



ANET Course Accreditation Process

I. Preamble

The aim of this section is to introduce the regulations governing the professional accreditation process for engineering courses which is to be carried out by ANET; this accreditation being designed to allow graduates of such courses to practise professionally.

ANET is of the opinion that both the assessment carried out by CNAVES (FUP, ADISPOR and APESP) and the assessments carried out by publically-regulated professional associations, which lead to the joint accreditation of establishments /courses and which exempts graduates from having to take the professional exam, are processes of equal worth which should complement, rather than overlap, each other. The results of these processes should be used by schools to implement proactive measures that will encourage the sustained development of their own activities, thus allowing them to optimise the educational service they provide. For this, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the objectives that CNAVES (FUP, ADISPOR and APESP) should pursue in its assessment, as well as of the objectives of those assessment processes carried out by publically-regulated professional associations. The assessment carried out by CNAVES may be characterised as a formative process in which the performance of all the players involved is scrutinised, the quality of available resources is checked, as is the workability of the investments made, and any shortcomings or needs are identified. On the other hand, the assessment carried out by professional bodies governed by public law should have as their objective, the end-result of the process itself. That is, the checking of the competences, capabilities and knowledge acquired by graduates as they relate to the performance of the profession that they oversee. Obviously it must be accepted that assessment downstream from graduation may be more subjective in nature than that which is based on the verification of upstream objective items, given that a simple assessment of the professional performance of ex-students may be influenced by factors external to the educational process itself, such as the work context, the experience acquired, etc. It is requisite, therefore, that downstream assessment should also be based on that information relating to the educational process which is considered pertinent, but not determinant. Moreover, it is believed that the main emphasis of the dossiers submitted to the publically-regulated professional associations should be on evidencing the way in which the educational process has enabled students to acquire the competences, capabilities and knowledge that allow them to perform as engineers, this being detailed for each specialisation in the Professional Acts Table, as defined by these publically-regulated professional associations. Thus, collaboration protocols should be set up between those bodies responsible for academic assessment and the publically-regulated professional associations who are responsible for the professional certification of courses with a view to integrating the two processes (ANET already has collaboration protocols with ADISPOR and APESP).

On the other hand, ANET believes it is indefensible in a country like ours that so many graduates are prevented from exercising their professions because their course has not been professionally accredited and that the failure rate for the professional exam should be so high. Should it be the case that publically-related professional associations hold such a censorious attitude towards those



courses that have been recognised by the relevant ministry without, in most cases, even defining the objective of the assessment? Or, rather, shouldn't they form active partnerships with the schools with a view to optimising the curricular structures of the courses, bearing in mind the future professional activities that graduates are likely to carry out. ANET is a firm advocate of this second scenario. It intends to set up active partnerships with all those schools that offer engineering courses, whether they are part of the polytechnic or university subsystems. In such partnerships the individual nature of each school will be taken into account and there will be an understanding of the overriding need to provide the type of training which will enable graduates to practise as Technical Engineers with a specialisation. To this end, they will need to be prepared to carry out a range of engineering-related activities.

II. Principles Underlying the Accreditation Process.

ANET is of the view that there are eight principles that should be adhered to in this process:

- The school shall be held responsible for ensuring quality and for guaranteeing that the training that it gives bestows the competences, capabilities and knowledge germane to the carrying out of those engineering activities defined for each type of specialisation;
- A guarantee that the interests of society in general are taken into account when considering the professional quality of future graduates;
- The promotion of ongoing improvement in the quality of students' curricula, with a view to responding to emerging demands in the workplace;
- The promotion and encouragement of a culture of quality in the schools, orienting the training towards the future integration of graduates into the professional world.
- The carrying out of the accreditation process in a way which does not repress diversity and innovation;
- In carrying out the accreditation, giving equal weight to the opinions of ANET and the school, as the objective is to reach points of consensus between the two parties;
- The detection of any gaps in training and the proposal of any solutions that will allow these to be closed, preferentially through measures that can be built into the course curricula or through post-curricular training activities;
- The guarantee that no graduate shall be barred from exercising the profession; provided that they are willing to undertake a complementary training course, where necessary.

III. The Process

The accreditation process for 1st cycle engineering courses is divided into the following phases:

- a) Submission by the Institution of the "Course Dossier" which contains the following elements:
 - The joint establishment/course self-assessment report used for academic evaluation;
 - The report by the CNAVES (FUP or ADISPOR or APESP) external assessment committee;
 - The school's response to this;



CONSELHO DIRECTIVO NACIONAL

- The demonstration, by the school, of the methods by which the students acquire the competences, capabilities and knowledge that will allow them to carry out the engineering activities described in the Professional Acts Table. A form was provided for this purpose;
 - The identification of the specialisation college at which the course is to be accredited;
 - An indication of any curricular internship and whether or not this is to be integrated with the professional internship organised by ANET;
 - Any other elements that the school deems pertinent.
- b) Nomination, by the National Executive Council and on the recommendation of the Professional Council, of the Accreditation Commission. For the purposes of course accreditation, the Accreditation Commission will have three to five members. The chair will be a member of the Professional Committee, or designated by the same, and at least two other members shall be nominated by the relevant College of Specialisation. The National Executive Council will provide logistic support to the Accreditation Commission;
- c) Reading and analysis of the "Course Dossier" by the Accreditation Commission;
- d) Organisation and carrying out of a visit to the Institution by the Accreditation Commission;
- e) Drawing up by the Accreditation Commission of its Visit Report;
- f) Submission of the Visit Report to the Institution for verification of the facts contained therein. If necessary, a second meeting may be set up between the Accreditation Commission and representatives of the school for the purposes of discussing the report;
- g) Drawing up by the Accreditation Commission of the final report containing recommendations and a proposed decision;
- h) Scrutiny, by the Professional Council, of the final report and proposed decision submitted by the Accreditation Commission. Declaration of the Professional Council's opinion.
- i) Ratification of the decision by the National Executive Council
- j) Communication of the decision to the candidate Institution. Only the decision and the number of years for which it is valid will be made public. The Institution, however, may make use of the other assessments contained in the report as it sees fit.

Nota do Tradutor:

ANET - Associação Nacional dos Engenheiros Técnicos (National Association of Technical Engineers)

CNAVES – Conselho Nacional de Avaliação do Ensino Superior (National Council for the Assessment of Higher Education)

FUP - Fundação das Universidades Portuguesas (The Portuguese Universities Foundation)

ADISPOR - Associação dos Institutos Superiores Politécnicos Portugueses (The Association of Portuguese Higher Education Polytechnic Institutions)

APESP - Associação Portuguesa do Ensino Superior Privado (The Portuguese Association for Private Higher Education)