Quality is the

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

Administrative REPORT

OCT 01 | **20**15
SEP 30 | **20**16

ACTT
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
Established by Chapter 39:06
Quality is the Key

This Administrative Report summarises the activities of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago for the period October 01, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

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Executive Summary

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) regulates higher education and training institutions in Trinidad and Tobago through the services of Conferment of Institutional Title, Registration, Institutional Accreditation, Programme Approval and the Recognition of Transnational Programmes, Foreign Awarding Bodies and Institutions. ACTT also advises individuals on the status of local, regional and international institutions and programmes. Further, ACTT advises the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs on the CARICOM CSME Free Movement of Skills initiative.

ACTT is committed to protecting students and stakeholders' interests through these quality assurance functions and continues to provide pertinent information through community outreach programmes that involve a mobile Student Caravan and Career Fairs. In addition, ACTT publishes an online "Compendium of Registered, Accredited and Recognised Institutions, Awarding Bodies and Programmes" which assists students and other stakeholders in making informed decisions when choosing an institution or programme of study. At present, the Council has on its register fifty-nine (59) registered institutions, twelve (12) accredited institutions and seventeen (17) recognised foreign awarding bodies/institutions.

Guided by the organisation's core values, ACTT's staff is committed to the development and advancement of the local higher education sector and creating awareness of ACTT's functions and benefits to stakeholders. In this regard, ACTT hosts an Annual Quality Assurance Month of events, which include the prestigious Excellence in Higher Education Awards. At this event, awards are presented to deserving individuals and higher education institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago who advance the 'message of quality' in their institutions. Other events which ACTT hosts include the External Evaluator Training, Report Writing for Team Chairs, a National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education for secondary school students and an Essay Competition for secondary and undergraduate students.

1.0
VISION, MISSION, STRATEGIC GOALS AND CORE VALUES

1.1
VISION

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) will be the principal authority in Trinidad and Tobago for quality assurance and continuous improvement in higher education and a leader in innovation and best practice.

1.2
MISSION

To assure the quality and integrity of higher education primarily through recognition, registration and accreditation as well as public education and related activities, while ensuring the efficiency and transparency of our operations and demonstrating commitment to national development and global competitiveness.

1.3
STRATEGIC GOALS

Guided by our vision and mission, ACTT strives to achieve the following strategic goals:

• Facilitate the growth and development of human capital to meet national development needs
• Support the continual improvement of quality within institutions inclusive of their programmes
• Provide an enabling framework to monitor the development and implementation of quality standards and to enforce the law applicable to its services
• Strengthen relationships with local, regional international stakeholders towards the learning and sharing of international best practice in quality assurance
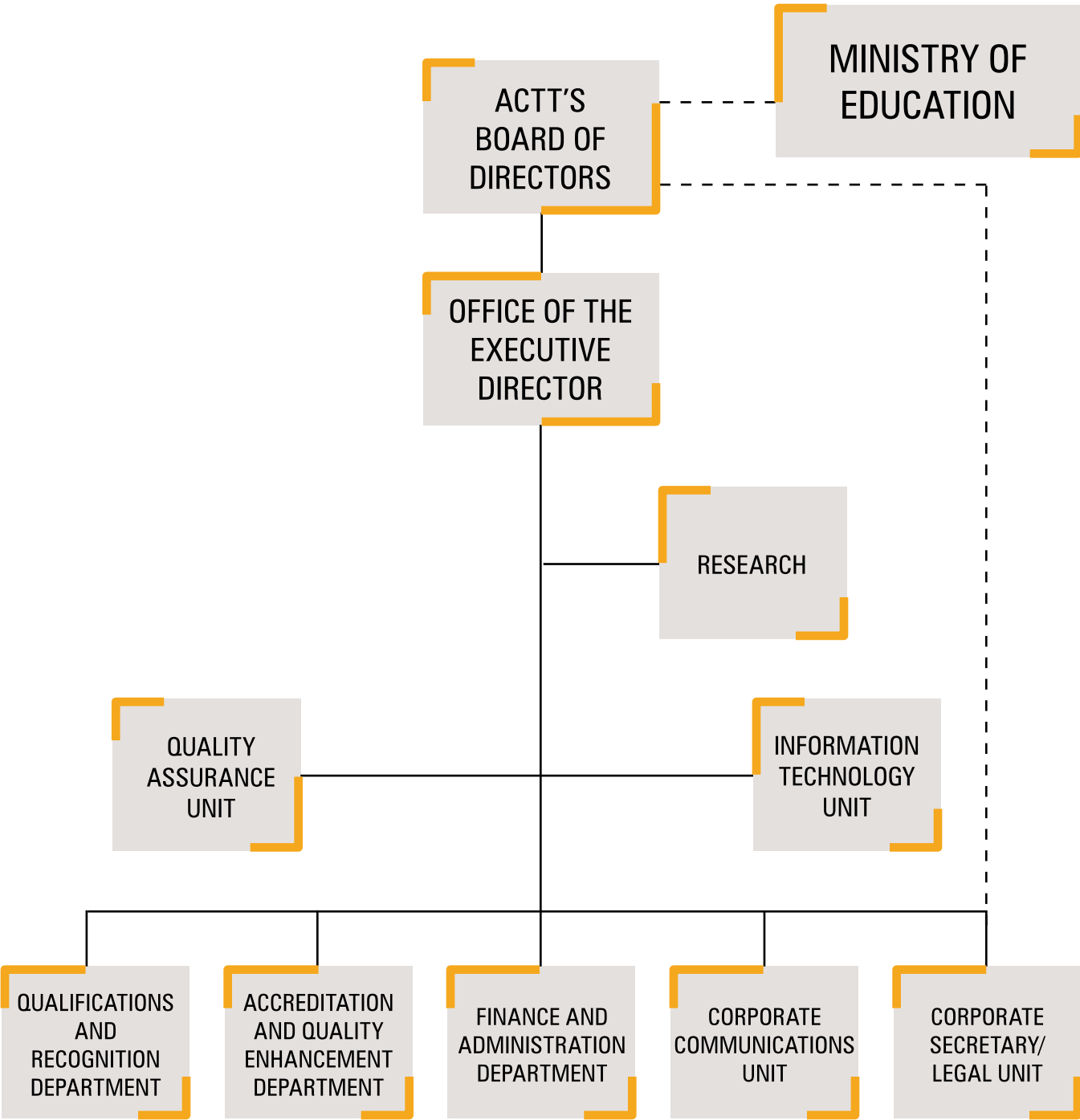
• Create a corporate image that positions ACTT as the leader in quality assurance and accreditation
• Introduce the latest developments in information and communication technology throughout the organisation
• Strengthen and develop ACTT's internal human resource capacity
• Acquire facilities to house ACTT's head office

1.4
CORE VALUES

• Accountability
• Commitment to Personal Growth and Development
• Customer Focus
• Integrity
• Teamwork
• Trust

2.0
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

2.1
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF ACTT

ACTT is governed by a Board of Directors (the Board) which is responsible for charting the overall direction of ACTT. Section 4 of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago Act Chapter 39:06 (the Act) provides the areas of representation on the Board. All appointments to the Board are made by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and are required to be published in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette.

