

DISCUSSION PAPER

**ADMISSION POLICY FOR GRADUATES WITH UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATIONS
OTHER THAN A 4-YEAR SURVEYING DEGREE**

1ST DECEMBER, 1999

INTRODUCTION

This discussion paper addresses the ISA rules and policies regarding admission to the Institution of applicants who are enrolled in, or who have completed, a tertiary degree other than those on the current list of “approved 4-year Bachelor Degrees in a surveying discipline”. This group is divided into two separate cases:

- Those applicants who are enrolled in, or who have completed, a 3-year tertiary degree in a surveying discipline; and
- Those applicants who are enrolled in, or who have completed a tertiary degree which is not one of the ‘traditionally recognised’ surveying degrees – for example an applicant who has completed a GIS major in a Bachelor of Science, or a relevant coursework Masters degree.

SUMMARY

There is no constitutional barrier to a university Bachelor degree which is not a 4-year surveying or geomatics degree being included on the Institution’s list of approved courses. It is recommended that the Council consider on its merits any application to have a University degree included on the list of approved courses and that the duration of the degree or the nomenclature of the degree should not be a barrier to its inclusion.

With regard to the National Competency Standards, minor changes will allow graduates from approved courses that are not 4-year surveying or geomatics degrees to progress through Stage 1 and Stage 2 certification. It is recommended that progress be based on individual assessment of candidates rather than by application of any general rule that requires graduates from 3-year courses to articulate through a different path.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Membership of the Institution is controlled by the Constitution and By-Laws:

1. The definition of **surveyor** is contained in Section 2 of the Constitution and Section 1 of the By-Laws:

A surveyor is defined as a professional person with the academic qualifications and technical expertise to practise the science of measurement; to assemble and assess land and geographic related information; to use that information for the purpose of planning and implementing the efficient administration of the land, the sea and structures thereon; and to instigate the advancement and development of such practices.

This definition of surveyor (and the expanded list of activities contained in the By-Laws) does not preclude membership for those with qualifications such as the two cases described above.

2. The qualifications for Members, Graduate Members, Associate Members and Affiliates are contained in Section 6 of the Constitution:

6.3 Qualification of Members

A candidate for election or advancement into this grade shall produce evidence to the satisfaction of the Council:

6.3.1 That he is the holder of an approved Bachelor Degree Award, or equivalent, in a discipline of Surveying or was before 1 January 1988 the holder of a Certificate of Competency in Surveying and/or professionally registered, licensed or authorised by an authority recognised by the Institution and that he has at least two years satisfactory experience since such graduation or registration.

OR

6.3.2 That he is the holder of a Bachelor Degree Award in a discipline other than surveying and by virtue of his training and experience in surveying has attained a status in the profession equivalent to that of a person eligible for admission under the provisions of the preceding part of this By-Law.

6.4 Qualification of Graduate Members

A candidate for election or advancement into this grade shall produce evidence to the satisfaction of the Council that he is the holder of an approved Bachelor Degree Award in a discipline of Surveying.

6.5 Qualification of Associate Members

6.5.1 A candidate for election or advancement into this grade shall produce evidence to the satisfaction of the Council that he is the holder of an approved Associate Diploma Award in a discipline of Surveying or its equivalent.

OR

6.5.2 That in the opinion of the Council his standing in the profession of surveying, by virtue of his knowledge of, and experience in surveying, is not less than that of a person eligible for admission under the provisions of the preceding part of this By-Law.

OR

6.5.3 That he is engaged in the profession of surveying and holds an approved qualification equivalent to an Associate Diploma in a discipline other than surveying.

6.6 Qualification of Affiliates

6.6.1 That he is engaged in the profession of surveying and holds an approved Certificate Award from a Tertiary Institute.

OR

6.6.2 That he is at least 30 years of age and in the opinion of Council has achieved a status of not less than that of an Affiliate.

6.7 Qualification of Students

6.7.1 A candidate for election into this grade shall produce evidence that he is enrolled in an approved course in a discipline of surveying leading to qualifications as a surveyor.

6.7.2 No person shall remain in the grade of Student beyond the end of the financial year in which he becomes eligible for a higher grade of membership.

Throughout this section of the By-Laws there are references to **approved courses in a discipline of surveying** but with no restriction to 4-year degrees. There appears to be no constitutional barrier to a 3-year degree being included on the list of approved courses. There also appears to be no constitutional barrier to a degree with a major in one of the emerging surveying disciplines (such as geographic information systems) being included on the list of approved courses. It is worth noting that throughout Section 6, the words “**a discipline of surveying**” are used, which is consistent with a

view that members of the Institution may have qualifications and interests that relate to particular aspects of the profession rather than suggesting that all members have common qualifications and interests.

