



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PEER EVALUATORS FOR ACTT'S QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICES

*Copyright the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
August 2019*

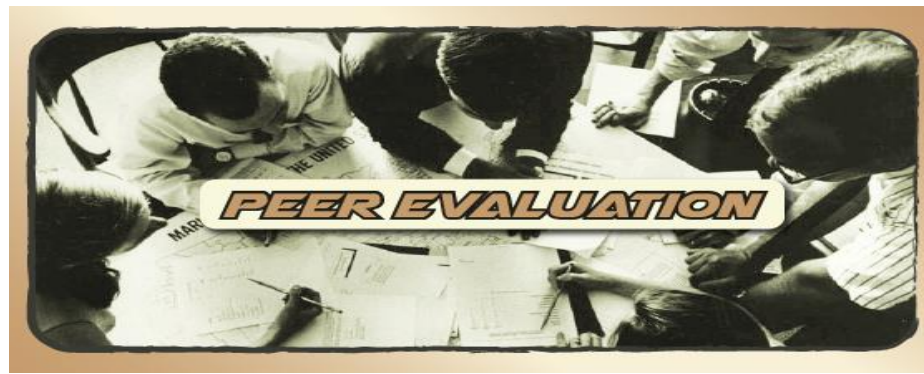
ITEM	PAGE NUMBER
Preface	3
What is Peer Evaluation?	4
Role of Peer Evaluation	4
Who are Peer Evaluators?	5
Recruitment of Peer Evaluators	5-6
Criteria for Peer Evaluators	7
Training of Peer Evaluators	7
Selection of Peer Evaluators	8
Appointment of Peer Evaluators	9
Terms and Conditions for Engagement of Peer Evaluators	9-10
Further Questions	10
APPENDIX I – Peer Evaluator Data Form	11-16
APPENDIX II - Minimum Criteria for the Selection of Peer Evaluators for ACTT’s Quality Assurance Services	17-20
Appendix III - Performance Measures for Peer Evaluators on ACTT’s Assignments	21-22

PREFACE

During the month of August 2019, the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) had undertaken a review of its external evaluation processes and practices to improve them. This has resulted in the preparation of a Code of Practice for Peer Evaluators who represent the bedrock of our external quality assurance practices. The Code of Practice is a professional practice code for ACTT's peer evaluators and represents the practices which will now form part of the way we engage them. As professionals engaged by ACTT, the services of our peer evaluators will be based on established guidelines for their recruitment, selection and engagement/re-engagement. All new peer evaluators shall be exposed to training on these guidelines when they attend workshops as external evaluators by ACTT. All members appointed to the ACTT External Evaluator Corps are required to attend annual meetings for updates on policies, standards, processes, practices and methods to ensure that they are continuously appraised of any changes affecting them. This Code of Practice will be in effect from January 1, 2020. The Code of Practice is subject to review based on changes of policies and services administered by the ACTT.

1-WHAT IS PEER EVALUATION?

Peer evaluation is an independent form of external evaluation of an institution or programme. The evaluation process considers the quality of different aspects of the institution or programme against established criteria and standards. It requires appointment of qualified, trained and experienced higher education practitioners who provide independent judgement, operate with a high degree of integrity and can add value to assessing and recommending measures for improvement of an institution or programme.



2-ROLE OF PEER EVALUATION

Peer evaluation takes place to provide an accreditation agency with the advice needed to make meaningful, reliable and objective determination of whether or not an institution's or programme's quality meets the required standards, such that the institution may be capable of being registered or accredited or its programmes approved for delivery. The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago relies upon peers as external evaluators to support its decision-making processes with respect to conferment of institutional title, initial and continuing registration, programme approval, institutional accreditation, or recognition of transnational programmes.

3-WHO ARE PEER EVALUATORS?

Peer evaluators are qualified, trained and experienced subject matter and higher education experts/practitioners who are selected and appointed by the accreditation agency. Typically, two to five peer evaluators are appointed depending upon the complexity of the evaluation exercise. Peer evaluators are required to treat with an institution's data, materials and information they come into contact with by applying high levels of confidentiality, and declare any conflicts of interest with the institution. Accordingly, integrity is the fundamental principle governing an individual's conduct as an evaluator in his/her dealings with the accreditation agency, the institution and its personnel. Peer evaluators provide independent judgement and have limited contact with the institution during the evaluation process. They assess and make recommendations for improvement of an institution or programme.

