

Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB)

EAB Annual Report 2010

As required by the EAB's Terms of Reference, this report to the Board's constituent Institutions summarises EAB's activity during 2010, including visits undertaken, items discussed, decisions taken and documentation produced.

1. Introduction

The EAB met four times in 2010 – on 22 March, 15 June, 14 September and 7 December. These meetings were hosted by IMechE, CIBSE, IET and InstMC respectively. A meeting for Chairs of the Institution accreditation committees was also held on 28 June at the Engineering Council. Institution chairs found this a very useful meeting and it was agreed that this meeting will be held annually. EAB members agreed that the number of EAB meetings could be reduced to 3 meetings a year. The EAB terms of reference were amended to reflect this change.

EAB's work this year continued to look at process improvement and consistency amongst the professional institutions, relating to accreditation.

At the end of 2010, Professor Bob Cryan stepped down after six years as Chairman of the Engineering Accreditation Board. Professor Cryan played a very influential role in ensuring the successful establishment of EAB, resulting from the merger of DABCE and JAB, and has worked tirelessly to ensure that accreditation has become an accepted and respected process, both in the UK and internationally.

Professor Cryan is succeeded by Professor Barry Clarke (ICE) and Professor Peter Hicks (IET), has been elected as the new Vice-Chair. The EAB Membership for 2010 is listed in Annex 1.

2. Accreditation Visits

2.1. At each meeting, the recent visit reports were discussed, and new applications for accreditation visits received by the Secretariat were noted.

2.2. In 2010, a range of academic programmes were looked at during 7 EAB visits to the following Universities:

University visited	Date of visit (2010)	Participating PEIs	Number / level of programmes looked at
Newcastle	12/13 January	InstMC, IChemE, *IET	2 (CEng)
Glasgow	9/10 February	IED, *IMechE, *RAeS	5 (CEng)
Aberdeen	23/24 February	*JBM, * IET, IMechE, InstMC	49 (CEng)
Loughborough	23-24 March	EI, *IET, *RAeS, InstMC	6 (CEng)

Newcastle	14-15 April	EI, *IET, *IMarEST, RINA, *IMechE, *IoM3, *IGEM	4 (CEng)
Cranfield	12-13 May	*IET, *RAeS	6 (CEng)
City	26-27 May	*IET, IPEM, InstMC	11 (CEng)

* Provided staff support on the visit

2.3. EAB noted the following applications for 2011: University of Strathclyde (March), University of Bristol (monitoring visit May), University of Hertfordshire (June), Newcastle University (possibly paper review).

3. EAB documentation, process and website

3.1. In 2010, changes were made to improve some of the existing documentation.

- A pre-visit guidance manual for universities was produced and approved for publication.
- A new initial data form for international visits was developed and approved.
- A separate submission form and guidelines document for MSc programmes other than MEng was developed and approved.
- The 'Chair's brief' which was produced in 2009 was further amended to include reference to flexible timings on the visit schedule and the expectation that an indication of possible accreditation decisions by the individual PEIs will be given at the end of the visit.

3.2 The EAB visit schedule was further amended to include flexible timings to ensure that there was adequate time to review student output. A separate meeting with the Industrial Advisory Panel was also added.

3.3 The EAB visit report template was amended by the EAB Secretariat with the help of an advisory panel to ensure that it met the needs of the PEIs. The EAB agreed that as the EAB template is based on consensus the format could not wholly meet each PEI's exact requirement. The EAB members therefore agreed that an annex would be provided by the PEIs to the EAB secretary with institution-specific comments and that this annex would form part of the report.

Sharing of best practice

The EAB meetings continued to give members a forum to discuss developments in their own institutions and share good practice.

Feedback

EAB asks HEIs to complete a feedback form following accreditation visits and below is a summary of the feedback received so far for the 2010 EAB visits;

Documentation

- All HEIs contacted the EAB Secretariat for assistance with completion of the documentation prior to the visit. There was a range of responses with some

HEIs finding the EAB documentation, particularly the Output Standards Matrix, more difficult to complete and others finding it relatively easy to complete.

