



General Visitor Manual

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1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate as a GENERAL VISITOR on an upcoming accreditation visit. You, along with the Chair of the Visiting Team, the Vice-Chair and the Program Visitor(s), provide an invaluable service to Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board.

Engineers Canada has developed this document in order to assist you in understanding the accreditation process and your role and responsibilities. Also, you are asked to complete the Accreditation Board's on-line training to gain a full appreciation of the value and purpose of accreditation and your role in it.

2. Overview of the Accreditation Process

In Canada, the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board is responsible for accrediting and re-accrediting undergraduate engineering education programs that meet or exceed educational standards acceptable for professional engineering registration. Students who graduate from an accredited program can be considered to have fulfilled the academic requirements for licensing by Canada's provincial and territorial engineering regulators.

Accreditation is an on-going process. It involves six main steps that take approximately 18 months to complete.

Step 1. Initiating the Process

The accreditation process begins when the institution offering the program for which accreditation is sought makes a request to the Accreditation Board Secretariat. Note that the Accreditation Board accredits individual engineering undergraduate educational programs, not departments or engineering faculties. Requests must be received in January for decisions that will be taken in June of the following year. To be considered for accreditation, a program must have the word "engineering" as part of its name, and must have graduates.

Step 2. The Visiting Team

The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board selects a Visiting Team Chair, who is usually a current or former member of the Accreditation Board. The Visiting Team Chair then invites a Vice-Chair and Program Visitor(s) to join the team. GENERAL VISITORS are selected by the provincial and territorial engineering regulators in the province in which the institution is located. All members of the visiting team must be registered professional engineers.

Step 3. Before the Visit

Before an accreditation visit, the Accreditation Board Secretariat asks the institution to complete a questionnaire, reporting on various aspects of the program being considered for accreditation. The questionnaire seeks information about the administration, faculty, facilities, course content and the attributes of its graduates. Copies of the completed questionnaire, along with supporting documents such as the institution calendar, are delivered to each visiting team member, including the General Visitor, six weeks before the visit.

All visiting team members are expected to read the completed questionnaire. The Accreditation Board Secretariat provides a *Tracking of program issues: Working Document* to all team members to assist them in identifying matters that require further investigation. The Tracking of Issues Working document must be submitted to the team chair before the on-site visit.

Step 4. The Accreditation Visit

The accreditation visit usually takes place over three (3) days in October or November. In some cases, accreditation visits may be held in January or February; this is typically for programs that have not been previously accredited, allowing the visiting team access to a greater amount of completed student work.

The purpose of the visit is to provide the visiting team with an opportunity to corroborate the information contained in the completed questionnaire and to assess qualitative factors that can affect the undergraduate educational experience. Visiting team members participate in a variety of activities. Including interviews with faculty, staff, administration, and students, tours of facilities, and examination, of course, notes, textbooks, student reports, and transcripts. As well as documentation that shows how achievement of graduate attributes is monitored and how information about the performance of graduate attributes is used to improve the program.

On the final afternoon, the visiting team meets privately to review their findings. During the team's last meeting and before the presentation of team results, each program visitor completes a rough draft of their **Report**. Copies of each draft **Report** are given to the Visiting Team Chair, for consolidation and use at the presentation of team findings to institution representatives.

Step 5. Report of the Visiting Team

A **report on the accreditation visit** is prepared by the visiting team chair consisting of:

- Acknowledgements
- Overview: background information about the institution and the accreditation visit
- Summary of issues tables
- The report(s) on the program(s)
- Supplementary information.

The visiting team report template is available on-line at <http://www.engineerscanada.ca/accreditation-resources>

Within two weeks of the visit, the program visitors submit the final versions of their reports to the team chair. These final reports cannot include any significant findings not previously mentioned and revealed during the exit interview.

Within four weeks of the visit, the team chair submits the **Report on the Accreditation Visit** to the Accreditation Board Secretariat.

Note that the Report contains no recommendations about the accreditation status of the program(s) visited.

The Accreditation Board Secretariat forwards a copy of the Report to the institution for review and comment. This gives the institution an opportunity to ensure accuracy and to advise on any enhancements to the program after the visit.

