



Accreditation Policy Document

Introduction

The Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) is the international membership body and learned society for marine professionals, with 50 branches and 15, 000 members in over 100 countries around the world.

The Institute's role is to promote the scientific development and interdisciplinary understanding of marine engineering, marine science and marine technology and to uphold and advance the knowledge and status of professionals across the international marine community.

IMarEST is open to everyone associated with the marine, coastal and offshore world, across all scientific, engineering and technological disciplines and applications.

The IMarEST received its Royal Charter in 1933 and is a licensed body of both the Engineering Council UK and the Science Council UK and as such can register suitably qualified and experienced Engineers, Scientists and Technologists on 12 registers (Refer to the IMarEST Definitive List of Registers).

One of the many functions performed by the Institute, as a direct result of its own Royal Charter and its licenses, is the accreditation of academic courses in Marine Engineering, Science and Technology and Initial Professional Development (IPD) / Graduate Training Schemes.

An overview of the process of accreditation

The process of accreditation by the IMarEST is basically an independent, peer review of an academic course or suite of courses in marine technology, marine science and marine engineering or IPD schemes to internationally recognised standards by a suitable panel of experts. The review process is unique (it is not an audit) in that the course(s)/scheme(s) is/are scrutinised and advice is offered to the university/college/company from a panel of experts drawn from the broader marine engineering/marine science/marine technology membership of the IMarEST. The process involves a review of a completed application form and supporting documentation by the panel; a visit to the organisation; interviews with students on the course(s)/graduates on the IPD Scheme; presentations from

key members of staff; a tour of the facilities and constructive feedback at the end of the visit from the panel Chair to the key staff of the university/college/company.

This peer review process is designed to be helpful to the organisation. The organisation receives a free *consultancy service* to highlight any problems with the course(s)/scheme(s) and suggestions for improvements. This 'quality assurance' of the course(s) is to recognised national and international standards. Thus, the students on an IMarEST accredited course or graduates on an IMarEST accredited IPD Scheme have a guarantee of the highest standards and of satisfying many, if not all, of the academic or IPD requirements for registration at Chartered, Incorporated/Registered or Technician level.

Accreditation by the IMarEST is an opportunity for universities/colleges/companies to gain valuable, impartial advice to improve/maintain the standard of their academic courses/ipd schemes. The university/college/company is able to use IMarEST accreditation for promotional purposes to encourage potential students/graduates to apply for a place on the course. The IMarEST does not charge the university/college/company for this service, although the IMarEST Executive requires the University/College/Company to pay the out of pocket expenses of the panel. Similarly the process to achieve professional registration through the Institute is simplified for students/graduates, who have successfully completed an IMarEST accredited course/scheme.

Accreditation of Academic Courses

The accreditation of academic programmes is based upon learning outcomes. (Refer to The IMarEST Learning Outcomes Document.)

The process involves a review of a completed application form and supporting documentation by the panel; a visit to the university/college; interviews with students on the course(s); presentations from key members of staff; a tour of the facilities and constructive feedback at the end of the visit from the panel Chair to the key staff of the university/college.

Accreditation of Academic Courses Containing Accredited Prior Learning

Whilst each degree will be reviewed on its own merits against the learning outcomes, the IMarEST has decided that it would be highly unlikely that degrees allowing more than 25% exemption for Accredited Prior Learning will meet the IMarEST's requirements for accreditation.

Accreditation of combined degrees (eg Engineering with Management)

These degrees can be accredited. However, the IMarEST's has decided that around two thirds of total degree time would typically be required to deliver the engineering/science/technology outcomes.

Documents used by the IMarEST Panel to Conduct an Academic Accreditation Visit.

- 1) The Definitive List of Registers
- 2) Appropriate Standards Document
- 3) The IMarEST Learning Outcomes Document
- 4) Guidance Document to IMarEST Panel Members visiting Universities/Colleges to conduct an accreditation visit.

Accreditation of Initial Professional Development Schemes

The accreditation of Initial Professional Development (IPD) Schemes is based upon the Competencies and Commitment Statements required for registration. (Refer to The Definitive List of Registers)

The process involves a review of a completed application form and supporting documentation by the panel; a visit to company; interviews with graduates on the scheme(s); presentations from key members of staff; a tour of the facilities and constructive feedback at the end of the visit from the panel Chair to the key staff of the company.

Documents used the IMarEST Panel Members to Conduct an IPD Accreditation

- 1) The Definitive List of Registers
- 2) Appropriate Standards Document
- 3) Guidance Document to IMarEST Panel Members visiting Companies to conduct an accreditation visit .

Joint Accreditation visits

The IMarEST aims to work closely with other Licensed Bodies of the Engineering Council and Science Council and as such may partake in joint Institute/Institution accreditation visits. On such visits, the IMarEST will endeavour to reduce the burden on Universities/Colleges/Companies but reserves the right to ask for additional information, which may not be required by the other Institutes/Institutions. The Head of Membership and Professional Development will assign a panel to the visit. The panel will always consist of one suitably qualified and experienced member of the IMarEST Executive. The PAEC will still make the final decision as to whether to grant IMarEST accreditation. The IMarEST is, however, not required to come to the same decision as the other Institutes/Institutions.

After an Accreditation Visit

Following an accreditation visit, the Executive will produce a visit report, which will outline the panel's findings. The report will firstly be checked by the other panel members to ensure that all panel members are content with the report.

