ENGINEERING COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA *Standards and Procedures System*	
Procedure for Arranging and Conducting an Accreditation Visit	
Status: Approved by Council	
Document : E-11-P **Rev-1** **7 February 2008**	

1 Purpose

This document defines the procedure for arranging an accreditation visit to a provider. Three phases are covered: pre-visit arrangements, the visit itself and post visit activities, including consideration of the report.

> Section 3 identifies roleplayers in the accreditation process.
> Section 4 details the previsit activities and timeline.
> Section 5 describes the activities arrangements during the visit.
> Section 6 describes the steps required to finalise the team report to the AC.
> Section 7 details the procedure for considering reports in the AC meeting.
> Section 8 details the actions required after the AC meeting.

2   Related documents

Refer to section 2 of document E-01-P for a full list of related documents

3   Roles and responsibilities

A number of persons and committees who play key roles and carry important responsibilities in the accreditation process are identified below:

CEO:	ECSA Chief Executive Officer
CH:	AC Chairperson
Dean:	Dean of the Faculty in which the programme(s) are run
EM:	ECSA Education Officer
Head:	Person responsible for the programme within the provider
Rap:	Rapporteur
TL:	Team Leader
AC:	University Accreditation Committee
AC Exco:	The AC Executive Committee
VL:	Visit Leader

Their specific responsibilities are flagged in the visit arrangements detailed in sections 4-6.

4   Pre-Visit Activities

4.1   Timing of visit

The visit takes place in a year determined by the accreditation cycle or the requirement for an Interim Visit or Final Visit.

The visit must take place in normal teaching term time. The visit is best timed for a part of the year to give the opportunity of interviewing students in the latter part of their final year and have experienced second semester courses, and possibly viewing project work. If this timing is not

possible postgraduates who completed their degrees in the previous academic year should be interviewed.

4.2 Pre-visit schedule

The time associated with particular activities expressed as V-x indicates that completion is required x time units before the visit.

Table 1: Pre-visit activities, timeline and responsibilities

Due	Activity	Responsible
V-52 w	Remind Dean that visit is due and that information specified in E-12-P section 4.1 must be submitted	**EM**
V-40 w	Deans invitation to visit received by ECSA	**EM**
V-35 w	Confirm dates for vist and prepare schedule of key activities with actual dates, indicating responsible persons	**EM**
V-35 w	Dean provides information called for in E-12-P section 4.1	**Dean**
V-26 w	AC/ AC Exco considers information submitted by Dean, Determines required teams, Appoint Visit Leader, Team Leaders	**AC/ Exco**
V-25 w	Secure VL's and TL's commitment	**AC Ch, EM**
V-24 w	Inform International Accord signatories of visit details	**EM**
V-20 w	Appoint Team Members	**AC/AC Exco**
V-18 w	Secure Team members' commitment to visit	**TL, EM**
V-12 w	Training of new team members	**EM+Ch**
V-10 w	Approve attendance by observers	**AC/AC Exco + Dean**
V-8 w	Book team hotel rooms, meeting rooms	**EM**
V-8 w	Finalise team travel bookings	**EM**
V-8 w	Confirm on-campus venues with Dean	**EM**
V-6 w	Agree on detailed Visit Timetable for each programme	**Dean**+**VL**+**EM** **Head**+**TL**
V-6 w	Submit documentation to ECSA	**Dean**
V-5 w	Distribute documentation to team and observers	**EM**
V-3 w	Collate issues, information requirements using form in Appendix A	**TL, VL**
V-2 w	Check on team's computing and printing requirements	**Head**
V-14 d	Call for missing/additional documentation	**TL**
V-1 d	Preliminary evaluation of documentation	**TL, TM**

4.3 Venues

Three main types of venues are required for accreditation activities:

Plenary CR: A conference room large enough to seat all team members, Heads plus 5 more. Must be centrally located relative to departmental venues in order to minimise walking time.

Team CR: Every team requires a conference room capable of seating up to 6-8 persons for its exclusive use over the visit. Extra tables should be made available for laying out on site documentation as required in E-12-P section 7. In addition, the team may require a second, larger room, for example a common room, seating approximately twenty persons, for interviews with staff and students.

Team Hotel CR: The ECSA EM will secure a conference room in the team hotel for the two evening plenary team meetings.

