HKIQEP ACCREDITATION SCHEME

INFORMATION FOR POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Version 1.1 – 15 December 2025

Contents

1. Introduction

The Hong Kong Institute of Qualified Environmental Professionals (HKIQEP) was established in 2015 to develop and raise the standards of environmental professionals with a view to promoting Hong Kong as the Centre of Excellence in environmental services. In 2020, HKIQEP launched its Accreditation Scheme to encourage institutions to provide environmental degree programmes with appropriate breadth in fundamental environmental principles and depth in specific areas, as well as to forge better collaboration between academic and practicing environmental professionals. For information on routes to HKIQEP professional membership, please refer to https://hkiqep.org/routes-to-professional-membership/
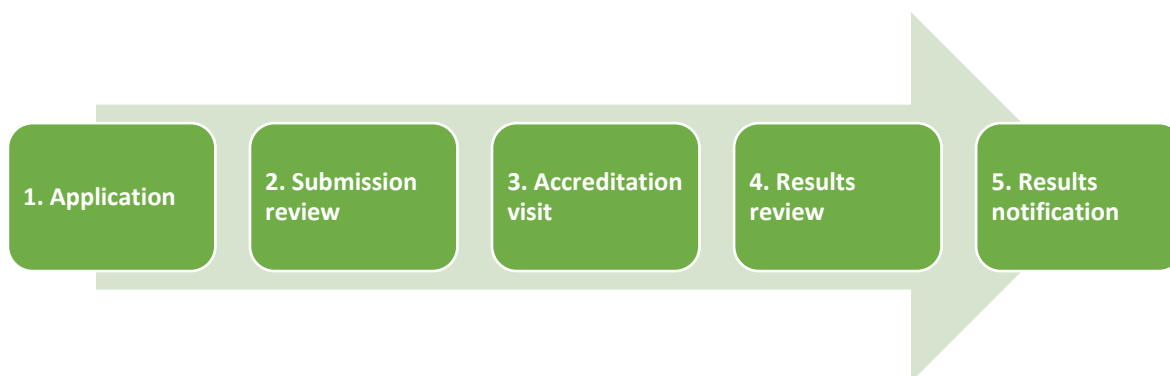
2. HKIQEP Accreditation Scheme Categories

All environmental degree programmes at the postgraduate level may apply for accreditation under this scheme. There are two categories of accreditation:

i.   Provisional*: For Programmes which are under development and have not yet had the first cohort of graduates

ii. Full: For existing or new Programmes with at least a first cohort of graduates

All Programmes granted Provisional Accreditation must convert to Full Accreditation at the next accreditation cycle.

3. HKIQEP Accreditation Process

The accreditation process consists of five stages:

1. Application → 2. Submission review → 3. Accreditation visit → 4. Results review → 5. Results notification

3.1 Application

To apply for accreditation, programmes should download the application form from the HKIQEP website and submit the completed form with all required information to the HKIQEP Accreditation Panel at accreditation@hkiqep.org. Upon receipt of the application, HKIQEP will issue an invoice to the programme for settlement. Once payment is settled,

- The Accreditation Process is officially commenced;

- The forms and templates, as well as instructions for their completion, will be sent to the Contact Person via email;

- A Visiting Team will be formed to review and assess the Programme against the Accreditation Scheme requirements;

- A briefing meeting may be requested by the Contact Person to clarify any issues after receipt of the forms and templates.

3.1.1. Timing

The application timeline varies depending on the accreditation category.

i. Provisional Accreditation: Application process must commence <u>at least SIX months before the first cohort of graduates complete half of the Programme</u>.

ii. Full Accreditation: Application process should commence <u>at least SIX months before the expected Accreditation Visit date</u> to allow adequate time for the Programme to prepare the Submission.

