



South African Council
for the Architectural Profession

**REPORT OF THE VISITING SACAP VALIDATION BOARD TO
INSCAPE EDUCATION GROUP (PRETORIA CAMPUS)**

**PURPOSE OF THE VALIDATION VISIT: REVISIT
03 – 04 MAY 2021
FINAL REPORT**



Photo 1: As seen from left to right: Ms Esther Martins (INSCAPE DEAN OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT), Ms Lula Scott (SACAP VB member), Ms Kimberley Rowan (SACAP Education & Accreditation Manager) & Dr Finzi Saidi (SACAP VB Chairperson)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) validation board (VB), acting as Education and Training Qualifications Authority (ETQA) for the Council of Higher Education (CHE), visited the Inscope Education Group at the Pretoria Campus on the 03 & 04 May 2021.

The validation visit served to assess the quality and relevance of the Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology qualification (NQF Level 5) which is offered through face-to-face and via distance mode. This report contains the findings of the VB.

A summary statement was presented to the department on the 04 May 2021.

The VB thanks the executive management, faculty and department for their assistance during the visit.

2 LIST OF ACRONYMS

ALS	Architecture Learning Site
CA	Canberra Accord
CBE	Council for the Built Environment
CHE	Council for Higher Education
SACAP	South African Council for the Architectural Professions
VB	Validation Board
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Validation Board wishes to thank the following for their time, effort, arrangements and hospitality.

Campus Director: Ms Renee Koelewyn

Dean: Ms Esther Martins

Academic Staff: Dr Sue Giloi, Ms Gail Barry, Mr Johann Boonzaier and Ms Anita du Plessis

The Staff, Students, Alumni, and Part-time lecturers represented at the visit and via Teams for making time available and sharing information.

The SACAP has a mandate in terms of the Architectural Profession Act, 2000 (Act 44 of 2000) to



assess the quality and relevance of qualifications leading to candidacy and eventual professional registration and practice. Its quality assurance mechanism comprises validation visits by the SACAP appointed validation boards to the architectural learning sites (ALSs) situated at South African institutions. These visits are conducted every five years to coincide with the five-year terms of SACAP councils.

The aim of a validation visit is to determine whether graduates who apply for registration as candidates in any of the SACAP's four professional categories – who hold qualifications from the ALS being visited – meet the minimum standards of competencies and skills associated with that category. A validated qualification enables graduates to register as Candidate Draughtspersons, Candidate Architectural Technologists, Candidate Senior Architectural Technologists and Candidate Architects with the SACAP.

4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4.1 Introduction

Inscape Education Group, is a higher education institution which offers contact learning located at campuses in Cape Town, Stellenbosch (not included in 2021 validation), Durban, Pretoria and Johannesburg in South Africa. The institution also offers distance learning through an online platform. The INSCAPE Education group at the Pretoria campus is their main office and distance campus. This was their revisit, a follow up to conditions that were placed on them previously in 2016.

This report was prepared by the Validation Board (VB) representing SACAP to review the Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology qualification (NQF Level 5) offered by INSCAPE. The process involved the onsite inspection of the Pretoria campus facilities, evaluation of subject contents and assignments, and interviews with staff, students and their external moderator, as well as a review of the module programmes' contributions to architectural education and research in general.

4.2 Recommendations to SACAP

The VB recommends to SACAP:

Unconditional Continued Validation, with recommendations of the following programme:

- Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology – Category of registration: Candidate Draughtsperson
Applicable to the Pretoria Campus and Distance Learning

4.3 Recommendations:

INSCAPE needs to implement a strategic Transformation Plan and procedures to systematically address organisational and pedagogical challenges and opportunities across all campuses.



Experiential Training should have a systematic way of evaluation and feedback of assessment.

All modules in the programme need to be externally moderated as they are exit-level modules to ensure quality and that lecturers are able respond to recommendations in their specific modules. External Moderators should be subject matter experts in the module. The appointment of the moderators should be according to the CHE regulations which recommend a three (3) year contact. Moderation to include all portfolios of all the students and not a sample only.

