

CAMPUS

**DURBANVILLE
(CAPE TOWN)**

DESCRIPTION

The Higher Certificate in Architectural Practice is designed for students who are passionate about the environment, interested in solving problems creatively, and eager to make a positive difference. The programme is intended for those who want to enter the architectural industry, contribute to an architectural practice, or continue their studies in the field.

The modules covered in this qualification prepare students to produce the basic design and contract documentation required of an Architectural Draughtsperson in an office environment, helping to prepare them for the world of work after graduation. Throughout the programme, students develop a portfolio of work that can support employment opportunities or further study in architecture.

This programme has received Unconditional Validation from SACAP. Graduates may register with SACAP as Candidate Architectural Draughtsperson upon graduation.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- a Senior Certificate (SC); **OR**
 - a National Senior Certificate (NSC); **OR**
 - a National Senior Certificate – Vocational Level 4 (NC(V))
- with**
- a minimum of 40% in English Home Language or a minimum of 30% English First Additional Language.

ADDITIONAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENT

Applicants are required to submit a 5-10 minute video, which may be created using a mobile phone, in which they take the architectural lecturers on a guided tour of their own home or the home of a friend or family member. We would like to see the applicants themselves, hear their voice, and see them lead the tour.

The purpose of this video is to help us get to know the applicant better and to give the lecturers insight into how they observe and think about space, place, and the built environment.

**** Find the video instructions at the end of this document.**



SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Registered students will be required to have access to the following equipment before their studies can commence:

- Smart device suitable for online learning
- USB to transfer information between devices and locations
- Laptop compatible with software covered in the programme (see minimum laptop specifications on page 2 of the document)

ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY

Students will make use of online learning platforms for access to:

- Learning materials and resources
- Assessments and submissions
- Communication and feedback

Continuous access to these systems is essential for academic success.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Students should have access to:

- Reliable internet access
- A web browser such as Chrome, Edge, or Firefox
- Microsoft Word and PDF viewing software
- The ability to scan and upload documents
- Email and mobile communication tools

ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

The following costs may arise during the programme. These are not included in the tuition fees and should be budgeted for accordingly:

- Specialised stationery, textbooks, or equipment
- Printing and presentation costs
- Model building material
- Portfolio expenses
- Outings (petrol, entrance fees etc)

LAPTOP REQUIREMENTS [MIN. SPECIFICATIONS]:

The purpose of this guide is to help students (and parents) choose a laptop that will comfortably handle the software used throughout an architectural qualification, without paying for more machine than is needed. The guide is organised into three tiers:

- Tier 1: Minimum specifications for Higher Certificate students
- Tier 2: Recommended specifications for Higher Certificate students who want a smoother experience.
- Tier 3: Future-ready specifications for students who intend to continue into degree-level study, where additional software programmes will be introduced.

Each tier builds on the previous one. If a student is undecided about continuing to degree level, Tier 2 is the safest middle ground. Tier 3 is only necessary if there is a clear intention to progress further to other Architectural qualifications.

Comparison of the Three Tiers

The table below summarises the specifications. Detailed commentary on each tier follows afterwards.

COMPONENT	Tier 1: Minimum (Higher Certificate)	Tier 2: Recommended (Higher Certificate)	Tier 3: Future-ready (Degree-level)
Processor (CPU)	Intel Core i5 (12th gen+) or AMD Ryzen 5 (5000 series+). Apple M2 or newer.	Intel Core i7 (13th/14th gen) or AMD Ryzen 7 (7000 series+). Apple M3 Pro or newer.	Intel Core i7/i9 (14th gen+) or AMD Ryzen 7/9 (7000/9000 series). High single-core clock speed is critical for Revit.
Memory (RAM)	16 GB	16 GB (32 GB preferred)	32 GB minimum. 64 GB if possible. Revit and Lumion both benefit significantly.
Graphics (GPU)	Dedicated GPU with 4 GB VRAM (e.g. NVIDIA RTX 3050/4050). Integrated graphics acceptable on Apple Silicon.	NVIDIA RTX 4060 or 4070 with 8 GB VRAM.	NVIDIA RTX 4070/4080 or 5070/5080 with 12–16 GB VRAM. Ray-tracing capable (required for Lumion ray-traced renders). Windows only.
Storage	512 GB NVMe SSD	1 TB NVMe SSD	1 TB NVMe SSD (2 TB preferred). Lumion alone needs 105 GB free.
Display	15.6" Full HD (1920×1080), IPS panel, matte finish preferred.	15.6"–16" Full HD or higher, IPS, 100% sRGB colour accuracy.	15.6"–16" Full HD or higher, IPS, 100% sRGB colour accuracy
Operating System	Windows 11 (64-bit) or macOS 13 (Ventura+ for MAC)	Windows 11 (64-bit) or macOS 14 Sonoma+ for MAC	Windows 11 (64-bit) only. Revit and Lumion do not run natively on macOS.
Ports & Connectivity	USB-C, USB-A, HDMI, Wi-Fi 6	USB-C (with DisplayPort), USB-A, HDMI, Wi-Fi 6	Thunderbolt 4 / USB-C (DisplayPort), HDMI 2.1, Wi-Fi 6E
Battery Life	6+ hours (general use)	6+ hours	Expect 2–4 hours under load. Mains power essential for rendering.

