Guidance Note on
Academic Accreditation

*To support Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) 4.0
and Regulations for Registration (RfR) 4.1*

Guidance Note on Academic Accreditation

1. Introduction

This document has been updated to support the fourth editions of Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) and the Engineering Council's Regulations for Registration (RfR 4.1).

Full implementation of the fourth edition of AHEP is expected by September 2024. Between September 2020[1] and August 2024 HEIs will be able to request accreditation against the learning outcomes from AHEP 3.0 or the learning outcomes in AHEP 4.0. This implementation period is a year longer due to the impact of Coronavirus on the 2020-21 academic year and the accreditation cycle.

This note covers the accreditation of academic programmes leading to the award of qualifications that provide some or all of the underpinning knowledge, understanding and skills for Incorporated Engineer (IEng) and Chartered Engineer (CEng) under the UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence and Commitment (UK-SPEC 4.0): Foundation degrees (and equivalent qualifications), Top-up degrees, Bachelors and Honours degrees, integrated Masters (MEng) degrees, other Masters degrees and Doctoral programmes.

Information related to accreditation and approval of education and training programmes which are not delivered by HEIs, and degree apprenticeships, is set out in Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA 1.0).

Regulations 35 - 38 and 41 - 60 of RfR 4.1 set out the requirements governing the accreditation of academic programmes by Licensees (professional engineering institutions that are licensed to accredit by the Engineering Council). This guidance note and its annexes complement RfR 4.1 and AHEP. This note does not introduce any new regulatory requirements.

The annexes cover accreditation matters related to:
- Foundation degrees (Annex A)
- Distance learning (Annex B)
- Doctorates (Annex C)
- Programmes offered outside the UK (Annex D)
- Location of Study (Annex E)
- Accreditation where Licensees may have an interest (Annex F)
- Accreditation of programmes outside the terms of the Regulations for Registration 4.1 (Annex G)
- Compensation and condonement (Annex H)
- Reporting changes to accredited programmes (Annex I)
- Questions and Answers relate to AHEP fourth edition and AAQA first edition learning outcomes (Annex J)
- Risk-based approach to accreditation visits (Annex K)
- Dual (IEng and CEng) accreditation of Bachelors with Honours degrees (Annex L)
- Titles of accredited or approved programmes (Annex M)

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[1] Licensees will need to update their documentation and train accreditors on the new learning outcomes before accrediting programmes against these. Providers seeking accreditation during the implementation period should speak to Licensees about moving to the new learning outcomes.

- Statement on top-up degree titles (Annex N)

This note and its annexes have been prepared for use by Licensees. They may wish to use these as a basis for their own guidance to HEIs and to accreditation panels, and are encouraged to share these or elements of these with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) seeking accreditation.

Information for Licensees about removal of accredited status from a programme and more detailed information about risk-based accreditation, including making a decision not to undertake an academic accreditation visit are covered in separate documents.

Accreditation plays a valuable role in maintaining and developing the relationship between the profession and higher education, and in ensuring appropriate standards. Part of its purpose is to stimulate and encourage programme innovation and development. RfR 4.1, AHEP and this Guidance Note help to enable this.

Accreditation is not intended to be a prescriptive exercise, and Licensees are encouraged to avoid introducing un-necessary prescription into their individual requirements. Accreditation should be viewed as a developmental process, with more of a continuing dialogue between HEIs and the accrediting Licensees, rather than placing all the emphasis on the five-yearly visit. This approach helps to establish an understanding of the opportunities that accreditation brings and the value of the process, as well as encouraging the development of innovative provision. It also assists degree awarding institutions that are developing new programmes.

During accreditation exercises, Licensees may wish to draw on the specific technical expertise of smaller Licensees or Professional Affiliates of the Engineering Council that do not hold academic accreditation licences. Under such an arrangement, the overall process and outcome remain entirely under the control of the accrediting Licensee. Any such input should be clearly recorded in the accreditation visit report, and HEIs should be encouraged to include reference to the specific input in their course literature.

Guidance for Licensees about further learning is available on the Engineering Council's Partner Portal.

2. Output Standards for Foundation degrees (and equivalent), Bachelors, Honours, Integrated Masters (MEng), other Masters Degrees and Doctoral Programmes

The fourth edition of AHEP http://www.engc.org.uk/ahep published in 2020, sets out the requirements for graduates from accredited programmes in five key areas of learning:
- Science and mathematics
- Engineering analysis
- Design and innovation
- The Engineer and society
- Engineering practice

The following degrees can be accredited:

Qualification	ISCED Level
Foundation degrees and equivalent qualifications accredited as partially meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for IEng registration	5

Bachelors and Bachelors (Hons) degrees accredited as fully meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for IEng registration	6
Bachelors (Hons) degrees accredited as partially meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration	6
Integrated Masters (eg MEng) degrees accredited as fully meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration	7
Other Masters degrees accredited as meeting the further learning requirement for the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration	7
Doctoral programmes accredited as meeting the further learning requirement for the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration	8

Programmes that can be considered for accreditation with further learning required may also be considered for accreditation in full for a title that requires a lower level of underpinning knowledge and understanding. For example Foundation degrees can be accredited as partially meeting the requirement for IEng registration and/or recognised for EngTech registration, and Bachelors degrees can be accredited as partially meeting the requirement for CEng registration and/or accredited for IEng. Note dual accreditation is not automatic (see Annex L for further information). Programmes cannot be considered for accreditation for a title that requires a lower level of underpinning knowledge and understanding than that for which accreditation in full may be considered. For example Masters degrees cannot be accredited for IEng or for CEng with further learning required, and Bachelors degrees cannot be accredited for EngTech.

Licensees must seek RSC permission before confirming any other degree accreditations. Further information about accrediting programmes outside of what is permitted by RfR 4.1 is provided in Annex G.

Does a degree programme have to deliver all the required learning outcomes as set out in AHEP?
Yes. An accredited programme must deliver all the required learning outcomes, although as AHEP 4.0 makes clear, the 'weighting of learning outcomes may be different in each programme. Some programmes may be weighted in favour of engineering practice whilst others may be weighted in favour of science and mathematics'.

Where are additional general skills covered?
In AHEP 4.0, what were previously referred to as 'Additional general skills' have been integrated within the five specific areas of learning.

Does a degree programme have to deliver all the points included under the five areas of learning in AHEP?
Yes. The points describe the learning outcomes. They represent different aspects of the capabilities which graduates from accredited programmes should possess, rather than curriculum content. They therefore serve as indicators for accreditors when looking at student achievement from the programme as a whole.

Which should take priority – programme or module learning outcomes?
The decision to accredit should be based on programme learning outcomes. Thus, the expectation is that accrediting panels will look at learning outcomes at the programme level.

Consideration of learning outcomes at the module level may prove to be useful if further information is required but these should not be the prime source of evidence.

Are there any other reference points for accreditation?
Yes.

The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK-Degree Awarding Bodies, International Standards Classification of Education (ISCED) and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). These are key reference points in determining whether the programme is delivering knowledge, understanding and skills at the appropriate level.

The competence statements for IEng and CEng which Licensees have adopted under UK-SPEC 4.0 and the intermediate competences set out in AAQA may also be a useful reference point:

AHEP 4.0 and RfR 4.1 set out requirements, including the evidence to be reviewed during accreditation, and rules on compensation and condonement (see annex H for guidance on compensation and condonement). Some Licensees add their own requirements to reflect discipline needs, for example to contextualise AHEP learning outcomes or add learning outcomes to meet specialist requirements.

Can combined degrees (eg Engineering with French) be accredited and is a stipulated amount of engineering content required in these?
Yes, they can be accredited. In discussion at the EAB, most Licensees felt that generally around two thirds of the total programme would be required to deliver the required engineering outcomes. However, this is not a fixed requirement; whether a course holistically delivers the required learning outcomes is still the ultimate criterion in awarding accreditation.

When recording programmes on the course search database licensees must include a separate record for each title that will appear on degree certificates.

Is it a requirement for accreditation that degree assessments include examinations?
No. The Engineering Council does not specify assessment approaches.

Is it a requirement for accreditation that an MEng or any other Masters degree includes a group project?
No, not if the programme delivers all the learning outcomes. AHEP has always emphasised outcomes rather than how these are achieved. There are aspects of the five areas of learning to which a group project might make a major contribution. In the absence of a group project, the accreditation panel would need to be confident that the outcomes were being achieved by some other means.

Is a visit required?
Yes. Regulation 41of the RfR 4.1 states that the accreditation process shall include a visit. Policy on risk-based accreditation sets out when the visit must include a significant in-person element and minimum requirements for a visit with a significant in-person element.

A visit is not required where the title of an existing programme is changed or a new mode of study introduced where no other change is made to an accredited programme; this may include the addition of a sandwich mode with a different title (eg …with a year in industry). Introduction of distance learning as a new mode of study will require closer scrutiny to consider student experience, and Licensees need to consider whether a visit is required. (Further information on accrediting distance learning programmes is presented in Annex B)

From 2016 visits additional to the usual schedule of visits may not be required where the programme concerned has significant commonality with programmes already accredited by the Licensed Member. However, there are strict parameters and accrediting Licensees must

refer to RfR 4.1 and the policy on risk-based accreditation and any other guidance when applicable before deciding not to visit.