2.2
ACTT'S STAFF

ACTT's staff comprises fifty-two (52) members in the following departments/units:

• Office of the Executive Director
  o Research
  o Quality Assurance
• Accreditation and Quality Enhancement
• Qualifications and Recognition
• Finance and Administration
• Office of the Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer
• Corporate Communications
• Information Technology

2.3
LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

ACTT has the overarching responsibility and jurisdiction for registration and accreditation of post secondary and tertiary education institutions and programmes in Trinidad and Tobago. By virtue of the Act, ACTT is empowered, inter alia, to:

• develop, implement and monitor national quality standards for the higher education sector
• confer institutional titles
• register post secondary and tertiary level institutions
• accredit institutions and programmes

• recognise qualifications awarded by foreign institutions
• grant approval for locally developed programmes
• collaborate with recognised accrediting and professional bodies in the fulfilment of its mission

In the execution of its functions, ACTT must comply with the legislative requirements for the submission of an annual report to its line Minister detailing the Council's activities and containing financial statements and such other information relating to the operations and policies of the Council.

2.4
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATE SECRETARY/ LEGAL OFFICER

The Office of the Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer provides legal advice, support and service to the Board and the Council itself. The Unit ensures legal and regulatory compliance in all of the Council's operations, including procurement activities. This allows the Council to achieve its objectives in a manner which complies with established law. The Unit ensures compliance with internationally accepted corporate governance principles in all the Council's operations and in all decisions taken by the Board and implemented by the Council. The Unit also ensures that all Corporate Secretarial functions in support of the Board are effectively discharged.

2.5
DELEGATED LEVELS OF AUTHORITY

The table at right summarises the levels of authority for the approval of expenditure for the purchase of articles/works/services which have been procured, in keeping with the Policy and Procedures document, together with the Council's Policy and Procedures for the purchase of articles/works/services:

QUANTUM OF PURCHASE/TENDERS	Authority
Up to TTD$30,000.00	Director, Finance and Administration
Up to TTD$100,000.00	Executive Director
Over TTD$100,000.00 - TTD$5,000,000.00	The Board on the recommendation of the Tenders Committee

2.6
REPORTING FUNCTIONS

The table below summarises ACTT's reporting functions and responsibilities, in relation to the Council's operations.

REPORTS	Line Minister	Ministry of Planning	Ministry of Finance	Auditor General	Parliament
Annual Operating Budgets	✓	✓	✓		
Strategic Plan	✓	✓			
Monthly/Annual Financial Reports	✓		✓		
Annual Financial Statements	✓			✓	
Monthly/Annual Performance Reports	✓	✓	✓		
Annual Audit Report	✓			✓	✓
Annual Administrative Report	✓				✓
Public Sector Investment Programme: Monthly, Quarterly, Bi-annual and Annual Reports	✓	✓			
Freedom of Information Act Report	✓				
Contribution to the Ministry of Education's (MoE's) Budget Presentation/Achievement Reports	✓	✓	✓		
Monthly Board Meetings	✓				
Performance Monitoring Reports	✓	✓			
Quarterly Reports on 1-year Action Plan	✓	✓			

3.0
CORE FUNCTIONS / SERVICES

3.1
CONFERMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL TITLE

Conferment of Institutional Title is the granting of permission to institutions to use any of the titles protected by law. These are as follows:

- Technical College
- Polytechnic
- Technical Institute
- Tertiary College
- College
- Community College
- Technical University
- University

In accordance with Chapter 39:06, ACTT has the authority to confer institutional titles on post secondary and tertiary level institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. This applies to institutions that were established subsequent to the proclamation of the Act in 2004, as well as to institutions that wish to change their name. In Trinidad and Tobago, an institution must apply for Conferment of Institutional Title if it wishes to carry any of the protected titles.

Conferment of Institutional Title is the only service offered by ACTT to institutions prior to Registration. All other ACTT services are accessible after Registration.

There were no institutions requiring Conferment of Institutional Title during the period under review.

3.2
REGISTRATION OF POST SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Section 8 (2) (c) of the Act, Chapter 39:06, requires that local and foreign post secondary and tertiary level institutions desirous of operating in Trinidad and Tobago be registered by ACTT. Registration is mandatory and it is the process through which an institution is evaluated to determine that it has met the requirements to offer post secondary and tertiary education and training to the public. Registration provides the legal status to do so.

An institution must be registered before it can access any of the other quality assurance services offered by the ACTT. The only service that may be accessed before Registration is Conferment of Institutional Title. Registration by ACTT is akin to Pre-Accreditation in the United States. There are seven (7) criteria and twenty-two (22) standards catering for a wide scope of institutional activities including Mission and Purpose, Governance and Administration, Teaching and Learning, Preparedness for Change, Commitment to Continuous Improvement. An institution must provide relevant narrative and evidence, demonstrating how it has met or surpassed the requirements of the standards in order to determine eligibility for the conferment of registered status.

The evaluation is conducted by a team of External Evaluators who are education and subject matter experts in fields relevant to the programmes to be offered by the institution. As part of the evaluation process, the evidence submitted by the institution is examined and subsequently a site visit is conducted to verify the evidence, conduct interviews with key stakeholders and examine facilities and resources to determine suitability and appropriateness for efficient and effective programme delivery. An institution may be registered for a maximum period of three (3) years.

5
During the reporting period, ACTT conferred Initial Registered status on five new institutions

16
During the reporting period, ACTT conferred Continuing Registered status on sixteen institutions

59
The number of registered institutions as at September 30, 2016 was fifty-nine

3.3
ACCREDITATION OF POST SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

In Trinidad and Tobago, the ACTT is the official body responsible for accrediting post secondary and tertiary institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as programmes offered by these institutions.

