



**THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
(ACTT)**

CRITERIA

FOR

SPECIALISED/PROGRAMME

ACCREDITATION

CRITERIA FOR SPECIALISED/PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Introduction

Chapter No. 39:06 gives the Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago (ACTT) the power to accredit and re-accredit post secondary and tertiary institutions. Section 8 (1) of the Act established ACTT as *“the principal body in Trinidad and Tobago for conducting and advising on the accreditation and recognition of post secondary and tertiary educational and training institutions, programmes and awards, whether local or foreign, and for the promotion of the quality and standards of post secondary and tertiary education and training in Trinidad and Tobago.”*

There are several **criteria** that must be met by institutions seeking specialised/programme accreditation. The criteria are intentionally broad enough to allow for diversity and innovation since there is considerable variation among institutions and the programmes and awards they offer based on their distinctive characters, philosophies and purposes. They are also precise enough to ensure that critical aspects of acceptable quality are encompassed in the statements.

There are *five categories* in which quality is evaluated and recognised. In each of the five categories there are *criteria* and *standards*. A programme must be judged to have met all the criteria to merit accreditation.

Criteria are distinct and discrete statements which identify or define in verifiable terms, the attributes of programmes accredited by ACTT.

Standards are statements that identify the conditions that are necessary for an objective evaluation of the extent to which a programme meets each criterion. ACTT will also provide information that will guide institutions in interpreting the requirements to meet the criteria

Examples of Evidence will include examples of tangible evidence that a programme can demonstrate that the standards have been achieved. Given the variation among programmes offered, some examples of evidence may not apply to all programmes.

The standards and examples of evidence promulgated by ACTT will be reviewed and modified periodically to ensure that they are current, valid, relevant and consistent with emerging trends and developments in the field of quality assurance and accreditation universally.

Specialised/Programme Accreditation

In a number of fields (for example healthcare, engineering, law) graduation from an accredited specialised programme is a requirement for securing a licence to practice in the field. ACTT has established a collaborative relationship with professional bodies to ensure that the standards and requirements for specialised programme accreditation are consistent with the current requirements for professional practice. In this context, specialised accreditation is recognised as providing a basic assurance of the scope, and quality of professional or occupational preparation. Institutions may also seek accreditation of non-professional programmes as an assurance of the quality of the qualifications awarded.

<p>Category 1</p> <p>Criterion Statement</p>	<p>Mission & Purpose</p> <p><i>The programme maintains a clear and publicly stated philosophy and specific educational objectives that are consistent with the institution's mission and purpose and are appropriate to tertiary education.</i></p>
<p>Standard 1.1</p>	<p>The programme is congruent with the institution's mission, purpose and educational goals.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>The programme's objectives and learning outcomes are aligned with the institution's mission and purpose.</p> <p>The programme's objectives and learning outcomes are consistent with tertiary education goals.</p> <p>The needs of the stakeholders are reflected in the learning outcomes of the programmes.</p> <p>There is evidence of stakeholder input in curriculum development.</p>
<p>Standard 1.2</p>	<p>The programme's objectives, content and assessment are documented and communicated to the relevant stakeholders.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>The programme's objectives, learning outcomes and content are documented in the student handbook, faculty handbook, catalogues, manuals and other publications.</p> <p>Programme information is available in hard and electronic formats to afford easy access by interested stakeholders.</p> <p>Clearly defined policies and procedures for programme implementation and assessment are available.</p> <p>The philosophy, goals and objectives of the programme are clearly communicated, available and consistent in all documents and publications.</p> <p>Student handbook is clear and embodies the rules and regulations governing the programme.</p>

