

## Information on Accreditation of UK Programmes

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES), through its education committee, the Committee of Heads of Environmental Sciences (CHES), offers professional accreditation to CHES members for Masters, Honours and Foundation Programmes. The scheme also covers HE provision within FE institutions.

Only CHES members may apply for accreditation. Honours Programmes should fall within the remit of the [Benchmark Statement](#) for Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies, and Masters Programmes should clearly align with this benchmark.

### Benefits

By joining CHES and getting your programmes accredited, you will become part of an active community which champions environmental disciplines both academically and professionally. CHES is determined to maintain the flow of highly qualified and motivated people who can meet the challenges of the future. Students enrolled on IES/CHES accredited programmes are automatically eligible for Student Membership of the IES free of charge. The IES will send your department pre-paid postcards, making it easy for your students to register.

#### For the Department

- Quality assurance: expert input into programme design and external accreditation of your degree content
- Marketing: signals to potential students and employers that your department's teaching, learning and research is aligned with high quality professional development. Accreditation is reported in a dedicated column in the new Key Information Sheets on the unistats website
- Promotion of the programme through the IES and CHES websites and careers information
- Free listing of news, events and publications on the CHES website
- Association with CHES and the IES, influential organisations leading debate, dissemination and promotion of environmental science and sustainability

#### For Staff

- Networking opportunities nationally and internationally through CHES contacts, annual conference and other events
- Opportunities to engage with priority issues and influence national agendas
- Become involved in the work of partner organisations
- Bimonthly email update including funding opportunities, job vacancies and events
- Eligibility to sit on the Executive Committee with access to CHES meeting reports and minutes

#### For Students

- The ability to use StMIEnvSc up to the end of the calendar year in which they graduate, signalling their professional commitment to potential employers
- First steps on an environmental career path which could take them to Chartered Status
- Electronic copies of the latest edition of our journal, environmental SCIENTIST with opportunities to publish articles and a monthly e-newsletter
- Free or reduced entry to IES events
- Access to exclusive members-only content through the IES' online portal
- Upon graduation, automatic eligibility for Associate Membership, which is offered at half price for the first year

## Application process

Applications for accreditation are made by submitting the completed application form, accompanied by the relevant current Programme Specification. **No additional documentation is required; any other materials or documents that are submitted will not be considered.**

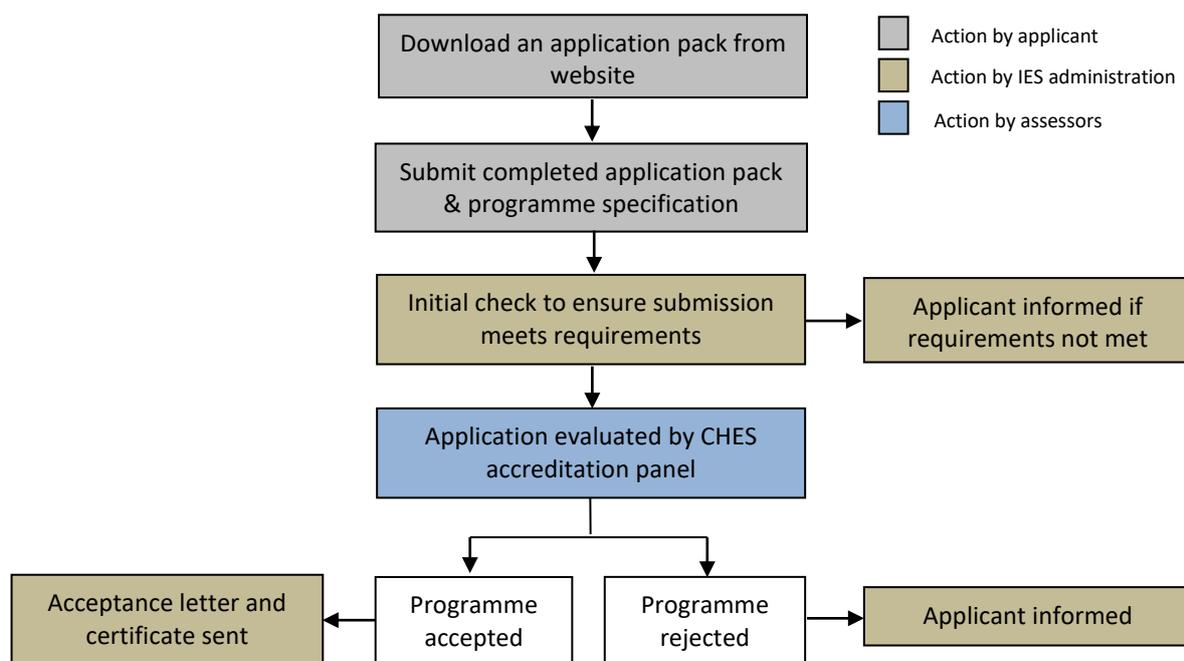
The IES/CHES scheme seeks to avoid duplication of quality management and enhancement processes and standards (i.e. Benchmark Statements, Programme Specifications and Codes of Practice). The application form therefore consists of:

- Section A *The Programme*; and
- Section B *Environmental Professional Practice*.