Accreditation is a voluntary process through which ACTT, as the external quality assurance body, evaluates registered institutions in order to assure academic quality, improve accountability and support continual institutional development. While Registration ensures that institutions have basic systems to operate, Institutional Accreditation examines how effectively these systems are working. The evidence to be provided and the comprehensive site visit for Institutional Accreditation are greater in scope and depth than that of Registration. Institutional Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution that has been evaluated and found to have met or exceeded stated criteria of educational quality. An institution may be accredited initially for a maximum period of seven (7) years, while Continuing Institutional Accreditation is for a maximum period of ten (10) years.

Specialised Programme Accreditation examines programmes offered at an accredited institution. These focusses on programmes requiring a licence to practice, including but not limited to areas such as Medicine, Engineering and Law. These specialised programmes are evaluated in collaboration with the relevant national, regional or international statutory and regulatory body such as the Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago for programmes in Nursing, The Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions (CAAM-HP) for programmes in Medicine and Allied Health.

A close working relationship between ACTT and recognised professional associations helps to

ensure that the requirements for accreditation are related to the current requirements for professional practice. Programme Accreditation evaluates programmes using criteria that include, but are not limited to, the quality of teaching and the support of learning; design and planning of programmes of study; assessment and feedback to learners; learning environments and learner support systems; programme evaluation and quality assurance systems.

The purpose of Accreditation is to:

• evaluate the standard of education to assure its quality
• encourage institutions to improve the quality of their offerings
• ensure that institutions are accountable for their educational offerings
• foster public confidence in educational institutions

The benefits of accreditation include:

• international acceptance of qualifications from graduates of accredited institutions and programmes
• easier access to programmes and scholarships
• smoother transfer of students and credits between institutions
• increased confidence that graduates from accredited institutions have the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for the workplace

During the period, ACTT conducted Mid-term Reviews for Institutional Accreditation for the following 4 institutions:

University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)
– November 18, 2015

Caribbean Nazarene College (CNC)
– January 21, 2016

St Andrews Theological College (SATC)
– January 22, 2016

Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI)
– March 18, 2016

During the period, the following 4 institutions retained their Candidacy for Institutional Accreditation:

National Energy Skills Center (NESC)

Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI)

Omega Advanced School for Interdisciplinary Studies (OASIS) Institute of Higher Learning

UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (Trading as ROYTEC)

By the end of the reporting period, the total number of accredited institutions was 12:

The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus

The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)

College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)

Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (ALJGSB)

University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)

Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies (CCLCS)

Caribbean Nazarene College (CNC)

St Andrew's Theological College (SATC)

Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI)

Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI)

MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)

West Indies School of Theology (WIST)

3.4
PROGRAMME APPROVAL

This quality assurance process ensures that local or indigenous programmes are consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriately designed and structured, have stated learning outcomes and assessment strategies appropriate to the level of the qualification to be awarded and are adequately resourced for delivery. Further, it ensures programmes developed locally are aligned or referenced to other countries regionally and internationally. It is a mandatory activity that registered post secondary and tertiary institutions undertake as a means of validating the quality of their locally developed programmes.

The programme submitted by an institution for approval is evaluated by an External Evaluator who is an expert in the relevant field. The programme, if evaluated and is found to have met the standards shall be approved for a period of three (3) to five (5) years. Prior to the expiration of the period of approval, the programme must be submitted for re-evaluation. Further, any substantive changes to programmes must be approved by ACTT before being implemented.

43

During the reporting period, ACTT approved forty-three programmes from accredited institutions

3

During the reporting period, ACTT approved three programmes from registered institutions

3.5
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT/INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through its Quality Enhancement service, ACTT assists institutions by providing information and guidance to improve their policies, procedures and processes so that they are able to meet or exceed ACTT's criteria and standards. Quality Enhancement is achieved through one-on-one meetings, workshops, seminars and training. Monitoring of institutions' progress as they work towards continuing registered or accredited status also forms part of the quality enhancement support. This monitoring is achieved through the evaluation of progress reports, annual reports, mid-term reviews, scheduled focussed site visits and unscheduled visits.

Quality enhancement support is also provided to registered and accredited institutions through The Quality Institute (TQI) which offers training tailored to strengthening institutions' capability in delivering quality education and training. Its services are also extended to quality assurance bodies in the wider CARICOM region, facilitating attachments to ACTT or to locally-accredited institutions.

During the reporting period, ACTT hosted 1 workshop to prepare External Evaluators to conduct evaluations on behalf of ACTT:

Report Writing for Team Chairs – October 21-22, 2015

ACTT also hosted 4 workshops entitled 'Guide to the Self Study Process', for the purpose of Continuing Institutional Accreditation, for the following institutions:

The University of the West Indies (UWI) – May 13, 2016

Caribbean Nazarene College (CNC) – July 22, 2016

Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI) – September 23, 2016

St Andrews Theological College (SATC) – September 30, 2016

3.6
QUALIFICATIONS AND RECOGNITION

Recognition is a process through which ACTT verifies that programmes or institutions have been duly quality assured by the relevant quality assurance agency in the country of origin. Internationally, when an institution or programme is quality assured 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 does not transcend national boundaries. However, quality assurance by a legitimate agency lays the foundation for mutual recognition across borders.

Chapter 39:06 mandates that ACTT recognise programmes and awards of foreign institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of recognition is to verify that requirements are met for the delivery of foreign post secondary and tertiary education and training programmes through partnership arrangements with institutions registered by ACTT. While local institutions may apply for recognition of individual transnational programmes, a foreign awarding body/institution may alternatively seek recognition by ACTT. 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.

Through this process, foreign awarding bodies and institutions must provide evidence that the transnational qualifications offered locally are equivalent and comparable to the qualifications that carry the same or similar titles in the country of the awarding institution. It should also ensure that the local context is considered in the design and delivery of the programmes.

Foreign awarding bodies/institutions must also implement reliable and tested systems to avoid credential fraud and maintain the highest integrity of the qualification. Enrolled students should also have the same rights and access to information regarding changes in fees, policy, examination results and other information available to students at the awarding institutions.

During the reporting period, ACTT conducted site visits to review nine foreign awarding bodies/institutions for Continuing Recognition

ACTT also conducted three site visits to review foreign awarding bodies/institutions for initial Recognition within that period

ACTT reviewed Annual Reports from ten ACTT-recognised foreign awarding bodies and institutions...

