



South African Council
for the Architectural Profession

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

**PURPOSE OF THE VALIDATION VISIT: VIRTUAL VISIT
01 SEPTEMBER 2021
FINAL REPORT**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	3
3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
4. PREAMBLE.....	4
5. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	5
6. VALIDATION PROCESS, AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
7. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	5
8. MEMBERS OF THE VISITING BOARD.....	5
9. OBSERVATIONS AND FEEDBACK.....	6
10. COMMENTARY.....	6
11. FACILITIES AND FEEDBACK.....	9
12. REVIEW OF COURSES.....	10
13. CONCLUSION.....	16
14. ANNEXURES.....	17

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), physically visited the facilities and virtually visited the Inscope Education Group at the Midrand Campus on the 17 August and 01 September 2021 respectively.

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 06 September 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: Mr Maurice van der Merwe

Dean for the Built Environment: Ms Esther Martins

Academic Staff: Dr Sue Giloi and Mr Abi Coetzee

The Staff, Students, Alumni, and Part-time lecturers represented at the virtual visit via zoom 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 PREAMBLE

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5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5.1 Introduction

The executive summary for the INSCAPE Midrand Campus describing the ethos and campus culture was impressive.

The previous SACAP report related to the Pretoria Campus and not the Midrand, Cape Town and Durban Campus'. However as Inscape as a Group apply a common curriculum and methodology across all their Campus programs, the findings of the SACAP report related to the Pretoria Campus are referenced to the Midrand, Cape Town and Durban Campus'.



This report was prepared by the Validation Board (VB) representing SACAP. The process involved the physical inspection of the facilities, with 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 via a virtual visit.

5.2 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

5.3 Recommendations:

There needs to be a Transformation strategic plan and procedure in place across the campuses. The academic staff should be more diverse.

External Moderators should be subject matter experts in the module. The appointment of the moderator should be according to the CHE regulations which is based on a three (3) year contact.

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.

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).

The physical inspection of the facilities was undertaken by Ms Lula Scott.

7 OBSERVATIONS AND FEEDBACK

7.1 Intellectual Identity

The VB acknowledges the Management of INSCAPE Midrand for their blending learning mode with a strong focus on developing work-based skills.

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 - Midrand 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, supported continuous learning, performance and student deliverables when face-to-face contact was unavailable. Data paid for by Inscape for students in need during lockdown period to ensure continuity in access to learning and online resource platforms

ProQuest offers a digital repository of books, articles, thesis and magazines for students to carry out their work. There is also an advantage between having a balance of academia and lecturer with ‘real-work ‘experience. INSCAPE Midrand has sustainability in finances and teaching cohort of lecturers who are willing and excited to be teaching.

8 COMMENTARY

8.1 Documentation, Digital Presentation and Exhibition of Work

The documentation was succinct and well compiled within files sent through the online platform. The information was further expanded on by the Dean of the Built Environment. Midrand was effective in aligning the modules and documentation to the outcome competencies for a candidate draughtsperson.

The previous SACAP report related to the Pretoria Campus and not the Midrand, Cape Town and Durban Campus. However as INSCAPE as a Group apply a common curriculum and methodology across all their Campus programs, the findings of the SACAP report related to the Pretoria Campus are referenced to the Midrand, Cape Town and Durban Campus’.

8.2 Meetings with Management

The INSCAPE Midrand campus staff is not diverse, Midrand would benefit from the knowledge and backgrounds of a diverse academic staff. Management seemed very committed and supportive of the school’s vision and mission.

8.3 Comments Based on an Interview with the External Examiner

The External Examiner is the same person for all of INSCAPE’s campuses’. 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. Furthermore that External Examiner expertise lies in Interior design and not all the modules covered by the Higher Certificate in Architecture.

8.4 Comments Based on an Interview with Students

The student compliment is diverse and they are very happy with the facilities and the lecturers.