Step 6. Accreditation Decision

The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board makes a decision about accreditation based on information obtained during the accreditation visit process and/or from reports submitted by the institution at the request of the Accreditation Board. Most accreditation decisions are taken in June of the year following the accreditation visit, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Accreditation Board. Before this meeting, relevant documents are forwarded to all Accreditation Board members for review. One member of the Accreditation Board is assigned the role of lead reviewer, with responsibility for conducting an in-depth review of the program(s) and formulating a proposed motion for consideration by the Board. During the decision meeting, the visiting team chair presents the case for the program(s) under review, and the lead reviewer initiates the discussion about the program(s). After discussion, the Accreditation Board members vote on the accreditation status of the program(s).

The maximum period for which a program can be accredited is six years. Sometimes a program is accredited for a shorter period, if the Accreditation Board is concerned about particular aspects of the program or so that future accreditation activities coincide with other programs at the same institution. If the Accreditation Board judges that significant weaknesses exist in a program subject to re-accreditation, a Notice of Termination of Accreditation can be issued. If the Accreditation Board determines that an unaccredited program not fulfill the Accreditation Board published criteria, accreditation of the program can be denied.

The decision about the accreditation of the program is conveyed in writing to the Dean shortly after the meeting. A courtesy copy of the decision letter is also sent to the President of the institution.

3. Role and Responsibilities of the General Visitor

The primary function of the GENERAL VISITOR is to assist and support the visiting team with examination and assessment of aspects of the program(s) under consideration. This can often include evaluation of areas such as the professional orientation of the program, Occupational Health, and Safety issues, student projects, support departments and facilities and other aspects as determined by the team chair. Before the visit, the team chair will contact you about your assignments and your schedule during the visit.

If the GENERAL VISITOR is involved in visit activities that are the responsibility of other team members, the general visitor should provide input to the other team members for inclusion in their reports.

You may be asked by your provincial/territorial licensing body to provide a verbal or written report on the accreditation visit. The Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board encourages this practice to the extent that it does not compromise the confidentiality of the accreditation process. The licensing body can be informed of the quality and conduct of the visiting team, the visit schedule, and other general information that would convey a sense of the overall experience. Information regarding the quality of each engineering program and related factors assessed during the visit must remain confidential.

After the Accreditation Board has decided on the accreditation status of the program(s), you will receive a letter from the Accreditation Board chair thanking you for your participation in the accreditation process.

4. Guidance for contributing to the Visiting Team Report

Below, we have put together some ideas to help you as you review the institution's documents and make observations during the visit.

Components linked to Engineering

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| Transcripts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does transcript information conform to regulations as stated in the institution's calendar (e.g., are failed courses cleared)? - Is there evidence of conformance with Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board's regulations regarding transfer credits? |
| Student Projects a) Capstone Design b) Other Projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the Capstone project represent a "significant" design experience? - Is there an opportunity for teamwork? - Is there a link between undergraduate projects and faculty research? - Does the institution make the most of the industry partnerships when identifying Capstone or other design projects? |
| Complementary Studies a) Engineering Economics b) Impact of Technology c) Ability to Communicate d) Central Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are these individual courses, or are the topics covered as part of other courses? - What are the opportunities for developing communication skills? - Do students receive formal instruction in oral presentation and report writing? - Are elements of the complementary studies integrated into engineering coursework (e.g., do students evaluate economics as part of design projects)? - Do instructors outside the faculty give complementary studies? |
| Library Facilities and Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is Engineering consulted when the library makes decisions regarding acquisitions? - What type of liaison exists between Library Services and engineering? - Is instruction in using the library and its resources provided? - What is the engineering budget for acquisitions? |

