary prior to the anticipated Accreditation review of a complete set of Programme outcomes.

In general and in addition, special care should be taken regarding the following:

- i. Proper naming, conceptualisation, design and implementation of a Programme are important first steps towards providing continuous professionally aligned quality education. As per the CHE's Programme Accreditation Criteria, design policies and procedures should ensure that the Programme is part of the Institution's mission and planning and is provided for in its resource allocation, is academically sound, takes the needs of students and other stakeholders into consideration, and articulates with other Programmes, where possible.

- ii. Student recruitment needs to be undertaken as part of the marketing of the Programme, and admission and selection policies and practices should be commensurate with its academic nature, within the framework of widening access and promoting equity in higher education.
- iii. Staff competence and effectiveness are critical for Programme quality. An Institution should provide incentives, resources and development opportunities for staff to meet professional goals, to contribute to realising the Institution's mission through the Programme, and to respond to the challenges currently facing professionals in higher education.
- iv. Student assessment and success are central indicators of teaching and learning effectiveness. An effective assessment system can support the goals of widening access, improving retention and throughput rates, and producing graduates with field related knowledge, skills and competencies. Although the curriculum may target knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the goals of social and economic transformation, if assessment procedures fail to prioritise and test these competences, students are unlikely to acquire the intended learning outcomes.
- v. Suitable and adequate infrastructure, including library resources, supports and access, are indispensable for supporting quality teaching and learning in a Programme.
- vi. Programme administrative services play an important role in providing information to students on Programme issues, managing the Programme information system that keeps records of students in the Programme, and ensuring the integrity of processes leading to the Accreditation review of the qualification.
- vii. Postgraduate studies and research training in the context of these studies constitute a core academic activity for many higher education Institutions worldwide. Enabling policies and procedures must be put in place in order to maintain and enhance the quality of postgraduate Programmes.

A new Programme receives accredited status only after the Higher Education Standards and Programme Prerequisites for Accreditation are met upon the assessment of a complete set of Programme outcomes and found to be in accordance with expectancies for the relevant registration category.

It should be noted therefore that this section does not apply to Accreditation aspects related to the revision and/or restructuring of Programmes, that bear an Accreditation status. Programmes that are accredited and are due for restructuring/re-circulation should be dealt with according to "application for substantive change" as per the Accreditation Procedures. Only if an existing Programme does not comply with the parameters associated with "application for substantive change", will it be eligible to be considered for provisional Accreditation status in terms of the above.

5. NOMENCLATURE

The preferred nomenclature for accredited Programmes will be as per CHE approval and the stipulations of the Accreditation Procedure's Programme Prerequisites.

The Council will give due consideration to accrediting Programmes that, while not necessarily having wording/terminology specific to a professional registration category, as part of its main Programme nomenclature, are able to demonstrate compliance with the Higher Education Standards and Accreditation Procedures.

The Council does not support the use of terminology or wording, specific to a registration category, in nomenclature of Programmes that do not feed to the relevant registration category. The nomenclature is to relate to the categories of registration as well as the Core Competencies associated with the registration category.

The Council is to be formally notified of any changes to the nomenclature of any accredited Programme.

6. RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

As per Section 13(h) of the Act the Council may:

“enter into an agreement with any person or body of persons, within or outside the Republic, with regard to the recognition of any examination or qualification for the purposes of the Act.”

The Council could thus be required to assess foreign academic Programmes to this end. Subsequent review of Programmes, for recognition purposes, will be conducted in accordance with the applicable education policies.

The Council could thus also, provide for the recognition of academic Programmes at Institutions in other countries and provide guidance in as far as prerequisites and standards in higher education as well as required competency levels related to the registration categories that may apply to granting the recognition.

It is to be noted that such activities will need to be undertaken in line with other government entities and departments in as far as the intergovernmental protocols of South Africa, where applicable.

7. TRANSITION MEASURES

In order to provide for the discrepancies between former Education/Accreditation Standards that were applicable in the review of Programmes in a previous Accreditation cycle and this revision, the following will apply:

- i. Where standards and or criteria have changed or have been partially revised the matching former outcome of an Accreditation assessment review will be applicable and should be reflected as far as possible;
- ii. Where standards and/or criteria have been replaced and no longer applies currently, the former assessment outcomes of these should be reflected as a specific inclusion into the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and associated tables;
- iii. Where standards and/or criteria are completely new, the lack of associated previous Accreditation outcomes should be highlighted in reporting where applicable.

8. COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A complaint is defined as a written statement submitted by persons expressing substantial dissatisfaction with the quality of a Programme or its review as set forth by current Accreditation standards and procedures. Copies of all correspondence shall always be sent to the following concerned parties:

- Complainant,
- Programme administrator,
- Chief Executive Officer of the Institution, and
- The Registrar of the Council.

When an Institution adheres to sound, due process procedures within its own organisation, it is unlikely that the Council will become involved. Each Institution is encouraged to develop effective procedures for responding to faculty or student queries and problems, alleviating dissatisfaction, and averting the need for external intervention by any outside agency. Emphasis on co-operative attitudes and prompt action plays a significant role in fair resolution of faculty or student dissatisfaction.

In the event that a complaint should be received, it is proposed that it be processed in the following manner:

- Stage A: The aggrieved party shall submit the complaint, with documentary evidence, as per the Institution's complaint procedure.
- Stage B: Should the complainant not be satisfied with the response, only then submit such to the Council and only if it is related to Accreditation matters. At its next regular meeting, the Council will consider the complaint.
- Stage C: should it be found to be a complaint of merit, the Council will engage with the Institution involved to assist in resolving the matter.

SECTION B – HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Landscape Architectural Profession Act, 45 of 2000

In accordance with section 13(d) of the Act, the Council may:

“consult with the South African Qualifications Authority established by the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995), or anybody established by it and the voluntary associations, to determine competency standards for the purpose of registration;”

(note: reference to Act 58 of 1995 includes subsequent amendments that may apply)

In line with these stipulations in the Act, this section serves to provide education standards according to which Programmes offering professional qualifications (i.e. qualifications which give eligibility for professional registration) will be evaluated or reviewed for the purposes of awarding Accreditation status.

1.2 The Council On Higher Education (CHE), Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and Council

Similarly and not in opposition to the HEQC's criteria for Programme Accreditation, quality-related education standards constitute a crucial element in the execution of the Council's functions, fulfilling the dual purpose of serving as evaluative tools for the Accreditation Panel assessment and/or review as well as setting broad benchmarks for quality management arrangements in higher education related to professional Programmes. The standards are intended to enable Institutions to analyse and reflect on their quality management arrangements and to guide the production of self-evaluation reports.