3.1.2. Costs

The accreditation fee includes all costs for application processing, submission review, accreditation visit, and general administrative tasks. Any extra fees if incurred (such as transportation, accommodation, etc.) will be invoiced at cost to the Programme concerned. Extra fees may incur if:

- the specialization of the Programme where one or more overseas practicing environmental professionals are required to participate on the Visiting Team to conduct the Accreditation Visit , or

- the Institution is outside Hong Kong where the Visiting Team must travel to conduct the Accreditation Visit

3.2 Submission Review

The Programme must submit all required information <u>at least TEN weeks before the expected date of the Accreditation Visit</u>. The Visiting Team reviews the Submission to check and verify the coverage and compliance of the Programme against the Accreditation Scheme requirements. Any issues identified or clarification required will be sought from the Contact Person if required. The Contact Person will be informed <u>at least TWO weeks prior to the Accreditation Visit</u> regarding any additional information or documentation to be prepared for review during visit

3.3 Accreditation Visit

To assess whether the programme meets HKIQEP accreditation requirements and to verify the information in the submission, an accreditation visit is required for both Provisional and Full Accreditation. During this visit, the programme must demonstrate its ability to meet the Accreditation Scheme requirements. The duration of the visit depends on the complexity of the programme and normally requires <u>one to one and a half (1-1.5) days</u>, subject to the number of courses to be assessed. The details of the visit schedule are as follows:

- Communicated with the Contact Person <u>at least SIX weeks prior to the scheduled visit date;</u>

- The Contact Person should:

- notify all relevant personnel in the Programme the date and time their presence is required;
- identify any potential conflict of interest with any members of the Visiting Team and notify the Secretariat immediately;

- A typical visit includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Brief presentation by the Programme;
  - Meetings with programme leadership and academic staff including department head, programme leader(s)/director(s), academic staff, and support and office/administration staff;
  - Meetings with students and graduates;
  - Review of student materials related to student performance such as
    - Examination questions and sample answers from two academic years for each course;
    - Marked examination scripts for the most recent examination of each course;
    - Examples of laboratory and project reports with the score;
  - Review of teaching materials related to how the courses align with the curriculum;
  - Exit meeting with senior staff to convey the Visiting Team's initial observations.

3.4 Results Review

Following the accreditation visit, an Accreditation Report will be prepared by the Visiting Team. If the team determines that there is a significant issue requiring a response, the report will be sent to the Contact Person with a request for clarification or additional information. The report is then reviewed by the HKIQEP Accreditation Panel, which determines the result of the accreditation. The final accreditation status will be granted by the HKIQEP General Council.

FOUR possible accreditation decisions:

i. Provisional Accreditation granted for a period of up to THREE years

- Programmes under development which meet the Accreditation Scheme requirements
- Conditions may apply

ii. Full Accreditation granted for a period of up to FIVE years

- Ongoing Programmes which meet the Accreditation Scheme requirements
- Conditions may apply

iii. Accreditation rejected

- If the Programme does not meet the Accreditation Scheme requirements

iv. Accreditation revoked

- If the Programme failed to meet the conditions stated in the accreditation report issued during a previous accreditation cycle, or

- If there are programme amendments that significantly deviate from the Accreditation Scheme requirements

4. HKIQEP Accreditation Requirements

This document provides a summary of the HKIQEP Accreditation Scheme requirements for postgraduate programmes. Full details of the requirements will be provided to programmes after their application is received. The Accreditation Scheme is composed of six aspects: Programme Design, Staffing, Resources, Students, Programme Quality Assurance, and Programme Development and Sustainability.

4.1 Programme Design

4.1.1. HKIQEP Accreditation Expected Programme Outcomes

Graduates of HKIQEP accredited environmental programmes are expected to possess the following competences:

i. Apply knowledge in fundamental areas in environmental science and environmental management;

ii. Apply appropriate breadth and depth in specific areas related to environment;

iii. Work independently as well as in a group environment, as a leader or member, to tackle environmental problems;

iv. Communicate effectively both verbally and in writing;

v. Recognize personal needs and engage in life-long development;

vi. Adhere to professional and ethical responsibilities.

4.1.2. Curriculum

The Programme must:

- Define adequate aims and objectives that meet the programme's intended learning outcomes, course outcomes, and HKIQEP Accreditation Scheme expected programme outcomes;

- Have an appropriate plan to deliver the programme objectives and outcomes by considering the detailed curriculum and teaching and learning strategies.

