

Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB)

1. EAB 2007 Report

1.1. As required by the EAB's Terms of Reference, this report to the Board's constituent Institutions aims to summarise the actions and outcomes from the variety of significant accreditation-related issues that were discussed throughout 2007.

2. Introduction

2.1. The EAB met four times in 2007 – on 22 March, 12 June, 25 September and 11 December – and the first EAB seminar, on Masters Learning Outcomes, was held after the September meeting.

3. Accreditation Visits

3.1. At each meeting, the recent visit reports were discussed, along with any new applications for accreditation visits that had been received by the Secretariat.

3.2. In 2007, a range of academic programmes, including for the first time some MRes and EngD programmes, were looked at during EAB visits to the following Universities:

University visited	Date of visit	Participating PEIs	Number of programmes looked at	Final Decision letter sent
Plymouth	16/17 January	IMechE, IOM3, RINA, IMarEST	3	31/10/07
Oxford	20/21 February	IET, JBM, IMechE, InstMC, IChemE	2	24/1/08
Cambridge	6/7 March	IMechE, JBM, IET, InstMC, RAeS, IPEM	2	25/1/08
Leeds	27/28 March	IET, IMechE, InstMC, RAeS	10	24/1/08
Newcastle	16 May	IMechE, IOM3, RINA, IGEM, IChemE	1	tbc
Manchester	10/11 October	IET, IMechE, RAeS, EI	14	16/6/08
Swansea	5/6 December	IMechE, RAeS, IET, IChemE, IOM3, IED	56	tbc

3.3. Looking ahead to 2008, planned EAB visits include those to the University of Reading (April), University of Plymouth (October), North East Wales Institute of Higher Education and Cranfield University (dates to be confirmed).

4. Working Groups

4.1. Documentation Working Group

4.1.1. The Documentation Working Group met several times in 2007 to discuss both the revision of the existing documentation and the creation of new documents to be used on EAB visits.

4.1.2. The main submission documentation form ACC2 was revised to ensure that it was relevant to undergraduate programmes at both CEng and IEng level, and also to postgraduate programmes. In addition to this, a new section was created to accommodate any Institution-specific information required for an accreditation visit. This was felt to be the best approach in order to keep the majority of the main submission document as generic as possible. The visit timetable was also revised in response to the feedback received from previous visits. An extra session was added to allow panel members more time to review student output.

4.1.3. New documentation developed by the Group included a Feedback Form, the results of which would be collated and presented annually to EAB from 2008, and a Good Practice Form. While members agreed on the importance of collecting and sharing examples of good practice, it was felt that this information should be picked up in the visit report rather than on a separate form. The dissemination of good practice could be achieved via both the EAB website and the Engineering Subject Centre. The Group also produced an outline for how the CD part of the submission documentation should be structured, aiming to improve the accessibility and consistency of the CDs received for EAB visits.

4.2. Charging Working Group

4.2.1. The question of whether accreditation should be chargeable was raised again in 2007 and it was decided to convene a Working Group to look at the various issues involved. The Group met once and discussed various approaches to charging.

4.2.2. Some members raised concerns about the possible introduction of charges, commenting that universities might not approach the smaller Institutions in order to keep costs down or might decide which Institutions to approach for accreditation based on their charges. It was also pointed out that EAB visits might not be seen to represent 'good value' to universities paying a separate fee to each Institution. However, other members suggested that universities would understand if accreditation was chargeable since it is common to pay for other services, such as those provided by external examiners.

4.2.3. It was agreed that there would be no common policy on charging; those Institutions that already charge for accreditation would continue to do so, a number of other Institutions would look to introduce charges and the rest would carry on offering accreditation at no charge. However, the Group recommended to members that if they wished to introduce charges, an annual affiliate scheme (such as the one the BCS uses) would be best practice. The aim of charging would be to recoup costs associated with accreditation visits, without changing the nature of the relationship with universities by, for example, charging for staff time. The Group also agreed that the cost of any overseas visits should be met by the HEI in question.

5. Accreditation-related Issues

5.1. Higher Education Regulatory Review Group (HERRG)

5.1.1. Members were informed of the critical comments concerning professional bodies in the report of the chair of HERRG. It was pointed out that the Institutions encourage progress, development and best practice through accreditation. ECUK and HERRG would continue to discuss this matter in 2008.

5.2. Royal Academy of Engineering Report

5.2.1. The Royal Academy of Engineering's paper *Educating Engineers for the 21st Century*, which suggested that accreditation practices might hinder course development and innovation, caused some debate among members. Some were concerned, especially in light of similar criticism from HERRG, while others questioned if improvements could indeed be made to the accreditation process.

5.3. Accredited Courses Information

5.3.1. Members discussed the clarity of the Accredited Courses Database, noting that it would be helpful to users to include a banner statement explaining the full exemplifying qualifications for CEng. The following statement was therefore added: *An individual holding an accredited MSc must also hold a CEng accredited Honours degree to have the full exemplifying qualifications for CEng.* It was also suggested that the following qualifying statement be used to describe MSc and Bachelor programmes on the database: *Accredited as partially meeting the academic requirements for CEng registration.*

5.3.2. Another issue was raised concerning inconsistencies in the recording of information regarding the accredited status of academic programmes on the UCAS website. Members agreed that universities should be given further guidance on this subject.

