



Standards for Institution Accreditation

Introduction

Background

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) was established under the authority of the Barbados Accreditation Council Act, 2004. Its functions include to:

- Register local, regional and foreign-based institutions offering post-secondary and tertiary education and training in Barbados;
- Maintain a register of all institutions that are registered;
- Accredite and re-accredit institutions and programmes of study;
- Accredite and verify Certificates of Recognition of Caribbean Community Skills granted to Community Nationals by their own country; grant Certificates of Recognition of Caribbean Community Skills in accordance with the provisions of the Caribbean Community (Movement of Skilled Nationals) Act, 2004; and
- Advise on the recognition of foreign-based institutions and their awards.

Coverage

In this document **institution** will be taken to mean post-secondary or tertiary education and/or training institutions. **Education** will be taken to mean education and/or training. **Programme(s)** will be taken to mean course(s) and/or programme(s) of study. **Teaching** will be taken to include training. **Faculty** will be taken to include teachers, trainers, instructors, lecturers, tutors, and/or demonstrators.

Acknowledgements

The Barbados Accreditation Council wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals/organisations in the development of its accreditation standards.

- Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT), Trinidad and Tobago;
- Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI), Local Chapter;
- Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA), UK;
- Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), Australia;
- British Accreditation Council (BAC), UK;
- Distance Education Training Council (DETC), USA
- European Coaching Institute (ECI);
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), USA;
- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India;
- National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), Jamaica;
- New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA), New Zealand;
- North West Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), USA;
- Open and Distance Learning Quality Council (ODL QC), UK;
- Quality Council of India (QCI), India;
- Quality Assurance Authority (QAA), UK;
- Mr. John Randall;
- Dr. Leonard Shorey;
- Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA), Scotland;
- University Council of Jamaica (UCJ), Jamaica; and
- University of the West Indies (UWI), Open Campus – External Relations and Intra/Inter-Institutional Collaboration, formerly the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU)

Overview

The BAC recognises that some aspects of an institution are always stronger than others. Meeting the accreditation standards guarantees the overall quality of the institution. By design, these standards allow for perceptive and imaginative experimentation aimed at increasing the effectiveness of institutions.

The institution accreditation standards, including those that offer electronically delivered programmes, have been drafted on international best practices and apply the following principles and considerations.

- The institution accreditation standards are intended to provide an enabling framework that will lead to the generation and dissemination of examples of good practice.
- The institution accreditation standards descriptor statements put each quality area into context.
- The BAC will work with other agencies to develop a coherent and integrated quality assurance and review framework.

The BAC takes a partnership approach to the quality assurance of institutions through ongoing monitoring, institutional self-evaluation and evaluations conducted by the BAC. The institution's adherence to these standards will be periodically reviewed through peer evaluations preceded by the institution's self-evaluation directed towards demonstrating both adherence to the standards and programmatic improvement.

Purpose

This document sets out the accreditation standards that institutions must meet to establish and maintain accredited status with the BAC. The institution must manifest its integrity and commitment towards quality enhancement through continued voluntary adherence to these standards.

Each of the accreditation standards encompasses a principal area of activity.

In applying the Standards, the BAC assesses and makes a determination about the current effectiveness of the institution. The institution which meets the standards has demonstrated:

- Clearly defined purposes appropriate to the institution and where applicable, national objectives;
- Assembled and organised resources;
- Achievement of institution's mission and objectives; and
- Ability to continually achieve the stated purpose of the institution.

Standards for Institution Standards

There are several **standards** that must be met by institutions seeking accreditation. The standards 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 designed to ensure that critical aspects of acceptable quality are included in the statements.

The standards are organized into five (5) areas in which quality is evaluated and recognised. The standards are shown below:

Standard 1	Mission and Objectives
Standard 2	Governance and Administration
Standard 3	Teaching and Learning
Standard 4	Readiness for Change
Standard 5	Quality Enhancement

In each of the five standards there are *critierion statements* and *standards*. An institution must be judged to have met all the criteria to merit accreditation.

Criterion Statements are distinct and discrete statements which identify or define in verifiable terms, the attributes of institutions or programmes accredited by the BAC.

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

Examples of Evidence will include examples of tangible evidence that an institution can demonstrate that the standards have been achieved. Given the variation among institutions, some examples of evidence may not apply to all institutions. Examples of evidence may be tailored to specific institutional configurations.

The standards and examples of evidence promulgated by the BAC 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.

