



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

***CRITERIA***

***FOR***

***INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION***

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## CRITERIA FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

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### 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 accreditation. The criteria are intentionally broad enough to allow for diversity and innovation since there is considerable variation among institutions with 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**. An institution 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 institutions or programmes accredited by ACTT.

**Standards** are statements that identify the conditions that are necessary for an objective evaluation of the extent to which an institution 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 an institution can provide to prove that the standards have been achieved. Given the variation among institutional types, some examples of evidence may not be suited to all institutions. Examples of evidence may be tailored to specific institutional configurations.

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.

<p><b>Category 1</b></p> <p><b>Criterion Statement</b></p>	<p><b>Mission &amp; Purpose</b></p> <p><i>The institution's mission and purpose are appropriate to tertiary education and consistent with the policies and practices that guide its operations.</i></p>
<p><b>Standard 1.1</b></p>	<p><b>The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's purposes and goals.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution's mission is documented and approved by its board or governing body.</p> <p>The mission is effectively communicated to the relevant stakeholders including prospective and enrolled students.</p> <p>The institution has clearly defined institutional goals.</p> <p>The institution's mission is consistent with its purpose and goals.</p>
<p><b>Standard 1.2</b></p>	<p><b>The institution has a defined mission and purpose that are appropriate to tertiary education.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The levels of certification offered are consistent with the requirements of tertiary education.</p> <p>The goals of the institution are congruent with tertiary level education and training.</p>
<p><b>Standard 1.3</b></p>	<p><b>The mission statement reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The mission statement clearly identifies the stakeholders the institution serves.</p> <p>There is adequate documentary evidence to indicate the input of the stakeholders in determining their needs.</p> <p>The institution's mission statement demonstrates its commitment to the needs of all its stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Standard 1.4</b></p>	<p><b>The mission is communicated to, and supported by, all stakeholders within the institution.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The board, faculty, administration and students understand and support the institution's mission.</p> <p>The mission statement is prominently displayed and included in all relevant official documents.</p> <p>The institution's decision making processes are informed by its mission and purpose.</p> <p>The institution has clearly defined the roles of the internal stakeholders in achieving its mission and purpose.</p>

<p><b>Category 2</b></p>	<p><b>Governance &amp; Administration</b></p>
<p><b>Criterion Statement</b></p>	<p><i>The institution's system of governance ensures ethical decision making and efficient provision of human, material and financial resources to effectively accomplish its educational and other purposes.</i></p>
<p><b>Standard 2.1</b></p>	<p><b>The institution's governance and administrative structures and practices promote effective and ethical leadership that is congruent with the mission and purpose of the institution.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution has a governing board/ system of governance that involves participation from all stakeholders and facilitates the successful accomplishment of its mission, goals and purpose.</p> <p>The institution's board/governing body is legally constituted and has ultimate responsibility to ensure that the policies, procedures and regulations are adhered to by all stakeholders.</p> <p>The institution has documented policies and regulations that define authority and relationships among its internal stakeholders.</p> <p>The institution has an Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer whose full-time or major responsibility is to manage the operations of the institution in keeping with the board/governing body's directives.</p> <p>The system of governance makes provision for consideration of the views and judgements of all stakeholders.</p> <p>The institution has mechanisms to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its governing body and to improve its operations.</p> <p>The institution has adequately qualified, trained and experienced technical staff to manage its resources.</p>
<p><b>Standard 2.2</b></p>	<p><b>The institution's resource base supports the institution's educational programmes and its plans for sustaining and improving quality.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The faculty plays a major role in identifying resources for the educational programmes offered by the institution.</p> <p>There are adequate and appropriate resources for the educational programmes being offered.</p> <p>The institution has established mechanisms, processes and procedures to address procurement, storage and allocation of resources on a timely basis.</p>

