

Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB)

1. EAB Annual Report 2008

1.1. As required by the EAB's Terms of Reference, this report to the Board's constituent Institutions summarises the actions and outcomes from the variety of significant accreditation-related issues that were discussed throughout 2008.

2. Introduction

2.1. The EAB met four times in 2008 – on 11 March, 13 June, 18 September and 9 December. These meetings were hosted by RAeS, IMechE, IStructE and IET respectively.

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 2008, a range of academic programmes were looked at during EAB visits to the following Universities:

University visited	Date of visit	Participating PEIs	Number / level of programmes looked at	Final Decision letter sent
Reading	15/16 April	IET, BCS, InstMC	26 (CEng)	11/12/08 (InstMC / BCS)
Glyndŵr	7/8 October	RAeS*, IET, IMechE	16 (CEng / IEng)	tbc
Plymouth	21/22 October	IED*, IET, IMarEST, RINA	5 (IEng)	tbc
Teesside	11/12 November	IET*, InstMC	2 (CEng)	tbc

* Provided staff support on the visit

3.3. Looking ahead to 2009, planned EAB visits include those to the University of Southampton (February), University of Durham (February), University of Leicester (March), Cardiff University (March), University of Bristol (March), University of Sheffield (May) and the University of Exeter (November). Additionally, a paper review is taking place to look at extending the accreditation at the University of Leeds. This represents a significant increase in EAB activity and suggests that the joint accreditation approach is valued.

4. EAB documentation and website

4.1. In 2008, several new documents were produced in order to clarify various EAB processes and changes were made to improve further some of the existing EAB documentation.

4.2. New documents included the Role of the EAB Secretariat (EAB/07/08) and the Statement on International Visits (EAB/10/08). An EAB Visit Concordat (EAB/40/08) was agreed in order to clarify the post-visit process and address concerns about the length of time being taken for some Institutions to come to a decision on accreditation. A Recommendations Summary (EAB/29/08) was also produced, summarising the guidance issued by EAB to date on accreditation-related issues over the period 2006 - 2008. This was well received and in future, the Secretariat intends to produce an annual summary of recommendations.

Members can download all of these documents from the EAB website (www.engab.org.uk)

4.3. The key changes to existing documentation and processes are as follows:

- Discipline-specific meetings were added to the EAB visit timetable, giving panel members from each of the participating Institutions time to confer and agree on the key issues to be raised in the general panel meetings
- General and Institution-specific actions are now identified on the Action Plan which accompanies the Visit Report, allowing Institutions to follow up relevant actions more easily
- The final paragraph of the EAB decision letter was re-worded in order to incorporate a new statement promoting IEng registration
- The Terms of Reference were amended to specify both that the Chair and Vice Chair would not normally serve for more than two terms of two years and that they could not represent the same Institution
- The deadline for the submission documentation was increased from 6 weeks to 8 weeks before a visit to allow panel members more time to review it
- A standing item on accreditation practice / changes in policy was added to the EAB meeting agenda in order to facilitate the sharing of good practice amongst member Institutions and ensure that key issues were highlighted and discussed

4.4. The EAB website was re-designed in 2008, with its content both updated and revised to make it more user-friendly. New sections were added (*EAB Visits* and *FAQs*) to provide more information to universities thinking of applying for an EAB visit.

5. Working Groups

5.1. Foundation Degree Working Group (FDWG)

5.1.1. The Foundation Degree Working Group (FDWG) met for the first time on 16th December 2008. The Group was formed following discussions at EAB on how to deal with the increasing number of Foundation Degrees (FDs) being put forward for accreditation. It was agreed that the Working Group would discuss the issues surrounding FDs and produce some guidance for member Institutions on how they might recognise these qualifications. The Group comprises 10 members, including Charles Pickford of FDF (Foundation Degree Forward). The group is chaired by the ICE representative, Mr Brian Counter of the University of Derby.

6. Accreditation-related Issues

6.1. Re-presentation of UK-SPEC

6.1.1 The new version of UK-SPEC was launched by EC^{UK} on 18th December 2008. The Standard builds on the 2003 document, integrating the three categories of registration, Engineering Technician, Incorporated Engineer and Chartered Engineer, into a format that emphasises the progression possibilities for those entering the profession. It has also provided more detailed guidance on how to satisfy the requirements for registration, and clarified educational benchmarks.

6.1.2 The updated version of the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes booklet was also launched on 18th December 2008. None of the required learning outcomes (which had already been adopted by QAA for their Engineering Benchmark) have changed, but some of the guidance on procedure has been improved in the light of experience. The QAA / SCQF level descriptors have been included in a new appendix and EAB Chair Professor Cryan provided a new Foreword.