4.4 Computer facilities for teams

Teams usually use a notebook computer belonging to a member. If this is not the case, the department should ensure that the visiting team has a personal computer with Word-7 (or later). The department must provide a data projector and printing facilities in the team conference room. Heads of Department must liaise with Team Leaders before the visit to check whether a notebook computer is being brought by the team and to establish that the correct printer drivers are available. Each Team must also have access to a photocopy machine and a telephone.

5 Visit arrangements

5.1 Timetable

As indicated in section 4, the Dean and the Visit Leader are required to agree on the visit timetable at least six weeks before the visit. Tables in Appendices B and C give a pro-forma timetable for a team's activity. The pro-forma is provided to guide planning the actual timetable for each visit. While the timetable may be varied to suit the needs of particular programmes the following principles must be applied:

1. The timetable contains essential team activities geared to the evaluation questionnaire in E-14-P. No essential activities must be eliminated.
2. The timetable follows the logical sequence of the key questions defined in E-14-P, focussing in turn on the assessment of outcomes, programme content, effectiveness of teaching and learning and sustainability/capacity for improvement.
3. The pro-forma timetable is well proven. For this reason, ECSA discourages radical departures from the pro-forma timetable.
4. The times shown are indicative and may be adjusted to deal with specific conditions.
5. Activities common to more than one team must be synchronized at various stages.
6. Visit Leader activities are shown in italics

5.1.1 Pro-forma timetable for EPAC Visit

Appendix B defines the normal timetable for an EPAC visit. Minor variations must be made to accommodate local conditions

5.1 2 Pro-forma Timetable for TPAC Visits to ND and BTech Programmes

Appendix C define the normal timetable for an EPAC visit. Minor variations must be made to accommodate local conditions.

7 Post Visit Activities

V+x d indicates a deadline x days after the visit. M-y d indicates a deadline y days before the AC meeting.

Due	Activity	Responsible
V+5 d	Produce second draft report, agreed by team Send 2nd Draft to VL	**TL**
V+ 5 d	Produce second draft Visit Leader's report Send 2nd Draft VL report to Team Leaders	**VL**
V+8 d	VL and TLs agree on consistency of reports	**VL & TL**
V+11 d	Send 2nd draft reports to ECSA	**TL & VL**
V+14 d	Send 2nd Draft reports to Dean for factual correctness	**EM**
V+ 28 d	Return comments on report to ECSA EM	**Dean**

V+28 d	Invite Dean to AC meeting	**EM**
V+35 d	Produce final report, agreed by team	**TL**
V+35 d	Produce final VL report, agreed by TLs	**VL**
V+35 d	Send **signed** final Team and VL reports to ECSA EM	**TL&VL**
M-21 d	Circulate reports with AC Meeting papers	**EM**

The implication of this schedule is that at least 8 weeks must elapse between the visit and the AC meeting.

8 AC Meeting Procedure

The steps in handling the agenda item to consider the visit reports on a particular provider are detailed below.

Step	Activity	Responsible
1	Invite the Dean to join the meeting	**Ch**
2	Explain the procedure	**Ch**
3	Invite the VL to present the VL Report and individual team reports	**Ch**
4	Present VL report	**VL**
5	Present report and recommendation for a programme	**VL**
6	Questions in clarification from Dean & AC members (no discussion)	**Ch, AC, Dean**
	Repeat steps 5 and 6 until all reports have been presented.	
7	Invite Dean to make statement	**Ch**
8	Ask Dean to withdraw from meeting	**Ch**
9	AC deliberation on reports	**Ch, AC**
10	Resolution on each programme recommendation	**Ch, AC**
11	Recall Dean and summarise resolutions (no further discussion), outline next steps (as in section 9.1).	**Ch**
12	Thank Dean and release from meeting	**Ch**

9 Post meeting activity

9.1 Mandatory steps

The mandatory actions after the AC meeting are detailed below.

Due	Activity	Responsible
M+7 d	Write accreditation decision minute(s)	**EM**
M+14 d	Check decision minute(s)	**VL Ch CEO**
M+21 d	Write decision letter(s)	**EM**
M+24 d	Check decision letter(s)	**VL+Ch+CEO**
M+28 d	Sign decision letter(s)	**CEO**
	Dispatch letter cc to CHE	
M+28 d	Update list of Accredited Degrees	**EM**
M+35 d	Check updated list	**Ch + CEO**
M+45 d	Publish updated list on ECSA website	**PRO/Webmaster**
M+45 d	Update schedule of visits for interim evaluation, if required	**EM**

9.2 Minuting and decision letter

The AC meeting minutes must contain a resolution for each programme considered for accreditation. The resolution must contain the accreditation decision using the style of wording defined in E-14-P Appendix A. Where a decision is based on identified deficiencies, the deficiencies must be specifically identified in the minute for the programme.