Further guidance on this matter for accrediting Licensees is available on the Partner Portal.

Can a visit be coordinated with the university's periodic review process?
Yes this is encouraged.

Can a licensee accredit a programme in which it or a partner organisation has an interest?
Where a potential conflict of interest exists where a Licensee wishes to accredit a programme that they or a partner organisation have an involvement with, the conditions set out in Annex F must be met.

What is meant by accreditation being viewed as a developmental process?
Licensees are encouraged to provide assistance at an early stage to a HEI that is planning a new programme or that is new to the accreditation process. This approach is more likely to lead to the development of programmes that meet the required standard. After accreditation is conferred, continuing dialogue may take the form of annual reports or the sharing of notable or innovative practice. HEIs should be encouraged to contact the engineering accrediting Licensee(s) for advice when considering the development of existing programmes.

Can someone who only follows the final year of an accredited programme get an accredited degree on graduation?
Yes. Historically, students had to spend at least two years on an accredited programme, but this rule does not exist under UK-SPEC. A HEI will have made the decision to admit someone to the final year of a programme on the basis that their previous academic experience enables them to achieve the necessary outcomes. However, accrediting Licensees may ask HEIs to demonstrate how those graduating after one year would actually achieve the required learning outcomes and decide whether to limit accreditation in the light of the response.

This arrangement would therefore apply, for example, to holders of an HND or graduates from Foundation degree programmes who wish to follow the final year of a Bachelors or Honours programme.

Note that entry to a later year of an accredited programme is not the same as entry to a programme that is designed as a top-up degree. AHEP 4 permits accreditation of top-up degrees as further learning for candidates who complete partial an IEng accredited Foundation degree or equivalent.

Can a student who fails a project first time, then passes, be awarded an accredited degree?
The Engineering Council is not prescriptive about this. Accrediting Licensees are encouraged to avoid introducing un-necessary prescription into their individual accreditation requirements. Their requirements must be clearly communicated to degree awarding institutions and students, and correctly entered on the Engineering Council's course search database.

What is the position of someone who, on completion of an accredited MEng programme, is awarded a BEng rather than the MEng degree?
The person concerned will hold a non-accredited degree and any application for registration would be individually assessed. However, a BEng programme which is specifically designed as an exit point for MEng students who decide not to complete the MEng may be accredited if the accrediting Licensee is satisfied that it delivers the required learning outcomes for IEng or CEng as appropriate.

If an MEng programme is only slightly deficient, can it be accredited with a requirement for further learning?

No. The award of accredited status to an MEng programme means it fully meets the published requirements.

Can someone with an accredited Masters degree but without an accredited Honours degree be considered for registration?

Yes, but a Licensee considering their application for registration will need to complete an individual assessment of their underpinning knowledge, understanding and skills. It is important that Licensees encourage HEIs to inform students correctly about the status of graduates from accredited Masters programmes in relation to Engineering Council registration requirements, and request that any identified inaccuracies in information about the accreditation status of programmes be corrected promptly.

Many Masters degrees have a mixed intake with not everyone having an accredited Honours degree in engineering. Can such programmes be accredited?

Yes. The requirements for accreditation apply equally to the accreditation of Masters degrees. Paragraph 44 of the Engineering Council's Regulations for Registration 4.1 requires accrediting Licensees to consider a range of evidence, including "entry to the programme, and how the cohort entry extremes will be supported." A judgement has to be made in the light of this.

Accreditation of a Masters degree confirms only that it provides the further learning to Masters level component of the education requirement for CEng registration.

Can Postgraduate Diplomas be accredited?

Postgraduate Diplomas are not exemplifying qualifications under UK-SPEC and should not be accredited as such. They may be accepted on an individual basis as meeting part or all of the further learning requirements, or as part of an integrated package of further learning and professional development. Postgraduate Diplomas accredited before 1 February 2007 retained accredited status until the end of their accreditation period.

3. Coordinated visits

What is the basis for carrying out a joint accreditation visit with another institution?

Joint accreditation visits bring considerable advantages, for example in terms of there being a single point of contact and one submission document, visit and visit report.

For a joint visit, there should be sufficient commonality amongst the programmes being put forward. Therefore, in general, joint visits may not be appropriate for programmes that span a range of departments or for very large numbers of programmes, unless the commonality can be clearly defined.

The EAB organises joint visits involving several Licensees. Further information about EAB is available at: https://www.engc.org.uk/eab

4. Accreditation Decisions

Regulation 48 of the Regulations for Registration 4.1 sets out three possible outcomes of an accreditation assessment.

Qualifying phrases such as 'provisional accreditation' and 'partial accreditation' are not used.

When printed this becomes an uncontrolled document. Please check the Partner Portal for the most up to date version.

Any Licensee considering a request to accredit a degree programme in a way that is not explicitly covered by AHEP must consult the Engineering Council.

Does this mean that we cannot provisionally accredit new programmes?
Regulation 53 of the RfR 4.1 states that programmes which do not have an output cohort at the time of accreditation may be accredited. This would be on the basis of their anticipated output standards. Institutions undertaking the accreditation must however monitor the output and review their accreditation accordingly, and they may accredit a new programme for a shorter period. Should they decide to withdraw the accreditation, the first graduates and those students already on the programme would still have accredited degrees. This maintains the previous practice; it is simply the term 'provisional accreditation' which has been withdrawn.

Licensees are encouraged to work with degree awarding institutions during new programme development, offering on-going advice and support to help to ensure that UK-SPEC requirements are understood, and that innovative provision is encouraged.

Are programmes still able to be 'partially accredited'?
The term was discontinued some time ago. Programmes may be accredited as partially delivering the knowledge and understanding for a professional title, eg accredited with further learning required or as further learning This means that a programme delivers the learning outcomes required for the accreditation (for example an Honours degree for CEng) but further learning is required to demonstrate all of the knowledge and understanding required for registration.

What should accreditation decision letters include?
Under regulation 52 of the RfR 4.1, the awarding institution must be required to inform the accrediting Licensee of any major changes during the period of accreditation that affect the delivery of the specified programme outcomes. Examples include changes to compensation regulations, change of title, substitutions of modules, discontinuation of a module or loss of a critical resource.

Clear information about the registration opportunities for graduates from the accredited programmes should be included.

Awarding institutions should be informed that they may use the Engineering Council's accredited programme logo (downloadable from: www.engc.org.uk/accrediteddegreelogo), the applicable accreditation statements as listed in AHEP, and alerted to the availability of a EUR-ACE® label (www.engc.org.uk/eurace).

What are the consequences for students and graduates of a decision not to award accreditation?

It is an accepted principle across the profession that individuals who embark on a programme that is accredited should not be disadvantaged by a future decision to remove accreditation before the end of the original accreditation period. This also applies to graduates, should a decision to remove accreditation be backdated.

Licensees should:
- Remind HEIs that public information about the accredited status of their degree programmes and the relationship to registration must be correct.
- Inform HEIs that the publication of inaccurate information can be referred by the Engineering Council to the QAA under its 'Cause for Concern' procedure.

Licensees must:
- Check the accuracy of statements about accredited status and registration as part of the periodic accreditation exercise.

A Licensee that is considering the removal of accreditation before the end of the original accreditation period is directed to a separate document covering this matter.

Can programmes be accredited for EngTech?
Accreditation of a degree is on the basis of delivering specific learning outcomes derived from the statements in AHEP. AHEP deals specifically with programmes accredited for IEng and CEng. Foundation degrees and equivalent programmes may be accredited for IEng with further learning required, in line with AHEP and/or recognised for EngTech in line with AAQA processes.

How can apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeships and graduate apprenticeships) and non-degree qualifications be recognised?

The Standard for recognition of apprenticeships and non-degree qualifications is Approval and Accreditation of Qualification and Apprenticeships (AAQA) The learning outcomes for programmes recognised towards IEng or CEng are common for AHEP 4.0 and AAQA 1.0

Do HEIs have to advise of changes to accredited programmes during the accreditation period?
Yes. However, it is expected that programmes will change over time. Significant and therefore notifiable changes are mentioned above (decision letter contents) and in the policy on risk-based accreditation.

The Engineering Council has produced a template that may be used by HEIs to report changes to accredited programmes (Annex I)

Is there a minimum requirement about professional qualification of academic staff?
The Engineering Council is not prescriptive about this. However, Licensees are encouraged to support engineering departments and their staff to increase the levels of professionally qualified engineering academics. This provides role models for their students and provides a mechanism for active engagement with the profession.

5. Charging for accreditation

There is no common policy on charging. The Engineering Council believes that it is a matter for an individual Licensee to decide whether or not to make a charge for accreditation, in accordance with its own business plans. Should a decision to charge be made, RfR 4.1 requires this to be specified in an institution's accreditation procedures and made clear to a university at an early stage. Licensees are asked to provide up to date charging details to the EAB Secretariat. If an institution wishes to introduce charging, an EAB working group has recommended an annual affiliate scheme as best practice.

