



Association of African Planning Schools



The AAPS Post-Graduate Curriculum Frame:

Guidelines



AAPS Secretariat

African Centre for Cities

University of Cape Town, South Africa

www.africanplanningschools.org.za

Last Update:

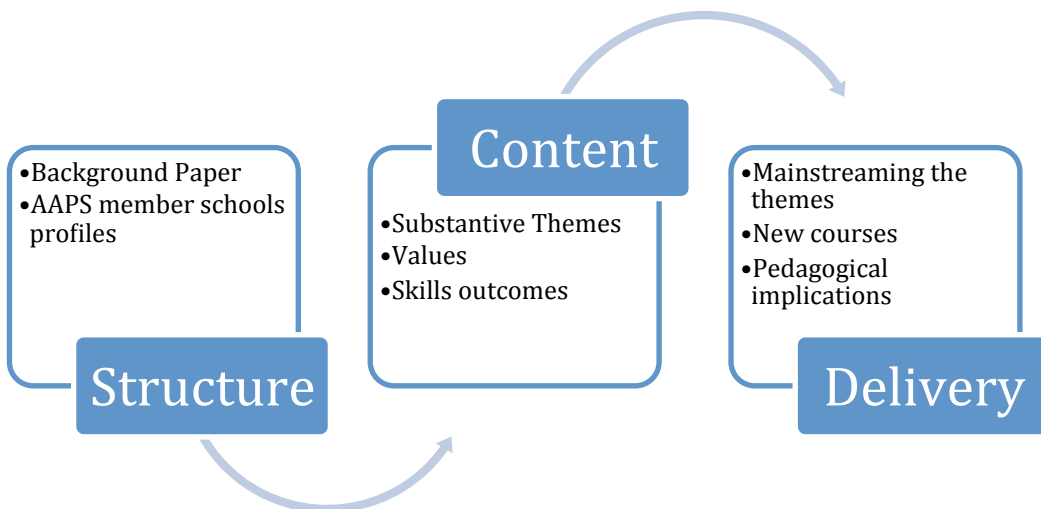
3 August 2011

Origins of the AAPS Post-Graduate Curriculum Frame

The aim of the AAPS project entitled 'Revitalising Planning Education', funded by the Rockefeller Foundation from 2008 to 2010, was to make detailed recommendations for curriculum reform and develop associated resources. Preparatory work on the draft post-graduate curriculum entailed meetings with many of the planning schools. The project coordinator visited 24 Planning Schools in 14 countries over a 13-month period. The agenda for these visits included an extensive discussion on curricula together with a firsthand account of schools' facilities and resource constraints.

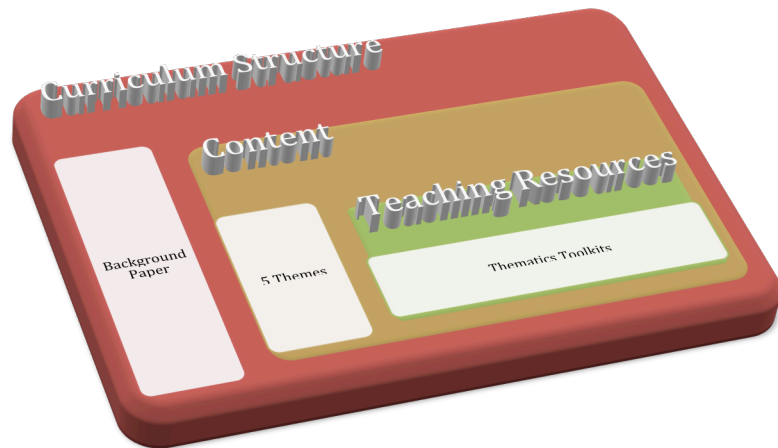
In addition to the procedural elements of network building and curricular discussion, thematic work that draws on contemporary debates in urban Africa gave conceptual guidance. Five themes were identified: access to land, actor collaboration, infrastructure, shelter and spatial change (linked to rapid urbanization); climate change and resource depletion (fossil fuels and food, primarily) and urban informality. These were developed as entry points into thinking differently about training built environment professionals. It also framed systematic engagement at the AAPS 2010 workshop on curriculum content.

In addition to the content themes, a background paper on post-graduate curricula structures was circulated and presented (attached). The post-graduate curricular frame developed at the AAPS 2010 workshop used the background paper in informing the overall structure of the post-graduate course. The themes were work-shopped into curricular inputs where appropriate. The resultant curricular frame consists of three layers: structure, content and delivery modes.