The decision letter is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, copied to Dean and the CHE/HEQC, over the signature of the ECSA CEO. The decision letter must convey the decision and, for all cases other than accreditation until the next Regular Visit, must convey the deficiencies as grounds for the decision. The decision letter must also enumerate the concerns that must be addressed at the next accreditation visit. The Visit Leader Report and individual team reports are appended to the decision letter.

Process for Initial Evaluation

The process of Initial Evaluation defined in E-10-P section 5.1 is as follows:

Timing	Action	Responsibility
S	Documentation submitted to ECSA at date S	**Dean**
S+2w	Perusal of documentation	**AC Chair**
S+4w	Documentation not complete: refer back to Dean	**EM**
S+4w	Documentation complete: Appoint Team	**AC/EXCO**
I	Availability of team confirmed	
I+1w	Issue documents to team	**EM**
I+3w	Team leader contacts team	**TL**
…	e-mail, teleconference as required	**TL,TM**
I+7w	First Draft Report complete & circulate to team	**TL**
I+8w	Final Report completed	**TL**
I+8w	Sign off report and submit to ECSA	**TL**
M-2w	Report circulated with AC Agenda	**EM**
At M	Member of AC identified by Chair presents Team Report AC deliberates AC formulates Opinion	**AC Chair**

This schedule ensures that a submission will receive an opinion within six months.

10 Revision History

Version	Date	Revision authorised by	Nature of revision
Concept-A	15 Oct 1999	AC	Adapted from PE-71 Rev2
Concept-B	30 Nov 2006	Working group	Renumbered, timetable for TPAC added
Concept-C	7 Dec 2006	Working group	TPAC Schedule adjusted
Draft A	19 May 2007	Working group	Editorial
Revision 1	7 Feb 2008	Council	

Appendix A

The worksheet below is available as Excel file TeamWs.xls

Accreditation Team Worksheet
Programme:
Stage of Visit   Day: 0/1/2   Time:

Q	Issue for investigation/Information to be provided	Action/Resolved
1.1		
1.2		
1.3		
1.4		
1.5		
1.6		
2.1		
2.2		
2.3		
2.4		
2.5		
2.6		
2.7		
2.8		
2.9		
2.10		
3		
4		
5		

Appendix B: Pro-forma visit Programme for EPAC Team Visit

Available in Word file EPAC-Prog.doc

EPAC: Day 0 Programme - Evening Before Visit			
Period	**Venue**	**Team Activity**	**Who**
17:30		Arrival at Team Hotel	
18:30-20:00	Team Hotel Conference Room	Private Plenary Team Meeting chaired by Visit Leader. (Observers are present) • Introductions • Visit Leader briefs Teams on visit programme, logistics, procedures, reporting (<15 min) • Teams collate members' initial issues & information list into team list using form in E-11-P Appendix A (30 min) • Team leaders present initial appraisal and apparent issues to be investigated. (<10 min per programme) • Identify issues and information needs common across teams • Further planning of activities as required	***Instruction:*** *insert actual posts/names of university persons who must be present or on call during the activity shown.*
20:00	Team Hotel	Private Team Dinner (Observers present)	

EPAC: Day 1 Programme			
Period	**Venue**	**Team Activity**	**Who**
08:30-08:45	Plenary CR	Visit Leader to Chair Plenary Session of all teams and Heads of Departments. Dean gives overview to Plenary Session.	
08:45-09:00		Question and Answer (High level, non program specific issues only)	

