



APPLICATION FORM FOR RECOGNITION OF A FOREIGN AWARDING INSTITUTION

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Name of Institution: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Website: _____

Accredited/ Quality Assured by: _____

Period of current accreditation/recognition: _____

Local Partner Institution(s) where your Qualification(s) will be offered

Head of Awarding Institution:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*PLACE INSTITUTIONAL
STAMP HERE*

Title and designation: _____



ACTT

The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key

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Criteria for Recognition of a Foreign Awarding Institution

CRITERION 1	GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Criterion Statement	<i>The foreign awarding institution has a robust corporate governance and administrative structure that is characterised by transparency and integrity.</i>
Standard 1.1	The foreign awarding institution has been established in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the country of origin.
Standard 1.2	The foreign awarding institution has a governance and administrative structure that has oversight of its programmes offered internationally.
Standard 1.3	Partnerships with institutions in Trinidad and Tobago are governed by legally binding agreements and clearly articulated policies and procedures.
Standard 1.4	The foreign awarding institution has a policy to protect the interest of students in the event that programmes are discontinued in Trinidad and Tobago.
Standard 1.5	The foreign awarding institution has an appropriate equality of opportunity policy which ensures that international students have the same rights and obligations as students in the country of origin.
CRITERION 2	ACADEMIC STANDARDS
Criterion Statement:	<i>The foreign awarding institution takes responsibility for establishing and maintaining the academic standards of all awards granted in its name.</i>
Standard 2.1	The awarding institution and its programmes have been quality assured by a recognised external quality assurance agency in the country of origin.
Standard 2.2	The awarding institution continually reviews the academic standards of the programme and makes revisions as necessary.
Standard 2.3	The foreign awarding institution has documented criteria, standards and procedures for granting approval to international institutions seeking to offer its programmes.
Standard 2.4	The foreign awarding institution assigns a single, named point of accountability for maintaining quality and academic standards of all programmes delivered in Trinidad and Tobago.
Standard 2.5	The foreign awarding institution takes responsibility for establishing and maintaining standards for the teaching and learning process leading to the final award.
Standard 2.6	The foreign awarding institution ensures that programmes offered internationally are delivered by faculty who are proficient in terms of qualifications, teaching, research (if relevant) and other professional experience so as to maintain academic standards.
Standard 2.7	The awarding body conducts fair and transparent assessment of student learning and has procedures to minimise the possibility of fraud in the assessment process.

Criteria for Recognition of a Foreign Awarding Institution

CRITERION 3	EQUIVALENCE/COMPARABILITY AND RELEVANCE
Criterion Statement:	<i>The foreign awarding institution demonstrates that programmes offered in Trinidad and Tobago are comparable to similar programmes in the country of origin and are relevant to Trinidad and Tobago.</i>
Standard 3.1	Programmes offered by partner institutions in Trinidad and Tobago have admission requirements comparable to those at the foreign awarding institution.
Standard 3.2	The programmes have academic requirements that are equivalent to those of comparable programmes at the foreign awarding institution.
Standard 3.3	Programmes comply with the requirements of the qualifications framework developed by The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago.
Standard 3.4	The qualification awarded allows graduates articulation to study opportunities afforded to graduates of comparable programmes in the country of origin.
Standard 3.5	The foreign awarding institution has systems/mechanisms to review its range of programmes to ensure cultural relevance and satisfaction of labour market needs in Trinidad and Tobago.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF A FOREIGN AWARDING INSTITUTION

These Guidelines are organised into six sections:

- 1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE** ➤ identifies the rationale for the guidelines and provides references to the key legislation that governs ACTT and its processes
- 2 DEFINITIONS** ➤ explains any new or not commonly used terms introduced in these guidelines and in the criteria
- 3 GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ACTT'S RECOGNITION PROCESS** ➤ explains the goals and expectations of the recognition process. This section provides clarification of the criteria and the expected outcomes for an institution or awarding body applying the criteria to its operations
- 4 GENERAL INFORMATION** ➤ provides information on:
 - what constitutes an application for recognition
 - how to submit and re-submit an application for recognition
 - the resources and support services available to assist institutions
 - how to communicate with ACTT prior to and during the processing of the application for recognition
- 5 REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION** ➤ identifies the requirements for an application to be accepted by ACTT
➤ provides a suggested format and style for submitting applications to ACTT
- 6 UNDERSTANDING THE CRITERIA** ➤ provides guidance on the documentation requirements

1.0 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist foreign awarding institutions to prepare applications for recognition by ACTT. ACTT acknowledges its responsibility to create an enabling environment for the recognition of transnational programmes, awarding bodies and awarding institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago.

