

Statement on confidentiality agreements and programme recognition activity

The following statement relates to use of confidentiality agreements (sometimes referred to as non-disclosure agreements). Professional Engineering Institutions may adopt the same approach or issue their own guidance.

A majority of awarding organisations and providers that seek recognition (approval or accreditation) of their programmes do not request that panel members sign confidentiality agreements.

Programme recognition processes require:

- Production of a written report
- Discussion with committees that make recognition decisions, of information seen prior to and during an accreditation visit. Generic confidentiality agreements tend to forbid such sharing of information which would prevent normal decision making processes needed to award recognition to programmes.

It is recognised that some student work may be covered by confidentiality agreements with industry. In such instances the awarding organisation or provider may decide not to include this work in the materials available for review, or to present work in such a way that information is removed or anonymised as appropriate.

Should an awarding organisation or provider consider it impossible for recognition activity to proceed without participants signing confidentiality agreements they should:

- Make the PEI Secretariat aware at the earliest opportunity of the request for confidentiality agreements to be signed, and provide any draft agreement with or prior to the final submission.
- Recognise that a request for a confidentiality agreement to be signed may restrict the Professional Engineering Institutions that feel able to participate in a recognition activity or even make it impossible for the recognition process to go ahead.
- Provide a confidentiality agreement that is suitable for the purpose of recognition activity, bearing in mind that:
 - Recognition processes require production of a written report and discussions, including with committees that make accreditation decisions, of information seen prior to and during an accreditation visit.
 - Participants in recognition activities are primarily volunteers and should not be asked to sign anything that infers personal liability.