

The Importance of Academic Accreditation

4th November 2013

Agenda

- **What is accreditation?**
- **How does accreditation benefit a university?**
- **How does accreditation benefit students?**
- **Challenges for HEIs**
- **Challenges for Engineering Council and PEIs**

What is academic accreditation

- An industry standard to aspire to
- A collaborative process between the Professional Engineering Institutions and the Universities
- A connection between the Engineering Industry, and the students aspiring to professional registration and Engineering Industry

What is academic accreditation

- Not designed to stifle innovation
- Opportunity to share best practice
- Highlights areas of weakness and provides advice on how to combat this
- An industry wide accepted validation

How does accreditation benefit a university?

Student Recruitment

Engineering & Technology has the lowest growth of student applicants in all STEM subjects over the last 10 years.

With the introduction of higher university fees students are becoming more aware of the perceived quality of programmes. Having a programme accredited by a professional body provides further confidence in the student.

How does accreditation benefit a university?

Accreditation information is now included in Key Information Sets (KIS) statements. Students have access to much more comparative information.

Certainly at the IET the number of enquires we have had from students before they make their UCAS choices has risen in the last couple of years.

Link to UK-SPEC

- Primary focus will be to confirm the programme has met the UK-SPEC learning outcomes.
- These are developed and set in collaboration with industry.
- Provide assurance that the university is providing the graduates with the skills industry is seeking.

Quality Assurance

- It is not just a pass or fail process. Universities are given targets for individual departments to meet which are designed to improve the delivery of the programme and the students experience. Not *just* focused on UK-SPEC
- The academic accreditation process includes reviewing Internal and External Examiner processes

Benchmark

- Universities need to demonstrate their ability to their market audience
- Accredited degrees allow some benchmarking to other Engineering Programme providers
- The vast majority of HEIs in the UK run professionally accredited Engineering Programmes

Share Best Practice

- PEIs and The Engineering Council are able to gather examples of best practice
- Any special features or commendable aspects of programmes, if appropriate can be shared with other HEIs
- Provides an excellent opportunity for HEIs to gather new ideas and improve their existing programmes or develop new ones.

How does accreditation benefit students

Employment

- Employers seek graduates from accredited degree programmes.
- They are seeking to guide their employees to Professional Registration
- Having an accredited engineering degree simplifies the requirements on an individual for registration.

International Recognition

- Many of the PEs in the UK, including The IET are Internationally Recognised
- All Engineering Council accredited qualifications are accepted via various countries around the world through:
 - Washington Accord
 - Sydney Accord
 - Dublin Accord
 - FEANI Index
 - EUR-ACE

Professional Engineer

- Having an accredited engineering degree allows you to automatically meet or partly meet the academic requirements for Professional Registration with the Engineering Council
- On graduating you would be eligible for Graduate or Member status with your relevant PEI and in some cases designatory letters.

Access to a wider engineering community

- Having a degree accredited by a PEI automatically gives you a link to them which can be nurtured and utilised with many benefits:
 - Career guidance
 - Access to many publications and other resources
 - Job opportunities
 - Local Networks or other Engineering groups
 - Support and processing of Professional Registration

Challenges to HEIs

HEIs are facing many challenges in today's climate. Whilst accreditation cannot assist with all of them it can help:

Recruitment

As previously discussed having programmes accredited provides a valuable marketing tool for prospective students.

Challenges to HEIs

Number of UK Students on MSc Falling

- Together with the Engineering Council HEIs can liaise with Industry and BEng graduates to identify ways of attracting new UK students
- Some PEIs can provide bursaries or grants to students on accredited programmes to help meet the substantial cost of an MSc

Challenges to HEIs

Links with Industry

- Here a link with a PEI could be invaluable. PEI schemes can help connect HEIs with local businesses and provide a link to industry on a local level
- Opportunity for more sandwich or summer placements for students

Challenges to PEIs

Academic Partnership

The IET runs an Academic Partnership which creates a formal platform for engagement, ensuring students and your department get maximum benefit from IET products and services.

Our challenge is to keep departments engaged and up to date with the latest industry needs and news.

Whilst feeding back concerns or ideas from the HEIs.

Challenges to PEIs

Skills shortage across the industry

Between 2010 and 2020, engineering companies are projected to have 2.74 million job openings across a diverse range of disciplines

We need to ensure that those graduating from Engineering degree programmes are fit to fill these gaps. Accreditation is a way to help monitor the standard of graduates.

Challenges to PEIs

Ensuring needs to industry are addressed in HE

Finally the accreditation process ultimately is there to ensure the needs of the engineering industry are addressed in HE.

It helps encourage development and ensure that graduates enter their career equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge

Thank You

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The Institution of Engineering & Technology