A strict word limit of 1,000 words for each of these two sections applies. A separate application form is required for each individual degree Programme. **Information provided in the application form must not duplicate the Programme Specification document; 'cut-and-paste' of text from programme specifications must be avoided.**

Applications will be reviewed by an Accreditation Panel of the IES and CHES Executives which meets up to four times a year. After approval, accreditation will normally last for five years. Post-accreditation, any significant programme changes need to be reported to CHES in a timely manner. Changes which require reaccreditation include, but are not limited to, the removal/reduction of field or laboratory work, changes to course content which exceed 25%, or the reduction of science content to less than 50% of the syllabus.

The impacts of the changes will then be considered by the Accreditation Panel in relation to the requirements of accreditation and a decision made regarding continuation of the accreditation for the remainder of the five-year period. If a resubmission is required and the programme accepted for accreditation, the accreditation will last for five years after approval of the resubmission.



## **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

The IES and CHES are committed to accrediting environmental science programmes that strive to be inclusive and accessible for all learners, reflect the diversity that exists within society, and provide equal opportunities from which everyone has the potential to benefit. This is vital for the achievement of the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals included in the 2030 Agenda.

In recognition of the attainment gaps that exist within universities among diverse groups, and the impacts of these on employability, all applications are required provide information about how equality, diversity and inclusivity are addressed within the programme, and in relation to professional environmental practice. Diverse groups which might be considered include, but are not restricted to, gender, race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic background. Note, inclusion is characterised as the environment in which diverse groups are valued.

The competencies contained in the accreditation pro forma, along with important considerations to address, are:

**A2: Outline how equality, diversity and inclusion are addressed institutionally and within the programme. This may include, but is not limited to, course content, assessment and departmental activities. Provide examples of good practice.**

This section is intended to draw explicit attention to equality, diversity and inclusion and encourage applicants to consider both their departmental and programme-specific practices. We recognise that different aspects of diversity may be of higher priority to some institutions at any given time; for example, an institution with a high proportion of students with disabilities but a low number of BAME students may wish to place greater onus on enhancing inclusivity regarding ethnicity whilst maintaining good practice in disability. It is therefore expected that focus may vary across institutions. Some examples to consider may include:

- Reference to an inclusive teaching and learning policy (level may vary, i.e. university, faculty, school);
- Details of specific awards or endorsement (e.g. Athena SWAN, Stonewall);
- Specific examples of anticipatory approaches to making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities;
- Evidence for inclusive practice or Widening Participation (WP) initiatives.

Greater consideration should be given to programme-specific and departmental activities as opposed to institution-wide initiatives. Responses which only make reference to the latter may be rejected.

**B1: How are matters regarding equality, diversity and inclusion addressed in relation to career planning, opportunities and choices? State the nature of any known attainment gaps.**

This relates to attainment gaps that exist among diverse groups, subsequent impacts on employability and whether institutions are doing anything to explicitly address these. Examples may include:

- Engaging with employers that recognise and value diversity;
- Ensuring that students are properly supported on work placements;
- Ensuring diversity is reflected in invited speakers;
- Signposting students to professional associations that can further support them in employment.

It is important to note that, whilst these competencies will not be formally assessed nor, at present, prohibit the awarding of accreditation, responses will be used to identify barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion within environmental science education and help CHES to collate case studies for best practice. Departments will be expected to demonstrate they have made reasonable efforts to complete these sections, otherwise their accreditation application will be returned with a request for further information. In the future, the IES and CHES intend to produce formal best practice guidance on equality, diversity and inclusion for higher education and further education providers, which will be used to provide formal, tailored feedback during the accreditation process.

### **Screening process: initial check to ensure submission meets requirements**

Any application that does not meet the requirements as specified above will be returned to the applicant without full evaluation. For example: application forms that duplicate the programme specification and submissions that exceed the word limit will be returned.

### **Cost**

The initial cost of accrediting a single programme is £500, with a charge of £200 for each additional programme. In cases where referral and a visit are necessary, there may be additional charges. After approval for accreditation, there will be a recurring Accredited Membership fee of £450 per annum to cover CHES membership and the administration costs for the production and supply of graduate certificates. This is a flat fee regardless of how many programmes you have accredited. Only members of CHES may apply for or hold accreditation. Accreditation will be withdrawn if CHES membership lapses.

Every five years, or sooner if there are significant changes, the course will need to be reaccredited. This is to ensure the programme still meets the requirements necessary for accreditation. Reaccreditation is charged at £200 per course.

### **Programmes with additional year variants**

There is strong evidence that sandwich placements and general work experience enhance employability. Therefore, departments are encouraged to accredit additional year derivatives, along with their parent programmes, by providing respective course specifications. Accreditation of these variants is completely free of charge, with the accreditation fee covering all approved derivatives of the course.

This applies to all Year in Industry, Professional Placement, Year Abroad and Foundation Year courses. Please note, integrated masters, joint honours, and pathways resulting in different degree titles must be accredited separately.

### **After accreditation**

To keep the accreditation, you must make sure that you notify us of any changes to the programme ([info@the-ies.org](mailto:info@the-ies.org)). This includes any: changes to content or assessment in core modules; changes that affect the mapping of the programme against the ES3 Subject Benchmark Statement; and any other changes that would trigger an institutional review of the programme. These changes will be sent to the Accreditation Review Panel, to decide whether the programme requires re-submission for accreditation.

### **Further information**

Any further clarification required may be obtained from [info@the-ies.org](mailto:info@the-ies.org) or +44 (0)20 7601 1920.