

# ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

## ACCREDITATION BOARD

### ACCREDITATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

#### FOR

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

#### (COMPETENCY BASED)

### IN THE OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY OF ENGINEERING ASSOCIATE

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## 1. EVALUATING ALTERNATIVE IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

To support a globally competitive economy, Australia must have a flexible and responsive education and training system. Engineers Australia encourages innovative approaches to program design and delivery leading to flexible options for the benefit of the key stakeholders including learners, industry the broader community and the provision of new engineering Vocational Education and Training (VET) products.

Flexible delivery options will commonly be manifested as alternative implementation pathways within a common program definition. In this case each pathway will normally be designed to deliver the same vocational outcomes. Neither the title of the program nor that of the associated award would be differentiated to identify the particular implementation pathway.

For a program to maintain ongoing accreditation however each implementation pathway must be individually evaluated and each pathway must concurrently satisfy the accreditation criteria.

Alternative implementation pathways will normally be considered for accreditation simultaneously, ie within a common review cycle. This could occur for example in considering a program which offers optional vocational streams, elective units of competency, workplace learning options, external or other flexible study options or designated articulation routes for entry.

On the other hand the accreditation consideration of alternative implementation pathways may be staggered in time. This could be the case for example where a particular program has one implementation at the home campus and an alternative pathway offered through a regional Australian or offshore campus.

An RTO can always choose to have alternative offerings evaluated for accreditation as separately defined programs. This most certainly will be the case where a particular award is available by two or more different program routes, involving substantially different operating environment, quality systems, learning and assessment design, staff profile and/or facilities. In these cases it would be expected that the title of the award would be clearly differentiated for each of the alternative offerings. The accreditation processes for the two programs of learning in this case would be quite independent.

Where the Board has reason to believe that different routes to an award differ substantially in their compliance with the criteria for accreditation, it may decide to evaluate them as separate, program offerings. This would normally be a matter for consultation with the RTO and would require clear differentiation of titles for the resulting programs.

## 2. REGIONAL CAMPUS, ONSHORE AND OFFSHORE PARTNERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS

In the specific case of developing regional campus, or offshore offerings based on a program already established in a home campus setting, an RTO would need to firmly decide between the following approaches.

- a) Undifferentiated case: - Each offering is manifested as an alternative implementation pathway within a single program definition, and with a common learning and assessment program design and vocational outcomes. The accreditation criteria must be satisfied simultaneously for both implementations of the program through separate evaluation processes. A unified program title and award title would normally cover all implementations of the program.
- b) Differentiated case: - The regional campus or offshore partnership offering is identified as a separate learning and assessment program with different vocational outcomes perhaps leading to a similar award as the home campus program. Each program would be independently accredited in its own right and in this case program titles and award titles would be expected to distinguish separate program implementations on the home, and offshore or regional campuses.

Under normal circumstances, separate accreditation visits and unsynchronised accreditation review cycles would apply for offshore, regional campus and home campus offerings. Where the separate offerings are alternative implementations of the same program as in a) above, then confirming full accreditation on one campus reaffirms ongoing full accreditation at other campuses (up to the end of the individual accreditation cycle in each case).

The Dublin Accord in its Rules and Procedures now recognises accreditation of programs that are offered in differentiated or undifferentiated form by a provider, headquartered in the jurisdiction of a signatory, but delivered at a location outside of the national or territorial boundaries of that signatory. In the case of an Australian engineering school implementing an undifferentiated program at a location within the jurisdiction of another signatory to the Accord, accreditation of the offshore offering would be initiated by Engineers Australia, but undertaken collaboratively with the signatory associated with the country of delivery. In this case the offshore program implementation must satisfy the accreditation criteria of both signatories.

Further detail on the accreditation of offshore program implementations is provided in the Engineers Australia *Policy on Accreditation of programs offered by Australian Registered Training Organisations at Offshore Locations or through Twinning Arrangements with Offshore Institutions* (Reference 1). Further detail on the accreditation of distance based programs is provided in the Engineers Australia Interim policy on Accreditation of Programs Offered in Distance Mode (Reference 2).

Details on procedures for start up and for seeking provisional accreditation status for offshore program offerings are provided in Reference 3.

### 3. ARTICULATION ON THE BASIS OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING.

Under the National Skills Framework, RTOs are required to provide learners with access to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes incorporating Recognition of Current Competencies (RCC).

It is the responsibility of the RTO to maintain policies and procedures for the formal evaluation of RPL on a case by case basis and these should be implemented and maintained in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) policy entitled Recognition of Prior Learning: National Principals and Operational Guidelines which is included in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the AQF Implementation Handbook (Reference 5).

### 4. REFERENCES

1	P03EA_Comp	Engineers Australia Policy on the Accreditation of Programs Offered by Australian Registered Training Organisations at Offshore Locations.
2	P04EA_Comp	Engineers Australia Policy on the Accreditation of Programs Offered in Distance Mode.
3	G04EA_Comp	Introducing New Programs and Program Amendments
4	S02EA_Comp	Accreditation Criteria Summary.
5		AQF Handbook Fourth edition 2007 <a href="http://www.aqf.edu.au/">http://www.aqf.edu.au/</a>