6.2. Charging for accreditation

6.2.1. It was reported that some Institutions were looking to introduce a charge for accreditation in 2009. RAeS will start charging £1000 per accreditation visit from 1 January 2009 and IET intends to start charging from October 2009, using an annual affiliate scheme, similar to BCS, in line with the best practice recommendation from the EAB Working Group. There will be further EAB discussion about this in 2009.

6.3. HE Concordat

6.3.1. The HE Concordat (formerly the HERRG Concordat) commits signatories to seek to reduce the burden on universities without compromising quality standards. Considering that EAB is already committed to reducing the burden on universities, it was proposed that the EAB member Institutions should sign the Concordat along with EC^{UK}, as the regulator, in order to demonstrate a unified approach within the profession. EC^{UK} is a signatory and has encouraged EAB member Institutions to do so. To date, over half have become signatories.

8. Presentations and other events

8.1. Royal Academy of Engineering Presentation

8.1.1. Dr Bob Ditchfield, Director of Education Affairs, gave a presentation about the Royal Academy of Engineering's surveys of industry and academia that informed its 'Engineer of the 21st Century' report. He also outlined the Academy's planned Engineers for Enterprise project, which would develop experience-led engineering degrees.

8.2. Foundation Degree Forward (FDF) Presentation

8.2.1. Mr Charles Pickford, Director of Employer Partnerships, gave a presentation on developments with Foundation Degrees in the engineering sector.

8.2.2. Members noted that not all engineering-related FDs would be worthy of accreditation and that it was important to apply the same rigorous process to both FE colleges and leading universities in order not to undermine the established and respected system of accreditation. The Foundation Degree Working Group would be producing some guidance for member Institutions on this issue.

8.3. EAB workshop on accreditation

8.3.1. An EAB workshop on accreditation, run by the Engineering Subject Centre, was held after the September meeting in order to share experience and good practice. It provided an opportunity to discuss the terminology used in academic programme documentation and to share lessons learnt through accreditation visits on identifying evidence and assessing learning outcomes and was particularly well received by those new to the process of accreditation. .

8.4. EAB elections for Chair and Vice Chair

8.4.1. Elections were held in late 2008 for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of EAB. Professor Bob Cryan, the existing Chair and IET representative, was re-elected to serve as Chair for a period of two years, commencing in January 2009. Professor Barry Clarke, the ICE representative from 2009, was elected to serve as Vice-Chair for the same period.

Annex A

2008 EAB Membership

Prof Roger Boyle	British Computer Society
Ms Elizabeth Friend	British Computer Society
Mr Alan Mosedale	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Ms Marie Dignan	Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers
Dr Doug Harris	Energy Institute
Ms Kate Dunk	Energy Institute
Mr Simon Bennett	Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers
Dr Alistair Greig	Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Mr Ben Saunders	Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Dr Ken Strafford	Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining
Dr Peter Davies	Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining
Prof Geoff Roberts	Institute of Measurement & Control
Mr Peter Martindale	Institute of Measurement & Control
Dr Deric Jones	Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine
Mr Robert Neilson	Institute of Physics & Engineering in Medicine
Dr Rob Best	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Mr Neil Atkinson	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Prof Ben Barr	Institution of Civil Engineers
Ms Ellen Ryan	Institution of Civil Engineers
Mr Dan Canty	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Bob Cryan (Chair)	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Peter Hicks	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Mr Peter Cannings (Vice Chair)	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Kevin Edwards	Institution of Engineering Designers
Ms Anna Clarke	Institution of Engineering Designers
Mr Dougal Drysdale	Institution of Fire Engineers
Ms Louise Craig	Institution of Fire Engineers
Mr John Barratt	Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers
Ms Sandi Atkinson	Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers
Mr Alan Silver	Institution of Highways & Transportation
Ms Sue Stevens	Institution of Highways & Transportation
Prof Neal Juster	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Ms Katy Hayday	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Mr Richard Eastwood	Institution of Structural Engineers
Mr Darren Byrne	Institution of Structural Engineers
Prof Mike Graham	Royal Aeronautical Society
Ms Lynn Beattie	Royal Aeronautical Society
Dr David Fellows	Royal Institution of Naval Architects
Mr Giuseppe Gigantesco	Royal Institution of Naval Architects
Mr Mark Organ	Society of Operations Engineers
Mr Peter Hills	Society of Operations Engineers