

## **JBM Statement on confidentiality agreements and accreditation visits**

The following statement relates to use of confidentiality agreements (sometimes referred to as non-disclosure agreements) with regards to Joint Board of Moderators (JBM) accreditation visits.

A majority of university departments that participate in JBM visits do not request that visit team members sign confidentiality agreements.

It is not generally felt appropriate for volunteers or the JBM Secretariat to be asked by Higher Education Institutions to sign confidentiality agreements when participating in JBM accreditation visits.

JBM processes require production of a written report by the JBM Secretariat as well as discussion with the JBM Board that makes accreditation decisions, of information seen prior to and during an accreditation visit. Generic confidentiality agreements tend to forbid such sharing of information which would prevent normal accreditation decision making processes.

It is recognised that some student work may be covered by confidentiality agreements with industry. In such instances the Higher Education Institutions may decide not to include this work in the materials available for review by the visit team, or to present work in such a way that information is removed or anonymised as appropriate.

Should a Higher Education Institution consider it impossible for an accreditation visit to proceed without participants signing confidentiality agreements they should:

- Make the JBM Secretariat aware at the earliest opportunity of the request for confidentiality agreements to be signed and provide any draft agreement with or prior to the final submission.
- Recognise that a request for a confidentiality agreement to be signed may restrict the JBM to feel able to participate in the visit or even make it impossible for a visit to go ahead.
- Provide a confidentiality agreement that is suitable for the purpose of a JBM visit, bearing in mind that:
  - Accreditation processes require production of a written report and discussions, including with the JBM Board that makes accreditation decisions, of information seen prior to and during an accreditation visit.
  - Participants in a visit are primarily volunteers and should not be asked to sign anything that infers personal liability.