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AUSTRALIAN COMPUTER SOCIETY

2019 ACS ACCREDITATION PILOT MANUAL

Volume 1: Accreditation Procedure

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Australian Computer Society (ACS) is the authority responsible for the accreditation of professional ICT education programs in Australia.

The ACS is accredited by the International Professional Practice Partnership (IFIP IP3).

The ACS is a signatory to the Seoul Accord. The Accord signatories accord mutual recognition to their respective accreditation schemes for undergraduate and postgraduate (master's level) (degree) programs for initial professional practice. The Seoul Accord Graduate Attributes have been incorporated within the ACS Core Body of Knowledge (2015, Appendix D). This mapping ensures that a program satisfying the ACS accreditation requirements will satisfy the Seoul Accord requirements and forms the substance of the ACS adherence to the Accord.

This document forms part of a new ACS approach to accreditation that is authorised for use during a pilot phase, while reforms are evaluated and reviewed. Participating institutions are asked for feedback and input. During the pilot phase, the institution may otherwise opt to continue with pre-existing ACS accreditation processes and requirements.

The ACS complements the role of Australia's Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and accredits higher education programs in ICT as a discipline-specific application of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* administered by TEQSA.

The 2019 ACS Accreditation Pilot system is specified in 3 volumes:

- Volume 1: Accreditation Procedure
- Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria
- Volume 3: Application Template

This document, *2019 ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 1: Accreditation Procedure*, specifies the process by which accreditation is conducted and maintained.

1.1 Terminology

For the purposes of the ACS Accreditation Manuals the following terminology is used:

AC	The Accreditation Committee of the ACS.
ACS	The Australian Computer Society.
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework (https://www.aqf.edu.au).
Accreditation Types	Accreditation recognises programs that prepare graduates for professional practice in ICT. *Professional* level for initial practice, *Advanced* for a higher level of expertise and *Specialist* accreditation for expertise in a particular specialisation. See Volume 2, Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.
SFIA	Skills Framework for the Information Age, current version (https://www.sfia-online.org/en).

Bloom's Taxonomy	Anderson, Lorin W (2001) A Taxonomy for Learning Teaching and *Assessment: Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* Longham.
HESF	Higher Education Standards Framework 2015 (https://www.teqsa.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework-2015).
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (https://www.teqsa.gov.au/).
IFIP IP3	International Federation of Information Processing; International Professional Practice Partnership (https://www.ipthree.org).
Seoul Accord	Seoul Accord establishes international standards for ICT graduate outcomes and a basis for international recognition of ACS accredited programs (http://www.seoulaccord.org/).
Institution	The Higher Education provider that is responsible for, or is applying for, the accreditation of an ICT program.
ICT School	That part of the Institution responsible for the education of ICT graduates.
ICT Industry Advisory Board	A body to provide advice on industry requirements of ICT graduates, program content, industry trends and the institutions interactions with industry.
ICT Industry Liaison	A role in the institution with oversight of industry interaction with a program, including organising ICT Industry Advisory Board meetings and consultations; industry projects, internships and placements; industry guest lectures, visits and so on.
Program	A structured set of subjects and/or majors leading to a recognised AQF qualification. In some institutions a program is called a course, or a degree.
Development Plan	An institution's schedule of activities and issues that may affect ACS accreditation.
Major/ Specialisation	A structured set of subjects which address the complexities of a specific part of the ICT field.
Subject	A subject is also known as a course or unit. It is a component of a program in which a coherent body of knowledge taught and assessed as a whole. Where quantification is required, a subject is one eighth of one Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL) being 'a measure of the study load, for a year, of a single student undertaking a course of study on a full-time basis' (https://www.teqsa.gov.au/glossary-terms).
ICT Subject	A subject which assesses knowledge from the essential or general areas of the CBoK or ICT Discipline-specific knowledge (see Accreditation Manual *Volume 2, Criterion C*)
ICT-related Subject	A mandatory subject with little or no specific ICT content may be considered ICT-related if it is necessary for the achievement of a program's ICT outcomes, for example, a subject that is clearly a prerequisite for a later mandatory ICT

subject. An ICT-related subject cannot merely provide a context for ICT to be applied.

