INSTITUTE OF QUANTITY SURVEYORS SRI LANKA (IQSSL)

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

FOR

ACCREDITATION OF UNDERGRADUATE
DEGREE PROGRAMMES LEADING TO
QUANTITY SURVEYING PROFESSION

July 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Quantity Surveyors Sri Lanka (IQSSL) was established as an incorporated professional body under the Parliament Act No. 20 of 2007 to protect and promote the interests, status, welfare, rights and privileges of the profession and interest of the public about the profession of Quantity Surveyors. Under the provisions of the Act, IQSSL is empowered to undertake and regulate the professional education and training of persons desiring to do Quantity Surveying and to prescribe and approve courses of studies and qualifying examinations for membership.

IQSSL accredits Quantity Surveying undergraduate degree programmes, ranging from those witha specialist focus to those which are more broadly based with a higher emphasis at professional level input, and to those with highly developed vocational focus emphasising at technical level and other key requirements. Each programme is considered on its merits.

This document provides the policy and procedures of Institute of Quantity Surveyors, Sri Lanka (IQSSL) for the accreditation of undergraduate study programme leading to Quantity Surveying degree. These guidelines are established and designed to evaluate the standard of programmes producing Quantity Surveying graduates with academic qualifications to be recognised for direct membership to IQSSL Graduate Member category.

2. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

IQSSL appoints a panel of members to evaluate each application. The accreditation panel shall include number of member as decided by IQSSL representing academia and industry. Subsequent to initial review, the panel shall authorise an accreditation visit for successful submission. An initial feedback will be conveyed to the relevant academic Institution in a reasonable time after the visit as a record of discussions in the visit. The panel shall submit a report to the Executive Council for decision making by IQSSL. Academic institutions are informed that this process may take some time and hence advised to refrain from advertising of the accreditation until a formal approval is granted by IQSSL.

3. PROGRAMME DESIGN

3.1 IQSSL accredits programmes specifically designed to meet the requirements of its Assessment of Professional Competency pathways. Programme applications which relate to the identified domains within which Quantity Surveyors operate, the academic institute shall satisfy that their graduates from the programme will meet IQSSL Competency Standards.

3.2 IQSSL is not prescriptive in terms of programme design. It welcomes a diversity of provisions. Academic institutes with appropriate expertise, skills and resources are encouraged to design programmes to their particular strengths and specialisations, which will allow for greater differentiation and innovative programme developments. In designing programmes, academic institutes are encouraged to obtain feedback from Institute of Quantity Surveyors, Sri Lanka.

3.3 IQSSL will only accredit programmes which comply with Competencies specified by IQSSL. It aims to maintain continuous improvement of existing standards of the Quantity Surveying education and profession. This can be achieved by ensuring that programmes are delivered within the ambit and spectrum of Quantity Surveying profession. Emphasis should be given to the identification and development of core skills and competencies with the integration of subjects, within module system.

4. DEFINITIONS OF CONTACT HOURS (CHs) AND ACADEMIC CREDITS (ACs)

Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) offers general guidance for the delivery of an academic programme. However, a programme is expected to carry the balanced volume of learning through lectures, assisted studies (such as tutorials, project works, laboratory and fieldwork) and directed self-studies. Contact Hours (CH) refers to direct contact with Academic staff, consisting of two components; Lectures and Assisted Studies. Non-Contact Hours (NCH) refers to directed self-studies. ("Lecture" is an organised instruction, a presentation or a discussion, delivered as a classroom session. "Assisted Studies" is a learning process based on the individual study or group study in a classroom with guidance on the subject matter by the academic staff).

One Academic Credit (AC) in a regular teaching module shall be equal to Fourteen (14) hours of Lectures or Twenty-Eight (28) hours of Assisted Studies. The proportion between the two may vary, but in general, either shall not be less than one third (1/3) of the other.

For activities in which Contact Hours cannot be used to properly describe the extent of the work involved, such as industrial training, research dissertation, and field visits, guest lecture and workshops, the following definitions are used for an AC:

- four (4) weeks of industrial training

- two (2) weeks of research (dissertation or equivalent)

- three (3) number of field visits or guest lectures or workshops

5. CURRICULUM GUIDANCE

5.1 The design of undergraduate and other programmes should take account of the competencies set out in the document Assessment of Professional Competency Guidelines (available on request) Universities/Colleges are advised to consult this document carefully when preparing their submissions.

