

SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR PLANNERS

For Discussion Purposes Only



The South African
Council *for* Planners
S A C P L A N

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Professional Examination System Competencies and Standards Project Phase 2 Draft 16 February, 2015

Prof CB Schoeman & Prof P S Robinson

Research Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management

Prof. Nico Smit (Director)



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

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Task 5 Professional Examinations

1. Purpose

A professional examination is a crucial pre-requisite for our professionals to be recognised internationally. This report provides guidelines to be considered if a professional examination is to be introduced. The motivation for the introduction of an Assessment Examination is linked to the growing role for registered planners prescribed in provincial legislation. The examination will also set a national benchmark, providing consistency in the standard of planners entering the professional arena. It is also in line with international trends. The purpose of this report is to develop an Examination system(s) as part of the registration process of planners in terms of the Planning Profession Act, 2002 (e.g. organs and structure, timing).

2. General Guiding principles

SACPLAN as Professional Body and custodian of the Planning Professions Act (PPA) (2002) has a legal obligation and overseeing responsibility to ensure that all applicants to be registered as in any one of the Registration Categories.

2.1. Introducing an Assessment and Examination for Registration

In order for the Council to enhance and protect the image of the profession and to ensure that planners are able to fulfil their functions competently, it is recommended that planners wishing to register as a either a *professional planner, planner or assistant planner* are required to submit an integrated report and undertake a written or oral examination at the end of the practical training. The Professional Examination papers, one for each category (Professional Planners, Planners and Assistant Planners) should all follow the following proposed structure and be marked on a simple “pass” or “fail” basis:

Part 1 of the Examination – 20%: professional practice and ethical behaviour

Part 2 of the Examination – 40%: core competencies

Part 3 of the Examination – 40% functional competencies

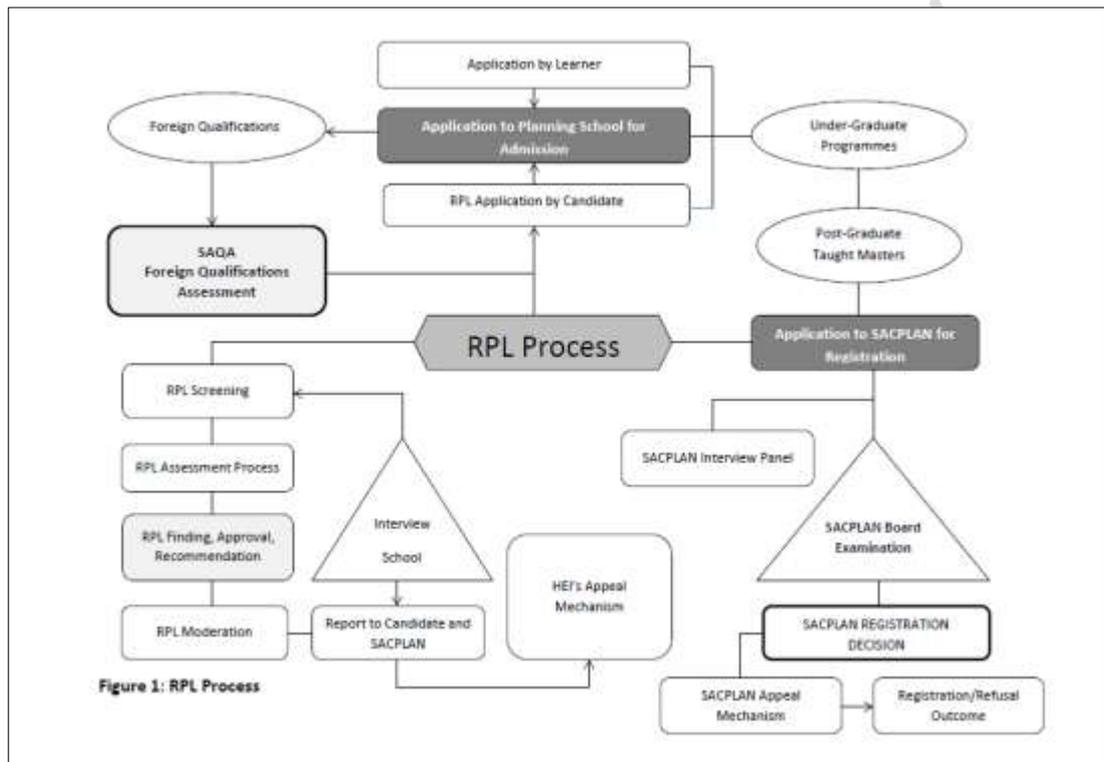
While the examination “Parts” would remain the same for different categories of registered planners, the difference would be based on the complexity and the depth of knowledge required from professional planners.