The HEQC's, criteria for Programme Accreditation, indicates the minimum standards for academic Programmes in relation to aspects such as:

- Programmes design,
- student and staff recruitment,
- learning strategy,
- assessment policies, practices and procedures,
- Programme administration,
- infrastructure and library resources,
- policies, regulations and procedures,
- Programme co-ordination,
- academic development,
- student retention and throughput rates, as well as
- Programme impact/ student employability.

The Higher Education Standards are orientated towards promoting quality education in preparation for candidacies and ultimately, professional registration. Although some standards may relate to the HEQC's criteria, listed above, the focus of the Higher Education Standards remain predominantly on ensuring that Programme and educational aspects align with the core competencies expected in terms of registration as a candidate.

The standards and criteria apply to contact, distance education and e-learning Programmes. Requirements pertaining specifically to distance education or e-learning are reflected in the HEQC's Criteria for Programme Accreditation and should serve as reference in this regard. Where necessary, additional criteria for distance learning provision, and comprehensive Institutions, may be developed by the EC to supplement the standards and associated criteria set out in this document.

1.3 Meeting the Higher Education Standards

The Higher Education Standards and associated criteria for Programme Accreditation should be used as the basis for an Institution's self-evaluation of the Programme(s) submitted for Accreditation, along with additional benchmarks which the Institution might set for itself. The Council's EC and Accreditation Panel will use the standards and associated performance criteria, the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and supporting evidence provided by the Institution, in assessment for first time

Accreditation of new and existing Programmes or Accreditation review of existing Programmes bearing an Accreditation status.

Each of the Higher Education Standards provides a description of the expected quality in education a Programme must uphold and meet substantially, in order for it to be awarded an accredited status by the Council.

Each standard has performance criteria statements that define the components needed to satisfy the related standard. Each criterion requires qualitative evidence, and in some cases also quantitative evidence, to demonstrate the level of performance. This is largely demonstrated through the completion and prior submission of the SER which includes

- 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.

To be accredited, a Programme must provide evidence that:

- i. Criterion have been substantially met, or;
- ii. Significant Progress towards meeting a criterion substantially, has been made, or;
- iii. Alternative criteria apply to meeting the required standard substantially.

Criterion not substantially met, are to be thoroughly explained and motivated in the SER. It should be noted that not satisfying a criterion does not automatically lead to an assessment of a standard as 'not met'.

2. HIGHER EDUCATION STANDARDS

2.1 Standard One - Programme Strategy

The programme has a clearly defined vision and mission statement supported by goals and objectives aligned with that of the Council and shall demonstrate alignment, actions, policies and commitments towards the attainment thereof.

Performance Criteria:

- a) The Programme literature, website, and other public information sources accurately, clearly and duly reflect the Programme's strategic position;
- b) The Programme has a clearly stated vision/ethos and mission reflecting the purpose and values of the Programme;
- c) The Programme goals and objectives are clearly defined and are consistent with the objectives of the particular profession and with that of the Council;
- d) Programme material clearly outlines the professional career path being targeted; and
- e) Which study field(s) of the profession have been identified as the core of the Programme;
- f) Public Programme material clearly states the Programme's Accreditation status awarded by the Council;
- g) The published curriculum provides details on a sequence of learning opportunities and emphasises its individual Modules and study years that relate to the Programme objectives.

2.2 Standard Two - Governance And Administration

This standard refers to processes and activities which relate to the delivery of the Programme. The criteria aim to provide guidance in determining whether the Programme has the authority and human resources to achieve its educational objectives and deliver on core competencies.

Sufficient numbers of suitably (in terms of programme objectives and expected outcomes) qualified and experienced academic staff should be employed to provide for the proper level of academic expertise across all aspects of the teaching and management of the Programme, including active engagement with the profession.

Performance Criteria:

- a) The Programme should be structured as a discrete professional Programme with the authority, leadership and adequate control of resources;
- b) The Programme has to be effectively co-ordinated in order to facilitate the attainment of its intended purposes and outcomes;
- c) The leadership and resource management of accredited Programmes and study field streams are divested to persons holding qualifications reflective of the study field and/or experience related thereto;
- d) The Programme is adequately resourced to provide support for academic staff development, support for academic research and to provide student support;
- e) The academic staff have higher education qualifications and/or professional experience in the same field as the Modules they lecture;
- f) The Programme has a full-time to part-time staff ratio that ensures part-time and junior staff and tutors are trained, where necessary, and monitored by full-time staff;
- g) The lecturer to student ratio in design studios and tutorials is not greater than 1:25 for undergraduate programmes; i.e. one equivalent full time academic staff to twenty five equivalent full-time students and 1:20 for postgraduate programmes i.e. one equivalent full time academic staff to twenty equivalent full-time students;
- h) Design studios should have a dedicated studio leader/co-ordinator;
- i) There is a demonstrated commitment to involve practicing professionals with appropriate expertise, relative to their involvement, in the Programme;
- j) Opportunities should also exist for student and professional input and participation in the governance process, where relevant; and
- k) Recording of student progress and performance is up to date and available.

2.3 Standard Three - Curriculum Content

The curriculum should address the core competencies as per the latest core competency weighting table published by Council for the said National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level. Alignment of the expected outcomes with the NQF level descriptors as well as professional registration categories is of the essence.

Performance Criteria:

- a) The curriculum content and orientation reflects the Programme's strategy and aligns with the faculties educational policies;
- b) The expected knowledge, competencies, abilities and values of the Programme at the outcomes level are systematically arranged and distributed throughout study years, study field streams and Modules to create a sequence of compatible and well defined learning opportunities reflecting cognitive progression are evident;

- c) The curriculum has a stated core study field. In the case of a Programme feeding towards a design profession, i.e. landscape architecture, approximately half (50%) of the weighting of the curriculum should be dedicated to design teaching;
- d) All minimum expectancies in terms of the core competencies as per the Council Core Competency weighting table should be evident in the Programme outcomes;
- e) Students have opportunities to engage in regular multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary studies; and
- f) Prescribed material is relevant to Module outcomes expectancies and up to date with latest developments in the professional field.

2.4 Standard Four – Assessment and Outcomes

The different modes of delivery of the Programme are suitable to facilitate the required assessment, moderation, monitoring and recording of outcomes and competencies pertaining to professional registration.

