



ADVANCING BUILT ENVIRONMENT
COST PROFESSIONALS

AIQS COURSE ACCREDITATION POLICY

APPLICABLE 1 JANUARY 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document details a co-operative approach to the accreditation of Universities or other Higher Education Providers (Providers) providing courses in the disciplines of quantity surveying and construction economics. The goal of the scheme is to ensure that the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (AIQS) and the Providers can co-operate on course development and delivery and the conduct of research in mutually beneficial ways. This document is issued by the AIQS as a guide to Providers and representatives of other professional bodies as to how the accreditation system is implemented.

This approach will be based on respectful dialogue and provides a guide to ways in which that discussion can be leveraged to ensure that the Providers are delivering the most highly skilled graduates to the construction and allied industries. In return, the AIQS agrees to make its contribution to the pursuit of excellence and continuing professional development. As part of that process, the AIQS agrees to co-operate with the Providers to ensure that research and teaching are central goals that are recognised and nurtured.

In terms of educational goals, the AIQS accepts that student education is part of a life time career long process; that educated citizens who can problem solve, negotiate, think laterally and are flexible in their thinking are the outcomes to which both the Providers and the AIQS must contribute.

The accreditation process applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate courses meeting the current Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements for higher education awards, quality assurance and regulation in the disciplines of building/construction management, and quantity surveying.

The goals of the accreditation process are to:

- Offer a means to strengthen and improve existing academic courses in the disciplines covered;
- Provide guidelines for the development of new academic courses in the discipline;
- Provide guidelines for accrediting new courses
- Provide a framework for a mutual, ongoing dialogue between the AIQS and the Providers;
- Provide incentives and a framework for innovation and research.

The aim of the accreditation process is to assess the quality of a Provider's course(s) with regard to staffing, syllabus content, facilities, research and innovation, resources, and the systems that will ensure that this quality can be maintained. The role of the AIQS in this accreditation process is to evaluate a course to ensure that it meets the requirements of this document.

The AIQS accredits courses that meet and maintain educational standards relevant to the disciplines of quantity surveying and construction economics and provides external verification of a course's quality. Graduates holding the resulting awards are adequately equipped to be recognised by the AIQS as meeting the educational requirements for entry to the profession of quantity surveying. Post-graduation work experience is NOT covered by this document and is subject to the AIQS Assessment of Profession Competence (APC) rules.

Any changes to this policy or the benchmarks described herein will be communicated to Providers offering accredited courses.

2. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

There three steps in the accreditation process:

2.1. STEP 1 – INITIAL REVIEW

Once a Provider has decided to seek accreditation with the AIQS, the first step is to forward details of the applicable course to be considered by the Education Committee of the AIQS.

The AIQS Education & Events Manager will forward to the Provider a [Self-Assessment Form \(Appendix A\)](#) which must be completed in detail, providing sufficient information on the course offered for accreditation, facilities and resources, staff, teaching methods, research capacity and activity (present or anticipated) etc., together with course outlines, External Examiner reports, and any reports or minutes from the Industry Advisory Committee meetings.

Additionally, as part of the [Self-Assessment Form](#) Providers are required to map their course/program against the sets of skills and knowledge that are considered essential for quantity surveying graduates. Graduates of an AIQS accredited course/program are expected to have acquired the following skills/knowledge and be able to apply them in the workplace in an entry-level position as a junior quantity surveyor. See [3.3 Quantity Surveying Competencies](#).

A completed copy of the [Self-Assessment Form](#) should be forwarded to the AIQS Education & Events Manager (education@aiqs.com.au).

On receipt of this information all documentation will be assessed by AIQS Education Committee representatives.

If additional information or clarification is required, the AIQS Education & Events Manager or nominated AIQS Representative will contact the Provider requesting either further documentation to support the Self-Assessment Form or to ensure that there is no misunderstanding of AIQS requirements.

Throughout this process assistance from the AIQS to the Provider is offered, including mentoring if required.

2.2. STEP 2 – ACCREDITATION PANEL VISIT

Once the AIQS is satisfied that the course(s) meet the general requirements for an accredited course, arrangements are made with the Provider for a formal accreditation visit. This visit should be for a duration of no more than two days.

In conjunction with the Provider a date is agreed and an agenda formed (See [Sample Agenda \(Appendix B\)](#)). The AIQS will appoint an accreditation panel and the Provider will be informed of membership of the panel. The AIQS is responsible for organising the accreditation panel which will usually comprise of an academic, a local industry practitioner and a representative of the AIQS National Office.

