

JBM

Guidance on Foundation Degrees – Work Based Learning Requirements

The current guidelines for foundation degree programmes intending to seek professional accreditation for Technician Engineer (EngTech) status is that a minimum of 60 credits must be achieved through the Work Based Learning (WBL) unit and at least 30 of these credits must be at the higher level.

The ethos of the unit is that students would be deployed into the workplace and that practitioners within the organisations would assist in the supervision and assessment of the unit.

There is increasing evidence of WBL being replaced by Work Related Learning (WRL) at institutions delivering foundation degrees resulting from two major causes.

Firstly institutions are facing increasing pressure to review programme delivery costs occasioned by imposed financial restraints, and secondly employers are experiencing difficulty in providing suitable placements in the current economic downturn.

WRL is delivered at the educational establishment and assessed by academic staff, with the project requirement being based on and related to industrial scenarios (preferably actual current projects).

The proposal is that the above is accepted in principle, but with the stipulation that employers and/or professionally qualified personnel working in practice would formally assist the academic staff at the institution in both the delivery and assessment of the unit. They would, in effect, be members of the programme team.

The professional personnel involved would also be expected to provide (amongst other activities) mentoring and suggestions for the project content about to be undertaken by the students.

Strong evidence of the above involvement would be required to be presented to the visiting team during the accreditation visit and ideally the practitioners would be in attendance at the meeting of the teaching team with the accreditation panel.

It is proposed that the requirement of 60 credits (30 of which must be at the higher level) would be a requirement for a WRL unit, matching the requirement of the current WBL unit.

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