5 PREAMBLE

SACAP has a mandate in terms of the Architectural Profession Act, 2000 (Act 44 of 2000) to assess the quality and relevance of qualifications leading to candidacy and eventual professional registration and practice. Its quality assurance mechanism comprises validation visits by SACAP appointed Validation Boards to each of the architectural learning sites (ALSs) situated at South African institutions. These visits are conducted every five years.

The aim of a validation visit is to determine whether graduates who apply for registration as candidates in SACAP's four professional categories – holding qualifications from the ALSs being visited – meet the minimum standards of competencies and skills associated with the respective categories. A validated qualification enables graduates to register with SACAP as Candidate Draughtspersons, Candidate Architectural Technologists, Candidate Senior Architectural Technologists and Candidate Architects, and subsequently as Professionals after two years of in-service training and the passing of an examination in professional practice.

6 VALIDATION PROCESS, AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Validation is an outcomes-based, peer-reviewed evaluation of courses in architecture. SACAP evaluates the evidence presented by the ALS and revealed by means of interviewing staff, students and external examiners. Accreditation, as conducted by the Council for Higher Education (CHE), focuses on procedures and processes, and although SACAP may comment on issues such as governance and administration, those are mainly the domain of the CHE. In addition, validation provides a benchmark of international standard as well as allowing mobility of students between the various programmes offered by validated ALSs.

- This report is aimed at providing an assessment for the validation of the Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology.

The broad aim of the validation system applied by such VB is the safeguarding of standards in architectural education by means of a recognition process. Specific concerns were identified:

The Assessment process, whilst the VB finds your process interesting, it is weak and needs to be independent, vigorous and broad so that it gives effective feedback to the lecturers so as they can

implement the recommendations. The moderators report is too generic. There is no transformation plan in place.

7 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The criteria applied are according to SACAP's Competencies for the Architectural Profession. The process is prescribed in SACAP's Validation Guidelines, referred to as The Validation Protocols. The architectural competencies prescribe a range of skills and knowledge fields for each of the four categories of architectural professional and are loosely aligned with the qualifications being validated. To allow for the diversity of philosophies and focus that exists at ALSs, it is accepted that some competencies will be more developed at some institutions than at others.

It is clear, therefore, that although the validation process is standardised for consistency and equality, the intrinsic diversity of learning programmes is accepted and celebrated. The ALS undergoing validation is expected to, very clearly articulate and explain how its programme is positioned vis-à-vis existing programmes at other ALSs. Unique characteristics of the programme, its niche, as well as similarities and distinctive differences must be highlighted.

The panel must assess subjects in terms of structure, credits, content, teaching and learning, and intellectual intensity in terms of the year offered. An ALS must also indicate how continuity and vertical progression are to be achieved in the transition between qualifications. Of specific importance are the requirements for, and envisaged format of, final year design theses and their examination procedures.

MEMBERS OF THE VALIDATION PANEL

The panel consisted of Dr Finzi Saidi (VB Chairperson), Ms Lula Scott (VB members) and Ms Kimberley Rowan (SACAP Manager: Education and Accreditation). No conflicts of interest were reported. A detailed schedule of Board members and qualifications is appended (Annexure D).

8 OBSERVATIONS AND FEEDBACK

8.1 Intellectual Identity

The main strength and vision of INSCAPE is to provide students with further access to further their studies and for students to gain entry level employment. In 2019 66% of their students went on to study further and 31% found employment. The VB acknowledges the Management of INSCAPE for their blending learning mode with a strong focus on developing work-based skills. There is also an advantage between having a balance of academia and lecturer with 'real-work' experience. INSCAPE has sustainability in finances and teaching cohort of lecturers who are willing and excited to be teaching.

