



Report of the Visiting Team on the Periodic Review
of the Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Educa-
tion (JABEE) under the Washington Accord

24-28 November 2012

Educational Establishments Visited:

Kanazawa Institute of Technology (KIT)
and
Kanazawa University (KU)

Submitted by:

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11 March 2013

RECOMMENDATION TO SIGNATORIES

This report precedes the convening of the JABEE Decision Making meeting (scheduled to be convened during March/April 2013). As such, it is not possible to present a firm recommendation in this report.

A formal recommendation will therefore be included in a *Supplementary Report* which the Washington Accord Periodic Review Team will submit after this meeting has been observed. It is proposed that this Supplementary report be considered, together with this report, at the June 2013 IEA meeting.

However, the Periodic Review Team that visited the JABEE is of the opinion that, based on the evidence considered to date, and subject to a satisfactory review of the Decision Making meeting, that it is likely that the Periodic Review Team will recommend that the JABEE be accepted by the other signatories, for a period of six years, as leading to outcomes substantially equivalent to those recognized by the Accord.

This preliminary assessment by the Periodic Review Team is based on the review of documents received prior to the visit, evidence collected during an on-site visit to JABEE, including observation of 4 accreditation visits comprising three programmes at the Kanazawa Institute of Technology (a Private provider) and one programme at the Kanazawa University (a National University).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the period 24-28 November, a Washington Accord (WA) Periodic Review Team, comprising representatives of HKIE, IEET and ECSA, conducted a monitoring review of the JABEE accreditation process in accordance with the review provisions of the Accord.

The previous review was completed in 2005 and a visit had been scheduled for late 2011. However, the unfortunate events associated with the Tsunami and the severe damage caused by that event during 2011 made that visit wholly inappropriate.

It was mutually agreed by the International Engineering Alliance (IEA) and the JABEE that the scheduled visit be postponed by one year. The Periodic Review Team appreciates the difficulties experienced by many of the JABEE members during that time. This report covers the visit of November 2012.

The JABEE was established in 1999 with the purpose of becoming a signatory of the Washington Accord. Accreditation visits by the JABEE commenced in 2001 – the same year that the JABEE achieved provisional status.

The first WA Review Team observed the process of accreditation and decision-making in 2003 and 2004, based on which the JABEE became a full signatory of the WA in 2005. By now, the JABEE has more than ten years of experience in the accreditation of engineering programmes in Japan.

The JABEE is currently self-funded through fees levied for accreditation visits, fees paid by each accredited programme per annum (between accreditation visits) and membership fees as well as industry support. It obtains no state funding. Its members comprise 75 Learned (discipline-specific) Societies that make up the General Assembly. Governance is by a Board of Directors that currently comprises 25 people nominated by the members of the General Assembly.

Accreditation of Engineering Programmes is voluntary in Japan, and of the pool of 1 500 potentially eligible engineering programmes in the country, 450 have been accredited by the JABEE, while 389 currently remain valid.

The JABEE accreditation teams that undertake the accreditation process are generally experienced, but their membership is biased towards Academics. This is a matter that requires on-going attention.

The review activities of the Periodic Review Team involved an initial meeting with executives of JABEE who overviewed the processes followed, changes in their processes since 2001, and in particular the substantive changes relating to the introduction of Design as a key criteria following the 2005 Review report. This was followed by on-site visits at two institutions – the Kanazawa Institute of Technology (three programmes) and the Kanazawa University (one programme) – where the activities of the Accreditation Teams were observed.

All of the JABEE accreditation teams included between one and three observers. Observers are there to learn the process in order to be able to join as a full member of future accreditation teams. The JABEE is placing significant emphasis on pooling and training members from industry.

Since the previous Review the JABEE has undertaken accreditations visit to multiple programmes at a single institution. This was introduced to make the process more efficient and cost effective, and to have a less disruptive effect on the institution. The Periodic Review Team notes that this is likely to encourage more programmes to join the accreditation process. The JABEE has introduced a Mentor (in future, the Visit Leader) who accompanies the multiple teams in order to advise them, in particular regarding consistency and matters relating to difficult decisions.

The report of the Periodic Review Team presents a description of the JABEE accreditation system, an overview of the visits that were observed, an assessment of the JABEE's compliance with its stated policies and procedures, an explanation of the recent changes to policies and criteria, recommendations to the JABEE, and observations and suggestions for improvement – in particular comments relating to the importance of Team and Multidisciplinary Team work as a key attribute of graduates, the proportion of complementary studies in the programmes and scope for more internationalisation (for instance the introduction of additional foreign staff and students) in the programmes.

As the Decision Making meeting of the JABEE has not yet taken place, no formal recommendation can be made at this stage. This formal recommendation will be included in a *Supplementary Report* which the Washington Accord Periodic Review Team will submit after this meeting has been observed.