4.1.3. Syllabus

The typical syllabus for Programmes seeking Accreditation shall comprise of the following three sections:

i. Fundamental Areas (Mandatory)

Fundamental areas of environment professionals shall include <u>TWO areas: (i) Environmental Science and (ii) Environmental Management.</u>

The Institution shall refer to the HKIQEP Syllabus for the subjects included in the fundamental areas. <u>The Institution is recommended to also include additional topics that are not listed in the HKIQEP Syllabus.</u> The HKIQEP Syllabus will be reviewed and

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amended from time to time and the Institution is advised to ensure the latest version is being referenced.

The Programme <u>MUST demonstrate the CORE courses</u> have adequate coverage of the fundamental areas in term of contact hours, teaching and learning strategies, assessment methods, hours spent in practical work and training, and the expertise and qualification of academic staff to deliver the courses.

ii. Specific Areas (Mandatory: At least two out of seven areas)

In addition to the two fundamental knowledge, <u>SEVEN specific areas</u> have been identified. They are <u>(i) Environmental Policy and Legislations; (ii) Sustainability; (iii) Air; (iv) Environmental Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment (EIA & HA); (v) Noise; (vi) Waste; and (vii) Water</u>.

The Institution shall refer to the HKIQEP Syllabus for the subjects included under each area. <u>The Institution is recommended to also include additional topics that are not listed in the HKIQEP Syllabus.</u> The HKIQEP Syllabus will be reviewed and amended from time to time and the Institution is advised to ensure the latest version is referenced.

The Programme <u>MUST demonstrate the CORE courses</u> have adequate coverage of the specific areas in term of contact hours, teaching and learning strategies, assessment methods, hours spent in practical work and training, and the expertise and qualification of academic staff to deliver the courses. <u>A maximum of three specific areas can be applied for by the programme.</u>

iii. Complementary Skills Training (Mandatory)

Apart from environmental knowledge, complementary skills training should be provided to prepare students for lifelong learning, multi-disciplinary collaboration, professional ethics and conduct, and effective communication.

The training includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Initiatives to recognize personal needs and engage in lifelong development (e.g., mentoring programs, online resources, career-sharing platforms)

- Provisions to equip students with knowledge across multiple disciplines and the ability to collaborate effectively in multi-disciplinary teams.

- English as the medium of instruction for teaching and learning, along with training in comprehensive communication skills (e.g., outward-facing communication, sensitivity to listening carefully, and awareness to adapt and respond to stakeholders)

- Training on adherence to professional and ethical responsibilities (e.g., courses on conduct and ethics)

4.2 Staffing

The programme must assign appropriate personnel at the management level and optimize the composition of its academic staff to ensure that programme objectives and outcomes

are achieved. The quality and commitment of academic staff should be demonstrated through their range of expertise, qualifications, and experience, as well as their involvement in research publications, consultancy work, and scholarly activities. Furthermore, the programme should engage guest lecturers with industry experience to enhance teaching. Adequate office, administration, and support staff with appropriate qualifications and experience must also be assigned to facilitate effective programme delivery.

4.3 Resources:

The Institution shall ensure the Programme is equipped with sufficient finance provisions (including financial situation and/or budget allocation) and other resources to support Programme operations and meet Programme outcomes in teaching and learning, and ensure programme development and sustainability.

4.4 Students:

The intake and output quality of students, entry requirements, qualification of intake students, academic award arrangements, and graduate employment statistics are integral components of the Accreditation Scheme. The Programme shall also encourage students to engage with environmental professionals where they can participate in relevant events and activities to enhance their competencies.

4.5 Programme Quality Assurance:

An effective quality assurance system in the Programme can assure and enhance the quality of Programme delivery as well as maintain and improve academic standards.

The Institution shall demonstrate the provision of sufficient and effective internal and external quality assurance systems (e.g. an early structured course feedback mechanism for all courses, and an advisory board that includes industry professionals) in term of committees and methods. The former is to review and evaluate the programme outcomes and other aspects relating to the programme (e.g. curriculum, Programme objectives and outcomes, teaching and learning processes, subject content, and Programme development), while the latter is to maintain academic standards with reference to local and international benchmarks.

Furthermore, the Institution shall implement improvement actions after internal and external quality assurance system assessments. Results of these improvements actions shall demonstrate the proper functioning of the assurance systems and continuous improvement of the Programme.

