

The Washington, Sydney & Dublin Accords: Educational and Professional Pathways for the Engineering Team in Malaysia

Hassan Basri
Board Member, Board of Engineers Malaysia

Abstract

In 2009, Malaysia, via the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM), was admitted as a signatory to the Washington Accord, the mutual recognition agreement for engineering education programs under the governance of the International Engineering Alliance (IEA). Nine years on, in June 2018, the BEM was accepted as a full signatory for the other two IEA agreements for education, i.e., the Sydney Accord for engineering technology education and the Dublin Accord for engineering technician education. These achievements by the BEM represent significant milestones in international benchmarking for quality engineering education in Malaysia, where henceforth, Malaysia has been an active signatory in all three education accords of the IEA. The IEA is the umbrella body that champions cross-border collaboration and mobility within the engineering profession by promoting clarity in the relevant standards and competencies. Full-signatory status to these three accords can only be granted after rigorous audit by international peer reviewers during a provisional signatory status, which normally requires massive and intensive efforts by the relevant stakeholders in the jurisdiction's engineering education community. Hence, graduates of BEM-accredited program are now recognized by other signatory nations of the accords and can look forward to having in their possession a very marketable qualification for them to commence their professional career. Such graduates will be of international standing and hence will help to attract foreign companies to set up their businesses in Malaysia, consistent with the aspiration to develop competent human capital that is necessary to propel the nation toward a high-income economy. Signatory status for the Washington, Sydney, and Dublin Accords ensures the high standards necessary for graduates to enter the profession for the entire engineering team, which importantly includes engineering technologists and technicians. These two categories of engineering professionals have traditionally been overlooked in the past, despite their significant role within the engineering profession. Pursuant to this, the BEM has developed education standards based on the adopted IEA Graduate Attributes and is currently developing IEA-based professional competency frameworks. This will provide clarity for potential students intending to become engineers, engineering technologists, and technicians to chart their educational and professional pathways within the engineering profession, where the outcomes and competencies are globally recognized.



Prof. Hassan Basri is a professor of environmental engineering at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and is currently a board member on the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM). He has been a long-serving council member of the Engineering Accreditation Council (EAC-BEM) since 2003, including as a past chair. He played a key role in transforming engineering education in Malaysia in preparing for Malaysia's entry into the Washington Accord, the international agreement for mutual recognition for the accreditation of engineering degree programs. Prof. Basri has also been involved in the Engineering Technology Accreditation Council (ETAC) since 2013. He was appointed as its pro tem chairman in 2012, a past deputy chair, and was an active participant in Malaysia's effort to secure full-signatory status of the Sydney and Dublin Accords in June 2018. Prof. Hassan obtained his B.E. in civil engineering with honors from Tasmania University in 1982, MSc (engineering) with distinction from Leeds University in 1988, and PhD in 1994,

also at Leeds. He practiced as a civil engineer with MMC Engineering Services Sdn Bhd (1983-1987), and subsequently on a part-time basis with several engineering companies. At UKM, Prof Hassan served as head of the Civil Engineering Department, dean of Engineering, director for Research, director for Corporate Planning, and deputy vice-chancellor. He is also a past chair of the Malaysian Council of Engineering Deans.