4-RECRUITMENT OF PEER EVALUATORS

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) relies upon different approaches for recruitment of peer evaluators. They include the following:

Partnerships with Other Accreditation and Professional Regulatory Agencies

Given the limited pool of interested, qualified, trained and experienced peer evaluators in Trinidad and Tobago, the ACTT has established partnerships through MOAs/MOCs¹. All these agencies and associations have cadres of qualified peer evaluators who are

¹ Examples include the National Training Agency, the Association of Professional Engineers, the Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago, the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago, the Board of Engineering of Trinidad and Tobago, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom, The Higher Learning Commission, Chicago, Illinois, the Barbados Accreditation Council, the University Council of Jamaica, the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Tertiary Education (CANQATE), Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA), the Trinidad and Tobago Group of Professionals Association (TTGPA).

accessible to ACTT. Depending upon the nature of an external evaluation exercise and the demand for a regional or international external evaluator, ACTT makes contact with these agencies through conferences and by exchange to access their peer evaluators from their peer evaluator databases.

Referral

The ACTT has established a referral process through which ACTT-approved peer evaluators can recommend and refer others whom they deem as possessing the qualities of peer evaluators for ACTT's quality assurance services. Evaluators are invited to nominate such individuals who in turn submit their Curriculum Vitae (CV) to ACTT by contacting evaluators@actt.org.tt. These evaluators may be contacted to participate in prior scheduled training as external evaluators.

Self-Nomination

Practitioners from locally registered and accredited institutions or professional regulatory bodies who think that they are suitably-qualified and have the requisite qualities to serve as a peer evaluator in an external evaluation may apply directly to ACTT by sending their Curriculum Vitae (CV) by email to evaluators@actt.org.tt. Other qualified persons from industry may also serve as external evaluators, although not ideally peers, but on specific subject matter areas/fields where their expertise may assist peer evaluators. They are usually required for programme-specific quality assurance processes and can also self-nominate using the same procedure as peers. Information may be disseminated to institutions through ACTT's eblast service or by correspondence. Such individuals, if suitable, will be invited for external evaluator training when it is next scheduled.

Persons who have been referred or self-nominated from registered or accredited institutions and have submitted their CVs and Profiles are asked to complete an Evaluator Data Form (Appendix I) and be screened by ACTT prior to being enlisted for training or appointment as peer evaluators.

5-CRITERIA FOR PEER EVALUATORS

Peer evaluators may be team chairs, members or observers. The ACTT has established criteria for selection of team chairs or members for external evaluations for its quality assurance services. Peer evaluators are selected based on their qualifications; specialist skills and certifications; sector and industry experience and prior related experiences as are relevant to the quality assurance service which is being accessed. The criteria concerning their selection are included in Appendix II.

6-TRAINING OF PEER EVALUATORS



Prior to training, a short telephone screening will occur to determine the eligibility to become an external evaluator. Training of peer evaluators is necessary before any potential peer evaluator can participate in any of ACTT's quality assurance services. Training exposes new and continuing peer evaluators to the principles, processes, criteria, standards, practices and methods of external evaluation at ACTT. Training sessions may be scheduled once or more each year depending upon the volume of potential screened peer evaluators and ACTT's needs. New external evaluators may be mentored by more experienced peers during the peer evaluation process.

7-SELECTION OF PEER EVALUATORS

Once peer evaluators have been trained, they are entered into ACTT's database as members of the Evaluators' Corps. The database comprises local, regional and international external evaluators who have either been trained by ACTT and/ or have completed previous ACTT peer evaluations. Other experienced peer evaluators for areas not represented on ACTT's database are sourced through partnerships and referrals when there is a vacancy for a specialist evaluator.

