

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES
FOR COURSE APPROVAL, MAINTENANCE AND
REVIEW**

THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

JULY 1999

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<u>Content</u>	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
GENERAL POLICY	1
Existing Courses	1
New Courses	1
Franchised, Outreach and Other Courses	2
Course Monitoring and Quality Control Procedures	2
Review Visits	3
REACCREDITATION	4
ADMISSION WITH ADVANCED STANDING	4
ASSESSMENT	4
FRANCHISED COURSES AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS	5
OPEN LEARNING AND DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES	6
CONDITIONS AND PERIODS OF APPROVAL	8
RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL	8
SANCTIONS	8
UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION	9
PUBLICATION OF VISIT REPORTS	9
FEES AND COSTS	9
CONTACT ADDRESS	10
APPENDIX 1 : Procedures & Guidelines on the Accreditation of Courses	11
APPENDIX 2 : Annual Monitoring Information	23
APPENDIX 3 : Summary of Changes to existing course(s) following accreditation	25
APPENDIX 4 : Review Visit Documentation	26
APPENDIX 5 : Regulations on the appointment of External Examiners	28

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors' policies on Course accreditation are detailed in this document.
- 1.2 The policies herewith described may be subject to periodic review and educational establishments and other interested organisations will be notified accordingly.
- 1.3 Responsibility for implementing the Institute's policies for course accreditation lies with the Institute's Board of Education (BOE).

2. GENERAL POLICY

- 2.1 The HKIS operates a system of accreditation of academic courses providing admission to the Institute's Assessment of Professional Competence in one or more of its divisions. Where accreditation is granted this can be for up to a maximum of five years.

2.2 Existing Courses

- 2.2.1 Applications for accreditation of existing courses will be determined by the Board of Education of the HKIS which will have regard to the following:-

- (a) the findings of the most recent HKIS review visit;
- (b) external examiner and internal annual course monitoring reports; and
- (c) other quality audit reports conducted for internal purposes or by an external agency.

- 2.2.2 Accredited courses must be designated to a Faculty, Department or School within an academic institution, which will be a separately identifiable unit with academic and financial responsibility for the surveying courses it delivers.

- 2.2.3 Accreditation is not transferable to other organisational units or locations either within the academic institution or organisations affiliated to it. The HKIS will require to be informed, in advance, concerning any changes of title, location or organisational structure involving an accredited course and approval must be sought prior to the implementation of any proposed changes. Depending on the nature of such changes the BOE may require a re-application for formal accreditation.

2.3 New Courses

- 2.3.1 New courses for which applications for accreditation are made must comply with the following general principles:-

- (a) for undergraduate courses – the duration of study must be for a minimum of three years full-time (or equivalent period part-time);

- (b) for postgraduate courses – the duration of study must be a minimum of one year full time (or equivalent period part-time); and
- (c) all courses in the opinion of the HKIS must be within or closely related to a divisional specialisation.

2.3.2 An academic institution seeking accreditation for a new course must submit full documentation and validation reports to HKIS for accreditation at least six clear months before the commencement of the course. A course offered in an alternative mode of study or a new named pathway route will be deemed to be a new course. Where accreditation is subsequently confirmed, the procedures for annual course monitoring and control outlined in paragraph 2.5 below will apply. The documentation required to support a new submission is detailed in Appendix 1 : Procedures and Guidelines on the accreditation of Courses, paragraph 6.1(a) and (b).

2.4 Franchised, Outreach and Other Courses

2.4.1 The provisions outlined in paragraphs 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 will not apply in respect of the following categories:-

- (a) franchised courses; and
- (b) surveying programmes already accredited but operated from a satellite location.

For provisions on such courses paragraph 6 below will apply.

2.5 Course Monitoring and Quality Control Procedures

2.5.1 Accredited courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level in order to remain in continuous approval will be monitored annually and be subject to satisfactory reports referred to in paragraph 2.5.2.

2.5.2 All Faculties/Departments/Schools offering accredited courses will be required to submit the following details before 31 December, or such other date as agreed each year:-

- (a) annual Course Review Reports including, where appropriate, the academic institution's response to these;
- (b) number of students entering such accredited courses including direct entrants, entry profile details, cohort progression and graduate output statistics;
- (c) external examiner reports;
- (d) details of any staff resource changes in the last twelve months to be provided on the pro-formas which appear in Appendix 2 - Annual Monitoring Information – Staff Changes, Resources; and
- (e) revised course documentation and re-validation reports, where applicable.

2.5.3 In respect of item 2.5.2(e), all institutions must submit revised internally revalidated documentation (3 copies) for all extant accredited courses, together with a summary sheet identifying substantive changes to course philosophy, admission requirements, assessment regulations and course content (see Appendix 3). Substantive change will normally cover proposals for which internal validation is required.

2.5.4 The HKIS recognises that course teams normally have internal discretion to modify courses without internal revalidation. Whilst HKIS recognises the need for Institutions to make such changes, these are required to be reported in annual course monitoring reports. The HKIS will then decide on the nature of any approval mechanism.

2.6 Review Visits

2.6.1 Normally one Review Visit will take place in any period of accreditation. Visits will be to review all surveying courses with extant accreditation.

2.6.2 The HKIS will identify those accredited courses for which a review visit will be conducted in the course of each academic year. Normally a minimum of two months prior notice will be provided before a review visit.

2.6.3 The purpose of a review visit will be to assess the custodianship of surveying education by each Faculty/Department/School. The visit will focus on issues arising from the process of annual monitoring which, inter-alia, may cover any of the following elements:-

- Quality and quantum of staff resources
- Financial and physical resource provision
- Enrollment levels – numbers/quality
- Wastage rates
- Curriculum content and design
- Teaching, learning and assessment methods
- Student experience
- Monitoring and review
- Links with the profession
- Research
- Staff development
- Output quality and employment characteristics
- Employer perceptions

2.6.4 The composition of Visiting Panels may be multi-disciplinary reflecting the broad scope and purpose of a visit. The participation of external examiners, employers and former graduates will be encouraged.