The students stated that they are enjoying the programme, assessment feedback is very good and consistent. They have a Student Representative Committee that communicates any

issues to the lecturer and the lecturer will respond. They stated that lecturers are available after hours for assistance. The facilities at the INSCAPE Midrand campus are impressive and sufficient, students have access to the studios and are able to access the Library for information they need. The students do enjoy being on the campus, whether it is working or socialising. They enjoyed the common spaces they interacted in socially and while learning and the absence from this environment and interaction due to covid 19 was missed, as was peer discussions which supported their learning.

The Model Building Workshop is well equipped and is a creative environment.

A Recommendation is that students all register with the SACAP as under the “student category” to enable early entry and understanding of the “professional environment”.

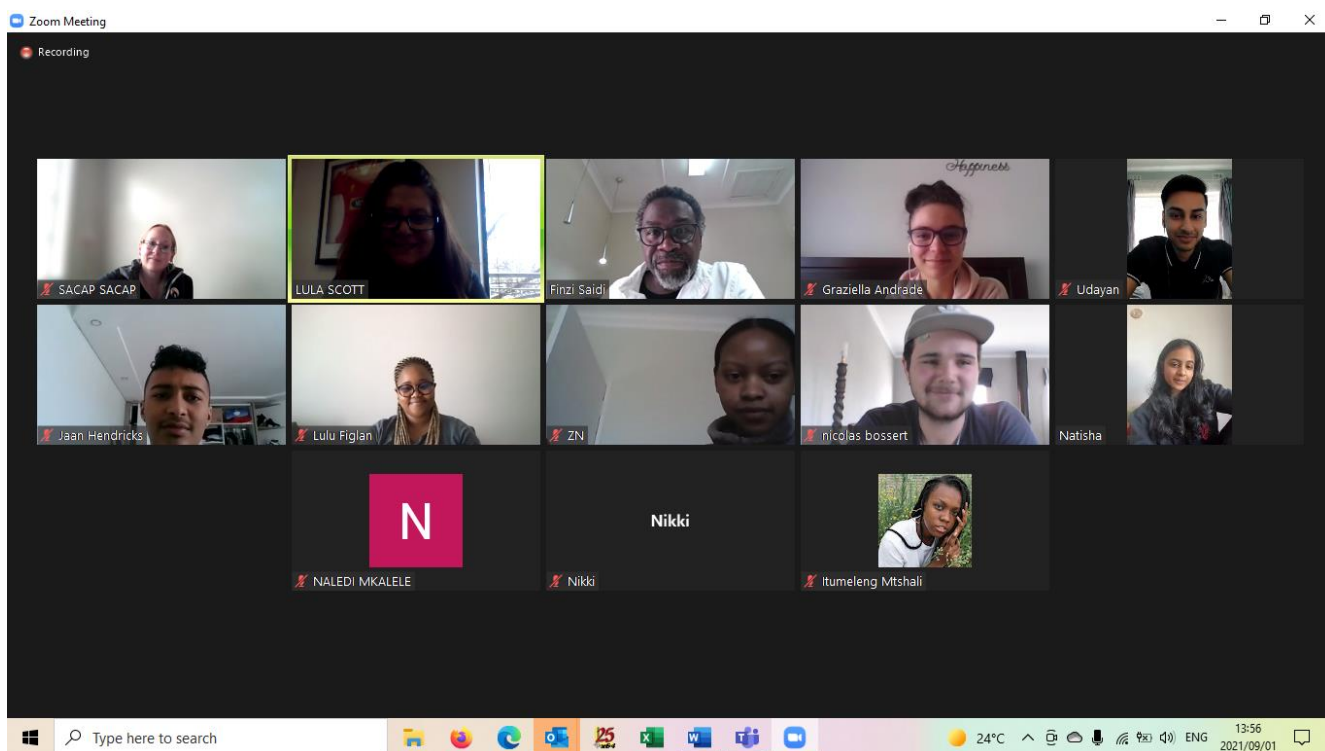


Photo 1: Interview with the students of INSCAPE - Midrand

8.5 Comments Based on an Interview with Staff

The staff were very complimentary of their leadership and initiatives to enhance the faculty and its offerings.