Wherever possible the ACS will use the terminology of the institution seeking accreditation, however, for consistency, the above terminology is used throughout the Accreditation Manual.

1.2 Accreditation Roles

Title	Role
Director Professional Standards & Assessment Services	ACS executive with responsibility for accreditation operations and processes, implementation of standards, approval of panel and case manager allocations
Accreditation Officer	ACS staff role with responsibility for public information, operational coordination, accreditation panel formation and panel support. Provides a point of contact for the initiation phase of an accreditation.
Case Manager	Assigned by the ACS to an accreditation case or client. Provides a point of contact for the preliminary, assessment and reporting phases of an accreditation and provides ongoing advice. Agrees forms of evidence, receives applications, conducts analysis, serves as panel member and prepares reports and recommendations.
Panel Member	Assigned by ACS to an accreditation case. Responsible for reviewing available evidence and analysis, collectively agreeing recommendations and reviewing draft reports.
Panel Chair	Assigned by the ACS to an accreditation case. Facilitates collective panel analysis and formation of recommendations. Chairs panel meetings and accreditation visit proceedings, ensuring all panel members have equal hearing.
Accreditation Committee	Terms of Reference are set by ACS Management Committee. Reviews accreditation reports; approves accreditation outcomes and conditions.
Panel Observer	Observers do not act as Panel Members. Observers may witness proceedings (except as directed by the Chair) and may inspect evidence but may not participate in interactive sessions.

2 INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

The ACS aims to improve and develop professionalism in the ICT industry. One of the ways it does this is to assist educational institutions to produce graduates who are ready for professional practice in ICT. The accreditation requirements have been developed to specify what the features an ICT educational program would need to have to ensure such graduate outcomes. The accreditation process examines an institution's programs and where they meet requirements issues a Certificate of Accreditation.

To be accredited, an institution's ICT programs, staff and educational activity at least meet, and preferably exceed, accreditation requirements.

2.1 Timing of Accreditation Evaluation

Normally an institution and its programs are evaluated on-site on a five-year cycle. The ACS will issue a courtesy reminder in September/October that the cycle finishes in the following year, in order that the Institution can develop an application for re-accreditation.

Aligning ACS accreditation with internal review processes improves the efficiency and comprehensiveness of both.

Requests for extensions to current accreditations will not be granted unless the Institution can demonstrate exceptional circumstances such as significant organisational restructuring which has a major impact on the ICT school making the accreditation request. In these circumstances the Institution would need to demonstrate that the relevant ICT school could continue to offer accredited program during the period of the accreditation extension.

During the period of accreditation, significant changes can occur in institutions and their accredited programs. The Institution is required to advise the ACS and apply for an update of the Certificate of Accreditation (see *Section 2.4*). The application may be submitted at any time, but as program accreditation is granted on a calendar-year basis, sufficient lead time needs to be allocated to allow for evaluation of the application.

2.2 The ACS Accreditation Case Manager

The ACS will appoint an Accreditation Case Manager for each institution interested in accreditation. The case manager's role is to maintain an ongoing relationship with the institution and to facilitate the accreditation of its ICT programs.

The case manager can advise on the interpretation of accreditation requirements, application preparation, application evaluation and on the accreditation process but will not engage with the work of the institution such as program design, subject curriculum, assessment, staffing, facilities, etc. Advice beyond the case manager's role might be sought from the Accreditation Committee. In such cases, the Committee may appoint an experienced person to respond or may suggest persons who may be consulted directly. Provision of such advice expressly does not constitute any guarantee of ultimate accreditation. The Accreditation Committee or any of its members will not involve themselves in any way in the engagement as consultants, or actively contribute to program design.

2.3 Determination of Accreditation Evaluation Method

Normally an on-site accreditation panel visit will be required for accreditation of an institution and its programs. The ACS will determine the appropriate method of evaluation for accreditation. Under some circumstances a desk-top/remote evaluation may be appropriate. Those circumstances may include:

- the institution showing stability or improvement, with respect to
  - organisational structure
  - ICT staffing profile
  - ICT facilities and resources
  - input from stakeholders
- the program(s) for accreditation being currently accredited and that accreditation having been updated as program developments were made during the period of its accreditation
- the program(s) for accreditation are new but utilise significant aspects of currently accredited programs and staff.