2.6.5 In recognition of the differences in the size and complexity of academic institutions, it is not intended to adopt prescriptive procedures for the arrangements and duration of visits.

- 2.6.6 The documentation which will be required from an institution seeking new accreditation or re-accreditation prior to a review visit is identified in Appendix 4 - Review Visit Documentation.

3. REACCREDITATION

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of each Faculty/Department/School to ensure that an application for re-accreditation is made in sufficient time before its current accreditation lapses. Failure to do so may result in cohorts of students not being eligible for membership of the HKIS. The requirements and procedures for re-accreditation are described in Appendix 1.

4. ADMISSION WITH ADVANCED STANDING

- 4.1. With regard to entry qualifications, the HKIS is aware of the increasing trend to admit students with advanced standing or unit exemption on to accredited courses. In the interests of consistency and standards, advanced entry will be acceptable only if not less than half of the full accredited courses are to be taken by the students.

5. ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The HKIS will take account of the following general principles when reviewing Course Assessment and Award Regulations:
- (a) an accredited award will normally be an honours degree or equivalent or postgraduate qualification or equivalent which meets minimum academic requirements of the academic institution. Non honours degrees at undergraduate level will not normally be accredited;
 - (b) accredited awards should provide for a minimum aggregated pass mark of 40% or equivalent assessment criteria within any subject;
 - (c) examination covers a wide range of assessment including formal closed written papers, open book examinations, multiple choice, phase tests, computer based exercises, vivas and other forms provided the individual student is assessed at the time or point of assessment without recourse to another person, or resources other than permitted materials and completed within a specified period of time during which the student is under invigilation or supervision;
 - (d) at the final year or where results contribute to the award classification the contribution of a group mark towards a unit or module should not be greater than 25% of the individuals total mark for that unit or module;

- (e) compensation at year 2 of a structured programme (or equivalent) and the final year should not apply to defined core units or subjects;
- (f) compensation and condonement should only apply where a candidate shows strength in other subjects i.e.; achieving marks/grades well above pass level in other subjects;
- (g) external examiners should be consulted and be asked to approve in principle all forms of assessment of an award (see Appendix 5 Regulations on the Appointment of External Examiners paragraph 2);
- (h) external examiners should approve any change to the strategy and method of assessment;
- (i) award regulations should define plagiarism, collusion and other forms of cheating (the HKIS would not expect students found proven of intentional cheating to proceed); and
- (j) in accrediting a course the HKIS is approving both the course and all regulations applying **at the time of accreditation**. All Faculties/Departments/Schools are required to inform the HKIS and the external examiners of any institutional change to assessment regulations applying to an accredited course. The HKIS reserves the right to review course accreditation in the light of such changes to regulations.

5.2 These principles are not prescriptive on universities or colleges in terms of their degree awarding powers but are indicative of the level of award and standard of achievement considered necessary for that award to be accepted for HKIS accreditation purposes. However, any significant departure from these guidelines should be supported by an appropriate rationale.

6. FRANCHISED COURSES AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 In all institutions accreditation will apply to a course validated, operated and controlled by a single academic institution. It is anticipated this will continue to be the norm. The HKIS recognises that the franchising of courses may produce beneficial gains in terms of widening access to higher education or facilitating regional delivery of courses.

6.2 However institutions must comply with the following policy requirements:-

- (a) an academic institution operating an accredited course may not pass that recognition to another academic institution under franchise or otherwise without the HKIS undertaking separate accreditation involving both establishments; and

- (b) proposals to franchise a course, in whole or part, must be declared by academic institutions (franchisor and franchisee) when seeking accreditation or re-accreditation of a course.
- 6.3 Academic institutions proposing to franchise their course elsewhere should recognise that such a franchise can only be regarded as an extension of the course programme for which they already have responsibility and exemption, and that accreditation cannot be regarded as divisible. It therefore follows, that should a review visit to any of those academic institutions involved in the operation of a franchise arrangement result in a recommendation for complete or partial withdrawal of accreditation, then the HKIS may withdraw accreditation from all courses in the programme including those of the franchisor.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that proposals for the accreditation of a franchised programme will normally involve two institutions with an established record in the provision of surveying courses.
- 6.5 Institutions proposing to offer accredited courses under franchise must submit documentation which complies with the standard requirements, and additionally details of:-
- (a) franchise agreements;
 - (b) resources; and
 - (c) course management and quality control procedures.
- 6.6 The HKIS will no longer consider for accreditation bridging or similar course arrangements which provide access to the final year of an accredited course. However, it will consider proposals for approval from academic institutions, which have established formal partnership arrangements. These programmes must provide a coherent course of study and a logical progression from a sub-degree qualification to final accredited award.
- 6.7 In considering such proposals the HKIS will require details of all stages of the education process. In any approved linked schemes, as a guide, the time spent in the degree awarding institution should not be less than half the normal duration (or 50% of the required credits) which would equate to two thirds of a conventional 3 year taught programme.

7. OPEN LEARNING AND DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

- 7.1 The HKIS will consider applications for accreditation in open learning and distance learning modes and recognises that courses in these formats can make an important contribution to the internationalisation of the profession.
- 7.2 It is normally expected that such courses will only be offered by institutions already offering accredited courses in conventional modes of delivery. Any proposal must be supported by documentation specified in Appendix 1 paragraph 6. This provision

applies to any course offered in a distance learning format, in full or part and, irrespective of whether the course is already accredited in sandwich, full or part time mode.

