

Criteria for Accrediting Engineering Programs

Effective for Evaluations during the 2004-2005 Accreditation Cycle

These criteria are intended to assure quality and to foster the systematic pursuit of improvement in the quality of engineering education that satisfies the needs of constituencies in a dynamic and competitive environment. It is the responsibility of the institution seeking accreditation of an engineering program to demonstrate clearly that the program meets the following criteria.

I. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR BASIC LEVEL PROGRAMS

Criterion 1. Students

The quality and performance of the students and graduates are important considerations in the evaluation of an engineering program. The institution must evaluate, advise, and monitor students to determine its success in meeting program objectives.

The institution must have and enforce policies for the acceptance of transfer students and for the validation of courses taken for credit elsewhere. The institution must also have and enforce procedures to assure that all students meet all program requirements.

Criterion 2. Program Educational Objectives

Although institutions may use different terminology, for purposes of Criterion 2, program educational objectives are intended to be statements that describe the expected accomplishments of graduates during the first several years following graduation from the program.

Each engineering program for which an institution seeks accreditation or reaccreditation must have in place:

- (a) detailed published educational objectives that are consistent with the mission of the institution and these criteria
- (b) a process based on the needs of the program's various constituencies in which the objectives are determined and periodically evaluated
- (c) a curriculum and processes that prepare students for the achievement of these objectives
- (d) a system of ongoing evaluation that demonstrates achievement of these objectives and uses the results to improve the effectiveness of the program.

Criterion 3. Program Outcomes and Assessment

Although institutions may use different terminology, for purposes of Criterion 3, program outcomes are intended to be statements that describe what students are expected to know or be able to do by the time of graduation from the program.

Engineering programs must demonstrate that their graduates have:

- (a) an ability to apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering
- (b) an ability to design and conduct experiments, as well as to analyze and interpret data
- (c) an ability to design a system, component, or process to meet desired needs

- (d) an ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams
- (e) an ability to identify, formulate, and solve engineering problems
- (f) an understanding of professional and ethical responsibility
- (g) an ability to communicate effectively
- (h) the broad education necessary to understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global and societal context
- (i) a recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning
- (j) a knowledge of contemporary issues
- (k) an ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern engineering tools necessary for engineering practice.

Each program must have an assessment process with documented results. Evidence must be given that the results are applied to the further development and improvement of the program. The assessment process must demonstrate that the outcomes of the program, including those listed above, are being measured.

Criterion 4. Professional Component

The professional component requirements specify subject areas appropriate to engineering but do not prescribe specific courses. The engineering faculty must assure that the program curriculum devotes adequate attention and time to each component, consistent with the objectives of the program and institution. Students must be prepared for engineering practice through the curriculum culminating in a major design experience based on the knowledge and skills acquired in earlier course work and incorporating engineering standards and realistic constraints that include most of the following considerations: economic; environmental; sustainability; manufacturability; ethical; health and safety; social; and political. The professional component must include:

- (a) one year of a combination of college level mathematics and basic sciences (some with experimental experience) appropriate to the discipline
- (b) one and one-half years of engineering topics, consisting of engineering sciences and engineering design appropriate to the student's field of study. The engineering sciences have their roots in mathematics and basic sciences but carry knowledge further toward creative application. These studies provide a bridge between mathematics and basic sciences on the one hand and engineering practice on the other. Engineering design is the process of devising a system, component, or process to meet desired needs. It is a decision-making process (often iterative), in which the basic sciences, mathematics, and the engineering sciences are applied to convert resources optimally to meet these stated needs.
- (c) a general education component that complements the technical content of the curriculum and is consistent with the program and institution objectives.

Criterion 5. Faculty

The faculty is the heart of any educational program. The faculty must be of sufficient number; and must have the competencies to cover all of the curricular areas of the program. There must be sufficient faculty to accommodate adequate levels of student-faculty interaction, student advising and counseling, university service activities, professional development, and interactions with industrial and professional practitioners, as well as employers of students.

The program faculty must have appropriate qualifications and must have and demonstrate sufficient

authority to ensure the proper guidance of the program and to develop and implement processes for the evaluation, assessment, and continuing improvement of the program, its educational objectives and outcomes. The overall competence of the faculty may be judged by such factors as education, diversity of backgrounds, engineering experience, teaching experience, ability to communicate, enthusiasm for developing more effective programs, level of scholarship, participation in professional societies, and licensure as Professional Engineers.

Criterion 6. Facilities

Classrooms, laboratories, and associated equipment must be adequate to accomplish the program objectives and provide an atmosphere conducive to learning. Appropriate facilities must be available to foster faculty-student interaction and to create a climate that encourages professional development and professional activities. Programs must provide opportunities for students to learn the use of modern engineering tools. Computing and information infrastructures must be in place to support the scholarly activities of the students and faculty and the educational objectives of the program and institution.

Criterion 7. Institutional Support and Financial Resources

Institutional support, financial resources, and constructive leadership must be adequate to assure the quality and continuity of the engineering program. Resources must be sufficient to attract, retain, and provide for the continued professional development of a well-qualified faculty. Resources also must be sufficient to acquire, maintain, and operate facilities and equipment appropriate for the engineering program. In addition, support personnel and institutional services must be adequate to meet program needs.

Criterion 8. Program Criteria

Each program must satisfy applicable Program Criteria (if any). Program Criteria provide the specificity needed for interpretation of the basic level criteria as applicable to a given discipline. Requirements stipulated in the Program Criteria are limited to the areas of curricular topics and faculty qualifications. If a program, by virtue of its title, becomes subject to two or more sets of Program Criteria, then that program must satisfy each set of Program Criteria; however, overlapping requirements need to be satisfied only once.

II. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR ADVANCED LEVEL PROGRAMS

Criteria for advanced level programs are completion of a program of study satisfying the general criteria for basic level engineering programs, one academic year of study beyond the basic level, and an engineering project or research activity resulting in a report that demonstrates both mastery of the subject matter and a high level of communication skills.