Standard 1	Mission and Objectives
Criterion Statement	<i>The institution's mission and objectives are appropriate to post-secondary or tertiary education and consistent with the policies and practices that guide its operations</i>
Standard 1.1	The institution has a clear, well-articulated mission that represents the institution's objectives and goals.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution's mission is documented and approved by its board or governing body. 2. The mission is effectively communicated to the relevant stakeholders including prospective and enrolled students. 3. The institution has clearly defined institutional goals. 4. The institution's mission is consistent with its purpose and goals.
Standard 1.2	The institution has a defined mission and objective that are appropriate to post-secondary or tertiary education and training.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The levels of certification offered are consistent with the requirements of post-secondary or tertiary education and training. 2. The goals of the institution are congruent with post-secondary or tertiary education and training.
Standard 1.3	The mission statement reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The mission statement clearly identifies the stakeholders the institution serves. 2. There is adequate documentary evidence to indicate the input of the stakeholders in determining their needs. 3. The institution's mission statement demonstrates its commitment to the needs of all its stakeholders.
Standard 1.4	The mission is communicated to, and supported by, all stakeholders within the institution.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board, faculty, administration and students understand and support the institution's mission. 2. The mission statement is prominently displayed and included in all relevant official documents. 3. The institution's decision making processes are informed by its mission and objectives. 4. The institution has clearly defined the roles of the internal stakeholders in achieving its mission and objectives. 5. The institution has a clearly stated and published admission's policy which is compatible with its mission and objectives

<p>Standard 2</p> <p>Criterion Statement</p>	<p>Governance and Administration</p> <p><i>The institution's system of governance ensures ethical decision-making and efficient provision of human, physical and financial resources to effectively accomplish its educational and other purposes.</i></p>
<p>Standard 2.1</p>	<p>The institution's governance and administrative structures and practices promote effective and ethical leadership that is congruent with the mission and objective of the institution.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution has a governing board/system of governance that involves participation from its stakeholders and facilitates the successful accomplishment of its mission, goals and objective. 2. 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 its stakeholders. 3. The institution has documented policies and regulations that define authority and relationships among its stakeholders. 4. The institution has a Director/Chief Executive Officer/Principal whose full-time or major responsibility is to manage the operations of the institution in keeping with the board/governing body's directives. 5. The system of governance makes provision for consideration of the views and judgements of its stakeholders. 6. The institution has mechanisms to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its governing body and to improve its operations. 7. The institution has adequately qualified, trained and experienced staff to manage its resources.
<p>Standard 2.2</p>	<p>The institution's resource base supports the institution's educational programmes and its plans for sustaining and improving quality.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The faculty plays a major role in identifying the resources required for programmes offered by the institution. 2. There are adequate and appropriate resources for the educational programmes being offered. 3. The institution has established mechanisms, processes and procedures to address procurement, storage and allocation of resources on a timely basis. 4. The institution has established mechanisms to provide for the adequate maintenance and updating of teaching and learning resources

Standard 2.3	The institution has sound financial policies and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of the programme offered at the institution.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution is financially viable to ensure completion of programmes undertaken and to respond to financial emergencies or unforeseen circumstances. 2. The institution has mechanisms and procedures to control its financial resources and to allocate them appropriately to achieve its educational objectives. 3. The institution plans, administers and monitors its budgets and investment portfolio. 4. The institution uses adequate auditing and budgetary controls and procedures in keeping with statutory requirements. 5. The institution's policies stipulate the terms and conditions for accepting gifts and/or donations from public, private and international organizations. 6. The institution has mechanisms to ensure financial integrity through regular audits and reports. 7. The institution has clearly stated, equitable and publicized policy related to the refund of tuition and other fees in the event that a learner does not enter and/or complete a programme. 8. The institution has clearly stated, equitable and publicized policy related to the refund of tuition and other fees in the event that the institution discontinues the programme before its completion due date.
Standard 2.4	The institution's system of governance provides for learners' input in decision-making in matters directly and indirectly affecting them.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a functioning student governing body/guild/association. 2. The roles and responsibilities of the student governing body/guild/association are clearly defined in the institution's constitution or other supporting documentation. 3. There is a constitution outlining the student governing body/guild/association's structure and operations. 4. The Minutes/Agendas/decisions of meetings are recorded and can be retrieved.

Standard 3	Teaching and Learning
Criterion Statement	<i>The institution provides evidence of student learning outcomes and faculty effectiveness in achieving its educational objectives and demonstrates the capability to continue to do so.</i>
Standard 3.1	The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to undertake planning and evaluation of educational programme objectives.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policies and procedures exist for planning, evaluation and revision of programme objectives. 2. The institution's strategic plan considers planning and evaluation. 3. Programmes are evaluated regularly to ascertain their effectiveness and relevance. 4. Decisions to add or delete programmes are consistent with the institution's resource base and students' needs. 5. Committees are established to provide direct input into the design, development, implementation and evaluation of programmes and qualifications.
Standard 3.2	The institution clearly specifies and publishes educational programmes, and the objectives for each programme.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning outcomes are defined in the objectives of the educational programmes as stated in the programme specification document. 2. Programme information is effectively communicated to learners and other stakeholders.
Standard 3.3	The institution values and promotes effective teaching.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution supports and documents continuous professional development, research and innovation to facilitate teaching in a variety of learning environments and situations. 2. The institution has mechanisms and procedures to evaluate and reward effective teaching. 3. The institution encourages and supports faculty members' participation in professional organizations relevant to the disciplines they teach. 4. Teaching approaches reflect consideration for diversity among learners. 5. Opportunities exist for learners to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of the faculty. 6. There are opportunities for faculty to engage in research.