Performance Criteria:

- a) Provision is made for internal assessment of student achievements, be suiting to the mode of education;
- b) Appropriate external moderation is provided for according to clear guidelines and includes registered professionals, with subject related experience, in assessment panels where applicable;
- c) Student tasks, assignments and projects are orientated towards providing exposure to a spectrum of practice related problem-solving scenarios, reflective of the study objectives and of the complexity related to expectancies;
- d) Students should be provided with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with professional opportunities, registration, professional development, advanced educational opportunities and continuing professional development requirements associated with professional practice at the Programme outcome level;
- e) Staff and student research and publication outcomes are evident as integral activities of an accredited Programme;
- f) Where Programme content allows, support the development of partnerships with the profession to undertake research; and
- g) Where work-based learning (WIL) forms part of the professional Programme, this should be effectively structured, co-ordinated and assessed. Placement of learners in work environments, that provide the required exposure, should be evident.

2.5 Standard Five – Infrastructure and Facilities

Programmes must be supported through the provision of suitable and sufficient infrastructure resources and facilities to ensure effective Programme delivery.

Performance Criteria:

- a) Adequate computers, software, electronic and other technical equipment are available, maintained and updated;
- b) Programmes are to ensure students have adequate access to relevant industry software and support services. Students are to be exposed to and encouraged to explore current and emerging information technologies;
- c) Students have access to study and meeting rooms, and project work facilities;

- d) Programmes facilitating studio based design teaching should provide access to adequate and suitable studio space dedicated to a specific year group. Sufficient exhibition space for assessing design projects should be available;
- e) Lecturing, and study spaces are suitably furnished and equipped;
- f) The correct and safe use of equipment is integrated in the curriculum where applicable;
- g) Students have adequate storage space in line with Programmes requirements, particularly for model making and other project work where applicable;
- h) Students have out-of-class, safe access to facilities;
- i) A library collection and information of diverse and varied resources must be provided to support the Programme. Library and learning resources, both physical and digital, should be accessible to students;
- j) 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. Regular acquisitions that supplement the existing collection as required by academic staff is to be demonstrated;
- k) Library operating hours, loan and study facilities, allowing for sufficient access for staff and students. On-line access is to be provided to library resources;
- l) Curriculum integrates library use with coursework;
- m) Provision is made in the curriculum to educate students in the task orientated use of library media as information resources; and
- n) Facilities are well maintained, regularly updated and be suited to hosting professional Programmes.

2.6 Standard Six – External Relevance and Outreach

In order to provide learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and opportunity for professional guidance, Programmes should establish effective relationships with the Council, and other relevant associations and institutes, as well as engage with the community.

Performance Criteria:

- a) The Programme regularly liaises with the Council EC Chairperson with a commitment to keeping it informed of Programme responses to Council's Accreditation assessment and directions;
- b) The Programme provides reports and Accreditation documentation in accordance with the Council's Policies and information requests;
- c) The Programme establishes links with other professional institutes and associations and provide opportunity for deliberation between the relevant entities, the Institution and practice, through advisory sessions and similar, in order to remain relevant and aligned with work place expectancies;
- d) The Programme actively promotes positive relationships with the professionals registered with Council and maintains currency through on-going interaction with the profession by means of facilitating school lectures by professionals and excursions to real time and/or completed projects;
- e) Local and international work of excellence is highlighted and upheld as best practice models for teaching purposes;
- f) The Programme actively encourages student participation in the profession's activities, such as participating in the Voluntary Association's (VA) and relevant Council activities;

- g) The Programme structure and outcomes is in alignment with similar Programmes at higher education Institutions nationally in support of improved articulation and student mobility;
- h) The Programme orientation, structure, content and intent aims to contribute towards conformity at national level; and
- i) The Programme encourages students and staff to participate in community activities and promote interaction with the general public.

2.7 Standard Seven – Student recruitment, admission and selection

The Programme's policy reflects the objectives of the Council as far as providing for the intake of students in terms of the Programmes orientation as a feeder to professional registration.

Performance Criteria:

- a) Programme promotional material aligns with and is a true representation of the status, and nature of the Programme as a requirement to professional registration.
- b) The Programme's admission criteria are in line with the National Plan for Higher Education's (NPHE's) goal of widening access to higher education.
- c) Equity targets are clearly stated, as are the plans for attaining them.
- d) Provision is made, where possible, for flexible entry routes, which includes Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with regard to general admission requirements, as well as special preparatory Programmes.
- e) Selection criteria in terms of aptitude tests should be explicit and indicate how they contribute towards the Programme's plans for improved demographic diversity.
- f) The admittance of students and student numbers support the demographic transition and scarce skills objectives of Council.

SECTION C – ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

In line with the stipulations in the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, Act 45 of 2000, hereafter referred to as the Act, this section serves to provide an outline according to which Programmes offering professional qualifications (i.e. qualifications which give eligibility for professional registration) will be evaluated or reviewed for the purposes of awarding an Accreditation outcome.

Accreditation is a statutory system of monitoring, assessment and review of higher education Programmes, in which Programmes and/or Institutions are benchmarked against specified requirements for the education of SACLAP registered professionals. There is typically a degree of self-assessment and self-regulation expected of the Institutions, which is overseen by an accrediting body or organisation that represents the profession that is served by the educational Programmes.

In the interests of aligning the Council Accreditation process (from the perspective of a Statutory Council concerned with Professional Programmes in higher education) with that of the Council for Higher Education (CHE), the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), and the potential streamlining of these parallel processes, the Council's EC is tasked to undertake the following:

- Co-operating in advancing the objectives of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008.
- Co-operating in performing quality assurance functions relating to landscape related qualifications, including the Accreditation of landscape Programmes as well as monitoring and assessment of landscape related education at higher education Institutions.
- Promoting a coherent and effective quality assurance system for higher education Institution's landscape Programmes at NQF levels six to ten (unless otherwise agreed), that form part of the requirements for designations in the landscape professions; and
- Co-operating with one another in the development of standards for landscape higher education qualifications thus ensuring that these Programmes offered at higher education Institutions reflect premium quality standards.

The HEQC Programme Accreditation Framework and HEQC Programme Accreditation Criteria have reference in this regard. Furthermore the NQF Act, 2008 establishes a satisfactory legal basis for the CHE/HEQC to grant delegated Programme Accreditation powers to a body such as a professional Council. The HEQC can take an independent decision on the Accreditation of a particular Programme, possibly on the recommendation of Council, should the need arise.

2. PURPOSE

Furthermore professional Accreditation is also the process of review, designed to evaluate a Programme in the light of its educational objectives and the minimum standards in relation to the Core Competencies as defined by Council as an outcome at graduation with reference to professional registration. Refer to the website (www.saclap.org.za) to obtain a copy of the latest Core Competency Table.

