

# **University of Johannesburg, South Africa**

## **Department of Town and Regional Planning**

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### **1. Introduction**

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) was founded on 1 January 2005 and consists of the former Rand Afrikaans University (including two campuses of Vista University, a historically black South African university), a traditional university, and the former Technikon Witwatersrand, a technicon (polytechnic). UJ is one of the largest contact universities in South Africa.

Within UJ a comprehensive range of qualifications is being offered, ranging from traditional formative, through career-focused, to professional programmes. The Department of Town and Regional Planning is one of 16 departments situated within the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, and forms part of the Civil Engineering and the Built Environment Cluster.

### **2. Location of the university**

The university consists of five campuses, four of which are located within the City of Johannesburg and one within Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. The four campuses in the City of Johannesburg are the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus, the Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus, the Doornfontein Campus and the Soweto Campus, with the East-Rand Campus in Daveyton, in Ekurhuleni. The Town and Regional Planning Department at UJ is located on the Doornfontein Campus.

The City of Johannesburg is one of the three metropolitan areas within Gauteng Province. The other two metropolitan areas are the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality and the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. The Gauteng government is in the process of establishing/growing the province (consisting of the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, Tshwane and certain district councils) as a globally competitive city-region (SACN 2006a: 2-5, 2-6).

Within Gauteng there are three higher education institutions offering Urban and Regional Planning programmes. These are UJ, the University of Pretoria (UP) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). The diploma programme offered at UJ is unique in Gauteng, and no similar programme is offered in the province. The Durban University of Technology and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology are the two other institutions that offer the diploma programme within South Africa.

### **3. The urban and regional context**

Due to the fact that the department is located within the City of Johannesburg, the information provided in this paper will focus on the City of Johannesburg area. However, as a result of the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component of the National Diploma: Town and Regional Planning (ND TRP) qualification, students are also employed by a number of other municipalities (e.g. Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality) and by private companies.

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### 3.1 Defining 'urban'

An urban area would be identified as the built-up area within existing formalised (proclaimed) areas. Examples would be those areas within existing towns, cities and metropolitan areas such as the City of Johannesburg. Rural areas, on the other hand, would typically be seen as those areas falling outside the 'definition' of 'urban' given above. However, this is a broad and fairly loose definition of an 'urban' area. From the South African Cities Network (SACN) *State of the Cities Report 2004* (SACN 2004: 22) it is clear that there are still some difficulties in arriving at a definition of an 'urban area' that would be accepted by all.

In the *State of the Cities Report 2006* (SACN 2006a: 2-14) South African towns and cities have been divided into three categories. The classification is based on the size of the economy, the nature of the economy and the footprint and role of the city in the wider region. In these terms, the City of Johannesburg was classified as one of the core urban regions. It is, however, clear from this report that the divide between rural and urban is not clear-cut.

### 3.2 Rates of urban population growth and city size

According to census data, the population of the City of Johannesburg in 2001 was just over 3.2 million. This represents a 5-year population growth of 22.23%. The average annual population growth rate for the metropolitan area is 4.10% (SACN 2004: 179).<sup>1</sup> The population growth rate for Ekurhuleni has been similar to that of the City of Johannesburg.

In 2001, the largest proportion of the population in the City of Johannesburg was aged between 15 and 35 (40.85%) with 31.42% between the ages of 35 and 64 (SACN 2004: 179).

A total of 11.33% of the 2001 population were new migrants to the city. The in-migration in the 5 years from 1996 to 2001 was 364 792. Of these, a large number came from Limpopo Province (54 637), Gauteng (37 970) and KwaZulu-Natal (32 589).<sup>2</sup> From the cities forming part of the SACN, 36 087 came from Ekurhuleni and 25 983 came from eThekweni. Approximately 55 000 migrants were from unknown places (SACN 2004 Appendix 1).

The out-migration from the City of Johannesburg during the 5 years between 1996 and 2001 amounted to 194 604 people. Of these, a large number migrated to the rest of Gauteng (30 922).<sup>3</sup> From the cities forming part of the SACN, the largest proportion migrated to Ekurhuleni (42 548) (SACN 2004 Appendix 1).

The migration figures between 2001 and 2006 show that the net in-migration has dropped to 120 330. This represents an in-migration of 4.02% of the total population in 2006. It should be noted that the single largest movement was between the metropolitan municipalities within the province, with approximately 50 000 people migrating from the City of Johannesburg to Ekurhuleni and approximately 42 000 people from Ekurhuleni to the City of Johannesburg (SACN 2006a: 2-18, 2-19).

### 3.3 Extent of informality

From information in the *State of the Cities Report 2004* (SACN 2004: 186) on access to shelter, it is

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<sup>1</sup> The census was conducted in 2001.

<sup>2</sup> The figures given for these provinces exclude the cities forming part of the SACN. These nine cities are eThekweni, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Ekurhuleni, Nelson Mandela Bay, Tshwane, Buffalo City, Mangaung and Msunduzi.

<sup>3</sup> The figure excludes the cities forming part of the SACN.