Standard 3.4	Programmes and courses are designed with mechanisms and/or procedures for the assessment of student learning outcomes.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The content of educational programmes has a coherent design and is characterized by sufficient breadth, depth, sequential progression, synthesis of learning and continuity. 2. The institution clearly identifies and defines the expected outcomes for each programme it offers. 3. Faculty is involved in identifying and defining student learning outcomes. 4. Faculty is involved in identifying and defining the strategies to be used to determine student learning outcomes. 5. Faculty is involved in determining whether the learning outcomes are achieved. 6. The assessment of students' learning is at multiple levels and includes multiple direct and indirect measures of students' learning. 7. The evidence of students' learning is documented and available to all appropriate stakeholders including faculty, administration and students. 8. Procedures for assessment and evaluation of student learning are documented. 9. Curriculum design must take into consideration the actual learning needs of students admitted to the institution.
Standard 3.5	The institution's resources support student learning and effective teaching.
Examples of Evidence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution employs adequate teaching and non-teaching personnel. 2. The institution has and ensures access to teaching and learning resources including, but not limited to, libraries, research laboratories, theatres/workshops/performance spaces, technology centres. 3. The institution designates appropriately qualified and experienced staffing for its teaching and learning processes. 4. The institution has mechanisms and/or procedures for evaluating the effective use of its resources and uses the evidence to inform planning processes. 5. Sufficient financial resources are allocated for institutional improvement activities. 6. The institution maintains a database of all staff credentials. 7. The institution maintains a database of student records.

<p>Standard 4</p> <p>Criterion Statement</p>	<p>Readiness for Change</p> <p><i>The institution's human, physical and financial resources are strategically allocated and employed to respond to the social and economic needs of a rapidly changing global society.</i></p>
<p>Standard 4.1</p>	<p>The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to evaluate the achievement of its mission and objectives.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution maintains and utilises effective systems for collecting, analyzing, storing and distributing institutional information. 2. The planning documents reflect the impact of changing and/or emerging trends on the institution. 3. The planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the institution's present capacity as evidenced by the outputs of a self-evaluation. 4. The planning process includes environmental scanning, benchmarking and adaptation of best practices. 5. The institution's environment is conducive to change and innovation. 6. The institution has a history of achieving its goals and objectives. 7. The institution conducts management reviews of the implementation of its strategic plan.
<p>Standard 4.2</p>	<p>The institution has set mechanisms and/or procedures to strategically and equitably allocate resources for present and future use.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution has a budgetary plan which identifies the resources for acquisition and allocation to meet future needs. 2. The institution has an established system, used by individuals and departments, for acquiring resources. 3. Specific personnel are identified for the acquisition and disbursement of resources. 4. The institution effectively implements and uses the technology. 5. Technology, learning support services, pedagogical skills and instructional facilities are updated and upgraded regularly to include what is currently appropriate.

<p>Standard 5</p> <p>Criterion Statement</p>	<p>Quality Enhancement</p> <p><i>The institution monitors, reviews and improves its Quality Management Systems through effective planning and evaluation, sustained effort and commitment to quality.</i></p>
<p>Standard 5.1</p>	<p>The institution allocates sufficient time and physical, human and financial resources to effectively plan, monitor and evaluate its efforts on a continuous basis.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution allocates appropriate and adequate resources for its planning, monitoring and evaluation efforts. 2. The institution engages in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation that are appropriate to its goals and objectives. 3. The institution utilises appropriate resource management systems. 4. The institution has a history of resource development and investments 5. The institution has a history of ensuring educational quality. 6. Records of planning, monitoring and evaluation processes, including status reports and audit reports, are duly maintained.
<p>Standard 5.2</p>	<p>The institution conducts environmental scanning and draws on the findings to enhance its effectiveness.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The institution conducts timely self-studies/SWOT/needs analysis and environmental scanning reports. 2. The institution liaises with the relevant stakeholders to inform needs analyses and/or market surveys. 3. The institution uses all relevant data collected to inform its Strategic and Training Plans.