

Introduction of Accreditation System and the Challenge of Engineering Education in Japan

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The quality of Japanese engineers has been kept at high level by the combination of basic training of mathematics and natural sciences at the lower-level schools, high emphasis on education of engineering sciences at higher-level colleges and universities, together with the well-designed on-job training as an engineer at companies. In this way, Japanese engineers have strong loyalty to the companies, but do not recognize themselves as independent engineers.

Due to the tendency towards the collapse of the life-long employment system and also due to the globalization of engineer's activity, however, this was started to become a disadvantage for Japanese engineers.

As a part of the movements towards this change, it became realized that an accreditation system needs to be introduced to Japan. Thus a new association called "Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE)" was established on November 19, 1999 and the accreditation of engineering programs in higher-level colleges and universities have started in the school year of 2001. Now, approximately 190 programs have been accredited by JABEE. As a part of movements for the globalization, JABEE became a provisional member of Washington Accord (WA) in 2001 and became a full signatory at the WA meeting at Hong Kong on June 15, 2005. Another movement of JABEE is to establish the graduate-level (Master Course) accreditation.

The activity of JABEE and the contribution of the Society of Chemical Engineers, Japan (SCEJ) to the accreditation of chemical and chemistry –related engineering programs are reviewed in the present article

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