The selection process entails the following steps:

- ACTT will identify suitably-qualified and experienced peer evaluators from its database of local, regional or international evaluators;
- ACTT will match identified peer evaluators to the particular requirements of the peer evaluation exercise. This includes a close examination of previous quality assurance issues, recommendations and annual report data;
- ACTT will make contact with the peer evaluators matched to the institution's quality assurance requirements to determine their willingness to serve as a peer evaluator in a peer evaluation exercise and to determine any likely conflicts of interest with the institution;
- The institution will be provided with a short-list of peer evaluators who have consented to serve as a peer evaluator at the institution. Profiles of such persons will be provided and consider approval/objection to the recommended members giving sufficient evidence for such;
- ACTT will make contact with other peer evaluators to determine their willingness to serve on an institution's external evaluation exercise, if the institution has queries concerning the peer evaluators, or desire to have other peer evaluators serve;
- ACTT will inform the institution if there is no suitably-qualified individual willing to serve. Efforts will have to be made to identify individual peer evaluators from the region or internationally who are suitably qualified. The institution will have to consent to this arrangement, which may have implications for the logistics and cost of the external evaluation exercise, including the site visit.

8-APPOINTMENT OF PEER EVALUATORS

Peer evaluators are paid volunteers who support ACTT in a specific external evaluation assignment. Once ACTT has identified peer evaluators to serve on an assignment, an agreement is established for the specific assignment. The peer evaluator then signs the specific agreement which outlines the terms and conditions of the engagement.

9-TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT OF PEER EVALUATORS

Peer evaluators who have formally agreed to serve for a specific peer evaluation assignment, agree to the following general terms and conditions:

1. To serve on the specific assignment and be committed to seeing it through to completion;
2. To declare any conflicts of interests at the time of selection;
3. To abide by the ACTT code of practice for peer evaluators, paying attention to embracing collegiality, open-mindedness, cultural sensitivity, and receiving and giving feedback, to which they are exposed during peer evaluator training;
4. To be familiar with the criteria, standards and evidence requirements stipulated for the specified external evaluation process and the external evaluation report templates provided by ACTT;
5. To access, use and apply any information with which they come into contact during the self-study report reading/analysis phase and during pre-, mid and post-site visits y by maintaining confidentiality and fairness in judgements;
6. To spend sufficient time, as agreed, to prepare for a site visit, participate whilst on the actual visit and discuss and write the external evaluators reports and submit to ACTT within the agreed timeframe;

7. To be paid an honorarium and, wherever applicable, travel and accommodation for the service rendered in accordance with the established fee schedule for team chairs/members of an external evaluation exercise, such fees being borne by the institution;
8. Upon completion of an ACTT external evaluation exercise, peer evaluators agree not to be engaged in any formal employment, contracts or working relationships with the institution which they have evaluated for no less than one calendar year from the date of completion of the last evaluation process. However, peer evaluators may serve on a related external evaluation exercise with the same institution during this period, if a follow-up visit is required;
9. Peer evaluators will be subject to an assessment of their conduct and performance following an assignment (Appendix III). The ACTT representative, institutional QM representative and external evaluation team members participate in the assessment and satisfactory performance will determine the need for further coaching or team assignment in future activities.

10-DO YOU HAVE:

**Any
Questions?**

Any questions regarding the peer evaluation guidelines or any related matters can be brought to the attention of the Director-Accreditation and Quality Enhancement by email to evaluators@actt.org.tt.

APPENDIX I – Peer Evaluator Data Form

NAME IN FULL

First Name	Middle Name	Surname

PERMANENT ADDRESS

House/Apartment Number:	Street Name:
Town:	City:
State/Country/Region:	Postal Code:

POSITION

--

INSTITUTION

--

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email:	Telephone:	Mobile:
--------	------------	---------

SPECIAL MEDICAL CONDITIONS

(Please state any medical conditions which may affect your performance)

--

DISABILITIES

(Please state any disabilities which may affect your performance)

--

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

(Please state any dietary requirements)

--

QUALITY ASSURANCE SERVICE INTERESTS

(Please check the ACTT external evaluation service which you may be interested in)

Conferment of Title/Registration	
Registration	
Institutional Accreditation	
Programme Approval	
Transnational recognition	

PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY

(Please check the period during the year in which you may be willing to serve)

All Year Round	
January to April	
May to August	
September to December	

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest is defined as any set of circumstances that create undue risk that affects a peer evaluator's professional judgement or actions with respect to the conduct, performance or decisions regarding an institution's external evaluation process or result. Such circumstances may be financial, familial, employment, ownership, legal or otherwise that may lead to bias in favour of or against any institution or deemed to be corruption. Typically, in situations of prior employment, a peer evaluator should have ceased employment with the institution at least five years before being eligible for serving as a peer evaluator with that institution.

