



# 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. Undergraduate 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.

## Application and re-accreditation process

Your accreditation application needs to include:

- ✓ Completed application form
- ✓ ES3 Benchmark Statement mapping table
- ✓ Relevant current Programme Specification
- ✓ Most recent programme report (for new programmes, the validation report should be included instead)

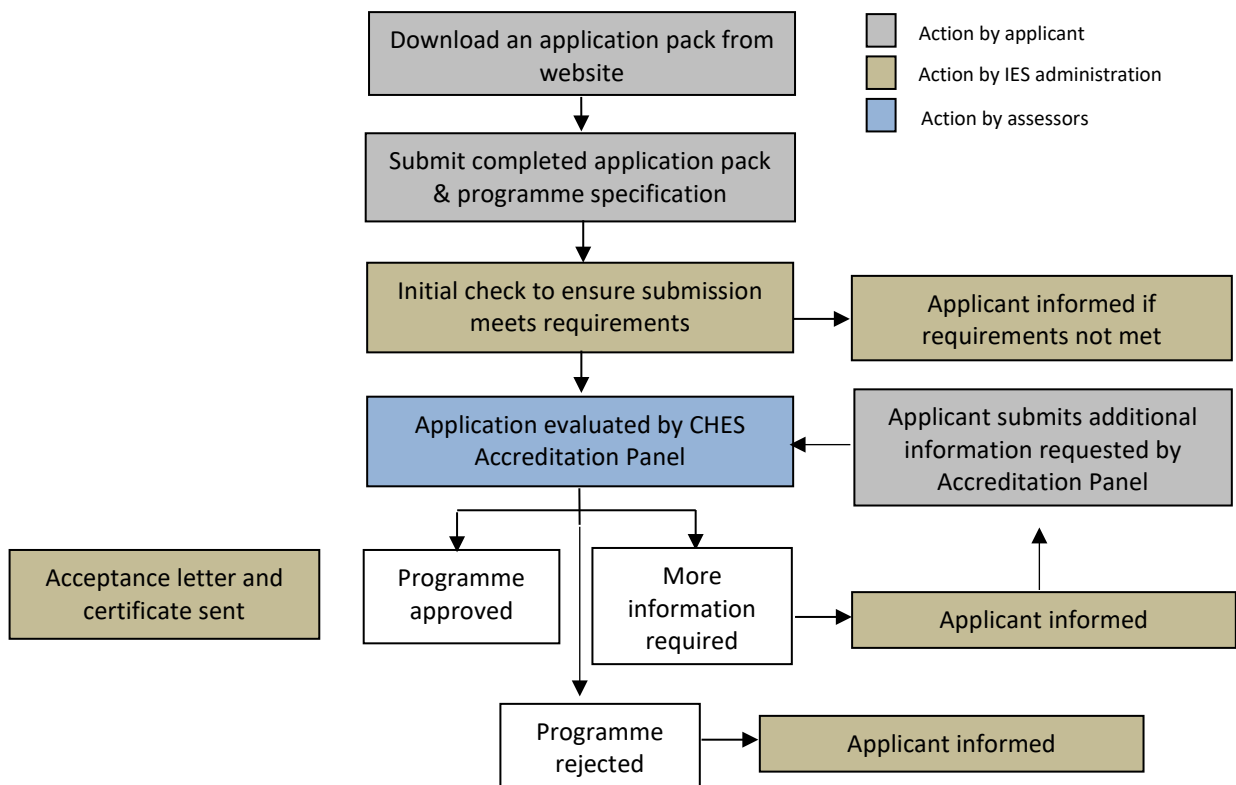
**No additional documentation is required; any other materials submitted will not be considered.**

A separate application form is required for each individual programme. **Information in the application form must not duplicate the Programme Specification;** ‘cut-and-paste’ from programme specifications must be avoided.

Our scheme avoids duplication of quality management and enhancement processes and standards (i.e. Benchmark Statements, Programme Specifications and Codes of Practice). The application form consists of two sections: Section A *The Programme*; and Section B *Environmental Professional Practice*. A strict word limit of 1,500 words for each section applies.

An application that does not meet the requirements specified above will be returned without a full evaluation. For example, application forms that duplicate the programme specification or submissions exceeding the word limit.

Applications are reviewed by an Accreditation Panel of the IES and CHES Executives which meets four times a year.





## Equality, diversity and inclusion

We 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. 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.

There are two competencies in the accreditation form that refer to equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I).

**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 encourages 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 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; and
- 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.

## ES3 Benchmark Statement

In addition to ensuring that the ES3 Benchmark Statement has been referenced clearly within the report responses, a table has been added to the application paperwork to enable applicants to demonstrate clearly where ES3



Benchmark learning outcomes are included throughout the delivery of the programme. The ES3 Benchmark is typically utilised in undergraduate programme design, however applications for postgraduate and international programmes should also complete the mapping table to show how the programme aligns with the ES3 learning outcomes. If the programme does not meet one of the learning outcomes, a contextual narrative can be included within the application.

## **Cost**

The initial cost of accrediting a single programme is £550, with a charge of £250 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 £500 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.

## **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 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. Integrated masters, joint honours, and pathways resulting in different degree titles must be accredited separately.

## **After Accreditation**

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%;
- the reduction of science content to less than 50% of the syllabus;
- changes to assessment in core modules;
- changes that affect the mapping of the programme against the ES3 Subject Benchmark Statement; or
- any other changes that would trigger an institutional review of the programme

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.

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.

## **Further information**

Any further clarification required may be obtained from [info@the-ies.org](mailto:info@the-ies.org) or ++44 (0)20 3862 7484.