In the updating of an existing Certificate of Accreditation the ACS will, depending on the specific situation, accept the change, request further information, conduct a desk-top/remote evaluation or require an on-site accreditation panel visit to be conducted.

2.4 The Certificate of Accreditation

The Certificate of Accreditation details the key aspects of an institution and its programs which contribute to the satisfaction of accreditation requirements at the time the certificate was issued. The certificate is used to provide a basis for discussion between an institution and the ACS, to assess the impact of program or institutional change on accreditation and to facilitate continuing program development.

Where an accreditation is granted with conditions, an Interim Certificate of Accreditation will be issued which will be replaced by a final certificate when the conditions have been met.

Where program changes occur that affect any aspect covered by the certificate the institution will discuss the change with their case manager with a view to updating the certificate.

Accreditation is granted for the programs identified in the testamur for each program. Where one program title on a testamur covers a number of implementation pathways (eg. several campuses, majors or educational modes) accreditation applies to all pathways. If one pathway is not accreditable, then the program as a whole cannot be accredited.

2.5 Fees

There are fees associated with accreditation, which are reviewed annually. Institutions interested in accreditation should consult the fee schedule on the ACS Website.

3 ACCREDITATION SELF-ANALYSIS

In considering whether to apply for accreditation an institution should conduct a self-analysis.

An institution should consider the context within which each program is offered, particularly

- the orientation of the institution, its educational approach and TEQSA accreditation
- the industry sector graduates may go into and the relationship of the institution with industry
- the kind of graduates it aims to produce and actually produces
- the attributes of the student intake
- the skills of academics and the ICT educational facilities
- relevant disciplinary and professional bodies of knowledge, including that of the ACS.

It should then consider how each program specifically aligns with its context in terms of its objectives, structure, content and implementation and how that alignment is supported by the engagement of all ICT staff, ICT Industry Advisory Board and other stakeholders.

The ACS is interested in programs from the perspective of the ICT Profession, which may be different from the institutional or academic perspective. The Accreditation Criteria (see Volume 2) provide a means for investigating the professional aspects of a program. The Accreditation Template (Volume 3) provides a means of documenting them. A self-analysis should use these resources and analyse each program through the lens of accreditation requirements. A simple approach to this task is to fill out a draft Certificate of Accreditation - discuss this with your case manager.

The result of self-analysis will probably be a decision to seek accreditation, in which case most of the effort needed to produce an application will already have been done.

3.1 Development Plan

A self-analysis typically identifies general issues and opportunities for development as well as areas where accreditation criteria are not being fully met.

The ACS encourages ongoing program improvement and innovation. The institution will likely have a Development Plan in place specifying improvement to program designs and operations. This plan should be updated with activities to which will improve the program with respect to accreditation criteria. Where possible, such improvements should be commenced prior to accreditation.

The Development Plan should be included in the Accreditation Application, see

ACS Accreditation Manual Volume 3: Application Template, section 2.7

The accreditation panel will take the Development Plan into consideration when determining the accreditation outcome. In some cases, a reliable Development Plan may obviate the need for conditions to be placed on accreditation. It is also a means of checking for any concerns that the ACS may have with planned changes.

4 THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

4.1 Creation and Submission of an Application

The formal accreditation process starts with the submission of an Application for Accreditation.

The accreditation application should be minimal. Wherever possible it should link to operational systems (such as the Learning Management System) where the accreditation requirements can be seen to be being met. For application template see

ACS Accreditation Manual Volume 3: Application Template

Privacy and confidentiality issues are critical in the professional conduct of accreditation. The NHMRC has specified some advice on this (https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/resources/ethical-considerations-quality-assurance-and-evaluation-activities) and panel members and ACS staff have entered into confidentiality agreements, but the issue needs to be discussed with the case manager.

The ACS aims for an authentic accreditation process, that is, one which examines the program in actual operation and how it explicitly addresses the needs of its stakeholders – students, staff, institution, industry, the ACS and so on. An aspect of responsible program design and implementation is that it both meets the needs of all stakeholders and explains how it does that. So most of what is required for accreditation should already exist. Where this is not the case, the operational systems should be updated to accreditable standard.

