

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION PANEL (AQP)

GUIDANCE ON PREPARING A SELF-MANAGED WORK-BASED FURTHER-LEARNING SUBMISSION

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is intended to give you guidance on preparing a submission for approval of a Self-Managed Work-Based *Further-Learning* programme (WBFL) to meet the academic base requirements of a Chartered Engineer. It should be read in conjunction with references 1 and 2.
- 1.2 Your submission must cover a number of essential elements as discussed below and please bear this in mind when planning your submission:
- It must indicate how, through *Further Learning* (i.e. further to your undergraduate BEng/ BSc degree), you have bridged the academic gap to Masters level equivalent qualification; i.e. the academic standard specified by the Engineering Council for eventual registration as a Chartered Engineer. This will be achieved through demonstrating achievement of the Masters level *Learning Outcomes* (see ref 1);
 - The Academic Qualification Panel (AQP) will receive and approve your proposed plan of work (see para 2) and give you feedback and advice;
 - *Further Learning* achieved prior to the submission of your plan of work may be taken into account when preparing your plan (see para 4);
 - The AQP will subsequently receive and comment on a progress report which you will submit twelve months from the approval of your plan of work;
 - Although it is expected that you will have mentor(s) support in the workplace, ultimately AQP will judge whether you have met the required standards. Your final portfolio submission to AQP (see para 3) should therefore be complete and comprehensive, clearly signposting when and how you have achieved your *Further Learning* outcomes;
 - The completion of a Training Agreement and achievement of the ICE Development Objectives is not in itself an indication that you have met the requirements of *Further Learning* no matter how well executed your training programme was. *Further Learning* and Training are not the same thing although elements of Training can contribute to a *Further Learning* programme. In judging any submission AQP will need to be convinced that *learning*, and appropriate *assessment* of that learning, has taken place and it is to Masters level.

2 Submitting your Plan of Work

- 2.1 A WBFL programme should be pre-planned and carefully thought through. Ref 1 gives a template for submitting your proposed plan but this should be treated as a minimum expectation of your submission and should not be blindly reproduced. AQP needs to be convinced that you have given detailed thought to the learning opportunities available to you and to a realistic programme timescale that will be dependent on your personal circumstances.
- 2.2 In reviewing your plan AQP will look for and expect to see that most of the following issues have been addressed:

Programme Content

- (i) Proposed activities, assignments and portfolio evidence that will clearly capture and demonstrate the *Further Learning* (to Masters level) that will take place and which are not confused with simply evidencing achievement of the ICE Development Objectives (ref 3).

Further Learning must be clearly differentiated from Initial Professional Development (IPD) and cannot be simply offered as an eclectic mix of training activities.

- (ii) Sufficient detail given in describing each activity/ assignment such that a judgement can be made about whether or not the activity/ assignment is appropriate. Vague statements of intent without sufficient thought to the detail will not be acceptable. You should consider providing additional supportive information such as the syllabus of a University Masters module or a company-run course that you are proposing to attend.
- (iii) Evidence of private study that must be an intrinsic part of a WBFL programme – a WBFL programme cannot be achieved or evidenced without significant time, commitment and effort over and above that represented by normal work/ training activity.
- (iv) Evidence of intended reflection and evaluation of the anticipated *Further Learning* built into the programme plan at appropriate stages.

Programme Plan and Timescales

- (v) Clear starting and ending dates for each activity, appropriate timescales, milestones and outputs, preferably indicated in the form of a Gantt Chart. This will help demonstrate that a programme has been properly formulated with realistic timescales albeit it may evolve with time.
- (vi) Time guidelines of a WBFL programme – broadly the programme will represent 1200 hours of learning spread over three to four years. Of this, 200-300 hours should represent formal learning in a structured environment that could include in-house courses, university modules, training courses etc. The remaining 900-1000 hours will be a mix of work activity and private study

Proposed forms of Assessment

- (vii) Work-place assessments: although ultimately AQP will judge whether the required standards have been met, it is an expectation that work-place assessment will form part of the programme. Whereas it is recommended that a Supervising Civil Engineer (SCE) can be a mentor and make overall comments on your work, preferably a different, appropriately experienced/ qualified engineer should act as an independent assessor for each activity undertaken and this should be indicated on the plan.
- (viii) Assessment methods that are specific - for example, with a report, the approximate number of words and what will be covered in it needs to be specified. This will set a much clearer goal rather than just saying that a report will be produced.
- (ix) Assessment methods that are appropriate for the activities undertaken - assessment can take a wide variety of forms including reports, exercises, interviews, presentations and drawings and should be identified as appropriate to the learning activities undertaken. AQP will not be impressed if every proposed assessment is in the form of a report or a discussion with a supervisor.
- (x) Assessments that are sufficient in number but not excessively so - a typical 20 credit University Masters programme module would represent 200 hours of student learning (formal and informal learning plus time for assessments). The learning outcomes of that module (a sub-set of a Masters programme) would typically be assessed through one or two significant

assessment tasks, not a collection of small assessments that are questionably at the right level.

