



Barbados Accreditation Council



**GUIDELINES
FOR THE
RECOGNITION
OF
AWARDING BODIES**

Contents

	Page
Preface	3
The Barbados Accreditation Council	4
Vision Statement	4
Mission Tenets	4
Guidelines for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies	5
Terms Defined	5
Recognition Process	6
Principles	6
Procedures	7
Initial Application	7
Post Recognition	7
Failure to Disclose Information	8
Loss of Recognition	8
Recognition Criteria	8
Responsibilities	9
Disclosure and Confidentiality	10
Costs	10
Recognition Period	11
Conducting Self-Assessments	11
Appendix I – Flow Chart of Recognition Process	
Appendix II – Criteria for Recognition of Awarding Bodies	
Appendix III – Post Recognition Monitoring Process	
Acknowledgements	

Preface

This document has been prepared by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) to assist awarding bodies that are seeking to offer qualifications/awards in Barbados. It provides awarding bodies with information governing the BAC's recognition process, principles, procedures, and criteria. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist awarding bodies with preparing applications for recognition by the BAC. The BAC acknowledges its responsibility to assist organisations and create an enabling environment for the recognition of the resultant qualifications awarded to learners resident in Barbados.

Policy related questions should be directed to the office of the BAC. The BAC reserves the right to make changes to its policies, procedures and other statements at any time.

The Barbados Accreditation Council

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) was established in November 2004 by the Barbados Accreditation Council Act, 2004-11. It is a statutory body under the portfolio of the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training.

Vision Statement

To be a World-class, dynamic quality assurance authority 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 governance, 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.

GUIDELINES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES¹

Terms Defined

- A. **Awarding body** – an organisation that issues qualifications (e.g. certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc.) to learners formally recognising the achievements of an individual, following a standard assessment procedure. It also has responsibility for developing qualifications; assessing and quality assuring qualifications; managing the assessment process for each qualification; awarding qualifications; and providing customer service to approved centres and candidates.
- B. **Awarding institution** - a post-secondary/tertiary educational provider that awards post-secondary/tertiary level qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, and degrees in its own name.
- C. **Collaborative provision** - all arrangements in which the awarding provider makes an award (solely or jointly) or gives credit towards an award on the basis of education provided by another educational provider in the home country or overseas.
- D. **Course** – a defined body of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired over a specified period of time. A course may be awarded one or more credits and can generally be completed in one term or one semester.
- E. **(Educational) Provider** – any institution or organisation offering education and/or training programmes of study/courses at the post-secondary/tertiary level in Barbados.
- F. **Overseas institution** - a provider that is operating outside of its home country.
- G. **Partner** - an institution/organisation that collaborates with an awarding provider offering post-secondary/tertiary programmes that lead to either an award in the name of the awarding provider or joint awards in the names of both the awarding provider and the partner.
- H. **Programme (of study)** – an approved curriculum composed of a series/set of courses, in an academic or vocational speciality, leading to a recognised qualification (e.g. certificate, diploma, associate degree, bachelor’s degree, etc.) or a structured and purposeful set of learning experiences that lead to a qualification.
- I. **Provider country** - the source country of the educational programme or qualification that is delivered in another country.
- J. **Providing institution** – an educational provider that is delivering all or part of a programme of study.
- K. **Receiver country** - the host country to which the educational programme or qualification sourced overseas is delivered.
- L. **Transnational/foreign provider** - an institution or organisation that is operating in another country and has its origin and main campus, or establishment in an overseas country or territory.

¹ These guidelines apply to local and foreign/overseas/transnational awarding bodies.

Recognition Process

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) is the national authority with responsibility for the recognition of the quality and adequacy of local or overseas postsecondary/tertiary level educational providers and awarding organisations, as well as the qualifications they award. Any overseas provider or awarding organisation seeking to operate in Barbados must first be legally established and recognised/accredited in accordance with the quality assurance system in its country of origin.