6. Location of Study

Licensee(s) must normally visit all campuses involved in delivery of programmes they are invited to accredit, or only accredit for delivery in campuses visited. A visit is usually required to enable Licensed Members to consider evidence from a range of indicators, including those listed in regulation 44 of the RfR 4.1. If a programme is delivered on multiple campuses (including through franchise or partnership* arrangements) students will only be considered to have completed an accredited programme if they have completed the programme at a campus** for which accreditation is confirmed. In some circumstances a visit may be hybrid or virtual (the policy on risk-based accreditation provides more information)

Further requirements are set out in AHEP and the policy on risk-based accreditation.

Licensees should record on the courses database any limit to the scope of accreditation awarded.

Suggested wording for Licensees to use in communications with Higher Education Institutions on this matter is provided at Annex E.

*Partnership in this context refers specifically to partnership arrangements pertaining to the delivery of an accredited degree.

**Completed at a campus means that the student registered at that campus and, with the exception of distance or work-based learning students, they completed the majority of their studies including final assessments at that campus.

Annex A: Statement about the accreditation of Foundation degrees

This annex provides information that is additional to that in the main guidance note on academic accreditation and is specific to Foundation degrees. Both should be referred to.

Foundation degrees may be accredited by Licensees as partially meeting the educational requirements for IEng registration.

Licensees are expected to request, before agreeing to undertake accreditation, that the education provider would be expected to provide information additional to that normally expected for bachelors or masters level accreditation. This would include information about:

- The degree awarding body and its relationship with any other Foundation degree programme provider(s).
- Progression opportunities.
- Careers information and guidance given to the Foundation degree students.
- How the quality of any provision in the workplace is assured by the degree awarding body.
- Systems for the accreditation of prior learning/experiential learning.

A visit to the education provider will be undertaken, including to franchisees e. g. colleges. However, mechanisms to reduce the resource required for a visit will be explored.
Individual Licensees will be free to decide whether to:

- Approve a Foundation degree in line with AAQA
- Accredit a Foundation degree as partially meeting the requirement for IEng registration and/or for full EngTech.

Annex B: Accreditation of distance learning programmes

This annex provides information that is additional to that in the main guidance note on academic accreditation and is specific to distance learning. Both should be referred to.

1. Introduction

After the shift to an outcomes-focused registration and accreditation framework in 2003, the Engineering Council's Registration Standards Committee (RSC) re-stated its position:
UK-SPEC does not limit accreditation to any particular mode of delivery; distance learning programmes are not excluded.

AHEP includes a section on alternatives to campus-based provision. This annex should be read alongside that information.

2. Aim and scope of this guidance

This guidance is intended primarily for Licensees carrying out accreditation of distance learning programmes, including Bachelor and Masters level programmes as well as Foundation degrees.

3. Definition of distance learning

In general, distance learning is a mode that does not require the student to attend particular classes or events at particular times and particular locations and is not an apprenticeship.

A wide range of programmes may be offered as distance learning, from whole degrees to individual modules. As well as for students who are remote and off campus, it can be a supplementary activity for campus-based students.

4. Key principles

The same accreditation aims and standards apply to distance learning programmes as for any other type of programme, and are set out in the AHEP, RfR 4.1 and this guidance note on academic accreditation.

Assessment of distance learning assignments must be at the same level as any equivalent programme being delivered by the academic institution.

Accreditors will be reviewing different types of material than for a campus-based course, but these are no less valid.

Licensees should ensure that accrediting panels pay particular attention to the issues below and any other aspects of distance learning provision when carrying out accreditation.

5. Particular characteristics of distance learning programmes

The inherent flexibility of distance learning programmes that is often attractive to potential students can pose some challenges to established accreditation policies and procedures. Issues which may arise in relation to distance learning include:
- The open-ended nature of distance learning programmes.
- The robustness of systems in support of students.
- Project work and access to laboratories.
- The involvement of a range of delivery partners.
- The diverse needs of students.
- Individually tailored programmes.
- Confirming the authenticity of the student.

5.1 The open-ended nature of distance learning programmes

Accreditation of engineering degrees is framed by intake date. In view of the pace of change in engineering and technology practice, concern has been expressed about students taking long periods to complete a distance learning degree, especially where the programme was accredited some time ago.

However, the length of time that students might take to complete a programme need not in itself be a barrier to accreditation if the required learning outcomes are still being delivered. Licensees may specify that distance learning students must graduate within a prescribed period, which may be the same or less than that prescribed by the HEI.

HEIs should be required to specify in their accreditation submission document the maximum length of time permitted for completion of their distance learning programme(s).

As a guide, a completion period of 6-8 years is suggested. This information must be included on the course search record. If the HEI's proposed time period is not acceptable to an accrediting Licensee, special notes would have to be added to the course search database. Where possible, the aim should be to reach an agreement.

5.2 The robustness of systems in support of students

Programmes delivered by distance learning must be underpinned by a sound delivery platform. Greater emphasis may need to be placed on the delivery and communications systems, and academic institutions may be required to provide more detail about this than is required for campus-based programmes.

There should be equitable access to student, academic and administrative services, and timely feedback on assignments.

Accreditors should seek evidence that the views of distance learning students are included in student feedback and that questions about distance learning are included. These may cover, for example, the quality of web-based learning systems and access to the library.

The accreditors must meet with some distance learning students during the accreditation visit. This may be a face-to-face meeting, or it may use a suitable telecommunications service or application.

5.3 Project work and access to laboratories

AHEP 4.0 is not prescriptive about the mode of delivery. However, some learning outcomes are most appropriately demonstrated by way of laboratory work.

Accrediting Licensees should be prepared to consider a range of ways by which this may be demonstrated, that need not necessarily be limited to campus laboratories. For example, work-based distance learning students may be able to achieve the required standards through workplace activity.

There may need to be a greater emphasis on the systems in place to ensure that practical skills-based activities are developed, and it may be necessary for HEIs to provide additional material to demonstrate how distance learning programmes achieve the required skill based learning outcomes. This may include mandatory on-campus course components.

Accreditors will need to assure themselves that the same rigour and standards apply to the assessment of work-based laboratory work as would apply to full-time campus provision.

Similar considerations apply to project work.

Licensees must make explicit to the HEI before agreeing to carry out accreditation any requirement for a practical activity that would make it difficult for a distance learning degree to be accredited. An example is the RAeS' requirement for undergraduates to undertake flight testing.

5.4 The involvement of a range of delivery partners
RfR 4.1 regulation 41 requiring an accreditation visit to all partner organisations applies to distance learning provision. This is further explained in the main note.

A HEI may class as distance learning a programme that is in fact being delivered under a franchise agreement. Careful scrutiny of accreditation submission documentation should be undertaken to confirm the accuracy of the information provided and ensure that appropriate accreditation activity is undertaken. Particular care should be taken with international franchise arrangements.

5.5 Multiple access points and more diverse student groups
The flexibility of distance learning is attractive to those who may not wish, or be able, to attend campus. Progression data and evidence for support of the extremes of cohort is required as for any degree programme. Accreditors should be alert to levels of non-progression above those for a campus-based programme. In such cases, the academic institution should be expected to provide a more detailed breakdown, including the reasons and any mitigating actions. It is important to ascertain whether or not any enhanced level of non-progression reflects the quality of provision.

HEIs are increasingly offering multiple entry points during the academic year and students may not move through distance learning programmes as a cohort. Thus, accreditors should be aware that the data and evidence provided may differ from that which they are accustomed to with more homogeneous cohorts.

5.6 Individually tailored programmes
The open-ended choice of modules offered by some HEIs could lead some students to undertake programmes whose design and content prevent them from covering all the required learning outcomes. Whilst this is not limited to distance learning provision, it may be a greater risk in this mode.

Accreditors should seek assurance that students are being properly advised about module choice. Information about the flagging of groups of courses as providing particular pathways within an overall programme may be required.

5.7 Confirming the authenticity of students
Accreditors must assure themselves that robust systems are in place, especially where examinations are taken off campus or outside the UK.

HEIs are advised to consider using recognised centres outside of the UK such as British Council offices.

Annex C: Accreditation of doctorates

This annex provides information that is additional to that in the main guidance note on academic accreditation and is specific to doctorates. Both should be referred to.

1. Background

In February 2012, the Engineering Council's Registration Standards Committee (RSC) approved a change to the Regulations for Registration 4.1 such that an accredited Engineering Doctorate (EngD) may be considered as an exemplifying academic award for CEng for an individual holding an accredited Bachelors degree with honours in engineering or technology. This change applies to an EngD that is accredited since 1 March 2012 according to the principles below, and in line with the Regulations for Registration 4.1. The introduction of AHEP 4.0 in August 2020 broadened the scope to permit accreditation of doctoral programmes with Engineering Doctorate (EngD) or other doctorate awards when the required learning outcomes can be demonstrated.

Licensees are encouraged to consider requests to accredit doctorates where candidates complete sufficient common learning to demonstrate the learning outcomes required for accreditation.

2. Aim and scope of this guidance note

This guidance is intended primarily for Licensees and their representatives who are carrying out accreditation of doctorate programmes.

Licensees may also wish to use this as a basis for their own guidance to HEIs and to accrediting panels.

3. Key principles and reference points

When accrediting doctorates, the arrangements for the accreditation set out in RfR 4.1 regulations 35-38 and 41 – 60, apply.