6. International Issues

6.1. EAB International Policy

6.1.1. An application from an international HEI for an EAB accreditation visit prompted members to discuss the lack of an EAB international policy. The issues to consider in drafting such a policy were raised, including language barriers and increased costs. Some members suggested that it might be preferable to set up parallel systems of mutual recognition rather than carrying out a number of time-consuming international visits. It was agreed that the Secretariat would produce a Statement on International Visits in order to clarify the process.

6.2. Bologna Process

6.2.1. The matter of Bologna was talked about throughout the year, with members being informed of the UK's position on integrated Masters degrees, the ongoing review of ECTS and any Government developments on the subject. The Royal Academy of Engineering, IET and ECUK hosted a well-attended Bologna seminar in October, looking at the various issues involved.

6.2.2. Members were also briefed on the initial results of the UK Higher Education Europe Unit's survey of university responses to the Bologna Process. The survey revealed that two thirds of the universities running integrated Masters programmes have made no changes in relation to Bologna, noting that their MEng graduates have

no difficulty finding employment in the UK or Europe. Most of these universities do not award separate Bachelors and Masters degrees to students on integrated programmes.

6.3. EUR-ACE Labels

6.3.1. Members were informed of the development of the new EUR-ACE Label, which ECUK could award to programmes accredited since November 2006 upon application (and payment of a fee) from the HEI. It was suggested that the Institutions might promote the Label as part of the accreditation process. It was noted that the market for the Label remained unproven due to the significant fees attached.

6.3.2. Copies of a leaflet promoting the EUR-ACE Label were distributed for members' information. It was noted that copies of the leaflet would also be sent out to universities to inform them of the availability of the Label. Discussing the possible merits of the Label, members noted that it would provide a brand recognised in Europe that may prove helpful in the context of Bologna.

7. IEng Review

7.1. Members were kept up to date throughout the year on any developments with ECUK's IEng Review, including plans to re-position the grade as part of a progressive registration structure in order to encourage more applicants, and consider a change of title. Members suggested that marketing and better promotion of the IEng grade were essential in order to attract more applicants.

8. Seminars and presentations

8.1. Masters Learning Outcomes Seminar

8.1.1. Following the guidance of the Registration Standards Committee that MSc programmes should be accredited rather than approved, it was decided to hold an EAB seminar on Masters Learning Outcomes in order to share experience and best practice. The seminar, comprising presentations from Dr Daphne O'Doherty and Dr Jane Horner followed by a general discussion of the issues by members, took place after the September meeting of the EAB.

8.1.2. Issues raised included the level of non-engineering content in MSc programmes, breadth versus depth of technical programme content, the difficulty in applying UK-SPEC to MSc programmes and the challenges of determining the level of MSc programmes.

8.2. QAA Presentation

8.2.1. Mr Stephen Jackson, QAA Director of Reviews, gave a presentation on the HERRG Concordat and the QAA Causes for Concern register at the March meeting of the EAB. Mr Jackson emphasised the value of information sharing as part of the Concordat. The ECUK's involvement with the Causes for Concern register – i.e. passing on to the QAA details of any matters that have given the Institutions cause for concern - was also discussed.

8.3. ALOE Presentation

8.3.1. Professor Fred Maillardet, chair of the Assessment of Learning Outcomes Working Group, gave a presentation on the Group's work at the December meeting

of the EAB. Prof Maillardet discussed issues such as the different methods of assessment and the merits of universities using a matrix to demonstrate where the learning outcomes are achieved in each module of their programmes.

Annex A

2007 EAB Membership

Prof Sunil Vadera	British Computer Society
Elizabeth Friend	British Computer Society
Alan Mosedale	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Lynn Beattie	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Dr Daphne O'Doherty	Energy Institute
Kate Dunk	Energy Institute
Simon Bennett	Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers
Dr Alistair Greig	Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Ed Hansom	Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Dr Ken Strafford	Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining
Dr Peter Davies	Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining
Prof Tony Barker	Institute of Measurement & Control
Peter Martindale	Institute of Measurement & Control
Dr Deric Jones	Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine
Robert Neilson	Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine
Dr Rob Best	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Neil Atkinson	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Prof Ben Barr	Institution of Civil Engineers
Ellen Ryan	Institution of Civil Engineers
Dan Canty	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Bob Cryan (CHAIR)	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Andy Watson	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Peter Hicks	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Peter Cannings	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Stuart Poole	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Kevin Edwards	Institution of Engineering Designers
Anna Clarke	Institution of Engineering Designers
Dougal Drysdale	Institution of Fire Engineers
Louise Craig	Institution of Fire Engineers
John Barratt	Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers
Sandi Atkinson	Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers
Mr Alan Silver	Institution of Highways & Transportation
Sue Stevens	Institution of Highways & Transportation
Prof Neal Juster	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Katy Hayday	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Mr Richard Eastwood	Institution of Structural Engineers
Darren Byrne	Institution of Structural Engineers
Prof George Done	Royal Aeronautical Society
Richard Jordan	Royal Aeronautical Society
Dr David Fellows	Royal Institution of Naval Architects
Giuseppe Gigantesco	Royal Institution of Naval Architects
Mark Organ	Society of Operations Engineers
Peter Hills	Society of Operations Engineers