

**International Ergonomics Association
Professional Standards and Education Committee**

**IEA Guidelines on Professional Training and Recognition in
Ergonomics: Scope and Intention
Version 4, January 2003**

Introduction

1. The IEA have a number of Guideline documents available, as support to those undertaking initiatives in professional training and recognition.
2. As present these documents are:

Core Competencies in Ergonomics [short name: Competencies]

- Summary version
- Full version

Minimum Criteria for the Process of Certification of an Ergonomist [short name: Certification Criteria]

Criteria for IEA Endorsement of Certifying Bodies [short name: Certification Endorsement] and Guidelines for the Process of Endorsement [short name: Endorsement Process]

Guidelines on Standards for Accreditation of Ergonomics Education Programmes at Tertiary (University) Level [short name: Accreditation]

3. These Guidelines have been produced in response to requests for information and assistance from the Federated Societies. There have been requests for advice about: the education and recognition of professional ergonomists; methods of ensuring the quality of ergonomics education programmes; and the qualities which should characterise a 'professional ergonomist'. The diverse needs expressed have reflected the differing sizes, goals and levels of activity of the various Federated Societies. For instance, smaller Societies may want to support the establishment of first courses in ergonomics. Larger and longer established Societies may want to protect the ergonomics profession from improper use of the term 'ergonomist' by unqualified individuals or groups.

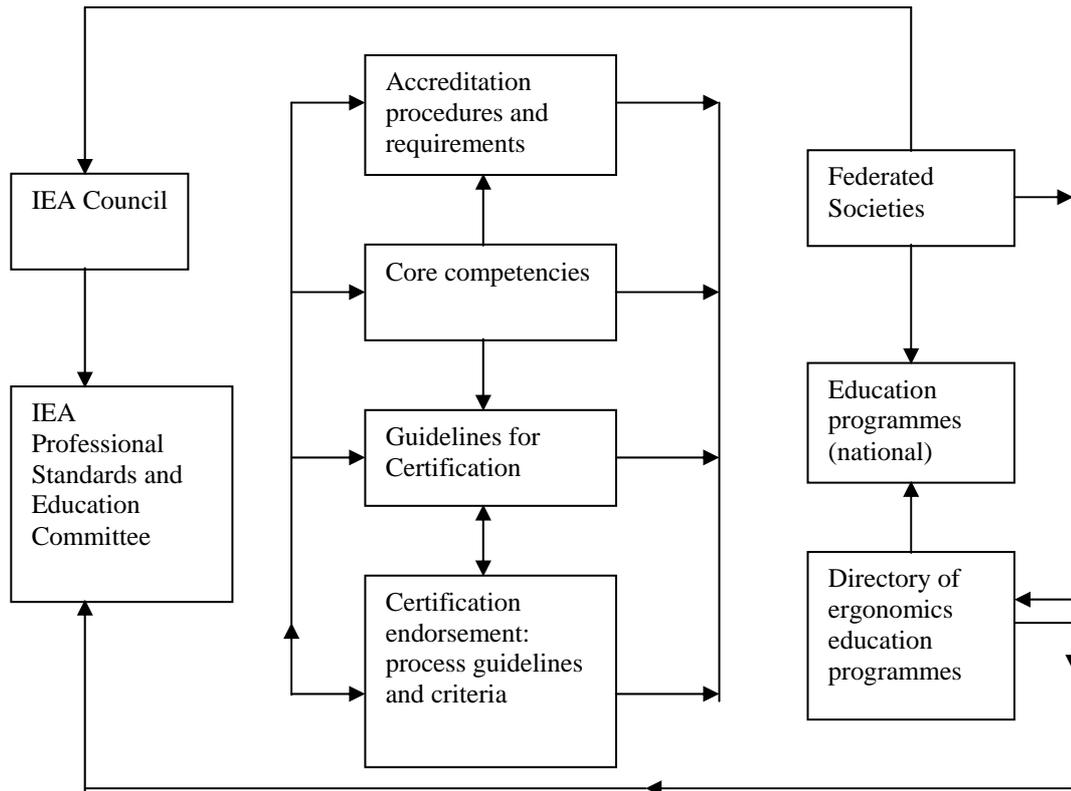
4.

