

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION ON UNIFIED DIPLOMA SYSTEM IN ENGINEERING

The Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ), lead representatives from polytechnics and industry training organisations (ITOs)¹ have developed a unified diploma system for engineering diplomas at Level 6 in the civil, electrical and mechanical disciplines. Within the system there is a single governance structure and two diplomas:

- New Zealand Diploma in Engineering (NZDE) - an academic diploma with achievement-based assessment that provides the underpinning knowledge for an engineering technician
- New Zealand Diploma in Engineering Practice (NZDEP) - a work-based diploma with competence assessment that leads to professional registration as an engineering technician.

Consultation with industry, providers and ITOs on the unified diploma system has occurred in two phases.

Phase 1 – September 2009

In this phase, representatives from IPENZ, Otago Polytechnic and Competenz held meetings in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin to present the concept of a unified diploma system to providers, industry and ITOs. Almost 100 people registered to attend and they were also invited to submit written responses. They gave unanimous support to the concept provided that the detail was right.

Discussions at the consultation meetings occurred on the:

- proposed names of the diplomas
- qualification structures
- need for flexible delivery of the NZDE
- assessment models i.e. achievement standards in the NZDE and unit standards in the NZDEP
- articulation into the diploma from the trades and from the diploma into higher level qualifications such as the Level 7 Bachelor of Technology (BEngTech) and the Level 8 Bachelor of Engineering (BE)
- governance structure and the composition of the different groups within the structure
- quality assurance and national consistency.

Phase 2 – May/June 2010

The developers from the lead polytechnics and ITOs considered the feedback from the September 2009 consultation when:

- drafting the constitution for the New Zealand Board in Engineering Diplomas and terms of reference for the management groups
- writing the structures for the civil, electrical and mechanical disciplines and their specialisations

¹ CPIT, MIT, NZIHT, Otago Polytechnic, WelTec, Wintec, Competenz, ESITO, ETITO, EXITO, Infratrain, MITO

- writing the course descriptors and the national moderation system.

The second phase of consultation occurred in May/June 2010 on the structures for each discipline and their specialisations, the draft course descriptors and national moderation system. Participants in the September 2009 consultation, industry people in the ITO networks and staff from the polytechnics and ITOs were invited to attend or send written submissions. Almost 100 people registered to attend the meetings held in five locations. Consultation also occurred through the Council for Engineering Technologists and Technicians New Zealand (CETTENZ)², existing provider consortia and ITO consultation networks.

The issues raised during the consultation were:

- governance structure and representation of stakeholders on each group in the structure
- quality assurance and national consistency
- entry requirements for the NZDE and the requirement for 12 credits in Maths
- qualification structures and the appropriateness of the papers in the specialisations
- consistent assessment across the diploma
- changes to the learning outcomes of some course descriptors
- additional topics for the indicative content
- the content of the four common papers to all disciplines
- transitioning from the diploma into the BEngTech and BE
- alignment of the diploma with the BEngTech

Since the consultation, developers have considered the feedback and reviewed the structures and course descriptors for each discipline in the NZDE.

Participants from industry commented on their experiences with the National Diploma in Civil Engineering (Applied) which is being replaced by the NZDEP. They offered to contribute when development of the NZDEP is underway.

² CETTENZ is the Council for Engineering Technician and Technologist Education New Zealand, a bipartite council of the Engineering Deans or Heads of Department from the ITP and university sub-sectors responsible for three-year degrees (Sydney Accord criteria) and two-year Diplomas (Dublin Accord criteria).