


Doc no. EAB-A17-P	Revision no. 0	Effective Date: 2022-11-18	
Subject: POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST			
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POLICY AND GUIDANCE ON ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN ACCREDITATION OF ENGINEERING DEGREE PROGRAMMES


Document Reference: EAB-A017-P

Purpose of this Document

This document brings out the EAB Policy in the form of Guidelines for individuals assigned on engineering degree programme accreditation and members serving on EAB's Boards and Committees engaged in evaluation and decision-making on accreditation of engineering degree programmes.

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1. Purpose of Document and Interpretation

1.1 This document is a guideline for persons engaged in the accreditation process or serving on the Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB) and its subcommittees on the need to adhere to and discharge their obligations within an ethical policy framework with a view to maintaining and ensuring a high standard of ethics and values, built on institutional values, integrity, honesty, trust, and confidence. Compliance with the principles spelt herein ensures a check on the overall performance of the individuals as well as of the committees.


1.2 These guidelines aspire to minimize risks and delivery of services with the highest levels of professionalism, compatible and commensurable with:

- Promoting good practices and creating opportunities with institutional values.
- Attainment of the highest standards of ethical conduct in all work relations and decision-making.
- Identifying likely ethical issues upfront and permitting timely resolution thereof.
- Ensuring all members dealing with accreditation matters are fully apprised of their obligations as a member of the EAB's accreditation team.

1.3 Interpretation

In this document the following words or phrases have the following meaning:

“conflict of interest” means a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust, where the private interests may be real or perceived; the notion of conflict of interest is illustrated in the following context:

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Contextual interpretation: When a person is either in the membership, or employment of the Engineering Accreditation Board (EAB), or engages himself/herself in any manner, voluntarily or against a honorarium, to provide a service to the EAB or on behalf of EAB to any other person, organisation, institution, including a Higher Educational Institution, where that service may require that person to take a decision in which the person, a relative or associate has a real or perceived interest, then that person must declare an interest and abstain from participating in the decision or from providing that service, unless the EAB having been apprised of the nature of the perceived conflict of interest, approves otherwise.

2. Structure of this Document

Section 3 of this document briefly spells out the EAB's expectations from individuals engaged by IEM on accreditation responsibilities.

Section 4 spells out the core elements of the Ethics, Principles and Values that EAB expects to be displayed by anyone associated with EAB in the delivery of accreditation assignments.

Section 5 brings out the provisions relating to the observance of confidentiality by members engaged in the accreditation process.


Section 6 summarises issues constituting a conflict of interest and exemplifies the same in typical situations.

Section 7 gives guidance on handling of conflicts of interest.

Section 8 draws attention to policy guidance contained in document **EAB-A10-P: Accreditation Policy on Engineering Degree Programmes**.

Section 9 lists out other documents that form part of the EAB Accreditation Documentation System.

The following Chart EAB-A17-P illustrates the EAB Accreditation Documentation System:

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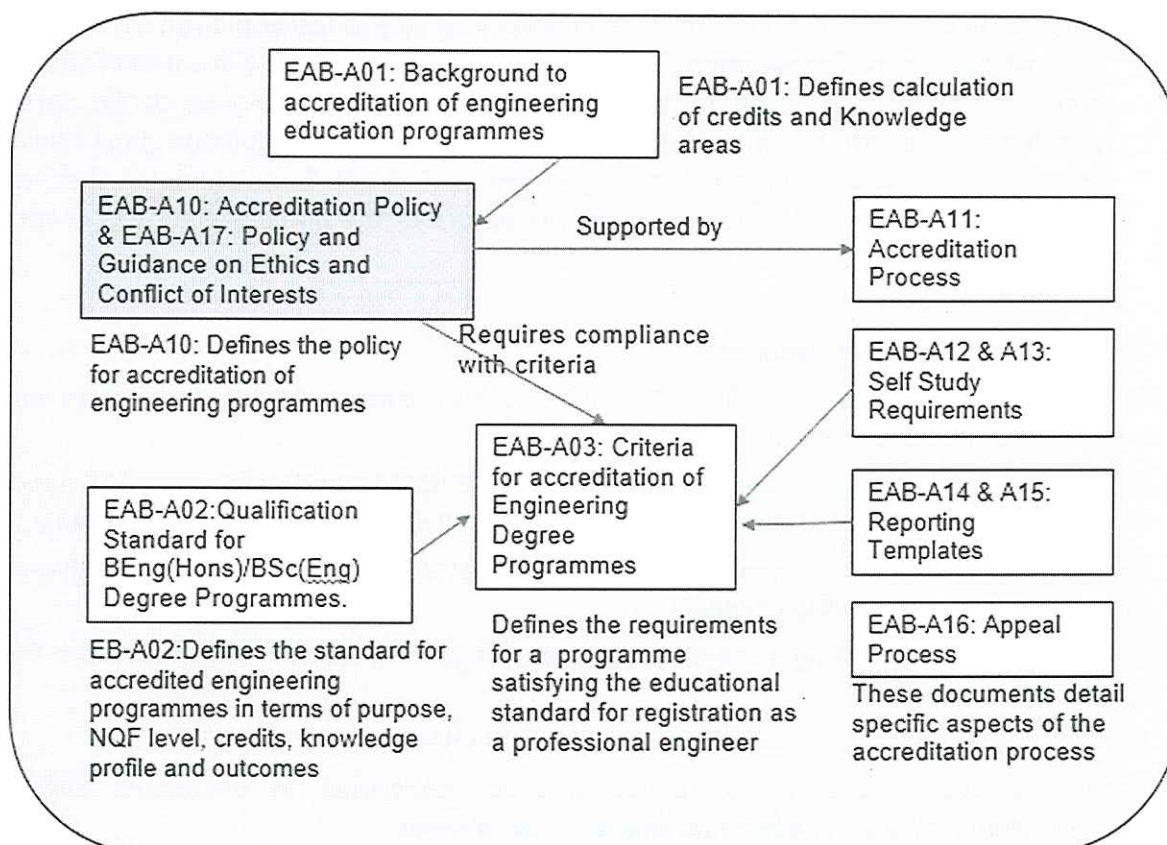