<p>Category 2</p> <p>Criterion Statement</p>	<p>Governance & Administration</p> <p><i>The programme is supported by appropriate structures for effective policy-making and implementation and the necessary human, material and financial resources to achieve its objectives and educational outcomes.</i></p>
<p>Standard 2.1</p>	<p>The programme’s governance and administrative structures and practices are congruent with the mission and purpose of the institution.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>There are clearly defined policies, processes and procedures for programme development, implementation and evaluation.</p> <p>There is evidence to show that the programme was approved by the institution’s Board.</p> <p>There is a programme committee to ensure that the programme is delivered in accordance with the purpose and mission of the institution.</p> <p>The members of the programme committee are appropriately qualified to carry out their designated responsibilities.</p> <p>Minutes of meetings of the programme committee are available.</p> <p>The effectiveness of the programme’s governance and administrative practices are periodically reviewed and improved.</p>
<p>Standard 2.2</p>	<p>The institution’s resource base adequately supports its educational programme offerings.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>Programme development is inherent in the strategic plan for the institution.</p> <p>The institution’s facilities are conducive to the demands of its education programme.</p> <p>The institution’s resources are adequate for the achievement of the goals of the programme.</p> <p>Adequate and appropriately qualified faculty members are allocated and available to deliver the programme.</p>
<p>Standard 2.3</p>	<p>The institution has the financial capacity to sustain its planned educational programme for a given period of time.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>Past financial documents, e.g. budgets, are available.</p> <p>Investment records are available.</p> <p>Statements of income and expenditure are available.</p> <p>Financial projections for the programme are available.</p> <p>Appropriate financial management systems for each programme are available.</p>

<p>Category 3</p>	<p>Teaching and Learning</p>
<p>Criterion Statement</p>	<p><i>The programme is successful in achieving student learning outcomes and faculty effectiveness that demonstrate that it is achieving its educational purposes and can continue to do so.</i></p>
<p>Standard 3.1</p>	<p>The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to undertake academic planning and evaluation of educational programme objectives.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>A programme/curriculum committee operates as part of the institution's structure.</p> <p>Policies for programme planning, implementation and evaluation exist.</p> <p>Records of committee meetings and decisions taken are available.</p> <p>The programme is informed by the strategic plan for the institution.</p>
<p>Standard 3.2</p>	<p>The institution clearly specifies and publishes educational programme objectives and the requirements for each programme.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>Programme requirements and objectives are stated in documents, catalogues and handbooks.</p> <p>Catalogues and handbooks are easily available to all stakeholders.</p> <p>Programme documents are user friendly and are revised periodically.</p>
<p>Standard 3.3</p>	<p>Effective teaching is valued and promoted in the programme.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<p>Faculty members are appropriately qualified.</p> <p>Faculty members are associates in professional organisations relevant to the disciplines they teach.</p> <p>Faculty members' participate in current and relevant professional development activities.</p> <p>Instruments exist for periodically evaluating teaching of staff by internal constituents.</p> <p>Faculty members are continuously engaged in relevant research.</p> <p>Policy and procedures exist for recruiting and inducting new staff.</p> <p>Mechanisms exist for identifying and rewarding effective teaching.</p>

Standard 3.4	The programme and its relevant courses are carefully designed with mechanisms and procedures for assessment and evaluation of student learning.
Examples of Evidence	<p>An assessment/evaluation committee exists as part of the institution's structure.</p> <p>The course outline incorporates appropriate procedures for assessment of students at each level of the programme.</p> <p>Mechanisms exist to supply the relevant constituencies with assessment data.</p> <p>Mechanisms exist for the data from assessment activities to inform teaching and learning.</p> <p>A variety of assessment methods and tracking systems are utilised to cater for the needs of the diverse student population.</p>
Standard 3.5	The programme's resources support student learning and effective teaching.
Examples of Evidence	<p>Physical structures – classrooms, labs, studios – are conducive to the teaching /learning process.</p> <p>Appropriate physical resources are available and equitably allocated as required – computers, library, laboratory, equipment, tools.</p> <p>An inventory of learning resources is maintained for each programme.</p> <p>Human resources are available and timetabled to facilitate the teaching/learning process.</p>

