

# Joint Board of Moderators

## JBM Accreditation: Guidance and Preparation

This document provides guidance for higher education institutions (\*HEIs) which are seeking JBM accreditation or re-accreditation of degree programmes.

\*For the purpose of this document, the term HEI includes all levels of education provision.

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## FURTHER READING

Reference documents can be found at [jbm.org.uk](http://jbm.org.uk)

[Guidelines for Developing Degree Programmes](#)

[JBM Guidelines for MScs and Programmes of CEng Further Learning \(FL\) \(Technical and 'Non-Technical MScs and FL Programmes\)](#)

## SECTION A INTRODUCTION

### A1 What is the JBM?

The Joint Board of Moderators (JBM) was established by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE), the Institute of Highway Engineers (IHE), and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) to coordinate accreditation activities for educational programmes in the civil, structural, transportation and associated engineering disciplines within the built environment sector.

The JBM is licensed by the Engineering Council (EngC), the UK's regulatory body for the engineering profession, to accredit degree programmes that partially or fully satisfy the academic requirements for Incorporated Engineer (IEng) or Chartered Engineer (CEng). (The JBM is also licensed to [approve programmes that satisfy the academic requirements for Engineering Technician \(EngTech\)](#). This is outside the scope of this document.)

### A2 What is accreditation?

The EngC sets the overall requirements for the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) in engineering, in line with the [UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence \(UK-SPEC\)](#).

The JBM's accreditation process complies with UK-SPEC's outcomes-based approach and, additionally, the JBM has some civil engineering-specific requirements which must be met. These are set out in the [JBM's Guidelines for Developing Degree Programmes](#).

In line with EngC policy, JBM accreditation is for a maximum period of five years after which time an HEI must undergo a re-accreditation exercise.

### A3 Which Degree programmes can be Accredited?

The following programmes may be accredited by the JBM:

- BEng and BSc ordinary programmes (for IEng)
- BEng (Hons) and BSc (Hons) programmes (for IEng or CEng [partial] )
- MEng programmes (for CEng)
- Master's and Engineering Doctorate programmes (as further learning under UK-SPEC)

The JBM does not accredit foundation-level programmes but, where the HEI offers HNC/D or foundation degree programmes which form part of a progression route, information on these programmes will be required in the accreditation submission.

### A4 Entry Requirements

The JBM's recommended entry requirements for programmes accredited at IEng and CEng levels are described in Annex A of the [Guidelines for Developing Degree Programmes](#).

### A5 Accreditation Process

#### A5.1 Applying for Accreditation

##### HEI seeking accreditation

The HEI should contact the JBM at least 12 months in advance of the requirement for accreditation. Prior to developing a programme and seeking accreditation from the JBM, it is strongly recommended that the HEI appoints an external academic adviser who has experience of developing and managing JBM-accredited programmes.

##### HEI requiring re-accreditation

The JBM will contact the HEI to set a date for a re-accreditation visit. Visits generally take place when the HEI has a year's accreditation remaining. Where a new programme is based upon an existing programme, or where significant changes are being made to an existing programme, the JBM may adopt a [risk-based approach](#) which requires evidence of a minimum of 70% commonality with the existing programme. Where this is the case, HEIs must provide a mapping table (from old to new) and a brief supporting statement explaining the mapping and any commonality with existing provision.

#### A5.2 The Accreditation/Re-accreditation Visit

The accreditation/re-accreditation visit usually takes place over two consecutive days in term time, generally Thursday and Friday. Additionally, there will be a private pre-visit meeting of the visit team on the Wednesday evening.

If the proposed date for a JBM visit falls within an examination period, the HEI should suggest alternative dates as the JBM team will need to meet students during a visit and does not wish to put any extra pressure on them at this time.

If the department is undergoing a process of major change, for example significant changes in staffing, a visit date should be agreed which will enable the JBM visit team to review the impact of the changes on the undergraduate curriculum.

### A5.3 The Visit Team

The visit team generally consists of two academics, two industrialists and a secretary. The team is usually led by an academic member (whose experience reflects the programmes offered for accreditation) who will be responsible for chairing meetings at the visit and for reporting to the JBM.

The team may be accompanied by up to four observers (such as a trainee moderator or an EngC representative) and the HEI will be advised of the names of the observer(s) in advance of the visit.

The team will **not** include members who are currently external examiners, consultants or advisers to the HEI (or have undertaken such roles in the preceding three years).

The HEI has the right to object to one or more of the team members but must provide a written explanation for the objection. Once any changes have been implemented, the HEI will be asked to confirm its acceptance of the team.