Chart EAB-A17

3. Duties and Responsibilities of Members

3.1 Each person appointed to serve on a particular committee of the EAB, shall endeavour to discharge the responsibilities and duties devolving on him/her from his/her nomination or appointment and shall, for that purpose, endeavour to attend all the meetings to which he/she is convened and devote sufficient time to promote and facilitate excellence in his/her tasks. Every such member has a duty to act responsibly for the effective and efficient administration of the committee in which he/she has been appointed.

3.2 The provisions of this document do not, in any way, absolve the individuals' obligation to adhere to the Code of Ethics of their own professions, where applicable.

3.3 Any person, nominated by an HEI, a PEI, the EAB, including the IEM itself, the CRPE, or an Educational authority, to serve on any Board, Committee or sub-Committee, Evaluation or Visit Team constituted by the EAB, is nominated after a due consultation process, which


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emphasizes that the nominee will, upon acceptance of his or her nomination by EAB, conduct himself/herself as per the Terms of Reference approved by EAB, or if applicable by IEM for the specific Board, Committee, sub-Committee, or Team to which he/ she is assigned to serve. As such he/ she agrees and undertakes, whenever discharging an accreditation related function or task, to discharge the obligations arising therefrom to the best of his/ her ability and judgement as expected, while adhering to the applicable rules and code of conduct, including the guidance set out in this document, without any consideration of personal or their organisation's interests.

4. Guiding Principles

4.1 In the performance of his/her duties as a member of the EAB or any Board or Committee associated with or related to engineering programme accreditation, or when discharging their obligations as an Evaluator, any person so concerned shall conform to the following values:

- **Integrity:** – Putting the person's obligations to the Committee above personal interests.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** – Acting responsibly and transparently in accordance with applicable rules and procedures and being accountable for own decisions and actions.
- **Fairness, Equity and Impartiality:** - Acting according to the merits and in accordance with any instructions and guidance applicable to the situation and assignment without any bias or favour whatsoever, whether on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, race, colour or political affinity.
- **Honesty:** – Acting truthfully, and in good faith while conforming with one's Terms of Reference in the relevant capacity. Where teamwork is an essential mode of discharge of obligations or performance of a task, working together effectively with work colleagues to achieve the specific outcomes sought through the tasks.
- **Justice** - Adhering to the principles of natural justice.
- **Diversity** – Promoting diversity and representation within working groups.
- **Confidentiality:** - see Section (5)
- **Conflict of Interest:** - see Section (6)

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5. Confidentiality

5.1 In accordance with EAB policy on the operations of the Accreditation Committee, the Engineering Accreditation Board, the Accreditation Visit Team, or any other sub-committees, all records, deliberations, decisions and actions must remain confidential. Any person associated with any part of the process will not reveal, without explicit authorisation, any information concerning the institution other than a list of accredited programmes and their effective dates of the accreditation and accreditation periods. Any information disclosed to participants in the accreditation process will be subject to the policies and guidelines applicable to that information or documents carrying that information.