...and reviewed Annual Reports prepared by twenty-three institutions in Trinidad and Tobago involved in collaborative provision with ACTT-recognised awarding bodies and institutions

During the reporting period, ACTT reviewed Annual Reports for eight recognised transnational programmes

Additionally, ACTT reviewed an Annual Report submitted for a qualification from a local awarding body accredited by ACTT

3.7
ISSUANCE OF STATEMENTS ON RECOGNITION

Employers, higher education institutions and other entities (e.g. those responsible for awarding scholarships) require that foreign institutions and programmes be recognised. ACTT provides authoritative advice and guidance on the recognition of foreign qualifications. A Statement on Recognition confirms the status of qualifications from foreign institutions/awarding bodies.

1,407
During the reporting period, ACTT processed one thousand, four hundred and seven Statements on Recognition
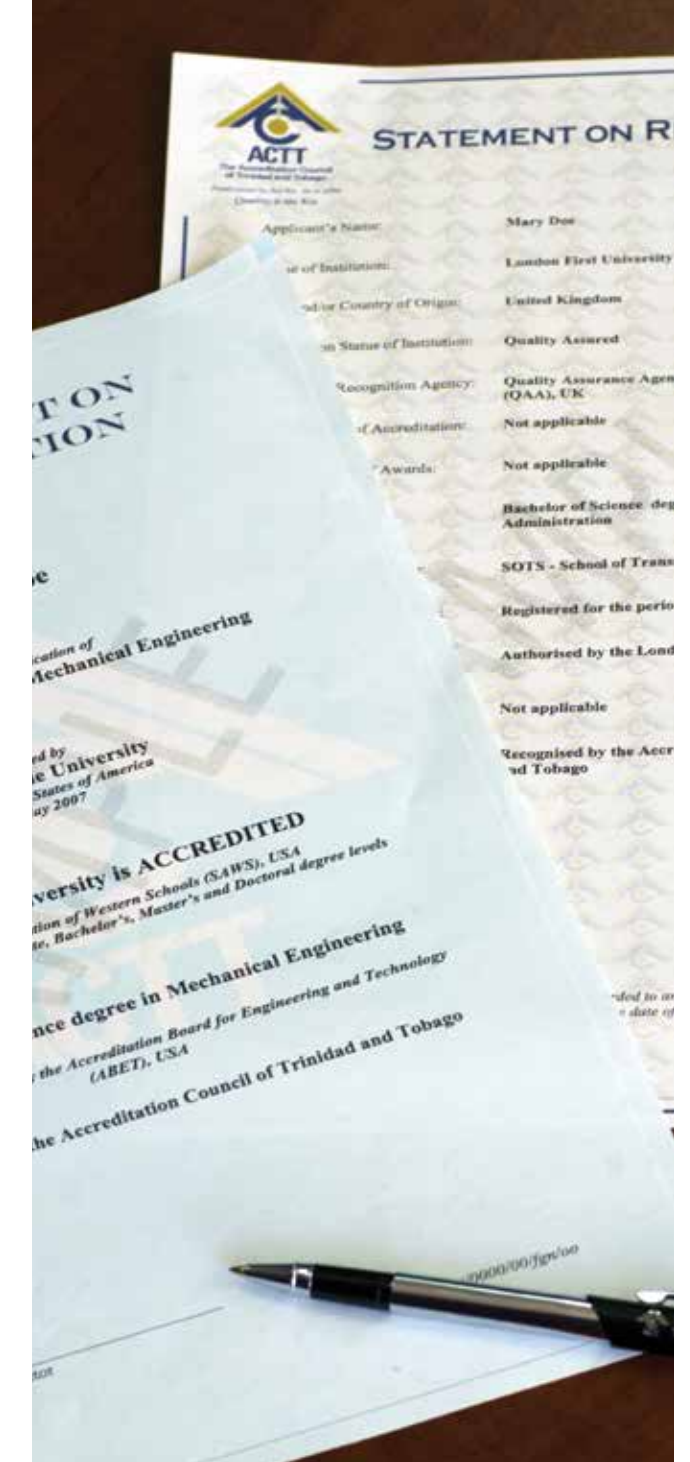
46
ACTT collaborated with the Ministry of Health to assess forty-six qualifications of foreign medical doctors

274
ACTT also collaborated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the assessment of two hundred and seventy-four qualifications for issuing CARICOM Skills Certificates.

14,100
To date, ACTT has issued fourteen thousand, one hundred Statements on Recognition.

3.8
EQUIVALENCE ASSESSMENT

This service determines the comparable academic value of foreign qualifications in Trinidad and Tobago. An Equivalence Assessment is an evaluation of a foreign qualification to determine its comparative level and value to a similar qualification awarded by an institution in Trinidad and Tobago.

ACTT conducts assessments of foreign post secondary and tertiary level qualifications and issues statements on the equivalence of these qualifications. An Equivalence Assessment also provides information on the accreditation/recognition status of the institutions and programmes of study and may:

• assist a student to gain access to further study in Trinidad and Tobago
• facilitate credit exemptions

However, the institution receiving the student makes the final decision on the acceptability and value of credits towards completion of its programmes.

49

During the reporting period, ACTT completed forty-nine Equivalence Assessments

3.9
SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS
Quality Assurance Month – October 2015

ACTT's Quality Assurance Month featured activities aimed at promoting quality assurance in higher education and training. The Council hosted a training workshop on Report Writing for Team Chairs, as well as on the Forensics of Credential and CV Fraud. In addition, ACTT hosted the Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony to recognise the contributions of institutions and individuals to the development and advancement of quality assurance systems, policies and procedures for tertiary education and overall higher education.

Forensics of Credential and CV Fraud

On October 27 and 28, 2015, ACTT collaborated with Education Credential Evaluators (ECE), USA, and the Employers Consultative Association (ECA) to host a workshop on Forensics of Credential and CV Fraud. This workshop focussed on techniques to detect fraudulent credentials and curriculum vitae tendered by unscrupulous persons. Facilitated by Majka Drewitz, Senior Evaluator and Research and Knowledge Management Evaluator at ECE, the workshop was specially designed for quality assurance, human resource professionals, fraud detection experts, educational administrators, faculty and other educational professionals.

Participants use hand held black lights to view documents

Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony

ACTT hosted the prestigious Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony on October 29, 2015, at which awards were presented to exemplary institutions in the following categories:

• Excellence for an Established Quality Management System
• Excellence for Student Support Services in Tertiary Education
• Excellence in Teaching and Learning

ACTT also presented awards to individuals in the higher education sector in the following categories:

• Excellence in Applied and Academic Research
• Excellence in Teaching

Winners of the 2015 QuiTE Awards were as follows:

Institutional Awards
Excellence in Quality Management Systems

1st Place: University of the Southern Caribbean

2nd Place (tie): Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

2nd Place (tie): UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited – Trading as ROYTEC

Excellence in Student Support Services

1st Place (Large Category): University of the Southern Caribbean

2nd Place (Large Category): Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

1st Place (Medium Category): CTS College of Business and Computer Science

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

1st Place (Large Category): Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

2nd Place (Large Category): University of the Southern Caribbean

1st Place (Medium Category): CTS College of Business and Computer Science

Natasha Barrow, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, presents the 1st place award to Gersha Pierre, University Administrator, University of the Southern Caribbean.

