

COVID19: Interruption to approved programme delivery and assessment

It is understandable that providers have been making changes to delivery and assessment during the COVID19 outbreak.

It would seem reasonable to expect that providers would aim to maintain delivery of the full programme and this would likely mean adjustments to delivery format, order in which modules are delivered, assessment methodologies, re-scheduling of learning and assessment into holiday periods, and possibly extension of end dates to enable work that has had to be suspended to be completed and assessed.

Programmes (qualifications or apprenticeships) approved by professional engineering institutions under licence from the Engineering Council are subject to independent external quality assurance. Therefore, the range of evidence considered for approval purposes is narrower in scope than that for degree accreditation, and a visit is not required. In the context of COVID19 it is expected that the agencies responsible for quality assurance of the programmes will continue to ensure that standards are maintained and learning outcomes continue to be delivered.

It is not an Engineering Council requirement that professional engineering institutions be advised of changes to approved programmes. In normal circumstances regulated qualifications and apprenticeships would not change outside normal review cycles, with reviews resulting in a new qualification or apprenticeship which would be subject to a new approval.

Professional engineering institutions may wish to consider information from awarding organisations regarding any changes to assessment, e.g. where awards are made on predicted grades, to assure themselves that programmes currently approved continue to deliver the required learning outcomes and competences where appropriate. If notified of changes, the key consideration for approval is that the programme will continue to deliver all the learning outcomes and competences at the specified level.

PEIs are asked to notify the Engineering Council of any adjustments made and decisions taken. These will be summarised for QAC and RSC information.

COVID19: Approval of programmes

It is not anticipated the COVID19 movement restrictions will significantly impact upon approval activity conducted by professional engineering institutions, as a visit is not required.

If a professional engineering institution would usually look to visit a provider they are encouraged to consider whether that activity could be postponed or carried out virtually.

If there are practical problems in conducting an approval or the regulatory life of a qualification has been extended due to COVID19, professional engineering institutions may consider the following approaches:

- Postpone the approval activity.

- If the PEI's usual approach to approval involves a visit, consider conducting a desk based approval or a virtual visit.
- Extend approval by up to a year.
- Seek authorisation from the Registration Standards Committee of the Engineering Council for approaches outside those explicitly permitted by the Registration Code of Practice (RCoP) and the Approval of Qualifications and Apprenticeships Handbook (AQAH) (or after publication Approval and Accreditation of Qualifications and Apprenticeships).

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