Consequently, the ACS strongly recommends that the ICT School itself generates the accreditation application and does not engage consultants or quality assurance staff in its production. Further, as ACS accreditation is ICT discipline-specific and does not duplicate institutional level TEQSA quality assessment, its focus is clearly on matters within the ICT school hence external assistance in the preparation of the application should be unnecessary.

It is strongly advised that an institution liaises with its case manager early in the process of creating an application. In particular, discuss with the case manager how evidence will be presented - if access to operational systems is possible, how will it work to let panellists see what they need to; if not, what needs to be packaged up as part of the submission and what needs to be available on the visit.

An application will normally be required to be submitted a minimum of six weeks before the scheduled visit. Email to:

accreditation@acs.org.au

4.2 Selection and Approval of the Panel

An Accreditation Panel acts on behalf of the ACS. A Panel will be selected by ACS such that the aggregated panel expertise profile adequately covers the range of program specialisations under review. The ACS will manage panel conflicts of interest and will allow the institution to raise reasonable objections to panel selection. A Panel will include the following roles:

- A Panel Chair with current expertise in ICT higher education and experience in accreditation
- A Case Manager with current knowledge of ICT higher education and expertise in accreditation standards and processes
- At least one Panel Member with appropriate disciplinary expertise
- At least one Panel Member with current expertise in employing ICT graduates in practice environments

The Institution is invited to nominate the Chair (or nominee) of its ICT Industry Advisory Board (or equivalent) as a full member the Panel, or an appropriate alternative member who is a stakeholder of the Institution and who is not an academic. Such nominations should take Conflict of Interest situations into account.

The ACS will exercise discretion in the size and composition of an Accreditation Panel. Campus visits and panel meetings are not necessarily attended by a full panel. Expert Panellists may provide specialism and disciplinary advice only.

Panel members will enter into a confidentiality agreement.

4.3 Panel Observers

From time to time the ACS receives requests from other national and overseas accrediting bodies, including other signatories to the Seoul Accord, wishing to have observers participate in the evaluation process. Similarly, requests may arise from the host institution, wishing to appoint an internal or external observer to the evaluation process, for example, in order to use the process as part of a wider review by the institution of its programs. Finally, the ACS may wish to appoint observers for the purpose of training in the accreditation process. All such observers are subject to approval by the host institution and/or the ACS as appropriate.

The following protocol applies for observers joining campus visit panels.

a. Observers are welcome to attend all interactive sessions the Panel has with the leadership team, staff, students and external stakeholders, as well as Panel private sessions where the Panel is viewing teaching materials and student work or formulating its findings and recommendations.

b. Observers will be asked to refrain from asking questions or participating at all in the discussion.

c. Observers are welcome to speak privately with either the Panel Chair or the Case Manager at any time if a viewpoint is to be expressed or a question or request is to be made.

d. The Panel Chair has the right to ask observers to vacate any specific session if a Panel member or host organisation considers it to be necessary.

e. The Panel Chair may invite comments from the observers, outside the interactive sessions.

f. Observers must agree to keep all discussion and details of decision making in confidence and return and/or delete associated documentation at the conclusion of the visit. Observers may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

4.4 Visit Schedule

This schedule will be finalised by the Case Manager and Accreditation Officer in negotiation with the Institution. The Institution will be asked to append to the final visit schedule, the venue details for each session and a listing of the names, titles and affiliations of members of the senior leadership team, the academic staff and the external constituents who will be attending sessions with the Panel. See the Visit Planning notes at Appendix A.

4.5 Campus Visit

The main campus visit will normally extend across two days and involve all members of the Panel. The key functions of the campus visit are to examine first-hand and evaluate the evidence presented in the accreditation application. See Panel Visit Planning notes at Appendix A.

At the conclusion of the visit, the Panel Chair provides preliminary comments to the officer/s representing the Institution. These will ultimately be embodied in the draft report of the evaluation Panel. The Panel cannot, however, anticipate the final decision of the Accreditation Committee and a definite statement of findings should not be expected at this stage. Whilst the Panel Chair will normally give general indications of possible outcomes of the visit, this is not obligatory, as there may be occasions when the Panel may require further time in order to formulate even its preliminary findings and recommendations.

