



The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

A Guide to Programme Approval or Post Secondary and Tertiary Institutions in Trinidad and Tobago

What is programme approval?

Programme approval is a quality assurance process which ensures that a programme is appropriately designed and structured; adequately resourced; consistent with the institution's mission; and has stated learning outcomes and assessment strategies that are set at an appropriate level for the qualification awarded.

Who conducts programme approval?

Programme approval can be internal or external. At the institutional level, internal programme approval should be undertaken by a committee (e.g. a Programme Approval Committee established for that purpose). Externally, the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) undertake programme approval when it is requested by institutions seeking external validation of the quality of their programmes.

These processes should take place before a programme is run for the first time. Thereafter, each programme must be monitored and reviewed periodically, usually towards that end of a period of approval when it is requested by institutions seeking external validation of the quality of their programmes.

Is programme approval the same as accreditation?

Programme approval is not accreditation. Both institutional and specialised (programme) accreditation evaluate the quality of programmes offered by an institution and ensure that processes for programme approval, monitoring and review are effective, and support the achievement of learning outcomes.

Programme approval evaluates all aspects of an educational and/or training programme except actual outcomes such as student performance; feedback from students and teaching staff; and feedback from employers of graduates of the programme. Every programme must be internally approved by an institution before it is subject to external review and approval or accreditation by ACTT.

What are the criteria for programme approval by ACTT?

When an institution applies to ACTT for approval of a programme, it must provide evidence that:

1. authorisation from the governing body or relevant authority has been granted to offer the programme;
2. the programme is consistent with the institution's stated mission;
3. the institution has a system for internal programme approval, monitoring and review;
4. programme specifications has been developed that provides details of the:
 - the institution
 - the award
 - programme aims
 - learning outcomes
 - teaching and learning strategies
 - assessment methods
 - programme structures and requirements
 - criteria for admission to the programme
 - assessment regulations
 - indicators of quality
 - methods of evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning
 - support for learning
 - date on which the programme specification was written or revised
5. human, financial and material resources are available to sustain the programme
6. a market case has been established for the programme (e.g. industry and/or student demand, national developmental goals).

Are all post-secondary and tertiary education programmes eligible for approval by ACTT?

All new, locally developed programmes that lead to qualifications awarded by local institutions or awarding bodies are eligible for approval by ACTT.