5.2 There is no requirement that all of the competencies specified are covered to the professional capacity for accreditation to take place. Some of these competencies have limited academic framework and can only be achieved through practical experience built upon structured education. It is the policy of IQSSL to encourage a broad diversity of programme provision, and therefore the requirement to justify competencies covered and not covered should not be taken as encouragement towards standardisation of programme proposals within any discipline.

5.3 There is no wish to be prescriptive in the content of programme bearing in mind the diversity of mode of study. However, it is expected that at least 70% of the compulsory content of the programme would address competencies specified by IQSSL.

6. MONITORING QUALITY CONTROL AND SANCTIONS

6.1 All accredited programmes are monitored annually and academic institutions are required to submit the following details for each IQSSL accredited programme within three months of the end of each academic year:

  i. external quality assurance reports
  ii. the academic Institution's response to these

iii.   annual programme review reports..

6.2   IQSSL will not require an annual monitoring report in the year in which an academic institution applies for re-accreditation. Annexure 03 is the annual monitoring report template.

6.3   The appointment and function of external examiners (external quality assurers) on accredited programmes is one of the most effective means of assuring standards during the period for which the programmes are accredited.

6.4   IQSSL will consider accrediting a new programme at an Academic Institution only if the existing accredited programme(s) has complied with annual monitoring and any other conditions of the accreditation.

6.5   Universities/colleges are responsible for ensuring that annual monitoring information is submitted to IQSSL each year. Failure to submit the required information may result in the withdrawal of accreditation from a programme.

6.6   If the monitoring and review process identified a perceived shortfall in the quality of the programme provision, IQSSL may:

i.   require an immediate review visit; and/or

ii.   withdraw accreditation for the programme(s).

7. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

7.1 There are quality standards that IQSSL wishes to assure by an external audit on a regular basis. This is to ensure that accredited programmes meet minimum standards which assure the quality of the student experience.

For all accredited programmes, an external quality audit is required to ensure:

i.   there is a relevant and balanced curriculum, with clear objectives and outcomes,

ii.   there is a fair assessment, and

iii.   formal feedback is given to the Academic Institution on i) and ii) above.

The IQSSL external quality assurance system is identified as a necessary supplement to the internal quality assurance system. IQSSL requires the appointment of external examiners to carry out external quality assurance.

7.2 External Examiners

External examiners act as independent and impartial advisors providing Academic Institutions with informed comments on the standards of the programme and students' achievements. The role of the external examiners is, therefore, an integral part of Academic Institution quality assurance. External examiners verify that standards are appropriate for a specific award, assist Academic Institutions in the comparison of academic standards across higher education awards, and verify that processes for student assessment, examination, and the determination of awards are sound and have been fairly conducted.

Approval of IQSSL is required for the appointment of external examiners by Academic Institutions. Generally, the requirement for each accredited programme is two (02) IQSSL approved external examiners, comprising one senior academic and one practitioner. The practitioner must be a Corporate Member of IQSSL, with the following exception.

- Where an Academic Institution is offering a number of programmes in a related discipline, the requirement for two IQSSL approved external examiners remains, those examiners, if appropriate, can overlap across a number of programmes. The same examiners can be used for major/minor combinations as well as for straight majors.

7.2.1 Criteria for appointment of external examiners

    i. An external examiner should have appropriate standing, expertise and experience indicated by:

        - present position and place of work

        - range and scope of experience in higher education or professional practice

        - current and active involvement in academic activities, research or professional practice related to the field of study.

ii. An academic external examiner should have recent external quality assurance experience or comparable related experience in assessing students in terms of:

- previous external examining experience, or

- extensive internal examining experience, or

- other relevant and recent experience likely to support the external examiner role.

iii. External examiners should be impartial in judgement, and should not have close involvement with the Academic Institution concerned which might compromise objectivity. Appointments will not normally be approved if a proposal results in external examinership which is reciprocal between Academic Institutions, either concurrent or consecutive.

iv. External examiners should not be re-appointed within five (05) years of completing a previous external examiner appointment to the Academic Institution. Over the five (05) years prior to the date of appointment, the proposed examiner should not have been a member of staff, a governor, a student or a near relative of a member of the management or staff in relation to the programme.

v. The proposed external examiner should not normally be, and must always declare if he or she is:

- personally associated with the sponsorship of students on the programme

- required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme

- corporately or personally responsible for students regarding bursaries or other emoluments to students on the programme being examined.

