

## OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago's (ACTT) 4th National Essay Competition will promote awareness of the importance of pursuing programmes at a quality assured higher education institution to ensure students earn recognised qualifications. Additionally, the Competition will highlight the benefits of quality assurance to the socio-economic development of Trinidad and Tobago. This initiative is expected to increase the visibility and profile of ACTT as the authority in higher education with respect to issues related to registration, accreditation and recognition.

## AUDIENCE

ACTT's 4th National Essay Competition targets students from:

- Forms 5 and 6 in all public and private secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago
- Undergraduate programmes of all registered and accredited higher education institutions in Trinidad and Tobago

## GOALS

The competition will foster an appreciation for issues related to quality assurance in higher education and highlight the impact on and benefit to students, institutions, society and the economy.

## OBJECTIVES

- Promote awareness of ACTT's role and the benefits of its services
- Influence students in making informed decisions on higher education

To learn more about the essay competition and ACTT, please visit our website at [www.actt.org.tt](http://www.actt.org.tt).

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The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago's

# 4TH NATIONAL Essay COMPETITION 2014

## SPONSORS



## INSTRUCTION MANUAL

OPEN TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (FORMS 5 AND 6)  
AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

## PRIZES

Prizes are as follows:

CATEGORY	Form 5	Form 6	Undergraduate
<b>1<sup>st</sup> PRIZE</b>	iPad Air (32Gb) and TT\$2,000	iPad Air (64Gb) and TT\$2,500	iPad Air (128Gb) and TT\$2,000
<b>1<sup>st</sup> RUNNER UP PRIZE (2<sup>nd</sup> place)</b>	Kindle HDX (16Gb, 8.9") and TT\$1,500	Kindle HDX (32Gb, 8.9") and TT\$2,000 worth of UTC shares	Kindle HDX (64Gb, 8.9") and TT\$2,500 worth of UTC shares
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> RUNNER UP PRIZE (3<sup>rd</sup> place)</b>	TT\$1,500 worth of UTC shares	TT\$2,000 worth of UTC shares	TT\$2,500 worth of UTC shares
<b>SPECIAL PRIZES/ Honourable Mention</b>	Book vouchers valued at TT\$800	Book vouchers valued at TT\$1,000	Book vouchers valued at TT\$1,500
<b>SCHOOL PRIZE</b>	TT\$5,000 value	TT\$5,000 value	

- Winners will receive a Certificate of Merit
- Winners will be published on the Council's website, in the daily newspapers and via other electronic media

## ELIGIBILITY

ACTT's 4th National Essay Competition is open to students at all secondary schools and registered or accredited tertiary level institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. The specific target groups within the schools and institutions are as follows:

### Secondary Schools

- Category 1A – Form 5
- Category 1B – Lower and Upper Forms 6

### Higher Education Institutions

- Category 2 – Undergraduate students

### Exemptions

Members of ACTT's Board of Directors, management and staff and their immediate family members are **INELIGIBLE** to participate.

## COMPETITION DETAILS

### Theme

Quality in Higher Education in the Knowledge Age.

### Timeline

- **Launch:** Tuesday, September 02, 2014
- **Submission Deadline:** Thursday, October 02, 2014
- **Judging Period:** Monday, October 06 to Wednesday, October 22, 2014

### Essay Topics

Participants will select and write an essay on **one** of the following questions:

#### SECONDARY STUDENTS (FORM 5)

1. We are in the knowledge age. Discuss developments in higher education that have been made over the last fifteen years. What are the benefits and challenges of these developments in ensuring quality in higher education?
2. Given improved student access to information through the use of technology, what are the challenges facing a student in maintaining high academic standards?

#### SECONDARY SCHOOL (FORM 6)

1. Discuss the developments related to higher education over the last fifteen years. Evaluate the benefits, challenges and responses that have been made by higher education institutions.
2. The use of technology in the knowledge age has had its complications. Identify challenges facing institutions in maintaining high academic standards and propose possible solutions.

#### UNDERGRADUATES

##### CASE STUDY

Rochette Technical College was established in 1970 as the premier training institute for technical employees. For years, the College has effectively produced graduates who were exceptional in the local industrial sector. Recently, the College has been faced with declining student enrolment and, to mitigate against this, they have decided to re-engineer their offerings.