9 COMMENTARY

9.1 Documentation, Digital Presentation and Exhibition of Work

The documentation was timeously distributed to the members of the VB before the visit. It was succinct and well compiled, and addressed concerns highlighted in the previous validation report from 2016. The information was further expanded on and clarified in presentations by the Dean and Chief Academic Officer. INSCAPE was effective in aligning the modules and documentation to the outcome competencies for a candidate draughtsperson. The visit was well organised, and the VB was well-received.

9.2 Self-Appraisal and Response to the Previous Validation Report

The balance of credits in the modules has been addressed at the correct NQF levels. Content which was cited as having been thin on history has been adequately addressed. Lack of precedents, has been addressed with appropriate assignments by identification of prominent architects from which students could select and study.

The comment of portfolios lacking creativity appears to have been addressed with an integrated portfolio and an emphasis on the quality of presentation.

A reflection on the COVID-19 response: On the 14th April 2020, classes started online via the platform 'Teams' and the timetable continued online. All students were assisted with modem and data for their personal laptops where needed. INSCAPE made use of Office 365 and MS Teams as a virtual classroom together with their existing LMS platform (IN.CONNECT). Once Lockdown levels subsided the students could go on campus to make use of the specialised equipment, free WIFI or consult lecturing staff. Despite the COVID-19 challenges the students and staff still engaged in a culture of teaching & learning. There was an innovation in how Experiential Training was handled, the students were able to still benefit. The financial support given to the students regarding data supplied by INSCAPE is commended, the norm of "bring your own device", as a working tool with software supplied by INSCAPE, supported continuous learning, performance and student deliverables when face-to-face contact was unavailable.

The VB acknowledges the benefit of the balance between lecturers to student ratio. The students should feel privileged to know that they have the lecturers' full attention.

9.3 Meetings with Management

The VB held constructive and transparent meetings with the Dean and other staff members who pointed out the challenges that include for INSCAPE that their academic staff have no opportunity to receive DHET subsidy to support their research activities. Management seemed very committed and supportive of the school's vision and mission. The Dean spoke of funding that was acquired independently to assist students who needed funding for their studies.



9.4 Comments Based on an Interview with the External Examiner

The comments by the External Examiner during her interaction with the VB were generally positive. The External examiner was a former lecturer for INSCAPE and since 2020 has been the moderator moderating all of INSCAPE's campuses. The VB was concerned that there was no distinct review of each module as a unit and is rather overviewed as an overall programme annually without interim moderation. Also concerned that review did not include all portfolios of all the students but a sample of low/medium/high. The External Examiner has interior design specialisation without expertise across all subjects. The VB however, was glad to note that the external moderator had made substantive recommendation about the critical competence required in the higher certificate programme in her reports – the ability of students to produce competent and acceptable council submission drawings and documents which was lacking.

9.5 Comments Based on an Interview with Students

Students commented that even though offering opportunity for continued learning and access to lecturers during Covid restrictions, the online classes gave them little motivation to do work, they missed their 'peer-learning' that takes place on campus. Practical work is completed onsite. Students have access to the INSCAPE online library, but made the comment that when learning AutoCAD they need to "google" search for support. Overall the VB noted that the students were largely satisfied with the programme's intentions and outcomes, they spoke highly of the facilities such as the student lounge area and said the environment was friendly. However more power point plugs would be ideal for running laptops constantly in class and on campus. The students felt that all the material that they needed should be supplied by INSCAPE and should not be costing them anything. They also felt that parking away from the campus felt unsafe and that somehow more parking space needs to be identified where it is safer and closer to (or on) campus. Generally they are satisfied with access and support to their lecturers, noting external lecturers may be difficult to reach due to their private work commitments. Student indicated that they had no access to the workshop on campus.

9.6 Comments Based on an Interview with Staff

The staff were very complimentary of their leadership at INSCAPE. There is adequately qualified staff, most of whom are practitioners. There is a strong body of lecturers who are engaged with the students and teaching.

