

## **American Institute of Constructors**

### **Constructor Certification Commission Document No. 85**

#### **Evaluating the Acceptability of US and Non-US Post-Secondary Degree Program Accreditations**

This document is to be used to evaluate the acceptability of US and Non-US post-secondary degree (associate, baccalaureate, and graduate) program accreditations to those accepted by the Constructor Certification Commission to be eligible to take either of the certification examinations when using years of education to qualify.

#### **Overview**

In the U.S., there is no central government body that establishes, maintains and sets standards to oversee academic institutions and programs. Instead, there are accrediting groups recognized by the United States (US) Department of Education which themselves have met or exceed recognition standards in order to review and accredit academic institutions and degree programs. Accreditation as defined by the US Department of Education as “the process whereby an agency or association grants public recognition to a school, institute, college, university, or specialized program of study which meets certain established qualifications and educational standards, as determined through initial period evaluation. The essential purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a professional judgment as to the quality of the institution or programs (s) offered, and to encourage continual improvement thereof.”

The first step in evaluating requests to approve US or Non-US post-secondary degree program accreditations is to determine whether the program is accredited directly by the respective country government educational authority or the government educational authority recognizes and approves organizations with the responsibility of accrediting post-secondary degree programs which is more typical.

The Constructor Certification Commission certification schemes allow for the use of degrees from approved accredited post-secondary programs to qualify to take either of their certification examinations. For degrees to be accepted from post-secondary degree construction programs, they must be accredited by the American Council for Construction Education (ACCE), the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), or others approved by the Constructor Certification Commission. For degrees to be accepted from post-secondary construction-related construction programs, they must be accredited by one of the construction-related accreditation organizations accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Programmatic Accreditation Organizations or others approved by the Constructor Certification Commission. And for degrees to be accepted for other post-secondary degree programs, they must be accredited by the respective degree program discipline organization accredited by CHEA or others approved by the Constructor Certification Commission. All of CHEA’s programmatic accreditation organizations are recognized

and approved by the US Department of Education. Therefore, the Constructor Certification Commission will consider recognizing US and Non-US post-secondary degree program accreditation agencies having accreditation standards and processes equivalent to those of the above-mentioned US based accreditation entities or having formal accreditation reciprocity agreements with them recognizing the equivalency of academic program accreditation standards.

The Constructor Certification Commission currently recognizes the following discipline-specific accreditation agencies:

Accredited Construction Degree Programs:

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and those accreditation organizations having agreements of accreditation reciprocity for associate, baccalaureate and graduate construction degree programs - [www.abet.org/accreditation/find-programs](http://www.abet.org/accreditation/find-programs)

American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) and those accreditation organizations having agreements of accreditation reciprocity for associate, baccalaureate and graduate construction degree programs - [www.acce-hq.org/accredited-degree-programs](http://www.acce-hq.org/accredited-degree-programs)

Accredited Construction-Related Degree Programs:

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and those accreditation organizations having agreements of accreditation reciprocity for associate, baccalaureate and graduate construction degree programs

Mexican Accreditation Council for Engineering Education (CACEI) for baccalaureate Civil Engineering Degrees – [www.cacei.org.mx/indexe.ph](http://www.cacei.org.mx/indexe.ph)

Acreditadora Nacional d Programas de Arquitectura y Disciplinas del Espacio Habitable (ANPADEH) for baccalaureate Architecture Degrees – <http://anpadeh.org.mx/>

Other construction-related post-secondary degree programs accredited by any of the construction-related Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Programmatic Accreditation Organizations and those accreditation organizations having agreements of accreditation reciprocity for associate, baccalaureate and graduate construction-related degree programs with them - [www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations](http://www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations)

Other Accredited Degree Programs:

Other post-secondary degree programs accredited by any of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Programmatic Accreditation Organizations and those accreditation organizations having agreements of accreditation reciprocity for associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree programs with them - [www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations](http://www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations)

## **Review Process**

The current policy of the Constructor Certification Commission in the review of the acceptance of qualifying years of education to take either of the certification examinations is noted below.