There should be no limit placed on the number of times the candidate may take the examination. A fee covering the examination administration costs should be payable by the candidate. Internationally, an exam such as this tends to be offered twice a year.

3. SACPLAN policy guidelines

- **Background:** The Professional Examination will be a formal examination that will be written at various Examination Centres as will be identified by SACPLAN. Such Centres will be identified throughout South Africa and will be selected in terms of the spread of Candidate Planners who wish to apply for Registration with SACPLAN.

- **Professional Examination Opportunities:** Two opportunities will be provided by SACPLAN and the dates will be announced by the end of January each year. The time and duration of the Professional Examination will be set by the SACPLAN Professional Examination Committee.
- **Compulsory requirement:** The Professional Examination will be compulsory for all persons who want to be Registered in any of the Registration Categories of SACPLAN and may include persons with foreign qualifications who plan to enrol in any Accredited Course Programme at any HEI in South Africa. The need to write the Professional Examination is clearly depicted in **Figure 1** RPL Process as contained in the RPL Policy of SACPLAN.



- **Planning Training School:** SACPLAN may consider the introduction of a Planning School as a preparatory opportunities for all Candidates within each Registration Category as a support system for Candidates who have enrolled for the Professional Examination. These Planning Training School opportunities will be scheduled at least two months before Each Examination Opportunity. The Planning Schools of HEI's will assist SACPLAN in rolling the Planning Training School system out. The Training School will consist of four days (i.e. one a week) preceding the date for the Professional Examination.

4. SACPLAN Procedures

- **Content and focus of examinations:** The themes, content focus that will be covered in the Professional Examination will be communicated in writing by the SACPLAN Office to each Candidate for each of the Registration Categories.
- **Professional Examination and Categories of Registration:** A separate Professional Examination Paper will be compiled for each Registration Category of SACPLAN.
- **Writing of the Professional Examination:** As indicated the Professional Examination will be undertaken at identified Examination Centres. All examinations will be undertaken under the supervision and control of formal Examination Officials (3

independent individuals with at least 5 year experience in the Education Sector)appointed by SACPLAN for the purpose.

- Assessment of Professional Examination: All Examination Papers will be assessed and moderated externally. The SACPLAN External Examination Committee will use Staff from HEI's to compile the Professional Examination Papers. All papers will be supported by a complete Memorandum that will be made available to all Candidates after the Examination and once the result is known.
- Pass rate: The pass rate for all Professional Examination opportunities will be 80%. All Candidates that fail will have to use the next Professional Examination as scheduled in order to re-write and improve the outcome. All Candidates who do not pass the Second Professional Examination Opportunity will have to skip the following two Opportunities before being allowed to register for a further Professional Examination as scheduled by SACPLAN.
- Examination fees: The Professional Examination fees for Registration in the Category Professional Planner will be R2 500-00 and for Planner R2 000-00 per examination opportunity. The fees for Assistant Planner will be R1 500 per examination opportunity.
- Outcome of the Professional Examination: The outcome of the Professional Examination will be communicated by SACPLAN Office to each Candidate in writing.
- Attendance of Planning Training School: The costs for attending the Planning Training School will be R5 000-00 per Candidate per training session. SACPLAN and the Planning School to enter into a formal Agreement.

4. Implementation plan (including transition arrangements)

The SACPLAN Education and Training Committee should be responsible for managing this training and examination overall. In summary the key functions of managing the Professional Examination inclusive of:

- It would need to be undertaken by the SACPLAN Education and Training Committee (ETC);
- This may require creating an Examination Board (EB) that reports to ETC comprising of registered professional planning academics with 5 years of experience and registered professional planners with a minimum of 10 years professional experience (the feasibility of this requirement needs to be assessed); The Board would be responsible for setting and assessing the examination, and this may require the development of its own procedures for this.

However, before the Council reaches a final decision in this regard, it is proposed that a detailed feasibility plan be prepared which examines *inter-alia* the projected capacity and financial implications of its introduction.

5. References

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