The accreditation panel is responsible for ensuring that the information provided by the Provider in the Self-Assessment form is correct, touring the facilities to ensure that both staff and students have the necessary facilities to accommodate the course, and briefing the Head of School and discipline staff on the ongoing AIQS requirements for accreditation. This will involve discussion with staff on how students meet the benchmarks and how these are tested, interviewing of students, perusing students' marked work, and in some cases a verbal debrief to discipline staff on the panel's findings. Where possible, the AIQS will rely on External Examiners' reports and other internal documents that the Providers are already using for reporting purposes.

The academic member of the team will be the notional team leader and responsible for the conduct of the panel visit. The academic member is expected to have, or have held, an equivalent academic rank of Associate Professor or

above, or an academic leadership role of an accredited course, and have a good understanding of the education standards required for accreditation.

The local industry practitioner should have a good understanding of the educational standards for course accreditation and a good understanding of the requirements of the profession (e.g. skill level of graduates).

On occasions, additional academic or industry members or stakeholders may join the accreditation panel as observers under a mentoring process to ensure the pool of qualified assessors is maintained. Observers on the team will not have a decision-making role.

2.3. STEP 3 – REPORT & RECOMMENDATION

The AIQS Education & Events Manager will be responsible for compiling a draft report on the accreditation visit. The draft should be completed within one month of the accreditation visit and will be forwarded to the Provider to allow them two weeks to correct factual errors or make comment on any unfavourable recommendations.

The accreditation panel will then meet to decide whether to accept, or change and/or include the Provider's comments. Any factual errors will be amended in the final report.

Once the report becomes final it is forwarded to the AIQS Education Committee and National Board for comment and endorsement of provisional accreditation. After endorsement the report is forwarded to the Head of School or other appropriate academic officer restating any conditions attached. Any conditions and/or timelines will be monitored by the AIQS Education & Events Manager.

Once endorsed, a course is provisionally accredited until such time as the first cohort of students has graduated. During the period of provisional accreditation, the course will be monitored through annual External Examiner visits (See [4. Continuation of Accreditation](#)). Transition from provisional to full accreditation will be dependent on endorsement of the course and its delivery by the External Examiners.

Accredited courses will be included in the AIQS Accredited Course Guide and published on the AIQS website.

2.4. COSTS

The Provider will bear all costs associated with accommodation and travel of the representatives from the AIQS accreditation panel and for subsequent visits by the AIQS External Examiners. The AIQS does not charge a fee for course accreditation.

3. ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A course is assessed during the accreditation process to ascertain whether the course meets the criteria for accreditation of the resulting qualification. The panel will consider a number of aspects of the course and its delivery including:

3.1. COURSE STRUCTURE

The AIQS acknowledges that models of undergraduate courses vary throughout Australia and the world; therefore there is no minimum length/time prescribed for an undergraduate course.

The AIQS also recognises that a Masters degree can be the vehicle for a full course delivery and that equivalent length experiential and self-directed learning would be counted as part of the full-time equivalency.

The length of a course will therefore be determined by a number of factors, the key one being the quality and time of exposure to major elements of the disciplines and their work environment and requirements.

In addition, the AIQS requires that there must be an active industry advisory committee that meets and reports to management of the educational provider at least once a year.

The AIQS requires graduates who are knowledgeable and have a working understanding of the context of the industry as it is practised. Providing students with learning of the activities which make up the industrial workplace are vitally important, and it would be expected that, in the accreditation process that each Provider demonstrates the strategies and methodologies it employs in supporting their students in gaining this understanding and experience. The AIQS acknowledge that there are multiple ways of achieving this outcome and therefore require this information to be clearly demonstrated and reviewed at each of the annual visits.

The AIQS also understands that practical work experience is recommended but is not a condition for accreditation of the course or graduation of the student.

3.2. THRESHOLD STANDARD COMPLIANCE

It is a requirement of accreditation that some academic teaching staff be research active and/or have relevant industry experience. It is also desirable that academic teaching staff be members or eligible to be members of a relevant quantity surveying or construction institute.

The Provider should ensure that research informs and/or is incorporated in the curriculum.

When accreditation is sought and the Provider does not have such academic teaching staff, an appointment may need to be made before the accreditation is awarded.

Where a Provider is not a university and there is no requirement that staff be research active, the Provider must demonstrate that it has policies that encourage staff to enhance their scholarship of the built environment.

3.3. QUANTITY SURVEYING COMPETENCIES

As part of Step 1 – Initial Review, Providers are required to map their course/program against the following sets of skills and knowledge that are considered essential for quantity surveying graduates. Graduates of an AIQS accredited course/program are expected to have acquired the following skills/knowledge and be able to apply them in the workplace in an entry-level position as a junior quantity surveyor.