These guidelines are prepared following ACTT's criteria and process for recognition and will assist applicants to comply with requirements under Chapter 39:06 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of recognition is to assure the quality of transnational programmes delivered in Trinidad and Tobago.

2.0 Definitions

<u>Awarding Body</u>	an organisation or consortium which develops content and standards for educational programmes that lead to the award of qualifications in its name. Awarding bodies are not directly involved in the delivery of the programme.
<u>Awarding Institution</u>	a post secondary or tertiary institution that awards degrees and other qualifications in its own name
<u>Criterion</u>	the reference point against which operations are evaluated
<u>Criterion Statement</u>	an overall description of requirements of the criterion
<u>Collaborative Provision Report</u>	a narrative that shows how the evidence provided satisfies the criteria for recognition of a transnational programme
<u>Equivalence</u>	the determination of the comparable academic value of a foreign qualification in Trinidad and Tobago
<u>Evidence</u>	information that supports the existence of quality practices expressed in the institution's or awarding body's narrative or self study report meaningful data that are helpful in forming a conclusion or judgment as to whether the particular standard has been met <i>NOTE: The term meaningful data is included in the definition to emphasise that only relevant information should be submitted</i>
<u>Executive Head</u>	a properly certified person who has executive authority over an institution or provision of educational services or the person who officially directs and controls the institution/ provision at the executive level
<u>Foreign institution</u>	has its origin and main campus/establishment in an overseas territory (outside of Trinidad and Tobago)

<u>Report on Completeness</u>	identifies any deficiencies in an application submitted by an institution for any of ACTT's core services
<u>Narrative</u>	an evaluative account that shows how the evidence provided satisfies the requirements of the respective standard
<u>Partner Institution</u>	a post-secondary or tertiary institution that collaborates with an awarding body/institution in offering programmes that lead to either an award in the name of the awarding body/institution or joint awards in the names of both the partner and the awarding body/institution
<u>Recognition</u>	the approval by an authorised agency of the quality and acceptability of a legitimate educational institution and the qualifications it awards
<u>Registration</u>	the process whereby an institution/provider has its quality management system (QMS) evaluated by ACTT to determine whether its QMS meets the minimum requirements of established criteria and standards
<u>Standard</u>	the specific requirements that must be met by the institution/provider. The standards are used to determine whether the overall requirements of a particular criterion have been met
<u>Supporting documents</u>	include copies of policies, procedures, processes and records that show evidence of the information given in the narrative
<u>Transnational programme</u>	a higher education programme that is awarded by a foreign awarding body or institution and is delivered in collaboration with a registered institution in Trinidad and Tobago

3.0 Goals and Expectations of ACTT's Recognition Process

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) is the authority established by an Act of Parliament, Chapter 39:06, for the recognition of the quality and acceptability of legitimate post secondary and tertiary institutions and awarding bodies, whether overseas, transnational or local, and the qualifications they award. Any transnational institution or awarding body desirous of operating in Trinidad and Tobago must first be legally established and recognised and/or accredited in the country of origin in accordance with the quality assurance system of the respective country.

Foreign institutions or awarding bodies seeking to offer programmes in Trinidad and Tobago may do so through partnership arrangements with local institutions that are registered by The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago. ACTT expects that foreign awarding bodies and institutions, along with their local partner institutions, would demonstrate:

1. Integrity

Reliable and tested systems are implemented to avoid the various forms of academic fraud. All parties involved in assessment, record keeping and issuing the award must be aware and committed to safeguarding against any form of fraud or discrepancy.

2. Protection of the rights of enrolled students

Students in Trinidad and Tobago should have the same rights of access to information regarding changes in fees, changes in policy, examination results and other information available to students at the awarding institution. In the case of a termination of the agreement between the foreign and the local institutions, students should be protected by an 'exit policy' and 'teach-out' arrangement which reasonably allow students to complete the programme leading to the award of the qualification.