4.6 Programme Development and Sustainability:

Programme development and sustainability is an important element of an environment degree Programme. The Institution shall demonstrate continuous development and improvement of the Programme in order to ensure it meets local and international professional and academic standards.

Institutional policies and resources shall be available (e.g. training courses on teaching for academic staff) to provide training support to academic staff to ensure their continued

teaching competence and professional development. The programme shall also establish a structured mechanism for the engagement and coordination of all instructors, including both academic staff and guest lecturers, to ensure they clearly understand the programme goals, remain aligned with industry needs, and collectively address teaching challenges.

The Programme shall demonstrate how to integrate with the profession and industry, and how it responds to the latest local and international standards and requirements. Plans shall be in place for the continuous development and improvement of the Institution and the Programme to meet local and global needs.

5. Commonly Asked Questions

Q1. Who is the appropriate personnel to be Contact Person?

➢ To facilitate efficient accreditation submission, the Contact Person should be at programme leadership level and has a good understanding of the programme curriculum and syllabus.

Q2. Can we change our Contact Person during the accreditation period?

➢ The Contact Person may be changed anytime by notifying HKIQEP.

Q3. Where can I find the fees schedule?

➢ Interested programmes may contact HKIQEP at accreditation@hkiqep.org for details regarding accreditation fees.

Q4. Do we have to submit the entire Submission package at once?

➢ It is preferred that the entire Submission package is received and reviewed at the same time. If there are missing information in the initial Submission package, the Programme will be contacted to provide the additional information.

Q5. What are the typical records required in the Submission package?

➢ Records to be submitted typically include:

- Student intake information
- Graduate employment statistics
- Internal and external QA system assessments results and actions taken

Q6. When should we submit the application package in order to have the Accreditation Visit on our target/scheduled date?

➢ A minimum of TEN weeks is required between receiving the submission package and the Accreditation Visit.

➢ More time is required if more than TWO specific areas are to be considered for the Accreditation.

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Q7.   What happens if our submission is not ready by the expected submission date?

➢   The Programme MUST apply to HKIQEP for an extension in writing at least TWO weeks before the expected submission date with reasons for requesting the extension and the new target submission date.

➢   Note that extension may cause a postponement of the Accreditation Visit date.

Q8.   What can we do if we have any questions on the accreditation report and the results?

➢   If there are any questions, the Programme MUST contact HKIQEP as soon as possible but no later than TWO weeks from the date of receive the notification letter with the Accreditation Report and results.

Q9.   What is the renewal process?

➢   The Programme must apply to HKIQEP for re-accreditation at least SIX months before the expiry of the current provisional or full accreditation.

➢   The application form will be available for download on the HKIQEP website.

Q10.   What happens if we make changes to our Programme after Accreditation is achieved?

➢   It is expected there will be changes to a programme within its accreditation period.

➢   The Programme must inform HKIQEP of the changes as soon as practicable.

➢   Subsequent follow-up action such as requirement for written reports and/or initiation of a visit may be required.

6. Contacts and Resources

HKIQEP Contact

• Email: accreditation@hkiqep.org

Useful Links

• HKIQEP website: http://www.hkiqep.org
• HKIQEP syllabus: https://hkiqep.org/qualification-process/
• HKIQEP accredited UG degree: https://hkiqep.org/accredited-programmes/
• Routes to professional membership: https://hkiqep.org/routes-to-professional-membership/

7. Glossary

Accreditation Scheme	The HKIQEP scheme under which environmental programmes of academic institutions may submit application towards
Accreditation Visit	Onsite review of relevant documentation and records, and conduct interviews with relevant personnel of the Programme
Contact Person	The main contact from the Programme who handles all communication matters with the Panel
HKIQEP	Hong Kong Institute of Qualified Environmental Professionals
HKIQEP Syllabus	The syllabus for HKIQEP Professional Assessment (Part I)
Institution	The academic institution applying for HKIQEP Accreditation
Panel	HKIQEP Accreditation Panel
Programme	The academic programme applying for HKIQEP Accreditation
Secretariat	HKIQEP Secretariat staff responsible for the operation of the Accreditation Scheme
Submission	The packet of documents submitted by the Programme in response to the submission instructions, forms, and templates provided by the Panel
Visiting Team	The team appointed by the Panel to carry out the Accreditation Visit