<b>Standard 2.3</b>	<b>The institution has sound policies and the financial capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programmes offered at the institution.</b>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<p>The institution is financially viable to ensure completion of programmes undertaken and to respond to financial emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.</p> <p>The institution has mechanisms and procedures to control its financial resources and to allocate them appropriately to achieve its educational objectives.</p> <p>The institution plans, administers and monitors its budget.</p> <p>The institution’s policies stipulate the terms and conditions for accepting gifts and/or donations from public, private and international organisations.</p> <p>The institution has mechanisms to ensure financial integrity through regular audits and reports.</p>
<b>Standard 2.4</b>	<b>The institution’s system of governance provides for student input in decision making in matters directly and indirectly affecting them.</b>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<p>There is a functioning student governing body/guild.</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities of the student governing body/guild are clearly defined in the institution’s constitution or other supporting documentation.</p> <p>There is a constitution outlining the student governing body/guild’s governing structure and operations.</p> <p>Minutes/agendas/decisions from previous meetings are provided and can be retrieved.</p> <p>Feedback from students informs documented planning and other strategic processes of the institution.</p>

<p><b>Category 3</b></p> <p><b>Criterion Statement</b></p>	<p><b>Teaching and Learning</b></p> <p><i>The institution provides evidence of student learning outcomes and faculty effectiveness in achieving its educational purpose and demonstrates the capability to continue to do so.</i></p>
<p><b>Standard 3.1</b></p>	<p><b>The institution has set mechanisms and/or procedures to undertake academic planning and evaluation of educational programme objectives.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>Policies and procedures exist for planning, evaluation and revision of academic programme objectives.</p> <p>The institution's strategic plan considers academic planning and evaluation.</p> <p>Academic programmes are evaluated regularly to ascertain their effectiveness and relevance.</p> <p>Decisions to add or delete academic programmes are consistent with the institution's resource base and students' needs.</p> <p>Faculty has direct input into the design, development, implementation and evaluation of academic programmes.</p>
<p><b>Standard 3.2</b></p>	<p><b>The institution clearly specifies and publishes educational programmes, and the objectives and entry requirements for each programme.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>Learning outcomes are defined in the objectives of the educational programmes as stated in the programme specification document.</p> <p>Programme content is effectively communicated to students and all stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Standard 3.3</b></p>	<p><b>The institution values and promotes effective teaching.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution supports and documents continuous professional development, research and innovation to facilitate teaching in a variety of learning environments and situations.</p> <p>The institution has mechanisms and procedures to evaluate and reward effective teaching.</p> <p>The institution encourages and supports faculty members' participation in professional organisations relevant to the disciplines they teach.</p> <p>Teaching approaches reflect consideration for the diversity among students.</p> <p>Opportunities exist for students to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of the faculty.</p> <p>There are opportunities for faculty to engage in research.</p>

<b>Standard 3.4</b>	<b>Programmes and courses are designed with mechanisms and/or procedures for the assessment of student learning outcomes.</b>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<p>The content of educational programmes has a coherent design and is characterised by sufficient breadth, depth, sequential progression, synthesis of learning and continuity.</p> <p>The institution clearly identifies and defines the expected outcomes for each programme it offers.</p> <p>Faculty is involved in identifying and defining student learning outcomes and the strategies to be used to determine them as well as whether the outcomes are being achieved.</p> <p>The assessment of students' learning is at multiple levels and includes multiple direct and indirect measures of students' learning.</p> <p>The evidence of students' learning is documented and available to all appropriate stakeholders including faculty, administration and students.</p> <p>Procedures for assessment and evaluation of student learning are documented.</p>
<b>Standard 3.5</b>	<b>The institution's resources support student learning and effective teaching.</b>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<p>The institution employs adequate academic and non-academic personnel.</p> <p>The institution has and ensures access to teaching and learning resources including, but not limited to, libraries, research laboratories, theatres/workshops/performance spaces, technology centers.</p> <p>The institution designates appropriately qualified and experienced staffing for its teaching and learning processes.</p> <p>The institution has mechanisms and/or procedures for evaluating the effective use of its resources and uses the evidence to inform planning processes.</p> <p>Sufficient financial resources are allocated for institutional improvement activities.</p> <p>The institution maintains a database of all staff credentials.</p>