- 7.3 Having regard to the above, course providers are required to clarify the aims and objectives of the courses in terms of the following categories:-
- (a) courses based on HK practice; or
 - (b) courses which apply to local professional practice.
- 7.4 In addition, to the standard documentation specified in Appendix 1 paragraph 6 to support a course application, course providers must include the following:-
- (a) details of learning packages, study guides and student handbooks to support the delivery of the programme;
 - (b) details of the provision for local tutor support and delivery;
 - (c) details of the provision for student support and guidance through other mechanisms such as, Email and the INTERNET;
 - (d) details of quality audit systems in place and copies of a University/College's quality assurance policy documentation;
 - (e) curriculum vitae for all academic staff including local tutors;
 - (f) systems for providing students with feedback in all assessed work;
 - (g) security arrangements relating to assessed work particularly where examinations are offered in different time zones;
 - (h) the provision for involving external examiners in the scrutiny and assessment of student work particularly assignments;
 - (i) details of staff development relevant to a distance learning course;
 - (j) copies of any agreements where a course is offered in partnership with another college, university or local agent;
 - (k) copies, where applicable, of a University/College's policy on the delivery of courses abroad; and
 - (l) evidence, where appropriate, of consultation with external associations branches, with professional bodies and/or employers in the regional setting where the course will be delivered.
- 7.5 Franchise courses in distance learning mode will **not** be considered for approval. A franchise course would be classified as one where either part or whole of a programme is not delivered by the originator.

8. CONDITIONS AND PERIODS OF APPROVAL

- 8.1 In all academic institutions the HKIS may grant approval to a course for up to five years, but shorter periods may be appropriate where further development or other changes in the course or academic institution are expected, where the nature of the course renders this inappropriate, or where an earlier review is considered desirable.
- 8.2 Courses are normally granted approval subject to conditions that can be both precedent and subsequent to approval. In order to maintain the validity of an approval, the academic institution must comply with conditions usually within a specified time limit. The HKIS will **withdraw** approval where conditions are not fulfilled. The timing of such a withdrawal will relate to whether the condition was precedent or subsequent to approval.
- 8.3 The terms of approval may include a number of recommendations on which academic institutions are invited to take action. Recommendations do not require mandatory action, but will be a point of focus when courses are considered for re-approval.
- 8.4 Acceptance of the HKIS Regulations on the Appointment of External Examiners is a condition precedent to approval. Copies of the above regulations are obtainable from the contact address given in paragraph 14.
- 8.5 Accreditation will apply to an award, in a named mode of study, validated, supported and controlled by a single academic institution. Accreditation is not divisible and cannot be transferred to an alternative location without HKIS approval.

9. RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL

- 9.1 Retrospective approvals will not normally be contemplated by the HKIS, but special circumstances can render a retrospective approval of one intake permissible. Retrospective approvals exceeding one intake will not be considered. Academic institutions should recognise this when advertising and developing courses.

10. SANCTIONS

- 10.1 Where, as a result of the annual process of monitoring and review, a perceived shortfall in quality of course provision is identified the HKIS:
- (a) may invoke an immediate re-accreditation; and/or
 - (b) may withdraw accreditation from a course/courses.
- 10.2 Academic institutions are responsible for ensuring that annual monitoring information is received each year by the HKIS before 31 December, or such other agreed date. Failure to submit the required information may result in the withdrawal of accreditation from a course. Information provided as part of the annual monitoring requirement will be assessed, and may precipitate an earlier re-accreditation or a request for additional details. As part of its quality audit system the HKIS will also

make use of published material from, for example, a quality assurance agency or any other relevant bodies involved in assessing standards of provision within the Higher Education sector.

11. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION

- 11.1 Re-applications for accreditation will not be considered for approval until a further twelve months has elapsed.

12. PUBLICATION OF VISIT REPORTS

- 12.1 After each accreditation a visit report will be prepared by the HKIS. In agreeing to a visit, an academic institution must confirm its acceptance on the policy, procedures, status and availability of visit reports identified below:-

- (a) a confirmed visit report, endorsed by the HKIS Board of Education, will be placed on public deposit and made available for public inspection;
- (b) academic institutions are given the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of a visit report before it is placed on public deposit or circulated to named external organisations;
- (c) an academic institution accepts that no legal liability may be attached to the HKIS or its members in respect of the contents of a visit report; and
- (d) details contained within a visit report, which an academic institution regards as confidential and not for publication may, on request, be considered by the HKIS for incorporation into a “Confidential Annex” to be held by the HKIS and the academic institution concerned.

13. FEES AND COSTS

- 13.1 Administration fees will apply for courses for which approval or reaccreditation is sought in institutions. These will comprise:

- (a) an application fee payable on submission, for each new course for which HKIS accreditation is sought;
- (b) a visit fee to consider the accreditation of a new course or the re-accreditation of an existing course; and
- (c) an administration fee related to the cost associated with the annual monitoring of each course.

- 13.2 The scale of fees will be reviewed annually. Fees may be waived at the discretion of the HKIS in the case of courses where there is a perceived under provision or likely to be a limited demand. It is expected that this will only arise in exceptional circumstances.
- 13.3 The above application and visit fees will apply to all institutions offering courses under licence or franchise regardless of the status of the originator.

14. CONTACT ADDRESS

Enquiries should be made to:-

The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Suite 801, Jardine House
1 Connaught Place, Central
Hong Kong

Telephone Number : 2526 3679
Fax Number : 2868 4612
Email : edudept@hkis.org.hk

APPENDIX 1

Procedures and Guidelines on the Accreditation of Courses

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Guidelines in this appendix are intended as a procedural aid, and should not be read as providing prescriptive advice in course design. Each course is considered on its merits. In designing new courses academic institutions are requested to have regard to the requirements of the HKIS's strategic education policy framework.

A wide spectrum of academic courses must be encouraged, ranging from those with an academic focus to those which are more broadly based with a higher emphasis on business management, to those with a more highly developed vocational focus emphasising the technical features of the discipline.

Postgraduate entry to the profession is to be developed through the growth of conversion courses, research based degrees and specialist postgraduate awards.