Licensees must ensure that accreditors are familiar with doctorates and their particular features. A briefing note about the EngD is included towards the end of this annex to assist members of visiting panels and accreditation committees.

Accreditation should be carried out using the following reference points:

- The principal reference point is the learning outcomes for doctoral programmes. Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes: www.engc.org.uk/ahep

  Note especially the references in the preamble to the varying nature and purpose of such degrees, the opportunity to study in greater depth and the multidisciplinary nature of some degrees.

Other reference points are:

- Characteristics Statement Doctoral Degree updated by the QAA in 2020: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/doctoral-degree-characteristics-statement-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=a3c5ca81_14
- The UK-SPEC 4.0 standard of competence and commitment for CEng: www.engc.org.uk/ukspec

When reviewing a doctorate for accreditation as an academic award, accreditors are reminded that the programme is not expected to provide full competence for CEng. The

assessment is whether or not the programme is delivering knowledge and understanding which will underpin the CEng standard.

Evidence collected from UK EngD providers indicated that it ought to be possible for an EngD to deliver the engineering-specific learning outcomes and the additional general skills at the required level. Other doctorates would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Accreditors may wish to pay particular attention to: the nature of the project, the balance between the management and more technical engineering content, the integration of learning with the research project objectives and application, supervision arrangements for the Research Engineer (RE), and systems for ensuring that the RE is allowed sufficient time to undertake any university modules and prepare for exams.

Accreditors should satisfy themselves that the attainment of knowledge and understanding is not lessened by the emphasis on the development of competence.

In line with normal accreditation practice, there will be a meeting with REs; it is also useful to meet with some employers of REs.

In addition to material normally considered during degree accreditation, accreditors may find it useful to refer to:

- Monitoring reports and mid-term reviews provided for funding agencies such as the EPSRC
- The validation document that an Industrial Doctorate Centre (IDC) would have had to prepare for the university, showing the learning objectives.

Briefing note: The Engineering Doctorate

The Engineering Doctorate (EngD) was established in the UK in 1992 following the Parnaby Report's conclusion that an alternative was required which would be distinct from, and complementary to, the traditional existing PhD. The EngD is more vocationally focused and suited to the needs of industry. It is an alternative to the traditional PhD for students who want a career in industry.

The EngD is open to articulate and highly motivated graduates with a good degree in engineering or another relevant discipline. The four-year programme combines PhD-level research projects with taught courses, and students spend about 75% of their time working directly with a company, focusing on the corporate need. EngD students, known as Research Engineers (RE), undertake technical and management training, assessed as part of the degree, to help their professional development. Their PhD-level research projects are jointly supervised by the university and a company, and aim to help the performance of the company.

The EngD has become well established over the past 20 years as a consequence of the EPSRC-funding of Industrial Doctorate Centres (IDCs) which are exemplars of HE-industry collaborations. Many IDCs are partnerships between HEIs and have a diversity of industrial partners and research programmes. More than 270 companies are currently sponsoring about 1000 active REs. EngDs are also offered outside of the EPSRC IDC system. Some attract significant private sector support and funding from other sources such as European Union grants.

There is a strong emphasis on leading-edge research in a business context and development of competence that equips the RE for a range of roles in industry. The programme contributes to a body of knowledge on a particular technical discipline, industrial sector or multidisciplinary theme. Of the four years, approximately 25% can be recognised as 'learning' to at least Masters level via taught courses and 75% of the time is spent working

directly with the collaborating company. Many individual REs spend a significant amount of their time in-company.

The EngD is at least equivalent to the intellectual challenge of a PhD (level 8 in the qualifications framework for England/Wales and N Ireland; level 12 in Scotland), but is enhanced by the provision of taught material in both management and technical areas.

What to expect of an RE seeking CEng status

The following expectations for RE competences are set out by EPSRC and are applicable to any EngD:

- Expert knowledge of engineering/science areas relevant to their research project;
- An appreciation of industrial engineering and development culture including:
  - ➤ the role of research;
  - ➤ product development;
  - ➤ marketing awareness;
  - ➤ environmental impact;
- Project and programme management skills - financial planning and control;
- Teamwork and leadership skills - communication skills – oral, written, technical, non-technical;
- The ability to apply skills/knowledge to new and unusual situations;
- The ability to seek optimal solutions to complex or multifaceted problems.

IDCs must ensure that there is appropriate support for the RE which typically includes the academic supervisor and an industrial supervisor. Preparation for the chartered professional review is supported in a variety of ways, for example, there may be a professional mentor.

EPSRC suggests that an RE keeps a logbook of all their work including attendance on taught courses and the progress of their project work. This could be a helpful inclusion within an individual's evidence of professional development. Each RE is subject to periodic progress reviews, copies of which could form part of the evidence that the CEng standards have been met. The RE may be registered on a Licensees' development monitoring system.

Reference

The EPSRC Industrial Doctorate Centre Scheme: Good Practice Guidance
http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/newsevents/pubs/the-epsrc-industrial-doctorate-centre-scheme-good-practice-guidance/

Annex D: Accreditation of academic programmes outside the UK

This annex provides information that is additional to that in the main guidance note on academic accreditation and is specific to programmes outside the UK. Both should be referred to.

Introduction

Accreditation of academic courses by Licensees is not restricted to provision within the UK. There are four key parameters for academic accreditation outside the UK:

- The same standard, level and learning outcomes apply to all programmes put forward for accreditation regardless of the HEI and location of delivery
- The Engineering Council's RfR 4.1 regulations 43 – 60 set out what Licensees should specify in their detailed criteria and procedures for accreditation
- The Rules and Procedures of the International Engineering Alliance.
- The ENAEE policy on transnational accreditation

Aim and scope of this guidance note

This guidance is intended primarily for institutions that wish to undertake accreditation outside the UK. It focuses on generic principles, rather than including detailed procedures, and does not restrict an individual institution from making its own decisions about non-UK accreditation. Institutions are encouraged to develop their own policy about accreditation outside the UK. They may wish to use this guidance note as a basis for their own guidance to academic institutions and to accrediting panels.

References to useful documents appear within the document and are also listed at the end. References to relevant sections from The Rules and Procedures of the International Engineering Alliance are also included within the document.

The basis for agreeing to accredit or declining a request

Licensees are encouraged to be clear and transparent about the basis for agreeing to accreditation requests from non-UK academic institutions, as well as understanding the reasons why this is being sought. Some have a policy or checklist to assist them in making such decisions.

Considerations might include:

- Whether the HEI is within an area of strategic interest
- The likely tangible benefit to membership and hence registration
- The existence of an active local/regional group to assist with briefing and assessing
- The ability to resource it, and in a timely way, which may be faster than in the UK
- Preparedness to deal with local customs and politics
- Ability to maintain the relationship between visits.

They may wish to seek more initial data from a non-UK HEI. This assists in deciding how to deal with the accreditation request and might cover: staff and student membership of UK Licensees; the programme specifications; details about facilities; and details of any local/ national accreditation and accreditation agencies.

Where possible, it is prudent to undertake preliminary independent research about the quality of the awarding institution and/or the HEI. This is essential if this is a private provider and unknown to the Licensee.

Particular attention should be paid to programme content and how this maps to the published learning outcomes, albeit in a local context. The requirement for this should be clearly stated in advance.

Some Licensees offer a local briefing or undertake a pre-accreditation visit. This may involve fewer representatives than a full visiting panel and may involve locally based individual(s) appointed by the Licensee. This can be very useful in revealing areas of concern which the HEI may be asked to address before a formal visit can be confirmed.

Licensees should be aware of the possible conflict of interest between coaching (for accreditation) versus assessment. Individuals involved in providing guidance and advice to a university during programme development should not also carry out the accreditation assessment.

Resourcing issues and strategies for achieving efficiency

Non-UK academic accreditation is more resource-intensive than UK accreditation in areas such as staff time; dealing with logistical issues such as travel and sometimes security checks on non-UK personnel; tailoring the visit schedule to meet local needs and constraints; the flexibility to be able to deal with any complex issue(s) at the time rather than later; the need for a larger pool of accreditors; and increased direct costs.

The requirement to visit, set out in RfR 4.1 regulation 41, applies to UK and non-UK accreditation. This includes visiting the awarding HEI and all providers involved in delivering the programme; and when the awarding HEI offers multiple versions of a programme in different locations, visiting each location for which programme accreditation is sought.

The revision mentions the possibility of not undertaking a visit in certain defined circumstances. Further guidance on this matter has been developed – see Waiving the requirement for an academic accreditation visit on the Engineering Council Partner Portal (under Institution Guidance).

The Engineering Council's RSC has agreed that whether or not to make a charge for accreditation visits is a matter for accrediting Licensees to decide upon individually, in accordance with their business plans. For non-UK accreditation, it is common practice for them to seek to cover the full direct costs of the visit.

Joint accreditation visits are an option, with or without EAB involvement. A Licensee may wish to make use of another institution's visit report as part of the submission, or to assist in deciding whether or not to undertake a visit.