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evident that both the number of people with access to formal shelters as well as those without formal shelters increased between 1996 and 2001. The percentage change in households without formal shelter between 1996 and 2001 was 41.55%. During the same period the percentage change in households with formal shelter was 38.83%. What is alarming, however, is the high percentage change in households in informal dwelling between 1996 and 2001, which is given at 153.60% (SACN 2004: 186).

If the number of households in formal backyard dwelling is investigated more closely, it is clear that there was an increase of 6.23% in the number of households between 1996 and 2001. However, the number of informal backyard dwellings decreased during this period by 21.03% (SACN 2004: 191).

### **3.4 Key issues and trends in the broader region**

The chapter on Urban Trends and Performance in the *State of the Cities Report 2006* (SACN 2006b) considers these trends in terms of population dynamics, the productive city, the inclusive city, the well-governed city and the sustainable city. Certain aspects of the *Report's* analysis of these trends will be highlighted here.

The first trend relates to population growth. The nine major cities<sup>4</sup> forming part of the SACN experienced an average annual growth rate of 1.92% from the mid-1990s. This growth rate has been slower than that of the preceding 50 years; the decline coincides with the declining national population growth (SACN 2006b: 3-2).

Regarding economic growth, the *Report* acknowledged the existence of problems with available economic data and the non-availability of economic indicators at municipal level. According to the *Report*, the Gross Value Added (GVA) data suggested an economic growth rate in the nine cities of 3.2% between 1996 and 2001, and 3.8% between 2001 and 2004. It is thus clear that economic growth has accelerated. The City of Johannesburg and Tshwane, particularly, showed sharp rises in per capita GVA. This trend was echoed in exports and imports, with an annual average growth rate in the City of Johannesburg between 1995 and 2004 of 12.9% in imports and 15.8% in exports (SACN 2006b: 3-8, 3-9).

Even though the City of Johannesburg showed an unemployment rate of 23.56% for 2004, it is encouraging to see that there was a drop in the unemployment growth rate of 2.01% from 2001 to 2004. On the other hand, there was growth in total employment of 2.48% during the same period (SACN 2006b: 3-16, 3-18).

In addition, there was growth in the property market. Strong growth was visible in retail properties as well as in industrial properties. The property boom was evident from an increase in the value of building plans approved (SACN 2006b: 3-31, 3-33).

### **3.5 Levels of access to adequate housing and services, and trends**

The City of Johannesburg prepared a comprehensive implementation plan for housing delivery during the 2004/05 financial year; the plan was aimed at streamlining the process of housing delivery up to 2009. During this period the City of Johannesburg has managed to formalise 29 informal settlements and to deliver approximately 10 000 houses. The challenges being faced by the City include, inter alia, uncertainty regarding the availability of funding for projects, the lack of available prime land for low-income housing development, high levels of unemployment in the informal settlements, the cost of building materials, a high migration rate from the rural areas, the inability to collect money for the payment of municipal services charges, and the low availability of affordable rental accommodation (CoJ 2007/08: 119).

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2.

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The *State of the Cities Report 2006* indicated that the housing backlog had worsened between 2001 and 2004, but that there had been a slowdown in the rate at which the backlog was growing (SACN 2006b: 3-42).

### **3.6 Levels of unemployment, poverty and income inequality, and trends**

From the age distribution indicated above, it is evident that approximately 70% of the total population of the City of Johannesburg would compete within the existing job market in Johannesburg and surrounding areas. The age distribution for the Ekurhuleni area is comparable with that of the City of Johannesburg, which increases the relative competition for available jobs in these two areas.

According to the 2001 census, the number of unemployed persons is approximately 647 000 for the City of Johannesburg area and 516 000 for the Ekurhuleni area. This equates to an unemployment rate of 37.35% in 2001 compared to 29.15% in 1996 for the City of Johannesburg area, and 40.41% in 2001 compared to 32.11% in 1996 for the Ekurhuleni area. In both areas there has thus been an increase in the unemployment rate, as well as a substantial increase in the actual number of unemployed persons (SACN 2004: 180).<sup>5</sup>

In terms of living standards, the SACN reports that '[in] Johannesburg, there appears to have been a reduction in the share of households falling in the middle LSM<sup>6</sup> categories 3–6, with a small gain in LSMs 7–8 and more substantive increase in the uppermost LSMs' (SANC 2006b: 3-44) This gives an indication of the level of income in the City of Johannesburg area.

### **3.7 The nature and organisation of civil society**

As part of its trends analysis, the *State of the Cities Report 2006* looked at the notion of an 'inclusive city' (SACN 2006b). This relates to the ability of residents to share in the benefits of urban life. The *Report* looked at key indicators of inclusivity. The indicators used to examine inclusivity were water, sanitation and electricity provision, refuse removal, housing supply, social and community services, wealth distribution, human development, HIV/AIDS and quality of life.