Category 4	Curriculum Effectiveness
Criterion Statement	<i>The programme is effectively designed to ensure relevance and to maintain certification requirements that conform to accepted standards in that profession or field of study.</i>
Standard 4.1	The learning outcomes and content are clearly stated and are appropriate to the programme level.
Examples of Evidence	<p>The programme objectives and content fit the level for which the programme is intended.</p> <p>The programme content and learning outcomes are clearly articulated and consistent in all official documents.</p>
Standard 4.2	The programme incorporates assessment strategies that are appropriate to the requisite learning outcomes.
Examples of Evidence	<p>Multiple assessment methods are employed to appropriately assess student learning.</p> <p>Assessment method is appropriate to the level and nature of the programme being offered.</p> <p>Assessment activities reflect adequate sampling of content covered and are in alignment with the learning outcomes.</p> <p>Data on student assessment, including rates of graduation, transfer, attrition and placement, are easily available to the relevant stakeholders.</p>
Standard 4.3	The effectiveness of curricula is evaluated continuously to ensure its appropriateness to the external environment.
Examples of Evidence	<p>A mechanism exists for the curriculum committee to periodically review the programme.</p> <p>Faculty members have input in defining expected learning outcomes and determining if they were achieved.</p> <p>General education is integrated into the programmes to develop attitudes and skills needed for lifelong learning in a diverse society.</p> <p>The programme is reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance to current and future needs.</p>

Standard 4.4	Programme content and outcomes demonstrate that certification and other applicable standards are achieved.
Examples of Evidence	<p>A qualifications committee exists as part of the institution's structure.</p> <p>The content and outcomes are congruent with the level of certification being awarded.</p>
Standard 4.5	The organisation values and supports effective learning and student achievement.
Examples of Evidence	<p>Mechanisms are in place to publicly recognise and reward effective learning - access to scholarship/bursaries and awards for outstanding academic performance.</p> <p>Learning activities and resources cater to the diversity that exists among the student body.</p> <p>Enhancement of effective learning is catered for in the departmental/programme budget to include expenditure on modern learning technologies.</p>

Category 5	Commitment to Continuous Improvement
Criterion Statement	<i>The programme maintains a systematic approach to assessing educational quality in order to improve educational and other outcomes.</i>
Standard 5.1	The programme has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to strategically evaluate the achievement of the mission and educational purpose of the institution.
Examples of Evidence	<p>Policy, procedures and processes exist for strategically evaluating the programme in context of the vision, mission and educational objectives of the institution.</p> <p>Schedules, records, and other reports demonstrate planning, monitoring and evaluation strategies.</p> <p>Programme evaluation and student assessment records are available and easily accessible.</p>
Standard 5.2	The programme is allocated sufficient physical and other resources to be effectively planned, implemented and evaluated on a continuous basis.
Examples of Evidence	<p>A budget related to the programme is available.</p> <p>Records to justify the allocation of resources exist.</p> <p>The system for resource allocation addresses current and future needs.</p> <p>Performance appraisal reports reflect the continued competence of the staff for the programmes they deliver.</p>
Standard 5.3	The programme is informed by timely, realistic analyses of the internal and external environment, which enhances programme effectiveness.
Examples of Evidence	<p>There is a plan to subject the programme to timely self-studies/SWOT analyses.</p> <p>The programme coordinators use results of need analyses/market surveys to inform programme development and review.</p> <p>The data collected is used to inform the strategic and staff development plans for tutors.</p> <p>There are existing records of evaluation processes to provide information on levels of performance in meeting stated goals/objectives for programme relevance and effectiveness.</p>

Standard 5.4	The programme is subject to short, medium and long term planning consistent with the mission and purpose of the institution.
Examples of Evidence	<p>The institution has a strategic plan that includes new programme development.</p> <p>Short, medium and long term plans are documented and readily available.</p> <p>Strategic planning processes are sufficiently flexible to accommodate revision in response to environmental changes.</p>
Standard 5.5	The institution provides opportunities to enhance the capabilities of its faculty, administrative and other staff to effectively deliver a quality programme.
Examples of Evidence	<p>The institution has a tracking plan.</p> <p>The institution maintains a database on employees' training records, skills and abilities for each programme area.</p> <p>The institution's strategic plan considers the regular review of the programmes, their relevance, demand, affordability and accessibility.</p>