It is expected that the accreditation panel will need to visit all locations where a program is taught and will interview staff and students at each. The panel will wish to be assured that each campus offers comparable educational experiences, facilities and standards and that quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure the Institution maintains control of the educational program. The overriding criterion is that students have the same opportunities to achieve the program outcomes.

Where a campus is overseas:

a. The ACS will receive documentation from the Institution and will arrange an accreditation visit to the offshore location under its normal procedures. It is particularly important that the documentation be received well ahead of the proposed visit, so that any apparent difficulties can be identified in advance and the visit rescheduled if necessary.

b. The Institution concerned will be expected to reimburse the ACS for all costs associated with an offshore accreditation visit. This will also include an additional administrative fee which at present is not normally charged within Australia.

c. The ACS wishes to undertake offshore accreditation activities only where these are acceptable to relevant authorities in the host country. On receipt of a request from an Australian institution for offshore accreditation, The ACS will wish to negotiate with the host-country professional association and will not wish to undertake a visit until that association has expressed its concurrence with the arrangements. ACS preference is to conduct visits jointly with the host-country association. The Institution will be kept fully informed of such negotiations and involved to the maximum extent appropriate.

In all instances, the onus is on the Institution awarding the degree to demonstrate that the accreditation criteria are met. The ACS reserves the right to investigate in depth how stated outcomes are actually achieved in practice.

4.6 Information to be available for examination during the panel visit

It is expected that online access to most documents have been made available to the panel as part of the accreditation application process.

Where that is not possible, opportunities for the panel to examine educational materials, student work and documentary records to substantiate the application are a key element of the visit. Information to be available includes:

a. Institutional Context:
   Records of ICT Industry Advisory Board meetings, internal program reviews etc
   Copies of recent internal reviews of the ICT School and programs

b. Program Details:
   Approved program objectives, content and structure design documents
   Current advertising material

c. Subject Details:
   For all subjects designated as meeting *Requirements B to E* of *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria*, and for subjects that assess pre-requisite knowledge for these subjects:
   subject outline documents as distributed to students
   examples of teaching materials and resources
   specifications for assignments, projects and laboratory activity,
   examples of formative and summative assessment materials including examination papers, and graded student work including assignment and examination scripts, journals and portfolios, assignments, project reports, laboratory reports, professional practice log books. Of particular interest are examples of assignments which achieved the lowest pass mark, and examples of assessments low, medium and high achievement should also be available.

4.7 Accreditation Panel Report and Institution Response

As soon as possible after the visit a Panel Report is drafted for the Accreditation Committee by the Case Manager, in conjunction with members of the Panel and the Panel Chair. The draft Panel Report will be based on the initial documentation, the Panel's observations during the visit, and any additional documentation provided by the School and received by the Panel as part of any requested post-visit follow up.

The case manager may provide the institution with the draft Panel Report, findings and recommendations and correct any factual matters.

4.8 Accreditation Committee Decisions and Accreditation Certification

The Accreditation Committee will consider the Panel Report and may make a determination for each program evaluated to:

a. Unconditionally accredit the program for a period of up to five years. A Certificate of Accreditation will be issued to the Institution, subject to approval of the CEO.

b. Conditionally accredit the program. While a conditionally accredited program is accredited, that accreditation is subject to the Institution's agreement to provide specified information or to take specified actions and report on them, within the specified timeframe for each condition.
   If such agreement is not honoured, or if the response is judged to be inappropriate or inadequate, ACS has the right to amend its determination on conditional accreditation. An Interim Certificate of Accreditation will be issued to the Institution, subject to approval of the CEO.

c. Delay consideration of accreditation application or suspend an existing accreditation for a specified time period until specified issues have been addressed.

d. Decline to accredit or withdraw an existing accreditation. In such case, a further application will not normally be considered within two years.

The final Panel Report and Certificate of Accreditation will be sent to the Institution. The ICT Industry Advisory Board should be provided with the Panel Report.

4.9 Publication of Accreditation Status

The ACS website lists all accredited programs, the level of accreditation and the accreditation finish date. Accreditation applies to all intakes of students up to and including the year of the finish date.

