

Submission on 'Towards Principles for Accreditation and other Professional Engagements'

For the attention of Quality and Qualifications Ireland

19th November 2020

Introduction

As the professional body for engineers, Engineers Ireland accredits more than 200 engineering programmes, covering all major engineering disciplines and NFQ levels 6-9. Engineers Ireland welcomes the opportunity to contribute to, and commends, Quality and Qualification Ireland's (QQI) work towards Principles for Accreditation and other Professional Engagements. We have found QQI's programme of engagements and publications to be very useful in our recent accreditation review, including the Finding Common Ground series and Accreditation/Approval of Higher Education Programmes by Professional Bodies. We agree that increased engagement and sharing of information will lead to a better understanding by all parties of each other's roles, and will increase confidence and trust among all stakeholders involved in the academic validation and professional accreditation of programmes of education and training.

Responses to consultation questions

1. Please enter your full name, role and organisation below.

Richard Manton, Deputy Registrar & Policy Officer, Engineers Ireland

2. If you would like to be added to QQI's mailing list so that we can notify you of activities and events relevant to PSRBs and professional education, please enter your email address below.

rmanton@engineersireland.ie

3. Are you satisfied that all relevant engagements between PSRBs and HEIs are captured in the document? If you consider that there are omissions, please list below.

Yes, the document captures the accreditation engagements between Engineers Ireland and HEIs.

4. Do you feel that there are any other significant omissions in the document? If 'yes', please specify these briefly below.

There are no significant omissions in the document, however, we would like to suggest some clarifications and amendments, listed below.

Page 1: Change “Reduce the burden on those academic providers subject to many professional, regulatory and state processes and requirements.” to “Reduce the administrative burden on those academic providers subject to many professional, regulatory and state processes and requirements.”

Page 2: Transparency is included as a principle, which presumably includes the publication of accreditation reports – however, this is not explicitly stated in the document. The consultation webpage states “These principles [...] emphasise [...] publication of PSRB reports”. As Engineers Ireland produces a detailed panel report for each programme accredited (52 in 2019), we are currently considering the publication of a summary report at the institution level.

Page 3: Some typos in the paragraph beginning “Professional accreditation bodies are...”

Page 6: Guidance on effective complaints and appeals processes would be welcome.

Page 6, Roles and Responsibilities of Providers, Professional Bodies and QQI: We suggest that there could be a role for QQI in creating an online evidence sharing system with some standardisation/templates to reduce the administrative burden on HEIs and duplication between PSRBs. QQI could also play a role in coordinating alignment of reviews between PSRBs and HEIs.

Page 7, Roles and Responsibilities of Providers: Change “providing relevant information and evidence against the standards for professional accreditation and approval of exemptions” to “retaining and providing, in a timely and accessible manner, relevant information and evidence (including in the virtual environment, where relevant) against the standards for professional accreditation and approval of exemptions”.

Page 7: Change “avoiding prescribing resources, processes, policies and practices” to “avoid prescribing resources, processes, policies and practices unless there is sufficient evidence to substantiate a claim of unsatisfactory graduate outcomes and attainment”. This would better align with the statements on page 7 (“allocating resourcing [...] to ensure that students achieve programme learning outcomes”) and on page 8 (“where is sufficient evidence to substantiate a claim of unsatisfactory graduate outcomes and attainment”).

5. Do you engage with any international PSRBs or other bodies that would be interested in subscribing to these principles? If so, please indicate the names of these bodies below

International Engineering Alliance (Washington Accord, Sydney Accord, Dublin Accord; www.ieaagreements.org) and European Network for the Accreditation of Engineering Education (www.enaee.eu).

6. Would your organisation be happy to subscribe to these principles? If not, please indicate the reasons below.

Yes

7. Are you satisfied with the title, 'Principles for Accreditation and other Professional Engagements' for the final document? If you have other suggestions, please specify these below.

Yes

8. Please indicate your preference for dissemination and adoption of the final version of the principles (e.g. endorsement with signatures, logos; publication on websites of those organisations who have subscribed).

We suggest that endorsement take place using digital signatures (an in-person signing event could be held once the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted). A list of the organisation names and logos of the signatories could be added as an appendix to the Principles document and published on a dedicated webpage. QQI could consider asking signatories to include a specific line on their websites, e.g. "Engineers Ireland is a signatory to the Principles for Accreditation and other Professional Engagements (link)".

ENDS

Contact:

Dr Richard Manton
Engineers Ireland
22 Clyde Road,
Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

Tel: +353 1 6651300

Email: rmanton@engineersireland.ie

Background to Engineers Ireland

With over 25,000 members, Engineers Ireland is the voice of the engineering profession in Ireland. Engineers Ireland was established in 1835 making us one of the oldest and largest professional bodies in the country. Members come from every discipline of engineering, and range from engineering students to fellows of the profession.

Our responsibility is to

- Promote knowledge of engineering
- Establish and maintain standards of professional engineering and engineering education
- Provide opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Maintain standards of professional ethics and conduct
- Ensure that professional titles are granted to qualified candidates
- Act as the authoritative voice of the engineering profession in Ireland

Our Vision Statement

Engineers Ireland: a community of creative professionals delivering solutions for society.

Our Mission Statement

Engineers Ireland is an organisation that enables the engineering community to progress their professional development, make an impact on society and encourage and educate the future generations of engineers.