



Guidance on Threshold Academic Standards

Background

1. A small number of universities in the UK offer accredited MEng programmes with a group project in the penultimate stage/year and an individual project in the final stage/year. Individuals who embark on a MEng programme but exit early with a Bachelor's qualification will not normally achieve an IET accredited degree if they have not completed an individual project.
2. If appropriate learning outcomes have been met it is desirable to enable such individuals to be awarded an IET accredited degree without altering the structure of the programme.

Definitions of Academic Standards

This section is drawn from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards.

1. According to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

Threshold academic standards are the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student must demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. For equivalent qualifications, the threshold level of achievement is agreed across the UK and is described by the qualifications descriptors set out in the national frameworks for higher education qualifications.

Academic standards are the standards that individual degree-awarding bodies set and maintain for the award of their academic credit or qualifications. These may exceed the threshold academic standards.

2. Threshold academic standards for UK degree-awarding bodies are met by aligning programme learning outcomes with the relevant qualification descriptors in the national frameworks for higher education qualifications and through use of subject benchmark statements (where appropriate).
3. Individual degree-awarding bodies are also responsible for defining their own academic standards by setting the pass marks and determining the grading/marking schemes and any criteria for classification of qualifications that differentiate between levels of student achievement above and below the threshold academic standards.

Use of Threshold Academic Standards in Academic Accreditation

1. A programme presented for IET Academic Accreditation will have:
 - a. Programme learning outcomes that are aligned with the relevant qualification's descriptor and the Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) Learning Outcomes for the accreditation that is being sought
 - b. A curriculum design and associated module learning outcomes that will collectively ensure that a graduate from the programme will have achieved all the programme learning outcomes
2. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education places a responsibility on degree-awarding bodies to ensure that the award of credit and qualifications takes place only when the relevant learning outcomes have been demonstrated through assessment.

Expectation A3.2

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- a. The achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment
- b. Both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.

Background

3. When considering academic standards, an Accreditation Panel will evaluate:
 - a. The programme learning outcomes
 - b. Curriculum design
 - c. Module content, learning outcomes and assessment methods
 - d. Assessment regulations that govern the award of credit and qualifications (these must comply with IET requirements)
 - e. Examination papers and grading/marking schemes (along with samples of marked scripts)
 - f. Coursework briefs and grading/marking schemes (along with samples of marked student work)
 - g. Grading/marking schemes for major projects (along with samples of assessed outputs and evidence of the moderation process)
 - h. Statistical reports of student performance at module and programme level
 - i. External examiner reports
 - j. Programme approval, annual monitoring and periodic review processes and associated reports
4. The Panel will carefully review samples of marked student work (coursework, project reports and examinations) to ensure that a mark or grade is awarded at threshold pass level only where:
 - a. All relevant learning outcomes have been achieved
 - b. Threshold academic standards have been satisfied
5. Key reference points for threshold academic standards are:
 - a. [Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes \(AHEP\) Fourth Edition](#)
 - b. [Engineering Subject Benchmark Statement](#)
 - c. [Foundation Degree Benchmark Statement](#)

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