In terms of water, sanitation and electricity provision, it is evident that the number of households in the City of Johannesburg without access to water on site had decreased over time. The same was apparent for the percentage of households with access to ventilated improved pit latrines or less adequate sanitation between 2001 and 2004. Although the percentage of households not making use of electricity decreased between 2001 and 2004, the air pollution (indoor and outdoor) experienced by those who made use of alternative methods of cooking and heating (e.g. coal, wood and paraffin) still created health risks. The ability to pay for electricity and to obtain electricity appliances furthermore has a direct impact on the use of alternative methods for cooking and heating.

### **3.8 The role of culture and ethnicity in civil society dynamics**

The xenophobic attacks that were evident in some residential areas of the city, and elsewhere in the country, in 2008 reveal to a certain extent the role that culture and ethnicity sometimes play in influencing civil society dynamics. Furthermore, if one looks at the history of some residential areas in the City of Johannesburg, the important role of cultural differences and the role that ethnicity plays

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<sup>5</sup> The number of unemployed persons increased from 392 777 in 1996 to 647 039 in 2001 for the City of Johannesburg and from 319 517 in 1996 to 516 011 in 2001 for the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality area.

<sup>6</sup> The Living Standard Measure (LSM) is an index considering primarily a set of indicators relating to age, level of education, income and the ownership of certain household goods.

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in shaping civil society dynamics are visible.

### 3.9 The extent of rising urban land prices and speculation in land

From workshops held by Urban LandMark it is clear that rising urban land prices and speculation are a reality.<sup>7</sup> What is also clear is that this trend also affects the poorer communities. Some of the comments made by participants in the Urban LandMark workshops indicate this:

‘Market values...are set ridiculously and intentionally high. They are not accessible to the poor and working class.’

‘[Owners]...are unwilling to sell and when...approached they want inflated prices ...’

‘Speculation in land – people sit on vacant land for years... This [results] in increased land values.’ (Urban LandMark 2008: 6)

In the *State of the Cities Report 2006* it is indicated that there has been a growth in the property market, especially since 2004. The average price of residential properties within the cities forming part of the SACN increased between 2002 and 2005 by 82% to 125% (SACN 2006b: 3-31, 3-33).

### 3.10 The current land tenure system

South Africa probably has one of the better, if not one of the best, property registration systems currently in operation worldwide, with ownership being registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds through formal processes. This does, however, create a problem in that this process is avoided by the poor due to the costs involved in changing ownership as well as the lengthy process required (Urban LandMark 2008: 22). Typical examples of the forms of ownership found include freehold ownership and sectional title ownership.

There are, however, calls from organisations such as Urban LandMark for the existing land tenure system to be extended, to make it more accessible and more affordable to the poor. They argue that ‘[the] current formal system of regulations relating to land and tenure needs to be adapted so that it can become more widely applicable and more useful for the poor, so that the poor can have a greater chance to share in the benefits of legally-recognised tenure ...’ (Urban LandMark 2008: 22).

### 3.11 Main health issues currently being faced

Within the South African context the delivery of health services, with specific reference to primary and preventative health care, have been devolved to local government.

The City of Johannesburg has approved the establishment of a centralised health function for areas of need such as ‘... HIV and AIDS...Primary Health Care, [and] Environmental Health ...’ (CoJ 2007/08: 75).

The intention is to achieve this through the integration, decentralisation and rationalisation of facilities. Efforts will also be intensified to implement HIV and AIDS programmes. The City intends to strengthen its health effort through campaigns and outreach programmes and to promote, educate and enforce programmes in respect of environmental health services (CoJ 2007/08: 75).

The City of Johannesburg has further identified a number of Five-Year Strategic Objectives which are then addressed through Five-Year Integrated Development Plan (IDP) programmes (CoJ 2007/08). These Strategic Objectives are:

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<sup>7</sup> The Urban Land Markets Programme (or Urban LandMark) was set up in 2006 with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID); it was intended to contribute towards making urban land markets work better for the poor.

- an Environmental Health Plan to prevent and minimise environmental pollution;
- an integrated and well-resourced system in place for environmental health certification, monitoring and enforcement;
- a consistent rate of monitoring and enforcement, reduced incidence of non-compliance with environmental health regulations and set standards;
- a reduction in the risks of potential outbreaks and effective containment of outbreaks when they do occur;
- improved awareness of HIV and AIDS risks, prevention methods and available services; reduced rate of new HIV infections;
- city-wide access to comprehensive HIV and AIDS support services to ensure effective medical care for people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

### **3.12 Main environmental issues being faced by planners, governments and citizens**

One of the Five-Year Strategic Objectives is the compilation of an Environmental Health Plan to prevent and minimise environmental pollution. This entails the ongoing monitoring of all identified sources of air pollution, the setting of noise contouring requirements for new developments and the monitoring of noise to address possible noise pollution. Further programmes include water pollution monitoring and illegal dumping prevention programmes.