### A5.4 Accreditation Decisions

Accreditation decisions made by the JBM are based on the following:

- a detailed accreditation submission report
- an accreditation visit
- a comprehensive visit report setting out requirements and recommendations.

\*A **requirement** must be completed within a specified time-frame for accreditation to be confirmed.

\*\*A **recommendation** is something which the visit team feels the programme could benefit from implementing. (Although a recommendation does not impact upon accreditation, it may become an issue at a future visit.)

The JBM's accreditation decision, for each programme considered, will normally be one of the following:

- Accreditation for the maximum period of five years.
- Accreditation for the maximum period of five years, subject to written confirmation that the HEI has addressed any specific concerns raised by the JBM.
- Accreditation for a period of less than five years. In such cases, granting the remaining period of accreditation will require either a review visit (to assess the specific concerns identified in the visit report), or paper submission (explaining how the HEI will address the issues identified in the visit report).
- Accreditation is not granted.

### A5.5 Withdrawal of Accreditation

In the event of accreditation being withdrawn, none of the students enrolled on a programme at the time the visit took place (re-accreditation or review visit) will be adversely affected by any decision taken by the JBM.

### A6 Cancellation or postponement of a visit

The HEI will be responsible for refunding any travel or hotel expenses incurred by the JBM if:

- It fails to submit an accreditation submission report which complies with the requirements outlined in section B2.
- It fails to submit the accreditation submission report by the six week deadline.
- It provides an accreditation submission report which contains contradictory information or lacks sufficient detail to permit the visit team to adequately prepare for a visit.
- An acceptable visit timetable is not provided in advance of the visit.
- There are other extenuating circumstances which prevent the visit from taking place.

The JBM will be responsible for refunding any travel or hotel expenses incurred by the HEI if:

- The accreditation visit does not take place as a result of actions by the JBM visit team.
- There are other extenuating circumstances which prevent the visit from taking place.

## SECTION B PREPARATION FOR A VISIT

### B1 Key Deadlines for the HEI

#### Eight Weeks prior to the Visit:

Confirm the proposed visit timetable (which, other than in exceptional circumstances, should follow the format outlined in B6 below) with the JBM visit team leader **and** JBM secretariat

#### Six Weeks prior to the Visit:

##### i) Send the following to each member of the visit team

- a hard copy of the completed submission report with appendices **and**
- a password-protected portable storage device (which does **not** require internet access) containing the completed submission report (including appendices and all linked folders/documents).

#### To note:

- *All linked documents must be included within the portable data storage device and clearly referenced to the appropriate part of the submission report.*
- *It is not acceptable to provide links to websites.*

##### ii) Send the following to the JBM secretariat

Send by appropriate electronic means:

- The approved visit timetable (see section B6).
- The completed accreditation submission report (including appendices and all linked folders/documents).
- Contact details for the individual who will meet the visit team when they arrive at the HEI on the first day of the visit (and confirmation of the meeting point).
- Confirmation that a visit team meeting room will be made available during the visit.
- Directions to the university.
- Details about the visit team's hotel booking (see section B3) including the:
  - booking reference(s)
  - location of the visit team's pre-visit evening meeting
  - arrangements for the visit team's dinner on the pre-visit evening.

### B2 The Accreditation Submission Report

Please use the [accreditation submission report](#) template (JBM131).

The completed submission report, appendices and all linked folders/documents should be submitted as an electronic folder on a password-protected portable data storage device (which must not require internet access). The electronic folder, any sub-folders and document titles should clearly identify content and make reference to the submission document as appropriate. (Please ensure document titles are short enough to prevent the technical problems associated with very long file paths.) A suggested template for an electronic folder appears at the end of section B5.

The accreditation submission report should **not** make reference to documents stored on a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Where an HEI uses a VLE, it is **not** acceptable to simply provide a link to the VLE with the submission report and to expect the visit team to find the relevant documents (for documents submitted prior to the visit and those provided at the visit).

Additionally, please take note of the following:

- If more than one programme is being considered for accreditation, any information common to each course must be clearly cross-referenced.
- If sections and tables within the template are expanded, the information supplied must be easily readable and concise.

### B3 Facilities required during the Visit

#### Accommodation and meals for the visit team

Accommodation and dinner for the visit team for up to two nights (night before and night of the visit) in a hotel close to the HEI.

#### At the visit team's hotel

A designated visit team room (with Wi-Fi) on the evening before the visit for a team meeting.

