Standards for Programme Accreditation

The Barbados Accreditation Council

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) was established in November 2004 by the Barbados Accreditation Council Act, 2004. It is a statutory body under the portfolio of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

Vision Statement

The Barbados Accreditation Council will be a World-class, dynamic quality assurance agency for education and training.

Mission Tenets

The Barbados Accreditation Council will pursue its vision by:

- Providing advisory, administrative, advocacy and quality-assuring services that meet globally recognized standards for quality assurance and the expectations of our clients.

- Cultivating an environment of highly dedicated and competent staff members who work as a team to create value for our clients and all the communities we serve.

- Undertaking functions and such related activities that would ensure the efficient and effective discharge of our legal, regulatory and corporate responsibilities.

- Building strong linkages with our sectoral partners to develop a culture of high quality post-secondary/tertiary education and training in Barbados and beyond.

- Engaging in sound financial management, business and social responsibility practices to bring sustainable prosperity and benefits to government, directors, staff, social partners and the communities in which we serve.

Core Values

Leadership

Having the courage to act on our convictions; aligning our actions with a shared vision; fostering collaboration, building trust and facilitating meaningful relationships among stakeholders; seizing initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve; taking personal responsibility for our actions and accounting for the results of our performance; providing examples for our colleagues to emulate.

Integrity

Keeping our word; standing up for what is right; honouring our commitment to our stakeholders; treating all individuals with courtesy and dignity; maintaining confidentiality; embracing and impressing on our stakeholders the principles of fairness, honesty, objectivity and transparency in our business practices.

Quality

Demonstrating a commitment to high standards of performance that will sustain and advance service excellence, efficiency, reliability, competence and continuous improvement in our day-to-day operations; being forward thinking and proactive in responding to trends and changes that will affect our internal and/or external environment.

Professionalism

Striving to satisfy individual needs while maintaining the highest standards of performance and ethical behaviour; keeping up-to-date with the latest ideas, trends and developments in one's profession; demonstrating a willingness and ability to listen to and appreciate the worth of each individual's perspective and personality; practising self-control and adherence to approved policies and procedures, acceptable behaviour and orderliness.

Teamwork

Valuing the contribution of each individual with whom we work; building highly effective relationships with other people to achieve a common purpose or goal; participating in activities to ensure the success of a project, work unit, functional area/department and ultimately the entire organization.

Quality Statements

Quality for the BAC is the provision of effective and efficient services that are:
- ❖ geared towards the enhancement of post-secondary/tertiary education and training;
- ❖ fit for purpose, add value and exceed stakeholders' expectations;
- ❖ benchmarked against regional and international standards.

Quality for the BAC is guided by:
- ❖ a developmental approach;
- ❖ accountability to stakeholders;
- ❖ integrity of practise;
- ❖ excellence in service; and
- ❖ a commitment to national and regional development.

Quality for the BAC is demonstrated by:
- ❖ demand for non-mandatory services by its clients;
- ❖ respect of peers through mutual recognition;
- ❖ positive feedback from internal and external stakeholders;
- ❖ efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

The BAC perceives quality in educational providers as:
- ❖ effective governance
- ❖ clearly stated and appropriate mission
- ❖ efficient and effective administration
- ❖ qualified, competent and engaged faculty and staff
- ❖ timely and customer-friendly services
- ❖ relevant, current, well-documented and appropriately assessed programmes
- ❖ established, documented, functional and well-managed quality assurance system
- ❖ responsiveness to change
- ❖ system for formative and summative evaluation and reform
- ❖ a culture which embraces integrity and ethical conduct
- ❖ prudent financial management
- ❖ effective and diversified learning and teaching experiences
- ❖ adequate and appropriate student services and support
- ❖ committed and motivated students

Standards for Programme Accreditation

The standards provide a guide for the evaluators as they review the programme of study as part of the accreditation process. There are several standards that must be met by institutions seeking specialised programme accreditation. The criteria are intentionally broad enough to allow for diversity and innovation since there is considerable variation among institutions and the programmes and awards they offer based on their distinctive characters, philosophies and purposes. They are also precise enough to ensure that critical aspects of acceptable quality are encompassed in the statements.

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

> Standard 1   Mission and Objectives
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> Standard 2   Governance and Administration
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> Standard 3   Teaching and Learning
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> Standard 4   Curriculum Effectiveness
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> Standard 5   Quality Enhancement

In each of the five standards there are ***criterion statements*** and ***standards***. A programme must be judged to have met all the standards to merit accreditation.

Criterion Statements	are distinct and discrete statements which identify or define in verifiable terms, the attributes of programmes accredited by the BAC.
Standards	are statements that identify the conditions that are necessary for an objective evaluation of the extent to which a programme meets each criterion. The 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 a programme can demonstrate that the standards have been achieved. Given the variation among programmes offered, some examples of evidence may not apply to all programmes.

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.