In the City of Johannesburg Integrated Development Plan Revision 2007/08 (CoJ 2007/08: 145) the following environmental challenges were identified:

- poor levels of air quality – this is as a result of engine emissions and the burning of coal for domestic use;
- poor surface water quality – this is mainly as a result of blocked sewers due to aging and polluted storm water as a result of littering;
- unlicensed water service providers who contribute towards illegal dumping;
- provision of parks and trees in disadvantaged areas.

## **4. The current planning system**

### **4.1 Legislation governing planning in the City of Johannesburg**

Within South Africa three spheres of government exist that are responsible for planning: national government, provincial government<sup>8</sup> and municipalities.<sup>9</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa sets out the competencies of each level of government with regard to the different areas of planning.

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<sup>8</sup> The Republic of South Africa has been divided into nine provinces (see section 103(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Municipalities have been divided into three categories, namely metropolitan municipalities (Category A), local municipalities (Category B) and district municipalities (Category C). (See section 155(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.)

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The IDP and Spatial Development Framework (SDF) are both governed by the City of Johannesburg, which is categorised as a metropolitan municipality. Within Johannesburg there are a number of national and provincial legislative frameworks governing planning. The national legislation is applicable to the country as a whole, whereas each province also has its own legislation governing planning in that province. Probably the two most important items of planning legislation currently governing planning in South Africa are the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) (No. 67 of 1995) and the Municipal Systems Act (MSA) (No. 32 of 2000). The DFA sets out the general principles that should govern land development throughout the country, and has the additional purposes of, inter alia, introducing methods to speed up development, enabling the establishment of one or more Development and Planning Commissions, the establishment of tribunals, and providing uniform procedures for the development of land. The MSA provides the basis for municipalities to compile integrated and comprehensive plans for their areas of jurisdiction; these include IDPs which must contain SDFs for the area.

Local documents controlling planning are thus primarily SDFs at different levels of detail, and Town Planning Schemes which are statutory documents compiled in terms of the Town Planning and Townships Ordinance (Ordinance 15 of 1986).

Other legislation governing planning at the provincial level includes the Gauteng Planning and Development Act (No. 3 of 2003), the Division of Land Ordinance (Ordinance 20 of 1986), the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (No. 107 of 1998) and the Gauteng Removal of Restrictions Act (No. 3 of 1996). This is not an exhaustive list, just an indication of some of the other planning legislation applicable to the City of Johannesburg.

#### *Alignment of urban planning with broader regional plans*

The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (No. 13 of 2005) sets the framework within which intergovernmental relations, alignment and integration needs to take place. The three spheres of government are obliged to align their plans and strategies with each other.

The City of Johannesburg sets out to align its framework plans with the frameworks of the key national and provincial strategies. These strategies are:

- the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP);
- the Gauteng Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS); and
- the Gauteng City Region (GCR) Perspective.

## **4.2 Key issues and trends in the City of Johannesburg**

The department responsible for urban planning in the City of Johannesburg is the Department of Development Planning and Urban Management. This department renders the strategic spatial planning for the city, and is responsible for the city's cadastral data. It has a legislative regulatory responsibility for the processing of land use management applications as well as building plans, and also for enforcing the town planning regulations and building controls.

The department has committed itself to implementing a range of programmes within the next five years; these programmes reveal the key issues and trends that are of concern to the City of Johannesburg at present. These programmes are the following:

- a nodal and density programme – to inter alia promote mixed-use and mixed-income neighbourhoods;
- an economic area regeneration programme – focusing inter alia on key economic areas while paying particular attention to declining and marginalised areas;



- a programme to upgrade marginalised areas – focusing on the redevelopment of specific areas such as Ivory Park and Diepsloot;
- an informal settlements upgrading programme – to be managed jointly with the City of Johannesburg Housing Department;
- an inner city programme – coordination of various efforts as a result of commitments from an Inner City Summit held in 2007;
- a land use management programme – the streamlining of the existing systems;
- an urban management programme – coordination of public- and private sector activities to tackle challenges as a result of the failure of service delivery;
- a spatial information dissemination service programme – to increase public access to information from the GIS;
- a long-term strategic framework for urban growth – by putting in place mechanisms that would directly influence investment decisions by the public as well as the private sector (CoJ 2007/08: 95).

### **4.3 The types of urban plans produced**

Within the City of Johannesburg a five-year IDP has been produced for the period 2006–2011. This IDP is revised annually; the latest revision is the 2007/08 version (CoJ 2007/08).

An IDP has a five-year life-cycle that should be coupled with the term of office of the elected councillors. The annual revisions of the IDP are intended to ensure that it remains current and relevant. A thorough and inclusive public participation process is followed wherein a number of roleplayers form part of the process to compile the said plans.

As part of the IDP each department is required to compile a sector plan. These sector plans cover the following (CoJ 2007/08: 11–12):

- Development Planning and Urban Management
- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Environment
- Infrastructure and Services
- Housing
- Public Safety
- Transport
- Health

As indicated above, local authorities must compile SDFs as part of their IDPs. The City of Johannesburg's SDF:

... seeks to guide, direct and facilitate public and private investment in the City. It considers the development challenges of the City and details a series of development strategies and policy guidelines:

A Citywide Spatial Plan comprising development principles, strategies and guidelines, indicating spatial responses to these challenges;

A local interpretation of the Citywide Spatial Plan – the Regional Spatial  
Development Framework (RSDF), Precinct Plans, and Development Frameworks...  
(CoJ 2007/08: 41)

There is a correlation between the level of detail covered by the SDF plan and the area covered by it.

