

ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION INTERNATIONAL VISIT CRITERIA

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**

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Improving the world through engineering

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ACCREDITATION VISIT INFORMATION

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers accredits numerous degrees at universities outside of the United Kingdom. The accreditation criteria, process and paperwork are the same as if the accreditation were to be carried out within the UK.

All international requests are reviewed on an individual basis against criteria that consider whether the country is a member of FEANI, the Washington or Sydney Accord. Whether they are a target country for membership and whether it is viable for the Institution to attend.

Host universities are required to pay the full costs of the accreditation visit.

Each accreditation panel for a visit will be made up of three trained and experienced IMechE accreditation assessors plus a member of staff. A local industrialist and a local branch member may be invited if required to support the panel members.

The International Initial Submission Form must be completed in full for any request to be considered. Part of this process is to establish the current level of engagement with the IMechE.

Programmes are accredited for a maximum of five years. Another accreditation visit is then required and again the host university must pay the full costs. The Institution is licensed by the Engineering Council to accredit programmes towards IEng or CEng academic requirements for professional registration, after which demonstration of competence is required to become a professionally registered engineer.

All programmes are reviewed against the UK standard Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes (AHEP) and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers' Academic Accreditation Guidelines.

Our reviewers comprise of a mix of academics and industrialists who volunteer for the Academic Standards Committee. All accreditation decisions are made by the Committee which meets four times a year.

An accreditation panel would expect to see a university requesting accreditation to have IMechE professionally registered staff and IMechE Affiliate student members. The IMechE would also expect the university to have established or be actively in the process of establishing good links with their nearest regional IMechE branch: <http://nearyou.imeche.org/near-you/overview>

Costs

The Institution currently charges a fee of £6,000 for all accreditation visits. Where applicable there is also additional fees for Monitoring and Follow-up visits. It is the Institution's policy that all universities outside the UK mainland also meet the total costs of the accreditation visit.

A typical visiting team would consist of 3 experienced accreditation assessors plus an Academic Consultant acting as secretariat who would all normally require between 3- and 5-nights' accommodation. Where it is beneficial our regional representatives may be involved and participate in the visits.

Preparations for each visit are individually discussed and agreed between the Institution and universities, but an example of estimated costs would include:

- Business Class Return air travel (Business class if the flight takes over 3 hours) x4 people.

- UK Travel and accommodation from each assessor's home address to the airport, if needed x4 people
- Accommodation at minimum 3* hotel for 5 nights x4 people
- Meals x4 people
- Consultancy fees borne by the Institution (approx. £250 per day)
- Out of pocket expenses, where incurred by assessors (additional travel, subsistence, etc.)

All arrangements for travel (including transfers) and accommodation (including meals) must be completed at least 30 days before the commencement of the visit. Failure to do so will result in the Institution cancelling the visit.

Joint accreditation visits

Upon request from the university, the Institution is happy to participate in joint accreditation visits with other Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs). Where joint accreditation visits are arranged, the university will allocate the lead Institution, and all PEIs will use the same set of documentation.

It should be noted that while PEIs will arrange for joint accreditation processing the costs of accreditation and international visits is different. The decisions are made independently by the respective accreditation committees. Thus, **outcomes may vary between each PEI.**

Submission Information

To progress with discussions, there are a few initial questions to consider before submitting your International Initial Submission Form:

1. Typically, Bachelors programmes (BSc, BEng) would be accredited for IEng and/or partial CEng academic registration and MEng or MSc for CEng academic registration. Please note that an accredited MSc only partially satisfies the requirements of the educational base for IMechE membership. Even though a university has applied for accreditation at CEng level, the recommendation may be to accredit it to IEng registration. Would these be attractive levels of membership for potential candidates and output for the universities?
2. The programmes under consideration for accreditation must be taught entirely in English, is this so?
3. Have all programmes put forward for review had a graduating cohort from them?
4. The Academic Standards Committee will expect to see students registered with the Institution; similarly, that staff are professionally registered to promote accredited programmes. Is this the case?

If you have answered 'YES' to the above questions, then we would ask you to complete the International Initial Submission Form.

All submission forms and supporting information including the IMechE Accreditation Guidelines, can be found online at the following links:

<https://www.imeche.org/membership-registration/support-for-universities/how-do-i-get-my-university-accredited>

www.imeche.org/studentaffiliate

Deadlines

- The International Initial Submission form must be completed before any visit is to be agreed. The Committee will then review this and advise if additional information is needed. The Committee would use this information along with our internal procedures to confirm whether a visit is appropriate. If agreed, the Committee will request for the Main Submission to be completed and agree a visit date.
- The Main Submission must be completed and submitted to the Institution at least 12 weeks before an accreditation visit.

Please note that to secure the most cost-effective flights and accommodation, universities are asked to give as much notice as possible for suitable accreditation visit dates. A copy of a draft timetable is provided in [Appendix 1](#) to highlight how a visit may be scheduled and a copy of the proposed protocol which covers all arrangements.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The Institution accepts academic qualifications in line with registration and membership requirements via several international agreements. These agreements enable PEIs to accept validation processes in terms of academic qualifications of member states signed up to them, and how these map to satisfy the academic requirements as laid down by UK-SPEC.

Each member of the group of countries involved in the various agreements has expressed its confidence in the Quality Assurance processes of the other countries. By extension, this leads to the effective mutual recognition of accredited Engineering Degree courses in each of the signatory countries. When presented with such qualifications (by applicants for Institution membership), we will automatically accept accredited programmes under the various agreements as meeting the academic part of IMechE membership requirements for the relevant grade of registration and/or membership.

Engineers Europe

Engineers Europe has over 30 member countries from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The UK is represented by the British National ENGINEERS EUROPE Committee (c/o Engineering Council). There is a bilateral agreement between the UK and various European countries that are members through the framework establishing mutual recognition of qualifications and a guarantee of competence for professional engineers.

Under the auspice of Engineers Europe, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers will automatically accept academic qualifications of candidates from those programmes covered by the framework for membership for IEng (3-year programmes) and CEng (5-year programmes) without the need for further review. Please go to <https://www.engineerseurope.com> for more information.

Washington Accord

The Engineering Council is the UK signatory to the Washington Accord. Therefore, if your country is a member, then there is no need for the IMechE to undertake its own visit, as accredited programmes will be automatically accepted under the Washington Accord Agreement when presented as qualifications by applicants for Institution membership:

<http://www.washingtonaccord.org>

<http://www.imeche.org/membership/membership-registration/Eligibility/academic-requirements>

Both routes should be carefully considered before exploring routes of accreditation from the UK.

In terms of providing further accreditation support, the IMechE can support all students and staff through IMechE membership and associated benefits. Full details can be found here:

www.imeche.org/students

<https://www.imeche.org/membership-registration/become-a-member>

CONTACT US

If you have any questions on the process or to request any forms and guidance, please email uniaccreditation@imeche.org or write to:

Academic Accreditation
Institution of Mechanical Engineers
1 Birdcage Walk
London
SW1H 9JJ

Please note that all correspondence regarding any aspect of the accreditation process should be sent to the IMechE. Universities **must not** enter into correspondence with members of the visiting panel.

APPENDICES

Please read on for further information and examples of:

1. [The Draft Overseas Degree Accreditation Visit Programme;](#)
2. [A Typical timeframe for entire process; and](#)
3. [The Visit protocol.](#)

1 EXEMPLAR INTERNATIONAL VISIT TIMETABLE

Our standard international visit timetable may vary based on the flight arrival times of visiting team members in the host country of the University where the accreditation visit is scheduled. The visit duration may be adjusted, either shortened or extended, by an additional day to accommodate these factors.

PRE-VISIT

12 WEEKS BEFORE

University Sends Accreditation Submission to IMechE

The University uploads its main submission to IMechE's SharePoint for review.

6 WEEKS BEFORE

University Provides Additional Pre-Visit Material for Review

University provides samples of student material via IMechE's SharePoint.

Material to be provided via file share:

Major Individual and Group projects

For each year of the last three complete academic years:

- For each programme, a minimum of nine samples for both Individual and Group project reports across the whole band of marks i.e. top, middle and bottom (or for the whole cohort if less than nine) with student names removed as necessary.
- A copy of the project marking/feedback sheets, along with marking rubric for each of the projects provided.
- A copy of the project module marksheet for the whole cohort.

Other Modules

A copy of the module marks for the whole cohort (if this clearly shows the marks for each element in the module, then separate coursework and/or exam marks do not need to be provided as indicated below):

Coursework

For each assignment worth 5 credits or more, or it is the only element instrumental in meeting AHEP learning outcomes in a module:

- A minimum of three sample coursework assignments at the threshold pass¹ (or the whole cohort if less than three) with student names removed as necessary from the most recent complete academic year only. The sample shall include work at (or just above) the standard module pass mark (typically, a mark of 40% for levels 4, 5, 6 / 50% for level 7 modules).
- A copy of the marking/feedback sheets for each of the sample assignments provided from the most recent complete academic year only.

¹ A threshold pass represents the minimum acceptable level that a student needs to reach to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the assignment/exam (e.g. typically, a grade of at least 40% or equivalent for an undergraduate module). The sample should include work at or just above the pass mark (e.g. typically, a grade of 40-45% or equivalent), or the lowest scoring 'passed' samples as appropriate.

- A copy of the coursework brief and exemplar solution where appropriate from each year of the last 3 complete academic years.
- A copy of the coursework marks in that module for the whole cohort from each year of the last 3 complete academic years.

Exams

- A minimum of three sample exam scripts at the threshold pass (or the whole cohort if less than three) with student names removed as necessary from the most recent complete academic year only. The sample shall include work at (or just above) the standard module pass mark (typically, a mark of 40% for levels 4, 5, 6 / 50% for level 7 modules).
- A copy of the exam paper and the exemplar solutions from each year of the last 3 complete academic years.
- A copy of the exam marks for the whole cohort from each year of the last 3 complete academic years.

Failure to provide this material 4 weeks in advance may result in the cancellation of your accreditation visit.

2 WEEKS BEFORE

Private Team Preparation Meeting

Visiting Team meets to compile a list of initial questions for the University and request any further material that may be required following review of the submission and pre-visit material.

1 WEEK BEFORE

University Provides Responses to Initial Questions

University provides written responses to all the Visiting Team's initial questions along with any further material requested. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation to be used in the University's introduction session should also be provided along with a list of the names and roles of staff who will be attending each session and the names of those representatives from the Industrial Advisory Board who will be meeting with the Visiting Team.

Failure to provide this information/material on time may result in the cancellation of your accreditation visit.

5 DAYS BEFORE

Private Team Pre-Visit Meeting

Visiting Team meets to review responses to initial questions and agree final plans for the accreditation visit.

DAY 1	Business Class Flights from UK to visit the hosting HEI with transportation to and from the airport.
DAY 2	Arrival - University to collect visiting team and transport to hotel – private IMechE team day.
DAY 3	Day of rest and visiting team convenes for pre-visit meeting at the hotel.
DAY 4	First Day of Visit to University
09:30	Visiting Team to be collected from hotel and transported to the university campus
10:00 – 10:45	Welcome and Introduction to Key Staff Chair introduces the visiting team followed by introductions by the university. Key staff from the department will be present and the Vice Chancellor or another senior member of staff, if available, is invited to attend. This session will include a presentation² by the Head of Department (20 mins approx.), providing: • a brief overview of the department structure • an explanation as to how the requirements of UK-SPEC have been addressed in course design and operation • a summary of the strategy for industrial engagement and influence • details of future plans
10:45 – 11:30	Discussion on Aims and Objectives of the Programme Breadth, depth, and Learning Outcomes achieved.
11:30 – 12:00	Private Team Meeting and Morning Break
12:00 – 13:15	Tour of Facilities To focus on laboratory facilities, workshops, drawing/design facilities, computer laboratories and library. Please provide samples of student work made from hands-on exercises to support design for manufacture.
13:15 – 14:00	Buffet Lunch for Visiting Team
14:00 – 14:15	Private Team Meeting To decide on questions for the meeting with students.
14:15 – 15:15	Meeting with Students Visiting team to meet with 12 students from across all years of the programme. The student group should include some representation from the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. It would be helpful if students wore lapel badges to show their name and their year on the programme.

² The presentation should not include any research or scholarly activity unless it has a direct impact on teaching.

- 15:15 – 15:30 Private Team Meeting and Afternoon Break**
- 15:30 – 16:30 Meeting with Industrial Advisory Board Representatives**
To discuss industrial engagement and influence into the programme, including:
- committee composition, meetings, and key activities
 - areas of industrial involvement and influence
 - opportunities to share industry 'good practice' with students.
- 16:30 – 16:45 Private Team Meeting**
To discuss if any additional information is required.
- 16:45 – 17:00 Informal Meeting with Head of Department/Accreditation Contact (if necessary)**
To discuss any requests for additional information which should be provided as soon as possible to ensure no delays to the accreditation process.
- 17:00 End of First Day**

DAY 5 Second Day of Visit to University (All timings are approximate)

- 09:30 Visiting Team to be collected from hotel and transported to the university campus.**
- 10:00 – 12:30 Meeting with Staff**
This session should be limited to only those staff members able to answer questions on the AHEP learning outcomes as it will be to discuss:
- Science and Mathematics
 - Engineering Analysis
 - Design and Innovation
 - The Engineer and Society
 - Engineering Practice
- This session includes a 15-minute refreshment break.
- 12:30 – 13:00 Private Team Meeting**
- 13:00 – 14:00 Buffet Lunch for Visiting Team**
- 14:00 – 14:30 Discussion with Staff on current and planned engagement with IMechE (including membership plans)**
- 14:30 – 14:45 Private Team Meeting**
To discuss if any additional information is required.
- 14:45 – 15:00 Informal Meeting with Head of Department/Accreditation Contact (if necessary)**
To discuss any requests for additional information.

- 15:00 – 16:30 Private Team Meeting**
To decide on feedback to the university.
- 16:30 – 17:00 Final Debriefing Session**
Visiting team to meet with staff to report on accreditation recommendations³ and advise of next steps.
- 17:00 End of Visit**
Depending on return flight arrangements the Team is transferred to hotel/airport

Following the visit, the IMechE Team will prepare a final report for the Academic Standards Committee. This report will be sent to the University for factual checking then the report and its recommendations will be considered by the whole Committee and a decision whether to accredit or not will be made at this stage.

³ The debriefing session is not intended to reflect any decision on accreditation. It is used to highlight some aspects examined during the visit.

2 TYPICAL OUTLINE OF INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Note: The entire review process and the visit must be conducted in English.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

1. The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) receives and reviews Initial Submission Form
2. Any issues that have been highlighted are discussed with the university. This may involve information/projects being requested for review by ASC to clarify and resolve questions.
3. Once ASC agrees that it is appropriate to conduct a full accreditation visit, a visit date is agreed, and the main submission will be requested along with a selection of project work to be reviewed (must be received by ASC at least 12 weeks before visit date).

VISIT PREPERATION

1. Volunteer panel will comprise experienced x3 accreditation assessors and one academic consultant acting as secretariat.
2. Inform any relevant bodies in the country that we are proposing to visit where applicable – invite any necessary observers (e.g., local professional body representative or local IMechE representative).
3. Agree on accommodation and flights for team 3-2 months before the visit.
4. Six weeks ahead of the visit pre-visit material which includes major individual and group projects, coursework and examinations are required for preliminary review by the volunteer panel.

THE VISIT

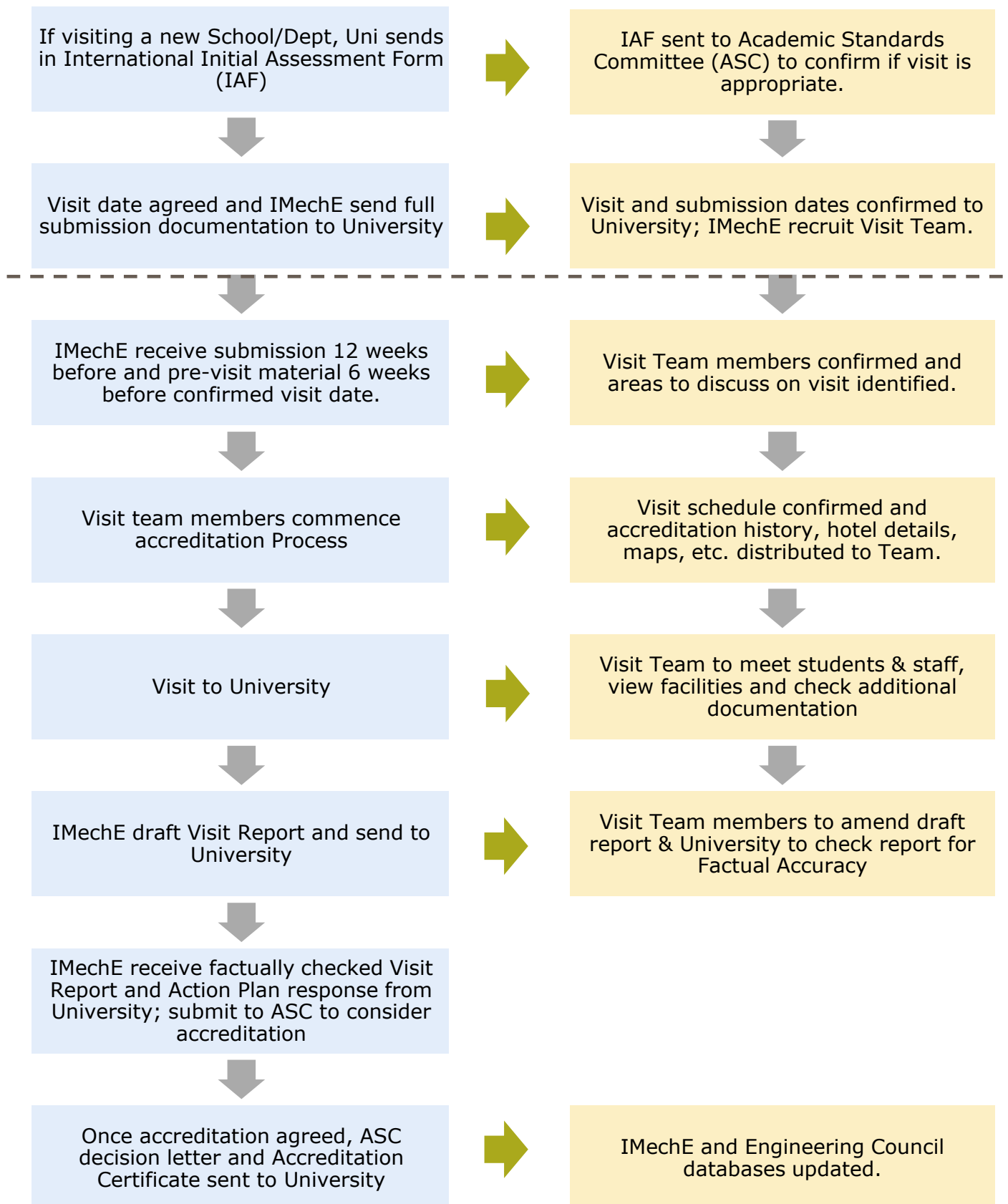
1. Typically, there are tours of facilities to teaching laboratories and private discussions with staff and students.
2. At the end of the visit, the Chair will indicate feedback and explain timeframes.

POST ACCREDITATION VISIT

1. Accreditation visit report written and sent to panel and university for factual checking and completion of an Action Plan.
2. Report, Action Plan, and any supporting evidence goes to ASC for decision (x4 meetings a year).
3. Accreditation letter sent to university post-ASC meeting conferring decision.
4. Any issues are highlighted in the accreditation letter for the university to respond to, where applicable. In such instances:

- Evidence is provided by the university to show that any required actions have been addressed.
- Supporting information is reviewed by ASC and then confer decision.
- Accreditation awarded is recorded on the IMechE and Engineering Council websites.
- Follow up exercise to liaise with student and staff as members and to establish a university Academic Liaison Officer by the IMechE Membership Development Team.

3 VISIT PROTOCOL



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