Although the moderator's report had been received by the Dean of the school, the lecturers had not seen the report and therefore had not incorporated the recommendation in time.

Greater focus on lecturers' moderators and external examiners with an architectural background is required.



10 FACILITIES AND RESOURCING

10.1 INSCAPE Facilities:

The INSCAPE Education Pretoria campus has both face-to-face and online learning (blended learning). Facilities are in place, students have their own laptops to which software is supplied by INSCAPE allowing constant accessibility for learning and lecturer contact. Although the library is not fully functional, the VB was encouraged by the appointment of a new librarian to get it to an operational level. Students have adequate studios but access to the workshop was inadequate.

Students are happy to come to the campus and have missed the peer contact and learning. Some shading can be placed by the external recreational area near the student smoking area so that students can enjoy time outdoors when on warm conditions.

Access to the workshop needs to be scheduled to allow student the opportunity to make their models.

11 COMMENTARY ON THE MODULES PRESENTED:

11.1 TECHNICAL DRAWING PRACTICES (TEC 135)

General Comments

The VB commends the Technology teaching staff for a comprehensive study guide for semester 1 & 2 that give students a clear plan of what is expected of them and how to achieve it.

There was a request from the previous validation report that orthographic drawings and gradual perspective drawings should be introduced and it appears to have been done.

Portfolios examined indicate a variety of drawing types from orthographic to perspective.

There has been realignment of the module with the requirement of the SACAP competencies for draughtspersons. Further there is clear weighting of the module with 35 credits in line with the HEQC frameworks.

The moderator's report, which has been extracted from the portfolio, raises concerns about the level of competence in the council drawings assignments. These assignments do not show sufficient awareness of council submission requirement. This is an area for improvement for the programme. As advised by the moderator there is a need to emphasise acquisition of technical competence for submission of council drawings as a key area of expertise for draughtspersons in line with SACAP categories of registrations. Moderation of a

critical module like TEC 135 should be done by an expert in draughting and building technology. The moderation is insufficient and may lead to critical competencies not being examined at their level of complexity.

There is a satisfactory combination of assessments that gradually take the student from 2D drawings to 3D and eventually to exploring methods and materials. Students work was provided in the high medium and low as required by SACAP. However, the VB observed that a weakness was that the assessment of TEC 135 was done as part of a comprehensive portfolio and this might lead to some students leaving out critical areas of competencies.

SACAP recommends that final assessment of Technical Drawing Practices (TEC135) to be externally done by a qualified moderator in order to ensure the competencies are adequately met by students.

11.2 DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS (CRE 136)

General Comments:

The module is well planned and exemplified by study guides and assignments that document competencies and expected outcomes on completion. There is clear documentation of assignments and the criteria for assessment. Content demonstrates adequate complexity for a draughtsperson consisting of history and theory of architecture; architectural principles: sketching, trends and latest technological and layout/presentation techniques.

There is considered effort to integrate knowledge demonstrated by the final project.

Portfolio in the range of high, medium and low were provided to examiners. Although the final project shows that most students had performed well and showed clear understanding of the draughting process, the panel notes the concerns raised by the moderator that there was poor understanding of technical council submission requirements. Most of the student's final 'council drawings' did not show sufficient council notes and would most likely be rejected by the Building office at Municipality. This an area that INSCAPE needs to ensure that it is improved as it is a key indicator of competence at this level of qualification. INSCAPE must ensure that students are introduced to SANS XA regulations and also Energy Efficiency Calculations to give their students the competitive edge. Assessment of sketching quality shows that most students have a low level of competence and the panel recommend added effort to remedy the situation. Model making seems minimal although there is a workshop in the school.

This module needs to reflect in its content the transformation in society and should explore in addition to the known canons of knowledge, South African and African contextual design opportunities and issues.

11.3 GREEN AND SUSTAINABILITY TECHNOLOGY (TEC 137)

General Comments:

The module appears to be well planned supported by study guides and assignments.

Competencies and expected outcomes on completion of module seem well defined.