- (xi) Assessments that are timely – they should be phased throughout the programme and indicated on the programme plan. Constructive feedback from your assessor would be expected at each stage of assessment submission.
- (xii) Assessments that are transparent - what criteria are being used in assessing the achievement of the learning task? Have these been established before the task is undertaken?
- (xiii) Assessments that are documented - if the assessment is, for example, a discussion with a mentor how will that discussion be recorded and evidenced? When you eventually submit your portfolio can you demonstrate to AQP when, how and with what outcome these discussions took place?

Training Courses

- (xiv) Attendance on a training course: attendance is not evidence in itself that any significant learning has taken place or that the learning is at Masters level. This can only be determined through a formal assessment and documentation of achievement of that assessment so that the learning can be evaluated as part of the *Further Learning* activity.

3. Submission of your Portfolio

- 3.1 When you and your mentor believe that your programme of *Further Learning* is complete you will submit your portfolio of work to AQP for final assessment and approval. It will take several weeks before this assessment will be completed. This timescale must be taken into account when planning for your Professional Review. You cannot apply for your Review until your Training Agreement is signed off or alternatively, your Career Appraisal is approved and neither of these is possible until your WBFL has been approved.
- 3.2 Your submission must include the following:
 - (i) A carefully presented **portfolio of evidence** with an introduction to explain the context of the evidence and the key learning outcomes that have been developed, evolved and demonstrated from the initial plan.
 - (ii) Clear details of the **Activities/ Assignments** use to test your knowledge and understanding of the learning undertaken in the work place context, and the skills you have developed.
 - (iii) Details and records of **oral and other assessments** that have taken place in the workplace.
 - (iv) **Reflective statements** on what has been learnt and how Learning Outcomes have been achieved (see ref 4)
- 3.3 In judging your submission AQP will be mindful of the issues outlined in Section 2 of this document and the extent to which you have addressed those issues when executing your programme of learning.
- 3.4 AQP will not expect to be overwhelmed with a massive portfolio containing evidence of everything you have ever done during your training but rather selective and appropriate evidence of how you have met the Learning Outcomes, as initially defined in, and developed from, your Learning Plan.

4 Prior Learning

- 4.1 If you believe that as part of your programme you are in a position to claim credit for Prior Learning you must produce evidence of when that learning was achieved together with details of how and to what extent it meets the Learning Outcomes.
- 4.2 Such learning may include, for example, attendance on a course before you started your WBFL programme. It could include other elements of previously achieved WBFL based on your achievements in the workplace but in all cases must meet the requirements outlined in this document i.e. it must represent learning at Masters level and there must be evidence that formal, documented assessment of learning has taken place.
- 4.3 Such retrospective claims of prior learning cannot be simply a collection of small tasks undertaken as part of your training programme or work experience. Each task should be significant in its own right and must clearly demonstrate achievement of one or more of the Learning Outcomes.

5 Summary

- A WBFL programme should be pre-planned, carefully thought through and approved by AQP. A Gantt chart would be one way of developing and indicating a meaningful plan;
- Proposed activities, assignments and portfolio evidence which will clearly capture and demonstrate *Further Learning* must be identified and articulated in your plan;
- *Further Learning* includes private study, learning activities undertaken in the workplace, formal and informal courses at the appropriate level and reflective statements;
- Work place learning and formal learning through courses must be assessed. Assessments can take a variety of forms and several types of assessment appropriate to the learning tasks undertaken should be included;
- The AQP will receive and comment on a progress report which you will submit twelve months from the approval of your plan of work;
- Your final submission must include the following:
 - A carefully presented **portfolio of evidence** with an introduction to explain the context of the evidence and the key learning outcomes that have been developed evolved and demonstrated from the initial plan.
 - Clear details of the **Activities/ Assignments** use to test your knowledge and understanding of the learning undertaken in the work place context, and the skills you have developed.
 - Details and records of **oral and other assessments** that have taken place in the workplace
 - **Reflective statements** on what has been learnt and how Learning Outcomes have been achieved

6 References

1. *Self-managed Work-Based Further Learning route for completion of the educational base for a Chartered Engineer*, Joint Board of Moderators, Sept 2008
http://www.jbm.org.uk/uploads/FLJBM7_SelfManagedRouteCEng.pdf
2. *Guidelines for Work-based Education forming part of the educational base of a Chartered Engineer*, Joint Board of Moderators, July 2009
http://www.jbm.org.uk/uploads/FLJBM10_WorkBasedEducationPaper.pdf
3. ICE 3005A, *Development Objectives*
4. Howarth T, *The 'Reflective Statement' – Enhancing Reflective Practice and Student- Staff Feedback in Written Assessment*, in Good Practice and Innovation in the Assessment of Students in Built Environment Subjects in Higher Education. See:
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/cebe/Documents/projects/SIGs/the_reflective_statement_enhancing_reflective_practice_and_student-staff_feedback_in_written_assessment.pdf