The following constitutes conflicts of interest if there is:

- evidence of prior employment at or with the institution being evaluated;
- evidence of prospective employment with the institution being evaluated;
- evidence of current or prior service in connection with the institution being evaluated;
- personal or financial interest in the ownership or operation of the institution;
- personal or immediate familial relationship with any members of the institution;
- existence of prejudice, e.g. involved in legal battle with the institution;
- evidence of receipt of remuneration, honoraria, honorary degrees, honours or other awards from the institution; and
- any other personal or professional relationships that may be perceived as conflict of interest.

Please name below any institutions for which there may be a conflict of interest if you were placed on assignment. Give any reason(s) why the conflict of interest may arise

PREVIOUS SERVICE

Have you previously served as an external evaluator with ACTT or any other regional or international external quality assurance agency?

Yes	
No	

Date(s)/Institution(s)/Agency(ies)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Institution</i>

NARRATIVE

In 200-300 words why do you wish to be considered to serve as a peer evaluator with ACTT?

I, _____ (*name of prospective peer evaluator*), declare that information provided on this form are true and correct and that I will be willing to abide by any terms and conditions established by ACTT for my service as a peer evaluator.

Signature

____/____/____

Date

APPENDIX II- Minimum Criteria for the Selection of Peer Evaluators for ACTT's Quality Assurance Services

Evaluation	Qualifications	Specialist Skills/ Certifications	Sector/Industry Experience	Prior Related Experience
Conferment of Institutional Title or Registration	<p>Master's or Doctorate in an area related to the institution's specialisms or in a broad area such as education or management which is recognised by ACTT</p> <p>(one level higher than highest degree offered by institution)</p>	<p>Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the criteria and standards e.g. corporate governance, management, curriculum being evaluated</p> <p>Must have knowledge of ACTT's registration criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training</p>	<p>Suitable experience at the level of executive leadership, management, curriculum or student affairs from an accredited or registered tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or the Caribbean region e.g. President/CEO/ED, Vice President, Dean</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Suitable experience at the level of corporate governance, executive leadership or management in a private or public sector organisation in the programme areas of the institution</p>	<p>Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national regulatory or-regional/ international accreditation body</p>
Accreditation	Same as above	<p>Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the criteria and standards e.g. corporate governance, management, curriculum being evaluated</p> <p>Must have knowledge of ACTT's accreditation criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training</p>	<p>Suitable experience at the level of executive leadership, management, curriculum or student affairs from an accredited tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or overseas e.g. President/CEO/ED, Vice President, Dean</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Suitable experience at the level of corporate governance, executive leadership or management in a recognized private or public sector organisation in the programme areas of the institution</p>	<p>Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national or international accreditation body</p> <p>Team Chair- Has participated in at least one accreditation site visit as team chair for appointment as team chair</p> <p>All members must have participated in at least two registration site visits</p>

Evaluation	Qualifications	Specialist Skills/ Certifications	Sector/Industry Experience	Prior Related Experience
Transnational Programme Evaluation	Same as above	<p>Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the programme criteria and standards e.g. education, social sciences, management, computer science, being evaluated</p> <p>Must have knowledge of ACTT's transnational programme evaluation criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training</p>	<p>Suitable experience at the level of management or curriculum from an accredited or registered tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or overseas delivering indigenous and/or transnational programmes e.g. Dean, Programme Director, Department Chair</p>	Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national regulatory or regional/international accreditation body
Recognition of Foreign Awarding Bodies/Institutions	Same as above	<p>Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the criteria and standards e.g. corporate governance, management, curriculum being evaluated</p> <p>Must have knowledge of ACTT's transnational recognition criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training</p>	<p>Suitable experience at the level of management or curriculum from an accredited or registered tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or overseas delivering indigenous and/or transnational programmes e.g. Dean, Programme Director, Department Chair OR</p> <p>Suitable experience at the level of corporate governance, executive leadership, or management in a private or public sector organisation in the programme areas of the institution.</p>	Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national regulatory or regional/international accreditation body