The staff seem to have a willingness to teach and be available for the students' needs. The Experiential Learning is managed well and the fact that students are encouraged to do a presentation and voice over is excellent. The students are challenged to step out of their 'comfort' zone and face 'real-life' scenarios.

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.

A single year end moderation exercise is not sufficient for the programme.



Photo 2: Interview with the staff of INSCAPE -Midrand

9 FACILITIES AND RESOURCING

9.1 INSCAPE Facilities:

The VB Member who visited the facilities was overall satisfied that the visit was adequate except for absence of the on-site student experience. The VB Member was well received, with representatives willing to share information. They presented the venue with a sense of pride, and it is clear to be a workspace and environment they enjoy. The facility is not exclusively used by students of the Higher Certificate in Architectural Technology and is shared with students in other Design fields.

In general, the impression of the INSCAPE – Midrand facility was of a modern well-equipped and organised facility, newly renovated with attention to detail in student and lecturers needs. The aesthetic is modern and fresh, yet classic thus creating a calm but inspiring environment, pleasing to the eye but comfortable to experience which the VB Member believes is beneficial to its users. The floor plan differs to that of the Pretoria Campus, but one immediately identifies the Inscape brand in choice of colours, murals and furnishing.

Use of natural light and ventilation to most areas is of great benefit. All echoed the sentiment that however productive the online sessions have been in ensuring ongoing learning, the

personal interaction was missed by students and lecturers and both are looking forward to the return to physical lectures and the hub and life that the learning process and participants bring to the campus. The Studios vary from cluster teaching with central island or areas to individual desk configurations. All studios include projectors, screens and white boards. All are air conditioned with majority having direct access to natural light and ventilation.

The closing view was that this is a Campus that is sensitive to its occupants. Not having active lectures and student activities on the day of the visit limited observing how the Campus is actually experienced, however, this did not diminish all the strengths of the Campus which appears to have addressed necessary considerations to create a functioning environment for its users.



Photo 3: The Studio at INSCAPE -Midrand



Photo 4: "Chill area" outside the Studio

10 COMMENTARY ON THE MODULES PRESENTED:

10.1 TECHNICAL DRAWING PRACTICES (TEC 135)

General Comments

Comprehensive documentation was provided in the study guides and in the assignments given to students in terms of learning areas which the VB thought was commendable.

A recommendation is that the Technical Drawings could be made of a building in Pretoria or nearby surroundings that not only teaches students to produce competent council submission drawings but also about how context, climate and local materials influences design of buildings. It offers students an opportunity to integrate technical resolution to climatic conditions and sustainable studies. The assessment methods are comprehensive and adequate.

The SANS XA competences that would boost the professional standing of students, needs to be covered in the curriculum of this module.

10.2 DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS (CRE 136)

General Comments:

Comprehensively written study guide that gives student good orientation in the module.

The presentation of information for evaluation of the high, middle and low marks of the student portfolios were not in the manner prescribed by SACAP and we advise that this needs to be attended to by the next validation visit.

Although most of the students work was available the manner of presentation made it difficult to compare the quality among students as mark allocations were identified for individual assignments and not as a whole evaluation of a portfolio. The folder for sketches' was empty and no conclusions could be made by the VB members.

The high pass portfolio had no freehand sketches. Similarly, some were well composed, and very comprehensive portfolios had no council submission documents which makes it hard to evaluate if students have indeed grasped the competencies. The missing student work made it difficult to triangulate assess the quality of the module.

There is a need to address comprehensively with a pedagogical transformation plan. There needs to be an understanding of what transformation means and its implications for teaching in the context of South African context.

An effort needs to be made to incorporate what it means in terms of knowledge to be located in Gauteng and surrounding local precedents, technologies and an understanding of the climate.

10.3 GREEN AND SUSTAINABILITY TECHNOLOGY (TEC 137)

General Comments:

The module appears to be well planned supported by study guides and assignments. The competencies and expected outcomes on completion of the module were well defined. There are numerous graphic examples that are presented enhancing the study material. There is a holistic approach and overview to the subject matter. The presentation and documentation of assignments and the assessment criteria are well defined and the content aligns to 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. The portfolio presented identified a range of high, medium no low range. Generally, there appears to be a good understanding of the principles required in the high and medium; it would have been beneficial to view the low

range.