Educational institutions may wish to publish statements to the effect that certain of their programs are accredited by the ACS. An institution is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of such statements and in particular must avoid statements which might be read as implying that certain programs are accredited when this is not the case.

4.10 Accreditation Review

The ACS may review its accreditation of a program at any time and for any reason. For example, an institution might commence teaching the program at non-accredited campus or makes changes to a program that result in an accreditation criterion no longer being met.

5 INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM CHANGES AFFECTING ACCREDITATION

The Certificate of Accreditation specifies how an institution's programs meet accreditation requirements. During the period of accreditation changes may occur in the program's institutional context, its structure and content and the pathways through which it is offered. Such changes may require a change to the program's Certificate of Accreditation.

Where a change may mean that an accreditation requirement may no longer be met, the Institution **must** notify the Society:

detailing the change and the rationale for it and

specifically addressing the accreditation requirements that may be affected by the change.

The institution may provide advance notification of changes by means of a Development Plan.

The ACS will consider the notification and, depending on the specific situation, may request further information, conduct a desk-top/remote assessment or require an on-site accreditation panel visit to be conducted before the Accreditation Committee considers the notification and makes a determination as described in Section 4.8 above.

5.1 Institutional Change

The Society must be advised of any significant changes to the institutional structure or the operational context within which accredited programs are conducted. Significant changes are those which might have a bearing on the

ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria, Section 3.1

5.2 Changes to an Existing Accredited Program

The terms of accreditation will normally provide for the ongoing development of program structures and content. The Society encourages enhancement and innovation within the accredited quality management framework. The institution may wish to submit advance notification by means of a Development Plan.

Program Title

Where a proposed program amendment involves a change to the program title or to the overall specification of educational objectives or targeted graduate outcomes then the ACS must be notified, preferably prior to the implementation of the change. Under such major changes the Accreditation Committee, once satisfied that the accreditation criteria continue to be met, will decide on whether to continue the current accreditation status or to accord accreditation to an essentially new program definition.

Program or Objectives, Structure or Content

Changes to program structure and content within the existing specification of educational objectives and targeted graduate outcomes are welcomed and expected within the accreditation cycle as part of the process of continuing quality improvement.

Institutions must ensure that all changes are within the accreditation requirements, such that program and the school as a whole continue to comply with the accreditation criteria.

Program Implementation Pathways

Where an accredited program is to be withdrawn from a campus, the Institution must detail the arrangements for students currently in the program to complete their program to the accredited standard.

Where an accredited program is to be implemented on a campus that has other accredited programs, or in a fully online mode, the Institution will submit documentation addressing those aspects of *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria* which may be affected (for example, staffing).

Where an accredited program is to be implemented on a new campus that has no other accredited programs, the Institution will submit full documentation addressing all aspects of *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria* dealing with the *Institutional Context of ICT Program.*

5.3 Application to Accredit a New Program

Where an Institution with existing ACS accredited programs seeks accreditation for a new program the Society should be notified in writing of the proposal before commencement of the first student cohort. It is suggested that this notification be instigated before or at the time the proposal is submitted for approval though the internal institutional processes.

Application for accreditation of the new program should be made as soon as institutional approval has been granted. The application should address the requirements of *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria*.

The Accreditation Committee has the discretion to determine whether a visit is required to assess the application.

New Program Implementation Pathways

Where the new program is to be offered at the home campus, or an established regional or offshore campus with accredited professional ICT programs already in place, the requirements in *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria* dealing with the *Institutional Context of ICT Program* will have been substantially addressed in the most recent accreditation review. However, it is necessary to respond to any requirements where circumstances are differentiated for the new program (for example, new staffing) or where specific actions to support the new program are needed (for example, industry consultation).

Where a new program is to be implemented on a new campus that has no other accredited programs, the Institution will submit full documentation addressing all aspects of *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria.*

6 ISSUES MANAGEMENT

6.1 Appeals

Should an institution wish to appeal against the outcome of an accreditation assessment of a program, an appeal should be lodged with the ACS's Chief Executive Officer within one month after the ACS has formally advised the Institution of the accreditation outcome. The CEO may authorise an appeal committee to consider the matter which may, if appropriate, commission a further evaluation visit. Following the report of the appeal committee, a decision will be taken in accordance with current delegations of the ACS's highest-level decision-making body, and that decision is final.