2. LEVELS OF ACCREDITATION

- 2.1 The Institute is normally prepared to consider proposals from academic institutions for courses leading to admission to the Institute's Assessment of Professional Competence. However, for certain courses in land surveying accreditation may be given for the purposes of entry to a written examination as approved by the HKIS prior to the APC.

3. THE APPROVAL PROCESS

- 3.1 The Board of Education(BOE) normally appoints a small Working Group to consider each application. In the case of a new course, and subject to satisfactory proposals and documentation, the BOE will authorise the Working Group to visit the academic institution. The Working Group will typically include two to three members of the BOE (academic and practitioner representatives), a local external practitioner (if overseas), and a member of the Secretariat of the Institute. An initial recommendation may be reported at the end of the visit, but the Working Group is required to report back to the BOE, with the final decision on accreditation being taken by the Institute's BOE.
- 3.2 In each case a Visit Report will be prepared by the Secretariat of the HKIS. In agreeing to a Visit an academic institution must confirm its acceptance of the policy, procedures, status and availability of Visit Reports identified below:-

- (a) Confirmed Approval Visit Report, endorsed by the Board of Education, will be placed on public deposit and made available for public inspection.
- (b) Academic institutions are given the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of an Approval Visit Report before it is placed on public deposit or circulated to name external organisations.
- (c) An academic institution accepts that no legal liability may be attached to the Institute or its members in respect of the contents of an Approval Visit Report.
- (d) Details contained within a Visit Report, which an academic institution regards as confidential and not for publication, may on request, be considered by the Panel for incorporation into a “Confidential Annex” to be held by the BOE and the academic institution concerned.

4. UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

- 4.1 The Panel will normally accredit courses specifically designed to meet the requirements of its specialist divisions: currently Building Surveying, General Practice, Land Surveying, Quantity Surveying, Planning and Development, and Property and Facility Management. However there has been an increasing movement towards greater commonality of course curricula, particularly in the earlier years of the course.

Furthermore, given that holders of an accredited qualification may register for the Assessment of Professional Competence relevant to their employment it follows that courses providing a more general surveying education may have a useful role to fulfill.

5. POSTGRADUATE COURSES

- 5.1 The BOE will normally only consider submissions of this nature from established surveying centres where development can be based on substantial undergraduate teaching experience in surveying, high quality teaching staff, a good research and development record and proven adequacy of resources.
- 5.2 The BOE believes that suitable courses can be designed in either full-time or part-time modes. The BOE makes no distinction between these awards, and requires that in either category the postgraduate course for which accreditation is sought is rigorous, covers sufficient depth and breadth and also the key study skills which the graduate Surveyor will require.
- 5.3 The BOE will apply the same general criteria for approval of postgraduate courses as those applied to undergraduate courses and detailed in paragraph 8. The objectives of post-graduate, conversion or fast-track courses should be to maximize the intellectual potential of the entrant, whilst establishing the necessary competences to equip students with the prerequisite knowledge for employment in a professional surveying

environment. To achieve this end it is recognised that postgraduate conversion courses will need to include significant amounts of study material consideration of which will start at principles level, but which will move rapidly up to higher levels of study at a different pace to that adopted for undergraduate courses. Postgraduate courses which involve conjoint teaching with units of study from undergraduate courses would only be considered acceptable in exceptional and special circumstances. Teaching and learning strategies should be based on a range of methodologies with an emphasis on student centred techniques. Academic institutions should pay particular attention to articulating a satisfactory course philosophy and providing evidence of proven demand.

- 5.4 Postgraduate conversion courses typically attract graduate entrants from a wide range of disciplines. This is beneficial, and reflects the broader base of many large practices, agencies and surveying consultancies. The intellectual and professional rigour demanded from these type of courses will necessitate high entry standards.

6. NEW SUBMISSION DOCUMENTATION

- 6.1 Information required in support of a new submission is necessarily extensive, but academic institutions are nevertheless requested to make every effort to address the following requirements with the minimum documentation possible consistent with completeness and clarity. The BOE is sometimes asked to consider proposals not supported by sufficient information. Out of fairness to other colleges and other academic institutions, the BOE requires all submissions to include the same information requirements and no exceptions are made.

(a) *Definitive Course Documentation* - full details must be supplied including:-

(i) General information:

- name, address and telephone number of the academic institution;
- (where appropriate), Department (or School) and Faculty responsible for the course;
- title of the course and proposed starting date;
- duration and mode of study;
- level of accreditation sought and the most appropriate HKIS Division;
- name of Head of Department (or School);
- explicit statement of validation processes completed, details of other approving or validating body conditions or other qualifications to any approval given including relevant starting date and duration.

- (ii) Course aims and philosophy:
 - rationale of the course;
 - identification of specific challenges which the course is designed to meet;
 - identification of the core areas of the course, the essential supporting subjects and any optional elements;
 - (iii) entry requirements and target enrollments;
 - (iv) relationship to relevant similar courses with details of cohort progression analyses;
 - (v) structure and content, including curriculum, syllabuses, required reading, teaching methods etc;
 - (vi) assessment and progression arrangements including the appointment and role of external examiners;
 - (vii) staffing for the course: the range of expertise, qualification and experience of each member of staff;
 - (viii) current staff development policy and achievement, recent research, consultancy and other scholarly activity etc;
 - (ix) support resources, technical and administrative staff, facilities, accommodation and major equipment, library and other reference facilities;
 - (x) financial provision for the course and/or Department;
 - (xi) academic structure of the college and its influence on the course;
 - (xii) management of the course academically and administratively including monitoring of delivery, constitution of course committees or boards; and
 - (xiii) student facilities, amenities and support.
- (b) **Documentation pertaining to Internal and External Validation** - the BOE will not consider course proposals until they have been approved by all appropriate groups within their own academic institutions. All relevant documentation and reports arising from the internal validation process should form part of the submission, where possible.