Natasha Barrow presents Narisha Khan, Quality Assurance Officer, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, with the 2nd place award.

Michael Bradshaw presents the 2nd place award to Wendy Augustus, Chief Executive Officer, UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (trading as ROYTEC).

1st Place (Small Category): KENSON School of Production Technology

Individual Awards

Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Higher Education Quality

Dr Lynn Priddy, Provost and Chief Academic Officer of the National American University

Leadership in Tertiary Education (LiTE) Award

Dr Kamla Mungal, Director, Academic Development and Accreditation, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

Excellence in Applied and Academic Research

Winner: Dr Zaffar Khan, Programme Director, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

Honorary Awardee: Dr Dickson C. Osuala, UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (trading as ROYTEC)

Michael Bradshaw presents Wanda Chesney, VP Academic Administration, University of the Southern Caribbean, with the 1st place award.

Michael Bradshaw presents Nazareen Muhammad, Manager, Learning Assurance Unit, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, with the 2nd place award.

Ravi Ragoonath, Academic Director, CTS College of Business and Computer Science Ltd, receives the 1st place award (Medium Category) for Excellence in Student Support Services.

Dr Kamla Mungal, Director, Academic Development and Accreditation, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, receives the 1st place award (Large Category) for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Kenneth Ferguson, Chairman, KENSON School of Production Technology, receives 1st place (Small Category) for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Dr Lynn Priddy (centre), Provost and Chief Academic Officer of the National American University, receives the Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Higher Education Quality.

Michael Bradshaw presents Dr Kamla Mungal, Director, Academic Development and Accreditation, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business, with the Leadership in Tertiary Education (LiTE) Award.

Winner for Excellence in Applied and Academic Research, Dr Zaffar Khan, Programme Director, Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business.

Honorary Awardee for Excellence in Applied and Academic Research, Dr Dickson C. Osuala, UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited – (trading as ROYTEC).

5th National Essay Competition for Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions

The Essay Competition targets the upper forms of secondary schools and undergraduate students of local registered and accredited institutions. It aims to foster an appreciation for issues related to quality assurance in higher education and the impact on and benefit to students, institutions, society and the economy. This competition and education drive is aimed at positioning ACTT as the authority in higher education with respect to issues related to registration, recognition and accreditation. In 2015, the theme for the competition was *'The Role of Indigenous Programmes in the development of Society'*.

Winners of ACTT's 5th National Essay Competition

CATEGORY	Winners, School
Form 5	
1st place	Rendell Ryan Ramdath – ASJA Boys' College
2nd place	Ferraz Nashan Khan – ASJA Boys' College
Form 6	
1st place	Nerissa Changa – Holy Faith Convent, Couva
2nd place	Joshua Antonio Parris – St Stephen's College
3rd place	Faith Matamoro – Miracle Ministries Pentecostal High
Undergraduate	
1st place	Avelana Phillip – College of Science, Technology & Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago
2nd place	Deirdre Zoe Subran-Ganesh – The University of the West Indies
3rd place	Akhim Alexis – The University of the West Indies

Honourable Mention

Form 6
Meagan Gopaulsingh –
Naparima Girls' High School

Undergraduate
Lisa Cindy Thomas –
The University of the West Indies

School Prizes
Form 5: ASJA Boys' College
Form 6: Holy Faith Convent, Couva

Winners of ACTT's 5th National Essay Competition

3rd National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

ACTT hosted its 3rd annual National Quiz for third- and fourth-form students from October 02 to November 06, 2015. This competition was conceptualised to inform students, their parents and teachers about the importance of pursuing programmes at quality assured higher education and training institutions. A total of twenty-seven (27) schools participated, with Cowen Hamilton Secondary School emerging as winners.

1st Place winner - Cowen Hamilton Secondary School

Winners of ACTT's 3rd National Quiz

1st Place
Cowen Hamilton Secondary School

2nd Place
Bishop's High School, Tobago

3rd Place
St Joseph's Convent, San Fernando

4th Place
Fyzabad Anglican Secondary School

Top Four Schools

Development of the National Qualifications and Credit Framework

In keeping with the mandate to "develop and advise on a unified credit-based system for the post secondary and tertiary education sector" [Chapter 39:06 Section 8 (2) (g)], the Council is in the process of developing a National Qualifications and Credit Framework (NQCF). During the reporting period, the National Training Agency (NTA) worked closely with ACTT and provided feedback on the draft NQCF Matrix. Feedback collected will be used to refine the draft NQCF Matrix and continue development of the Guidelines for the National Qualifications and Credit Framework. This companion document will provide explanations and principles for using the NQCF.

4.0
POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

4.1
TECHNICAL POLICIES

The Council's core services, as mandated by Chapter 39:06, are guided by the Council's Technical Policies on Conferment of Institutional Title, Registration, Accreditation of Institutions and Programmes, Recognition of Foreign Institutions and Programmes and Statements on Recognition and Equivalence.

4.2
FINANCIAL POLICIES

The Council's financial policies are guided by the public service regulations and are in compliance with the following:
• The Financial Regulations and Instructions 1965, as amended
• The Exchequer and Audit Act, Chapter 69:01
• The State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual
• Standard Procurement procedures for the Acquisition of Goods, Services to be Provided and Works to be Undertaken and for the Disposal of Unserviceable Items in State Enterprises/ Statutory Bodies (State Agencies)
• Guidelines for Contract Employment in Government Ministries, Departments and Statutory Authorities subject to the Statutory Authorities Act, Chapter 24:01
• Circulars from the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO), Ministry of Finance, Comptroller of Accounts and the Director of Personnel Administration

4.3
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

The Council maintains an Administrative and Personnel Policies Manual that provides information and procedures to all staff. This equips them with clear, specific and systematic approaches to executing their duties and to developing and maintaining ACTT's relationships with various stakeholders. It is a fundamental communication tool containing information and instructions pertinent to the duties, responsibilities and functions of its staff.

The Administrative and Personnel Policies are currently being revised in accordance with Public Service guidelines and best practice related to contract employment in the government services.

