



The Royal Statistical Society

ACCREDITATION OF UNIVERSITY COURSES

The Royal Statistical Society offers accreditation of university courses, at both undergraduate (including courses of MMath type) and MSc level. The accreditation is based on the general depth, breadth, quality and foundation of a course and its statistical content.

This document sets out the detailed criteria for accreditation and provides information about how to apply for a course to be accredited.

Accreditations are granted on an annual basis; instructions concerning renewal for subsequent years are circulated with notifications of accreditations.

Universities having accredited courses are welcome to state the fact in publicity material, prospectuses, course handbooks, etc. A list of currently accredited courses is available on the Society's website.

Graduates from accredited courses will be granted the Society's professional status of Graduate Statistician on application. (It may be necessary for a transcript to be produced, particularly for courses having many options.) Graduates from non-accredited courses may also apply for this status and will be considered on an individual basis. For undergraduate courses, whether accredited or non-accredited, at least Second Class Honours must have been achieved.

There are prizes for exceptional graduates of accredited courses. Information about these prizes is available on the website.

Detailed criteria for accreditation

For a course to be accredited, the Society will need to be satisfied professionally in terms of its general **breadth, depth, quality and foundation**. If so satisfied, the Society will then consider the **statistical content** of the course and will also need to be satisfied professionally in respect of this. It will normally be expected that the course title will include the word "statistics" or "statistical", though occasional exceptions (e.g. for "mathematical studies") will be permitted.

Breadth and depth are assured by an approximate equivalence of the course with the Society's Graduate Diploma in Statistics. This implies that there must be acquaintance with applications of statistics and that there must be exposure to practical problems and training in the more advanced aspects of statistical theory. In the case of undergraduate courses, these features must continue into the final year of the course (for courses of MMath type, "the final year" may be interpreted as "the final two years"). Information about the Graduate Diploma is available on the website.

Quality will be determined by the Society forming a professional judgement based on examination papers, staff curriculum vitae and assessment information from any relevant internal and external reviews.

A suitable **foundation** is one which includes appropriate treatment of the mathematical and statistical fundamentals. The treatment must not be shallow, but must give an adequate framework on which further work, including work beyond the degree, may be constructed.

Statistical content of the course

In forming a professional judgement concerning the statistical content of the course, the Society will be mindful of the increasing proliferation of joint and modular degrees and that even in single-subject degrees it is common to offer considerable choice.

For **undergraduate** courses, the Society's detailed judgement is likely to focus on the final year. It will be required that at least 50% of the final year can be made up of appropriate statistics units at level 3 (or higher); this may include a project if it is part of the curriculum. It is possible that *all* routes through a particular undergraduate course will meet this requirement; for example, this is likely to be the case for a single-honours BSc in Statistics. For many courses, *only some* routes will meet the requirement; such courses will nevertheless be eligible for consideration for accreditation. However, accreditation will not be granted if only a very few highly specific routes meet the requirement, because the course as a whole would not be sufficiently focused towards statistics. These criteria will also apply for courses of **MMath type**, the requirement being that at least 25% of the third and fourth years can be made up of appropriate statistics units.

For **MSc** courses, although there may be some choice of units, it will normally be expected that the total content of compulsory statistics units together with a minimal choice of options will be close to that of the Society's Graduate Diploma.

Information required

The following information is required in respect of each course submitted for accreditation:

1. The approximate annual numbers of students entering and graduating, and the usual range of academic standards of students on entry.
2. For each member of staff engaged in teaching statistics, a c.v. of *not more than two pages* listing qualifications, employment history, areas of interest, recent publications and external consulting/advisory/examining experience.
3. A *short summary* of assessment information from any relevant internal and external reviews.
4. A clear and concise statement of course structure. This must state the full list of units ("modules" in the nomenclature of many universities) that students may take; state clearly the relative weightings of the units; state which are compulsory and which are optional, and whether there are any minimum requirements concerning the number of options that must be taken. Where there are several routes through the course structure, perhaps consisting of different degree titles or different defined paths through a modular structure, **there must be a clear statement of which routes are being submitted for accreditation.**
5. The syllabus for each statistics unit in the course structure. This should also set out the method of assessment of the unit.
6. The last two years' examination papers for each statistics unit in the course structure where the assessment includes an examination. If a unit is assessed entirely or substantially by coursework, an indication of the nature of the coursework should be supplied.

The Society will acknowledge all applications for accreditation. The Society will respond as quickly as possible, but it will be appreciated that consideration of accreditation applications takes some considerable time. All correspondence should be addressed to **The Director of Education and Professional Affairs** at

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Special notes for universities overseas

The accreditation service as outlined above is available to universities outside the UK that wish to avail themselves of it. The same general principles and criteria apply, and the same information is required. Because educational systems may differ in different countries, the Society may need to adapt the criteria in terms of breadth and depth and in terms of references to concepts such as "the final year" or "the final two years". The Society is guided by UK NARIC (the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom; <http://www.naric.org.uk>) in terms of the general level of courses in different countries.

Some universities overseas may wish the accreditation to be extended to an accreditation in respect of the general nature of their provision in statistics. This does not usually apply in the UK because UK universities work within the parameters established by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education ("QAA"; <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>). The Society is guided by these parameters in accreditations of this type. Such accreditations require additional information from the university and will require site visits (normally two); there is a charge for this service. The Society will be pleased to provide further details to any university that is considering proceeding in this way.