The purpose of Accreditation is to serve the needs of four key stakeholders:

- i. The public is entitled to have confidence and expect that, in employing qualified and registered landscape professionals, there is adequate knowledge of the theory and practice of landscape related professional services;
- ii. The students, upon qualification, are entitled to assurance that the Programme has been independently reviewed and found to meet professional higher education standards, relevance and competencies in order for them to be eligible for registration in the registration categories stipulated by the Council;
- iii. The tertiary Institution for which the process provides a consultative peer review and stimulus to continually improve the educational Programmes to meet emerging and future needs; and

- iv. The profession, which is entitled to have confidence in the level of theoretical and technical knowledge of qualified individuals seeking to engage in landscape professions.

Accreditation is achieved when the Accreditation Panel, as delegated by the Education Committee (EC) concludes, after review of performance criteria and indicators or any other evidence as required, that the stated criteria, objectives and or standards are substantially met. To achieve Accreditation, a Programme must demonstrate to the Accreditation Panel, through the completion of the Self Evaluation Report (SER), site visit, and technical accuracy reviewed by the visiting Accreditation Panel, that it complies with all standards substantially. Apart from meeting standards substantially, compliance with Programme Prerequisites, as stipulated in the policy document, is essential to achieving and maintaining accredited status.

Compliance is subject to endorsement by the EC and approval by Council.

3. PROGRAMME PREREQUISITES

In order for a Programme to be eligible for Accreditation, the following essentials should be prevalent at the time and be maintained during the entire Accreditation cycle in order to retain the accredited status:

1. The Programme title and degree description incorporates the term "Landscape Architecture," "Landscape Technology," "Horticulture", "Ornamental", "Landscaping", "Landscape Management," "Landscape Construction," "Landscape Construction Management." Special attention should be paid to prevent use of terminology, in the naming of a professional Programme, which may have reference to the naming of the registration categories of Council, if not aligned. The selection of terms should aim to contribute towards conformity of the education Programmes at national level.
2. A professional NQF level Programme carries CHE approval/ endorsement regarding pedagogical, notional weighting and time allocation aspects.
3. Faculty instructional full-time equivalence (FTE) shall be as follows:
 - a. All instructional FTE must hold a qualification at a NQF level equal to or higher than the Programme instructed, taking into consideration, qualifications hailing from a previous or other academic regime, that is/was recognised by the Council for the same relevant registration category.
 - b. An academic unit that offers professional Programme(s) at under graduate and/or post graduate levels, has at least one and a quarter (1,25) instructional FTE per academic year, at least seventy five (75%) percent of whom hold qualifications equivalent to the related Programme/s instructed, and at least one per Programme whom are employed full-time.
 - c. An academic unit that offers one or more professional Programmes should at least have one full time lecturing employee (preferably senior lecturer) that is a registered professional with the Council.
4. The Council requires that the level of staffing, stated as part of the Accreditation submission and subsequent agreements, be maintained at all times for the period of Accreditation.
5. The Council, reserves the right to withdraw Accreditation should there be significant reduction in resourcing to an accredited Programme.
6. The parent Institution is accredited by the CHE.
7. There is a designated Programme administrator/co-ordinator responsible for the leadership and management functions of the Programme under review.
8. In addition, Programmes accredited by the Council shall:
 - a. Provide proof to continuously comply with the Higher Education Standards and Programme prerequisites as determined from time to time;

- b. Submit interim reports to the Council as per requests, conditions upon Accreditation outcome, or as stipulated elsewhere.

The Programme administrator shall inform the Council if any of these factors fails to apply during an Accreditation period. The Programme administrator is responsible for reporting any Substantive changes to the Programme when they occur. Substantive Changes would be those that may affect the Accreditation status of the Programme. Application for Substantive Change is addressed in Section 12.2 below.

In an instance where Programme prerequisites are not met, as set out in Section 3 above, upon application for review, these inadequacies need to be highlighted as part of the application for Accreditation and accompanied by a motivation explaining why the Programme should be considered eligible for review.

To be accredited, a Programme must demonstrate significant progress towards complying with the Programme prerequisites.

In a case where significant progress was a condition to address inadequacies, as a conclusion to a previous review, proof of such significant progress should be included in the SER.

4. ACCREDITATION TERM AND SCHEDULING

4.1 Accreditation Cycle

An Accreditation cycle is four (4) years, which is aligned with a Council term of office as per the section 13(a) of the Act.

The awarded Accreditation status is thus granted for a term of four (4) years. Following that time, the Programme Accreditation status will lapse.

A Programme may also apply for an Accreditation review at any time before its term expires, but may not defer a visit beyond the extent of a Council term.

The Council may consider variations to cycles, on recommendation from the EC, which are formally motivated and at its discretion. The official action letter to the Institution indicates the date on which Accreditation will expire. The annually published list of accredited Programmes includes the accredited status of each Programme along with the next scheduled Accreditation review.

All of this keeping in mind that:

- Accreditation is based on the assessment of outcomes of the full academic year immediately preceding the year of the visit. For example: a three-year programme, that has an outcome for the 2015 academic year, this is what will be evaluated in 2016.
- The accreditation status awarded will be valid for the 4 years following the endowment thereof.
- Accreditation status is subject to upholding standards, fulfilling recommendations (if applicable) and adhering to stipulations during the subsequent four (4) year cycle as per the remainder of this policy.

The Education Suite of Documents is also reviewed at least once in a four (4) year Council term of office.

4.2 Delaying or Cancelling A Scheduled Accreditation Visit

From time to time a Programme may want to delay a scheduled Accreditation visit because of unexpected circumstances. The Council will grant an Accreditation visit delay for up to one calendar year, if the following conditions are met:

- The Programme received a four (4) year term of Accreditation at its last review.
- There will be, in compliance with the Act, at least one visit per Council term.
- The Programme is in compliance with Programme Prerequisites for achieving and maintaining accredited status.
- All fees and required reports have been submitted.

- A motivation is provided for the delay in the Accreditation visit.

To request an Accreditation review delay the EC must receive a motivational letter from the Institution endorsed by the Dean (head of faculty or higher rank) and quality review department. In an instance where the visit has already been confirmed, the request for delay will only be considered if it is submitted, a minimum of twelve (12) months prior to the Programme's scheduled visit,

The Institution will be responsible to cover any costs the Council may incur, as a result of granting the delay.

4.3 Rescheduling Accreditation Visit

When the Accreditation visit is rescheduled, priority will be given to Institutions holding Accreditation visits in their regular cycle.

A delayed visit cannot be postponed again for any reason. If the rescheduled Accreditation visit does not take place the Programme's Accreditation will lapse.