5.0
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

5.1
BUDGET FORMULATION

ACTT is funded through government subventions for recurrent expenditure and under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for specific projects and programmes. Based on the Council's projected activities for the fiscal year, and in accordance with ACTT's strategic direction, budget requests of $26,463,162 and $9,865,000 were submitted to the line Ministry for Recurrent and PSIP Expenditure, respectively. Arising from the budget presentation for fiscal 2015/2016, the Council was advised that its allocation of funds under Recurrent Expenditure for fiscal year 2015/2016 was $20,000,000 and $2,000,000 under PSIP. In January 2016, the Council's allocation of funds under Recurrent Expenditure was further reduced by $1,400,000 to $18,600,000.

5.2
BUDGET / RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

For the financial year ended September 30, 2016 (ACTT was initially allocated $20,000,000 to fund its recurrent expenditure. This was however reduced to $18,600,000 in January 2016. As at September 30, 2016, total releases received from Ministry of Education amounted to $18,156,200. The Council had incurred total recurrent expenditure of $20,377,346 for the fiscal year.

The table below summarises ACTT's recurrent expenditure for the period October 01, 2015 to September 30, 2016:

SUB-HEAD	Budget Estimates (Releases) $	Actual Expenditure $	Variances $
Personnel Expenditure	378,000	-	378,000
Goods and Services	16,257,891	18,737,608	(2,479,717)
of which contract employment	10,930,484	12,946,687	(2,016,203)
Minor Equipment	101,500	83,866	17,634
Current Transfers and Subsidies	1,418,809	1,555,872	(137,063)
Total Recurrent Expenditure	18,156,200	20,377,346	(2,221,146)

Personnel Expenditure relates to fees paid to members of the Council's Board. For the financial year ended September 30, 2016, ACTT operated without a Board as none had been appointed. This fact is reflected in the positive variance of $378,000 under Personnel Expenditure.

In September 2015, the Council received notice of CPO's approval of revised remuneration packages for the Executive Director and staff of ACTT, covering the period November 01, 2010 to October 31, 2016. In accordance with this notice, in December 2015, approval was obtained from the line Ministry for the payment of basic salary arrears only to staff members who were in the Council's employ as at September 01, 2015. Total payments in this regard amounted to $3,356,614 and were paid in January 2016. This is reflected in the negative variance of $2,479,717 under Goods and Services.

The negative variance under Current Transfers and Subsidies resulted from the payment of increased gratuity amounts in accordance with the revised compensation packages (mentioned above) for those positions.

Overall, the Council employed stringent cost cutting measures throughout the financial year and opted to repair rather than replace its equipment to better manage its finances. Shortfalls in the Council's budget allocation were met out of the prior year's allocations and from minor revenues generated by ACTT.

5.3   BUDGET / PSIP EXPENDITURE

Total funding approved under PSIP for fiscal 2015/2016 was $2,000,000. The Council had requested $9,865,000. ACTT's 2015/2016 allocation was approved for funding an Enterprise Wide Document Management System (EWDMS) that was to be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. However, no funds were released to ACTT to fund this project in fiscal 2015/2016 and therefore no PSIP Expenditure was undertaken for the fiscal year.

5.4   DEBT POLICY

Section 19 of the Act gives the Council the power to borrow for the purpose of discharging its functions, subject to the approval of the Minister of Finance. To date, the Council has never sought to exercise this power.
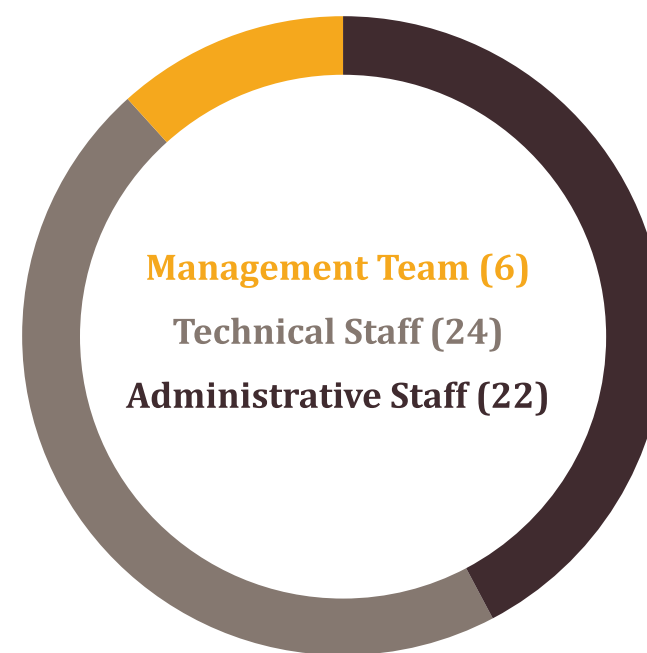
5.5   INVESTMENT POLICY

Under Section 18 of the Act, the Council may *"... accumulate reserves and such reserves and all other funds of the Council not immediately required to be spent in meeting the obligations of the Council or the discharge of any of its functions may be invested, from time to time, in such securities as the Council may with the approval of the Minister with responsibility for finance deem fit."* The Council currently maintains an interest bearing account with its bankers, First Citizens Bank (FCB), under this proviso. Revenues generated by the Council are held in this account.

6.0
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

6.1
ORGANISATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT
Category of Employees

Management Team (6)
Technical Staff (24)
Administrative Staff (22)

Career Path Systems

• Contract Employment

Whenever a vacancy exists at a higher level, eligible employees may be given an opportunity to perform the duties of that position. Additionally, eligible officers may apply for higher positions when advertised in the daily newspapers.

Performance Assessment/Management Strategies

ACTT utilises a Performance Management Appraisal System as detailed in Policy 4:09 of the Council's Administrative and Personnel Policies Manual. Position Descriptions have been developed for all offices. Periodic reviews, as well as Annual Performance Appraisals, are completed to evaluate officers' performance.

Selection Procedures

The Council recruits persons on contract in accordance with the Guidelines for Contract Employment in Government Ministries, Departments, and Statutory Authorities subject to Statutory Authorities Act, Chapter 24:01 issued by the Personnel Department, under cover of Circular Memorandum PD (bm):12/2/1 Vol. IV dated May 18, 2006.