<p><b>Category 4</b></p> <p><b>Criterion Statement</b></p>	<p><b>Preparedness for Change</b></p> <p><i>The institution's human, material and financial resources are strategically allocated and employed to respond to the social and economic demands of a rapidly changing global society.</i></p>
<p><b>Standard 4.1</b></p>	<p><b>The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and purpose.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution maintains and utilises effective systems for collecting, analysing, storing and distributing institutional information.</p> <p>The institution's planning documents reflect the impact of changing and/or emerging trends on the organisation.</p> <p>The institution's planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the institution's present capacity as evidenced by the outputs of an organisational self-assessment.</p> <p>The institution's planning process includes environmental scanning, benchmarking and adoption of best practices.</p> <p>The institution's environment is conducive to change and innovation.</p> <p>The institution has a history of achieving its planning goals.</p> <p>The institution conducts management reviews of the implementation of its strategic plan.</p>
<p><b>Standard 4.2</b></p>	<p><b>The institution has set mechanisms and/or procedures to strategically and equitably allocate resources for present and future use.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution has a budgetary plan which identifies the resources for acquisition and allocation to meet future needs.</p> <p>The institution has an established system, used by individuals and departments, for acquiring resources.</p> <p>Specific personnel are identified for acquisition and disbursement of resources.</p> <p>Technology, learning support services, pedagogical skills and instructional facilities are updated and upgraded regularly to include what is currently appropriate.</p>



<p><b>Category 5</b></p> <p><b>Criterion Statement</b></p>	<p><b>Commitment to Continuous Improvement</b></p> <p><i>The institution monitors, reviews and improves its Quality Management System through effective planning and evaluation, sustained effort and commitment to quality.</i></p>
<p><b>Standard 5.1</b></p>	<p><b>The institution allocates sufficient time and material, human and financial resources to effectively plan, monitor and evaluate its efforts on a continuous basis.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution allocates appropriate and adequate resources for its planning, monitoring and evaluation efforts.</p> <p>The institution engages in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation that are appropriate to its goals and purposes.</p> <p>The institution utilises appropriate financial management systems.</p> <p>The institution has a history of financial development and investments vested in ensuring educational quality.</p> <p>Records of planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, including status reports and audit reports, are duly maintained.</p>
<p><b>Standard 5.2</b></p>	<p><b>The institution conducts environmental scanning and draws on the findings to enhance its effectiveness.</b></p>
<p><b>Examples of Evidence</b></p>	<p>The institution conducts timely self-studies/SWOT/Needs analyses and environmental scanning reports.</p> <p>The institution liaises with the relevant stakeholders to inform needs analyses and/or market surveys.</p> <p>The institution uses all relevant data collected to inform its Strategic and Training plans.</p> <p>The institution has a history of meeting its stated goals/objectives.</p>

<b>Standard 5.3</b>	<b>The institution carries out short, medium and long term planning consistent with its mission and purpose.</b>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<p>The institution’s planning processes focus on its mission that defines the core values, vision, strategic goals, areas of focus and priorities for the institution.</p> <p>The institution’s planning processes are linked to budgeting and other related processes.</p> <p>Strategic plan review reports reflect flexibility and re-prioritisations as a result of environmental changes.</p> <p>The institution’s planning documents illustrate that there is a relationship among quality in education, student learning and trends in society.</p> <p>The institution’s planning processes indicate involvement by both internal and external constituents of the institution.</p>
<b>Standard 5.4</b>	<b>The institution provides opportunities for its faculty, administrative and other staff to enhance their capabilities.</b>
<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<p>The institution allows for sabbatical leave and staff development programmes to assess and develop its human resources on a continual basis to meet the needs of changing environments.</p> <p>The institution keeps and maintains a database on employees’ skills and abilities.</p> <p>The institution’s strategic plan considers the development of employees’ skills and abilities.</p> <p>The institution develops a training plan based on employee needs and institutional priorities.</p>