In a number of fields (for example healthcare, engineering, law) graduation from an accredited specialised programme is a requirement for a license to practise in the field. The BAC will seek to establish collaborative relationships with professional bodies to ensure that the standards and requirements for specialised programme accreditation are consistent with the current requirements for professional practise. In this context, specialised accreditation is recognised as providing a basic assurance of the scope, and quality of professional or occupational preparation. Institutions may also seek accreditation of non-professional programmes as an assurance of the quality of the qualifications awarded.

Standard 1	Mission and Objectives
Criterion Statement	*The programme maintains a clear and publicly stated philosophy and specific educational objectives that are consistent with the institution's mission and objectives and are appropriate to post-secondary or tertiary education.*
Standard 1.1	**The programme is congruent with the institution's mission, objectives and educational goals.**
Examples of Evidence	1. The programme's objectives and learning outcomes are aligned with the institution's mission and objectives. 2. The programme's objectives and learning outcomes are consistent with post-secondary/tertiary educational goals. 3. The needs of the stakeholders are reflected in the learning outcomes of the programmes. 4. There is evidence of stakeholder input in curriculum development. 5. There is consistency between the institution's mission and programme objectives e.g. target population, guiding principles, priorities, etc.
Standard 1.2	**The programme's objectives, content and assessment are documented and communicated to the relevant stakeholders.**
Examples of Evidence	1. The programme's objectives, learning outcomes and content are documented in the student handbook, faculty handbook, catalogues, manuals and other publications. 2. Programme information is available in hard and electronic formats to afford easy access by interested stakeholders. 3. Clearly defined policies and procedures for programme implementation and assessment are available. 4. The philosophy, goals and objectives of the programme are clearly communicated, available and consistent in all documents and publications. 5. Student handbook is clear and embodies the rules and regulations governing the programmes.

Standard 2	Governance and Administration
Criterion Statement	*The programme is supported by appropriate structures for effective policy-making and implementation and the necessary human, physical and financial resources to achieve its objectives and educational outcomes.*
Standard 2.1	**The programme's governance and administrative structures and practices are congruent with the mission and objectives of the institution.**
Examples of Evidence	1. There are clearly defined policies, processes and procedures for programme design, development, implementation and evaluation. 2. There is evidence to show that the programme was approved by the institution's appropriate authority. 3. There is a programme committee to ensure that the programme is delivered in accordance with the objectives and mission of the institution. 4. The members of the programme committee are appropriately qualified to carry out their designated responsibilities. 5. The Minutes/Agendas/decisions of meetings are recorded and can be retrieved. 6. The effectiveness of the programme's governance and administrative practices are periodically reviewed and improved.
Standard 2.2	**The institution's resource base adequately supports its educational programme offerings.**
Examples of Evidence	1. The strategic plan makes provisions for programme development. 2. The institution's resources are adequate for the achievement of the goals of the programme. 3. Adequate and appropriately qualified faculty members are allocated to deliver the programme. 4. Adequate and appropriately qualified faculty members are available to deliver the programme.
Standard 2.3	**The institution has the financial capacity to sustain its planned educational programme.**
Examples of Evidence	1. Financial documents e.g. statements of income and expenditure and audited accounts are available, where applicable. 2. Financial projections for the programme are available. 3. Appropriate financial management systems for each programme are available.

Standard 3	Teaching and Learning
Criterion Statement	*The programme is successful in achieving student learning outcomes and faculty effectiveness that demonstrate that it is achieving its educational purposes and can continue to do so.*
Standard 3.1	**The institution has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to undertake the planning and evaluation of educational programme objectives.**
Examples of Evidence	1. A programme/curriculum/advisory committee operates as part of the institution's structure. 2. Policies for programme planning, design, development, implementation and evaluation exist. 3. The Minutes/Agendas/decisions of meetings are recorded and can be retrieved. 4. The programme is informed by and provides feedback to the strategic plan for the institution.
Standard 3.2	**The institution clearly specifies and publishes the educational objectives and requirements for the programme.**
Examples of Evidence	1. Programme objectives and requirements are stated in relevant documents e.g. catalogues and handbooks. 2. Programme documents are easily available to all stakeholders. 3. Programme documents are user friendly and revised periodically.
Standard 3.3	**Effective teaching is valued and promoted in the programme.**
Examples of Evidence	1. Faculty members are appropriately qualified. 2. Faculty are encouraged to become members of professional organisations relevant to the disciplines they teach. 3. Faculty members participate in current and relevant professional development activities. 4. Instruments exist for periodically evaluating teaching staff by stakeholders. 5. Faculty members are encouraged to engage in relevant research. 6. Policy and procedures exist for recruiting and inducting new staff. 7. Mechanisms exist for identifying and rewarding effective teaching.