### *The relationship between 'forward' planning and the regulatory system*

Within the City of Johannesburg area the 'forward' planning process and the regulatory (zoning) process are separate, as a result of their being defined in terms of separate legislative frameworks. However, this is not to say that these different processes do not influence and inform each other. The 'forward' planning process draws on trends identified through the regulatory system and the regulatory system evaluates applications in terms of the relevant 'forward' planning document.

#### **4.4 The urban form produced**

The kind of urban form to be produced is defined in the following terms in the City of Johannesburg's IDP for 2006–2011:

The re-structuring and re-engineering of the existing urban form and function of the whole City without defined direction and intervention will take generations. To accelerate the delivery of developments that support the SDF's principles of Sustainability, Accessibility and Efficiency, medium- to long-term objectives and strategies have been supplemented by specific instruments that are used on a daily basis to address recurring development issues and assess the appropriateness of a development proposal or initiative. (CoJ 2007/08: 53)

From the above it is evident that these plans are committed to achieving qualities of sustainability, accessibility and efficiency in the City of Johannesburg area.

#### **4.5 The effectiveness of the plans**

The writer holds the opinion that the SDFs at their different levels are succeeding to a great extent in guiding and controlling private sector developments. Although there are certain development applications that might not be fully in line with the SDF proposals, planning officials should be taking into account the city's strategies when evaluating such development proposals. This would then ensure that such developments do not 'undermine' the overall strategic objectives set by the City of Johannesburg.

It is evident from the City of Johannesburg's IDP 2006–2011 document that the planning system strives towards urban growth that is sustainable, accessible and efficient. It is, however, also true that the re-structuring and re-engineering of the existing urban form and function of the city as a whole will take a long time to achieve. From what has been achieved thus far by the city it is evident that there is visible urban growth and that it is occurring in an equitable and sustainable way. Developments within the previously disadvantaged areas exemplify this.

## **5. The current planning education system in the Department of Town and Regional Planning at UJ**

Within UJ there are currently two Town (Urban) and Regional Planning programmes being offered. These are the National Diploma: Town and Regional Planning (ND TRP) and the Baccalaureus Technologiae: Town and Regional Planning (BTech TRP). These qualifications formed part of the qualification mix offered by the erstwhile Technikon Witwatersrand.

The ND TRP is an undergraduate diploma qualification. It is a three-year full-time programme consisting of two years of academic and one year of practical work. The course structure is set out in Table 1.

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The BTech TRP is an undergraduate degree. It is a follow-on qualification to the ND TRP. It is currently offered on a part-time basis over a period of two years (Table 2).

**Table 1: Course content for the National Diploma: Town and Regional Planning**

Subject	Code	Duration	NQF credits*
<b>First Year</b>			
<b>Semester 1</b>			
Drawing for Planners I	CDR1112	6 months	12
Communication Studies I (Module A)	CSAA131	6 months	5
History and Principles of Planning I	PSSA111	6 months	14
Surveying I	SSS1111	6 months	12
Geography for Planner I	GSS1111	6 months	12
<b>Semester 2</b>			
Theory of Planning I	PSSB111	6 months	14
Planning Design I	DPS211	6 months	12
Computer Skills I	EIRT111	6 months	10
Civil Engineering for Planners I	CES1111	6 months	12
Survey and Analysis I	ASS1111	6 months	12
Communication Studies 1 (Module B)	CSAB131	6 months	5
<b>Second Year</b>			
Project Work (consisting of four modules)**	EL38711	12 months	60
Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	EL38712	11 months***	60
<b>Third Year</b>			
<b>Semester 1</b>			
Planning Design III (Module A)	DPSA321	6 months	18
Economics for Town Planners III	DPTA311	6 months	18
Legal Principles I	LPT111	6 months	12
Statistics I	STA1ZIT	6 months	12
<b>Semester 2</b>			
Planning Design III (Module B)	DPSB321	6 months	18
Housing Development III	DPTB311	6 months	18
Legal Procedures II	LPS211	6 months	12
Computer Applications III	ART331	6 months	12

Notes: \* Each National Qualifications Framework (NQF) credit relates to 10 notional hours.

\*\* Project Work consists of four modules. Each of these modules covers aspects that a student could be working with as part of the WIL component. They are: Land Use Applications, Planning Design, Urban Renewal and Spatial Development Frameworks. The purpose of these modules is to prepare the student for the third year of study.

\*\*\* Eleven months or 220 days.