The composition of accrediting panels

The same requirements apply as for a UK visit in terms of the panel's balance and experience, and their training. In general, only senior or experienced accreditors should be used. The accompanying staff member may be viewed by the non-UK university as a representative of the Engineering Council as well as their Licensee, and may need to be briefed accordingly.

Awareness of different practice

The local context in which non-UK programmes are delivered is likely to differ from the UK HE environment in a variety of ways, for example: the primary and secondary education system; qualifications framework; student funding; health and safety culture; quality assurance; data protection issues; and the legal basis under which an HEI operates.

There is unlikely to be an external examining system like that in the UK. It may be possible to secure independent scrutiny of the courses by other means and this should be investigated with the awarding institution. Where different systems of classification such as Grade Point Average are used, accrediting Licensees will need to ensure that such matters are included in their training for accreditors.

Dealing with programmes that are not delivered in English

There is some limited experience of this amongst accrediting Licensees. In general, it is challenging and involves a great deal of work for the HEI and the visiting panel, and should not be undertaken unless it can be properly resourced.

The HEI will need to provide its submission and associated material in English. During the visit, arrangements need to be in place to enable the visiting panel to sample student work and project reports, and to enable the translation of new data or documents, in case these are requested by the panel.

Working with local accrediting bodies

The Engineering Council is a signatory to the various international accords, which also apply to the Licensees by virtue of the licensing process.

Arrangements for accreditation, rules and good practice for signatories to international accords is set out in the *International Engineering Alliance (IEA): Educational Accords Rules and Procedures document*. These cover collaboration between accord signatories, arrangements in a non-accord jurisdiction, what to take into account when agreeing to undertake accreditation in a non-accord jurisdiction, expectations for the conduct of reviews, working in developing countries, and how to deal with differentiated or undifferentiated programmes. The applicable sections are listed below:

Dealing with specific situations, see:
B.8   Engineering programs accredited by accord signatories in non-accord jurisdictions;
B.8.1   programme implemented without differentiation in two different jurisdictions, each with accrediting bodies who are signatories to the accord;
B.8.2   differentiated programme offered within the jurisdiction of a signatory;
B.8.3   undifferentiated or differentiated programme offered within a non-accord jurisdiction;
B.8.4   in applying the accords, a further allowed exception is defined for accreditation of engineering programs offered by non-accord jurisdictions.

Section C: Principles of good practice for accord signatories working internationally
The principles of good practice in Section C8 also apply in non-signatory jurisdictions and encourage communication with local accreditation agencies where these exist, see:
C.8.1   Principle 1: considerations for accord signatories when determining to undertake quality assurance evaluations in another jurisdiction not a member of the accord
C.8.2   Principle 2: expectations for conduct of evaluative services
C.8.3   Principle 3: quality assurance of online and web-based instruction and programs
C.8.4   Principle 4: responsibilities to students and colleagues
C.8.5   Principle 5: working in jurisdictions which are developing countries

Note that the Washington Accord applies only to accreditations conducted by the signatories within their respective national or territorial boundaries. The Sydney and Dublin Accords make some allowance for accreditation of programmes delivered in multiple jurisdictions. See especially paragraphs 3 and 4 in the section titled 'Sydney Accord: Recognition of Equivalence of Educational Base for Engineering Technologists' and paragraphs 15 and 16 in the section titled 'Dublin Accord: Recognition of Equivalence of Educational Base for Engineering Technicians' of the IEA Rules and Procedures

Licensees should ensure that the awarding institution is aware of these criteria from the outset.

Communicating with the local accreditation agency helps to establish whether the programme is eligible for accreditation in the home jurisdiction, whether the agency accredits the type and level of programme, and to a similar profile. Note that some signatories do not accredit engineering technologist or postgraduate programmes. Others have requirements for non-engineering content which may put a programme outside the scope of the home agency while potentially meeting the UK criteria.

The European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAEE) developed a [Transnational Accreditation procedure](#), which covers standards and procedures which ENAEE Authorized Agencies (agencies authorized by ENAEE to award the EUR-ACE® label) shall follow when performing transnational accreditaions. The applicable sections are listed below.

A1. If an ENAEE Authorized Agency is requested to review and accredit a programme by a HEI based in another country, in which an ENAEE authorized Agency exists

a. the Agency receiving the request must immediately inform the HEI that an ENAEE Authorized Agency exists in that country. At the same time, the requested Agency must ask the HEI and provide ENAEE (via the Label Committee Chair and the Secretariat) the reasons why this request is made when existing a local authorized Agency in the HEI country. This information as identified by the HEI will be evaluated by the Label Committee to identify any problem related to the local Agency accreditation process in continuing the monitoring and improving the transnational accreditation process within ENAEE;

b. if the HEI still confirms the request, the requested Agency shall inform the local Agency with copy to the ENAEE Secretariat that it intends to carry out the accreditation in accordance with the EAFSG;

c. before signing the contract on accreditation a formal communication (in writing or by e-mail) between the two Agencies (the requested Agency and the local authorized Agency) shall take place and possible collaboration and agreement shall be explored. Duplication between the two agencies should be avoided and a complementary way of working should be sought; A written agreement from the local Authorised Agency confirming that the requested agency may perform the EUR ACE label accreditation procedure for the indicated programmes will be included in the dossier that will be presented to ENAEE when the concerned programmes are submitted for EUR ACE label approval.

d. the requested Agency shall ask the HEI for information that the local Agency or any ENAEE authorized agency has not turned down, in the past two years, any of the programmes submitted by the HEI for accreditation;

e. the requested Agency will check that there are no other legal restrictions to do the accreditation;

f. if all the above mentioned conditions are fulfilled, the review can proceed under the sole responsibility of the requested Agency, but the local Agency will be invited to suggest a member of the Review Team or alternatively to nominate an Observer (at the expense of the said local Agency).

It is good practice to invite the local agency to provide an observer to participate in the visit. Some signatories require the HEI or PEI to obtain the agreement of the home accreditation agency.

Licensees are encouraged to keep the Engineering Council informed about planned non-UK accreditation activity. Where an institution does not have a relationship with the relevant agency, the Engineering Council can assist in establishing contact.

Course search database listing

Unless there is a good reason not to, course search records will distinguish between degrees offered by a UK awarding institution within and outside the UK. In the case of multiple campuses, if a specific location has not been visited and is therefore not included in the accreditation, this should be made clear in the public note on course record.

The existence of any partnership arrangements (eg franchise or collaborative) should be clear from the accreditation submission, and the accrediting Licensee should seek clarification if there appears to be any ambiguity, for example about which campus is named on a degree certificate.

Useful links

UK-SPEC: www.engc.org.uk/ukspec

Accreditation of HE Programmes: www.engc.org.uk/ahep

IEA https://ieagreements.org

Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB): www.engc.org.uk/eab
Engineering Council Regulations for Registration (engc.org.uk)

Annex E: Location of Study

This annex provides information that is additional to that in AHEP and the main guidance note on academic accreditation. The following wording is suggested for use in communications with HEIs through, for example, Licensee websites and accreditation decision letters. Licensees may wish to contextualise the final wording in their own communications with HEIs to accommodate their registration processes.

Statement for HEIs and other HE Providers on Location of Study

If accreditation is sought for a degree programme that is delivered on multiple campuses (including through franchise or partnership* arrangements) Licensee(s) must be invited to visit all centres involved in delivery, or informed of campuses for which accreditation is not sought. A visit is usually required to each campus for which programme accreditation is sought to enable Licensees to consider evidence from a range of indicators including human, physical and material resources, and meeting(s) with students. If a programme is delivered at more than one campus students will only be considered to have completed an accredited programme if they have completed the programme at a campus** for which accreditation is confirmed.

If a degree is delivered at multiple campuses the university must either agree with the accrediting Licensee(s) a means of clearly presenting the location of study/accreditation status of each degree awarded or ensure that the degree is accredited for delivery at every campus. Please note that it is not acceptable to some Licensees for the accreditation status of the award or delivery campus to be referred to only on the graduate's degree transcript or the back of degree certificates as these are not used in their membership processes.

HEIs involved in delivering and/or awarding of degrees delivered on multiple campuses must either secure accreditation of engineering provision in all locations, or make it absolutely clear in any material referring to the programmes where such programmes have not been accredited. Licensees may refuse to accredit programmes if they believe that HEIs (or their partners) are not being sufficiently clear about the non-accredited status of franchised degree programmes and/or degrees delivered through collaborative partnership(s) and/or at different campuses.

*Partnership in this context refers specifically to partnership arrangements pertaining to the delivery of an accredited degree.

**Completed at a campus means that the student registered at that campus and, with the exception of distance or work-based learning students, they completed the majority of their studies including final assessments at that campus.

Annex F: Accreditation where Licensees may have an interest

This annex provides information that is additional to that in the main guidance note on academic accreditation.

Licensees may occasionally be asked to accredit programmes in which they or their partner organisations have an interest. To safeguard accreditation standards and avoid any reputational risk arising from perceived conflict of interest Licensees will usually be expected to demonstrate independence from awarding and delivery institutions when accrediting.