Standard 3.4	The programme and its relevant courses are carefully designed with mechanisms and procedures for assessment and evaluation of student learning.
Examples of Evidence	1. An assessment/evaluation committee exists as part of the programme's structure.
	2. The course outline incorporates appropriate procedures for the assessment of learners at each level of the programme.
	3. Mechanisms exist to supply the relevant stakeholders with assessment data.
	4. Mechanisms exist for the data from assessment activities to inform teaching and learning.
	5. A variety of assessment methods and tracking systems are utilised to cater for the needs of the diverse student population.
Standard 3.5	The programme's resources support student learning and effective teaching
Examples of Evidence	1. Physical structures – classrooms, labs, studios etc. – are conducive to the teaching/learning process.
	2. Appropriate physical resources are available and equitably allocated e.g. computers, library, laboratory, equipment, tools.
	3. An inventory of learning resources is maintained for the programme.
	4. Human resources are adequate and timetabled to provide an effective teaching and learning process.

Standard 4	Curriculum Effectiveness
Criterion Statement	*The programme is effectively designed to ensure relevance and to maintain certification requirements that conform to accepted standards in that profession or field of study.*
Standard 4.1	**The learning outcomes and content are clearly stated and are appropriate to the programme level.**
Examples of Evidence	1. The programme objectives and content fit the level for which the programme is intended. 2. The programme content and learning outcomes are clearly articulated and consistent in all official documents.
Standard 4.2	**The programme incorporates assessment strategies that are appropriate to the requisite learning outcomes.**
Examples of Evidence	1. Appropriate assessment methods are employed to assess student learning. 2. Assessment method is appropriate to the level and nature of the programme being offered. 3. Assessment activities reflect adequate sampling of content covered and are in alignment with the learning outcomes. 4. Data on student assessment, including rates of graduation, transfer, attrition and placement, are easily available to the relevant stakeholders.
Standard 4.3	**The effectiveness of the curricula is evaluated periodically to ensure its appropriateness to the external environment.**
Examples of Evidence	1. A mechanism exists for the curriculum committee to periodically review the programme. 2. Faculty members have input in defining expected learning outcomes and determining if they were achieved. 3. General education is integrated into the programmes to develop attitudes and skills needed for lifelong learning in a diverse society. 4. The programme is reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance to current and future needs.
Standard 4.4	**Programme content and outcomes demonstrate that certification and other applicable standards are achieved.**
Examples of Evidence	1. A qualifications committee exists as part of the institution's structure. 2. The content and outcomes are congruent with the level of certification being awarded.

Standard 4.5	The institution values and supports effective learning and student achievement
Examples of Evidence	1. Mechanisms are in place to publicly recognise and reward effective learning – access to scholarship/bursaries and awards for outstanding performance. 2. The institution applies fair and consistent processes for credit transfer, recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competency. 3. Learning activities and resources cater to the diversity that exists among the student body. 4. Enhancement of effective learning is catered for in the departmental/programme budget to include expenditure on modern learning technologies. 5. Design and development of the curriculum takes into consideration the diversity that exists among the student body.

Standard 5	Quality Enhancement
Criterion Statement	*The programme maintains a systematic approach to assessing educational quality in order to improve educational and other outcomes.*
Standard 5.1	**The programme has formal mechanisms and/or procedures to strategically evaluate the achievement of the mission and educational objectives of the institution.**
Examples of Evidence	1. Policy, procedures and processes exist for evaluating the programme in context of the vision, mission and educational objectives of the institution. 2. Schedules, records and other reports demonstrate planning, monitoring and evaluation strategies. 3. Programme evaluation and student assessment records are available and easily accessible.
Standard 5.2	**The programme is allocated sufficient physical and other resources to be effectively planned, implemented and evaluated on a continuous basis.**
Examples of Evidence	1. A budget related to the programme is available. 2. Records justify the allocation of resources. 3. The system for resource allocation addresses current and future needs. 4. Performance appraisal reports reflect the continued competence of the staff for the programmes they deliver.
Standard 5.3	**The programme is informed by timely, realistic analyses of the internal and external environment, which enhances programme effectiveness.**
Examples of Evidence	1. There is a plan to subject the programme to timely self-studies/SWOT analyses. 2. The programme coordinators use results of need analyses/market surveys to inform programme development and review. 3. The data collected is used to inform the strategic and staff development plans. 4. There are existing records of evaluation processes to provide information on levels of performance in meeting stated goals/objectives for programme relevance and effectiveness.

Standard 5.4	The programme is subject to short, medium and long term planning consistent with the mission and objectives of the institution.
Examples of Evidence	1. The institution has a strategic plan that includes new programme development. 2. Short, medium and long term plans are documented and readily available. 3. Strategic planning processes are sufficiently flexible to accommodate revision in response to environmental changes.
Standard 5.5	The institution provides opportunities to enhance the capabilities of its faculty, administrative and other staff to efficiently and effectively deliver a quality programme.
Examples of Evidence	1. The institution has a plan for monitoring and review staff development. 2. The institution maintains a database on the staff's training records, skills and abilities for each programme area. 3. The institution's strategic plan considers the regular review of the programmes, their relevance, demand, affordability and accessibility.