The Application for Approval of an External Examiner for an Undergraduate Degree Programme is attached as Annexure 04.

8. ACCREDITATION REVIEW DOCUMENTATION

8.1 Academic institutes shall meet the requirements with the necessary documentation. The Institutions must provide any additional information as may be requested by the panel appointed by IQSSL.

8.2 The submission shall consist of:

    i.   Programme details

    ii.   Critical review of the programme

    iii.   Internal review documentation

    iv.   Changes during the period of accreditation (only for a re-accreditation)

    v.   Response to comments made in last accreditation report (only for a re-accreditation)

    vi.   Internal and external validation documents

8.2.1 Programme Details

Programme details consist of;

- FORM 01 (Refer Annexure 01)

- Introduction to the Institution and its structure

- Introduction to the Department

- Department management and funding structure

- Introduction to the programme

- Entry requirements and target enrolments

- Programme structure and the curriculum

- Teaching, learning and assessment methods

- Evaluation of performance, progression and award criteria

- Staffing of the programme, staff profiles, current and desired level of staff (academic and academic support staff) and staff development policy

- Student learning environment and current and desired level of facilities

- Student support, welfare and extra-curricular activities

- Graduate employability and employment statistics

- Accreditations or recognitions by other professional organisations

- Relationships and interactions with IQSSL, other Quantity Surveying professional institutes, allied professional institutions and the industry

8.2.2 Critical review of the programme

- Mapping of programme contents with competencies specified by IQSSL (Refer to Annexure 02).

- Demand Analysis

- Self-Reflection on:
  - Operation management and the resourcing of the programme
  - Achievement of aim and objectives
  - Relevance and balance of programme content including teaching methods and assessments
  - Student performance, cohort progression and achievements

- Future directions including proposed liaison with IQSSL

8.2.3 Internal Review Documentation

Briefly describe and provide the following documents under this section.

- Internal review reports

- Quality assurance documents

- Feedback (students, employers, staff peer reviews)

- Meeting minutes

- Samples of examination papers and assignments, including dissertation and industrial training

8.2.4 Changes during the period of accreditation

This section is only applicable for re- accreditation documentation. Provide the below mentioned changes with the reasons.

- Curriculum revisions

- Staff changes (recruitments and resignations) and staff developments

- Changes to teaching and learning facilities/ resources

8.2.5   Response to comments made in last accreditation report

This section is only applicable to re-accreditation documentation. Provide responses to each comment made in the last accreditation report.

8.2.6   Internal and external validation documents

IQSSL will not consider a programme proposal until it has been approved by all appropriate authorities within its own University or Institution. All relevant documentation and reports relating to the internal validation process should form part of the submission.

The submission shall also include external validation documents such as external review reports, demand assessments, and accreditation certificates by other professional bodies.

8.3 The following programme details with support documents must be included within relevant sections or in annexure with clear reference:

- Rationale and philosophy of the programme, clearly stated with an appropriate assessment strategy and details of how these are applied within the curriculum

- Identification of specific challenges that the programme is designed to meet

- Details of how competencies specified by the IQSSL are taught and assessed within the curriculum

- Entry requirements and target enrolments (minimum and maximum numbers); standards of the entry qualifications, and evidence on existing programmes that these are being maintained

- Relationship to other related programmes

- Structure and content, including curriculum, syllabi, required and recommended reading, teaching methods etc.

- Assessment, progression and award arrangements including the appointment and role of external quality assurers

- Staffing of the programme: the range of expertise, qualification and experience of each member of staff

- Details of the involvement of Chartered Quantity Surveyors in the development, teaching and assessment of the programme

- Current staff development policy and achievements; recent research, publications and other scholarly activities, and consultancies

- Support resources, technical and administrative staff, facilities accommodation and major equipment: library and other reference facilities/infrastructure

- Funding for the programme

- Administration structure of the Academic Institution and its influence on the programme

- Programme management including its administrative structure, and constitution of programme committees and/ or boards

- Quality assurance and enhancement methods in place and practiced student facilities, amenities and support

- Details of extracurricular activities encouraged and supported by the Academic Institution.