Before submitting qualifications for accreditation, an awarding organisation must first apply for recognition as an awarding body with the Barbados Accreditation Council. The recognition process involves a review of the systems and procedures of the awarding organisation against the *Criteria for Recognition of Awarding Bodies* established by the BAC. The review is designed to ensure that the awarding organisation has the ability to offer its qualifications to the required quality standards established by the BAC. A flow chart of the recognition process is shown at Appendix I.

Principles

The recognition process will be guided by the following five (5) principles:

- a. The awarding body has effective governance, leadership and management, which support the delivery of recognised qualifications. The awarding body's strategic aims, objectives and policies are appropriate and are understood by all who refer to them.
- b. The awarding body has developed and implemented a robust quality framework that ensures a quality product is delivered to the candidate. The awarding body and its staff are committed to a quality culture of continuous improvement through review and evaluation.
- c. The awarding body's administrative and support arrangements have been designed to reduce bureaucracy, are responsive to stakeholders needs, and are cost effective. The awarding body continually reviews its qualification provision to ensure it has, and deploys, sufficient resources to administer and support its qualification provision.
- d. The awarding body has demonstrated that it has the appropriate experience and ability to design, develop and deliver qualifications. The awarding body assessment methods are rigorous but have sufficient flexibility to ensure that their requirements can be met cost-effectively and in a variety of different circumstances. Copies of the awarding body's assessment methodology and guidance are made available to all those who may wish to use them.
- e. The awarding body's methodology for verification is rigorous and has been designed to ensure that only those candidates who have shown competence are awarded a certificate. The awarding body only deploys personnel who are qualified and competent.

Procedures

Initial Application

When an awarding body is applying for recognition, it must submit a plan of proposed provision defining the level, types and subject/sector of qualifications.

The awarding body must demonstrate that its qualifications are fully quality assured and must include evidence that:

- a. the awarding body has dedicated staff to assure the delivery of the programme across national borders;
- b. the local provider has been reviewed and approved to offer qualifications by the awarding body;
- c. the local provider is in compliance with the relevant requirements and standards established by the awarding body;
- d. practices have been implemented to reduce the potential for fraud in the assessment of candidates;
- e. the awarding body is financially viable and unlikely to exit the country with student fees, etc.; and
- f. local candidates are treated the same as students from the country of origin.

Post Recognition

Once recognised, should an awarding body intend to extend the range of the provision(s) defined in its original plan, it must give notice in writing to the BAC and submit the relevant documentation to support its application. In addition, the awarding body will be able to offer qualifications with any educational provider that is registered with the BAC. Local providers will therefore not have to submit individual applications for recognition of qualifications offered in partnership with the particular awarding body.

It is anticipated that the process may take approximately 16-20 weeks based on the following projections:

- a. Provided a completed application is submitted, the gap analysis of the application is expected to be completed within 6 weeks.
- b. The provider responds to the gap analysis – the timeframe depends on the expediency of the awarding body.
- c. Once a response is received, the BAC will schedule a site visit.

Post recognition, recognised awarding bodies and each partner provider in Barbados will be required to complete the “Annual Report for Recognised Awarding Bodies”. A copy of the

Annual Report document may be obtained from the BAC. The annual report must clearly specify that:

- a) the awarding body is fully compliant with the conditions under which it was given recognition by the BAC, or
- b) it is not so compliant, in which case the report must describe each instance of non-compliance and the date by which the awarding body expects to rectify its non-compliance.

In addition, the awarding body will also be subject to monitoring interventions implemented by the BAC. The BAC's post recognition monitoring process is outlined at Appendix III.

Failure to Disclose Information

Should an awarding body fail to disclose changes, amendments or withdrawals it will be subject to the sanction of the BAC which may include publication in the printed press and other forms of media.

Loss of Recognition

If an awarding body loses its recognition status, for lack of compliance with the BAC's regulations, it will be required to undergo a full evaluation and pay the relevant fees.

Recognition Criteria

The Criteria for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies are outlined at Appendix II.