There appears to be “copy paste” of material in research which should be discouraged in portfolio content. The quality of the technical drawings supporting the subject matter was found not to be consistent, it lacked evidence of application of the necessary town planning criteria in the case studies.

There is an extensive interaction with current systems and methods which are used in other countries, 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 - this should be explored and incorporated further by INSCAPE-Midrand. However, in the lecturer interviews the staff clarified that the basic principles and vernacular is covered in their teaching with local examples.

There is evidence of continuous formative project-based assessment, against defined learning outcomes, resulting in marks per assignment and includes a combination of lecturer, group discussion and critique plus peer assessment. A summative portfolio-based exhibition is externally moderated at end of the programme. This is based on a sample of portfolios. A review of the total student portfolio base would serve the students better and interim moderation during the year is encouraged. Specific briefs are internally moderated during the academic year. Although the students present their projects to their lecturers in the year, it might be beneficial for students to present their portfolios to the moderators at the end of the year and at interim moderation during the year (currently not available but encouraged).

There is a healthy practice of internal peer teacher evaluation of the modules. Written subject reports are helpful feedback for lecturers as they contain detailed reports on which to improve teaching. The panel commended the practice within INSCAPE-Midrand.

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

The VB encourages INSCAPE-Midrand to teach the basic principles of environmental factors with the students instead motivating students finding their own solutions and exploring their own historic and vernacular methods. Incorporating the basic environmental principles and methods in the model building assignment (under different module) is encouraged.

10.4 BUSINESS AND PRACTICE MANAGEMENT BUS (138)

General Comments:

The module appears to be well planned and 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. The competencies and expected outcomes on completion of the module were 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, the VB felt this was too advanced on expected competency.

There is too much focus on JBCC detail and insufficient focus on the overview of other market related contracts. Even though the courseware is too heavily weighted to the JBCC contract for the Higher Certificate, it was encouraging that the portfolios' that were presented the students' had interpretations of the principle applications of a contract. The Professional Appointment contracts are not adequately addressed and there is not enough focus on office practise and local authorities. There is a need for compliance in how documentation is presented to the latter.

Portfolio presented 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. The low showed an absence of sufficient knowledge in the subject

A greater understanding of the role players within the Built Environment and aligned professions with relevance to the student and graduate is required, as not always correctly understood by lecturers (and as taught). The context and role of CPA on the Built Environment and aligned professions is not adequately explained.

Focus on interior design components were noted in the project plans and but was explained this being initial project thus only applied simple project plans, without construction methods to explain principles of project planning. A greater focus on architectural technology is encouraged.

Learning is project-based, with the practical application of knowledge and skills to demonstrate an understanding of what is learnt. The student research requires to write assignments and business plans. Classes include experimentation, group discussion, workshops and the practical application of knowledge and skills is facilitated by the lecturer. Exemplars are used to illustrated architectural principles, practical tasks, research, class discussion and industry

site visits.

There is continuous formative project-based assessment, against defined learning outcomes, resulting in marks per assignment and includes combination of lecturer, group discussion and critique plus peer assessment.

A summative portfolio-based exhibition is externally moderated at end of the programme. This is based on a sample of portfolios. Specific briefs are internally moderated during the academic year.

Although the students present their projects to their lecturers in the year, it might be beneficial for students to present their portfolios to the moderators at the end of the year and at interim moderation during the year (currently not available but encouraged).

The external moderation offered inadequate comments on this module. The view of the VB:

To have a single external examiner across all modules does not offer sufficient expertise on the subject matter to interrogate specifics of each module. There is a heavy weighting on interior design expertise in moderators and lecturers. There should be a greater architectural expertise. There should also be Specialists in the field to moderate and serve as external examiners and interim assessment is required per term rather than only at end of the year for all the students and not only a sample of students.

10.5 SOFTWARE APPLICATION FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (SOF 135)

General Comments:

While the two programmes that are taught, AutoCAD and REVIT, are industry standard software packages that are well known, it was not possible to assess the competency level of the students because the student work folders given to the VB were empty.