**Table 2: Course content for the BTech in Town and Regional Planning**

Subject	Code	Duration	NQF credits*
Planning Design IV	PDES431	1 year	24
Environmental Studies IV	ENS431	1 year	24
Community Studies IV	COMS431	1 year	12
Geographic Information Systems IV	GIS431	1 year	12
Management for Planners IV	TPM431	1 year	24
City and Regional Planning IV	CRP431	1 year	24

Note: \* Each credit relates to 10 notional hours.

## **5.1 The overall aims and objectives of the curriculum**

Both the ND TRP and the BTech TRP are primarily technically/practically orientated, with the aim of producing professionals who will be capable of implementing the current planning system. However, BTech students are also expected to be able to use critical evaluation skills when performing their duties.

The ND TRP is an undergraduate diploma qualification that provides the students with specialised town and regional planning knowledge that can be applied in industry, to the benefit of both the employer and society as a whole. An appropriate balance of theoretical, practical and experiential knowledge and skills is attained through the subjects offered in each year of study, with the emphasis placed more on the practical and experiential part thereof. The work of a town and regional planning technician entails, inter alia, appraising land use applications, conducting planning surveys, analysing and presenting data by means of maps, graphs, diagrams and sketches, as well as all work, including legal procedures, connected in general with planning processes.

## **5.2 The curriculum's conceptual or technical bias**

The ND TRP is aimed at providing town and regional planning technicians to the town and regional planning industry (in the public as well as the private sector). The ND TRP curriculum mainly prepares graduates to fulfil a supporting function to professional planners until such time as they complete a BTech. The curriculum is thus developed with a technical bias. What is, however, experienced is that the graduate diplomates are usually appointed within the public sector not as technicians but in professional positions as planners, requiring them to perform duties they have not been trained to carry out. This is putting pressure on UJ to offer a programme that has to meet certain specific outcomes, but at the same time prepare the diplomate to be able to operate in a more demanding professional position if he or she is appointed to fill it.

Within the BTech TRP curriculum there is a much greater balance between conceptual and technical elements, but still with a technical bias.

## **5.3 Programme structure and content**

The ND TRP consists of a total of 21 semester courses which run over a period of three years (Table 1).

During the first year of study students are required to complete 11 courses; during the second year they are required to complete 4 practical modules and 11 months (220 days) of WIL, and during the third year of study they need to complete a further 8 courses. The programme is structured in such a way that students who do not secure a WIL opportunity during their second year of study can still be promoted to the third year. This addresses to some extent the possible 'bottlenecking' that can arise when students do not secure WIL opportunities. Such students can then complete their WIL component after completing their final (third) year of academic and project work.

The BTech TRP consists of six courses, and is currently offered on a part-time basis over a period of two years. These courses are alternated, with three subjects running in the first year and the remaining three in the second year (Table 2).

## **5.4 The teaching methods used**

The teaching methods used in the ND TRP programme depend mainly on the course offering. With the more theoretically orientated courses (e.g. History and Principles of Planning I) the teaching is largely done through formal lectures as well as focused assignments.

The more practically orientated courses (e.g. Planning Design II) have a section consisting of lectures where principles are conveyed, with studio/practical sessions forming the bulk of the contact periods.

Within the BTech TRP programme the teaching methods also relate to the orientation of the specific course. Due to the nature of the BTech programme more emphasis is placed on the theoretical portion of the course. The teaching methods are, however, a mixture of practical work and lectures. Some community-based activities are used as part of the range of teaching methods, but these are limited. Students are required, through assignments and excursions, to be sensitive towards community needs and to incorporate these into their assignments.

## 5.5 Admission requirements

From 2008 there will be a dual system of admission requirements for the ND TRP as a result of the new National Senior Certificate being implemented at school level in South Africa. Table 3 sets out the minimum admission requirements to qualify for study for the ND TRP programme, according to both systems.

**Table 3: Admission requirements – ND TRP**

Pre-2008 entry requirements*	New entry requirements**										
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Senior Certificate or an equivalent qualification at an equivalent standard</li> <li>• Minimum requirements:               <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Mathematics:</td> <td>Higher Grade E Standard Grade D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English:</td> <td>Higher Grade E Standard Grade D</td> </tr> </table> </li> <li>• Recommended subjects: Geography and/or Drawing</li> </ul> <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An N3 Certificate with a minimum pass of 60% in Mathematics and English</li> </ul>	Mathematics:	Higher Grade E Standard Grade D	English:	Higher Grade E Standard Grade D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A National Senior Certificate or an equivalent qualification at an equivalent standard</li> <li>• Minimum APS 22</li> <li>• Minimum requirements (ratings):               <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 10px;">Mathematics:</td> <td>3 (Moderate Achievement (40–49%))</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English (Language of Learning and Teaching):</td> <td>4 (Adequate Achievement (50–59%))</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Life Orientation:</td> <td>3 (Moderate Achievement (40–49%))</td> </tr> </table> </li> <li>• Recommended subject: Geography</li> </ul>	Mathematics:	3 (Moderate Achievement (40–49%))	English (Language of Learning and Teaching):	4 (Adequate Achievement (50–59%))	Life Orientation:	3 (Moderate Achievement (40–49%))
Mathematics:	Higher Grade E Standard Grade D										
English:	Higher Grade E Standard Grade D										
Mathematics:	3 (Moderate Achievement (40–49%))										
English (Language of Learning and Teaching):	4 (Adequate Achievement (50–59%))										
Life Orientation:	3 (Moderate Achievement (40–49%))										

Notes: \* This relates to the Senior Certificate or 'matric' qualification obtained prior to 2008.

