

ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA

ACCREDITATION BOARD

ACCREDITATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

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1. ACCREDITATION BOARD

The *Policy on Accreditation of Professional Engineering Courses* (Reference 1) is laid down by the Council of Engineers Australia.

Implementation of the Policy is the responsibility of the Accreditation Board. The Board comprises the National Vice-President (Education and Assessment) of Engineers Australia plus five other members appointed by the Council of Engineers Australia. One of the six shall be appointed Chair of the Board. At least two shall have substantial experience in organisations (other than universities) employing engineering graduates in significant numbers, and at least one shall be a person with senior academic experience.

In appointing the members of the Board, the Council shall seek to maintain reasonable gender balance, and a reasonable spread of expertise across the various branches of engineering practice.

The Accreditation Board:

- approves detailed guidelines and operating procedures for accreditation;
- oversees all operational arrangements, and appoints evaluation panels;
- receives evaluation reports on engineering programs, and determines whether accreditation should be granted and on what conditions;
- responds to any complaints or appeals concerning the accreditation process (Reference 2), and to any proposals for change;
- oversees the development and operation of accreditation and mutual recognition agreements with other countries, where necessary recommending to the Council;
- reports periodically to the Council on its work and when appropriate, recommends changes to the Council's policy on accreditation;
- fosters the dissemination of developments and best practices in engineering education; and
- advises the Council on public statements or representations that should be made in relation to engineering education.

2. AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING DEANS (ACED)

The ACED Constitution sets out the following objectives for the Council:

- to provide a forum for Deans of Engineering to discuss matters of mutual concern and national importance;
- to monitor the state of engineering education, in terms of adequacy of programs and resources and quality of outcomes;
- to initiate and conduct reviews, consistent with its mission;
- to consult with and offer advice to universities, government and industry on matters relating to engineering education;
- to collect and disseminate information about engineering faculties and schools;

- to maintain strong links with Engineers Australia, ATSE, AaeE and other relevant bodies to further its mission;
- to form liaisons, where appropriate, with related organisations both within Australia and overseas;
- to make statements on relevant issues to government enquiries, professional bodies, the media and the general community;
- to assist in informing the general community on the need for and value of high-quality engineering education and to assist EA in raising the status and influence of the profession;
- to promote research and research training in engineering.

Members of the Council are normally the Deans of Engineering, nominated by the member universities. Other representatives attend as observers.

3. ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA/ACED CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

In addition to the Accreditation Board there is a joint Accreditation Consultative Committee of Engineers Australia and the Australian Council of Engineering Deans (ACED). The Committee normally comprises

- the National Vice-President (Education and Assessment) of Engineers Australia
- the Chair of the Accreditation Board
- the Director, Education and Assessment, of Engineers Australia
- the Associate Director, Accreditation, of Engineers Australia (Secretary)
- two members appointed by ACED
- one member nominated by the Australasian Association for Engineering Education (AAEE).

One member shall be appointed Chair by agreement between the Chairs of the Board and ACED.

The Joint Committee:

- acts as a channel of communication and consultation between Engineers Australia and ACED on all matters relating to accreditation;
- periodically reviews the effectiveness of the accreditation process, and provides comments to the above two bodies;
- when appropriate, recommends changes to the policy, guidelines or operating procedures;
- acts to foster the dissemination of developments and best practices in engineering education.

4. THE WASHINGTON ACCORD

Engineers Australia is a foundation signatory to the Washington Accord agreement first signed in 1989. The signatories have exchanged information and examined respective policies, processes and practices for granting accreditation to professional engineering programs and have agreed that these are comparable. This agreement means that engineering education programs accredited by signatories to the Accord are considered to be substantially equivalent in terms of satisfying the academic requirements for the practice of engineering at the professional level. A listing of programs accredited by signatories to the Accord is thus a useful resource to bodies responsible for the registration or licensing of professional engineers in signatory jurisdictions, thus assisting the international mobility of professional engineers.

Programs identified as fully accredited on the Engineers Australia website listing of accredited programs at the level of Professional Engineer are thus recognised by bodies which are signatories to the Washington Accord.

The Washington Accord specifies the essential elements of an accreditation system as a pre-requisite for any accrediting body seeking provisional signatory status. Inherent within the guidelines of the Washington Accord and other educational accords under the International Engineering Alliance (IEA) are graduate profile exemplars and associated range statements and contextual definitions. The Engineers Australia Stage 1 Competency Standard (Reference 2) and the accreditation criteria (Reference 3) contained within this definitive document fully embrace all of these elements. The Washington Accord signatories continue to identify and encourage best practice in the processes of accreditation and in the academic preparation of engineers for professional practice.

A list of current signatories to the Washington Accord is available on the Washington Accord website: www.washingtonaccord.org.

The Washington Accord undertakes systematic monitoring of the accreditation policy, processes and practices of its signatories with a 6-year formal review cycle. The Engineers Australia accreditation system was reviewed by a Washington Accord monitoring team in 2002 and this revision of the Accreditation Management System incorporates changes based on the recommendations made in the monitoring team's report.

A number of Australian educational institutions implement engineering education programs on both the home campus as well as at offshore locations through international partnerships or wholly owned overseas campuses. Engineers Australia will consider for accreditation programs implemented by Australian institutions at offshore locations, where the resulting degree is an award of the Australian institution.

Offshore offerings may well be alternative implementations of a host program already established on an educational provider's home campus and are thus undifferentiated in title, award and specified outcomes. Alternatively such offerings may be quite separate to programs offered on the home campus and are thus described as differentiated.

The rules and procedures of the IEA educational accords 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.

Accreditation of programs offered at offshore locations by Australian providers is discussed in detail in Reference 4.

5. REFERENCES

- 1 P02 Engineers Australia Policy on Accreditation of Professional Engineering Programs
- 2 G03 General Review Process
- 3 S02 Accreditation Criteria Summary
- 4 P03 Engineers Australia Policy on the Accreditation of Programs offered by Australian Universities at Offshore Locations