5. COUNCIL ACCREDITATION STRUCTURES

5.1 COUNCIL Education Committee

The EC has ultimate responsibility for overseeing the Higher Education Policy, Higher Education Standards and Accreditation Procedure implementation as delegated by Council. To achieve this, the Council has established an Education Committee to oversee specific tasks but the Education Committee makes recommendations to the Council for a final decision and approval.

The EC's processes rely heavily on the volunteer time of the individuals to serve on panels and committees as well as the commitment from the Programme staff to fulfill the necessary roles and responsibilities. Registered professionals of Council may find recognition of their volunteered time in the Continued Professional Development Policy of Council.

Key tasks of the EC in terms of Accreditation include:

- Establish regular contact with the Programme to promote a supportive relationship and maximise familiarity with its operation;
- The EC Chairperson, and if deemed necessary an Accreditation panel member, may if the need arises, formally meet with the Programme's Head of Department (HOD) and coordinator once in between Accreditation visits, to discuss a range of matters including the operation of the Programme, to update information, and to address any points previously identified in Accreditation reports and to view a sampler of student work. On the basis of this meeting, the Institution may be required to submit an interim report;
- Discuss new proposed Programmes or changes to the present Programme;
- Provide feedback on Programme proposals, new directions and amendments.
- Provide feedback and recommendations on matters in education and review outcomes for the Council's consideration.
- Engage with other role players such as the CHE, HEQC, CBE and other relevant stakeholders on education related matters.

5.2 Accreditation Panel

The Accreditation Panel is a panel that is constituted by the EC in conjunction with the Institution that is to be accredited. This panel is to comprise of four (4) or more members, in relation to the Programme(s) and the scope of the assessment required.

5.2.1 Accreditation Panel Composition

The composition of the Accreditation Panel is to be in accordance with the following:

- At least one senior professional registered and practising at the relevant category of registration (compulsory);
- One academic (study field equivalent) from an accredited Institution besides the Institution being accredited (compulsory);
- One registered professional from the public sector (optional);
- One representative of the profession's private sector client body (compulsory);
- One selected representative (not directly associated with the Programme(s)) from the Institution to be accredited (compulsory);

- vi. Representative(s) from the CHE/CBE or nominated observer, and/or international professional(s) from practice associated with the Programme being accredited or as may be prescribed by the specific Institution at the time (optional). SACLAP also reserves the right to include representatives in the panel.

The composition of the Accreditation Panel should take cognisance of the following:

- Reflect an impartial, diverse range of practice and interests.
- Consist of registered professionals of Council with no current formal employment commitment to the Programme(s) and not be recent (within the last 5 years) graduates of the Programme(s).
- The majority of the panel members should preferably have graduated from other Programmes or, if from the Programme(s) in question, is to have at least five (5) years practice since graduation.
- Ideally, at least one member should be involved in a larger practice or public sector department operating across state or regional boundaries and have the necessary experience of graduates from a number of Programmes.
- The panel should have a balanced geographical spread and representation of practice.
- Attention should be paid to demographic representation.
- Consistency and continuity of Accreditation assessment is to be ensured by a progressive turnover/replacement of panellists and that, at any time, at least one, and preferably two, of the members appointed has served on the previously appointed panel.
- Service on the Accreditation Panel by any individual member is ideally limited to eight (8) years i.e. two consecutive Council terms.
- Registered professionals should be registered in the NQF related same, or a higher category of registration than that applicable to the Programme.

5.2.2 Accreditation Panel Selection

Panels are selected to avoid potential conflicts of interest. For example, a previous affiliation with the Programme under review, or an affiliation with a Programme in the same geographic location with competing enrollments, monies, etc., renders an evaluator ineligible.

The EC will not appoint any person to these roles against the reasonable objections of the Programme in question.

The tertiary Institution is advised of the proposed panel, including each proposed team member's present position, experience, and areas of expertise. The Institution has the right to challenge the proposed panel member's selection, with cause. For the purpose of challenge, conflict of interest can be cited as well as the perceived lack of competence of a nominee; however the final decision on an Accreditation panel member assignment rests with the EC Chairperson. The ultimate aim is to select a panel that would serve the mandate of all parties involved.

Only following the Institution's review of potential Accreditation panel members, will the individuals be invited to serve as such. When the Accreditation panel composition and date of the review are finalised, the Accreditation Panel and the Institution are formally notified. Any subsequent changes in the panel makeup, because of scheduling conflicts or emergencies, are made by the EC Chairperson in consultation with the Institution.

Where special conditions warrant, such as providing an Accreditation Panel member training or assisting with site assessment procedures and matters of due process, an additional non-voting panel member may be included for this purpose. At the discretion of the EC Chairperson, one of the following may accompany the Accreditation panel: an Education Committee member, an educator who has a specialist background relevant to the Programme under review or an educator from a related profession.

5.2.3 Conflict Of Interest

Any potential conflicts are to be avoided in the EC and the Accreditation Panel selected from those with no formal substantial commitment between themselves and the Programme.

A conflict of interest typically arises if the nominee comes from the same geographic location and is affiliated with a competitive Institution; or if the nominee had a previous affiliation with the Institution.

If any doubts are identified, the matter should be first referred to the EC, who in turn may seek guidance from the Council. For instance, the occasional volunteer role with the Programme may not be a conflict; however a formal paid on-going tutoring role would most likely be a potential conflict of interest should this person be considered for the Accreditation Panel.

The aim is to have an Accreditation Panel consisting of a mix of registered professionals, academics, and stakeholders with expertise relevant to the objectives of the programme and preferably from a range of tertiary backgrounds.

5.2.4 Accreditation Panel Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Accreditation Panel does not necessarily have to be the chair of the EC. The EC will, through a process of discussion with the Accreditation Panel, come to an agreement as to who the Chairperson will be for a specific visit.

In line with the CBE framework on Accreditation, “a person who is considered to be in good standing, knowledgeable, an expert and experienced in professional specific education matters of the profession must chair the Accreditation panel”.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Council may in accordance with section 12(1)(i) of the Act, promulgate fees associated with Accreditation.

The cost of assessment is borne by the Programme seeking Accreditation. The cost of interim visits of the EC Chairperson (as and where required), to the Institution, is borne as per arrangement with the Council, unless otherwise determined.

The Council further reserves the right to charge a fee, as it may deem appropriate, to cover administrative costs and costs incurred other than listed here. This could be payable as a submission/administration fee in order to process the application for Accreditation and/or, upon agreement, as a reimbursement of expenses.

