



JBM Guidance Note for a “Risk Based Approach” to the accreditation of new programmes of study.

Introduction

Paragraph 29 of the Engineering Council’s (Eng. C.) Registration Code of Practice (Registration Code) re-issued in February 2014 notes that: -

Programmes which at the time of application do not have an output cohort may be accredited, but Licensed Members shall monitor the output of such programmes and review their accreditation accordingly.

In the light of this it was agreed by the JBM at the Board meeting in June 2014 that a risk-based approach to assessing proposals for new programmes of study should be adopted. This note seeks to provide guidance on the evidence that should be sought to give the Board confidence that the programme can be delivered to an acceptable standard at the level proposed. The intention is that it will be used for the accreditation of new programmes of study submitted by Institutions already offering Engineering Council accredited programmes.

Guidance

Each programme should be assessed on a case by case basis, with appropriate consideration being given to content, people and resources. This evidence should, as a minimum, include the following:-

1. Affirmation that, as identified by the Programme Specification, the Programme Learning Outcomes are appropriate given the intended level and title of the programme that is proposed.
2. Confirmation that the risk that the final output will not be at an acceptable level is considered to be low (e.g. based on the output at the same level seen at the most recent full accreditation visit).

To achieve the latter it is anticipated that as much as possible of the following will need to be satisfied to give confidence that the risk associated with accrediting the programme is low.

1. Confirmation that the Academic Institution and the relevant Faculty, School or Department has the experience, and staff with the experience, of running and monitoring the quality of similar programmes at the same level.
2. Evidence that adequate resources (facilities and staff) either exist or that there is a clear commitment from the Institution to future investment in a relevant timescale to provide such resources.
3. Affirmation that appropriate procedures are in place for assessing and assuring the quality of programmes at the level proposed.
4. Assurance that there is reasonable commonality of programme content (normally considered to be in the region of 70%) with other accredited programmes at the same level provided by the Faculty / School / Department, i.e. that the new programme shares a good proportion of its taught content, across all years of the programme, with another programme at the same level which holds current JBM accreditation within the same Faculty / School / Department.

5. Verification that no significant issues arose during the most recent accreditation visit to the Programme provider and that any requirements of that visit have been or are being addressed.
6. Confirmation that no adverse changes have occurred in the Faculty's / School's / Department's or University's resources or governance since the most recent full accreditation visit.
7. Agreement that samples of output will be provided as soon as they are available to provide reassurance that the standard of this output is appropriate.

Non-compliance with the above will not necessarily result in non-accreditation but where there are concerns about the level of risk associated with accrediting the programme a visit may be necessary.

To adopt the above approach without a visit it is recommended that:-

1. The request to do so should come from the University concerned and that they should have already been running JBM accredited programmes so as to give confidence that they are familiar with JBM requirements.
2. Wherever practicable, the request should be reviewed by the Chair of the most recent accreditation visit plus one other JBM Board or Panel member.
3. Accreditation should only be awarded to the programmes under consideration in line with the accredited programmes with which they have been compared.
4. If this assessment reveals significant issues the decision should be deferred until the next full accreditation visit or an additional monitoring / review visit should be arranged. Depending on the level of risk identified by this assessment the scope of the additional visit should be determined according to the following:-
 - Is a 'Review visit' needed or just a review of output from the new programmes?
 - If the main purpose of the visit is to assess output then the real output is the graduate and therefore an effort should be made to speak with students, graduates and staff.
 - If a visit is felt necessary can this be undertaken by one person?

To request accreditation of new programmes of study without a visit as per the above approach, the following information must be submitted to facilitate the necessary review:-

1. A rationale for the new programme(s) (including consideration of learning outcomes, projected recruitment statistics, internal validation documentation, and details of any changes to the currently accredited programmes since the most recent full accreditation visit (if relevant)).
2. Programme Specifications giving details of the structure of the programme(s).
3. Resource implications for new modules (including staffing and equipment).
4. Details showing the shared modules clearly demonstrating levels of commonality with currently accredited programmes.