Once recognised, awarding bodies will be issued with a '**Certificate of Recognition for Awarding Bodies**' by the BAC. Furthermore, the recognition will be published in at least two (2) daily newspapers.

The awarding body will cover the cost of the certification and publication.

Responsibilities

The awarding body will be responsible for:

- a. Establishing Centre Approval Criteria;
- b. Assuring that appropriate quality systems are implemented and utilised by Approved Centres;
- c. Monitoring the quality assurance mechanisms being practised by Approved Centres;
- d. Establishing qualifications that conform to the Programme Approval specifications of the BAC;
- e. Assuring the integrity of the assessment policies and practises used by Approved Centres;
- f. Establishing internal and external verification policies and requirements for all qualifications;
- g. Developing policies and procedures to ensure that all new qualifications are approved by the BAC;
- h. Assisting the BAC to formulate evaluation teams for accreditation of programmes and institutions;
- i. Assisting the BAC to establish subject specific accreditation standards; and
- j. Any other functions that would ensure the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

The BAC will be responsible for:

- a. The programme approval of all new qualifications or programmes of study designed and developed by the awarding body;
- b. The programme review of all unaccredited qualifications or programmes of study designed, developed and offered by the awarding body;
- c. The accreditation and re-accreditation of all qualifications designed by the awarding body;
- d. The monitoring of the internal quality assurance mechanisms used by the awarding body;
- e. The monitoring of the quality assurance mechanisms used by the awarding body to monitor Centres;
- f. Liaising with the awarding body when formulating evaluation teams and evaluation procedures for its qualifications; and
- g. All other functions which will ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities.

Disclosure and Confidentiality

The BAC's ability to render sound judgement is facilitated by the awarding organisation's willingness to provide complete and candid information on its operations and programmes. The effectiveness and integrity of the recognition process therefore, is dependent upon a relationship of mutual trust between the BAC and the awarding body. Where it is found that judgement was rendered based on the submission of false or misleading information, such discovery will immediately render the judgement null and void.

The evaluation and recognition processes are highly confidential and the findings and recommendations and other information relating to such bodies and/or the programme offerings are, by implied agreement, exchanged within an atmosphere of trust, confidentiality and professional integrity. Information about awarding organisations that is not normally in the public domain will be treated as privileged information. The BAC shall therefore not publicise any statements or other data that the awarding organisation submits for recognition purposes, neither will it make public the substance of any advice offered to the awarding organisation. Such information will *only* be made available to other agencies or individuals upon receipt of written approval from the awarding body.

Costs

Costs will be incurred at various stages of the recognition process. The awarding body will be responsible for all direct costs associated with the recognition process, including:

- a. payment of professional fees for external evaluators;
- b. the payment of airfares and accommodations for external evaluators, liaison officers and/or observers from the BAC;
- c. fee to evaluate each programme for recognition; and
- d. fees for administrative and technical support provided by the BAC.

The fees covering the administrative and technical support that will be provided by the BAC, include:

- a. review of the application and supporting documentation;
- b. provision of a Gap Analysis to the awarding body;
- c. review of additional submissions;
- d. preparation of the Certificate of Recognition;
- e. costs for publication of the recognition in the daily newspaper; and
- f. provision of any other support that the awarding body may require.

Refer to the BAC's *Fees for Services* pamphlet for more information on related fees for this service.

Recognition Period

Awarding bodies may receive recognition for periods ranging from five (5) to seven (7) years. Individual (single) international programmes offered by local institutions in collaboration with an awarding body which is evaluated locally, may receive recognition for up to three (3) years. Once a programme has been given recognition status by the BAC, a maintenance fee becomes due and payable annually.

CONDUCTING SELF-ASSESSMENTS

The self-assessment is essential in enabling awarding bodies to evaluate their own quality development and for the continuous improvement of their operations. Self-assessment should be a normal part of the operational review, evaluation and monitoring processes performed by awarding bodies.