09:00-12:00	Team CR	Private Team Meeting Activity: examine material available on site and to elicit further information relating to questions 1-4. The team may call on Head and staff members to (short) ad hoc interviews to provide additional information as required. • Review of assessment process, verification of selected evidence, resolution of issues toward resolving Question 1 in E-14-P. Sample assessment material. • Review of programme structure, breakdown, core, engineering science profile toward resolving Questions 2.1-2.4 • Review aspects of effectiveness of teaching and learning within the programme (Question 3) • Check on remediation of deficiencies and concerns from previous visit • Identify matters to be raised in interviews with Head, staff and students.
09:30-10:30	*Deans Office*	*VL Interviews Dean. Agenda: faculty quality assurance processes, resource allocation, commitment to programmes*
11:00-11:45	*VC Office*	*VL pays courtesy visit to University Executive: Agenda is institutional commitment to engineering in general and programmes*
12:00-12:30	Team CR	Interview Head and/or Programme Co-ordinator • Examine key issues • Appraise of potential concerns and deficiencies • Agree on roster of staff for interviews 08:30-10:30 on Day 2
12:30-13:30		This lunch may be hosted by the University Executive but must be confined to one hour
13:30 -15:00	Team CR & Walkabout	Examine resources, visit laboratories and other facilities. The purpose of this session is to gather material relevant to • Question 3 (Teaching and learning effectiveness) and • Question 4 (Sustainability/capacity for improvement). • Identify further matters for student and staff interviews.
14:00-15:00		*VL meets engineering faculty student leadership*
15:00-16:30	Team CR/Other	Student Interviews. May be carried out in parallel sessions. All team members should see final year students and recent graduates. • Put prepared questions • Give students opportunity to raise issues
15:30-16:30		*VL starts drafting VL report*

| 16:30-17:00 | Team CR | Closed team meeting to assess progress on issues and identify outstanding issues and information. Update Team Worksheet | |
| 17:00 | | Transport to Team Hotel | |

EPAC : Day 1 Evening Programme

Period	Venue	Team Activity	Who

18:30-20:00		Private Plenary Team Meeting chaired by Visit Leader (Observers present)
		• VL presents aspects of VL Report of significance to all teams
		• Team Leaders provide appraisal of:
		  – Programme content (Q1 in E-14-P)
		  – Assessment of outcomes (Q2 in E-14-P),
		  – Programme teaching and learning effectiveness (Q3 in E-14-P)
		  – Sustainability/capacity for improvement (Q4 in E-14-P)
		  – Tentative recommendation
		• Team Leaders identify outstanding issues & information needs, particularly those from outside the departments
		• Consistency check on approach across teams, triangulate findings
		• Visit Leader co-ordinates visits/interviews to service depts, common facilities for 10:30-12:30 on Day 2. Form teams to perform common interest visits, interviews, etc	

20:00	Team Hotel Private Room	Private Team Dinner (Observers present)	

EPAC: Day 2 Programme

Period	Venue	Team Activity	Who
08:00-08:30	*Dean's Office*	*VL meets Dean to Co-ordinate activities between 10:30 and 12:30.* *Distributes confirmed arrangements to Teams by 10:00*	
08:00-10:30	Team CR	Interviews with staff members. Staff selected individually or in groups according to numbers and needs. • Put prepared questions • Give staff opportunity to raise issues Short interview with Head at end	

10:30-12:30	Various	Co-ordinated interviews, visits to service departments, library and other common facilities, according to agreed plan, concentrating on identified areas (rather than general tour).	
12:30-15:30	Team CR	Private Meeting Light lunch in Team CR Team reviews Q1-Q4 in E-14-P and selects recommended decision Team writes report, to be completed not later than 15:30 as Draft 1	
13:00 -14:30		Each TL consults the VL to test consistency of recommended decision: must be done by 14:30	
By 15:30		*VL Report Draft 1 completed*	
15:30		Copy of Team report given to VL, VL report to each TL Backup copy to EM	
15:30-16:00	Department	Feedback session to staff of department responsible for programme.	
16:00-16:30	Plenary CR	Exit Interview	
16:45		Transport to airport	

Appendix C: Pro-forma visit Programme for TPAC Team Visit
Available in Word file TPAC-Prog.doc

TPAC : Day 0 Evening Programme			
Period	**Venue**	**Team Activity**	**Who**

16:00-16:15
16:15-18:00
18:00-19:30
	Team Hotel CR	Plenary: Briefing
		Private Team Meetings
		Private Plenary Team Meeting chaired by Visit Leader (Observers present) Feedback from Teams
		• VL presents aspects of VL Report of significance to all teams
		• Team Leaders provide appraisal of:
		  – Programme content (Q1 in E-14-P)
		  – Assessment of outcomes (Q2 in E-14-P),
		  – Programme teaching and learning effectiveness (Q3 in E-14-P)
		  – Sustainability/capacity for improvement (Q4 in E-14-P)
		  – Tentative recommendation
		• Team Leaders identify outstanding issues & information needs, particularly those from outside the departments
		• Consistency check on approach across teams, triangulate findings
		• Visit Leader co-ordinates visits/interviews to service depts, common facilities for 10:30-12:30 on Day 2. Form teams to perform common interest visits, interviews, etc
			__Instruction:__ insert actual posts/names of university persons who must be present or on call during the activity shown.