Grounds for appeal are normally limited to errors of fact or breach of the Policy, Criteria and/or Procedures set down in this document.

6.2 Investigation of Concerns

If the ACS has good reason to believe that a program previously accredited no longer meets the criteria, it may notify the Institution of the reason(s) for its concern and request a formal response. If the response is not considered adequate, the ACS may appoint an evaluation panel to visit the Institution and investigate the situation. If the Panel is not satisfied, it will prepare a report recommending that accreditation be discontinued, with reasons. The ACS will forward the report to the Institution and invite further response, normally within six weeks. If the response is not satisfactory, accreditation will be discontinued by the ACS on the recommendation of the Committee.

In such a case the Institution may appeal to the ACS as outlined in the Appeals section of this document above. In considering such an appeal the ACS would not normally schedule a further visit and would confine its consideration to issues of fact and process.

APPENDIX A – ACCREDITATION PANEL VISIT PLANNING

Campus visits may be conducted as required for reliable accreditation outcomes. Alternative means of appraisal will be considered when appropriate.

Before any arrangements are made, the Institution is asked to liaise with the Accreditation Officer to create an appropriate visit schedule. The exact format will depend on the number of campuses in the visit and fitting in with whatever transportation is needed for the panel members.

It is requested that the Institution prepare a list of names and titles of attendees for each session on a separate document to assist the Panel during the visit and in preparation of its report. This should include the names of academic staff, technical and administrative support staff, students and external constituents attending designated sessions.

Name tags for staff, external stakeholders and Panel members should be provided for the days of the visit.

MAIN VENUE

It is appreciated if a dedicated venue can be assigned to the Accreditation Panel for the duration of the visit and that as many as possible of the interview sessions be conducted in that venue. The Accreditation Panel will wish to minimise time lost in transit between scheduled sessions. It is requested that the displayed documentation and student materials be within this venue or close by and be available for the duration of the visit.

MEETING WITH THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The objective of this meeting (1 hour) is to explore indicators of ongoing commitment to ICT education within the Institution and its managerial / operational mode. The Panel may explore issues such as leadership and management, staffing structure, levels and development, professional/practitioner input to program design, frameworks for setting and monitoring educational outcomes and future plans.

The Dean or Head of School may wish to open this session with a very brief overview presentation to begin the discussion process.

The ACS has ligitimate interests in issues such as ICT workforce diversity, hence has an interest in attributes of graduate cohorts. Panel members may consider the general educational culture at the institution level and issues of inclusiveness – gender, culture and social differences. For example, they may ask whether there is there a generic graduate attributes profile for graduates of all programs at the institution, and they may probe how program outcomes are measured against institutional objectives.

A final report session (30 minutes) on the final day of the visit with the above leadership team will provide an opportunity for the Panel to present a very brief indication of its progress towards the recommendations it intends to make to the Accreditation Committee.

MEETING WITH VICE-CHANCELLOR/CEO OR REPRESENTATIVE

The Panel will appreciate an opportunity to meet with the Vice-Chancellor/Chief Executive Officer or nominee. A senior School staff member would be welcome to accompany the Panel at this meeting if desired.

The purpose of the meeting is to explore strategic indicators, particularly the institutional commitment to ICT education and to the development of ICT professionals, future strategy affecting ICT education including academic staffing and staff development plans, physical resource and industry links and relationships. A brief session of 20 - 30 minutes would be adequate.

MEETINGS WITH PROGRAM LEADERS

The purpose of these sessions is to explore indicators of program design and delivery excellence. Meetings should involve staff members (Program Leaders/Convenors), with specific accountability for leadership of the academic teaching teams for each of the programs under discussion. Depending on the number of programs, there may be just one such session, or it may be appropriate to have one session with undergraduate program leaders, and one with postgraduate program leaders. Each such session should be 1 hour.

Members of the senior leadership team who are not involved in direct program leadership must not be in attendance at this session.