6.2
EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES
ACTT offers employee support in the following areas:

• Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
• Coaching and mentoring activities
• Professional development workshops
• Access to learning resources
• Examination leave
• No pay study leave
• Employee recognition
• Loans for computer technology

6.3
TRAINING

On February 23, 2016, as part of the Council's thrust to develop research competencies among staff members, the Council hosted a workshop entitled '*Action Research within your Organisation*'. Facilitated by Dr Jerome De Lisle, Deputy Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, The University of the West Indies, the workshop focussed on the following key areas:

- An overview of the research process
- Identifying research topics
- Creating Research questions
- Identifying data sources

In the interest of staff development, ACTT's staff participated in the following workshops:

- April 29, 2016: Administrative Professional workshop – theme *'Let me take a selfie'* hosted by Petrotrin Employee Assistance Program Services Limited; and
- September 13-14, 2016: *Excellence in Customer Service* hosted by the Government Human Resource Services Company Limited (GHRS)

Dr Jerome De Lisle

Lesley-Ann Brathwaite, Senior Assessment Officer, presents findings on behalf of her group for the brainstorming exercise.

7.0
PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

The Council is guided by its existing Tenders and Procurement Policy, Rules and Procedures and has ensured that all its procurement activities are in keeping with the provisions of Annex B of the Ministry of Finance's State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual – the Standard Procurement Procedures for the Acquisition of Articles, Provision of Services, Undertaking Works and Disposal of Unserviceable Items in State Enterprises/Statutory Bodies (State Agencies) dated July, 2011 and the provisions of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act No. 1 of 2015 as amended by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property (Amendment) Act, 2016. Section 7 of the Council's revised draft policy prescribes the forms of procurement that the Council uses. The following forms of tendering are used by the Council as prescribed in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual.

Forms of Tendering

Open tendering

This is a process where Tenders and/or Bids are invited through advertisements or other forms of public notice. Open tendering is used in the following instances:

- When the Council's list of approved Vendors does not cater or adequately cater for particular types of articles/works/services
- Where it is competitively more advantageous
- Where the terms and conditions of the Council's borrowings so require

Selective tendering

Tenders and/or Bids are invited from the Council's list of approved Vendors. A minimum number of invitees shall be set so as to allow adequate competition in the procurement process. The invitees selected shall be the top ten (10) ranked Vendors registered to provide the particular articles/works/services. In cases where there are less than ten (10) registered Vendors, all the Vendors registered to provide the particular articles/works/services shall be invited.

Sole tendering

Exemptions/Merit Awards: In keeping with the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, where the circumstances so require, Merit Awards for purchase of materials/works/services shall be issued without inviting competitive bids.

Consultancy services

The Council recognises that due to the specialist nature of certain types of professional and technical services classified as Consultancy Services, it may not be viable or economically sensible to engage in open or selective tendering. Once a determination is made by the office of the Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer that the Services are classified according to Tenders and Procurement Policies, Rules and Procedures as Consultancy Services, and suitable consultants/service providers with a proven record/reputation of efficiently providing services of the kind required are identified, the following procedure shall apply:

- **Consultancy Firms**: Except for Merit Consultancy contracts, all consulting services shall be competitively tendered either using open tendering or selective tendering as appropriate.
- **Individual Consultants**: Individual consultants are normally hired to carry out assignments for which the experience and qualifications of the individual are crucial to the task. They are selected

on the basis of their qualifications and experience relevant to the assignment. Advertisement is not required and consultants do not need to submit proposals. Individuals considered for comparison of qualifications and relevant experience shall meet the minimum qualifications deemed relevant for the assignment and those selected by ACTT shall be the best qualified and shall be fully capable of carrying out the assignment.

Emergencies

In cases of emergency where the safety of people, property, plant and equipment is in jeopardy, the most senior official responsible for that operation, if unable to contact the Executive Director or the Chairman of the Tenders Committee, may award contracts for Articles, Works or Services necessary to avert the danger or to bring the situation under control.

8.0
CLIENT AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO SERVICES / SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

ACTT currently operates three (3) offices located at:

Head Office
Ground Floor and Level 3, Building B
Pan American Life Plaza
91-93 St Vincent Street
Port of Spain, Trinidad

South Outreach Office
108 Independence Avenue
San Fernando, Trinidad

Tobago Office
MIC-IT/YTEPP Tobago Technology Centre
79 Milford Road
Canaan, Tobago

The public may also access ACTT's services through its website: www.actt.org.tt and social media sites facebook.com/ACTTNews and twitter.com/ACTTNews

Limited access to ACTT's services is also available through the Council's Students Caravan and career and college fairs.

8.1
CAREER FAIRS

ACTT participated in several career fairs that were geared towards sensitising students on the importance of the following services: Registration, Accreditation and Recognition. These included:

• ASJA Girls College, Barrackpore
• Belmont Boys' Secondary School
• Bishop Anstey High School, POS
• Bishop's High School, Tobago
• Carapichaima Secondary School
• Cunupia Secondary School
• El Dorado West Secondary School

• Holy Cross College
• Moruga Secondary School
• Naparima College
• Parvati Girls' Hindu College
• San Juan Government Secondary School
• Southern Academy of SDA
• St Anthony's College
• St George's College
• St Stephen's College
• SWAHA Hindu College
• UWI School of Business and Applied Studies (trading as ROYTEC)
• Vessels of Virtue Career & Health Fair
• Vessigny Secondary School

8.2
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (LOCAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL)
8.2.1 ACTT Partners

Local:

• The Trinidad and Tobago Group of Professionals Association (TTGPA)
• The Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT)
• The Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NCTT)
• The Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago (MBTT)
• The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT)
• The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Psychologists (TTAP)

Regional:

• Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA)

International:

• The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), US
• UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC)
• Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK

8.2.2 Membership

ACTT has full membership with the following organisations:

• International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
• Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE)
• Council for Higher Education Accreditation – International Quality Group (CHEA – CIQG)
• Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI)
• International Association of Universities (IAU)

8.2.3 Affiliations

ACTT is affiliated with the following organisations:

• Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA)
• Caribbean Tertiary Level Personnel Association (CTLPA)
• NAFSA: Association of International Educators, USA
• American Society for Quality (ASQ), USA
• Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE), USA
• The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), UK

Overall Achievements

from July 09, 2010 to September 30, 2016

12
higher education institutions awarded Institutional Accreditation by ACTT

2010-2011
College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) • The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) • The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus

2012
Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (ALJGSB) • University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) • Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies (CCLCS)

2013
Caribbean Nazarene College (CNC) • St Andrew's Theological College (SATC) • Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI)

2014
Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI) • MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)

2015
West Indies School of Theology

ACTT has hosted the following *conferences:*

- The 7th Annual CANQATE Conference and General Meeting (2010)
- The 1st National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2012)
- The 1st International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2013)
- The 2nd International Conference on Higher Education and Training (2015)
- Symposium on Higher Education (Tobago, 2014)