19:30	Team Hotel Room	Private Team Dinner (Observers present)	

TPAC: Day 1 Programme			
Period	**Venue**	**Team Activity**	**Who**
08:00-08:15	Plenary CR	Visit Leader to Chair Plenary Session of all teams and Heads of Departments. Dean gives overview to Plenary Session.	
08:15-08:30		Question and Answer (High level, non program specific issues only)	
		Teams move to programme venues	

08:30-13:00	Team CR	Private Team Meeting Activity: examine material available on site and to elicit further information relating to questions 1-4. The team may call on Head and staff members to (short) ad hoc interviews to provide additional information as required. • Check on remediation of deficiencies and concerns from previous visit • Review of programme structure, breakdown, core, engineering science profile toward resolving Question 1 in E-14-P. • Review of assessment process, verification of selected evidence, resolution of issues toward resolving Question 2. Sample assessment material. • Review aspects of effectiveness of teaching and learning within the programme (Question 3) • Visit laboratories and other resources (Question 4) • Identify matters to be raised in interviews with Head, staff and students.	
8:30-09:00	*VC Office or local venue*	*VL pays courtesy visit to University Executive: Agenda is institutional commitment to engineering in general and programmes*	
09:30-10:30	*Deans Office*	*VL Interviews Dean. Agenda: faculty quality assurance processes, resource allocation, commitment to programmes*	
12:30-13:00	Team CR	Light lunch	
13:30 -15:15	Team	• Interview students • BTech (1 below average, 1 average, 1 above average) • Recently qualified ND (2) • Recently qualified BTech (2) • First year diploma (1 below average, 1 average, 1 above average)	
15:15-16:15	Team CR + other	• Second year diploma (1 below average, 1 average, 1 above average) • Students doing/completed experiential training (1 below average, 1 average, 1 above average)	
14:00-15:00		*VL meets engineering faculty student leadership*	
16:15-17:15	Team CR	• Interview Advisory Committee members, local employers and local vocational society branch members, including alumni	
15:30-16:30		*VL starts drafting VL report*	
17:30		Transport to Team Hotel	

TPAC: Day 1 Evening Programme

Period	Venue	Team Activity	

18:00-19:30	Team Hotel CR	Private Plenary Team Meeting chaired by Visit Leader (Observers present)
		• VL presents aspects of VL Report of significance to all teams
		• Team Leaders provide appraisal of:
		  – Programme content (Q1)
		  – Assessment of outcomes (Q2),
		  – Programme teaching and learning effectiveness (Q3)
		  – Sustainability/capacity for improvement (Q4)
		  – Remediation of deficiencies and concerns
		  – Tentative recommendation
		• Team Leaders identify outstanding issues & information needs, particularly those from outside the departments
		• Consistency check on approach across teams, triangulate findings
		• Visit Leader co-ordinates visits/interviews to service depts, common facilities for 10:30-12:30 on Day 2. Form teams to perform common interest visits, interviews, etc	

19:30	Team Hotel	Private Team Dinner (Observers present)	

Day 2 Programme

Period	Venue	Team Activity	
08:00-11:45	Team CR+ Other as required	Interviews with staff members. Staff selected individually or in groups according to numbers and needs. • Put prepared questions • Give staff opportunity to raise issues Short interview with Head at end Staff required: Science lecturer, engineering lecturer, supervisor engineering laboratories, supervisor of practical/laboratory classes, supervisor experiential learning, supervisor project.	
11:45-13:00	Various	Interview Discipline Librarian, media supervisor, Computer Facility Supervisor	
12:30-13:00		Plenary: TL consults with VL to test consistency of recommended decision	

13:45-14:00	Dean's Office	VL meets with dean	
13:00-15:30	Team CR	Private Meeting Light lunch in Team CR Team reviews Q1-Q4 and selects recommended decision Team writes report, to be completed not later than 15:30 as Draft 1	
By 15:30		*Key elements of VL Report completed*	
15:30		Copy of Team report given to VL, Backup copy to EM	
16:00-16:30	Plenary CR	Exit Interview	
16:30		Departure	