7. COURSE REVIEW DOCUMENTATION

- 7.1 It is anticipated that all courses will be subject to internal review and revalidation. Revalidated documentation may be submitted at the time annual monitoring details

are provided. In all other cases review documentation must be submitted before the period of accreditation has lapsed and include the following:-

- (a) **A Critical Review of the Existing Course(s)** - covering the following aspects:-
 - (i) operation, management and resourcing of the course;
 - (ii) achievement of aims and objectives;
 - (iii) the relevance and balance of course content including teaching methods and assessment;
 - (iv) student performance, cohort progression and achievement and where appropriate employment destinations;
 - (v) results of consultations with students, employers and the profession; and
 - (vi) external examiner's reports.
- (b) **Definitive Course Documentation** - including full details (as in 7.1.(a) above) together with details of the changes proposed, a justification for those changes and the process leading to the decisions taken.
- (c) **Internal Review Documentation** - the Panel, where possible, will only consider for re-accreditation courses which have been subject to internal review, the output of which should accompany the submission, including internal review reports, minutes of meetings and other relevant documentation recording the process.

7.2 A formal review visit will normally be conducted for each course. However, in special circumstances the Panel will consider applications for re-accreditation based upon the foregoing documentation only, without the need for an accreditation visit. Such circumstances may include recent visits to the Department or academic institution to consider other course accreditation.

7.3 Increasing emphasis will be placed on the following requirements which should be addressed in all course submissions:-

- a) clearly articulated course philosophy, rationale and assessment strategy including how these are applied within the curriculum programme;
- b) appropriate standards of entry qualifications, and evidence on existing programmes that these are being maintained;
- c) identification of core skills relevant to the selected area of surveying with details of how these are taught and assessed within the curriculum; and

- d) evidence of the surveying context within which the course is delivered demonstrated by the involvement of corporate members of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors or an acceptable local equivalent in the development, teaching and assessment of the programme.

Course submissions which do not include specific reference and do not satisfactorily address the above requirements will not be considered for accreditation.

8. CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT

8.1 Each application will be judged on its own merits.

8.2 The main criteria on which courses are assessed include:-

- the context within which the course will operate;
- course philosophy and development process;
- the nature and composition of the course planning and management team;
- quality, experience and numbers of staff of whom an appropriate proportion should be Corporate members of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors or an acceptable local equivalent with the suitable background and experience;
- the resources allocated;
- the research base of the submitting Faculty/Department/School;
- the course documentation;
- course structure and duration;
- the content of the course in relation to the course objectives and employer requirements;
- the level of knowledge taught and the depth of understanding expected;
- the students' experience of the course;
- admission and assessment procedures;
- employers' opinions;

- External Examiner Reports and the response of the institution/department to issues raised therein;
- a reasonable expectation that the proposals are achievable;
- an appropriate scope and focus of content; and
- the institutional monitoring and validation process.

9. CONDITIONS AND PERIODS OF ACCREDITATION

- 9.1 The HKIS may grant accreditation to a course for up to five years, but shorter periods may be appropriate where further development or other changes in the course or academic institution are expected, where the nature of the course renders this inappropriate, or where an earlier review is considered desirable.
- 9.2 In all institutions courses are normally granted accreditation subject to conditions that can be both precedent and subsequent to accreditation. In order to maintain the validity of an approval, the academic institution must comply with conditions usually within a specified time limit. The HKIS may withdraw accreditation where conditions are not fulfilled. The timing of such a withdrawal will relate to whether the condition was precedent or subsequent to accreditation.
- 9.3 The terms of accreditation may include a number of recommendations on which the academic institution is invited to take action. Recommendations do not require mandatory action, but will be a point of focus when courses are considered for re-accreditation.
- 9.4 Acceptance of the BOE's Regulations on the Appointment of External Examiners is a condition precedent to approval. Copies of the above regulations are included as Appendix 5.

10. FRANCHISED COURSES

- 10.1 Accreditation will apply to a course validated, operated and controlled by a single academic institute. It is anticipated this will continue to be the norm. The HKIS recognises that the franchising of courses may produce beneficial gains in terms of widening access to higher education or facilitating regional delivery of courses.
- 10.2 Institutions must comply with the following policy requirements:-

- (a) an academic institute operating a full or partially accredited course may not pass that recognition to another academic institution under franchise without the HKIS undertaking separate accreditation involving both establishments; and
 - (b) proposals to franchise a course in whole or part, must be declared by academic institutions (franchisor and franchisee) when seeking accreditation or re-accreditation of a course.
- 10.3 Academic institutions proposing to franchise their courses elsewhere should recognise that such a franchise can only be regarded as an extension of the course program for which they already have responsibility and exemption, and that such exemptions cannot be regarded as divisible. It therefore follows that, should a review visit to any of a franchise arrangement result in a recommendation for complete or partial withdrawal of accreditation, then the HKIS may withdraw accreditation from all courses in the programme including the originator.
- 10.4 It is anticipated that proposals for the accreditation of a franchised program will normally involve two institutions with an established record in the provision of surveying courses.
- 10.5 Institutions proposing to offer accredited courses under franchise must submit documentation which complies with the standard requirements, and additionally details of :-
- (i) franchise agreements;
 - (ii) resources; and
 - (iii) course management and quality control procedures.

11. LIAISON AND MONITORING

External Examiner

- 11.1 In all academic institutions the appointment and function of external examiners on approved courses is seen as one of the most effective means of maintaining standards during the period for which courses are approved. Academic institutions are again referred to the BOE's Regulations on the Appointment of External Examiners.

Professional Links

- 11.2 The HKIS wishes to foster active liaison between academic institutions and members of the profession. Members may well be able to provide a service by way of special lectures, seminars, case study material and general information on shifts in the pattern or direction of professional practice. Academic institutions are encouraged to support student participation in professional activities and promote student membership of the HKIS.

12. SUBSIDIARY MATTERS

Joint Visits

- 12.1 Academic institutions contemplating re-accreditation subsequent to internal review may consider the appointment of BOE members as external advisers to the internal validation process. Such appointments may well facilitate the subsequent process of accreditation, but members will be acting in a personal capacity, when so employed, and not on behalf of the BOE or the HKIS.