However, the software module assignments were found in the Design portfolio and most were of an acceptable competency.

INSCAPE must adhere to SACAP guidelines for the display documentation for validations.

Students have access to LinkedIn Learning which is a valuable resource to have for AUTOCAD training.

10.6 EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING (BUS 026)

General Comments:

The 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. Learning is



experiential with students being fully involved in the activities of the host company in a typical architectural practice or related environment. The training should include exposure to all facets of architectural drawing, from sourcing work, meeting with clients, interpreting the brief, design process, final application, site meetings and general administration tasks. The training must include analysis of good examples of existing design work and exposure to the management of a project. The work should be completed under the supervision of a registered industry practitioner / professional.

With the Covid Challenges in 2020 this meant limited host company opportunities and INSCAPE – Midrand is commended for their approach to create “real life scenarios” for students to partake in and thus not be compromised. The shortcomings in content/experience were taken up by Distance Learning offering further opportunities to support the student.

With noting the above in the absence of opportunity to undertake in office experiential training and site visits, the campus is also to be commended for their approach allowing students to develop a presentation with research component to cover various aspects within an experiential environment, thus allowing for presentation skills and research tools to be explored. The Experiential Learning modules is managed well under the 2020's COVID pandemic constraints, and the fact that students are encouraged to do a presentation and voice over (even students with physical challenges) is excellent. The students are challenged to step out of their ‘comfort’ zone and face ‘real-life’ scenarios and enhance their presentation skills with opportunity to present personal interpretation of subject matter.

The high, medium and low portfolios were presented. The high portfolios extended themselves with good research components whilst the low portfolios lacked depth of analysis.

With respect to office opportunities, documentation of the entire process must be recorded, both written and visual by submitting a log signed by the supervisor confirming work has been completed by the student. A portfolio of evidence for the work undertaken during the Experiential Training is needed. An exit interview completed by the supervisor indicates the industry readiness of the student. This should be well planned and supported by study guides and assignments as the portfolios submitted for Experiential Training (both of 2019 students who had opportunity for in office work, and 2020 students were prevented this due to impact of covid) were inconsistent in feedback from mentor/host commonly. A recommendation for greater definition in respective 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.

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.

The competencies and expected outcomes on completion of module were well defined.

Examples are presented enhancing the study material.



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 apply with student.

There is inadequate comments offered by the moderator on this module: There is no evidence of ongoing dialogue with mentor/host company limits assessment of ongoing learning and growth. The reports are not supported by Examples of work, therefore the report is taken at face value.

The view of the VB: A single external examiner across all modules does not offer sufficient expertise on the subject matter to interrogate specifics of each module. There is a heavy weighting on interior design expertise in the moderators and lecturers and there is a greater need for architectural expertise. There also needs to be interim assessments and ongoing liaison between all key players necessary throughout process for all students.

11 CONCLUSION

The VB thanks the Campus Director, Dean of the Built Environment and Departmental staff for their hospitality and assistance during the virtual visit. Having spent the day 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.

Ms Esther Martins (Dean for the Built Environment)	Dr Finzi Saidi (VB Chairperson)
Date: 13 October 2021	Date: 12 October 2021
Signature: p.p. 	 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
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Annexure C: Validation Board Schedule

Tuesday 03 August 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: Wednesday 01 September 2021		
08h00– 08h30	<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 Mr Maurice van der Merwe
08h30- 12h30	Members of the VB divide their time between inspection of the work and portfolios	
12h30 - 13h30	Lunch	
13h30 – 14h30	The VB meets with students and graduates via zoom.	
14h30- 15h30	The VB meets with full time and part time staff	
15h30	Break	
16h00- 17h00	The VB meet with the senior staff of INSCAPE MIDRAND	

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 (HNDiploma: Architecture/PSAT)	Practitioner	083 264 1056	lulaw@iafrica.com
Ms Kimberley Rowan (PGDEM)	SACAP Manager: Education	+27 11 479 5000	Kimberley.Rowan@sacapsa.com