Years of Qualifying Education are counted as follows:

- 2 Years – Graduate degree in an accredited construction or management program, such as MS, MBA, PhD, etc. (Note that the Bachelor’s Degree that preceded the award of the graduate degree may count for additional years of qualifying education)
- 4 Years – Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited construction program, such as Construction Management
- 3 Years - Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited construction-related program, such as Architecture or Civil Engineering
- 2 Years – Any other 4-year accredited degree
- 2 Years - Associate degree from an accredited program with a concentration in construction
- 1 Year – Associate degree from an accredited program not related to construction
- No Credit – High School and Vocational Schools

In determining the number of years of equivalent education to be accepted in whole or part to take either of the certification examinations, the Constructor Certification Commission has adopted the following definitions concerning accreditation.

**Accredited Construction Program** – a post-secondary construction education degree program accredited by the American Council for Construction Education (ACCE), the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) or any others approved by the Constructor Certification Commission. Refer to [www.acce-hq.org/accredited-degree-programs](http://www.acce-hq.org/accredited-degree-programs) or [www.abet.org/accreditation/find-programs/](http://www.abet.org/accreditation/find-programs/) for ACCE and ABET accredited post-secondary education construction degree programs.

**Accredited Construction-Related Program** – a postsecondary construction-related degree program accredited by any of the construction-related Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) Programmatic Accreditation Organizations, or any others approved by the Constructor Certification Commission. Refer to [www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations](http://www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations) for CHEA accredited organizations.

**Accredited Degree Programs in Other Disciplines** – any other post-secondary degree accredited by one of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation Programmatic Accreditation (CHEA) Organizations or any others approved by the Constructor Certification Commission. Refer to [www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations](http://www.chea.org/programmatic-accrediting-organizations) for CHEA accredited post-secondary degree programs.

In accordance with Commission Policy 1.3, during the initial review of the examination application by the Certification Manager and/or the Application Vetting Subcommittee, it must be ensured that the educational program or institution meets the above appropriate definition of accredited for the type of degree being considered for acceptance to take either certification examination. This means that only degrees from post-secondary construction, construction-related or others accredited by those agencies noted in the definitions will be accepted as accredited. Any post-secondary education degrees not meeting the Commission's definition of accredited will not be accepted unless approved by the Commission in accordance with Commission Policy 1.9 - Processing Requests for the Approval of US and Non-US Post-Secondary Degree Program Accreditation Agencies.

The review process depends on:

1. The type of accredited post-secondary degree program being requested to be approved - construction, construction-related, or other.
2. The level of accredited post-secondary degree program being requested to be approved - graduate, baccalaureate, or associate.
3. Whether the accreditation agency is recognized by the respective government educational authority. If the agency is not recognized by the respective government authority the accredited degree program being requested for approval cannot be recommended for acceptance by the Commission.
4. Whether there exists a formal agreement of reciprocity covering the equivalency of accreditation standards and processes between the accreditation agency of the degree program being requested to be approved by the Commission and one of the CHEA Programmatic Accreditation Organizations and whether or not the agreement covers the same type(s) and level(s) of accredited post-secondary degree programs. And in cases where the agreement does, than item 3 above is satisfied and no further investigation is needed.
5. Whether or not the respective government educational accreditation authority in the respective country has formally recognized the accreditation or accreditation agency of the degree program being requested to be approved by the Commission as equivalent to one or more of the CHEA Programmatic Accreditation Organizations in terms of both accredited degree program type and level. And when so, then item 3 above is satisfied and no further investigation is needed.