In conducting the self-assessment, awarding bodies will need to:

- a) carefully consider all the criteria which will guide the self-assessment process, paying special attention to the criterion statements and indicators;
- b) gather the necessary evidence, which should include:
 - management tools such as risk registers, internal and external audits;
 - reports such as annual reports to a governing body or the public;
 - performance against targets;
 - performance trends and benchmarking information;
 - feedback from the approved centres and/or candidates;
 - the most recent monitoring or self-assessment report; and
 - outcomes from quality assurance monitoring.
- c) Once the evidence in relation to the criteria has been assembled, the awarding body can determine:
 - the strengths and weaknesses of its arrangements;
 - actions to be taken to address any weaknesses, including target dates and the person(s) responsible.

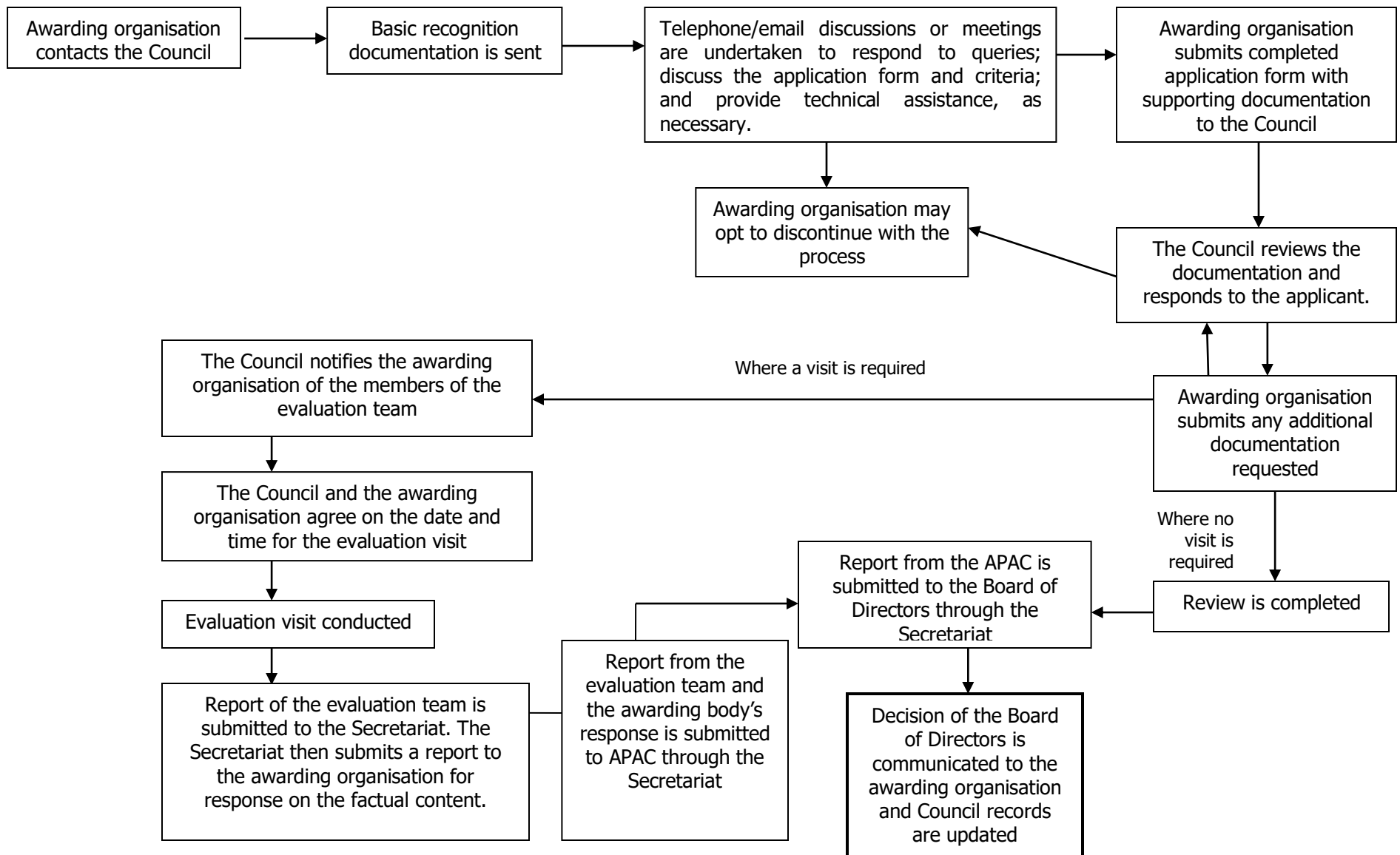
Some questions to ask include:

- How do we evaluate whether our governance arrangements are fit for the purpose of maintaining and ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of all the qualifications offered?
- How do we evaluate whether the examiners, moderators, independent assessors, internal or external verifiers have the skills and knowledge needed to meet their responsibilities in relation to the delivery of the qualifications and the maintenance of the assessment standards?
- How do we evaluate whether the qualifications offered meet the needs of the users and industry without leading to excessive provision in the relevant sector/subject?
- How do we ensure the clarity of the content of the qualifications and the associated guidance/learner materials?
- How do we determine whether the assessment methodology/ies for each qualification is fit for purpose and not burdensome or too costly for the centres and/or candidates?
- How do we evaluate the reliability and validity of the assessment methods and approaches?
- How do we ensure consistency of the assessments within and across the approved centres, as well as between assessors, moderators and verifiers?
- How do we ensure that assessment standards are maintained year to year?
- How do we evaluate whether candidate assessments are appropriate, timely and valid?
- How do we evaluate whether candidate receive valid results and correct qualifications?
- How do we determine the effectiveness of our systems to detect and deal with malpractice?
- How do we measure our performance against our customer service targets?
- How do we evaluate the adequacy of our procedures for enquiries, appeals, or complaints against assessment decisions?

The self-assessment is designed to ensure a thorough evaluation and determination of the effectiveness of the organisation's systems, processes and procedures in maintaining the quality of its qualifications and ensuring that its qualifications are fit for purpose.

Appendix I

FLOW CHART OF RECOGNITION PROCESS



Appendix II

CRITERIA FOR THE RECOGNITION OF AWARDING BODIES

Criterion 1: Governance

Criterion Statement: The awarding body's corporate governance, strategic aims, objectives and policies are appropriate, based on transparency and integrity and understood by all who refer to them.

Condition Statement 1.1	The awarding body has been established in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the country of origin
Indicator	Awarding body followed the appropriate legislation in its establishment.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Necessary documentation establishing the awarding body ○ Proof that the awarding body meets the regulatory requirements in its country of origin
Condition Statement 1.2	The awarding body has robust and transparent governance arrangements
Indicators	<p>Governance arrangements must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear distinction between the organisation's role as an awarding body and any other functions ensuring that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple roles do not constitute a barrier to access or restrictive practice. • Effective measures have been taken to manage the potential for conflicts of interest. 2. A mechanism to notify the BAC, in writing, of any change to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance arrangements. • Any partnership arrangements and associated partnerships agreement.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organisational chart(s) illustrating independence and separation between awarding body and other functions. ○ Terms of reference for Committees and Board showing independent element on the Board and/or the most senior Committee. ○ Job descriptions illustrating reporting lines, roles and responsibilities. ○ Written agreements, memoranda of understanding, franchise arrangements etc to illustrate areas of responsibility and indicate review of, and changes to, responsibilities. ○ Documentation that demonstrates that adequate measures have been put in place to ensure that any conflicts of interest are suitably managed. ○ Company details to show separate accounting for awarding body finances.