Numerous graphic examples are presented enhancing the study material.

There is a holistic approach and overview to the subject matter and the presentation and documentation of assignments and assessment criteria are defined. Content aligns to the anticipated competencies of a draughtsperson.

There appears to be an interaction of the knowledge across other modules carried through to this model thus subject matter is not viewed in isolation.

Portfolio presented identified a range of high, medium and low. Generally, there appears to be a good understanding of the principles required; however, the lower range show a lack of detail by the students suggesting subject matter not fully understood.

An extensive interaction with current systems and methods used in other countries is evident – leaning on existing expertise and working systems on which one may learn from and apply locally. However subject matter presented did not show adequate focus on basic principles and vernacular examples (local and international, and historic methods) and examples of current applications within the South African context and environment. Noting the above, lecturer interviews clarified that the basic principles and vernacular is covered in their teaching - this to be explored and incorporated further by INSCAPE.

The context of the Sans XA Regulations and Energy Efficiency calculations is touched on. A rational design may not necessarily fall within the required competencies, however greater evidence is required of students' awareness with the various calculations one may need to apply in a rational design and/or to confirm compliance to Sans XA Regulations and Energy Efficiency Regulations.

11.4 BUSINESS AND PRACTICE MANAGEMENT BUS (138)

General Comments:

The module appears to be well planned supported by study guides and assignments. Learning is guided by written briefs which define the subject matter as well as the depth and breadth of the learning to be evidenced by the student.

Competencies and expected outcomes on completion of module seem well defined.

Examples are presented enhancing the study material.



Generally, content aligns to anticipated competencies of a draughtsperson, however strong emphasis on project management and contract managements - panel felt this was too advanced on expected competency.

Too much focus on JBCC detail – insufficient focus on overview other market related contracts.

Professional Appointment contracts not adequately addressed.

Not enough focus in office practise and local authorities and need for compliance in how documentation presented to the latter.

Portfolio presented identified a range of high, medium and low. Generally, there appears to be a good understanding of the principles required; the high range showed a good knowledge of project planning and the principles of business practice, with lower being sketchy, with limited depth in detail, this suggesting subject matter not fully understood.

11.5 SOFTWARE APPLICATION FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (SOF 183)

General Comments:

The module introduces students to software applications AUTOCAD and REVIT. The module has a clearly outlined study guide that details the competences and assignments designed to assist students with learning. It is commendable that INSCAPE provides students with LinkedIn training to enhance their software training.

There is a clear intention to integrate software training with the technology and design modules by devising integrated assignments i.e. 'Technical Drawing Practices- TEC135' class and BRIEF TEC136: Commercial Working Drawings.

Student portfolio indicates an acceptable level of competences in software awareness.

The VB recommends that the modules should have examiners that are expert software moderators in order to ensure that the competences have been met. The moderators report showed no indication of what was good or any indication of areas that needed to be improved in the Software module.

11.6 EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING (BUS 026)

General Comments:

Students undertake a period of 240 hours/30 days full-time experiential training (in-service training or work integrated learning) in an architectural practice or similar.



2020 with its Covid Challenges limited host company opportunities and Inscape is commended for their approach to create “real life scenarios” for students to partake in and thus not be compromised. Shortcomings in content/experience were taken up by Distance Learning offering further opportunities to support the student.

Documentation of the entire process must be recorded, both written and visual by submitting (1) A log signed by the supervisor that confirms work has been completed by the student. (2) A portfolio of evidence of the work undertaken during the Experiential Training. (3) An exit interview completed by the supervisor indicates the industry readiness of the student to be well planned supported by study guides and assignments. Learning is guided by written briefs which define the subject matter as well as the depth and breadth of the learning to be evidenced by the student. Competencies and expected outcomes on completion of module seem well defined.



Examples are presented enhancing the study material.

It is recommended however that expected responsibilities and intended outcomes by both mentor/host Company and student must be clearly outlined to ensure ongoing growth and that student is effectively incorporated into the various work scenarios.