\*\* This relates to the new National Senior Certificate and is applicable to National Senior Certificates obtained as from 2008.

The admission requirements for the BTech TRP are the following:

- a ND TRP or an equivalent qualification at an equivalent standard;
- at the discretion of the Head of Department, the applicant may be required to register for and pass bridging subjects before admission to the BTech TRP;
- applicants must have an average pass mark of 60% in their final year of the ND TRP.

## 5.6 Methods of assessment

Most of the courses at ND TRP level as well as at BTech TRP level are assessed through written exams. During the semester/year students are required to complete a number of assignments/projects. In some courses students are also required to make an oral presentation on an assignment/project. Such oral presentations can be either on an individual level or as part of a group assignment. These normally form part of the third year ND TRP courses or the BTech courses.



Over and above the assignments, student are also required to complete written tests (formative assessment). There is normally an equal weighting between the mark obtained through the assignments, presentations and tests on the one hand, and the exam on the other.

There are, however, certain subjects that are assessed through continuous assessment, throughout the semester/year. Such assessments may take the form of assignments/projects, oral presentations and/or tests.

## **5.7 Current class numbers and staff/student ratios**

The department has 287 students enrolled for the ND TRP. A growth in student numbers enrolled in the ND TRP has been evident for approximately the last five years. A constant annual growth rate in the total number of students enrolled for the ND TRP of about 30% was evident from 2004 to 2006. As from 2006, the growth rate pertaining to the total number of students enrolled for the programme has dropped to below 10%. This growth rate is, however, now beginning to stabilise. The initial higher growth rate can be ascribed to first-year student intake numbers that increased from around 40 students in 2003 to around 80 students as from 2004. The intake for new first-year students wanting to study towards the ND TRP is currently capped at 80 students.

This means that the student numbers in classes have also increased since 2003. The number of students per course for the third year is between 65 and 75 students, and for first year courses between 85 and 120 students.

The number of students enrolled for the BTech programme has also increased, from 10 in 2006 and 12 in 2007 to 24 currently. This number consists of students in their first year of BTech study as well as those in the second year of study. An increase in numbers is evident; this can be ascribed to the fact that the BTech is offered on a part-time basis. All the students enrolled for the BTech qualification are employed on a full-time basis. The BTech TRP numbers are not capped at this moment in time. Depending on the foreseen future growth in the enrolment numbers toward the BTech TRP, the department will reconsider the possibility of capping the BTech numbers. The reasoning behind this is based on the availability of resources (e.g. computer programmes and computer laboratory sizes, and staff workloads).

## **5.8 Current student throughput rates**

For first-year students the pass rates range between 63% and 88%. There has been a constant improvement in the pass rates since 2006. The higher success rate could be ascribed to first-year students being taken through a selection process before being accepted into the Town and Regional Planning programme.

The pass rate of 63% at the lower end of the range may be a result of students from secondary schools experiencing higher education content and learning activities for the first time when they start the ND TRP, and encountering difficulties in adapting to a new learning environment.

For third-year students the subject pass rates range between 76% and 93%, with an average of approximately 84%. The higher pass rate for third year can be ascribed to these students being more mature and more dedicated to the completion of their studies.

The most recent pass rates for third-year subjects are comparable to those achieved since 2006.

Table 4 indicates the number of planning qualifications awarded by UJ since 2006. It is evident from the table that there has been a constant increase in the number of qualifications awarded. The table also shows the average number of years taken by graduates to complete their studies, taking into consideration that the ND TRP is a three-year programme and the BTech a one-year full-time and

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two-year part-time programme.

**Table 4: Number of planning qualifications awarded since 2006**

Year	ND TRP	Average number of years to complete	BTech TRP	Average number of years to complete
2006	17	5.1	3	2.7 (part-time)
2007	28	4.3	6	3.0 (part-time)
2008	41	4.1	3	1.7 (full-time)

## 5.9 Exposure to recent literature and ideas in planning

Lecturers within the department constantly re-evaluate course material to ensure that the content is recent and relevant to the required outcomes. Where possible, lecturers are required to offer a subject for a period of more than one year. This enables the lecturer to develop and revise the course over time. The department has further embarked on a process whereby each subject's content is discussed in the department, to enable staff to provide feedback on content, and address possible duplication and gaps in the content of the courses. This 'cross-pollination' further addresses the quality of subject content.

The department is furthermore constantly assessing new literature to ensure that the library stock is updated and expanded. The institution, through its library services, is registered with a number of electronic databases, thus ensuring that students have access to the latest and most up-to-date literature available. The department also assesses new databases from time to time for possible value of registration with them.