9. PERIODS OF ACCREDITATION AND CONDITIONS

9.1 IQSSL will grant accreditation to a programme for up to THREE academic years (i.e. three student intakes for programmes with one intake a year), but shorter periods may be appropriate where, for example, further development, or other changes in the programme or Academic Institution are expected.

9.2 Two standard conditions apply to all accreditations /reaccreditations; (a) the submission of annual monitoring reports and (b) the appointment of external examiners.

9.3 Programmes are normally granted accreditation subject to certain specific conditions in addition to standards conditions. To maintain the accreditation, the Academic Institution

must comply with all conditions, usually within a specified time limit. Failure to meet conditions may result in withdrawal of accreditation by IQSSL.

9.4 Any changes to programme content and delivery should be duly notified to the IQSSL. Major changes to programme content and delivery, and any change to modes of assessment should be notified at least 30 days prior to implementation and will require the approval of IQSSL for continuity of accreditation. Major change to programme content is a change that requires modification in "Mapping of Programme Contents with Competencies specified by IQSSL". Major change to programme delivery includes changes to delivery mode, and deviation to weekly workload of students beyond ±20%. Major change to staff beyond ±20% should be also duly notified to the IQSSL.

9.5 The annual monitoring reports referred to in 5.2 above must include responses to any specific conditions of accreditation where applicable.

9.6 The terms of accreditation may include a number of recommendations on which Academic Institutions are invited to take action. Recommendations are not mandatory, but may become a point of focus when programmes are considered for re-accreditation.

9.7 Accreditation will apply to a programme, in a named mode of study (i.e. full time, part time, etc.) which is validated, supported and controlled by an academic institution. Accreditation cannot be transferred to an alternative location without IQSSL approval.

9.8 IQSSL must be informed of any significant changes introduced after a programme has received its accreditation. IQSSL will then decide whether the changes affect the accredited status of the programme or whether further information should be provided.

9.9 A programme offered in an alternative mode of study or with a new named pathway will be treated as a new programme.

10 ACCREDITATION OF LATERAL ENTRY UNDERGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAMMES

Lateral entry undergraduate study programmes shall recognise students' prior learning in Quantity Surveying (Diploma, Higher National Diploma, and Advanced Diploma) and allow them to transfer their earned credits to the undergraduate study programme. An Academic Institution might run a suitable bridging/ Gap-filling programme where necessary for imparting the knowledge to the student seeking lateral entry.

Application for Accreditation of Lateral Entry Undergraduate Study Programmes

10.1   The Academic Institution can apply for accreditation of lateral entry Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programme along with the application of accreditation for relevant regular entry Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programme.

10.2   The Academic Institutions that have already obtained and successfully maintaining the IQSSL accreditation for the relevant regular entry Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programme can also apply for accreditation of their lateral entry Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programme separately by submitting a filled application for accreditation of undergraduate degree programmes along with a request letter.

10.3   For both above 10.1 and 10.2, the Academic Institutions having lateral entry schemes to complete their Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programmes shall submit the following information and completed schedules in Annexure 05, 06, 07 and 08;

- Lateral Entry Eligibility Criteria for the Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programme

- Information on the credit transfer policy applicable to Lateral Entry students and filled schedules in Annexure 05, 06 and 07.

- Module details of Bridging/Gap-filling programmes (if any) offered for different accepted Diploma holders for Lateral Entry (Refer to the schedule in Annexure 08)

- Sample papers of Eligibility Tests (if any)

Lateral Entry Eligibility Criteria

Minimum Lateral Entry Eligibility Criteria for allowing students to pursue Quantity Surveying undergraduate study programmes to be:

• Having successfully completed Diploma in Quantity Surveying, including a minimum 1-year academic session and a minimum three-month industrial training session;

AND

• Have a very good (B) pass for Mathematics at General Certificate of Examinations (Ordinary Level - Local / London / Foreign equivalent);

AND

• Obtaining minimum 2.5 OGPA (Overall Grade Point Average) from the completed Diploma;

OR

• Having two years of relevant experience after completion of the Diploma

The Institution shall submit their published Lateral Entry Eligibility Criteria with documentary evidence (Eg. Copy of advertisement)