

Academic Accreditor Guidelines

Introduction

The IET Team of Academic Accreditors are senior academics or industrialists who give their time voluntarily to the IET and provide the expertise that allows the IET to conduct credible reviews of programmes submitted for accreditation.

Criteria for involvement

Academic accreditors are expected to have experience in one or more of the following:

- External examining.
- Course leader / programme director position or with a leading role in course management or design.
- Members of institutional validation and/or review committee.
- Quality assurance agency auditing.

In addition, they will normally be registrants with appropriate knowledge and experience.

In addition Visit Panel Chairs will:

- Normally be experienced and active accreditors with leadership capability and a demonstrable interest in, and commitment to, the accreditation process.
- Be able to lead teams and help them arrive at consensual, fair and unbiased decisions.
- Take a leading role in pre and post visit accreditation activity.
- Normally be Fellows of the IET.

Industrialists don't need to meet the above criteria though they must have knowledge and experience of the Higher Education sector.

Period of appointment

- Accreditors are expected to serve a minimum of three years in the role.
- Committee members are appointed for three years and then subject to annual renewal.

Main duties and responsibilities

Accreditors

- Year one: Attend training (1 day) and observe two visits (2 x 2 days).
- Subsequent years: Attend training (1 day). Attend at least one visit. A visit also involves one to two days for preparation in advance of the visit and a half day for report review following the visit.
- Minimum commitment per year: 5 days (6 days in year one).

Visit Panel Chairs

In addition, Visit Panel Chairs will be expected to:

- Attend the Academic Accreditation Committee to introduce visit reports they have chaired (1 day per visit).
- Provide offline advice (e.g. by email) on the approval of accreditation extensions, new degrees, and approval of action plans: 2 days per year.
- Produce visit reports: 1 day per visit.

Academic Accreditation Committee (AAC) members

Constituted from a subset of the Team of Accreditors and Visit Panel Chairs they are responsible for:

- Setting IET accreditation policy.
- Reviewing accreditation visit reports and making decisions. The committee normally meets three times per year.

Support

- All travel, meals and accommodation expenses related to visits will be met.
- Regular training opportunities will be provided for new and existing Accreditors.
- A dedicated IET staff member will attend each accreditation visit to advise on the latest policies, procedures and precedents.
- An IET staff member will take responsibility for the logistics and administration before, during and after visits.
- An IET staff member will ensure that Accreditors are provided with all the information needed to prepare for the visit.
- An IET staff member will provide the focal point for communication between the visit panel and the HEI.
- An IET staff member will provide advice as required during normal office hours.

Code of conduct

- To represent the IET and the Professionally Registered engineering community.
- To gather evidence in order to make an objective judgement and to help form a consensus view.
- To present these judgements in a measured and constructive way.
- To operate in a spirit of partnership with the organisation seeking accreditation.
- To identify areas of good practice and innovation.
- To communicate shortfalls against the accreditation criteria directly and constructively during the visit and in the visit report.
- To keep evidence supplied in support of an application for accreditation confidential.
- To advise of potential conflicts of interest before agreeing to participate in a visit.
- To be adequately prepared for a visit by reading the submission in advance and, where necessary, taking part in email discussions, forums or conference calls.
- To keep to the agreed timetable during the visit.
- To deal with inter-panel disagreements privately and respectfully via the Visit Panel Chair.
- To adhere to equality and diversity legislation.

Benefits

- To contribute to the development of tomorrow's engineers.
- To help maintain and improve the quality of Higher Education Engineering provision in the UK and internationally.
- To gain an insight into current good practice in Higher Education
- To influence the development of accreditation.
- To gain a deep insight into the accreditation process to help you prepare for your own Department's accreditation visit.
- To network with peers.

Appointment process

Accreditors:

- Nominations or applications received.
- Distribute application form and criteria to applicants and ask for the application form to be returned to accreditation@theiet.org
- Applications sent to the Academic Accreditation Committee (or a delegated subset).
- Applications will be processed in June each year.
- If successful, new accreditors are required to attend a training session and to be observed at two accreditation visits before joining the academic accreditor team.
- The panel chair of each of the observation visits will evaluate the performance of new accreditors and advise the IET on their suitability to join the team of accreditors. Guidance for new accreditors is available. If successful, full membership of the academic accreditor team will then be confirmed.
- Membership of the team of accreditors will be reviewed at least once a year to add and remove members from the team.

Visit Panel Chairs:

- Membership of the team of accreditors will be reviewed at least once a year to consider appointing chairs from the team and inviting chairs to stand down. Outgoing chairs will be invited to remain active as accreditors.
- Information on activity levels throughout the previous year will be made available to the Committee.