Introduction to ABET Accreditation
ABET Statement of Purpose

• With ABET accreditation, students, employers, and the society we serve can be confident that a program meets the quality standards that produce graduates prepared to enter a global workforce
What Does ABET Accredit?

• An academic program leading to a specific degree in a specific discipline

• Misconceptions clarified:
  • Not institutions
  • Not schools, colleges, or departments
  • Not facilities, courses, or faculty
  • Not graduates
  • Not degrees
Member Societies

• Represent “the profession”
  • Over 1.5 million individual members
• Develop program criteria
• Appoint Board representatives
• Nominate commissioners
• Recruit and assign program evaluators
ABET Accreditation Statistics
As of 1 October 2016 … 3,709 Programs

- Accredited programs by commission:
  - ANSAC: 87
  - CAC: 461
  - EAC: 2550
  - ETAC: 629

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Becoming a Program Evaluator
The Big Picture

• ABET accredits 3,569 programs at 714 institutions in 29 countries.

• At present, more than ABET 2,200 experts.
  • From academia, industry, government, and the profession
  • Experts serve many roles in ABET.

• Quality and consistency of the accreditation process is derived from strength of the PEV pool.
A Growing Need for PEVs

• Projected need for up to 2,500 experts within five years

• Major ABET priorities:
  • Work with societies to recruit PEV
  • Refine/improve training
  • Retain new PEVs
Why Become an ABET Expert?

- Ensure global program quality
- Contribute to technical education program delivery
- Individual professional development
- Gain best practice experience from programs other than one’s own
- Influence academic conversation and relationship with industry
Program Evaluator (PEV) Competency Model

- Program evaluators are the “face of ABET” and need to:
  - Uphold the highest quality
  - Improve consistency
  - “Walk the talk” of continuous improvement
- Approved by Board and implemented in 2005
PEV Competencies

- Technically Current
- Effective Communicators
- Professional
- Interpersonally Skilled
- Team-Oriented
- Organized
What’s in It for You?

- Help ensure the quality of higher education
- Unique professional development opportunity
  - Use your specialized knowledge to improve educational experience for thousands of students.
- Network with other professionals
  - A great source of experience-based knowledge
- Keep up to date and have input on the criteria
- Service to the community of people who are trying to help maintain quality education
- Serve your profession, “give back”
PEV Pre-Visit Effort

• Pre-Visit (10-28 hours)
  • Training updates (1-2 hours)
  • Reviewing the Self-Study Report (4-8 hours)
  • Completing required forms (2-6 hours)
  • Participating in team conference calls (2-4 hours)
  • Communicating with the program and team chair prior to the visit (1-8 hours)
PEV Visit and Post-Visit

- Campus Visit: Sunday through Tuesday
  - Travel Saturday, Tuesday evening
  - Review materials
    - Based on your assessment of Self-Study Report
  - Tour facilities
  - Meet and interview faculty, students, and others
  - Participate in team meetings
    - Extensive discussions – team-based decisions
  - Write short report of findings

- Post Visit (1-2 hours)
  - As requested by the team chair
  - No direct contact with school after visit
PEV Annual Cycle Experience

- 360° review of each visit
  - PEVs evaluated by program chair and team chair
  - PEVs evaluate other PEVs and team chair
  - Results provided to PEV after completion of review cycle
- Update status each spring
  - Code of conduct agreement
  - Availability for visits
  - New conflicts of interest

- Training
  - Refresher training
  - Just-in-time training prior to each visit
  - ABET Workshops and Symposia (complimentary registration for PEVs)
- Repeat as desired
Initial Training
Three Separate Steps

1) Online learning experience
2) Face-to-face facilitated instruction
3) Society-specific training (if applicable)
Online Training

- Online portion of PEV Candidate Training typically takes 20-25 hours
- Requires written work and the completion of three end-of-module quizzes
Face-to-Face Training

• Pre-Work (4-8 hours)
  • Review of process and requirements
  • Evaluation of partial Self-Study Report
  • Mentor support/feedback

• Face-to-Face Training (~2 days with travel)
  • Full-day Saturday, half-day Sunday
  • Teams of 5-6 PEV candidates with Support Facilitator
  • Variety of activities
    • Presentation of information
    • Team activities
    • Play-acting demonstrations
    • Individual statement writing exercise
Personal Travel Expenses

- ABET pays all reasonable and appropriate travel expenses
  - Face-to-Face Training
  - Campus Visits
Training Period

• The entire PEV candidate training process begins in March and ends in June.

• The online training must be completed at least three weeks before the Face-to-Face Training.
Additional Training Notes

- New PEVs are assigned a mentor who provides feedback throughout training.
- Support Facilitator at the Face-to-Face Training also provides feedback.
- Some societies require an observer visit before a PEV serves on an actual visit.
- PEVs do online Just-in-Time Training prior to visits each year as a reminder about tasks and changes.
- Professional Development Hours (PDHs) can be awarded for participation.
Start With Online Application
www.abet.org

• When you apply, you must select the appropriate commission.
  • Applied Science Accreditation Commission (ASAC)
  • Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC)
  • Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC)
  • Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission (ETAC)

• Your member society will review your application and contact you if you are selected for training.
  • Each society has different selection cycle and may take several months.
Nomination by Your Professional / Technical Society

- PEV candidates who successfully complete both the online training and the Face-to-Face Training may be nominated by his or her member society to serve as a program evaluator.