Financial responsibilities are as follows:

- The Institution will provide/bear the cost of the Council administrative support relating to all aspects of the Accreditation procedure as incurred for function associated with such.
- The EC relies heavily on the willingness of panel members to volunteer their time as a service to the profession, however should this not be the case; the Institution is responsible for the daily remuneration of such an Accreditation Panel member(s), where such remuneration will be equivalent to the, SACLAP prescribed, daily honorarium.
- All expenses of the visit, including travel, lodging and meals will be borne by the Programme/Institution requesting Accreditation. The Institution will arrange for the lodging, meals and associated travel and commuting during the visit and/or reimburse panel members for such. All travel will be at economy class at the lowest available cost.
- Hotel accommodations must be comfortable, reasonably priced. Where possible, use of on campus facilities such as those for visiting faculty or guest lecturers will suffice.
- The Programme is responsible for all costs incurred related to copies of documents and material made available to panel members.

As per the CBE Framework on Accreditation, financing of Accreditation visits will follow accepted public sector guidelines on the cost recovery between public entities as advised by the National Treasury Regulations: Departmental Guide, Interdepartmental Transactions and Balances, April 2013.

It remains the responsibility of the Institution to timeously budget for the projected costs related to an Accreditation visit. Such a projection will be provided by Council, upon request.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES PRIOR TO THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

7.1 Education Committee

The EC shall coordinate and steer the Accreditation review arrangements, appoint the Accreditation Panel in line with the stipulations above and ensure that all related correspondence is dealt with in good time.

The EC Chairperson notifies the Accreditation Panel of the Accreditation schedule (as provided by the Institution) and deadlines related to the review process and outcomes.

7.2 Accreditation Panel

The Accreditation Panel Chairperson is responsible for assigning responsibilities to individuals within the panel.

Panel members receive the Education Policy, Education Standards, Accreditation Procedures, Core Competency Weighting Table etc. and are expected to be thoroughly familiar with these documents before the Accreditation visit.

Each panel member must carefully review the Programme's Self Evaluation Report (SER) and carry out assignments and or reporting directed by the Accreditation Panel Chairperson within good time.

All members of the Accreditation panel must ensure that they fully comprehend their duties in terms of this procedure and may be required to sign a code of ethics.

7.3. Institution Seeking Accreditation

7.3.1 Initiating Accreditation

A Programme can apply for Accreditation whenever it complies with the Programme Prerequisites and has had at least one complete range of assessed results at Programme outcome level.

A Programme should notify the Council's Registrar of its intention to apply for Accreditation at least twelve (12) months before the anticipated Accreditation visit.

Since Accreditation is a voluntary process, the Council cannot conduct an Accreditation assessment without a formal request, invitation or written notice of approval from the Registrar of the Institution. The application should be accompanied by the request/invitation and notice of preferred visit dates.

The application form is obtainable from the office of the Registrar.

7.3.2 Self Evaluation Report

All Programmes applying for Accreditation will prepare a Self Evaluation Report (SER) following the required EC template. The SER describes:

- the Programme's mission and objectives,
- its self-assessment,
- future plans,
- provides a detailed response to the recommendations of the previous visiting team,
- details the Programme's compliance with each education standard and
- Programme prerequisites.

It is important that faculty, administrators, and students participate in preparing the Self Evaluation Report. The SER must include a statement explaining the participation of each of the listed groups.

At least sixty (60) calendar days before the visit, the Programme submits an electronic as well as a single hard copy of the SER to the Registrar of SACLAP for distribution to the EC Chairperson and the Accreditation Panel.

If the documents are not submitted by this deadline, the Programme may be notified that the visit has been postponed. In the case of a currently accredited Programme, this may result in the term of Accreditation expiring.

One (1) bound colour copy of the SER is to be provided by the Institution at the Accreditation visit for review and record keeping purposes.

7.3.3 Accreditation Visit agenda

The Institution prepares the agenda and submits it to the SACLAP Registrar for distribution to the EC Chairperson and the Accreditation Panel, at least sixty (60) calendar days prior to the visit. The final agenda is to be agreed to and circulated to all parties no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the Accreditation visit.

Key elements of the Accreditation visit agenda includes:

- An introductory discussion with the Head of School, Head of Programme and senior colleagues;
- Inspection of student work; both by open exhibition and guided with the focus on each year; it comprise a formal review of a representative range of student work (student work will typically comprise samples of work over each of the years of the Programme and across subjects to demonstrate assessment procedures and benchmark standards for the full range of achievement levels);
- Inspection of the school/Programme facilities while in use as part of normal proceedings;
- Discussion with the staff responsible for specific areas of study; where applicable this should include part-time staff;
- Discussion with the teaching staff as a group;
- Discussion with students and recent graduates;
- Discussions with the Accreditation Panel and other local members/employers; and
- A meeting with the Head of the School and Vice Chancellor, to report on the outcome of the Accreditation visit.

The typical outline of the Agenda is as follows:

Proposed Day 1

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00 – 9:00	Briefing by the Accreditation Panel Chairperson and assignment of roles and reporting (if not undertaken prior) in respect of the schedule Discuss any special conditions/aspects pertaining to previous review or interim reporting
9:00 – 12:00	Welcome by Head of Department and orientation presentations by Programme coordinator(s) as well as heads of subject streams
12:00 – 13:00	Panel deliberation (Programme Coordinator should be available to provide for clarification if required)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch with Head of Department and Programme Coordinator/s
14:00-16:00	Tour of departmental and campus facilities
16:00-17:00	Accreditation Outcome Report Structuring and Review Delegations (finalise assignment of panel members to specific years/ subject streams/Modules and other tasks)

Proposed Day 2

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00-8:30	Meeting with full time lecturing staff
8:30-9:30	View Module Outcomes in parallel with respective lecturers present in venues
09:30-10:00	Meeting with specialist (part time) lecturers
10:00-11:00	View Module Outcomes in parallel with specialist lecturers present in related venues
11:00-11:30	Tea with Dean/Vice Chancellor – discuss national context and objectives
11:30-12:00	Meet with students
12:00-12:30	Meet with recent graduates and practitioners
12:30-15:00	Executive session: Brief feedback from each panel member (Working Lunch), Deliberation, Finalisation of Preliminary Report
15:00-16:00	Feedback to HOD and faculty on findings

A schedule could be expanded to include a third day, should the number of Programmes and extent of work warrant the expansion or if limited exhibition space exists etc. Since this will have financial and learner Programme implications and impede on the daily operation of the Institution, it should be duly considered.

The Accreditation Panel members may conduct interviews by telephone with persons who are unable to meet with them on campus. The Head of Department of the Programme should be available to meet, at the beginning and at the end of the Accreditation Panel's visit.