5.2 Except as may be specifically authorised, the obligation to maintain confidentiality in writing or by word of mouth applies to any information relative to accreditation emitting from or received by either the EAB or the HEI.

5.3 Members should respect confidential information shared by stakeholders unless such information is already in the public domain. Confidential information shall not be used to the personal advantage of third parties or members.


5.4 It is recognised that there may arise a situation where information may have to be disclosed pursuant to a Court Order. Such disclosure shall only concern information to which a person had direct access because of the member's professional obligation and in such situation, the disclosing party has a duty to inform the EAB, or if applicable, the IEM of the nature of the disclosure.

5.5 Visit Teams must not discuss their views with the HEI's staff. EAB processes have features that ensure transparency to the HEI, wherein the Heads of Faculty, Heads of Department and relevant staff are apprised of deficiencies and concerns through exchanges between EAB and the HEIs that take place procedurally.

5.6 IEM and EAB shall for the purposes of sub-Section 5.1, ensure confidentiality of any documents, discussions, proceedings or evidence placed at the disposal of or accessed by any person engaged by IEM or the EAB, including any member of IEM or EAB itself, the Accreditation Committee, Evaluation Teams, or persons participating as Observers, which may concern or relate to a request for Evaluation or the subsequent evaluation thereof and its determination by requiring every such person to sign an undertaking to maintain the confidentiality of the documents and information that the person may have accessed or has come to the person's knowledge during his/her assignment.

6. Conflict of Interest

6.1 A conflict of interest may be real or perceived; it has the potential to vitiate the judgment and actions of individuals and possibly of institutions or other entities the

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individuals represent because of multiple or competing interests. Since such interests can make it difficult for someone to fulfil his/ her duties impartially, EAB advocates its avoidance.

6.2 A conflict of interest may exist even if no unethical or improper act results from it. Such a situation can lead to impropriety being imputed or alleged, resulting in undermining of the confidence in the person, the organization he or she represents or the profession.


6.3 Conflict under this guideline shall be interpreted broadly as:

- (a) A decision, though in accordance with underlying principles and judicious, but taken when a conflict of interest is perceived within an Accreditation Committee (AC), for example, may result in the decision being questioned by an aggrieved party on grounds of the Conflict of Interest, if the decision is unfavourable to the aggrieved party.
- (b) A conflict of interest may exist if members of the EAB, or AC or an Evaluation Visit Team, have had links with the institution whose programmes are being evaluated, or were students thereof, or were full-time or part-time members of Faculty, or have served previously as External Examiners or Moderators.

Note: Document **EAB-A10-P** Section 6.7.2 deems past engagements of the member of AC with the HEI, whose programme is under evaluation, to constitute a conflict of interest. Any member so concerned, must declare interest whenever a situation as defined above arises for appropriate action or decision by the EAB.

- (c) The offer of training and capacity building to an HEI by members referred to in subsection (b), who may be assigned to evaluate the HEI's programme, may not constitute a conflict of interest situation per se, provided such assistance is limited to providing guidance and assistance towards understanding and appreciating the applicable standards, accreditation criteria and procedures, and that these members do not, in the process, undertake any assessment or evaluation of the HEI's programmes.
- (d) Section 6.7.2 of the document **EAB-A10-P** referred to in subsection (b) will also apply to a person either serving as a full-time or part-time lecturer or serving as Examiner or Moderator at a particular institution or providing mentorship in matters of engineering programme accreditation or assisting with compilation of documents towards an eventual submission for accreditation of a particular programme, is assigned as a member of an Accreditation Visit Team for the programme.

6.4 EAB's Accreditation Policy as well as the EAB document on Accreditation Visit Process provide for identifying such situations prior to their occurrence and resolving the same.

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6.5 Any committee member or member of an Evaluation Visit Team believing he/she has a conflict of interest in respect of any item on the Agenda of a meeting to which he/she has been convened, must declare such interest to the Chair of the Committee and shall, unless otherwise directed by the Chair, withdraw from discussions and/or other proceedings in relation to the particular agenda item. If it is the Committee Chair who is concerned by a conflict of interest, the Chair shall withdraw, and the Deputy Chair must chair the session, and in his absence, the remaining members shall elect an ad-hoc Chairperson for the remaining part of the session.

6.7 While EAB may implement safeguards against occurrence of a situation of conflict of interest, it may require every person participating in an evaluation or accreditation decision meeting to sign No-Conflict-of-interest statement prior to an evaluation visit or an Accreditation Meeting.

7. Non-Compliance with the Code on Conflict of Interest and Ethics


7.1 EAB considers that adherence to the guidance contained in this document should go a long way towards avoiding or eliminating any actual or perceived situation of conflict of interest or leading to an act amounting to a non-ethical conduct on the part of any person serving EAB or the IEM.

