

**United Kingdom Automatic Control Council (UKACC)
The UK National Member Organisation of the International Federation of
Automatic Control (IFAC)**

Brief historical background to IFAC and UKACC

The UK Automatic Control Council (UKACC), which was originally known as the UK Automation Council (UKAC), was formed in the late 1950's to bring together the interests of a large number of parties in automation and control. UKAC became the National Member Organisation (NMO) of the then newly founded International Federation of Automatic Control (IFAC), which required an NMO for any nation wishing to host any of their events. IFAC was formally formed at a meeting in Paris in 1957 following a successful International Conference on Automatic Control held in Heidelberg a year earlier. At this conference a declaration was made to form an international organisation to represent the subject of automatic control.

UKAC initially had a large representation on its executive which included not only professional engineering institutions but also influential trade union and government representations. It was very active in its early years, holding several events with one of the highlights being the hosting of the third IFAC World Congress in London in 1966. HRH the Duke of Edinburgh was Patron for the event, the late Professor John Coales was the IFAC president and Professor John Westcott was chair of the International Programme Committee. The Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, attended and spoke at the Congress banquet.

At the time of the Congress the secretariat for UKAC was held by the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) before it moved to the Society of Instrument Technology (SIT), which became The Institute of Measurement and Control (InstMC) in 1968. In the 1990's the secretariat of the then renamed UKACC returned to the IEE, now the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET).

The membership of UKACC declined from the late 1960's and for several years only had two or three professional engineering institutions as corporate members. UKACC has become more active in recent years and, following a series of successful biennial events organised jointly by the professional bodies in the UK, has now taken over the responsibility for overseeing the now well established series of international biennial conferences on control, with the first in the series under the auspices of UKACC taking place in 1996. The next in the series takes place at Cardiff in 2012.

IFAC World Congresses continue to be held every three years with the first two being held in Moscow and Basle in 1960 and 1963, respectively, and the most recent, the 17th, being held in Seoul in 2008. The next World Congress is scheduled for Milan, Italy in 2011.

Present-day UKACC Role and Activities

UKACC remains the UK NMO for IFAC seeking to act as an effective link between the UK and the international control communities, and to provide a focus for IFAC-related activities. The objectives of the UKACC can be broadly stated as:

1. To provide leadership in and to promote the theory and application, both established and emerging, of automatic control and systems engineering within the UK, and to provide focus for and coordination of relevant activities.
2. To act as the UK NMO for the IFAC and to appoint representatives to IFAC Technical Committees (TCs). IFAC has a Technical Committee (TC) structure, and NMOs are able to make nominations on a triennial basis for each of these Committees. UKACC actively seeks nominations from the UK control community and puts names forward to serve alongside others of international repute. These UK members represent the interests of the community to their TCs and in return are expected to attract IFAC Conferences, Symposia and Workshops into the UK; noting that IFAC only allows meetings to be held in countries with an NMO. IFAC TCs typically meet once per year at one of the major events with which the Committee is associated.
3. To attract into membership of UKACC those nationally recognised professional institutions, societies, industry and academic groups with a commitment to control engineering.
4. To encourage and facilitate the organisation of IFAC events in the UK. In this regard, UKACC seeks to identify potential organisers of future IFAC Conferences, Symposia and Workshops in the UK. These events can be organised through the professional institutions, but usually they are run independently by a host educational or industrial establishment.
5. To operate as a non-profit making organisation using its funds with a view to meeting the objectives in (1) to (4) above.

Annual and Biennial UKACC Activities

In addition to its links with IFAC, UKACC runs a number of other activities including its annual UKACC Lecture and the biennial International Conference on Control. UKACC is always interested in hearing ideas for activities from its membership or from potential new members.

The Current UKACC Constitution

In order to better engage with the control community in the UK in its widest sense, UKACC recently changed its constitution, where the most significant changes related to membership categories and rights. Within the current constitution, any organisation or group deemed by the Executive Committee to have an interest in or an association with control engineering and related disciplines may become a member of UKACC. There are three classes of membership for which different annual membership fees apply:

a) Corporate Membership: This class of membership is ascribed to organisations with a strong interest in automatic control and the activities of UKACC, normally (but not exclusively) the professional engineering institutions. Corporate Members pay the corporate subscription rate, are entitled to two representatives and one observer on the

UKACC Executive Committee, with full voting rights. Currently, the three Corporate Member bodies are: The Institute of Measurement and Control, The Institution of Engineering and Technology and The Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

b) Group Membership: This class of membership is ascribed to groups within organisations that have interest in automatic control and the activities of UKACC. Group Members pay a reduced subscription rate compared with Corporate Members and each is entitled to make one nomination for election to the UKACC Executive Committee and to vote for up to six candidates in the election for those Group Member Representatives that sit on the Executive Committee.

c) Individual Membership: This class of membership is ascribed to individuals with an interest in automatic control and the activities of UKACC and they will be entitled to attend the AGM. Individual members have one vote in the election process for Executive Committee membership but cannot nominate candidates.

Further Information and Contact Details

For further information on the wider activities of UKACC, please contact:

[Professor Andrew Plummer, Chair](#)

Or

[Kate Davis, Secretariat](#)