On occasions where a potential conflict of interest exists where a Licensee wishes to accredit a programme that they or a partner organisation have an involvement with, the following conditions must be met:

- The visit must be conducted with at least one other Licensee.
- Another Licensee must take the lead and appoint the Chair.
- The Chair will be responsible for ensuring no conflict of interest impacts upon the accreditation decision.
- The Chair will be responsible for achieving agreement on the accreditation decision with the Licensee that has the potential conflict of interest.
- If agreement cannot be reached the Chair must refer the matter to RSC.

Annex G: Accreditation of programmes outside the terms of the Regulations for Registration 4.1

This annex provides information that is additional to that in the main guidance note on academic accreditation.

Regulations for Registration 4.1 regulation 5 states that:

> Licensees shall not register individuals with the Engineering Council, or recognise programmes of development and learning for such registration, outside the terms of these Regulations for Registration, without the authorisation of the Registration Standards Committee.

The six types of programmes and learning outcome profiles set out in AHEP 4.0 constitute the terms of RfR 4.1 for the purposes of accreditation of HE programmes. These are:

- Foundation degrees and equivalent qualifications accredited as partially meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for IEng registration (ISCED level 5)
- Bachelors and Bachelors (Hons) degrees accredited as fully meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for IEng registration (ISCED level 6)
- Bachelors (Hons) degrees accredited as partially meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration (ISCED level 6)
- Integrated Masters (eg MEng) degrees accredited as fully meeting the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration (ISCED level 7)
- Other Masters degrees accredited as meeting the further learning requirement for the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration (ISCED level 7)
- Doctoral programmes accredited as meeting the further learning requirement for the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirement for CEng registration (ISCED level 8).

RSC further agreed that where RSC authorisation is required this must be granted before a record can be published on the Engineering Council course search database.

Annex H: Guidance on Compensation and Condonement

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the Engineering Council policy on Compensation and Condonement. It supplements the information provided in the policy and illustrates how the limits on compensation apply in practice. This guidance does not replace or materially alter the Compensation and Condonement policy, which was developed and reviewed by working groups comprising primarily engineering academics who are experienced accreditors from a number of professional engineering institutions (PEIs).

Most universities offer a broad range of qualifications, some of which are regulated by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and some which are not. General University regulations are usually designed for the purpose of meeting the needs of the general student population, but do not necessarily account for specific needs of students entering regulated professions. Examples of other PSRBs include the General Medical Council, the Institute of Physics and the Architects Registration Board.

The Engineering Council has previously issued guidance to PEIs which required them to limit the practice of compensation and condonement in Universities to certain levels. However, there are a wide range of practices across the HE sector, with:
- inconsistent definitions of compensation and condonement;
- significant variations in the volume of failed credit that can be compensated; and
- variations in threshold performance in a failed module above which compensation is permissible.

Guidance has been replaced with policy to:

- ensure consistency in HEI and PEI practice
- maintain international recognition of UK degrees (the most recent Washington Accord review team required the Engineering Council to adopt consistent compensation guidelines across all PEIs)
- ensure engineering graduates have achieved the learning outcomes to underpin roles that have significant societal (including environmental, health and safety) impact..

Extracts from the policy are shown in bold.

The Engineering Council defines compensation as: "The practice of allowing marginal failure (ie not more than ten percentage points below the nominal pass mark) of one or more modules and awarding credit for them, often on the basis of good overall academic performance."

The Engineering Council defines condonement as: "The practice of allowing students to fail one or more module(s) with a fail mark of more than ten percentage points below the nominal pass mark, yet still qualify for the award of the degree."

The policy sets out the following requirements for the use of condonement and compensation. These limits are absolute and no discretion is permitted on the part of Professional Engineering Institutions or accreditation visit panels.

1. **Evidence that all AHEP 4.0 learning outcomes are met by all variants of each programme must be provided before accreditation can be granted.**

The mapping of modules against the prescribed learning outcomes for the level of accreditation sought must demonstrate that a graduate from an accredited degree will have met all of the required learning outcomes irrespective of any optional modules selected. The AHEP 4.0 learning outcomes must be summatively assessed.

2. **No condonement of modules delivering AHEP 4.0 learning outcomes is allowed.**

No condonement is allowed for core or optional modules that contribute to the delivery of AHEP learning outcomes. Hence condonement is allowed only for modules not directly related to the study of engineering, for example a modern foreign language.

3. **A maximum of 30 credits in a Bachelors or integrated Masters degree programme can be compensated, and a maximum of 20 credits in a Masters degree other than the integrated Masters degree.**

The limits placed on the use of compensation are set out in the policy and apply to the programme of study presented for accreditation. The credit limits on compensation apply to all academic credit conferred by the degree provider as part of the programme of study, including any credit conferred through a partnership arrangement, dual award etc. Any compensation of academic credit awarded by a different provider but used to gain entry to the programme with advanced standing, for example direct entry to the second year, does not count towards the limit.

For direct entry students, entering a later year of a Bachelors or integrated Masters degree programme, 30 credits of compensation are permitted. For MSc programmes carrying greater than 180 credits, 20 credits of compensation are permitted, regardless of the number of credits carried by the overall programme.

Note:
> • Whilst the rules do not permit compensation of large modules, within larger modules there may be scope for a student to perform poorly in a learning outcome but still pass the module, amounting to 'hidden compensation'. HEIs must ensure, and accrediting PEIs shall verify, that large modules are not used to enable hidden compensation.
> • For degrees with international study contributing towards the accredited award, the HEI needs to cross reference to UK credit frameworks to calculate the level of permissible compensation

Scotland

Level	Bachelors (Ordinary)	Bachelors (Honours)	Integrated Masters	Masters degree other than the Integrated Masters
7				
8	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	
9				
10				
11				Maximum 20 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study

Note

- Any compensation at Level 7 in Scotland is not included in the overall credit limit on compensation. This will help ensure the compensation limits placed on degree programmes in Scotland are proportionate to those in the rest of the UK. Also, students joining the second year of a degree programme with Advanced Highers will be treated no more or less favourably than students joining the first year of the programme having completed Highers.
- Any compensation received on an Access or Foundation year/programme is not included in the overall credit limit on compensation.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Level	Foundation Degree/Top up Degree	Bachelors and Bachelors (Honours)	Integrated Masters	Masters degree other than the Integrated Masters
4	Maximum 20 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	Maximum 30 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study	
5				
6	Maximum 10 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study			
7				Maximum 20 credits of compensation allowed for the programme of study

Note

- Any compensation received on an Access or Foundation year/programme is not included in the overall credit limit on compensation.

4. Major individual and group-based project modules must not be compensated.

Major projects are an important part of an engineering degree programme and typically make a significant contribution to the delivery of AHEP learning outcomes.

5. The minimum module mark for which compensation is allowed is no more than ten percentage points below the nominal module pass mark (or equivalent if a grade-based marking scheme is used).

Compensation is permitted only when the overall module mark is ten percentage points below the nominal module pass mark. For example, in the case of a normal module pass

mark of 40%, compensation is permitted only when the overall module mark is between 30% and 39%.

The key consideration in the rules above is to ensure that graduates of accredited engineering degree programmes have met all the programme learning outcomes specified in the Engineering Council's AHEP (Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes) specification.

These requirements will apply to all students joining the first year of an accredited degree programme from September 2022. There is no requirement or expectation that assessment regulations will be changed for students who enrolled on an accredited degree programme before this date.

A separately published Guidance Note on Compensation and Condonement supplements the information in this annex with case study examples, and a set of Questions and answers related to Engineering Council compensation and condonement policy has also be published

Annex I Template for reporting changes to accredited programmes

It is a condition of accreditation that providers inform accrediting Licensees of any significant changes to programme delivery and assessment. This template has been created to assist providers in submitting relevant information about adjustments that have had an impact on programmes that needs to be notified to the accrediting Licensee(s).

The aim of the form is to keep the level of information to the minimum needed to enable PEIs to confirm that all graduates of an accredited programme have achieved all the required learning outcomes.

Each report should cover the whole academic year and should be submitted once all changes for that year have been implemented or before the start of the next re-accreditation process, if this is sooner. The Licensee(s) must then be satisfied that all the AHEP learning outcomes at the required level will still be achieved by all graduates. Education providers must therefore maintain a fully documented record of changes, which demonstrates how all graduates will achieve the required learning outcomes, and keep accrediting PEIs informed.

The Engineering Council is not prescriptive regarding mode of delivery or assessment etc, although some PEIs may set specific requirements. Where a student is unable to complete a module or project that delivers required learning outcomes, the provider will need to set out the alternative mechanisms for assessing the achievement of those outcomes, and/or demonstrate that those particular learning outcomes are also achieved in other elements of the programme that have been successfully completed. Please note that where 'no-detriment' rules have been applied it is important that these will not permit a student to graduate with any condoned (failed) modules, or with more compensated modules than accreditation allows.

Engineering accreditation of a degree programme is based on demonstrating that all graduating students achieve the specified threshold standard across all AHEP learning outcomes. Engineering Council and PEIs are therefore not concerned with the degree classification or marks awarded to students (as long as they have exceeded the pass threshold).

The form below is intended to assist providers in submitting relevant information to the accrediting Licensee(s). Licensees may request further information if needed.

Impact Report

Text in red is for example purposes only and indicative of level of detail.