Condition Statement 1.3	The awarding body's leadership is effective
Indicators	<p>The awarding body's leadership must ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The management of the organisation is defined by evidence-based decision making. 2. The organisation has a clear strategic vision for the future that is based upon the needs of its stakeholders. 3. Employees and customers are aware of the strategic vision for the organisation's future. 4. The organisation's leadership encourages continuous improvement to meet customer needs. 5. Staff, at all levels, are encouraged to maintain and enhance levels of professional competence.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documentation that illustrates that the organisation actively seeks feedback from others, for example, staff opinion surveys, customer surveys, complaints procedures etc. ○ The organisation's published strategic or mission statement. ○ Notes of meetings with customers and staff where the strategic vision has been discussed. ○ Policy for continual professional development of staff. ○ Performance management and training records. ○ Action resulting from internal reviews of key performance indicators.
Condition Statement 1.4	The awarding body has an effective business planning process
Indicators	<p>The awarding body records and documents the outcome of its business planning process. The business plan should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. include provision for all its accredited qualifications, including those accredited by the BAC. 2. be communicated to all internal and external stakeholders that have a legitimate interest in it. 3. contain aims (goals) and objectives, which relate to the current and future needs of the awarding body, its stakeholders and BAC accredited qualifications. 4. be formally evaluated, at least, on an annual basis with a view to improvement. 5. include a policy for marketing its BAC accredited qualifications that is effective and takes into account the present and future needs of the awarding body and its stakeholders. 6. show that the awarding body has the financial capacity to sustain its operations. 7. show that the awarding body is supported by adequate physical and information technology infrastructure.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Procedure for business planning. ○ Copies of agendas and minutes from planning meetings. ○ Policies register showing the marketing policy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Market research materials. ○ Budget demonstrating commitment to developing capacity within and across the organisation ○ Financial statements that demonstrate financial solvency ○ Website containing marketing information and business plan that is regularly updated. ○ Business plan document. ○ Copies of reviews of the effectiveness of the organisation’s policy, standards and quality. ○ Action plan linked to the evaluation of the business plan. ○ Analysis of centre approval rates, qualifications uptake etc. ○ Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. ○ A customer profile. ○ Evidence that the business plan has been agreed to and signed off by the main board or Chief Executive. ○ Documented processes for acquisition, maintenance and replacement of physical resources. ○ Dedicated and secure information technology to support administration, client databases, and monitoring and evaluation.
Condition Statement 1.5	The awarding body assigns a single, named point of accountability for maintaining the quality of all qualifications
Indicators	<p>The awarding body has assigned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual with specific responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards 2. An individual, department or team with specific responsibility to ensure that the local context is considered in the design and delivery of the programme leading to the qualification, to ensure that graduates are able to apply the acquired knowledge and competencies within the local environment. 3. A department or team who reports to the designated person on the quality and standards of all qualifications
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organisational chart showing the structure of the section with responsibility for the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards ○ Job descriptions ○ Copies of reviews of qualifications ○ Copies of reviews of policies and procedures for the quality maintenance of qualifications ○ Documented processes for the preparation and delivery of programmes ○ Documented processes for administration of examinations ○ Documented processes for the assessment of examinations ○ Documented processes for the verification of awards ○ Reports of consultations with national stakeholders. ○ Documented processes for the review and approval of local materials (e.g. case studies) for inclusion in the curriculum.

Criterion 2:**Quality Enhancement****Criterion Statement:**

The awarding body has developed and implemented a robust quality framework that ensures a quality product is delivered to the candidates. The awarding body and its staff are committed to a quality culture of continuous improvement through review and evaluation.