Competencies should be self-assessed against the following scale;

- 0 – Not covered by the course
- 1 – The course covers basic learnings of this competency
- 2 – The course covers intermediate learnings of this competency
- 3 – The course covers advanced learnings of this competency

3.3.1. BASIC SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (MANDATORY)

Providers must demonstrate that the following topics are adequately covered in their program/course.

Quantification/Measurement <i>(Required Scale Level: 3)</i>	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and apply the standard method of measurement relevant to the area of practice • understand and apply standard phraseology of building trades and
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	<p>elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quantify, enumerate and measure.
<p>Communication Skills <i>(Required Scale Level: At least 2)</i></p>	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate effectively, orally, in writing and with visual aids • combine fact or ideas into a complex whole • prepare written information in a formal way which clearly conveys meaning.
<p>Personal and Interpersonal Skills <i>(Required Scale Level: At least 2)</i></p>	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate self-confidence time management and self-motivation and enthusiasm • understand the role and motivation of others and participate in professional and inter-professional teamwork • identify and assess problems and find innovative solutions • set and achieve personal objectives and targets • understand and, where appropriate, apply marketing and negotiating skills.
<p>Business and Management Skills <i>(Required Scale Level: At least 2)</i></p>	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the need for cost-effective use of appropriate resources • understand the process of quality control and assurance, and understand appropriate certification • recognise consumer and client needs and the process for their satisfaction • understand accounting principles, including budgets and cash flows • understand the scale of fees and charges for professional services • be familiar with general economic principles.
<p>Professional Practice <i>(Required Scale Level: At least 2)</i></p>	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise the nature and significance of property development in all its forms • understand the role responsibilities and legal liabilities of Quantity Surveyors in matters of practice • understand and apply the ethics of professional practice • understand and apply legislation relevant to providing a professional service including registration of Quantity Surveyors and quantity Surveying practices • understand the role of Quantity Surveyor in a multi-disciplinary project

	<p>team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the structure of the national Institute of Quantity Surveyors, its by-laws and rules of conduct.
<p>Computer and Information Technology (Required Scale Level: At least 2)</p>	<p>The ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand and apply basic computer skills relevant to area of practice • understand the use and relevance of information technology
<p>Construction Technology (Required Scale Level: 3)</p>	<p>Acquire knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction processes and technologies • Construction activities and sequencing of activities • Source and use of building materials including testing and assessing techniques • Design and installation of building services • Principles of building science in respect of heat, light and sound • Principles of building science in relation to structures including analysis, design and stability • Principles of construction including demolition methods, formwork design, erection techniques plant and equipment • Principles of site surveys • Interpretation of building plans, construction codes and regulations • Specification writing.
<p>Construction Law and Regulation (Required Scale Level: At least 2)</p>	<p>Acquire knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws and regulations relevant to the construction industry • Various forms of building and construction contracts. • These basic skills form the platform from which a competent Quantity Surveyor can develop and are an integral part of the various units of competence.

These basic skills form the platform from which a competent Quantity Surveyor can develop and are an integral part of the various units of competence.

3.3.2. SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS (MANDATORY)

Providers must demonstrate that the following topics are also adequately covered in their program/course. Each of the below competencies have a Required Scale Level of at least 2.

- Contract administration (progress payments, variations, liquidated damages etc)
- Tender preparation including unit rate build-up

- Cost planning/design economics
- Early estimating (whole project)
- Life cycle costing
- Building project procurement/delivery systems

3.3.3. SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS (RECOMMENDED)

Providers are not expected to cover all the following topics in their course and the list is not exhaustive – it is indicative of other QS related areas that might be included in an accredited course.

- Value management/engineering
- Project management
- Feasibility studies
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Briefing
- Cost analysis of completed projects
- Dispute resolution
- Property law
- Facilities management
- Tax depreciation

A full copy of the National Competency Standards for Quantity Surveyors/Construction Economists is available in [Appendix F](#).

4. CONTINUATION OF ACCREDITATION

Once a course is accredited, such accreditation will continue as long as the Provider continues to meet the conditions of that accreditation and the below annual reporting requirements.

A new accreditation may be triggered by major changes to established courses in terms of structure, delivery and/or content that occur after their accreditation, or if there is significant restructuring of a School or Faculty that could have an effect on course delivery, the teaching staff, or reductions in resources or the AIQS decides, for any other reason, that the accreditation should be reviewed.

Such accreditations will be treated in the same way as accreditation of a new course and Providers will be required to follow the steps outlined above if they wish to have the revised course accredited.