•   HEI and Department Name
•   Contact details (name, email, phone)

1.   University of Education, Department of Engineering
2.   Dr C Engineer FIET, FIMechE {email}, {phone number}

Impact Report Template
•   To be completed for each affected programme or group of related programmes e.g. BEng, MEng, MSc, where different programme adjustments may have been necessary for each group.

1.   BEngs: Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science
2.   MEngs: Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science
3.   MScs: Software Engineering, Internet of Things

Policy Statement
•   Please provide a policy statement, or a statement of the principles applied by the university or department, explaining how the teaching and assessment arrangements have been modified. This could take the form of one or more revised formal policies and/or official public statements appended to this form, or text entered below. If appending statements please list below. Please keep the number of documents to what you reasonably think the accrediting PEI(s) might need.

List of Policy Statement(s) attached:
1.   All University of Education staff emails setting out planned changes to teaching and assessment for the remainder of 2019-20 academic year (February-April 2020)
2.   University of Education Teaching committee paper to Senate proposing revised Rules of Assessment for 2020 summer exam cycle (April 2020)
3.   University of Education Senate minutes approving variations to University Rules of Assessment for 2020 summer exam cycle (April 2020)

Summary of Significant Change
•   Summarise overall changes to delivery and assessment of AHEP LOs across programme content and confirm how overall delivery and assessment of all AHEP LOs has

been maintained.

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1.   BEng/MEng: All modules (including final year major projects) were delivered as originally planned, including practical coursework, but the final coursework assessments were all submitted and marked online (some would have been submitted and marked online normally).

2.   MSc All taught modules (Autumn/Spring terms were delivered as originally planned, including practical coursework, but the final coursework assessments were all submitted and marked online (some would have been submitted and marked online normally).

Significant adjustments were required to some MSc major projects to replace (Summer 2020) practical laboratory work with equivalent simulation work and transfer all project assessment processes to online submission and feedback. However, the applicable AHEP LOs continued to be delivered and assessed within these projects.

Programme and/or Module Content Adjustments

•   List any modules or module elements that were unable to be delivered (e.g. due to closure of engineering laboratories or project facilities).

•   Which AHEP LOs did these missing elements of the programme cover?

•   Where are the AHEP LOs associated with the missing elements covered elsewhere in the programme?

•   Are there any required AHEP LOs that were unable to be delivered and/or assessed at programme level as a result of the revised programme delivery and assessment?

•   If there have been no significant adjustments to programme or module content please state Not Applicable

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1.   2019-2020 academic year: no modules unable to be delivered.

2.   2019-2020 academic year: all BEng/MEng modules and AHEP LOs delivered prior to closure of physical access; some changes to assessment of AHEP LOs through replacement of traditional exams with online equivalents; all AHEP LOs still assessed, but with some adjustments (see below).

MSc taught module AHEP LOs delivered prior to closure of physical access; some changes to assessment of AHEP LOs through replacement of traditional exams with online equivalents; all AHEP LOs still assessed, but with some adjustments (see attached assessment policy for details).

MSc major project specifications have had to be revised to enable all practical work to be completed online, involving converting some projects from practical/physical lab work to simulation analysis, but maintaining coverage of the same AHEP LOs; assessment will be

unaffected except for project presentations/demonstrations/vivas being conducted by videoconference.

3.   N/A

4.   No

Delivery Adjustments

•   List any changes to module delivery and the impact these have had on learning of AHEP LOs.

•   List any plans to introduce additional content later in the programme to cover material that was unable to be delivered as planned this year (e.g. workshop training and practice, practical laboratories using specialist facilities, etc).

•   If there have been no significant adjustments to delivery please state Not Applicable.

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1.   No changes to taught module delivery (BEng/MEng/MSc), except additional time allowed for online submission of final pieces of coursework; no effect on AHEP LOs delivered.

2.   N/A, all AHEP LOs delivered for [applicable period]

Assessment Adjustments

•   List any changes made to coursework, project and/or exam assessment arrangements.

•   For each assessment change made, identify its impact on the assessment of AHEP LOs.

•   Where award of credit for a module has changed due to adjustment of the assessment of the module, or though application of a 'no-detriment' provision, clarify whether the AHEP LOs covered by the module are changed or unchanged, and confirm whether any compensation and condonement provisions remain within the limits applicable at the time of accreditation.

•   If there have been no significant adjustments to assessment please state Not Applicable.

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1.   No changes to coursework content (for BEng/MEng/MSc) except that from late Spring term onwards, all coursework (including project assessments) was submitted and assessed online.

All exams were switched from traditional delivery to online delivery; an additional hour for each exam was provided to help students adjust to changed exam arrangements; exam

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question orders were permuted randomly for each student to minimise opportunities for cheating/collaboration, in line with revised exam policy agreed by University of Education Senate in April 2020.

2.   N/A

3.   No changes were made to criteria for awarding module credit. In addition, the Compensation limitations agreed at the most recent accreditation visit to the Department continue to be applied in full.

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Any other information

•   If there is any other information that would be helpful to the accrediting PEIs, please give brief details below. For example, did you liaise with external examiners/industry advisory board/partner-providers etc about changes to content/delivery/assessment etc;

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1.   External examiner for Electronic and Mechanical Engineering consulted.
2.   Liaison with two feeder colleges to regarding changes to delivery and assessment of programmes giving direct entry to final year BEng Computer Science

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Annex J

Questions and Answers relating to AHEP fourth edition and AAQA first edition learning outcomes

Question 1: Must all required learning outcomes be assessed at the level of the qualification (eg in England level 6 for Bachelors; level 7 for Masters programmes). Or may some be assessed at a lower level within the qualification?

Answer: For each programme, each learning outcome must be assessed at least at the stipulated threshold ISCED/EQF level. (Refer to the marked up LO table.)

Question 2: Where learning outcomes are phrased identically for recognitions related to qualifications at different levels (eg both Bachelors and Masters) does there need to be a differentiation in level and assessment depending on the level of the qualification, or could these be identical (eg a with common assessment at EQF level 6) for both Bachelors and Integrated Masters students)?

Answer: Learning outcomes if phrased identically are not required to have differentiation, but the HEI may choose to do so for academic purposes. (The table with levels shown will be included as part of the guidance note on Academic Accreditation and AAQA guidance.)

Question 3: Must all required learning outcomes be assessed in the final year of study (eg year three for full-time Bachelors and year four for full-time Integrated Masters in England), or may some be addressed in earlier years of study?

Answer: All learning outcomes must be delivered and assessed by the end of a programme, but not all need to be assessed in the final year of study.

Question 4: What, if any, consideration should the accreditation process give to AHEP 4 and AAQA learning outcomes that are specified as 'achieved at previous level of study'?

Answer: Accreditation or approval for a particular programme does not need to cover those learning outcomes specified in the Answer to Question 1 as 'achieved at previous level of study', if the programme covers only a single level of study (e.g. Masters or Bachelors top up).

Annex K

Risk-based approach to accreditation visits – policy summary

<u>Introduction</u>

1. The Engineering Council introduced a 'risk-based approach to accreditation' for accreditation visits taking place after 1 January 2023. This relates to accreditation of programmes by PEIs against Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships (AAQA) or Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP)

2. This document summarises the policy for education and apprenticeship providers, with more detailed information available to licensed Professional Engineering Institution(s), hereafter referred to as PEI(s), on the Partner Portal.

<u>Summary of policy</u>

3. The risk-based approach permits some accreditation activity to be completed through a virtual visit or a hybrid visit (involving some in-person and some virtual activity), at the discretion of the PEI(s). In the context of this policy a 'visit' refers to visit activity whether conducted in-person (on site), entirely virtually (with no in-person element) or through a hybrid approach (with a mix of virtual and in-person activity).

4. In some circumstances a visit containing a significant in-person element is mandatory.

5. Individual PEIs may decide to complete all or a majority of their accreditation activity in-person.

6. PEIs must decide and confirm to all participants whether a visit will be in-person, virtual or hybrid at least six weeks in advance of a visit.

7. Accreditation of a qualification or programme confirms that its delivery is recognised at a specific site or sites. Each location for which programme accreditation is sought must be subject to a visit, even where the programme is identical.

<u>Changes to programmes between the normal cycle of visits</u>

8. It is a condition of accreditation that providers inform PEIs of major changes during the period of accreditation that might affect the delivery of the specified programme outcomes (this includes temporary changes for example due to strike action or a pandemic). A visit is required to confirm continuation of accreditation to programmes that have undergone a major change in between the normal cycle of accreditation visits.

9. Providers must also inform PEIs of any changes to titles of accredited programmes so that records on the Engineering Council course search database can be updated

The full policy is published on the Engineering Council partner portal.

Annex L

Dual (IEng and CEng) accreditation of Bachelors with Honours degrees

Background

1. In 1999 the Engineering Council established a precedent that Bachelors programmes accredited as partially meeting CEng learning outcomes could be assessed for IEng registration in the same way as an applicant holding a degree accredited for IEng.

2. From 2009 this precedent was replaced by a policy whereby all honours degrees accredited from intake year 1999 were deemed to automatically have 'dual accreditation' for IEng and be eligible for recognition under the Sydney Accord[2].