The Panel will be interested in how the context for each program is set, considering its graduate market and student intake, professional orientation, disciplinary standards, ICT Industry Advisory Board input, etc. and how these are addressed in graduate outcomes, educational design and assessment. Evaluation will be based in the Accreditation Requirements A to F in *ACS Accreditation Manual: Volume 2: Accreditation Criteria, Section 3.2* and issues that arise from them.

It is requested that the Heads of School and Program Leaders be on call during times of private meetings of the Panel, in order to respond to any specific queries or concerns that may arise.

MEETINGS WITH ACADEMIC STAFF

In this 1-hour session all teaching staff involved in delivery of the programs, including, casuals and those responsible for supporting content, should be available for discussion. The Panel will examine alignment of programs and subject content, warrant for subject knowledge (international curriculum, standards, etc), assessment, industry engagement, etc. and the issues that arise in educational practice.

The Panel will also talk to staff informally about research, teaching loads and resource availability.

In the case of large Schools where a number of programs are submitted for accreditation, it may be necessary to treat each program or groups of programs separately at a number of meetings. A further session with teaching staff may be required after meetings with students and the examination of facilities if there are issues requiring elaboration. The Panel will notify the Institution if this is required.

MEETING WITH STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

The purpose of this session is to explore indicators of the learning experience and workforce preparation.

In a 1-hour meeting with current students the Panel will discuss their experiences of, and views on, their programs. There should be at least one student from each year of each program and members of any student representative body.

Ideally, there will be a separate meeting with graduates of one hour. This needs to be held at a time when graduates can attend, eg. at lunch time, or sometimes in the early evening with the external stakeholders. It is permissible to have some attendees on a meeting system such as Zoom. Attempts should be made by the Institution to present graduates that are currently in the work-force rather than those who have progressed to post graduate studies, although the latter are also welcomed, and are to be particularly encouraged in respect of programs that have an explicit intent to prepare for graduate research study.

The Panel will meet with the students in camera and all comments provided by the students will be treated with the strictest confidence.

MEETING WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Panel will wish to speak with members of the ICT Industry Advisory Board, employers, friends of the ICT School and so on, preferably at an early evening meeting where there is opportunity for informal discussion. The purpose of this activity is to explore indicators of industry linkage, graduate capability and workforce preparation.

LABORATORY AND TEACHING FACILITIES INSPECTION

The purpose of this activity is to witness key facilities and equipment for ICT education. During the tour of facilities, it is requested that key technical support staff and key teaching staff be available for discussion and questioning. An opportunity for the Panel to inspect learning support facilities and the library may be required, depending upon the application and information supplied.

PANEL LUNCHES

The Institution is asked to be supply light lunches, morning and afternoon tea, as appropriate, depending on the schedule. As opportunities for informal discussion are very welcome, the Institution may suggest people who might lunch with the Panel.

FINAL CONSULTATION

At the completion of the visit, the Panel will meet for 30 minutes with the Senior Leadership Team. At this meeting the preliminary findings of the panel and its recommendations to the Accreditation Committee will be presented and the process for their consideration by the ACS Accreditation Committee outlined. The Panel may choose not to present its preliminary recommendations in the event that further consideration is required.

VERSION HISTORY

Date	Document Version	Revision History (reason for change)	Author /Reviser
2 Oct 2013	1.0	Creation of original document	
10 Nov 2015	1.2	Minor updates	Graham Low
19 Feb 2016	2.0	Version update in alignment with CBOK release	Berny Martinez
31 Jan 2019	4.0 Pilot	Complete revision: clarified criteria, aligned with TEQSA, simplified application	Craig McDonald
12 Aug 2019	4.2 Pilot	Minor revisions – pilot feedback	Craig McDonald

APPROVALS

Date approved	Version:	Approved By	Date in force	Next Review Date
15 Dec 2015	1.2	Professional Standards Board	15 Dec 2015	n/a
19 Feb 2016	2.0	Professional Standards Board	19 Feb 2016	n/a
1 Feb 2019	4.0 Pilot	Rupert Grayston, Director PSAS	22 Feb 2019	n/a
12 Aug 2019	4.2 Pilot	Rupert Grayston, Director PSAS	13 Feb 2019	n/a

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