4.1. ANNUAL REPORTING

Continuation of accreditation is reliant on the Provider supplying to the AIQS on an annual basis:

- An Institutional report - the content required in the annual reports is outlined in [Institutional Annual Report Template \(Appendix C\)](#).
- An [External Examiners Report \(Appendix E\)](#) including the [Declaration Form \(Appendix D\)](#)

- Minutes of the Industry Advisory Committee
- Any conditional requirements included in the Accreditation Report.

Providers may also provide copies of any other course assessment documents or similar items that feel may help to demonstrate the quality of the content and delivery of their courses(s).

Due Date: These reports must be submitted to the AIQS Education & Events Manager (education@aiqs.com.au) by the 31 August following the academic year being reviewed.

The AIQS Education Committee will consider the annual reports. If there are concerns raised that may require attention, the AIQS will either inform the External Examiners, if it is close to the time when the External Examiners are due to undertake an audit, or contact the Provider directly to ensure that any possible anomalies in the course or areas of concern are addressed.

If the information received by the AIQS does not alleviate all concerns the AIQS will decide if a separate visit is warranted. The Provider and any other stakeholders will be informed of this decision.

4.2. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The Provider will recommend an independent senior academic and local practitioner as external examiners and advise the AIQS of the appointment for the upcoming year in the Institutions' Annual Report.

It is advised that the Independent Senior Academic is appointed from an Interstate Academic Institution to avoid potential conflicts of interest, for that reason, Academics who are also past employees should not be appointed.

The External Examiners will visit the Provider annually and write a report which will be submitted to both the Provider and the AIQS that summarises the outcomes of the visit.

Such visits should take place within the first six months of the year following the academic year being reviewed. The report including an [External Examiners Declaration Form \(Appendix D\)](#) must be submitted to the AIQS by 31 August.

An External Examiner may be appointed for a period of 3 years, with an optional one year extension.

The External Examiners will:

- Audit the delivery of the course
- Ensure that the quality and content of accredited course aligns with the original accreditation
- Benchmark assessment standards applied to student work
- Consider key performance indicators and proposed course changes
- Provide advice for continuous improvement
- Monitor the improvement cycle
- Consider any comments from the minutes of the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC) that may have a bearing on the course(s)

The External Examiners may also comment on:

- Student success as determined by relevant interviews
- Graduate success determined by relevant interview course quality

- Research activities
- Evidence of links between theoretical knowledge and practice.

See [External Examiners Report Template \(Appendix E\)](#)

5. APPEALS PROCESS

A Provider may appeal an adverse decision of the Course Accreditation Panel in the Final Report, if the panel or its nominated representatives:

1. Failed to follow the accreditation process and/or standards as detailed in this document;
2. Did not consider all of the documentation provided by the Provider within the deadlines stated and/or;
3. Made an error(s) which affected the decision of the Course Accreditation Panel.

Should the Provider wish to initiate an appeal, a request should be made in writing to the AIQS Education & Events Manager (education@aiqs.com.au) within 14 days of receiving the Final Report.

Documentation to support the appeal should also be provided at this time.

The Providers' Course Accreditation status shall remain unchanged until the appeals process is resolved.

5.1. APPEALS COMMITTEE

An appeals committee shall consist of the AIQS National President (or nominated representative), one academic and one local practitioner, none of whom should have been a part of the initial Course Accreditation Panel.

A meeting on the appeals committee will take place within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. The Provider shall be advised of the meeting date and have the right to address the appeals committee during this meeting. The outcome of the appeal shall be communicated to the Provider within 14 days of the meeting taking place.

The decision of the appeals committee is final, no further appeals shall be considered. The Provider may choose to re-apply for accreditation, once the deficiencies in the course have been addressed.

5.2. COST OF APPEALS

The Provider shall be responsible for any costs associated with an appeal.

6. CONTACT

Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors

Education & Events Manager
Suite 303, Level 3, 70 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000 AUSTRALIA
T: +61 2 8234 4000
E: education@aiqs.com.au

APPENDIX A: SELF- ASSESSMENT FORM

A separate form is required for each course to be assessed. This completed form, together with the documents listed below, should be forwarded to:

Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors

Education & Events Manager
Suite 303, Level 3, 70 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000 AUSTRALIA
T: +61 2 8234 4000
E: education@aiqs.com.au

COURSE INFORMATION

Academic Institution:	
Address:	
Faculty:	
Department:	
School:	
Course Title & Number:	
Course Location(s):	
Course Coordinator:	

COURSE OUTCOMES

Provide a description of graduates' competencies and how they are assessed by the university and enclose course outlines	
Explanation of building industry work experience requirements of students	
Description of how Honours are awarded	
Number of students in the course and their entry level standards this year (per location)	
Number of students who successfully completed the course last year (per location)	
Comments on facilities and resources for the course (per location)	
Explanation of consultative processes with industry (enclosing composition of advisory committee and minutes of meetings during the last 12 months)	
Developments and initiatives or other Strategic Directions that affect the Delivery of the course	

COURSE MAPPING

Please map the course against the core competencies.