Retrospective Accreditation

- 12.2 Retrospective accreditation will not normally be contemplated by the HKIS, but special circumstances can render a retrospective accreditation of one intake permissible. Retrospective accreditation exceeding one intake will not be considered. Academic institutions should recognise this when advertising and developing courses.

Entry with advanced standing

- 12.3 Entry to an undergraduate course with advanced standing may be permitted, but students will normally be expected to study a minimum of 50% of the total degree curriculum content. Direct entry into the final year of an accredited course will not be approved.

Timing of Applications

- 12.4 Academic institutions contemplating new course submissions or revisions should notify HKIS by 31 December, of their intention to submit documentation for the coming academic session, and should submit such documentation within six months. Failure to meet these deadlines will normally result in consideration by the Panel being deferred until the following academic session.

13. AWARDS

- 13.1 Although the trend has been towards modularised and unitised courses the HKIS will continue to accredit named awards.

14. QUALITY

- 14.1 Members of the profession are concerned by claims that some graduates from accredited courses do not have the qualities or skills required to enter the profession. Therefore, the HKIS must undertake to rigorously maintain, and where appropriate enhance, its quality control mechanisms. HKIS accreditation is a strong marketing advantage for courses. The HKIS cannot allow standards to fall through entry, course

quality or output standards, any of which could lead to a devaluation of accreditation status. It is therefore policy to annually monitor courses, approve the appointment of external examiners in all cases and rigorously inspect all providers of accredited courses on a cyclical basis with additional visits when concerns justify such.

- 14.2 Where entry qualifications are at a minimum threshold level it will be necessary for academic institutions to demonstrate that added value is provided within the academic course for which reaccreditation is sought. The presence of generally low entry qualification standards may be a factor which could initiate a special review and the reconsideration of the course is accredited status.

15. COURSE DESIGN

- 15.1 The HKIS does not seek to be prescriptive in terms of course content and design. It positively welcomes a diversity of provision. Academic institutions, with appropriate expertise, skills and resourcing are therefore encouraged to design courses to their particular strengths and specialisms which will allow for greater differentiation, relevant innovative course developments and reasonable variety of approach. New courses will continue to be considered on their merits. Particular attention will be given to their relationship to specified areas of surveying activity for which students are being prepared.
- 15.2 The HKIS's prime concern is to ensure that it only accredits programmes of quality. An objective is to maintain and improve existing standards of provision. It is considered that this can be best achieved by ensuring that courses are based on a sound philosophy and delivered within a surveying context. It is increasingly important that due emphasis is given to the development of core surveying skills, and the integration of subjects particularly within modular programme.

16. ASSESSMENT

- 16.1 The Institute will take account of the following general principles when reviewing Course Assessment and Award Regulations:-
- a) an accredited award will normally be an honours degree or equivalent or postgraduate qualification or equivalent which meets minimum academic requirements of the academic institution. Non honours degrees at undergraduate level will not normally be accredited;
 - b) accredited awards should provide for a minimum aggregated pass mark of 40% or equivalent assessment criteria within any subject;
 - c) examination covers a wide range of assessment including formal closed written papers, open book examinations, multiple choice, phase tests, computer based exercises, vivas and other forms provided the individual student is assessed at the

- time or point of assessment without recourse to another person, or resources other than permitted materials and completed within a specified period of time during which the student is under invigilation or supervision;
- d) at the final year or where results contribute to the award classification the contribution of a group mark towards unit or subject should not be greater than 25% of the individuals mark for that unit or subject;
 - e) compensation at year 2 of a structured programme (or equivalent) and the final year should not apply to defined core units or subjects;
 - f) compensation and condonement should not normally apply to more than two units, modules or subjects per year or stage;
 - g) compensation and condonement should only apply where a candidate shows strength in other subjects;
 - h) external examiners should be consulted and be asked to approve in principle all forms of assessment of an award;
 - i) external examiners should approve any change to the strategy and method of assessment;
 - j) award regulations should define plagiarism, collusion and other forms of cheating. (There is grey area between student naivety and blatant cheating. The HKIS would not expect students found proven of intentional cheating to proceed); and
 - k) in accrediting a course the HKIS is approving both the course and all regulations applying to it **at the time of accreditation**. All institutions are required to inform the HKIS and the external examiners of any institutional change to assessment regulations applying to an accredited course. The HKIS reserves the right to review course accreditation in the light of such changes to regulations.
- 16.2 These principles are not prescriptive on universities or colleges in terms of their degree awarding powers but are indicative of the level of award and standard of achievement considered necessary for that award to be accepted for HKIS accreditation purposes.

17. OPEN LEARNING AND DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

- 17.1 The HKIS will consider applications for accreditation in distance learning mode and recognises that courses in this format can make an important contribution to the internationalisation of the profession.
- 17.2 It is normally expected that such courses will only be offered by institutions offering accredited courses in conventional modes of delivery. They must be supported by documentation specified in paragraph 6. This provision applies to any course offered in a distance learning format, in full or part and, irrespective of whether the course is already accredited in sandwich, full or part time mode.

- 17.3 Having regard to the above, course providers are required to clarify the aims and objectives of the courses in terms of the following categories:-
- a) courses based on Hong Kong practice; or
 - b) courses based on UK practice; or
 - c) courses which apply to local professional practice.
- 17.4 In addition to the standard documentation required to support a course application, course providers must include the following:-
- a) details of all learning packages, study guides and student handbooks to support the delivery of the programme;
 - b) provision for local tutor support and delivery;
 - c) provision for student support and guidance through other mechanisms such as, for example E-mail and the INTERNET;
 - d) details of quality audit systems in place and copies of a University/College's quality assurance policy documentation;
 - e) curriculum vitae for all academic staff including local tutors;
 - f) systems for providing students with feedback on all assessed work;
 - g) security arrangements relating to assessed work particularly where examinations are offered in different time zones;
 - h) the provision for involving external examiners in the scrutiny and assessment of student work;
 - i) details of staff development relevant to a distance learning course;
 - j) copies of any agreements where a course is offered in partnership with another College, University or local agent; and
 - k) copies, where applicable, of a University/College's policy on the delivery of distance learning courses outside the country of origin.
- 17.5 The above requirements are identified in recognition of the special expertise and resources necessary to support a distance learning course.
- 17.6 Franchise courses in distance learning mode will not normally be considered for approval.

