

ACCE WHITE PAPER-STANDARDS ISSUES

August 15, 2008

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The following issues/questions, with regard to ACCE Document 103 and related documents, were raised at the Visiting Team Chair training session on July 23, 2008, at the Annual Meeting in Schaumburg, IL.

The consensus at the training session was that these issues/questions, which may occur in the accreditation process, should be addressed by the appropriate ACCE committee for clarification or correction. Where appropriate a reference to the standards is included parenthetically; for example, [3.3.1] refers to Document 103, Section 3.3.1. Where the standard is quoted, underlining may be added by the author for emphasis.

1. Does ACCE accredit “degrees”, “programs”, or “degree programs”? This becomes an issue when a “program” offers multiple degrees. The standards also refer to a “construction unit” [2.2].

RECOMMENDATION. Revise Section I to clarify.

2. Satellite campuses. The standards do not deal with satellite campuses where programs may offer a construction degree at more than one physical location.

RECOMMENDATION. Revise Section II to clarify. Require that the satellite campus situations be set forth in the Self-Study and that the Visiting Team visit the satellite campus.

3. Dual or second degrees. Some universities permit the awarding of dual or second degrees where the number of additional credit hours required is set by the university. Are these dual or second degrees in construction accredited? They may, or may not, meet all the curriculum requirements of Document 103.

RECOMMENDATION. Clarify this issue in Section III.

4. Construction minors. Some universities promote the awarding of minors with a minimum credit hour requirement. What should the ACCE position be on the awarding of minors in construction?

RECOMMENDATION. Clarify this issue in Section III.

5. Construction education unit leader. Section 2.2 requires that the “construction education unit must be headed by a qualified administrator...”. For a Department or programs awarding multiple degrees, who is this “administrator”? This becomes an issue when determining if this individual has the requisite qualifications.

RECOMMENDATION. Clarify this issue in Section 2.2.

6. **Outside funding.** Section 2.3 reads: “Non-budgeted funds should be used to supplement institution funds...”. In reality most programs rely more and more on “soft monies and donations” to support their programs. Most institutions are facing tight budgets and construction programs must be entrepreneurial to supplement institutional funding.
RECOMMENDATION. Revise Section 2.3 as appropriate.
7. **“Should”.** In the issue above, the word “should” is used and it is found in several other places throughout the standards. In interpreting the standards, does “should” imply a requirement? Is a program in violation of the standards if they do not meet a “should” requirement?
RECOMMENDATION. Throughout the standards replace ‘should’ with ‘shall’ or ‘may’ as appropriate.
8. **Student materials.** Section 3.2 requires “programs must provide a syllabus/outline for each course taught by the construction unit...”; the section goes on to specify other materials required. In many cases, courses in the Construction and/or Construction Science categories may not be taught by the program, but taught by engineering or architecture programs. Should the requirement for course materials include all courses in the Construction and Construction Science category?
RECOMMENDATION. Revise the standards to require that course materials be provided for all courses in the Construction and Construction Science categories, regardless of who teaches the courses.
9. **Internship/co-op requirement.** Section 7.3 requires “They [the students] should also work to obtain construction related experience through participation in internships and cooperative education.” [Note the use again of “should”.] Does the program violate the standard if it does not have a required internship or Co-op program?
RECOMMENDATION. Revise this standard to be specific. Consider including this requirement in Section III.
10. **Business/management course.** Section 3.3.2 3) reads “This category involves fundamental courses to provide a foundation for contemporary business practices appropriate to applications in construction.” In some recent visits the Visiting Team has cited a curriculum weakness when a program included a construction/project management course in the Business category, implying that the management course must be taught in the Business College.
Recommendation. Clarify this issue.
11. **Faculty salaries.** Section 4.4 reads “...it is important that faculty compensation be competitive with comparable positions in other institutions and industry...”. This standard is not met by any program as far as having salaries comparable with industry and there is little data available on salaries in “other institutions”.

- RECOMMENDATION. Revise this standard or eliminate it.*
12. **Laboratory.** Section 6.1 includes the requirements for laboratory space, but they are not very specific, nor is the definition of laboratory space clear.
RECOMMENDATION. Review and revise this section to clarify minimum laboratory requirements.
 13. **Library standard.** The library standard, Section 6.2 requires “evidence of both adequacy and use” in library materials with no further definition.
RECOMMENDATION. Review and revise this section to clarify minimum library requirements particularly in light of the extensive availability of electronic libraries.
 14. **IAC definition.** Section 7.1 sets forth the requirements for industry advisory committees. The section is weak and contains very few specifics. It requires that “...the committee should be representative of the potential employers of the graduates of the construction program.”; the number of “potentials employers” is quite large considering owners, developers, contractors, AE firms, consultants, etc.
RECOMMENDATION. Revise this section to be more specific, perhaps introducing some minimum standards as to memberships, records, activities, etc.
 15. **Continuing education.** Section 7.2 seems to require that programs have specific programs of continuing education to support industry. In addition Section 4.1 encourages faculty to seek professional development through industry involvement.
RECOMMENDATION. Clarify the standards as to expectations of programs to provide continuing education to industry.
 16. **Relations with the public.** Section VIII requires that extensive documentation be made available to the public. It is felt that most programs do not meet this standard as written. In addition there is information regarding what a program can say about its accreditation.
RECOMMENDATION. Consider revising this section. Most programs use their web sites as public information and the standard may need to consider minimum requirements for web sites. Also recommend revising, and perhaps moving to Section I, what programs may release about their accreditation status.
 17. **Academic Quality Plan.** Section IX is the source of a Weakness or a Concern in almost every visit. The current standard leaves wide latitude for interpretation as to requirements.
RECOMMENDATION. Consider revising this section to improve clarity and specificity.