Once the report has been agreed by all panel members, it will be sent to the University/College/Company for a factual check. Once the factual check has been conducted, the report will be submitted to the Professional Affairs and Education Committee (PAEC) for the final decision.

It is important to note that whilst the Panel will provide feedback on the day of the visit, the PAEC has the final decision and may choose to override the Panel's recommendations.

The IMarEST may place restrictions on the eligibility of individual graduates, e.g. where compensation measures could allow the award of a qualification despite underperformance in a significant part of the programme. The IMarEST is required to log this information with both the Engineering Council and the Science Council.

Accreditation in full/ Accreditation in Part

If the PAEC decides to accredit a University/College Course(s) or a Company IPD Scheme, the IMarEST Executive will write to the contact (normally via email) to inform them of the outcome. It is important to note that there are two outcomes of the accreditation process ie. accreditation as meeting either the academic base requirements/IPD requirements in part or in full. This is explained below:

Students successfully completing a University/College course, which has been accredited as meeting the academic base requirement, in full, for registration on one of the 12 registers, will have met all the academic base requirements in full for registration and will, therefore, not need to undertake any more formal academic education.

Students successfully completing a University/College course, which has been accredited as meeting the academic base requirement, in part, for registration on one of the 12 registers, will have met some of the academic base requirements but not all.

Graduates successfully completing a Company IPD scheme, which has been accredited as meeting the IPD requirement, in full, for registration on one of the 12 registers, will have met all the IPD requirements in full for registration and will, therefore, not need to undertake any more formal IPD formation.

Graduates successfully completing a Company IPD Scheme, which has been accredited as meeting the IPD requirement, in part, for registration on one of the 12 registers, will have met some of the IPD requirements but not all.

Length of Accreditation

Academic Courses and IPD schemes shall be accredited for a period of not more than five years. Programmes, which at the time of application do not have an output standard cohort, may be accredited, by the IMarEST but the IMarEST

will continue to monitor the output of such courses/schemes and review their accreditation accordingly. Re-accreditation of a programme shall be by the same process as for initial accreditation unless there is in place an arrangement for continuing periodic audit and review (which may involve evidence obtained by other bodies).

Backdating Periods of Accreditation

Under its licenses and its own Royal Charter, the IMarEST is able to backdate a period of accreditation either to ensure that there is no break in the accreditation of a course/scheme or to encourage students/graduates currently on an earlier intake year to consider professional registration. The PAEC will usually not backdate further than 3 years. In order to be eligible for backdating, the course/scheme must not have changed significantly from the course/scheme paperwork submitted for accreditation. Any backdated years do not affect the length of time the PAEC can accredit a course into the future.

Extensions

The PAEC does not usually grant extensions to a period of accreditation, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Any requests for extensions should be sent in writing to the Education and Training Manager at the IMarEST HQ.

Approval of Academic Programmes/IPD Schemes

The IMarEST is licensed to accredit programmes/schemes but may also approve such programmes/schemes. Approval of a programme/schemes attests to its overall design, the depth and range of coverage, and the validity and reliability of the assessment strategy. It does not necessarily assure that every candidate completing the programme has either the required underpinning knowledge and understanding or competencies and commitments for Professional Registration.

In making a judgement for approval, the IMarEST shall consider evidence from a range of indicators. These shall include:

- programme content
- expected outcomes
- process of learning and teaching
- assessment strategies employed;
- quality assurance arrangements

Programmes are approved on an individual basis for a fixed period of not more than five years. Re-approval of a programme is by the same process as for initial approval, unless there is in place an arrangement for continuing periodic audit and review (which may involve evidence obtained by other bodies).

Approval of National Qualifications

For nationally devised qualifications, approval does not assure that every centre delivering the programme is equally well resourced or managed or that, especially where the programme has a number of options, every individual will have all the underpinning knowledge and understanding required for competence. In considering national qualifications for approval, the IMarEST will ensure that only programmes which provide specifications with clearly defined learning outcomes will be approved. The IMarEST will use the appropriate criteria and procedures, whether applied by the IMarEST only or within a 'joint visit' arrangement as specified above.

Conditions/Recommendations

Conditions are set by the PAEC if a problem is found or if an area of improvement is needed. All conditions are set with deadline dates of compliance and are logged on the Conditions Monitoring Spreadsheet.

The PAEC set two standard conditions on all accreditations:

- 1) The IMarEST is to be informed of any significant changes in the delivery or management of the education and professional development of marine engineering technicians, particularly those, which may be a consequence of changes in organisation policy.
- 2) The University/College/Company is to reply to the IMarEST Yearly Update Email. (Each year the IMarEST Executive will email all IMarEST accredited course/scheme providers with a view to finding out about any developments or changes that have taken place throughout the year. All course/scheme providers **must** reply to this email).

Recommendations are given by the PAEC to help with course development but it is not compulsory to comply with these.

Areas of Excellence

Any areas of excellence identified during an accreditation submission will be highlighted in the accreditation report. The IMarEST may seek permission to publish these to help with the dissemination of best practice.

Appeal against an IMarEST accreditation decision.

All academic course/company IPD providers have the right to appeal against an accreditation decision. All appeals should be placed in writing and sent to the Education and Training Manager within 30 days of the date contained within the official accreditation decision email.

On receipt all appeals will be submitted to the PAEC and the PAEC will conduct an investigation into the matter and will inform the University/College/Company of the outcome.

If the University/College/Company is not content with the PAEC decision, the University/College/Company has the right to appeal directly to the Council of the IMarEST, in accordance with the Royal Charter and Bye-Laws.

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