- Some societies require additional specialized training and conduct that separately, often online.
Link to Application

http://www.abet.org/program-evaluators/
Value of ABET Accreditation
Value of ABET Accreditation

• ABET-accredited programs recognized globally
  • Commitment to quality education

• Outcomes-based approach
  • “What is learned” vs. “what is taught”

• Emphasis on continuous quality improvement
• Criteria encourage innovation
ABET Value Industry

- Ensures educational requirements to enter “the profession” are met
- Aids industry in recruiting
  - Ensures “baseline” of educational experience
- Enhances mobility
- Opportunity to help guide the educational process
  - Program’s industrial advisory groups
  - Professional, technical societies
Basics of ABET Accreditation
Generally Accepted Accreditation Principles

• Accreditation is voluntary
• Non-governmental organization
• Fair and impartial peer review process
• Requires self-assessment by the program/school
• Continuous process (reviewed every $n$ years)
• Failure of single criterion results in loss of accreditation
  • Deficiencies in one area CANNOT be compensated by strengths in other areas.
What Programs Does ABET Accredit?

• Academic program leading to a specific degree in a specific discipline
  • Assigned commission depends on program name

• Applied Science (ASAC): associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s
  • Examples: Health Physics, Industrial Hygiene, Industrial & Quality Management, Safety Sciences, Surveying & Mapping

• Computing (CAC): bachelor’s
  • Computer Science, Info Systems, Info Technology

• Engineering (EAC): bachelor’s, master’s

• Engineering Technology (ETAC): associate’s, bachelor’s
ABET Accreditation Process
What Does It Involve?

• Criteria developed by member societies, practitioners, and educators
• Self-Study Report by the institution and program
• On-site evaluation by peers
  • From education, government, and industry
• Publication of lists of accredited programs
• Periodic re-evaluation (maximum 6 years)
ABET Accreditation Process
ABET Accreditation Process

• Programs prepare Self-Study Report for evaluation team
  • Documents how the program meets criteria

• Program review conducted by team of peer colleagues
  • Faculty, industry and government professionals, and administrators in the profession
  • Review the Self-Study Report, conduct the review visit

• ABET Program Evaluators (PEVs)
  • 2,200+ volunteers from academe, industry, and government (individual members of ABET Member Societies)
Peer Review

• Evaluation conducted by team of peer colleagues:
  • Faculty, industry and government professionals, and administrators in the profession
  • Review the Self-Study Report and conduct review visits
• ABET resource pool of visitors consists of approximately 2,200 faculty, industry, and government representatives
Review Team Membership

• One Team Chair
  • For large teams: Team Chair and Co-Chair

• Typically one program evaluator for each program being evaluated
  • Minimum of 2 for a single program

• Possibly one or more observers
  • International partners, U.S. state licensing boards, new program evaluators, ABET staff

• Team members are volunteers and not compensated for their work
On-Site Visit

• Direct observations
  • Program facilities
  • Student work, materials
  • Interview faculty, students, administrators, and other professional supporting personnel

• Complements the Self-Study Report
  • Provides direct, observable evidence that cannot be obtained from the Self-Study Report
Accreditation Timeline
18-21* Month Process

January
Institution requests review of programs

March – June
Team members assigned, dates set, Self-Study Report submitted

December – February
Draft statements edited and sent to institutions

May – June
Necessary changes to statement, if any, are made

August
Institutions notified of final action

Year 1

February – May
Institution prepares self-evaluation (Program Self-Study Report)

September – December
Visits take place, draft statements written and finalized following 7-day response period

Year 2

February – April
Institutions respond to draft statement and return to ABET

July
Commission meets to take final action

October
Accreditation status publically released

November*
Readiness Review (if required)
General Criteria

1) Students
2) Program Educational Objectives
3) Student Outcomes
4) Continuous Improvement
5) Curriculum
6) Faculty
7) Facilities
8) Institutional Support

Plus, Program Criteria
Continuous Quality Improvement
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

• ABET criteria have been developed on the principles of continuous quality improvement.

• On-going process at institution to improve quality of student’s educational experience
  • Systematic process: documented, repeatable
  • Assess performance against criteria
  • Take actions to improve program

• Accreditation is a part of CQI.
  • Verification that program meets certain level of quality, and CQI is part of the quality process.
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI Process)

- CQI process includes a clear understanding of:
  - Mission (your purpose)
  - Constituents (your customers)
  - Objectives (what one is trying to achieve)
  - Outcomes (learning that takes place to meet objectives)
  - Processes (internal practices to achieve the outcome)
  - Facts (data collection)
  - Evaluation (interpretation of facts)
  - Action (change, improvement)