

Industrial action affecting recognised programmes: interruption to recognised programme delivery and/or assessment.

Guidance for professional engineering institutions, education providers, and awarding organisations.

The Engineering Council and Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs) are aware that industrial action may affect delivery and/or assessment of recognised (approved or accredited) programmes, including degrees, apprenticeships and other qualifications.

It is expected that providers and awarding organisations will aim to maintain delivery of full programmes but strikes or other industrial action such as marking boycotts may result in disruption to delivery and assessment. This may result in changes to delivery format, order in which modules are delivered, assessment methodologies, re-scheduling of learning and assessment into holiday periods or later years of study, and possibly extension of end dates to enable work or assessment that has had to be suspended to be completed.

Although the circumstances are different, education providers and PEIs adapted to the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and may find some of the processes, guidance and changes introduced as a result useful when adapting to strikes or other industrial action such as marking-boycotts that impact education programmes and assessment. For example, PEIs may already have processes for providers to report changes to programmes, and providers may have provisions in their regulations for determining when and how students can progress in the event of teaching and/or assessment being disrupted.

Potential measures education providers and/or awarding organisations might consider taking to support student progression may include:

- Clear communication to students of any changes to teaching and/or assessment activities and/or timings.
- Prioritising activities that may have greater impact upon students if delayed, for example laboratory work, any work-based activities, presentations and vivas.
- Prioritising activities required to provide assurance that students will demonstrate required learning outcomes before completing their programme. This may be informed by reviewing which learning outcomes have already been assessed and where possible, prioritising assessment of those which have not. Module mapping presented for accreditation or approval purposes should be reviewed and, if necessary, updated to enable the PEI(s) to assure themselves that the required learning outcomes will have been demonstrated by all students.
- Considering where trailing credit, modules or assessment to a later year of study may be an appropriate solution.
- Additional measures, suggested by PEIs, education regulators, QAA, CMA or other bodies, that help students to progress whilst continuing to complete expected learning and demonstrate required learning outcomes.

It is a condition of recognition that PEIs are informed of any changes to programme delivery and assessment. PEIs must then satisfy themselves that all the required learning outcomes will still be achieved by everyone awarded a degree or qualification.

Providers of accredited programmes and awarding organisations for approved programmes must therefore:

- maintain a fully documented record of changes, which demonstrates that everyone awarded an approved or accredited degree, apprenticeship or other qualification will achieve the required learning outcomes.
- keep PEIs informed.

The Engineering Council is not prescriptive regarding mode of delivery or assessment etc, although some PEIs may set specific requirements. For an individual to be considered to have achieved a recognised programme they are usually only required to achieve a threshold pass¹

Where a student is unable to complete or be assessed for a piece of work that delivers required Learning Outcomes, the provider or awarding organisation will need to set out the alternative mechanisms for assessing the achievement of those outcomes.

If unavoidable, students who are not in their final year of study when a programme is impacted by industrial action may be permitted to make up any missed credit and/or learning outcomes during later years of study. This should be avoided if possible as it may put students under extra pressure if having to complete additional work in later years.

If interruption to programme delivery or assessment leads to a reduced number of credits or award of a degree or other qualification with some assessments not being complete, PEIs would need to:

- determine the scope of the evidence they would need to assure themselves that all graduates would still achieve all of the learning outcomes at the applicable level taking account of the changes.
- assure themselves that students who commenced their studies in September 2022 or later would not graduate from accredited degree programmes with compensation or condonement of credit beyond that permitted by Engineering Council [policy](#).

It is understood that students may in exceptional circumstances, following industrial action and through no fault of their own, be awarded a qualification or permitted to graduate with some assessments or marking of assessments being incomplete. This is not an approach we would encourage if it is possible to delay the award of a degree or qualification until assessments have all been marked. If degrees or qualifications are awarded prior to marking of all assessments PEIs must be informed, and ideally such awards will be provisional with any incomplete or unmarked assessments addressed at a later date.

If assessments which demonstrate required learning outcomes are expected to be incomplete or unmarked at the point when a student is awarded a qualification, providers and/or awarding organisations must provide PEIs with information as to where else (if anywhere) attainment of the learning outcomes has been demonstrated by students. This may refer to other modules or assessments that address the learning outcomes, and may include updates to module mapping that was considered during accreditation. In exceptional circumstances PEIs may consider whether less formal mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes can be accepted, for example if regular interactions between staff and students or interim assessments during a module or project can give confidence that learning outcomes have been achieved despite an assessment being incomplete or unmarked.

¹ A threshold pass means a pass at or above the minimum for the qualification, which must be a pass with honours for an accredited honours degree. Conditions of accreditation must be met, including in relation to compensation and condonement.

If it is identified that students will be awarded a qualification with gaps in assessed learning outcomes this must be clearly recorded by PEIs on the Engineering Council course search database, confirming which learning outcomes may be missed and for which student cohort(s). This should be exceptional and may affect future recognition of the programme, including internationally, for the cohorts concerned. PEIs will need to seek evidence during professional review that applicants for registration from affected cohorts are able to demonstrate any missed learning outcomes.

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