Condition Statement 2.1	The awarding body has a culture of continuous quality improvement
Indicators	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have procedures for acquiring and analysing feedback on the effectiveness of the awarding body’s service from key stakeholders and customers against the awarding body’s key performance indicators. 2. Documented internal quality assurance system to monitor compliance with BAC’s criteria. 3. Conduct a review at least once per year, which covers the following as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative arrangements. ○ Registration and certification. ○ Appeals, complaints and equal opportunities policies. ○ Quality assurance of BAC accredited qualifications. ○ Provision of data required by BAC. ○ Customer service statement against its key performance indicators. ○ Staffing levels. ○ Competence and deployment of external verifiers. ○ Risk assessment process. ○ Monitoring system for approved centres. 4. Implement improvements as a result of the review which ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bureaucracy is kept to a minimum. ○ The allocation of resources is sufficient to meet the needs of the organisation and its customers. ○ The service for the design and delivery of accredited qualifications is responsive to the needs of customers. ○ Costs associated with the delivery of accredited qualifications are minimised. ○ The systems and procedures in place meet the criteria of BAC
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer feedback forms, surveys etc that seek the views of customers and other stakeholders. ○ Evidence that the organisation, on a regular basis, evaluates its performance against the customer service statement and where necessary, takes improvement action. ○ SWOT and/or Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) analyses. ○ Evaluation of the awarding body’s key performance indicators. ○ Self-assessment reports.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Report detailing the outcomes of the review of systems and procedures and identifying key target areas for improvement and development.○ Analysis of resource levels against current and projected workload.○ Pricing policy and structures and a rationale for any changes made to the pricing structure.○ Analysis of the costs associated with the delivery of the qualifications.○ Analysis of external verifier reports, identifying issues across centres and action taken due to the analysis○ Current reports from the responsible external quality assurance agency in its country of origin
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Criterion 3:**Administration and Support****Criterion Statement:**

The awarding body's administrative and support arrangements have been designed to reduce bureaucracy, are responsive to stakeholders needs, based on transparency and integrity, and cost effective. The awarding body continually reviews its qualification provision to ensure it has, and deploys, sufficient resources to administer and support its qualification provision.