Early inspection of space and facilities and an exhibition of work produced by the students in the Programme are vital. No evening events should be scheduled, as the panel needs this time to work on its report and prepare for the next day.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

8.1 Accreditation Panel

8.1.1 Assessment and Review

Apart from other aspects listed and discussed in this document, the Accreditation Panel should adhere to the following during assessment:

- The SER remain the basis and reference to the assessment. The ultimate aim of the review is to confirm the facts and technicalities as presented in the SER at the hand of the education standards and prerequisites.
- The criteria as set out in the educational standards, according to which education standards are to be evaluated, should provide the framework for assessment of educational outcomes.
- Panel members should peruse programme material, student work, tests and assignments and make use of interviews from the viewpoint of confirming the validity of the SER and refrain from seeking confirmation of any other (including personal) objectives, opinions, philosophies or dogmas.
- Standards and related criterion serve as basis for assessment and should be substantially met, i.e. considerably, significantly, noticeably, markedly and greatly met. If some standards are not met it does not necessarily mean that a Programme cannot be accredited. The

recommendation of Accreditation outcomes as per Section 11 below should be kept in mind and states:

“Should the Accreditation Panel however find that some standards are not met substantially, but continued overall Programme quality and conformance to standards are judged likely to be met and maintained, the Panel may make recommendations to this end. The recommendations may be set as conditions to be attained in order to retain the status of Accreditation and may be associated with a time frame.”

Section 11 further provides for instances where standards are not met substantially and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall Programme quality and/or conformance to standards is improbable or not likely to be achieved or maintained. The deficiencies leading to refusal/withdrawal are to be sufficiently detailed and motivated with clear reference to standards, criterion and relevant stipulations that may apply.

- Clear record is to be kept of the evaluation of criterion, individual comments and related notes. Suggestions do not necessarily lead to recommendations that may be set as conditions and might rather be included in the Accreditation report for the Institution to take note of.
- Educational outcomes should be tested against the core competency weightings keeping its intention to set minimum expectancies and not idealistic expectations in mind.
- Confirm that Programme Prerequisites are met or significant progress in this regard is evident.
- Panel members are to be present during the full duration of the visit to the Institution and may not receive calls during sessions and procedures.

8.1.2 Executive Session And Feedback

The Accreditation Panel members meet in an executive session immediately after the assessment to prepare a complete report in draft form, and to decide on a recommendation to the EC on the Institution's Accreditation status. The content of this report, except the advisory recommendation, is discussed with the HOD of the Programme as well as the Programme administrator, faculty, and students, particularly with regard to strengths and weaknesses of the Programme, recommendations affecting Accreditation, and suggestions for Programme improvement.

8.2 Institution Seeking Accreditation

8.2.1 Facilities During The Visit

The Accreditation Panel requires the use of a lockable meeting room for the duration of the visit. The Institution should provide assistance, should the panel (within reason), require other specific resources that could assist with the assessment process.

8.2.2 Exhibition Of Student Work

The Accreditation Panel requires easy and unlimited access for the full duration of the visit, to an exhibition of student work completed during the previous academic year. No work of other preceding academic years should be presented.

The work is to include:

- Work from all study years within a specific Programme, arranged to demonstrate the particular outcomes achieved.
- One example each, of work representative of the highest fail, lowest pass, mid-range and lowest distinction should be included only. A class list with final results organised from highest to lowest mark should accompany the work.
- Work should be clearly labelled and organised according to the Programme, specific year and Module.
- Programme guides and related assignment, question papers and memorandums as well as other instructional documents handed to students of all Modules within a Programme.

8.2.4 Meeting With Students

The Accreditation Panel requires at least one meeting with students with no staff present. This group should be as representative as possible of the different years, including if possible recently graduated students and international students and any other representation to allow the panel to obtain a comprehensive overview. The students are to be briefed in advance by the Programme staff as to the role of the Accreditation Panel and the Accreditation processes.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES AFTER THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

9.1 Accreditation Panel

After the visit and executive session, the Accreditation Panel Chairperson consults with the EC Chairperson prior to the draft report being finalised and submitted to the EC. The following process is to be followed:

- i. Within one (1) calendar month following the visit, the Accreditation Panel Chairperson completes the final editing in line with the agreed template and sends copies to the other Accreditation Panel members and the EC Chairperson, for review.
- ii. The Accreditation Panel members should send comments, inputs and corrections to the Accreditation Panel Chairperson within (14) days of receiving the final draft.
- iii. Any substantive changes or additions by the EC Chairperson will be referred to the Accreditation Panel Chairperson and may result in distributing the report to the Accreditation Panel to review the report for final verification.
- iv. The Accreditation Panel Chairperson submits the final draft report to the EC for final review and recommendation to Council.
- v. In agreement with the EC, the final draft report is sent to the Institution seeking Accreditation for comment.

The final draft report will be presented to the Council by the EC for approval at a Council meeting or as delegated to the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO). The Institution will receive the final Accreditation Report within ninety (90) days of the completion of an Accreditation visit or as the Council's quarterly meeting intervals dictate.

In the event that the EC receives comments from the Institution on the outcome of the Accreditation visit, the EC Chairperson is to forward these, with a recommendation to the Council at least fourteen days (14) before the next scheduled Council meeting.

Once Council has approved the outcome of the Accreditation, copies of the document will be sent to the CHE and CBE.

The Council will publish the outcome of the Accreditation in its Annual Report, on the Council website and also in the CBE Quarterly Report that it submits to the CBE.

9.2 Institution Seeking Accreditation

The Institution will receive the final draft Accreditation report, and should, as soon as possible but no later than thirty (30) days of having received the final draft Accreditation report, submit its Institutional response (substantive comments and corrections) to the EC Chairperson. The Programme shall respond to any standard that is assessed as "met with recommendation" or "not met." This response should include any documentation the Programme deems pertinent.

The Institution will receive the final report upon endorsement by the Council. A Programme's subsequent awarded Accreditation status must be clearly conveyed in all Programme and Institutional literature henceforth. Programme literature must clearly reflect which Programme of study bears an Accreditation status.

If the Institution is aggrieved in any way by the outcome, the Appeals Process, as set out below in Section 13, can be initiated.

An Institution which has not been granted accredited status, or a Programme from which Accreditation has been withdrawn, may reapply for Accreditation when its administrators believe the Programme meets requirements and/or standards as set out by the Council.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

The EC and Accreditation panel treats all material generated by the Programme and for the Accreditation visit as confidential, however, the Council encourages the widest dissemination of all Accreditation materials within the Institution.

The Accreditation Report and Self-Evaluation Report are considered to be the property of the Institution accredited.

