

International ABET Accreditation: from the Perspective of a South African Information Systems Department



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ECIS 2010 Panel Discussion

Agenda

- Background
- Internationalisation and accreditation
- Preparation for accreditation
- Challenges



Background

Department of Informatics, University of Pretoria

- **BCom(Informatics) degree obtained ABET accreditation in 2007**
- **Advantages of accreditation - satisfying stakeholders and attracting students**
- **Impact on internal processes, curriculum design etc.**

ABET

- US based federation of over 29 professional and technical societies
- Recognised accreditor of college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering and technology education
- Assuring quality through a voluntary, peer-reviewed process



Internationalisation and Accreditation

- International education is growing.
 - Advantages for both students and educational institutions
- Implication: rethinking of curricula, processes and structures
- Challenges:
 - Regulation of new providers
 - International transferability of qualifications and credits
 - Development of an international approach to quality assurance and accreditation
- Move towards development of an international approach: Seoul Declaration in 2007.
- ABET reports some difficulties experienced by applying criteria to non-US programmes



Preparation for accreditation

- Investigation started in 2004
- British Computer Society OR ABET
- Workshop at AMCIS'2005
- ABET program evaluator
- Changes to degree program
 - Faculty Board
 - Senate
- Incorporation of Mathematics course



Challenges

- Finances
 - Money for the accreditation visit
 - Completion of the financial statements in the self study report
 - Extensive documentation (courier cost)
 - Administrative assistance
 - Attendance of workshops
- Academic year
 - Terminology
 - February – November with visit in October
- Semester hours and length of the programme
- Self study report
- Personnel
- Accreditation visit
- Name of the programme



Recommendations

- Full support of the university especially from top management and the Dean.
- Be prepared to spend a considerable amount of money.
- If possible, attend workshops advertised through ABET or the program evaluator training.
- Obtain the CD's distributed by ABET on accreditation.
- You need detailed information about the university and would need proper support from administration to get all the required information.
- Allocate enough time to complete the Self Study report and documentation for the visit.
- It is a good idea to have a dedicated administrative person in your department to assist with documentation and the visit (if you do not have a unit that can help you with that).



Thank you!

