

Accreditation information:

The Irene School of Garden design's Full Time and Part Time/ Part Time PLUS courses are currently accredited by a private society of Landscape designers, Landscape Architects, Architects, Landscape installers and Nurseries. From end 2016 they will all form part of the I.G.F.S.A, or the Independent Gardeners Forum for South Africa and Africa.

There is currently no niche Residential and Light commercial garden/landscape design with the Sector Education and Training Authority nor with the National Qualifications Board due to the lack of industry standards, and therefore none of the courses in RSA is currently accredited that way. The cost of developing these standard is simply too high for the private institutions that offer Residential and Light commercial garden/landscape design, and therefore most will rely on reputation, quality, course material and heritage. There are only 2 colleges or schools in RSA that hold such an elite body of private accreditors, of which Irene School of Garden Design is the first to be included in the I.G.F.S.A. The above mentioned courses is not registered with the NQF and will remain for reasons associated with higher education in South Africa unregistered to continue our education with quality and without the problems currently associated with registration. Our courses did however receive attention from abroad and was deemed by international comparison of an exceptional standard with remarkable outcomes.

There are many advantages to such a private accreditation in terms of quality of education, relevancy of course material, and outcomes. The Irene School of Garden Design has been busy assembling industry standards to be published in the I.G.F.S.A framework for the past 7 years and it may well be adopted by the National Qualifications Board at some point in the future. It is important to note that these courses contain the highest quality of material and the outcomes far exceeds industry expectation, but they may due to legislation not be called a diploma, degree or higher education. The Irene school of Garden design is widely recognised, and during the past 5 years had a knowledge platform sharing with more formal institutes abroad, and Universities both locally and internationally. Some of our course material is also presented at these institutions, and they also use our publications, hence the Irene school of garden designs popularity locally and abroad.

We hope that you find this information helpful and informative. Keep visiting this section of our website to see how and when students and industry individuals can register to be listed on the I.G.F.S.A.

Frequently asked questions and here are some answers:

Can I find employment with the Irene School of Garden design qualification certificate?

Yes you can. Most of our students find employment within their studies, and our students are in high demand. Because employers know that courses are not accredited, they base your appointment on the quality of your portfolio and your skills, which we address intensively in the course.

Why does Irene School of Garden Design prefer not to use the credit system as NQF?

The credit system is a points based system based on time. The assumption made for each point is that a specific amount of time is spent on receiving one credit. This results in the assumption that if the time is spent either in class or at home the credit is achieved. Irene School of Garden Design prefers the international quality of output approach where the efforts of the student is evaluated, and compared to what is expected and accepted (based on the industry and comparison to international and local educational institutions) upon which the appropriate response and improvements can be made to a specific student until the standard is met. The quality output method is thus in our view better as it measures results and not time spent, but can only be applied successfully for smaller groups.

Can I work overseas with my qualification certificate?

Yes. We have had quite a few students that work in Australia, Canada, the UK, and countries in Africa. Again your Portfolio, and how well you have mastered the required skills is what is most important. We also have had students continuing studies at Australian Universities, after the completion of our course, with amazing feedback from those Universities regarding what Irene school of garden design have contributed to their landscaping careers, as well as an advance on studies where they introduced our students on a higher level with no need to repeat some aspects covered and years completed.

What do I get after I have completed the course?

Our 1 year and 1.5 year courses are certificate courses, and you will receive a certificate accredited by the accreditation bodies on our website based on your performance. There are Certificates of attendance (if you have not completed all the tests, assignments and practicals) Certificate of achievement (successful completion of all tests, assignments and practicals) and Certificate of Excellence (additional to Certificate of achievement for distinctions in design practicals). You will also receive a letter of reference. Almost all employers do check in with the school to see if we would recommend a particular student for a position, as well as private clients who do some homework before choosing a designer.

Will I learn everything that I should learn from a certificate course?

The curriculum addresses all the aspects if full, but if the students do not engage with some of the information or miss classes, they might not fully grasp particular aspects. Class attendance is a pre requisite, and this is not a correspondence course due to the nature of design. It is a design orientated course, and the irrigation and Botany is only an introduction, but you will have all the knowledge you need as a designer. Classes are presented by University lecturers, so that the quality of information is preserved.

Is a private accreditation better than a National accreditation?

Both have their advantages, but a private accreditation has higher standards and pass rates. The course material is more relevant and up to date. Most companies do not mind either or, because they look at a potential employee's portfolio and skill set.

Can I register as a landscaper or landscape/garden designer?

Yes you register with SALI. You can ask your employer to register you, you can register as a practicing individual, or you can register your business with SALI. They have certain requirements, fees and events that you will have to partake in thus it is essential that you are practicing in some form or the other.

Can I get credit for the course if I decide to study something else?

Yes, you will be asked for your portfolio at Universities Technicians and other Schools and Colleges, and only in the fields related to the course material, such as Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Urban and Environmental Planning, Outdoor Furniture Design, Botany and Irrigation.

We hope this information pack helps clear some of the questions that you might have regarding the industry and where education in your field of interest is at. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We care as much about our students as they care about their future.