7.2 However, when a situation of conflict of interest comes to light, after commencement of any task or assignment, the nature of the conflict of interest should be brought to the notice of the EAB Chair, for remedial action within the purview and authority of the EAB Chair or IEM President, as may be applicable.

7.3 Where, in the event of a conflict of interest being perceived or identified after completion of a task or assignment, the EAB will examine the situation for a satisfactory outcome; if the issue involved a member of the board itself, that member should not participate in any meeting convened to discuss his case. The views or contribution of the "offending" member to any decision taken may be disregarded and a new consensus examined, or the views of a replacement member (e.g. for Assessment of the Self Study Submission) may be envisaged by the EAB Chair.

7.4 Situations of conflict of interest and breach of confidentiality arising from or during the process of an engineering programme accreditation shall be dealt with administratively by the EAB Chair.

7.5 It must be recognised and appreciated by any person contravening these procedures that while EAB may cease to have recourse to the person's services or expertise, any third party who alleges to have suffered damage or loss on account of the breach of procedures,

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may initiate legal action towards obtaining compensation, leading to a situation outside EAB's control.

8. Application of this Document

This document will be used as a guideline for members of the EAB and its sub-committees, including members of the Accreditation Visit Teams. EAB may regulate its own and other Boards and sub-committees' proceedings as it deems fit and expedient.

Concerned persons are also advised to note the following provisions of the document **EAB-A10-P** for Self and Team Guidance:

Section 3.5: on autonomy of education providers.

Section 4.4: on adherence to IEM Code of Ethics, and compliance with provisions on confidentiality and conflict of interest set out in document **EAB-A10-P**.

Section 6.3: Avoidance of conflict when designating Accreditation Visit members.

Section 6.7.2: Specific clause applicable to the Accreditation Committee.

Section 7.3: provisions applicable to Observers.

Section 8.2.4: Confidentiality clause applicable to the Administrator (Accreditation)

Section 9.1: Confidentiality clause

9. Documents constituting the EAB Accreditation Documentation System

EAB-A00: *Administration and Governance of the Engineering Accreditation Board*

EAB-A01-P: *Background to Accreditation of Engineering Degree Programmes.*

EAB-A02-P: *Qualification Standard for Bachelor of Engineering (Hons)/ Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Engineering Programmes.*

EAB-A03-P: *Criteria for Accreditation of Engineering Degree Programmes Meeting Stage-1 of CRPE Registration Requirements.*

EAB-A10-P: *Accreditation Policy on Engineering Degree Programmes Meeting CRPE Stage-1 of CRPE Registration.*

EAB-A11-P: *Procedure for arranging and conducting accreditation visits.*


EAB-A12-P: *Self-Study Documentation Requirements for Accreditation of Engineering Degree Programmes.*

EAB-A13-P: *Tables and Forms for Self-Study Submission. (Excel format).*

EAB-A14-P: *Format for Visit Team Report and Recommendations*

EAB-A15-P: *Format for Visit Leader's Report*

EAB-A16: *Procedure for Appeal/Review against Accreditation Decisions*

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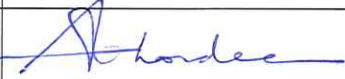

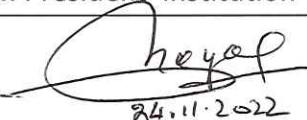
7. Document Revision History

Date	Description	Author/Reviewer	Remarks
14-10-2020	Drafting Group set up	R Rughooputh, N Ujodha, K Elahee	Joined by R Heerasingh 23 Nov 2020
14-12-2020	1 st Draft	R.Rughooputh	
14-12-2020	Reviewed	EAB Mtg 14 Dec 2020	
20-12-2020	Amended	Comments from R. Rughooputh, R Heerasingh & K Elahee	
14-01-2021	1 st Draft	EAB Mtg 22-discussed	Agreed to include text from IEM Policy and Engineers Canada
15-02-2021	2 nd Draft	J Soobarah Inserted "Contextual Interpretation under Conflict of Interest"	
29-03-2021	Issue 2021-1	J Soobarah Inserted Sn 3.3, 5.5 & 6.7. Sn 5.5 & 6.7 ex-ECSA. Doc Ref 20201220 is also replaced by 20210329 to reflect date of this version	
21-05-2021	This version	Review by SABEA Mtng No4	Sub-section 5.6 inserted- persons involved to sign confidentiality undertaking
06-05-2022		Dr A C C Yuk Reviewed & amended	
02-09-2022	Reviewed by DRC		
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