APPENDIX 2

ANNUAL MONITORING INFORMATION: STAFF CHANGES

NAME OF INSTITUTION:

DETAILS OF STAFF LEAVING OR RETIRING

Name	Position	Subject Area or Support Role

DETAILS OF NEW STAFF (CVs to be attached)

Name	Qualifications	Position	Details of Experience

**ANNUAL MONITORING INFORMATION:
RESOURCES**

Library, Annual Budget Change + \$
Other Changes :

IT Support Changes:

Equipment Changes:
(eg : Survey)

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO EXISTING COURSES FOLLOWING ACCREDITATION:

Name of Institution:	
Course Title:	
Date for Proposed Change:	
Effective for Existing Students	YES / NO
If YES Specify Entry Years:	
Summary of Changes	
Course Philosophy:	
Admission Requirements:	
Assessment Weighting (Coursework/examinations):	
Course Content:	
Approved By:	
Academic Board	Date
Board of Studies	Date
Other (Specify)	Date

APPENDIX 4

REVIEW VISIT DOCUMENTATION

1. DOCUMENTATION FOR REVIEW VISITS

1.1 Institutions will be required to provide the following information prior to a re-accreditation.

(a) Strategy

Statement on future strategy and development of the Faculty/Department/School.

(b) Course Monitoring and Review

(i) Details of the internal course monitoring and quality assurance procedures.

(ii) External Examiner and annual course monitoring reports.

(iii) Internal course validation reports.

(iv) Staff student liaison Minutes.

(v) Board of Studies Minutes.

(c) Student Statistics

(i) Student enrollment numbers.

(ii) Entry profile details, cohort progression and graduate output statistics by year and by course.

(iii) Wastage Rates.

(iv) Details of employment destination.

The above information to be provided over the previous five year period or other period as specified by the visiting panel.

(d) Research and Publications

Details of CPD activities and research publications during the last two years.

(e) Staff Development

(i) Details of staff appraisal systems and specific details of staff development activity.

(ii) Financial provision for staff development.

(f) Professional Liaison Activities

Minutes of Professional Liaison meetings.

(g) Resources

- (i) Details of the financial and annual budget provision for the Faculty/Department/School for both capital and recurrent expenditure.
- (ii) Details of the Faculty/Department/School's physical resources.
- (iii) Financial provision for the library.
- (iv) Details of the management structure of the Faculty/Department/School.
- (v) Staff CVs.

(h) Course Summaries

Executive summaries of extant courses to include a curriculum diagrams and assessment schedules for each accrediting course. A visiting panel may also request details of other specific course documents identified in Appendix 1.

2. NEW COURSE DOCUMENTATION

- 2.1 The above information, to include the appropriate number of copies as advised by the Secretariat, must be received two months before the date of the re-accreditation.

APPENDIX 5

REGULATIONS ON THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1. THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 1.1 This document sets out the requirements relating to the appointment and function of external examiners on HKIS accredited courses providing admission to the HKIS's Assessment of Professional Competence.
- 1.2 The appointment of external examiners is subject to the approval of the Board of Education(BOE). Forms for the approval of external examiner appointments may be obtained from the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, Suite 801, Jardine House, 1 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong.
- 1.3 The BOE requires that external examiners should be appointed as follows:-

For each accredited award - two approved examiners (one academic, and one practitioner who normally should be professional surveyors with the appropriate experience) in the divisional specialisation for which the course is designed. For courses leading to the exemption of more than one Division the BOE will consider appropriate arrangements based on the above criteria.
- 1.4 In approving appointments, the BOE will have regard to the combined experience of co-examiners, one of whom should be experienced as an external examiner.
- 1.5 Co-terminus appointments should be avoided. The tenure of appointments should be staggered to provide an experience overlap.
- 1.6 Concurrent with the approval of an appointment of an individual as external examiner, the HKIS will send separate confirmation to the appointee with a copy of these details of regulations covering the role and responsibilities of external examiners.

2. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

- 2.1 The role of the external examiner(s) approved by the BOE is seen as one of the most effective means of monitoring standards and maintaining the professional relevance of courses satisfying the HKIS academic requirements for professional qualification and admission to the Institute's Assessment of Professional Competence.
- 2.2 In order to carry out these responsibilities the external examiner must normally:-
 - (a) be involved in all levels of assessment in order to exercise his/her role effectively in the classification of final awards;

- (b) attend meetings of the academic institution's Board of Examiners and have access to all assessed work. It is expected that the Board of Examiners, with final authority for an award, will normally accept the decision of the external examiner on the results of a particular candidate or candidates should there be any difference of opinion amongst members of the Board of Examiners;
- (c) be given the opportunity to comment on the management, development and resourcing of the course; and
- (d) make annual written reports to the academic institution concerned after each assessment on their conduct and effectiveness (see External Examiners Report, section 5 below and The Place of External Examiners in Validation and Review, section 6 below).

