

# University Accreditation Assessor Volunteer Role Descriptor

## 1. Reference

**MQ/UNIA/2.2**

## 2. Background

The Education and Accreditation Forum (EAF) acts with authority delegated from IChemE Board of Trustees in deciding matters relating to the accreditation of academic programmes of study and the assessment of academic formation for the purposes of IChemE membership. Its purpose is as follows.

- To oversee, strategically and tactically, IChemE's involvement in chemical engineering education worldwide
- To ensure the effective operation of all IChemE academic accreditation processes and of all processes & assessments relating to the academic formation for the professional qualification of individual members

The role of the Assessors is to ensure that the output of a chemical engineering programme meet the standards laid down by IChemE while at the same time spreading good practice. An accreditation assessment involves studying documents provided by the department, a visit to the department and the preparation of a report to EAF.

### Accreditation Process Overview

#### Visits

Visits take place at a time agreed with the Department. It is usually in term time to facilitate discussions with a representative group of students. A visit to the University or college takes place over two days: since 2020 visits have been largely virtual, though often with a brief physical visit by one or two assessors. On average an Assessor would normally be asked to undertake one or two visits a year.

Each team is appointed by the EAF Vice-Chair with responsibility for visits and will have a Lead Assessor who is responsible for the conduct of the visit (more information on Lead Assessor's role below). The team will normally comprise three Assessors, including the Lead Assessor. At least one Assessor will be an academic and another will be from industry.

#### Virtual Accreditation Panel (VAP) Meeting and EAF Ratification

Following the visit, the Assessors will report their findings to IChemE. The report, excluding the recommendations of the Assessors, will be sent to the Department for comment on any factual inaccuracies after approval by the proposed VAP chair. The completed accreditation report will be considered by the EAF and a decision on whether to accredit will be made. While Assessors are required to make recommendations to EAF about the decision, these may be overridden on examination by EAF to maintain consistency with IChemE criteria and with other accreditation decisions. The EAF will usually work through VAPs which usually meet monthly for this purpose. The department will be notified of the outcome at the earliest opportunity.

## 2. Main duties and responsibilities

IChemE University Accreditation Assessors are academics or industrialists who give their time voluntarily to represent IChemE. Their expertise allows EAF and IChemE to conduct credible reviews of programmes submitted for accreditation. Potential assessors are expected to declare any conflicts of interest to IChemE, so that each assessor team can be seen to be independent of the institution being assessed

### All Assessors

Assessors are required to be objective and comply to IChemE standards and requirements. Discussions and decisions must not be based on personal views. As you are representing IChemE, we ask all assessors to act in a professional manner.

Prior to an accreditation visit an Assessor will be expected to read all the documentation and then evaluate nominated sections of the information provided by the Department and highlight any areas to

be explored further. At the discretion of the Lead Assessor, the documentation may be divided between the three Assessors with each having responsibility for certain areas of the accreditation submission.

All assessors must make sure they have read and understood the documents. Contact the Lead Assessor to request further information, e.g. missing items or needed for clarification, well in advance of the visit.

All assessors should arrive prepared with a good understanding of the provision to be reviewed.

**NOTE: For traceability and to avoid misunderstandings, all business email communications amongst the assessors should include IChemE. Telephone discussions should also be captured in an email.**

Assessors are required to abide by IChemE's 'Code of Conduct for Assessors'. Any confidential information provided by the Department will not be disclosed or used for commercial gain. Assessors are, however, encouraged to help disseminate good practice and encourage new approaches to teaching and learning.

### Lead Assessors

Lead assessors are responsible for co-ordinating the team, including liaising with IChemE, allocating any specific roles to team members, agreeing the agenda and timetable with the university, chairing meetings within the assessor team and with the university, and ensuring that the team has a shared view of how the visit is to be conducted and what the priority areas for discussion are. They should ensure that all assessors act in a good professional manner and work within the IChemE Code of Conduct. They are responsible for ensuring that the visit reports are completely within three weeks of the visit and representing the assessor team at the Virtual Accreditation Panel and, if necessary, subsequent EAF meetings.

## 3. Appointment method

Applications for University Accreditation Assessors are made to the relevant IChemE staff. Recommendations are then considered by the EAF Chair and Vice Chairs. Following approval by the panel, nominated University Accreditation Assessors will be advised to complete relevant induction training. Following approval by the trainer, trainee University Accreditation Assessors will be advised of their formal appointment.

## 4. Period of appointment

Assessors are expected to serve a minimum of five years in the role. Subject to retraining, possible reappointment for another five years, if appropriate.

## 5. Commitment required

Assessors are expected to study all documents provided by the University prior to conducting a visit, which may take up to 10 hours. A typical physical accreditation visit lasts for two days; virtual visits may take a similar amount of time spread over a longer period. There will normally also be a virtual meeting of the assessors in advance of the visit.

Depending on the location, assessors are expected to be able to travel locally or abroad. Throughout the accreditation process, when requested, Assessors are expected to be available to assist with queries via emails or attend meetings virtually or in-person.

## 6. Training

New Assessors are required to undertake induction training and post-training assessment.

All Assessors are required to undertake a refresher training every 3 years, and other relevant training when required. Lead Assessors are also required to undertake additional training on VAP meetings.

## 7. Person specification

All assessors must be an IChemE Chartered Chemical Engineer at Member or Fellow grade.

In addition to the appropriate knowledge and experience, academic assessors are expected to have experience in one of more of the following:

- External examining

- Course leader / programme director position or with a leading role in course management or design
- Members of institutional validation and/or review committee
- UK Quality Assurance Agency (or its equivalent in other nations) auditing

Preferably:

- From departments that are accredited with IChemE.

Industrialist assessors are not normally required to meet the above criteria. However, they are expected to have the appropriate knowledge, and experience of the Higher Education sector.

Recruitment to the assessor pool will aim to maintain a diverse group of assessors with an appropriate balance of geographical location and experience: this includes the ability to address accreditation of Professional Process Safety Engineer and EngTech programmes

## 8. Other

### Benefits

- To contribute to the development of future engineers.
- To help maintain and improve the quality of Chemical Engineering Higher Education provision in the UK and internationally
- To gain an insight into current good practice in Chemical Engineering Higher Education.
- For academics, to gain a deep insight into the accreditation process to help you prepare for your own Department's accreditation visit.
- For industrialists, to gain an up-to-date understanding of the formation of chemical engineers and the implications of this for the profession and their employers.

### Expenses for the activities:

All reasonable, relevant travel, meals and accommodation expenses for physical visits are covered but IChemE cannot reimburse Assessors for loss of earnings.

### Additional details

Area of interest that relates to the role (delete as appropriate):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education Special Interest Group</li> <li>▪ Professional Development</li> <li>▪ Membership</li> <li>▪ Higher Education</li> <li>▪ Publications</li> </ul>
Is the role location specific?	Worldwide
Total number of volunteer vacancies for this role:	Approx 15
Point of Contact	IChemE Head of Education Affairs

To apply for this role or further information, please contact [volunteer@icheme.org](mailto:volunteer@icheme.org), quoting the role and reference number at the top of this document.

**CLOSING DATE:** There is no closing date for these roles as recruitment is ongoing

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