#### At the HEI where the visit is to take place

A lockable room for the JBM visit team (with secure guest Wi-Fi) close to the main teaching and learning support facilities. This is for private visit team meetings, the inspection of student work, and to store personal belongings and confidential paperwork.

A PC/laptop (pre-loaded with the full submission supplied to the visit team prior to the visit – including appendices and linked documents – as well as electronic samples of student work to be inspected during the visit) should be provided for each visit team member. Where drawings are submitted electronically, an additional screen should be provided.

This room will be required for the duration of the visit and should be large enough to enable the visit team to spread out paperwork and inspect hard copy examples of student work, such as large-scale plans and drawings. (See section B.5 for further information.)

Refreshments should be available in the room.

## B4 Visit Costs

### Costs covered by JBM

Hotel costs, including meals (apart from dinner on the first day of the visit as indicated below). The HEI should initially pay these costs and then invoice the JBM after the visit.

### Costs covered by HEI

Any other costs incurred by the HEI in relation to the visit. Additionally, it is accepted practice for the HEI to cover the cost of the Thursday dinner for the visit team and senior members of HEI staff.

## B5 Documents to be Inspected at the Visit

The visit team is happy to view students' work at the visit in the format in which it was originally submitted. However, it is important to note that the team requires quick and easy access to all documents and those which are to be viewed electronically must be contained within electronic folders which clearly identify content and are appropriately cross-referenced. (It is **not** acceptable to expect the team to use a VLE to find the relevant documents.)

Electronic folders must be uploaded to the PC/laptops provided in the visit team room. A suggested template for an electronic folder appears at the end of this section.

The visit team will want to see samples of students' output for each module/unit of study for the academic year immediately preceding the visit, for all programmes which have been submitted for accreditation, and must include:

- Examples identified in the AHEP learning outcomes mapping table(s) provided as Appendix D to the accreditation submission report.
- Module specifications and coursework/project briefs.
- Programme specifications
- Marked examples of coursework (with briefs, model answers if appropriate, mark schemes and marking criteria, feedback given to students).
- Marked laboratory reports.
- A list of marks (with students' names highlighted where their work is included in the sample output).
- Marked samples of coursework (with feedback given to students).
- Individual final year project dissertations or conference format papers (including marks and marking schemes).
- Marked design project work and posters.
- Marked class tests (or other similar in-class assessments).
- Plans, drawings, sketch books and models.

### To note:

- *It is particularly important to ensure that samples include examples of work of the best quality (top performing three students), work at the level of a borderline pass (three students), as well as a range of the average of the cohort (three students).*
- *All documents should be clearly labelled by programme and year.*
- *Documents should also be grouped together by the appropriate JBM thread.*
- *Where examples of work for IEng and CEng undergraduate students are provided, these must be separated and clearly labelled.*
- *Where examples of work for MSc and MEng students who study common modules are provided, these must be separated and clearly labelled.*

## Suggested Template for an Electronic Folder

1. **Main folder** which contains:
2. **A folder for each module**

The folder must be entirely complete and cover the whole of a single programme identified by module code and title (and listed by year), including the following sub-folders:

  - **Module overview** which includes:
    - module sheet/handbook/description, including learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods and weightings
    - module results (with coursework and examination marks).
  - **Coursework** which includes:
    - coursework brief
    - sample of coursework and feedback (three examples each of best quality, borderline pass and average).
    - mark schemes and marking criteria
  - **Examinations** which includes:
    - examination paper (and model solutions)
    - sample of examination scripts (three examples each of best quality, borderline pass and average).
3. **JBM threads folder**

To include sub-folders containing the modules which cover each of the four JBM threads – design, sustainability, health and safety risk management, professionalism and ethics – ensuring that major and minor contributions are clearly identified.

### **To note:**

*Although this is likely to mean that module folders identified at point 2 above will be duplicated within the JBM threads folder, it is anticipated that this format will provide the visit team with clear access to the threads.*

*Generally a complete set of documentation needs to be provided for each programme submitted for accreditation. Where substantial commonality exists between programmes, other approaches can be used as long as the clarity and ease of use of the submission is unaffected.*

## B6 Standard Visit Timetable

### **To note**

- *The visit team will try to follow the agreed timetable but some flexibility is welcomed as, on the day, the team may want to spend more time than allocated focusing on certain aspects of the programme.*
- *During the visit, the visit team may ask to meet key staff involved with delivery of the programme.*
- *The JBM does not wish to cause significant disruption to any classes during the visit and the HEI is not expected to make any significant alterations to students' timetables.*

### **EVENING BEFORE THE VISIT** (usually Wednesday)

**18.00-20.00: Private meeting of the visit team in the visit team room at the hotel**

**20.00: Dinner for visit team only**

### **DAY ONE** (usually Thursday)

#### **08.30: Arrival of visit team**

A representative of the HEI will be required to meet the visit team to show members their 'team room' and facilities, and to deal with any requests for outstanding information.