Tier 1: Minimum (Higher Certificate)

This is the entry-level specification for students studying at the Higher Certificate level. It will run the software reliably, though with some patience required when opening larger 3D models.

If the budget is very tight

Prioritise components in this order: RAM first, then SSD, then GPU, then CPU. A machine with 16 GB RAM and integrated graphics will outperform one with 8 GB RAM and a dedicated GPU for this workload.

Tier 2: Recommended (Higher Certificate)

This tier is the sensible middle ground. It handles Higher Certificate work without compromise, leaves headroom for more ambitious projects, and will cope reasonably well if the student decides to dabble with other architectural software packages.

Tier 3: Future-proofed (Degree-level)

This tier is for students who intend to continue beyond the Higher Certificate into degree programme, where more demanding rendering workflows are introduced.

While the school will furnish certain essential consumables, every student must come prepared with the following items on their initial day of class:

- Artline 200 0.4 Fineliner
 - PVC-Free Eraser
 - A3 20 pocket Flipfile
 - 0.5 Clutch Pencil
 - 0.5 Clutch Pencil Lead
 - 2B Pencil
- HB Pencil
 - 6B Pencil
 - A4 Notebook
 - A3 Portfolio Bag
 - A4 + A5 Journal (white pages only)

Important: Windows only

Some Architectural packages are Windows-only. If a student is set on progressing to degree level and using these tools, a Windows laptop is the only practical choice.

Practical Notes for All Tiers

- A second external monitor at home transforms the workflow.
- Avoid touchscreens, 2-in-1 convertibles, and ultrabooks under 14 inches. Architecture students need screen real estate, stable keyboards and sustained thermal performance.
- A decent mouse is essential. A three-button mouse with a scroll wheel is the standard.
- Insist on a matte or anti-glare screen finish where possible. Glossy screens are tiring during long drafting sessions and poor for colour accuracy.

A Final Word

Software requirements are a moving target, and the software will only ever get more demanding. A laptop purchased today should ideally be expected to last the full duration of the qualification - three years for a degree, one year for the Higher Certificate. Buying slightly above the minimum specification today is almost always cheaper in the long run than replacing a laptop that cannot keep up.

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

SEMESTER 1	1st YEAR	
Compulsory (All)	Creativity for Architectural Practice	ACA151 (20 credits)
	Introduction to Spatial and Architectural Design Principles	ADP151 (20 credits)
	Literacies for Architectural Practice	ALA151 (20 credits)
SEMESTER 2	1st YEAR	
Compulsory (All)	Architectural Studio	AAS151 (20 credits)
	Introduction to Sustainable Construction	ASC151 (20 credits)
	Professional Development for Architectural Practice	APD152 (20 credits)
CREDITS PER YEAR	120	

ARTICULATION POSSIBILITIES

The Higher Certificate in Architectural Practice equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to apply for admission to degree or diploma studies in a related field at other institutions, subject to the receiving institution's admission requirements. Throughout the programme, students also develop a portfolio of work that may strengthen their applications for further study.

Graduates who achieve an average of 60% and above in the HCAP programme may also apply for further study in STADIO's Bachelor of Architecture programme, subject to the selection requirements.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

ARCHITECTURAL DRAUGHTSPERSON

SPATIAL DESIGN DRAUGHTSPERSON

INTERIOR DRAUGHTSPERSON

JUNIOR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER

PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

This programme has received Unconditional Validation from SACAP. Graduates may register with SACAP as Candidate Architectural Draughtsperson upon graduation.

VIDEO REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this video is to help us get to know the applicant better and to give the lecturers insight into how they observe and think about space, place, and the built environment.

The instructions for the video are outlined below:

Start by introducing yourself and the home

Tell us your name, where you are, and whose home we're about to visit. Share a bit of the story of the house: when it was built (if you know), who lives there, and how long they've been there. Let us know why you picked this home for your tour.

Begin outside

Before going in, walk us around the outside of the house. What does it look like from the street? What is it made of - bricks, wood, plaster, metal roof sheets? Is there a garden, a driveway, a wall or a fence? Is the house close to the neighbours or set back on its own? Does it face the sun or sit in the shade? Describe what you see in your own words.

Walk us through the rooms

Take us inside and lead us through the house in whatever order feels natural. As you go, try to notice things you might normally walk past without thinking about:

- Which rooms feel bright and which feel dark
- Which rooms feel big and open, and which feel small or tight
- What the floors are made of - tiles, carpet, wood, concrete
- How high or low the ceilings are
- How one room leads into the next
- What you can see through the windows

You don't need fancy words. Saying "this room feels calm because the light is soft and the window looks onto a tree" is exactly the kind of observation we're looking for.

Share your own thoughts

This is the most important part. Tell us what you like about the home and why. Tell us what doesn't work well and why. Maybe a room is too hot in summer, or a passage is too narrow, or a window is in just the right spot. There are no wrong answers. We want to hear how you think.