## 5.10 Library and IT resources

With the restructuring of UJ, the Faculty of Art, Design and Art relocated to the Auckland Park Bunting Road campus, resulting in a substantial 'loss' of relevant library material; it is in fact not 'lost' as it is still accessible to students from the department, but is not available on the Doornfontein Campus. The same applies to the change in access to the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus Library.

The department is, however, constantly identifying new material and is in the process of replacing and updating material for the Doornfontein Library. As indicated, there are a number of electronic databases available to students.

Regarding the adequacy of IT resources, the Doornfontein Campus IT resources for students have been substantially increased in recent times. A problem does, however, exist with regard to access to practising facilities during the day for more advanced CAD and GIS programmes.

## 5.11 Curriculum revision

There has not been a revision in the current curriculum, but the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) gazetted in 2007 necessitates the amendment of programmes to fit into the new framework proposed in the HEQF (DoE 2007).

The Department of Town and Regional Planning at UJ further underwent a process of Internal Programme Review (Self Evaluation) that was followed by a process of External Programme Review. The programme review process, together with the HEQF, necessitates revisiting the current curriculum; a revised curriculum will be rolled out within the next two to three years.

## 5.12 Links with the planning profession

Both the ND TRP and BTech TRP have been provisionally accredited by the South African Council for

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Planners (SACPLAN). All planning schools within South Africa are in the process of going through an accreditation process. UJ will have its process of accreditation completed by the end of 2008/ early 2009.

The department also received an International Benchmarking Visit from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) UK in October 2007. The report from the RTPI will be used in conjunction with the Programme Review evaluation reports to address the current offerings. The possibility of an accreditation/partnership agreement as a further step will then be considered.

All the members of staff are active members of the South African Planning Institute (SAPI), with the Head of Department also serving on the Executive Committee of the SAPI Gauteng Branch.

### **5.13 Preparing students to operate in 21st-century urban and regional environments**

To assess whether the current programmes offered by the Department of Town and Regional Planning are preparing students for 21st-century demands, lecturers within the department as well as students who have completed their ND TRP and are currently studying towards the BTech TRP were approached for their inputs.

The short conclusion to be drawn from the inputs received is that the programmes are preparing students for 21st-century conditions. If the responses are interrogated, it is evident that the current curriculum is tailored to prepare students to operate not only in the 21st-century environment but also beyond. Lecturers engage in scholarly and applied research and use the additional knowledge gained to prepare the students to become competent, creative and effective. Students are also encouraged to be able to engage with the principles of planning in a changing environment.

The typical feedback from some employers is that there is a general lack of a sufficiently high level of English amongst graduates. Although this issue was not researched, it could be hypothesised that the problem is a result of English being most students' second language of communication. This could perhaps be addressed by changing the current curriculum to include an English competency test, or a general English course for all students enrolling for the programme.

The responses received by the BTech students in respect of the ND TRP programme were generally positive, though with some qualifications:

'In terms of technical issues related to planning issue, yes. However when it comes to thinking broadly and in a strategic manner it hasn't [prepared me].'

'Yes, it gave me a basic understanding of legislation used, what are controls, what types of applications do you get and most importantly, how to assess applications correctly and what an application should entail.'

In respect of the BTech programme it must be said that the responses are from students currently enrolled for the programme, and might not take into account the whole curriculum as they have not been exposed to all subject offerings.

'I feel the BTech is more aimed at Strategic People as it gives us the knowledge we can greatly use in areas that are more strategic orientated.'

'Yes, this is because the course is dynamic and well updated in the sense that we engage in work which is in line with current legislation, e.g., MSA, NEMA, DFA, etc.'

'Yes it does, especially in terms of research.'

'Yes. This will prepare planners to be creative, innovative, assertive, etc., either personally, in the workplace and in the broader community. Planners will be able

to think logically, plan for future developments, preparation of policies, to undertake community issues, etc.’

‘Yes, so far. However, the BTech is not very well recognised so it feels as though it is a waste. It should be converted/made equal to an Honours University Degree.’

From the above responses, and from responses documented in a study entitled ‘The South African Higher Education Qualifications Framework and Work Integrated Learning: Kill or Keep? A town and regional planning perspective’ (Lewis & Taylor 2008) it is clear that the current programmes offered by the Town and Regional Planning Department at UJ are preparing students to operate in 21st-century urban and regional environments.

## 6. Conclusion

From the reports of the SACN it is clear that the City of Johannesburg faces many planning challenges in the coming years, as it strives to realise the aims and objectives of the IDP 2006–2011. The present paper makes clear that the legislative frameworks do exist within which newly graduated planners can operate, and contribute to the realisation of these goals. This confronts educational institutions with the challenge of ensuring that the planning curriculum prepares students to operate successfully in 21st-century urban and regional environments.

From the student inputs and staff comments received, it is clear that the programmes offered by UJ are preparing students to operate in the dynamic field of town and regional planning within the 21st-century urban context.

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