

Accreditation FAQs during COVID

From the beginning of 2020 the impact of COVID-19 has resulted in many universities having to make changes to their normal operating procedures and have requested information from IChemE on the following:

1. The replacement of closed book end of year examinations with alternative remote assessment/open book assessments/individual coursework

It is fully expected that universities have had to change to remote/alternative types of assessment. IChemE requires the assessment approach to give assurance that the learning outcomes have been met by all students awarded an accredited degree.

2. Changes being made to programme delivery and/or content at short notice

It is already likely that IChemE's required learning outcomes are being delivered through multiple modules and therefore changes to modules or their mode of delivery may not impact on the overall achievement of the required learning outcomes. It is recommended that any changes to the programme and/or delivery are recorded so that a retrospective report on the effects of the changes and how their impact was mitigated can be provided should this be necessary.

3. Changes to degree classifications/credits

The issue of degree classification is not one that impacts on IChemE accreditation. We are concerned about students having successfully achieved the learning outcomes required for accreditation so a pass in all modules that have IChemE learning outcomes is essential but how the university decides on its degree classification criteria is up to the university.

4. Changes to first year of programme/scheduling

In the current circumstances, it may be necessary to reschedule some items (particularly practical work); however, provided all learning outcomes are met by the end of the degree, we are not concerned with scheduling. We do, however, ask that all significant deviations from the course as accredited be documented eg by use of the IChemE Covid Impact Report Form, so that we are able to confirm that the learning outcomes are still being met.

5. Should students be allowed to trail credits if they fail assessments and providers are unable to provide suitable re-sit opportunities?

The Engineering Council guidance allows modules to be carried forward providing all learning outcomes are assessed and achieved by the point of graduation. Current Engineering Council external guidance for providers, is also consistent with the latest [QAA guidance](#).

6. Some universities have introduced a no-detriment policy to give students the required protection to ensure they are able to graduate with a degree that fairly represents their work whilst preserving academic standards. Examples of this policy have included calculating average marks for students in previous years prior to the start of the pandemic to compare to the present year/extension arrangements to coursework

deadlines/resitting/repeating modules to improve classification/compensation of modules.

IChemE accreditation requires that students successfully covered the learning outcomes required for accreditation so a pass in all modules that have IChemE learning outcomes is essential but grading/allocation of marks is a matter for the university to decide.

7. Changes to compensation and condonement

Although it is recognised that changes may have to be made to the university's compensation and condonement arrangements to ensure that students are not unfairly disadvantaged IChemE's current compensation strategy must be followed and from September 2022 the Engineering Council guidance will need to be adhered to.

Details of the [IChemE's current compensation strategy and Engineering Council policy](#) on compensation and condonement can be found on the IChemE website

8. What is acceptable within IChemE accreditation requirements in relation to hands on practical experience? eg adjustment to e-enabled delivery of labs with a write up of data, replacement of lab-based projects with lit. review/data analysis etc.

IChemE have not developed a policy on what might be a minimum requirement for practical work. Unless universities have not been open for labs for a year or more then it will be anticipated that the labs can be facilitated throughout the course of the programme. This will be most problematic for shorter courses (such as the MSc in the UK).

Additional resources

The Heads of Chemical Engineering UK (HCEUK) and IChemE's Education Special Interest Group held three workshops during 2020 to share good practice on:

1. Laboratory practice (Chemical Engineering Hybrid Laboratories Workshops) sharing practice about online laboratory activities, augmented reality in practical settings, embedding digital tools in the labs, developing a visual laboratory in undergraduate courses, using remote hands-on process simulators for practical activities and also supporting graduate-assistance training. [Find it on YouTube](#).
2. Online assessment (Assessment – Lessons Learnt and Next Steps) workshop showcasing innovative practices around delivering un-invigilated online exams, take-home exams and alternative forms of assessments.
3. Blended Learning (Blended Learning Workshop - Sharing Common Practice) workshop with presentations around essentials of blended learning, using videos screencasts, flipped classrooms and blended CDIO.

For more information on these please contact accreditation@icheme.org

The key point from IChemE's perspective is that all the Learning Outcomes that are required for the accredited IChemE degree are satisfactorily met by the end of the programme and that this is documented.