Evaluation	Qualifications	Specialist Skills/ Certifications	Sector/Industry Experience	Prior Related Experience
Registration of Local Awarding Bodies	Same as above	Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the criteria and standards e.g. corporate governance, management, curriculum being evaluated Must have knowledge of ACTT's registration of local awarding bodies criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training	Suitable experience at the level of management or curriculum from an accredited or registered tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or overseas delivering indigenous and/or transnational programmes e.g. Dean, Programme Director, Department Chair OR Suitable experience at the level of corporate governance, executive leadership, or management in a private or public sector organisation in the programme areas of the institution.	Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national regulatory or regional/international accreditation body
Accreditation of Local Awarding Body Qualifications	Same as above	Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the criteria and standards e.g. corporate governance, management, curriculum being evaluated Must have knowledge of ACTT's accreditation of local awarding body qualifications criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training	Suitable experience at the level of management or curriculum from an accredited or registered tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or overseas delivering indigenous and/or transnational programmes e.g. Dean, Programme Director, Department Chair	Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national regulatory or regional/international accreditation body

Evaluation	Qualifications	Specialist Skills/ Certifications	Sector/Industry Experience	Prior Related Experience
Programme Approval	Same as above	<p>Any specialist professional certifications e.g. CPA/ACCA, FCCA, PMP or documented skills related to the programme criteria and standards being evaluated</p> <p>Must have knowledge of ACTT's programme approval criteria, standards, policies and practices including the National Qualifications Framework obtained via training</p>	Suitable experience at the level of management or curriculum from an accredited or registered tertiary education institution in Trinidad and Tobago or overseas delivering indigenous and/or transnational programmes e.g. Department Chair or tenured senior faculty e.g. associate to full professor or senior lecturer to professor	Trained as an ACTT evaluator or team chair or from another national regulatory or regional/ international accreditation body

Appendix III- Performance Measures for Peer Evaluators on ACTT's assignments (*rubrics provided during training*)

Service	Time to complete draft report in working days (post site visit)	Number of drafts or iterations	Report Quality	Attributes of the evaluator	Knowledge and understanding	Commitment to the task	Score
	Weighting- 15	Weighting- 5	Weighting- 40	Weighting- 30	Weighting- 5	Weighting- 5	100
	<i>Who assesses? Staff Liaison</i>	<i>Who assesses? Staff Liaison</i>	<i>Who assesses? Staff Liaison/Line manager/Institution (Where applicable)</i>	<i>Who assesses? Peer Evaluators, staff liaison, observer, institution</i>	<i>Who assesses? Peer Evaluators, staff liaison, observer, institution</i>	<i>Who assesses? Staff liaison, institution</i>	
Programme Approval	10	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100
Registration	10	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100
Accreditation	20	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100
Conferment of Institutional Title	10	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100
Recognition of Foreign Awarding Bodies/Institutions	7	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100
Transnational Programme Evaluation	10	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100

Registration of Local Awarding Bodies	10	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100
Accreditation of Local Awarding Body Qualifications	10	Minimum – 1 Maximum - 3	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	All criteria	100

Standards for report quality

- Grammar, syntax and construction of the report (weighted 5%)
- Accuracy of facts (weighted 10%)
- Findings/observations- Context, evidence, judgement and impact (weighted 50%)
- Formatting (weighted 5%)
- Cover all criteria and standards (weighted 30%)
 - Scoring for all above exceeds = 1, met = 0.5, did not met = 0

Attributes of the evaluator

- Confidence and trust in the team, the ACTT and the institution's clients (weighted 3%)
- Ability to be thorough and complete in the task including preparation of the report (weighted 5%)
- Punctuality on the assignment (weighted 2%)
- Ability to conduct interviews with different groups of persons (weighted 5%)
- Ability to work in diverse teams with divergent views and ideas (weighted 5%)
- Confidentiality and ethics in handling information and dealing with clients (weighted 5%)
- Courtesy and respect to team members and clients (weighted 5%)

Knowledge and understanding of assignment, site logistics, and report writing including:

- Ability to write in a concise and technical manner (weighted 1%)
- Demonstrated ability to write grammatically sound documents (weighted 1%)
- Demonstrated ability to address the relevant ACTT standards in writing (weighted 1%)
- Awareness of the uniqueness of each institute (weighted 1%)
- Knowledge of ACTT's procedures with respect to Site Visit protocols (weighted 1%)

Commitment to the task that is accessibility, reliability, loyalty, and preparation