

## WHAT IS RECOGNITION?

Recognition is the approval of the quality and integrity of an educational institution and its qualifications. Internationally, when an institution or programme is quality assured/accredited by a legitimate Quality Assurance authority it is only guaranteed acceptability within the country in which it was quality assured.

Institutions and programmes that are quality assured in one country are required to be recognised in another country. Recognition is *not automatically transferable* across national boundaries. However, quality assurance by a legitimate agency lays the foundation for mutual recognition across borders.

ACTT provides authoritative advice and guidance on the recognition of foreign qualifications, as well as qualifications awarded by transnational institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago. A transnational institution is one that has its origin and main establishment in a foreign territory and is offering programmes in collaboration with a registered institution in Trinidad and Tobago. ACTT does not accredit qualifications awarded by foreign institutions; however, it issues official Statements on Recognition of these qualifications in Trinidad and Tobago. This is based on whether the qualifications have been quality assured by a legitimate quality assurance body in the country of origin.

### **What is a Statement on Recognition?**

Employers, higher education institutions and other entities (e.g. those responsible for the award of scholarships) require that foreign institutions and programmes be recognised. A Statement on Recognition identifies whether or not qualifications from a foreign or transnational institution have been quality assured by a legitimate agency. Anyone may apply for a Statement on Recognition at any of ACTT's offices. The processing time for a Statement on Recognition is a minimum of ten (10) working days or, in cases of urgency, two (2) working days.

### **How does ACTT determine the recognition status of a qualification?**

In order to determine whether a qualification should be recognised, ACTT verifies whether the institution awarding the qualification has been quality assured by a legitimate agency in its country of origin. The quality assurance agency must be one that is empowered to do so in accordance with the quality assurance system in that country.

In a number of fields (e.g. medicine, engineering, law) graduation from a quality assured programme is the academic requirement for receiving a licence to practise. In such cases the programme must have been quality assured by a specialised accreditation agency. This provides assurance that the programme

meets the professional and academic requirements for practice.

### **What are the benefits of a Statement on Recognition?**

A Statement on Recognition states whether the institution which you attended or intend to enrol in is quality assured/accredited. It can assist you to:

- meet the requirements for scholarship applications
- qualify for the CARICOM Single Market Economy Skills Certificate
- gain entry to further study in Trinidad and Tobago or abroad
- obtain employment or promotion

---

### ***Kevin's Story***

*Kevin is interested in pursuing a Bachelor's degree at a university in Florida. Kevin spoke with his Form Six school teacher, Mrs Jones, about an advertisement he saw online, stating that he could get his degree in just six months. He was excited about the possibility of getting his degree so quickly and returning home to get a 'big job' in one of those fancy companies in Port of Spain. Mrs Jones told him that the first thing he needed to know was whether that degree was recognised by The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT). She advised him to visit ACTT to apply for a Statement on Recognition before making his decision.*

*Two days later Kevin and his father visited ACTT where they were greeted by a Customer Service Representative (CSR) who explained the process*

*for applying for a Statement on Recognition. Kevin completed the application form, identifying the university and the programme of study. When Kevin collected his Statement on Recognition later the next week, he was shocked to learn that the university that he was interested in attending was not accredited and as such, the degree was not recognised by the ACTT.*

*After the initial shock, Kevin was thankful to have found out that the programme was not recognised before enrolling in the programme. A staff member of ACTT advised Kevin on where he could find more information on accredited universities in the United States.*

*Together with his parents and teachers, Kevin identified another university in Florida where he wanted to study. Kevin and his father returned to the ACTT and applied for a Statement on Recognition. This time, Kevin applied for the 'Express' option and was able to receive his Statement on Recognition in less than two days.*

*In the end, Kevin was happy to learn that the university and programme were both recognised by ACTT.*