Using the information provided in the request for approval of a new US or Non-US post-secondary degree program accreditation, first determine if the private or public entity awarding the accreditation being requested to be approved has a formal agreement of reciprocity covering the equivalency of degree program accreditation standards and processes with any of those accreditation programmatic accreditation agencies accredited by CHEA. If so, then determine for the specific discipline which degree type(s) and level(s) of post-secondary education the reciprocity agreement covers. This information will be part of the agreement. If the type and level of the accredited degree program being requested to be approved is covered by the reciprocity agreement, then check to see

if the degree program is in fact accredited by the respective agency. If it is the Task Force should recommend approval by the Commission, if not the Task Force would recommend to the Commission not to approve the request on the basis that it needs documented evidence that the accreditation standards and processes of the post-secondary degree program being requested to be accepted are substantially equivalent to the appropriate degree discipline accreditation of the respective CHEA Programmatic Accreditation Organization. It is not the responsibility of the Commission to determine the level of equivalency of accreditation standards and processes among US and Non-US accrediting entities.

Example 1: A request is being made to approve a baccalaureate degree in construction accredited by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) that accredits baccalaureate degree programs in construction management. It is found that ACCE has a Reciprocity Agreement with CIOB covering the equivalency of standards and processes to accredit baccalaureate construction programs. And in reviewing the list of accredited CIOB baccalaureate programs, the reviewer finds the name of the degree program being requested to be approved. The Task Force would then recommend approval to the Commission. If the program's name was not on the list of CIOB accredited baccalaureate degree programs that the Task Force would recommend not approving the request.

Example 2: A request is being made to approve an associate's degree in construction accredited by The Peoples Republic of China National Board of Construction Accreditation (NBCA) that accredits baccalaureate degree programs in construction management. It is found that ACCE has an accreditation Reciprocity Agreement with NBCA but it does not cover associate degree programs. Being the accredited associate degree is in construction, the Task Force would then check to see if ABET has an accreditation Reciprocity with NBCA. If it does and covers construction associate degree programs, then the Task Force would recommend approval of the request to the Commission. If it does not, even though NBCA is recognized by the Peoples Republic of China Ministry of Education, the Task Force would recommend not approving the request because it does not have the appropriate documented evidence that the accreditation standards and processes of the post-secondary degree program being requested to be accepted are substantially equivalent to the appropriate degree discipline accreditation of the respective CHEA Programmatic Accreditation Organization.

Example 3: A request is being made to approve a Mexican University baccalaureate degree civil engineering program accredited by the Mexican Accreditation Council for Engineering Education (CACEI). It is found that CACEI accredits baccalaureate degrees in civil engineering programs and the program requesting approval is in fact accredited by this organization. It is further found that CACEI is recognized by the International Engineering Alliance (IEA). And IEA recognizes CACEI's and ABET's accreditation standards and processes for engineering programs to be equivalent. The Task Force would then recommend approval to the Commission. If the program's name was not on the list CACEI accredited baccalaureate degree programs or IEA did not recognize CACEI as having equivalent accreditation standards and processes then the Task Force

would recommend not approving the request because of the same reason given in Example 2 above.

Example 4: A request is being made to approve a construction management master degree accredited by The National Higher Education Accreditation Association (NHEA). It is found that NHEA accredits a variety of discipline-specific undergraduate and graduate professional programs at private state-licensed institutions of higher education. And one of the degrees accredited is in the masters of construction management. After further investigation it is found that NHEA is not recognized by CHEA as having equivalent accreditation standards and processes to those of their approved programmatic accreditation organizations. The Task Force would recommend not approving the request because it does not have the appropriate documented evidence that the accreditation standards and processes of the post-secondary degree program being requested to be accepted are substantially equivalent to the appropriate degree discipline accreditation of the respective CHEA Programmatic Accreditation Organization.

While examples of every possible situation associated with requests for accreditation approval have not been presented, if the Task Force is of need of additional guidance is arriving at a recommendation to the Commission, the Task Force Chair should contact the Certification Manager for help.

**Revision History:**

Latest Revision: 09/15/2022