Preparation for the visit

- All universities received the timetable for the visit in sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

The visit

- All the universities visited either strongly agreed or tended to agree that the visit aims had been met in a well organised and constructive manner. Specific comments included:

“A single EAB visit was extremely useful to our Department. We provide a diverse range of degree programmes relating to Mechanical Engineering but also involving partner Departments both within the University (Aerospace Engineering) and externally (Glasgow School of Art). To arrange separate visits would have been very difficult to organise, in terms of staff and student availability on each visit day. Further developments towards a School of Engineering, and the provision of an increasingly diverse range of degree programmes, reinforce the benefits of an EAB approach”

“It was of major benefit, in terms of time and effort, to have a single joined-up accreditation visit for which I thank the EAB. Last time around there were three separate accreditations, three for the IGDS and one for APC, which involved two sets of documentation. (InstMC used that submitted to IChemE) and two different visits (IET and InstMC). It is also good news that the future periods of accreditation will be aligned.

We have found that the whole experience of having a joint visit organised by the EAB very positive. The initial communication from the EAB was very clear and the instructions on how to prepare the documentation were clear. It is especially positive to notice that much less information had to be provided as paper copies. We strongly support this and have found that using CDs and putting the majority of the documents on the CDs is a very positive move forward.

Overall

In overall terms, the feedback received so far from the HEIs indicates that they were very satisfied with the visit they received.

4. International Accreditation

4.1 International Accreditation was discussed by EAB as there had been an increase in the number of overseas accreditation requests received by the EAB Secretariat. EAB agreed to expand the initial data form to include details of staff and student membership of UK PEIs, the programme specifications and their facilities as the previous initial data form did not provide adequate information to enable the institutions to decide whether to participate in an overseas accreditation visit. EAB also agreed that once a visit is agreed in principle, the university should be required to attend a briefing meeting in the UK.

5. Other accreditation-related Issues

Decision Letter time scales

5.1. The time scales for sending out the EAB decision letter following an accreditation visit have improved from the previous year. Such letters cannot be sent until each participating PEI has made its own recommendations. The EAB members are committed to keep the accreditation decisions time scales as short as possible. More PEIs are in the process of introducing electronic methods for circulating the documentation outside committee meeting dates, in order to reduce decision-making time-scales.

Publishing Accreditation Information

5.2 EAB received a report from the Engineering Council outlining the findings from a review of university and UCAS websites. The quality of publicly available information on accredited status was found to vary widely amongst the HEIs in the sample. The Engineering Council has contacted UCAS regarding improvements to their search facilities/accreditation tags on the UCAS site to ensure that students receive the best information about accredited courses. The EAB report documentation has been amended to include a section on published information/website wording. Therefore accreditation panels will be looking at the accreditation information published by the HEI in their prospectus/website as part of the accreditation visit.

Annex A

2010 EAB Membership

*Prof Sunil Vadera	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/Mr Andrew Thurston	Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers
Dr Alistair Greig	Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Mr Ben Saunders	Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology
Dr Mike Wise	Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining
Mr Gordon Stewart	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
Prof Colin Grant	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Mr Neil Atkinson	Institution of Chemical Engineers
Prof Barry Clarke (Vice-Chair)	Institution of Civil Engineers
Ms Ellen Ryan	Institution of Civil Engineers
Ms Alison Haggart	Institution of Engineering & Technology
*Prof Bob Cryan (Chair)	Institution of Engineering & Technology
Prof Peter Hicks	Institution of Engineering & Technology
*Prof Kevin Edwards / Dr Andrew Tizzard	Institution of Engineering Designers
Ms Anna Clarke/Ms Judith Grace	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 Claire McHugh	Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers
*Mr Alan Silver	Institution of Highways & Transportation
Ms Sue Stevens	Institution of Highways & Transportation
Prof Ieuan Owen	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Ms Katy Hayday	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Mr Gerry Parke	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 Paul Bayly/Mr John Williams	Society of Operations Engineers
Mr Geoff Disley	Society of Operations Engineers

**Term of office has ended*