SCALE

- 0 – Not covered by the course
- 1 – The course covers basic learnings of this competency
- 2 – The course covers intermediate learnings of this competency
- 3 – The course covers advanced learnings of this competency

BASIC SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (MANDATORY)

Core Competency	Scale (0 – 3)
Quantification/Measurement	
Communication Skills	
Personal and Interpersonal Skills	
Business and Management Skills	
Professional Practice	
Computer and Information Technology	
Construction Technology	
Construction Law and Regulation	

SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS (MANDATORY)

Core Competency	Scale (0 – 3)
Contract Administration	
Tender Preparation including unit rate build up	
Cost planning/design economics	
Early Estimating (whole project)	
Life cycle costing	
Building Project Procurement/delivery systems	

SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS (RECOMMENDED)

Core Competency	Scale (0 – 3)
Value Management/Engineering	
Project Management	
Cashflows	
Feasibility Studies	
Cost-benefit analysis	
Briefing	
Budget preparation	
Final Accounts	
Cost analysis of completed projects	
Dispute Resolution	
Property Law	
Facilities Management	
Tax Depreciation	

STAFF/TEACHING

List full-time and part-time staff, with their duties, qualifications and professional memberships	
Official ratio of full-time staff equivalent to full-time student equivalent (per location)	
Comments on programs for staff self-improvement and research	
Details of teaching mode of delivery	
Explanation of systems in place for assessing teaching	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Any additional information you may wish to include	
Attachments to be submitted with this form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Outlines• Minutes of the Industry Advisory Committee meetings• Annual reports of any current External Examiners

APPENDIX B: ACCREDITATION PANEL VISIT – SAMPLE AGENDA

SAMPLE AGENDA

INSERT UNIVERSITY - Accreditation Panel Visit

Date:

Time:

Location:

Invitees:

ITEM	TOPIC	By
1.	Opening & Welcome	
	University Introduction	
	AIQS Introduction	AIQS
3.	Panel meets with Academic Teaching Staff	
4.	Panel meets with Senior Management (Dean)	
5.	Panel meets with current students and recent graduates	
6.	Tour of Facilities	
7.	Panel to provide initial verbal feedback	

APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE

The completed report must be submitted to the AIQS Education & Events Manager by the 31st August following the academic year being reviewed:

Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors

Education & Events Manager
Suite 303, Level 3, 70 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000 AUSTRALIA
T: +61 2 8234 4000
E: education@aiqs.com.au

COURSE INFORMATION

Academic Institution:	
Address:	
Faculty:	
Department:	
School:	
Course Title & Number:	
Course Location(s):	
Course Coordinator:	
Course Title & Number:	

Report Information (please include):

- Date of Report
- Academic Year
- Current External Examiners
- Proposed External Examiners for following academic year (include contact details)
- Academic Staff Updates
- Course Changes
- Official ratio of full-time staff equivalent to full-time student equivalent (per location)
- Number of students in the course and their entry level standards this year (per location)
- Research Update
- Updates required to the AIQS Course Accreditation Guide
- Any additional Information

APPENDIX D: AIQS EXTERNAL EXAMINER DECLARATION FORM

This form must accompany your External Examiners Report.

COURSE INFORMATION

Academic Institution:	
Course Title & Number:	
Course Location(s):	
Course Coordinator:	

I certify that I do not have a professional relationship with the Academic Institution, or are employed by a direct local competitor of the Academic Institution.

I further certify that no other relationship, bias or ethical conflict exists which will prevent me from evaluating any course solely on its merits and in accordance with the AIQS Accreditation Guidelines.

External Examiner 1	External Examiner 2
Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

APPENDIX E: EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT TEMPLATE

The External Examiners Report should include:

- Details of the External Examiners
- Introduction
- Information provided for review
- Comments on any changes to the course or staff updates
- Comments on course mapping against AIQS Requirements
- Comments on action items/recommendations from previous year report
- Staff Meeting outcomes
- Student Group outcomes
- Panel findings / Recommendations
- Any other relevant information

APPENDIX F: NATIONAL COMPETENCY STANDARDS FOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS/CONSTRUCTION ECONOMISTS

The following pages detail the National Competency Standards.