

FACT SHEET:

National Qualifications Framework – Trinidad and Tobago

What is a National Qualifications Framework?

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is an instrument that defines the levels at which qualifications may be awarded in a particular country or territory. An NQF assists in standardising qualifications by defining titles, outcomes of qualifications at each level and the relationship among qualifications.

What is a qualification?

A qualification is formal certification, issued by an official agency in recognition that an individual has been assessed as achieving learning outcomes or competencies to the standard specified for the qualification title; usually a type of certificate, diploma or degree. Learning and assessment for a qualification can take place through workplace experience and/or a programme of study. A qualification confers the official recognition of value in the labour market and in further education and training (OECD, 2006) (Adopted from the CQF).

What is a credential?

A credential is documentary evidence of a qualification earned.

Is there an NQF for Trinidad and Tobago?

Yes, the NQF for Trinidad and Tobago (NQF-TT) was approved by the Cabinet of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on May 19, 2022. The NQF-TT was developed jointly by The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) and the National Training Agency (NTA) in collaboration with stakeholders. The NQF-TT, therefore, includes academic, technical and vocational qualifications.

What is the difference between a qualification and a programme?

A programme refers to a related set of courses that, when completed, leads to a degree, diploma, or certificate.

A qualification is the award conferred upon successful completion of a programme.

How will the NQF-TT contribute to the development of Trinidad and Tobago and the region?

The NQF-TT will describe all qualifications in the education and training sector: primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training, higher education and adult education. Also, the NQF-TT would help to validate non-formally and informally acquired competencies. This validation will be central to the formulation of policies aimed at fostering lifelong learning and progression through different pathways.

The NQF-TT will also:

- support the design and development of programmes at defined levels;
- establish National Standards for the award of qualifications at various levels of the education and training system;
- facilitate the recognition of informal, non-formal and experiential learning;
- facilitate the standardisation of learning outcomes to better convey the competencies of qualification holders;
- be a catalyst for the development of programmes that are aligned to labour market needs;
- provide a systematic approach for the development, classification and approval of national qualifications;
- facilitate the recognition and determination of equivalence of qualifications that will allow for greater portability of skilled persons across CARICOM, in support of deeper integration of CARICOM Member States and the free movement of skills/labour in the region;
- assist in identifying/describing the qualification requirements for jobs, e.g. as outlined in job descriptions.

What is the purpose of the NQF-TT?

The NQF-TT is intended to:

- improve the understanding of qualifications;
- ensure greater alignment between programmes offered by institutions and training providers;
- allow for the harmonisation of qualifications for a seamless education system in Trinidad and Tobago.

The NQF-TT will also make it easier to establish the equivalence between local and foreign qualifications. Furthermore, it will encourage articulation agreements between institutions and the development of progression routes between qualifications obtained locally or abroad.

Will the NQF-TT help to facilitate the free movement of labour in the CARICOM region?

Yes. CARICOM has recommended that all Member States develop their NQF in alignment with the CARICOM Qualifications Framework (CQF). Trinidad and Tobago has ensured that the learning outcomes and levels of the NQF-TT are aligned with the CQF. This alignment will provide for ease of comparison among qualifications across CARICOM Member States, thereby facilitating the free movement of skills/labour within the region.



How does the NQF-TT benefit learners, employers and the general public?

Learners:

The NQF-TT will outline multiple pathways for individuals to access education and training, including those who exited formal education and are desirous of re-entering the system. The NQF-TT will promote lifelong learning and make learning and career progression more transparent. Learners will be clear about the learning pathways and be better able to make choices about their education and careers.

Employers:

The NQF-TT will assist employers in understanding qualifications and the learning outcomes attained by qualification holders. Employers and human resource professionals could use the NQF-TT to understand the levels of qualifications. This information could then be used in the recruitment, selection and performance management of employees.

The NQF-TT will also include mechanisms for employers to consistently provide feedback on competencies required at the various levels of the workplace and advise on the extent to which employees demonstrate the competencies defined by the NQF-TT for their qualification. The NQF-TT will therefore bridge the gap between employers and education and training providers to ensure that programmes are relevant and responsive to market needs.

Public:

The general public will have access to information on the levels of qualifications, the learning outcomes at the various levels and progression routes. This will allow the public to make more informed choices on qualifications and contribute meaningfully to discussions in the public domain.

What are the levels of the NQF-TT?

The NQF-TT is a 10-level framework that includes academic, technical and vocational qualifications. The table below shows the NQF-TT and includes a sample of qualifications in Trinidad and Tobago:

LEVELS	NQF-TT	NQF-TT QUALIFICATIONS EXAMPLES
10	Doctoral	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Agricultural Economics
9	Master's	Master of Science (MSc) in Sociology
8	Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
7	Bachelor's Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Psychology CVQ Level 5 in Property Development – Construction Project Management
6	Associate Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate of Applied Science (AASc) in Medical Laboratory Technology National Engineering Technician's Diploma (NETD) in Electrical Engineering Technician's Certificate in Mechanical Engineering
5	Diploma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSDP Journeyman – Electrical/Electronics Technology CVQ Level 4 in Training and Assessment Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)
4	Advanced Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVQ Level 3 in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning National Examination Council (NEC) Craftsman Certificate Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)
3	Certificate III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVQ Level 2 in Cosmetology
2	Certificate II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVQ Level 1 in Masonry
1	Certificate I	

What is a Certificate 1 at Level 1?

At this time, neither the ACTT or the NTA has approved any qualification at this level.



How may I confirm the level of a qualification being offered in T&T?

Contact the National Training Agency (NTA) or The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT).

Additional FAQs for Students

Will the NQF-TT impact my current programme/course of study?

No. There will be no impact on students currently enrolled in any programme. All qualifications currently being offered in Trinidad and Tobago will be recognised at the level it is advertised and offered. Going forward, programmes will be reviewed and aligned to the learning outcomes and levels of the NQF-TT.

Are my credits transferable to other qualification levels?

At this point in time, the NQF-TT does not include credits. Credit transfer will continue to be the remit of institutions.

How do I progress from one level to another?

Institutions can use the framework to assess and understand the competencies of persons seeking entry to specific programmes. It will enable them to determine whether applicants possess the competencies at lower levels of the framework, which will allow them to successfully access a qualification at a higher level.

Upon completion of each level, am I entitled to a Certificate?

You will be awarded the qualification for exit points that are designed, approved by regulators and published for your programme of study. Institutions must disclose the awards to be obtained in each programme of study.

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