3. REGULATIONS OF APPOINTMENT

3.1 The following conditions shall apply:-

- (a) all external examiner appointments must be approved by the BOE;
- (b) appointments should be for fixed terms, normally one year longer than the cycle of the course, or where mixed mode the period of office should relate to the length of the mode of attendance following by the majority of students;
- (c) normally external examiners should not hold more than two external examiner appointments at the same time;
- (d) an academic institution or other body responsible for the course must submit external examiner nominations for approval by the BOE before the date of the first assessments with which the proposed examiner is to be associated;
- (e) new examiners should take up their appointments on or before the retirement of their predecessors. External examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated in order to deal with any subsequent reviews of decisions;
- (f) in order to protect their independence, external examiners should not act concurrently as consultants to a course team for course design, or be members of a internal panel established to review the course they examine;
- (g) new external examiners must be briefed on their task as soon as possible after appointment, preferably by visiting the educational establishment to meet staff and students. The briefing will cover inter alia: the dates of examiners' meetings; the objectives of the course, its syllabuses and teaching methods; the methods of assessment and marking scheme; recent external examiner reports;
the regulations for the programme including those concerned with compensation for failure and opportunities for reassessment; HKIS Approval Reports and conditions of accreditation;

- (h) fees are a matter solely between the external examiner and the academic institutions; and
- (i) if an educational establishment terminates the appointment of an external examiner, the BOE must be informed of the grounds for termination.

4. CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT

4.1 The following criteria are considered by the BOE when approving external examiner appointments:-

- (a) an external examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience indicated by:
 - present post and place of work;
 - range and scope of experience in higher education and/or professional practice;
 - current and active involvement in academic activities, research and/or professional practice related to the field of study.
- (b) normally an academic external examiner should have recent external examining or comparable related experience in assessing students. A proposed examiner who has no previous external examiner experience at the appropriate level, should be supported by a co-examiner with substantial experience and have either:-
 - other external examining experience;
 - extensive internal examining experience;
 - other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role.

Appointments should be complementary in terms of experience and expertise.

- (c) external examiners should be impartial in judgment, and should not have previous close involvement with the educational establishment concerned which might compromise objectivity. If a proposal resulted in external examinerships which are reciprocal between departments or academic institutions, ie are either concurrent or consecutive, then this must be clearly declared on the proposal form and a case to justify the practice articulated.

Over the five years prior to the date of the application the proposed examiner should not have been:

- a member of staff, a governor, a student, or a near relative of a member of staff in relation to the course;
- an examiner on a cognate course in the academic institution;

- involved as external examiner for the course when it was approved by another validating body.

The proposed examiner should not normally and must always declare if he or she is:-

- personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the course;
- required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the course;
- corporately or personally responsible for students regarding bursaries or other emoluments to students on the course being examined.

5. EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORTS

- 5.1 External examiners are required to report annually to the academic institution on the conduct of the assessments just concluded and on the issues related to assessment, including:-
- (a) the overall performance of the students in relation to their peers on comparable courses;
 - (b) the strengths and weaknesses of students;
 - (c) the quality of knowledge and skills (both general and subject specific) demonstrated by the students;
 - (d) the professional relevance, the structure, organisation, design and marking of all assessments;
 - (e) the quality of teaching as indicated by student performance;
 - (f) the lessons of the assessments for the curriculum, syllabus, teaching methods, resources and management and review of the course; and
 - (g) any other recommendations arising from the assessments.
- 5.2 The purpose of the report is to enable the academic institution to judge whether the course is meeting its stated objectives and to make any necessary improvements, either immediately or by the next review as appropriate.
- 5.3 The external examiner(s) may require the academic institution to refer a report to the BOE if there is concern about standards of assessment and performance, or if the external examiner(s) believe that the assessments are being conducted in such a way which compromises the fair treatment of individual students or the standards of the HKIS.

- 5.4 If an examiner has matters of particular concern, which when raised with the Head of an academic institution are not properly taken account of, then such issues may be reported directly to the BOE. The BOE reserves, at any time, the right to call for external examiner reports from the academic institution or from the external examiner.

6. THE PLACE OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS IN VALIDATION AND REVIEW

- 6.1 External examining is a vital means of maintaining standards and providing information on outcomes for use in course review; it is, however, a separate process from internal review and it is important that there should be no confusion or role conflict between the two.
- 6.2 The external examiner's reports may have implications for the way in which the course is designed and delivered, but it is for the academic institution rather than the external examiner to consider what changes should be made as a result.
- 6.3 External examiner's annual reports must always form part of the documentation used in course review, and the BOE will scrutinise both the reports and the records of the course team's responses.

7. STATUS OF THE REGULATIONS

- 7.1 The HKIS reserves the right to vary any or all of these regulations. Normally the regulations will be reviewed annually, and the BOE will notify academic institutions accordingly in order that any changes may be complied with in the following session. Compliance with these regulations will be a condition precedent to any approval or accredited course by the HKIS.

* * * *

THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER

**NAME OF ACADEMIC
INSTITUTION**

--

Details of Course:

Course Title / Final Award

--

Mode of Study Duration.....

**NOMINATED EXTERNAL
EXAMINER** Name

--

Title :
Qualifications :
Occupation :
Postal Address :
.....

**PERIOD OF *APPOINTMENT
/ *REAPPOINTMENT**

From: (mth)..... (yr)	To: (mth)..... (yr)
--------------------------------	------------------------------

*Delete if not applicable.

**Concurrently Serving
External Examiner** Name

--

Title :
Qualifications :
Occupation :
Postal Address :
.....

APPLICATION to be completed by the responsible Department of the Academic Institution

Date : **Signature :**

Name : **Position :**

The completed form should be returned to the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Suite 801, Jardine House, 1 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong.

**NOMINATED EXTERNAL
EXAMINER**

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

as internal and / or
external examiner and / or
relevant previous experience

CURRENT EXPERIENCE

other external examiner
commitments with periods
of appointment

ANY OTHER EXPERIENCE

in academic / industrial or
professional roles

**RATIONALE FOR
VARIANCE FROM
GUIDELINES**

or where extension of approval
is sought

To be signed by the proposed External Examiner:

I confirm that I have not been associated with this academic institution or course in any of the unacceptable activities listed in HKIS Policy & Procedure for Course Approval, Maintenance & Review 99 (Amended on 14 March 2007).

Date:

Signature: