



Higher Education Policy as it applies to EIE programmes in the UK

This document applies only to education at Level 6 and above of the European Qualifications Framework. All terms used in this document have the meaning specific for UK and may have different meaning when used in any other country.

Overview of Quality Assurance

Most UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous in that they are not State owned or managed, they are however, partly State regulated. There are a small number of Private HEIs, some of which offer degrees validated by another HEI. Regulation of UK HEIs is through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) [1] for quality, regulation of student tuition fees, student numbers and research funding bodies.

Each University has its own internal system of quality assurance audit, referred to as "Periodic Review".

In Electrical and Information Engineering (EIE) the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) [2] accredits programmes for alignment with the academic requirements of Chartered and Incorporated Engineer status. Accreditation is valid for a maximum of 5 years.

There is no standard structural arrangement of UK HEIs. Some use "Faculties" to group academic disciplines where there might be "Departments" or "Centers" within the Faculty. In other cases there may just be "Departments" or "Centers".

External Evaluation

All universities use of external examiners as part of the quality assurance system. External examiners are involved in all stages of the student assessment process and are required to approve all examination results. External examiners, who usually come from other UK universities, are proposed by departments and approved by the Academic Institution.

New programme creation

HEIs are responsible for approving their own programmes (although see overview of quality assurance for accreditation). New programmes are designed and proposed by the academic department that will deliver it and approved by the University for its content (by the "University Teaching Committee") and for its business plan (by the "University Planning Committee"). Student, external academic and Industry comments on the new programme are required as part of the approval process.

Changes to existing programmes

Changes in the teaching methods by which a programme is delivered can usually be made by academic departments. Changes that materially change the technical content of the programme require approval by the "University Teaching Committee".

Student influence of programme content

Students are involved in most University committees and decision making processes. At the programme level student opinion is sought through the "Staff Student Liaison Committee", a committee comprising both staff and student representatives of all academic years. Student



feedback on programmes and delivered parts of programmes (typically referred to as “Modules”) is through end of module feedback questionnaires; through issues being raised at the “Staff Student Liaison Committee”, or through the student pastoral support system (through the student’s personal academic supervisor).

Industry influence of programme content

All academic departments delivering EIE programmes typically have an “Industrial Advisory Committee” (the name for this varies between HEIs) through which industrial input to programmes, departmental administration and general discussions is achieved.

Students with disabilities/special needs/unconventional needs

The term used to describe this in the UK is “disabilities”. All HEIs are required to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2010 [3] and Equality Act 2010 [4]. HEIs typically have a central student support function that reviews student supporting evidence and agrees appropriate adjustments. These adjustments are then put into place through academic departments (where there are teaching and learning implications) or through Facilities Management where changes to buildings or infrastructure are required. There is a well-established system for deciding specific adjustments that ensures equality of treatment of all students.

Mobility and life-long learning processes

UK HEIs are part of the European Erasmus+, exchange framework. In addition to this HEIs establish their own networks of collaborating institutions within and beyond Europe and manage these through formal or informal inter-institutional agreements.

UK HEIs are required by law (Disability Discrimination Act 2005 [3]) to offer equal opportunity and support to individuals wishing to embark on studies at whichever part of their life they should wish to do so. All universities offer various evening and part-time courses that mainly target persons already in active employment. HEIs can also offer part-time versions of their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Information management

Information is typically only available in the English language except in Wales where it is available in Welsh and English. The amount of information available without requiring a login is not prescribed so is variable between institutions. Typically all programmes are made available on-line including its structure and content, sometimes to the level of detail of topics, their description, entry requirements, learning outcomes and assessment format.

Personal student and staff information is required to be strictly protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 [5].

Any other relevant information

References

[1] The UK Quality Assurance Agency, www.qaa.ac.uk/en

[2] The Institution of Engineering and Technology, www.theiet.org



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[3] *The UK Disability Discrimination Act 2010* <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2005>

[4] *The Equality Act 2010* <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>

[5] *The Data Protection Act 1998* <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/UKPGA/1998/29/contents>

<http://www.saleie.york.ac.uk>

Project Coordinator: Tony Ward, University of York

Email: tony.ward@york.ac.uk