4. Task force reports and consequent guidelines have been approved at Council meetings between 1997 and 2001. All reports and Guidelines are living documents and regular updates will take place, to reflect changes in practice or views over time.

5. The IEA provides guidelines only, and use of these by Federated Societies is entirely voluntary. There is no attempt by the IEA to be prescriptive at an international level nor to dictate national activities. Documents such as the IEA core competencies and the criteria for accreditation of educational programs may be helpful for educational institutions, but are not obligatory requirements. The only exception is where a body seeks IEA endorsement, for instance of a certification body.

Figure 1 shows linkages between the different guidelines and documents.

Figure 1



Competencies

6. The summary version and the full version of the IEA document 'Core Competencies in Ergonomics' contain Units, Elements and Performance Criteria, produced after discussion and consultation at an international level. The Competencies document does not represent certification requirements for professional ergonomists, nor curriculum requirements for educational programs, although Federated Societies or Institutions may find it useful as a resource for either.

7. The IEA recognises that any outline of competencies has a limited life and that regular review is important. Also, even as guidance, an outline of competencies must not be too prescriptive. The IEA anticipates that Societies will suggest amendments, deletions and additions and welcomes such contributions.

Certification Criteria

8. Some Federated Societies (or regional groupings) already have a process in place for the Certification of ergonomists, but the IEA has received requests for guidance from other Societies contemplating the introduction of Certification. The IEA has developed a set of minimum criteria relevant to the process of certification.

9. The IEA Guidelines are meant to be informative and to assist Societies in the development or review of their own process of certification, if they wish to have one. The IEA, which encourages the move towards certification, appreciates the need for flexibility. Presentation of a set of minimum criteria does not prevent countries, Societies or other bodies from developing other approaches or more stringent standards, but it does allow us to acknowledge, at an international level, that there is a minimum standard which all systems should meet.

10. The sets of criteria will evolve and further comments from Federated Societies will be welcomed.

Certification Endorsement

11. Criteria for the endorsement of a certifying body by the IEA have been prepared for the guidance of those Societies establishing a Board or Committee to be responsible for a certification process. The IEA Certification Endorsement Sub-Committee reviews and, if appropriate, endorses certifying bodies and their individual systems of certification, according to the IEA Guidelines. The IEA's endorsement of a Society's (or other body's) system of certification would indicate that it had met the minimum criteria established internationally.

12. Submission of details of a certification process and certifying body for IEA endorsement is entirely voluntary.

Accreditation

13. As well as supporting the professional and quality assessment of individuals, through competencies and certification, another route to ergonomics quality is through the accreditation of education programs. Evidence that someone has followed and successfully completed an accredited program is not, in itself, sufficient to determine an individual's competence, but it is a starting point and a vital component.

14. Some Federated Societies already offer an "approval" of university courses in their region, in terms of recognition for membership criteria and of advice for prospective students.

15. The IEA guidelines on accreditation offer advice on a system – process and content – by which Federated Societies can accredit ergonomics teaching programs in their (or other) region. In time, and only with agreement of Council, these guidelines may become the basis of an IEA accreditation system.

Review of Guidelines

16. As suggestions are received from Federated Societies for modifications to the IEA documentation on professional recognition, these are being collated. At each formal review of the document, they will be incorporated, where appropriate, in proposed revisions. The IEA will continue to reflect a good international consensus in such matters of professional standing and recognition.

Education programmes (national)

Federated Societies

IEA Council

Certification endorsement: process guidelines and criteria

Guidelines for Certification

Core competencies

IEA Professional Standards and Education Committee

Accreditation procedures and requirements

Directory of ergonomics education programmes