Advancements in technology altered the landscape of the higher education sector, such that what was relevant in the 1970s no longer met the market demands of the 21st century in which the tertiary education graduate is expected to be able to source knowledge as well as create new knowledge. This resulted in the emergence of several technological colleges that provided programmes that differed significantly from those offered at Rochette.

Rochette faced the challenge of maintaining its relevance in an era where neither staff nor facilities were adequate to meet the needs of the changing sector. Staff held preconceived notions of the nature of technology, the relationships between knowledge and technology and the impact of these inputs on curricula. Over time, Rochette lost its competitive advantage in the higher education sector. Furthermore, employers became dissatisfied with the quality of the skill set of graduates who could not effectively manage the resources needed to efficiently perform their job functions.

The Board of Directors is committed to returning Rochette Technical College to the status it once held as it seeks to ensure that its programmes are responsive to the standards of quality higher education and the demands of the industrial sector.

Use the case of Rochette Technical College to respond to **one** of the questions below:

1. You have been engaged by Rochette Technical College's Board of Directors to re-engineer the institution. Submit a proposal using the standards for quality higher education from The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago as a guide.
2. Critique The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago's standards for quality higher education in assisting institutions such as Rochette Technical College in remaining relevant.

**Entrants are advised that plagiarism will be grounds for immediate disqualification.**

## PREPARATION OF THE ESSAY

### REQUIREMENTS

- Standard (British) English must be used.
- Entries must be typewritten and formatted as specified in Submission Format.
- Students may quote from relevant texts/sources, but must credit with citations.
- Referencing must be aligned to APA 6th edition format.
- Work must be supported with relevant examples and/or illustrations.
- Essays must be original, creative and factual.
- Students must adhere to the requirements of the topic chosen and information must be carefully researched.
- Ensure that the topic is adequately explored (develop arguments and address all points to be covered).

### SUBMISSION FORMAT

All submissions must be typed in the following format:

- Microsoft Word
- Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt
- Line spacing: Double
- Alignment: Left
- Referencing style: APA 6th ed. You may visit <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx> for guidelines.

**Deadline date for submissions: Thursday, October 02, 2014 at 4:00 pm**

Word Limits (exclusive of reference list and footnotes)

- Category 1A – Form 5 students: 1000 to 1200 words
- Category 1B – Form 6 students: 1500 to 1700 words
- Category 2 – Undergraduate students: 2500 to 3500 words

### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING AN ENTRY (APPLICABLE TO ALL CATEGORIES)

- Each essay must be submitted with a completed entry form. Names or other identifiable markings must not be written or printed on submissions, other than on the entry form.
- The electronic file must be saved with a filename in the format as follows: **Level\_Question\_Student Name**. For example: *Category 2\_Question 2\_John Doe*.
- One response to each question in any category will be accepted from an individual
- Submissions should be:
  - i. Emailed to [essaycompetition@actt.org.tt](mailto:essaycompetition@actt.org.tt) OR
  - ii. Submitted on CD or USB Drive which must be secured in an envelope addressed to **ACTT's Essay Competition, 2014** and delivered to any one of ACTT's offices:
    - o Ground Floor, Building B, Pan American Life Plaza, #91-93 St Vincent Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad
    - o #108 Independence Avenue, San Fernando, Trinidad
    - o #79 Milford Road, Canaan, Tobago
- Essays must be submitted to ACTT no later than **4:00 pm on Thursday October 02, 2014**.

**Essays will become the property of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago. Winning entries and/or those of honourable mention may be placed on ACTT's website and winners will be highlighted in ACTT's promotional material.**

### JUDGING

Staff of ACTT will code the entry forms and the essays received. After coding, entry forms will be removed to allow for anonymity of entrants in grading. A panel of distinguished judges from the education sector will conduct the grading of essays. This panel will select the top three (3) essays in each category. In addition, one (1) submission in each category may be awarded a special prize for honourable mention.

### NOTES:

- The judges reserve the right NOT to award prizes in any of the categories if entries do not meet the criteria.
- Judges may interview finalists before a final decision is made.
- Decisions of ACTT's judges are final.
- The rubric can be found on ACTT's website.

Students must demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of quality assurance in tertiary education
- Knowledge and understanding of the ACTT's quality assurance services
- Originality
- Evidence of research
- Creativity
- Academic discussion/discourse/argument