The Council reserves the right to release a complete report should the Institution release a portion of the Accreditation Report that might, in the judgment of the Council, present a biased or distorted view of the findings and recommendations of the Accreditation visit. The Council furthermore reserves the right to make use of the report in its deliberations with the CHE and other quality control authorities.

11. ACCREDITATION VISIT OUTCOMES

The Accreditation discussion and finalising of the recommendations will take place at the following scheduled Council meeting. The Council may consult with a member of the Accreditation Panel (usually the Chairperson) and/or the Programme administrator in order to clarify items in the Accreditation Report or Institutional response. Institutions may request to appear before the Council to discuss the pending Accreditation decision. The Council's decision will be based upon the Institution's SER, Accreditation Panel report, Institutional response and other reports or material that may be deemed applicable.

The EC will make recommendations to Council in line with section 13(b) of the Act or as determined hereunder:

11.1 Accreditation With or Without Conditions (display as “accredited”)

Accreditation is granted when the Accreditation Panel is fully satisfied following the visit, that the Programme meets all specified requirements and is granted when all standards are met Substantially. The Accreditation Panel will determine and recommend if a follow-up interim visit is required.

Should the Accreditation Panel however find that some standards are not met substantially, but continued overall Programme quality and conformance to standards are judged likely to be met and maintained, the panel may make recommendations to this end. The recommendations may be set as conditions to be attained in order to retain the status of Accreditation and may be associated with a time frame.

A Programme receiving Accreditation may be required to submit progress reports at the discretion of the Council.

11.2 Accreditation Refused

This status is applicable to Programmes that do not hold accredited status and results when standards are not met substantially and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall Programme quality and/or conformance to standards is improbable or not likely. The refusal is to be sufficiently detailed and motivated with clear reference to standards, criterion and relevant stipulations that may apply. This determination is subject to appeal.

11.3 Accreditation Withdrawn

This status is applicable to Programmes holding accredited status and results when standards are not met substantially and the cited deficiencies are such that continued overall Programme quality and/or conformance to standards is improbable or not likely to be maintained. The deficiencies related to the withdrawal, are to be sufficiently detailed and motivated with clear reference to standards, criterion and relevant stipulations that may apply. This determination is subject to appeal.

11.4 Provisional Accreditation (display as “provisionally accredited”)

This status can only be granted in the case of new Programmes. It could also apply, in the case of new Programmes where the full outcome as outlined has not been attained.

Provisional Accreditation may be granted/extended for a maximum of up to two (2) years, following the first review of a full set of Programme outcomes.

A Programme awarded provisional Accreditation may be required to submit rectification plans and/or special progress reports at the discretion of the Council.

Follow-up visits may be required in order to confirm the Programme's status, as far as complying with the predetermined conditions and at the hand of rectification plans and progress reporting. The Programme will, upon the lapse of the two (2) years, provided for rectification, be awarded any other applicable Accreditation Status but “Provisional Accreditation” and “Accreditation Refused”.

Provisional Accreditation Status is not deemed to be an adverse action, is dedicated towards new Programmes only and this determination is subject to appeal.

12 MAINTAINING GOOD STANDING

To maintain good standing a program must continuously meet the Programme prerequisites for achieving and maintaining accredited status. The Council must be informed if any of these requirements cannot be met during an Accreditation period. Should a Programme fail to maintain good standing, Accreditation may be suspended or withdrawn.

12.1 Interim Reporting

To monitor the Programme's continuing compliance with Accreditation requirements reporting may be a requirement as part of the Accreditation outcome. The EC Chairperson may also upon his/her interim visit request the Institution to prepare a report. The EC is to submit such reports to Council, with recommendations, for approval.

From time to time, the Council may require Programmes to prepare special reports to explain or describe a certain issue or problem. These issues will be ones that the EC believes, and motivates to Council, require additional explanation.

The interim report must include, but is not limited to:

- Changes in curriculum, personnel, administration and fiscal support that have occurred since the last report,
- The status of the physical facilities,
- Current enrolment,
- Number of graduates for the current/previous year,
- Report on employment or enrolments in post graduate Programmes of the previous year's graduates, and
- Report on the progress toward complying with the recommendations/conditions of the most recent Accreditation review.

12.2 Policy On Substantive Change

In order to support accredited Programmes as they make changes between regular Accreditation visits, EC will offer consultative reviews of proposed changes prior to submission of an official request for Substantive Change. The terms of Substantive Change are to be noted:

- i. Substantive Change will normally be included in interim reports, yet, is encouraged to be reported prior to the change and submittal to the CHE or other authorities for approval.
- ii. Primary responsibility for reporting Substantive Change rests with the Programme or Institution administrator.
- iii. A well-considered motivational statement and aspects affected by the change should be included to a report submitted to Council.
- iv. Substantive Change is any change that effects one or more of the Higher Education Standards approved and published by Council or that has implication upon any of the Programme prerequisites related to Accreditation, listed earlier in this document.

Council will provide a response regarding a Substantive Change within fourteen (14) calendar days after the following COUNCIL meeting. Pending the response of the Council, the Programme or Institution administrator must respond to the Council within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving such, in order to retain its status of good standing.

12.3 Withdrawal Of Accreditation During A Term

Should a Programme fail to uphold and maintain Higher Education Standards and/or Programme Prerequisites, or any other stipulations pertaining to its status of good standing during an Accreditation Cycle, the Accreditation may be withdrawn. If a decision is made to withdraw Accreditation, before the next scheduled Accreditation visit as per the four (4) year cycle, the Council shall send a letter requesting the Institution to explain why Accreditation should not be withdrawn. The EC shall consider the response before making a recommendation to the Council for a final decision.

The Council may alternatively, suggest to the Programme that an Accreditation visit is in order to assess the situation. If the Programme's parent Institution or other Programmes within the Institution

are awarded an adverse Accreditation Status by other accrediting agencies, the Council should be informed in writing with immediate effect, upon which the Council may send a request to the Institution to submit a report on the accredited Programme's prevailing condition and may consider to motivate to the Council not to withdraw the current Accreditation status.

Withdrawal of Accreditation is an adverse action and can be appealed (see Appeals Process).

13. APPEALS PROCESS

An Institution may appeal the adverse outcome of an Accreditation Visit or the imposition of conditions and recommendations that are proposed by the Council on recommendation of the EC.

An appeal must be in writing stating fully the grounds on which the appeal is made and signed by the divisional head (Dean or Head of School) of the Institution.

Lodgment of an appeal should be made, to the Registrar, in writing within thirty (30) working days of formal notification of Council's resolution on the outcome of the Accreditation.

On receipt of such an appeal, the Council will follow the Appeals process as set out in Section 35 of the Landscape Architectural Profession Act, No 45 of 2000.