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| Workshop Facilities and Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is equipment in good repair and up-to-date?- What is the access procedure for undergraduate students? |
| Computer Facilities and Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is equipment in good repair and up-to-date?- What on-site support is available?- Renewal – Is there a formal plan? How often is equipment updated?- What software is available to engineering?- How is the acquisition of specialized engineering software determined? |
| Advisory Services to Students | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the scope of services?- What is the accessibility? |
| Senior Institution Administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is engineering a priority?- How does commitment manifest itself (e.g., financially)? |
| Student Access to Dean’s Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is there formal liaison between undergraduate student body and the Dean’s Office?- What issues can be brought forward?- Is there informal access, and, if so, for what are the types of issues? |
| Relationship with Service Depts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is there collaboration between engineering and service departments?- What is the Service Department’s view of engineering undergraduates? |
| Co-op/Internship Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How are these delivered?- How is this experience integrated into the undergraduate education experience?- What is the rate of student participation? |

Occupational Health and Safety Issues (OH&S)

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| Culture Surrounding Lab Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Are undergraduates advised of safety procedures/equipment before entering/using the lab?- What safety equipment are undergraduates required to wear (e.g., glasses)?- What disciplinary action is taken if lab procedures are not followed?- How are chemicals stored, and how are they accessed?- How is laboratory activity (both course-related and research) supervised? |
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| Institution Commitment to Safety | - How is OH&S assured across the institution? |
| Example Set by Staff | - Are instructors knowledgeable of OH&S Act, procedures, and so on? - Do instructors wear safety glasses, shoes, hard hats, and so on? |
| Emergency Equipment | - Where are eyewashes and showers located? - Are fire extinguishers readily available? |
| Emergency Procedures | - Are Material Safety Data Sheets new and appropriately located? - Are emergency procedures posted? - Are evacuation procedures reviewed with faculty, staff, and students? |
| Faculty Appreciation of OH&S Knowledge | - How is OH&S integrated into the curriculum? |
| Student Appreciation of OH&S Knowledge | - Are undergraduates aware of the Act? - How do the students view the Act? |
| Posting of OH&S Act | - Where is the Act posted? - Is it the most recent edition? |
| Non-Academic Workplace Health & Safety Issues | - How does the institution monitor this? - What options are available if this is found to be lacking? |
| Public Health & Safety in Engineering Design | - Is there evidence that undergraduates consider health and safety in their design projects? - How is public health and safety integrated within the curriculum? |

Professional Licensure Issues

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| Students' Understanding of Licensure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do students describe the title "professional engineer"? - What advantages do students see in becoming licensed? - Can students articulate the responsibilities that go along with being licensed (e.g., protection of the public)? |
| Students' Understanding of the Licensing Body's Role | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the students' definition of self-regulating? - Can students articulate the functions performed by the licensing body (e.g., admissions, enforcement, and discipline)? - Can the students describe how the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board accreditation process fits into the licensing framework? |
| Regularity of Student Contact with the provincial and territorial engineering regulators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the relationship between the undergraduates and the provincial and territorial engineering regulators? - How is regular contact achieved? |
| Institution Programs and Incentives to Encourage Licensure of Non-registered Faculty Members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is licensure a requirement for employment? - Are annual, or other fees (e.g., exams), paid by the institution? - Is lack of licensure penalized (e.g., merit pay is withheld)? - How does the Dean support licensure? |
| Non-registered Faculty's Understanding of Licensure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do non-registered faculty view the title "professional engineer"? - What advantages do non-registered faculty see in becoming licensed? |
| Proportion of Registered Professional Engineers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How close is this number to 100%? - Reasons for present proportion (e.g., new hires who have not yet applied)? - Is there Dean support for registration? |
| Proportion of Professors Teaching Engineering Science and Engineering Design who are Registered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How close is this number to 100%? - Reasons for present proportion (e.g., new hires who have not yet applied)? - Dean is a policy for assigning professors who teach engineering science and engineering design? |

Student Interviews

Through discussions with the undergraduate students, observations can be made about student maturity, communication skills, knowledge (of licensure, of Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board accreditation process), among others. Furthermore, you can take this opportunity to find out how the students view the engineering program, its advantages and drawbacks and the features that the students find most attractive.

Suggestions for Improvements

You are encouraged to offer suggestions for improvements that the institution may wish to consider in future revisions to its engineering unit. These suggestions should be discussed with the team chair and the program visitors, which may incorporate them into their reports. Note that any suggestions are ultimately those of the visitors and will not necessarily represent the views of the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board or others.