This Package

This document comprises 3 sets of resources that can be interpreted as 'layers' to the curriculum frame:



- The 'base' is provided by a background paper, which details the trajectory of planning education debates. It concludes by presenting options for post-graduate degree *structure*.
- The next layer represents *content*, and is based on work done by AAPS on material hereto underexplored in planning curricula yet agreed to as essential to meaningful engagement with the African context.
- Associated with the thematic content are a number of *toolkits* intended to assist colleagues in incorporating this material into curricula. These are being placed on the AAPS website. <http://www.africanplanningschools.org.za/>. Already on the website are course outlines for: planning law; climate change; informal work; actor collaboration.

The Curriculum Frame

The Structure

Two structural options for a post-graduate degree were discussed. Both options require two years of full-time study. Both options divide the two years into four semesters. Each of the first three semesters is divided into a semester-long studio-based course and accompanying lecture-based (theory) courses which support the studio content. Time is allocated about half each to studio-

Year One					
Semester 1	Semester 2				
Scalar Progression					
Theory Courses					
Methods/ Techniques					
Practicum / Studio					
Year Two					
Semester 1	Semester 2				
Scalar Progression OR Specialisation					
Theory Courses	Dissertation				
Methods/ Techniques	Methodology				
Practicum / Studio	Field Work				

work and lecture-based courses.

In both options the first year has a scalar progression from local area (neighbourhood) planning to metropolitan scale planning.

The second year can either be a specialization year (for example urban design or transportation planning) or alternatively a further scalar progression to regional or rural planning. The last semester involves a dissertation.

Content

Planning curricula for the 21st century need to introduce new 'sensibilities' and values to students, and ultimately professionals. Planners are required be more 'enabling' rather than control-focused; able to do creative problem solving rather than just applying the rules; more flexible; more empathetic and open to (cultural/economic) difference.

At AAPS 2010, participants explored the curricular implications of **5 themes**, which are critical for African urbanization and should find their way into the curriculum: planning with informality; planning and climate change; planning and infrastructure; actor collaboration; and urban land markets. These are not necessarily separate courses but should find a place in studios and lecture-based courses. The diagram below tries to show this, along with the values, skills/knowledge and methods, which these should impart.

Year One		Values	Skills		Teaching Methods
Semester 1	Semester 2		Technical	Analytical	
Semester 1 → Semester 2 Scalar Progression		Openness			
Working with NGO's / CBOs in Real-time Practice		Political Engagement	'Soft' Regulation Questioning Standards	Understanding markets and sequences of investments in space	Role play
Informality	Urban Land Markets	Become Change Agents	Alternative infrastructure Management and Delivery	'Other' ways of knowing	Gaming
Spatial Planning		Recognition of other voices		Making the connections	Case learning
Integration of scales and Infrastructure			Alternative Mapping techniques	Alternative land and governance systems	Experiential learning
Taking Participation into the Studio		Inclusivity			Connecting to the heart
Year Two		Equity			Engaging the 'self'
Semester 1 → Semester 2 Scalar Progression OR Specialisation		From control to enablement			
Theory	Dissertation		Case research	Contextualising global issues	
Methods	Methodology		GIS ++ Conflict Resolution	Understanding decision-making processes	
Conflict Resolution	Informality		Urban Design and Livelihoods		
Practicum	Experiential Learning / Collaborative research				

In addition to generic techniques and theory courses (e.g. a planning law course, a planning history and theory course), incorporation of each theme was considered in terms of where a revision of 'methods' courses were required (in orange), or if new courses were essential (light purple) or whether the theme represented a theme that should be mainstreamed throughout the curriculum (green).

For example, the informality needs to be understood in all its guises as a stand-alone phenomenon, but given its prevalence in Africa, as a concept it needs to be mainstreamed into other courses also. Actor collaboration is best achieved through techniques courses in conflict resolution and studio work with CBOs (in addition to the usual consideration in theory course incorporated into most current planning degrees).

A Note on Teaching Methods

An interactive pedagogy is required. The principle of experiential learning informs methods that require students to engage with practice from the outset. A toolkit for case study research that incorporates pointers on using the case method in teaching is available from AAPS. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has yielded an emerging methodology for studio teaching with civil society organizations. This is in the process of being documented at a number of AAPS member schools.