Recommendation

That Council consider on its merits any application to have a University degree included on the list of approved courses and that the duration of the degree or the nomenclature of the degree should not be a barrier to its inclusion.

Adoption of this recommendation will allow student and graduate membership of the Institution to anyone enrolled in, or who has completed, an approved degree, without degree nomenclature or duration restricting the list of approved degrees.

The term “approved Bachelor Degree Award” in section 6.3.1 does mean that, for example, a coursework Masters degree cannot be included on the list of approved courses. It is likely that Australian universities will be offering more of these types of courses in the future, and so it might be appropriate to replace the term “approved Bachelor Degree Award” with “approved Bachelor Degree or Postgraduate Award”.

Recommendation

That the words “approved Bachelor Degree Award” be replaced with “approved Bachelor Degree or Postgraduate Award” in Section 6.3 and Section 6.4 of the Constitution.

Progression from graduate membership to corporate membership currently requires at least two years of satisfactory experience since graduation, a proposal endorsed by two qualified members of the Institution, and approval by Council. At the time that a graduate is applying for corporate membership, it seems inappropriate to attempt to differentiate that applicant and others on the basis of which of the various approved degrees he or she completed.

Recommendation

That no change to Section 6.3 of the Constitution (Qualification of Members) is required because of the possible inclusion of 3-year degrees on the list of approved courses.

It is however appropriate that clearer standards be made available to candidates and to Institution members, so that progression from Graduate membership to corporate membership is based on a proper appraisal of the candidate. These can be drawn from the description of Stage 2 certification contained in the Competency standards. They might include an indication that graduates from a three-year degree might expect to take longer to meet the requirements for corporate membership than graduates from a four-year degree.

Recommendation

That the Institution membership form used by candidates applying for corporate membership be amended to provide clear standards for the information of both the candidate and the members endorsing the application. These to be drawn from the National Competency Standards.

Section 6.5 and 6.6 of the By-Laws address the qualifications of Associate Members and Affiliates of the Institution. Consideration of these sections is outside the scope of this paper, but it should be noted that the use of the terms “Associate Diploma” and “Certificate Award” may be inappropriate given the changes in nomenclature that have been occurring in the Technical Colleges and Universities (with some universities now offering Certificates, and technical colleges offering Advanced Diplomas).

Recommendation

That Council review the course descriptions used in Section 6.5 and 6.6 of the By-Laws.

NATIONAL COMPETENCY STANDARDS

The National Competency Standards for Professional Surveyors published by the Institution also contain specific reference to “**approved 4-year degrees in surveying or geomatics**”. It should be noted that on pages 32 and 35 of the standards, the 4-year degrees in surveying or geomatics are indicated to be *benchmarks* and so the Standards might not be considered prescriptive, but do appear to be unnecessarily restrictive. On page 96 of the Standards, the reference to a 4-year degree is prescriptive, although there is a clear indication that degree nomenclature is not important. It should also be noted that the definition of “*approved degree*” on page 96 is not consistent with the words used on pages 32 and 35.

Recommendation

That Council supports the following changes to the National Competency Standards for Professional Surveyors:

Delete Page 32, paragraph 5: “*The benchmark for an approved degree will be a four year degree at an Australian University, approved or accredited by ISA*”

Delete Page 35, paragraph 3: “*The benchmark for an approved degree will be a four year degree at an Australian University, approved or accredited by ISA*”

Amend the definition of an approved degree contained on Page 96, Paragraph 1,
from: “*A four year university course in surveying or geomatics that has been accredited by the Institution of Surveyors, Australia. Typically these courses will lead to Bachelor Degree Awards in Surveying, Applied Science, Geomatics, Geoinformatics, Geomatic Engineering, or Land Information.*”
to: “*A university degree that has been approved for Graduate Membership of the Institution of Surveyors, Australia.*”

These changes will link the Standards directly to the ISA qualification requirements for graduate membership, which is consistent with the statement made on page 4 of the Standards, and will allow Stage 1 certification for all graduate members of the Institution of Surveyors.

COMPETENCY STANDARDS – PROGRESSION TO STAGE 2 CERTIFICATION.

Progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2 certification should be based upon individual assessment of candidates rather than by application of any general rule that requires

graduates from 3-year courses to articulate through a different path. The approach used for the Competency Standards will then be consistent with the approach used for the articulation from graduate to corporate membership of the Institution.

Recommendation

That Council recognises that progression from Stage 1 to Stage 2 Competency Standard certification is based on assessment of the individual, and so graduates with an approved degree which is not a 4-year surveying or geomatics degree should not be subject to a different assessment because of the duration of their undergraduate degree.

Again, it might nevertheless be useful to indicate that graduates from a three-year degree might expect to take longer to meet the requirements for Stage 2 certification than graduates from a four-year degree.

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