3. Equivalence

Transnational programmes offered in Trinidad and Tobago should be equivalent and comparable to programmes that carry the same or similar titles in the country of the awarding body or institution. Equivalence is intended to ensure that the holders of transnational awards have acquired comparable skills and competencies as those expected in the country of the awarding body or institution. Local graduates should also be assured of similar opportunities for further study and employment as graduates of the equivalent programme(s).

4. Relevance

The local context shall be considered in the design and delivery of the programme leading to the qualification to ensure that graduates are suitably able to apply their newly acquired knowledge and competencies within Trinidad and Tobago. Labour market needs and employer feedback should be considered to ensure that the programme is relevant to the economic, cultural, societal and technological context in Trinidad and Tobago.

4.0 General Information

4.1 What is a letter of intent?

Before an institution applies for recognition, a Letter of Intent must be submitted to the Executive Director of ACTT. The Letter of Intent:

1. states that the institution intends to apply for recognition of a foreign awarding institution
2. identifies the name of the foreign awarding institution
3. identifies all local institutions that will be involved in the delivery of foreign programmes
4. identifies all foreign programmes to be offered in Trinidad and Tobago
5. must be signed by the executive head

4.2 What is an Application for Recognition of a Foreign Awarding Institution?

An Application for Recognition of a Foreign Awarding Institution consists of:

1. Application form completed by the foreign awarding institution
2. Self Study Report which explains how the operations of the foreign awarding institution meet ACTT's criteria
3. Supporting documentation
4. Application Processing Fee (**non-refundable and non-transferrable**)

NOTE: *An Application for Recognition of a Foreign Awarding Institution is only deemed to be complete when all elements under Section 4.2 have been met. Applications that fail to meet the requirements of this section will not be processed. Awarding institutions may be requested to resubmit an application that does not meet these requirements.*

NOTE: *The application form must be signed by the executive head of the foreign awarding institution.*

4.3 How to submit an application

Applications for recognition should be submitted:

1. to: Executive Director
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
Level 3 Building B, Pan American Life Plaza
#91-93 St Vincent Street
Port of Spain, Trinidad
West Indies
2. in print (hard copy/paper) via mail or hand-delivery
3. in **duplicate**
4. in soft copy on a CD or via e-mail to transnational.programmes@actt.org.tt

4.4 What resources and support does ACTT provide to help prepare for recognition?

The following resources are available to assist local institutions, foreign awarding bodies and institutions prepare their applications:

1. Criteria for Recognition
 - The criteria for recognition are a key resource for foreign awarding institutions.
 - Applicants are advised to review these documents thoroughly before preparing a submission.
2. ACTT's Staff – Qualifications and Recognition Department
 - Applicants are encouraged to utilise the electronic medium to contact the Council at transnational.programmes@actt.org.tt to access information on its processes and services.

4.5 How long does an application take to be processed?

The cycle time for processing an application is dependent on the quality, appropriateness and adequacy of the submission and the evidence to support the claim for recognition. However, the projected timeline for processing is as follows:

Preparation of the Application

- a) Compilation of supporting documentation and relevant evidence (2 – 3 weeks)
- b) Completion of the Self Study Report (3 – 4 weeks)
- c) Completion of the Application form (1 day)

Gap Analysis

- d) Completion of the Report on Completeness by ACTT staff (1 week)

Evaluation

- e) If sufficient evidence has been presented, a team of external evaluators will be appointed to review the application and conduct a site visit (3 weeks)

Decision

- f) Following the site visit, the External Evaluators' Report is reviewed by ACTT's Board of Directors and a decision on the status to be granted is taken (3 – 4 weeks)

5.0 Requirements for Submission of the Self Study for Recognition

5.1 Content requirements

1. The Self Study must:
 - a. be aligned with ACTT's criteria and standards for recognition
 - b. include a narrative which gives an evaluative account of the quality practices in relation to each standard. The narrative should also explain how the evidence submitted demonstrates that a practice exists to adequately address the standards.
 - c. address issues directly related to the criteria but not go beyond the scope of standards
 - d. be correctly cross-referenced where evidence is submitted for more than one (1) standard
2. Where specific evidence or documents are submitted in support of more than one standard, the narrative must clearly explain how the evidence is relevant to each.