#### **08.45-09.45: Meeting with senior academic team**

Generally no more than six members of the senior academic team will be required to attend this meeting, including the head of faculty (or cost centre), head of school or department, the staff member responsible for the leadership of the civil engineering discipline (where this is not the head of faculty/school/department), the staff member responsible for the management and operation of the programmes submitted for accreditation, and the staff member responsible preparing the submission document. (It would be appreciated if the senior academic team could keep their diaries clear for a further 30 minutes in case this meeting runs over time.)

**1 Leader of the visit team** will introduce team members, explain the principal aims of the accreditation visit, and the process which will follow the visit.

## **2 One of the senior academic team will give a brief presentation to:**

- Explain how the civil engineering discipline operates and is managed within the HEI.
- Provide a brief overview of each of the programmes submitted for accreditation.
- Outline any 'special features' of the faculty, school, or programmes, such as flexible modes of study, research undertaken, and involvement in apprenticeship schemes.
- Provide a brief summary of actions taken in response to requirements and recommendations made at the last JBM visit.
- Highlight any significant changes since the last visit which have:
  - Impacted upon the civil engineering discipline: e.g. the provision of new teaching and/or research facilities, the appointment of new staff, staff departures, any changes in the management and/or operational structures, etc.
  - Affected programme provision, including areas of common teaching; e.g. modules shared by IEng and CEng programmes or MSc and MEng programmes.

## **3 Visit team leader may request clarification or seek further information if required.**

### **09.45-12.15: Meeting of visit team and inspection of student output** in visit team room

The visit team will be reviewing student output presented for inspection as evidence to demonstrate that the AHEP learning outcomes and JBM Threads and Core Subjects have been covered.

### **12.15-13.00: Informal buffet lunch**

An opportunity for the visit team to meet the academic team, in addition to technicians, computing and library staff, and those from other schools/departments who contribute to the programmes submitted for accreditation, in an informal setting. Students should **not** be invited.

### **13.00-14.45: Tour of facilities**

Led by the relevant senior academic staff member, the tour should focus on teaching, learning and research facilities in relation to programmes submitted for accreditation.

During the tour, the visit team will also want to meet with the staff member responsible for health and safety risk management in the laboratories.

### **14.45-17.30: Meeting of visit team and inspection of student output** (in visit team room)

Where possible, the academic staff responsible for setting, supervising and assessing the students' work which has been presented for inspection should be available to meet the visit team (if requested). In particular, the team may wish to meet those members of staff who can answer questions concerning the JBM core subjects and threads.

### **17.30-18.45: Meeting with representatives of the Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) and recent graduates**

The visit team will wish to discuss with graduates their experience of the course and how it has prepared them for their future careers. The team will seek evidence of the support provided by the IAB (for instance mentoring, lecturing, assisting with site visits, work placements, internships, etc.) and, in particular, its contribution to:

- the strategic development of the civil engineering discipline
- curriculum development
- research
- specialist consultancy activity
- student design and research project work (particularly in years three and four of the CEng undergraduate programmes)
- the provision of specialist lectures.

#### **To note**

- *The visit team will want to meet three or four recent graduates from each programme submitted for accreditation.*
- *Staff members will NOT be permitted to join this meeting (including those who are members of the IAB).*

### **19.30-21.30: Dinner with senior academic staff**

Taking place in the visit team's hotel (or a convenient location suggested by the HEI), this will provide an opportunity to discuss both the team's findings so far and the following day's plans.

**DAY TWO** (usually Friday)

### **08.30-09.00: Meeting with Head of Department and Programme Leader(s)**

The visit team will provide a summary of how the visit is progressing and confirm which staff members they want to meet during the day.

### **09.00-09.30: Meeting with Vice-Chancellor (or equivalent)**

*If the Vice-Chancellor is not available, it will be acceptable for the Pro or Deputy Vice-Chancellor to attend but the Head of Department or Dean should not attend this meeting.*

In order to gauge commitment to maintaining and supporting the civil engineering discipline, the visit team will want to discuss staffing levels, strategic development, investment in teaching and research activity, support for staff seeking to become professionally qualified, interaction with local and regional industry, and future plans.