59
local post secondary and tertiary level institutions registered by ACTT

225
approved local programmes

14,100
Statements on Recognition issued

ACTT has recognised

500
transnational programmes

+17
foreign awarding bodies and institutions

Journal
of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (JQAHE) published in October 2013

TQI
The Quality Institute launched in February 2015

Compendium
of Registered, Accredited and Recognised Institutions, Awarding Bodies and Programmes published since March 2011

11
Memoranda of Agreement or Cooperation signed between ACTT and:

Local
The National Training Agency (NTA) • The Trinidad and Tobago Group of Professionals Association (TTGPA) • The Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT) • The Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NCTT) • The Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago (MBTT) • The Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICATT) • The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Psychologists (TTAPP)

Regional
Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA)

International
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) • United Kingdom National Recognition and Information Centre (UK NARIC) • Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
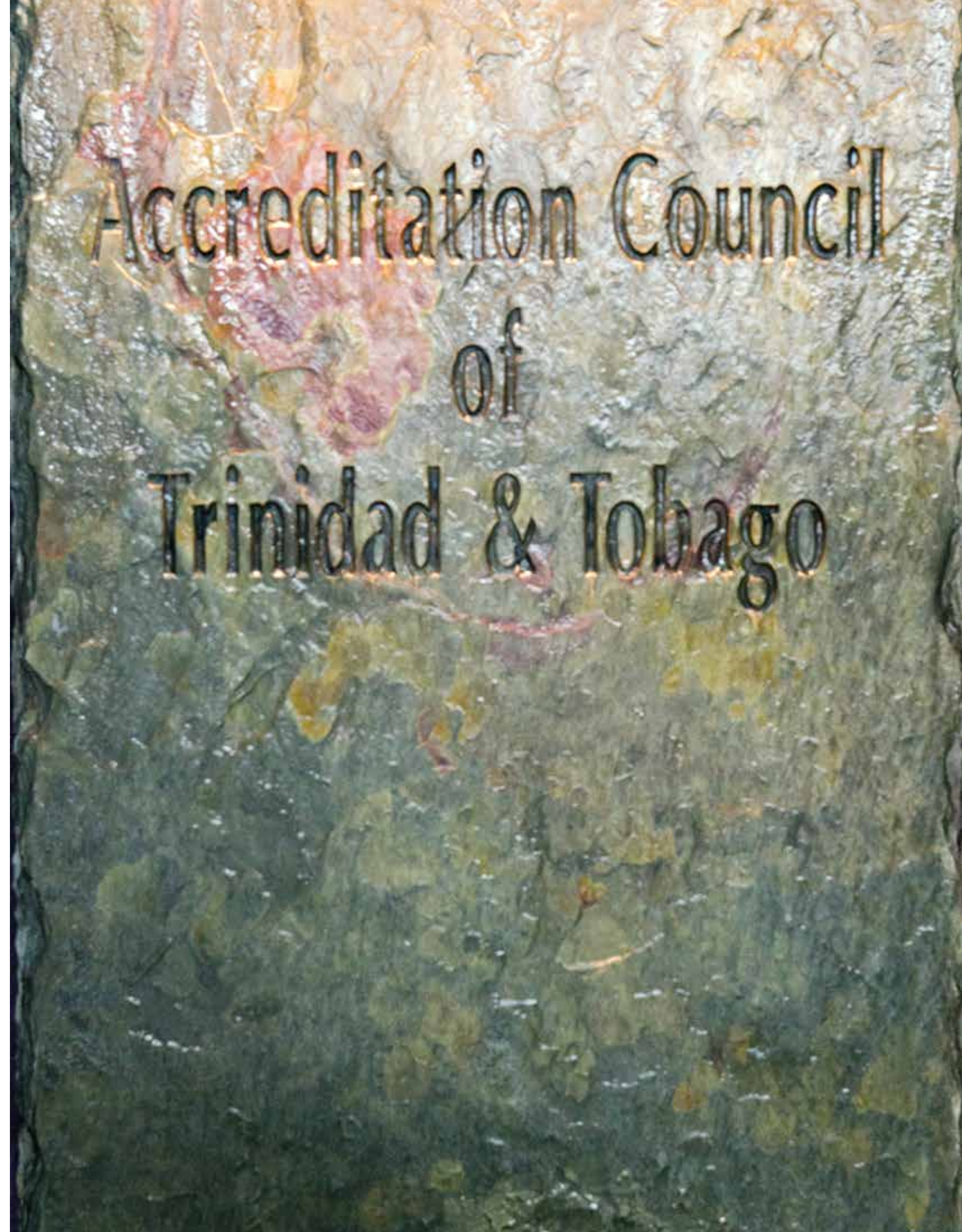
Conclusion

ACTT, through its activities, plays a key role in the development of a creative and productive workforce. The Council is committed to ensuring an articulate and empowered citizenry capable of transforming the society and securing the future of the nation by facilitating the creation of culture of quality amongst post secondary and tertiary education institutions.

The mechanisms employed by ACTT to achieve its goals have certainly proven successful. ACTT has carved a niche as a reputable quality assurance body in the Caribbean and the world and continues to stimulate conversations on issues related to higher education and training. ACTT has become a source of information for many of its Caribbean partners and is also sought after for input into international activities related to quality assurance and higher education and training.

Regarding future initiatives, ACTT plans to:

• Launch ACTT's National Qualifications and Credit Framework (NQCF) at the end of 2017. This framework will elaborate on its predecessor the Tertiary Qualifications Framework (TQF), while ensuring currency with today's education sector. The NQCF being developed would be used as a means of reforming, regulating and managing existing and future qualifications systems. The NQCF explains in detail the characteristics of vocational, academic and professional qualifications. It would establish the minimum requirements to attain qualifications at the various levels of the education and training system in Trinidad and Tobago.

• Host a Higher Education Symposium in Tobago which will focus on quality higher education and training, institutional development, financing small institutions and teaching and learning in higher education. This Symposium aims to involve stakeholders – institutions, students both secondary and tertiary, professional bodies, the general public, and members of the various divisions of the THA.

• The publication of the 2nd edition of the Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (JQAHE) – an internationally peer-reviewed journal that serves as a platform for scholarly discourse on theories, practices and policies in the area of quality assurance in higher education in the Caribbean region. This Journal, published in both print and electronic versions, addresses these issues within the context of international trends and developments and best practices.

ACTT

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key