NOTE: *Evidence is any data that clearly prove that the requirements of the particular standard for recognition have been met. Evidence may be documents such as a policy, plan, procedure, an agreement with a particular organisation; records such as minutes, completed feedback forms; a database.*

5.2 Evidence requirements

1. Include only information and evidence that deal directly with the recognition issues related to the specific criterion and standard. Evidence must be relevant and facilitate an effective evaluation of the fulfilment of the standards.
2. Relevant information may be summarised or copies of the relevant pages of a document may be extracted as evidence.
3. Electronic evidence may be cited through the use of hyperlinks to the institution's website or a secure portal. Copies of these documents should also be provided as appendices to the narrative.

5.3 Presentation and style requirements

1. Avoid exaggeration of quality practices.
2. Less is more - reduce the content of the narrative to the essentials.
3. Refrain from the use of jargon and acronyms except when previously defined.
4. Do not make claims in the narrative that cannot be supported by the evidence.

5.4 Format requirements

1. Ensure consistency in document layout.
2. Use numbers (1, 2, and 3) to identify each statement; bullets or roman numerals may be used for sub-statements.
3. Organise submission according to the criteria and standards for recognition.
4. The submission should be securely fastened by using folders, ring binders or spiral binding.
5. The Self Study should comprise the following elements:

I. Table of Contents

II. Introduction and Background of Institution

- a. Provide a brief history of the institution
- b. Provide information on provisions in Trinidad and Tobago and/or other countries

III. Institutional Commitment to the external quality evaluation process

- a. Make a statement on the institution's commitment to the external quality evaluation process.
- b. Express commitment to being professional and collegial throughout the process.
- c. Express commitment to address problems or gaps identified and to operate within the laws of Trinidad and Tobago.

IV. Fulfilment of criteria and standards

1. In this part of the submission you are writing a narrative that will explain how the institution meets each standard within the scope of the criterion. Provide a description that will help the evaluators to understand the foreign awarding institution's practice and to determine compliance with the standards.
2. A good narrative will outline the main parts of relevant policies and procedure and describe the link between the foreign awarding institution's operations and policies. This will enable the evaluators to determine that the standard has been met.
3. Additionally, the narrative should provide an evaluative account of the quality practices in relation to each standard.

V. Compilation of Evidence/Appendices

Documents comprising the appendices should be individually numbered and correspond with the citations in the narrative.

NOTE: *If the requirements in this section have not been met, the application may not be processed by the Council and the applicant may be required to re-submit the application in its entirety.*

5.5 Submitting additional evidence

ACTT prepares a Report on Completeness on applications for recognition. At this point, applicants may be asked to submit additional evidence identified in this Report. Applicants are urged to carefully consider the Report on Completeness before submitting additional evidence. Response to the Report on Completeness should be submitted in duplicate, as well as soft copy on a CD or via e-mail to transnational.programmes@actt.org.tt

6.0 Understanding the Criteria

6.1 Documentation Requirements for Applications for Initial Recognition of a Foreign Awarding Institution

The following items **must be submitted** for an awarding institution to successfully demonstrate that it meets the criteria for recognition. While these are required, the application **must** include additional evidence to support the narrative.

1. exit policy that protects students' interests in the case of dissolution of the collaborative arrangement (required for standard 1.4)
2. documentation of approval/accreditation status of foreign awarding institution and programmes from the relevant quality assurance agency (required for standard 2.1)
3. list of programmes to be offered in Trinidad and Tobago and evidence that they have been quality assured by the recognised quality assurance agency (required for standards 2.1 and 3.3)
4. centre approval procedures and criteria (required for standard 2.3)
5. sample agreement between the foreign awarding body and partner institution (required for standard 2.4)
6. procedure for monitoring approved centres (required for standard 2.5)
7. programme specifications for each programme to be delivered in Trinidad and Tobago (required for standard 2.6)
8. approval procedures and standards for faculty teaching programmes offered internationally (required for standard 2.7)
9. admission policies for each programme to be offered in Trinidad and Tobago (required for standard 3.1)
10. reports of consultations with stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago (required for criterion 3)
11. appeals procedure (required for standard 3.6)
12. equal opportunity policy (required in standard 3.6)

Additionally, the awarding institution must submit copies of the most recent quality assurance reports on centre approval visits to partner institutions in Trinidad and Tobago.

NOTE: *If these policies, documents or reports are not submitted, the awarding institution will not be able to demonstrate fulfilment of the criteria.*