**09.30-11.00: Meeting with students**

The visit team to meet students representing each year of all programmes submitted for accreditation, including those offered by part-time or distance-learning study (two students from each year of each programme). Where distance-learning programmes are to be considered, students may contribute remotely to the meeting. It is helpful if some of the students are members of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. (If there is time remaining, this will be added to the visit team's following private meeting.)

**11.00-11.30 Private meeting of the visit team and inspection of outputs**

**11.30-13.00 Meetings with academic staff involved in programme delivery:**

- 11:30-12:00: Achievement of AHEP learning outcomes of each programme.
- 12.00-13.00: Any other issues.

**13.00-16.00 Private meeting of the visit team** (with 'working lunch')

This is likely to involve a final assessment of the achievement of AHEP learning outcomes.

**16.00-16.15 Private meeting of the visit team and senior staff**

The JBM visit team will advise senior staff of any concerns or issues identified during the visit (but is **not** permitted to provide details of its accreditation recommendations to the JBM Board).

**16.15 Visit team departs**



## SECTION C AFTER THE VISIT

### The visit team report

The HEI will receive the visit team's draft report within 14 weeks of the visit and will be asked to check it for factual accuracy (or to submit a request for amendment). This initial version of the report will **not** include any requirements or recommendations.

When the report has been confirmed as factually correct, the requirements and recommendations identified by the visit team will be added. It will then be considered by the JBM Board (which meets three times a year: in January, June or July, and October). Once approved by the JBM Board, the final report, together with a JBM accreditation decision letter, will be sent to the HEI.

## SECTION D APPEALS PROCEDURE

### Grounds for an appeal

An HEI may submit a written request to the JBM to appeal an accreditation decision on the following grounds:

- There is evidence of administrative, procedural or other irregularities during the new accreditation, re-accreditation or review visit, or the meeting of the JBM Board at which the decision was taken.
- Information has become available which would influence the decision and which was not, and could not have been, available at the time of the accreditation or review visit.

### The appeals procedure

- (a) The HEI must submit a written notice of intent to request an appeal to the secretary of the JBM within 15 days of receipt of the final visit report and the JBM recommendations.
- (b) A detailed appeals submission stating the grounds for an appeal, together with a fee of £500, (returnable at the discretion of the Appeals Panel), shall be submitted to the secretary of the JBM within 30 days of receipt of the final visit report.
- (c) The secretary of the JBM shall request that the presidents of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Institution of Structural Engineers, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and the Institute of Highway Engineers, establish an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel shall consist of four members, nominated by each president as follows:

ICE President:	one nomination from the ICE Membership Committee.
IStructE President:	one nomination from the IStructE Membership Committee.
CIHT President:	one nomination from the CIHT Membership Board.
IHE President:	one nomination from the IHE Membership and Qualifications Committee.

The chairman of the Appeals Panel shall be chosen from the JBM member institution most directly concerned with the review and none of the members of the Appeals Panel shall have been involved in the original accreditation decision or with the HEI.

- (d) The composition of the Appeals Panel will be notified to the HEI who may object to one or more of the members but must submit, in writing, the reasons for the objection. The four presidents will decide whether or not to change the membership of the Appeals Panel in light of the objection submitted by the HEI.
- (e) The secretary of the JBM shall send the HEI's appeals submission to the Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel shall meet to consider the HEI's original request for accreditation, the JBM visit report and recommendations, and the HEI's appeals submission setting out the grounds for a review. The Appeals Panel may invite members of the original visit team and/or the head of the relevant section of the HEI requesting the appeal (or a member of staff nominated by the head) to present their case and give their views, and may arrange to visit the HEI for further investigation.

### The appeal decision

- (a) The Appeals Panel may decide that:
  - Either: The original recommendations made by the JBM should stand;
  - Or: The visit report should be amended as determined by the Appeals Panel.
- (b) The Appeals Panel must produce a report covering the following aspects of the review:
  - The grounds for the appeal.
  - Any additional information gathered during the course of the appeal investigation.

- The reasons for reaching the decision.
- An explanation of how the decision is consistent with JBM policy and guidelines.

(c) There shall be no appeal against the decision of the Appeals Panel.

#### **Appeal timescales**

- (a) Once the composition of the Appeals Panel has been finally determined, the Appeals Panel will endeavour to prepare its report within three months. When the Chair of the JBM has received the report, he/she will inform the four presidents, the HEI and the JBM of the decision.
- (b) During the appeal period the outcome of the accreditation process with regard to the HEI will be suspended.