Furthermore, ongoing liaison (formal and informal) by INSCAPE with mentor/host company should be applied throughout process (and not at end only) to identify challenges or shortcomings to enhance both the student’s development and where required to inform enhancements to the INSCAPE programme. Same ongoing liaison to be applied with the student too.

12 CONCLUSION

The VB thanks the Campus Director, Dean and Departmental staff for their hospitality and assistance during the visit. Having spent two days scrutinising and interrogating the many facets of the INSCAPE Education Group, the VB trusts that the interaction, comments and recommendations outlined will assist the ALS in continuing to play its role as a major contributor to the architectural profession and the built environment. Critical to the improvement of the higher certification programme will be the articulation of a clear Transformation Plan to outline, short medium and long-term goals of INSCAPE.

Ms Esther Martins (Dean Built Environment)	Dr Finzi Saidi (VB Chairperson)
Date: 2021/06/01	Date:08 June 2021
Signature: 	Signature: 

Annexure A: Competencies used

The competencies were aligned with the envisaged Identification of Work Matrix. That matrix is based on the complexity of the project, and the sensitivity of the context and site, whether natural or constructed.

		SITE SENSITIVITY		
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
PROJECT COMPLEXITY	LOW	PrArchDraught		
		PrArchT		
		PrSArchT		
		PrArch		
	MEDIUM	PrArchT		
		PrSArchT		
		PrArch		
	HIGH	PrSArchT		

Annexure B: Curriculum Overview

CODE	YEAR	MODULE
TEC135	1	Technical Drawing Practices
CRE 136	1	Design Fundamentals
TEC 137	1	Green and Sustainability Technology
BUS138	1	Business and Practice Management

SOF183	1	Software Application for the Built Environment
BUS026	1	Experiential Training

Annexure C: Validation Board Schedule

Friday 30 April 2021		
10h00 - 12h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-meeting of the validation board via zoom • SACAP panel to discuss the inspection of the architecture program (chairperson appointed by the SACAP to preside) 	SACAP Board
Day one: Monday 03 May 2021		
08h00– 08h15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of board members by the validation board chairperson and of staff members by the Dr Sue Giloi 	Dr Sue Giloi Ms Esther Martins
08h15- 09h45 –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation 1: Summative Self-appraisal • Presentation 2: Outline of the Academic Programme 	
10h00- 10h30	Private meeting with staff management	Ms Gail Barry, Dr Sue Giloi and Ms Esther Martins
10h00-	Members of the VB divide their time between	

12h30	inspection of the work and portfolios	
12h30 - 13h30	Lunch	
13h30 – 14h00	Walk around, visit of the workshops, library, studio, computer facilities etc. including informal discussions with staff and students.	
14h00 – 15h00	VB meeting with the external moderator.	Ms Jenni Theron
15h00 – 16h00	The VB meets with students and graduates face-to face and via zoom.	
16h00- 17h00	The VB reviews the documentation on display.	
Day two: Tuesday 04 May 2021		
08h00-09h00	The VB meets with full-time and part-time lecturers	
09h00-09h30	Meeting with the Dean and the VB	
09h30-12h30	Private meeting of the VB to discuss general findings, drafting of the exit outcome statement.	
12h30-13h30	Lunch	
13h30 -14h30	Meeting with the Dean and staff to summarise findings and discuss areas of concern.	SACAP Board, Dean and Management staff

Annexure D: Validation Board Members

Name	Representation	Telephone	E-mail
Dr Finzi Saidi (Phd: Architecture)	Chairperson	082 765 1552	finzis@uj.ac.za
Ms Lula Scott (Diploma: Architecture)	Practitioner	083 264 1056	lulaw@iafrica.com
Ms Kimberley Rowan (PGDEM)	SACAP Manager: Education	+27 11 479 5000	Kimberley.Rowan@sacapsa.com