3. This policy was reviewed during 2021.when it was decided to revoke the policy of automatic dual accreditation and revert to a precedent that allows for someone applying for IEng with a degree accredited for CEng to be assessed for IEng registration in the same way as a candidate who holds an IEng accredited degree.

4. This means that an honours degree accredited for CEng (with further learning required) will, for intakes of students following implementation of this change:

    a. continue to be treated by professional engineering institutions (PEIs) licensed by the Engineering Council to assess candidates for IEng registration as a qualification that demonstrates knowledge and understanding for IEng
    b. not be automatically accredited for IEng, and will therefore not be recognised as an engineering technology degree internationally (ie under the Sydney Accord)

5. The policy was reviewed and revised to more clearly differentiate between IEng and CEng accredited degrees, and in doing so protect the international standing of CEng accredited UK honours degrees. Internationally qualifications recognised under the Sydney Accord are referred to as qualifications for 'technologists' rather than 'engineers'. The Engineering Council is keen to emphasise that bachelors (honours) degrees are professional engineering degrees and believes that automatic dual accreditation risks devaluing UK bachelors (honours) degrees. It was noted that demand for IEng accreditation appeared to be very low, and there was little evidence of an international market for IEng or use of IEng accredited degrees to facilitate international mobility.

Implementation period

6. All Honours degrees accredited for CEng registration (with further learning required) from intake September 1999 until the expiry of the accreditation period applicable as of the end of August 2022 will continue to be considered to have automatic dual accreditation. This means that in effect a Bachelors (re-)accredited for CEng in the 2021-22 academic year, which most likely covers intakes 2022-2026 would continue to be considered to have automatic dual accreditation until its next re-accreditation, but one accredited in the 2022-23 academic year (or later) would not.

7. For accreditations in progress at the effective date of the policy[3] change the accrediting PEI will invite the provider to state whether or not they wish to retain dual accreditation. If so, dual accreditation will be automatic and should be formally recorded in the accreditation decision. This is to allow a transition period for the change of policy to be

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[2] A voluntary international agreement recognising 'engineering technology' programmes accredited by the signatory organisations as leading to substantially equivalent outcomes.
[3] 1 September 2022

communicated and for professional engineering institutions (PEIs) to put in place procedures to enable providers to apply for both IEng and CEng accreditation for their honours degrees in the next accreditation cycle if they wish to do so.

Future requests for accreditation

8. For accreditations commenced after the effective date providers will be able to apply for both IEng and CEng accreditation for their honours degrees if they wish. The accrediting PEI(s) will need to verify that the programmes deliver both sets of learning outcomes. As a minimum this will require the HEIs to submit module mapping matrices against both IEng and CEng learning outcomes.

Information on the Engineering Council course search database

9. Programmes on the Engineering Council's [course search database](#) are usually listed as recognised (approved or accredited by a PEI) towards one professional title (i.e. CEng or IEng). Also, where applicable, programmes may be recognised by one international accord recognition for any given recognition period.

10. Where dual accreditation has applied automatically this is not recorded on the course search database.

11. If a programme is explicitly accredited for both IEng and partial CEng both will be listed on the database as separate recognitions on the same programme record.

Annex M

Titles of accredited or approved programmes (including degrees, apprenticeships and other qualifications)

When considering applications for recognition (accreditation or approval) of programmes professional engineering institutions (PEIs) must monitor information the awarding institutions publish about the accredited or approved status of the programmes. This includes the titles of the programmes under consideration.

The Engineering Council recognises that awarding organisations have the right to determine what they call their programmes and resulting qualifications. However, the Engineering Council and the professional engineering institutions (PEIs) have a duty to check that information about qualifications that are recognised as supporting professional registration is clear and request that any information that could be misleading is corrected.

Reference to recognition within programme titles may be misleading. **Programmes with such titles must not be accredited or approved on behalf of the Engineering Council.** This includes

1. Reference to accreditation, approval or recognition (eg 'with accreditation', 'accredited' 'approved' 'recognised'), unless those words are clearly being used in a different context.

2. Reference to professional titles (eg 'CEng' or 'IEng').

3. Reference to a specific professional engineering institution (eg ICE, IET, BCS), unless the PEI awards or delivers the programme.

4. Reference to the Engineering Council (eg EngC)

The reasons we consider reference to recognition in programme titles to be potentially misleading include:

a. Such terminology could potentially be included in a title before recognition is confirmed or after it has expired.
b. Inclusion of such terminology would likely indicate recognition without confirming what the recognition means (ie is a programme accredited for full IEng, partial CEng, full CEng or some other purpose).
c. The scope of recognition given by PEIs or other regulatory bodies may vary in respect of disciplinary or other requirements.
d. Inclusion of professional titles may also cause confusion about how the programme relates to award of the professional title.

If a provider decides to award an alternative qualification to any students who follow a recognised programme but do not meet the requirements for award of the recognised qualification (eg students for whom credit is either condoned or compensated beyond the level acceptable to the Engineering Council – see compensation and condonement policy) they must ensure that the two qualifications are clearly differentiated. Examples of acceptable approaches used by some HEIs to differentiate between accredited and non-accredited variants include to add terms such as 'studies' or 'science' to the titles for non-

accredited degrees (eg to say 'Engineering Studies in Civil Engineering' for a non-accredited variant, and just 'Civil Engineering' for the accredited variant).

Annex N

Statement for Universities and other HE Providers on top-up Degrees

The following wording is suggested for use in communications with universities through, for example, Licensee websites and accreditation decision letters. Professional engineering institutions may wish to contextualise the final wording in their own communications with universities to accommodate their registration processes.

This statement:

• sets out the expectation of the Engineering Council and professional engineering institutions (Licensees of the Engineering Council) that HEIs with accredited programmes or seeking accreditation of their programmes must ensure they clearly differentiate between top-up degrees and full duration programmes that permit direct entry to later years of study.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) may offer 'top-up' bachelors degree programmes (with or without honours). These are designed for students who have completed a foundation degree or HND who wish to progress to achieve a bachelors degree. They are usually equivalent to the final year of a full duration degree and permit the conversion of an existing qualification to a bachelors degree.

Top-up degrees differ from direct entry to a later year of a full duration programme (following an assessment of prior learning) because they are designed to build upon outcomes from a prior qualification. Full duration in this context refers to a degree designed as a cohesive programme for which students usually study the full duration and number of credits required to be awarded the degree.

If the same or a similar title is awarded for full duration and top-up programmes, students will only be considered to have completed an accredited programme if they have completed a variant for which accreditation is confirmed.

If a HEI awards a top-up degree which it believes to be identical and equivalent to the final year of an accredited full duration degree, it should seek specific accreditation for the top-up degree. A graduate from a top-up degree that has not specifically been accredited will not be considered to hold an accredited degree, even if the HEI offers an accredited full duration variant of the same degree.

Graduates from a top-up degree that has been accredited must also have completed a first qualification (eg foundation degree or HND) that has been appropriately recognised (accredited or approved for IEng with further learning required) by a professional engineering institution to be considered to hold an accredited degree.

Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) 4.0 permits accreditation of top-up degrees as standalone programmes of further learning for IEng. Many top up-degrees are designed to support progression from a specific foundation degree or HND. Where this is not the case, the accreditation process may seek evidence of how students admitted to the top up programme are supported to bridge any gaps in discipline-specific knowledge. A candidate admitted directly into a later year of an accredited full duration programme who graduates with a cohort from an accredited intake is considered to hold an accredited degree.

If accreditation is sought for a degree programme or programmes where full duration and top-up variants are delivered with the same award and title(s), HEIs must either:

• ensure that the full duration and top-up programmes are both accredited for intakes graduating at the same time

or

• agree with the accrediting professional engineering institution(s) a means of clearly differentiating the accreditation status of each degree awarded, and make it absolutely clear in any material referring to the programmes where such programmes have not been accredited. If the words 'top-up' are included in the title of the top-up variant and will appear on degree certificates that would be accepted as clear differentiation.

Please note that it is not acceptable to some professional engineering institutions for information differentiating programmes to be referred to only on the graduate's degree transcript or the back of degree certificates as these are not used in their membership processes.

Professional engineering institutions may refuse to accredit programmes if they believe that HEIs (or their partners) are not being sufficiently clear about the non-accredited status of degree programmes

Appendix A

Change History

Version	Author	Date	Summary of changes	Status
3.0	Education and Skills Manager	August 2020	Alignment with new Standards	Major changes
3.1	Education and Skills Manager	November 2020	Minor corrections – date for implementation of learning outcomes, inclusion of link to AAQA where previously a note said to add this and footnote to add clarity on accreditation during the implementation period.	Minor corrections
3.2	Education and Skills Manager	December 2022	Replace Registration Code of Practice with Regulations for Registration (RfR 4.1) throughout. Added additional annexes J to N relating to Q and A on AHEP/AAQA Learning Outcomes, risk based approach to accreditation, dual accreditation, titles of degrees and other qualifications, statement on top up degrees.	Minor corrections
3.3	Professional Standards Senior Executive (International)	April 2023	Added reference to the ENAEE policy on transnational accreditation to Annex D.	Minor change
3.4	Education and Skills Manager	August 2023	Amended text on p 4 to be clearer regarding recognition of lower level quals	Minor change