

ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

ACCREDITATION BOARD

ACCREDITATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

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Title Introducing New Programs and Program Amendments



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1. INTRODUCING NEW PROGRAMS

1.1. New Program Implementation on the Home Campus

An established school of engineering may choose to introduce a new program within the context of an existing operating framework and established quality system already considered by Engineers Australia as part of the most recent general review of programs.

Where the new program is in a pioneering field of engineering, or where an educational institution is contemplating the establishment of a new engineering school, advice might be sought from the Accreditation Board. In such cases, the Board may appoint an experienced person to respond to questions, or may suggest persons who may be consulted directly.

Provision of such advice expressly does not constitute any guarantee of ultimate accreditation. Further, the Board or any of its members will not involve themselves in any way in the engagement of consultants, or in any other active contribution to program design.

Where the intention is to seek accreditation for a new program then Engineers Australia should be notified in writing of the proposal prior to commencement of the first student cohort. It is suggested that this notification be instigated at the time the proposal is submitted for approval through the internal institutional processes.

Application for provisional accreditation of the new program should be made in the first year of operation. Where this falls within the normal 5-year general review cycle, the written submission should be prepared as a supplement to the most recent written submission for general review.

The submission for provisional accreditation should be developed against the accreditation criteria, (Reference 1), and follow the guidelines provided in Reference 2. It should not however duplicate material already submitted for the most recent general review.

In most instances the criteria dealing with the operating environment and the quality system will have been substantially addressed in the most recent general review submission. It is only necessary to respond to individual criterion where circumstances or issues are differentiated for the new program or where changes in the environment have occurred since the most recent general review.

With regard to the academic program criteria, it will be necessary to develop an appropriate response addressing the specific objectives, educational outcomes, title, structure, content, implementation details and professional practice exposure issues unique to the new program.

It is particularly critical that a clear rationale is presented for the new program. This should demonstrate appropriate consultation with industry and other research that has established projected demand for graduates, led to the choice of title and underpinned the development of the graduate outcomes specification, program structure and content.

The new program cannot be considered for full accreditation until the first, sizeable, regular cohort of students enters the final stages of the program close to the point of graduation. Again Engineers Australia should be advised in writing once this cohort enters its final year of study. An update on the submission for provisional accreditation should be prepared, again responding to the accreditation criteria by addressing any changes in circumstances and the experiences and outcomes arising from implementation of the program. It is particularly important that the submission for full accreditation reports in detail actions and progress made on the recommendations in the report of the provisional accreditation evaluation panel.

1.1.1. Consideration of Provisional Accreditation

For a new program in a well-established school in good standing, provisional accreditation of a new program can occasionally be given on the basis of a desk-top assessment of the submitted documentation. "Good standing" means that all programs offered by the school were accredited at the last general review without significant difficulty.

In the majority of circumstances the Accreditation Board will require a panel visit to consider a new program for provisional accreditation. This would normally occur in the first year of operation, where a sizeable cohort of students has been enrolled. The Board has discretion to determine whether a visit is required and when provisional accreditation is appropriate.

1.1.2. Transition to Full Accreditation

Key considerations for the transition to full accreditation will be the schools' documented response to recommendations made in the report of the provisional accreditation evaluation panel and the quality of assessed student work in the latter study years of the program.

A visit will normally be necessary to assess transition to full accreditation. This assessment will follow a formally documented submission from the engineering school. Assessment could be undertaken as early as during the final semester of study of the first graduating cohort, provided sufficient access can be provided to representative examples of assessed final year student work, and also to a representative group of graduating student.

At the very latest, full accreditation should be sought at the next scheduled general review following the emergence of the first graduates.

Where full accreditation is considered in between general review visits and the school is in good standing, a visit by one senior panel member may be sufficient to recommend full accreditation. In other cases a full visit may be necessary.

1.2. New Program Implementation for a Regional or Offshore Campus

For an established regional or offshore campus, with accredited professional engineering programs already in place, the accreditation of a new program offering should follow the guidelines detailed in 1.1 above. Where the new offering is a fresh implementation of a program already established and accredited at the home campus or on other campuses, (ie an undifferentiated offering), then the documentation for both preliminary and subsequently full accreditation may well build on documentation already submitted previously for implementations of the program elsewhere. This concept is discussed in Reference 3.

Where an established program on the home campus is to be newly implemented at a regional or offshore campus or where a new program is to be introduced for the first time at a regional or offshore campus, the Board will normally require a visit to occur for consideration of provisional accreditation.

Where a new regional campus or offshore operation is first being established and provisional accreditation is to be considered for the first program offerings then the submitted documentation will need to be more comprehensive than that expected for just a new program offering within an established operating environment. The submitted documentation in this case will need to respond to all aspects of the accreditation criteria, with particular attention to the sections dealing with the quality systems and the operating environment. It is critical that the submission analyses all aspects of the development, delivery and management of the program and in particular the differentiating features associated with the new operating environment. These circumstances are further discussed in Reference 3.

2. PROGRAM AMENDMENT

Engineers Australia should be informed in writing of significant changes to established, accredited programs and to the operating environment within an engineering school. The terms of accreditation will normally provide for the ongoing development of program structures and content and in fact encourage enhancement and innovation within the defined quality management framework.

Changes to program structure and content within the existing specification of educational objectives and targeted graduate outcomes are welcomed and expected within the accreditation cycle as part of the process of continuing quality improvement. Engineers Australia will monitor program amendments through written advice received from the educational institution. The provider should ensure that all changes are within the accreditation guidelines, such that program and the engineering school as a whole continue to comply with the accreditation criteria.

Formal review of changes will normally occur at the next scheduled general review of programs by Engineers Australia.

Where a proposed program amendment involves a change to the program title, or to the overall specification of educational objectives or targeted graduate outcomes then Engineers Australia should be notified in writing prior to implementation of the change. Under such major changes the Accreditation Board, once satisfied that the accreditation criteria continue to be met, will make a decision on whether to continue the current accreditation status or to accord provisional accreditation to an essentially new program definition.

3. REFERENCES

- 1 S02 Accreditation Criteria Summary
- 2 G06 Preparation of Submission Documentation
- 3 G05 Alternative Implementation Pathways