

**From:** [Ann English](#)  
**To:** [Kim Allen](#); [Kathryn Sutherland](#)  
**Subject:** FW: draft message re Accrediation  
**Date:** June 7, 2016 8:03:12 PM

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To: Eng Can  
RE: Consultation on Proposed Accreditation Criteria 2016

APEGBC has received the May 21 letter regarding consultation and proposed changes to accreditation. The consultation invites specific feedback and also any additional general comments. APEGBC has considered the proposal and would like offer some comments and also recommend consideration of a potential alternate strategy. In coming to this recommendation, we are influenced by the following drivers.

Drivers for Change:

- 1) We believe there is a need for change process. We have heard first hand from BC universities and from our volunteers who have been involved with accreditation visits that the process is very cumbersome, largely a paper based exercize, with little actual value added. The universities are forced to expend a huge effort in terms of staff time, resources and funds to prepare and support accreditation visits. Volunteers who are involved in the visits also have to dedicate a large amount of time (away from their normal day jobs) and read huge volumes of materials. We site 2 recent BC examples that support our concerns about a process that is out of scale with its intended purpose and results:

a)In anticipation for the accreditation visit upcoming at UBC, the Mechanical Engineering department has hired a .5 full time equivalent support person for 16 months to put together the required paperwork for just their department's requirements.

b)For the upcoming audit of the UNBC/UBC Environmental Engineering program, visitors are requested to commit to 6 days of their time to this two-campus visit.

Surely, there has to be a better way. We recommend that as a minimum, if nothing else changes in terms of accreditation units, the current process undergo an 'autopsy' to look for streamlining, reductions, the use of technology vs paper examination and try to achieve better value for effort in terms of process improvements.

- 2) Any process used should not adversely affect the ability of our Canadian accreditation process to meet the requirements of the Washington Accord. To that end, we have considered the following:

We have done a quick search of [the Washington Accord Rules and Procedures](#).

- a. There is no mention of required Academic Units. It does, however require signatories to report substantial changes to their accreditation criteria:

*B.3.1.2 Any signatory which effects a substantial change to its accreditation criteria, policies or procedures is obliged to report such a change to the Committee via the secretariat and thereby to provide the other signatories with the opportunity to require that the scheduled Review and report be brought forward.*

- b. On the Accord website there are also papers on Graduate Attributes and Best Practices in Accreditation, neither of which mention accreditation units.
- 3) Any process used should not adversely affect the ability of any CA, including OIQ, to use the CEAB to accreditate their provincial programs. Mention was made at the recent meeting that any changes to the accreditation process would adversely affect OIQ. We have done a quick search of the OIQ requirements and note the following:
- a) OIQ Legislation - The OIQ does delineate between Quebec and other Canadian programs on its [website](#) but the message for both are the same – they must be CEAB accredited.

Our cursory interpretation of the Professional Code is that Section 184 requires that the Government by regulation determine what programs from Quebec institutions give access to a permit (in accordance with Chapter C26); then the OIQ Board establishes equivalency to programs outside of Quebec. For other Canadian programs it does this by benchmarking the Quebec and Canadian programs through their CEAB status.

If the CEAB rules were substantially changed, it looks like OIQ's Board would have to inform the Office des Professions but that it wouldn't be an insurmountable problem.

- b) We would recommend that Engineers Canada have an official legal review of the impacts of any changes on OIQ and all other CA's.
- 4) We have hosted 'industry' events with employers of engineers in BC. What they have told us is that we need to be educating and licensing engineers with different skill sets going forward. They have said that they find them to have very good technical skills but lack skills and understandings in other ways. The engineers of the future need to have broader backgrounds, greater diversity of thought, be more strategists than 'technicians', have greater ethical foundations, and bring greater leadership capacity to their careers. In order to help build these skills, the universities need to have more flexibility in the design and delivery of programs. We have heard the Deans say that they understand this and are anxious to respond and deliver but need an accreditation system that recognizes these needs and allows them more ability to adapt and customize programs. We trust the Deans and know that like Engineers Canada, they want the best for the public in terms of education of engineers that provides fundamentals that ultimately support public interest.
- 5) We have also heard the Deans' concerns that they are required to prove compliance

with not only the input requirement (the AU's that were to be phased out in favour of Graduate Attributes), but also the e outcome measure of Graduate Attributes. We support the eventual move to Graduate Attributes in favour of AUs and are of the opinion that this is a journey that both the AB and the Deans have to travel together in order to enable a successful transition. This can only occur if:

- a. the programs are given the flexibility to provide instruction and experiences so their students meet the Graduate Attribute requirements (we see freeing up the 405 program-relevant AUs as supporting the transition); and
  - b. the HEIs experience collaboration and support from the Accreditation Board in facilitating their demonstration of achievement Graduate Attributes. The profession has tools to facilitate this including a competency framework that maps to Graduate Attributes and an online tool that might be used for this purpose. In fact, one BC institution has considered that student Graduate Attribute reporting, validation and assessment could be as Phase I of a two-phase continuum towards professional; with Phase II being the post-graduation competency-based assessment for registration.
- 6) Too much time and goodwill has been expended by the Engineers Canada board, the Accreditation Board and the Deans Council discussing this matter and it must be concluded. It is time to move forward on this issue.
- 7) We have heard the call to action of the Deans Council and believe we should listen to them and that the time is now to ACT.

#### Recommendation – A Risk Based Approach

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Taking all of these influences into account, we are recommending that Engineers Canada, the Accreditation Board and the Deans Council might consider another approach. It seems that this issue fundamentally comes down to flexibility of the 405 units. Currently, programs are given ratings on a scale of 1 – 6 and T, R or V. However, the accreditation process used is basically the same across the board. We think it would make sense to consider different processes depending on risk level. So for example, does it make sense for a program like Civil Engineering at UBC which likely has had a rating of 6V for the past 40 years or more to have to have the same process as a new university program that is just undergoing its first or second visit? We suggest that the program should be modified so that a vastly streamlined approach be used for programs that are long standing and have been receiving high ratings consistently, an Accreditation Lite process. Additionally, if we move to a 1545 AU process (which APEGBC does not oppose), the audits of the 405 AU's could be treated separately for the first few visits to each HEI until there is confidence that the programs are delivering in compliance with the Interpretive Statement and Note 2.

We would encourage consideration of a new Risk Based Accreditation Approach and would be willing to devote volunteers and staff to help evaluate or develop such an approach.

best regards,  
Ann

Ann English P.Eng. | CEO & Registrar  
Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC  
200-4010 Regent Street, Burnaby, BC V5C 6N2  
Direct: 604-412-4850 / Toll Free: 1-888-430-8035 ext. 4850  
Fax: 604-430-8085 / Email: [aenglish@apeg.bc.ca](mailto:aenglish@apeg.bc.ca)  
[www.apeg.bc.ca](http://www.apeg.bc.ca)

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