Condition Statement 3.1	The awarding body has robust systems in place for the management of the services it offers
Indicators	<p>The awarding body must have systems in place to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. support the design and delivery of qualifications. 2. ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to support the awarding body's activities in the design and delivery of qualifications. 3. ensure that staff are trained to support the organisation's activities in the design and delivery of qualifications. 4. deploy sufficient resources to administer and support the design and delivery of qualifications. 5. ensure that the qualifications offered in Barbados are equivalent (levels, structure and content) and comparable to qualifications that carry the same or similar titles in the country of origin. 6. allow students in Barbados to progress to further study at tertiary level institutions in the country of origin 7. ensure that a learner who has completed its programme in Barbados has the same entitlement to be considered for enrolment on a related postgraduate programme similar to a learner who would have gained the same qualification in its country of origin. 8. ensure that local advertising is accurate in respect of opportunities for progression to further study or employment both locally and overseas. <p>The awarding body's management information system(s) must have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. security measures in place to prevent unauthorised use. 10. controls in place to ensure that unauthorised certificate printing cannot take place. 11. been designed to meet the requirements of all relevant legislation.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reports and/or evidence of review of management on the effectiveness of resources such as Information Technology (IT), staffing levels etc. ○ Action plan detailing improvements to systems. ○ Analysis of resource levels against current and projected workload. ○ Training needs analysis. ○ Detailed programme syllabi/programme specifications. ○ Copy of certificate. ○ Published policies and procedures in respect of the equivalence of qualifications and equality of opportunity comparable to those which apply to learners in the country of origin.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Details of entry requirements based on local and foreign qualifications. ○ Transcript ○ Progression routes identified following the award of the qualification ○ Job specifications and recruitment policy and procedures. ○ Organisational chart. ○ Evidence of compliance with the Health and Safety regulations. ○ Evidence of compliance with the Data Protection Act. ○ Current reports from the responsible external quality assurance agency in its country of origin ○ Evidence that there is no academic barrier to those who have successfully completed the qualification in Barbados to progress to further study at relevant institutions in the country of origin.
Condition Statement 3.2	The awarding body has an effective communications strategy that supports its awarding body activities.
Indicators	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. work to ensure ongoing development, currency and credibility of the qualifications. 2. communicate to its approved centres, external verifiers and other key stakeholders, any pertinent information in connection with BAC accredited qualifications and the awarding body activities. 3. ensure that internal communication systems allow for the dissemination of information relating to the awarding body’s activities or the accreditation of qualification. 4. ensure that BAC is granted access to the following from awarding body and approved centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assessment locations, ● candidates, ● premises, ● meetings, ● documents, ● data, ● analysis, and ● evaluation activities. 5. have processes in place to ensure that the BAC is sent data in the agreed format and by agreed timescales. 6. support the BAC’s monitoring activities.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minutes of awarding body forum. ○ Communications between centres and the awarding body ○ Communications between BAC and the awarding body. ○ Evidence of attendance at relevant BAC meetings and events. ○ Internal newsletters, flyers, etc ○ Notes/agenda for internal and/or external training events. ○ Quarterly registration and certification returns are sent to BAC by agreed timescales.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data requested for audit and centre monitoring purposes is sent to BAC by the agreed time.
Condition Statement 3.3	Where applicable, the awarding body has systems and procedures for approval of centres
Indicators	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure that all centres within which assessment will take place are capable of meeting the full requirements of the centre approval criteria prior to any candidate being assessed or certificated for an accredited qualification. 2. seek BAC’s written approval for any amendments to the centre approval criteria prior to their implementation. 3. ensure that each centre identifies a single named point of accountability. 4. require all potential centres to make a formal approval application that demonstrates the centres’ compliance. 5. ensure that where a partnership or consortium is seeking centre approval that the roles and responsibilities in relation to the linked centres are clearly set out in a written agreement. 6. require a centre to declare, in its centre approval application, if it has had approval refused, suspended or withdrawn. 7. inform a centre that applies for centre or qualification approval of its approval decision in writing. 8. inform a centre of its right to appeal an approval decision made by the awarding body. 9. ensure that an external verifier visits approved centres before the first candidate is certificated. 10. ensure that centres not previously approved to offer BAC accredited qualifications receive an external verification visit prior to approval. 11. provide potential centres with appropriate guidance and support on the awarding body’s approval process. 12. ensure that a centre provides evidence of approval of assessment/satellite sites and demonstrates that the quality assurance arrangements are consistent with those of the main centre. 13. require approved centres to inform the awarding body of any key changes. 14. retain and make available to the BAC on request: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Approval applications. b. Approvals visit reports. c. Details of the outcome of such visits. 15. have and maintain an accurate register of its approved centres and the qualifications each centre has been approved to offer. 16. inform its approved centres that they must provide BAC with timely access to locations and records for monitoring purposes.

<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Published centre approval criteria. ○ Centre approval applications. ○ Approved centre files. ○ Reports that illustrate how new centres are being visited prior to approval by an external verifier. ○ Awarding body feedback to centres on the outcome of the centre and qualification approval process. ○ Evidence that any action plan agreed at the time of centre approval has been achieved in full prior to first candidate certification. ○ Copies of written agreements between linked centres. ○ Copies of checklists against which assessment locations have been approved. ○ Evidence of the centre informing the awarding body of changes to its assessors, verifiers and ownership. ○ Approval guidance documents. ○ Where appropriate, the awarding body allows credit transfer. ○ Verifier report illustrating that the awarding body has reviewed the potential centre’s assessor and verifiers to ensure occupational competence, experience and that they hold or are registered for the relevant assessor and verifier qualifications.
<p>Condition Statement 3.4</p>	<p>The awarding body has a customer service statement and identified service levels</p>
<p>Indicators</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The customer service statement must be freely available to all who may wish to make use of it. It must specify: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the quality of service a customer can reasonably expect. b. relevant point(s) of contact and communication mechanisms. c. measurable outcomes, such as timescales and associated performance measures. 2. The customer service statement must specify, or indicate, where information may be found on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the fees and charges. b. summary details of the awarding body’s complaints and appeal procedures. c. summary details of the awarding body’s quality assurance mechanisms for centre approval and external verification.
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where the awarding body is part of a partnership or consortium, the customer service statement specifies the main point of contact. ○ Evidence that the customer service statement is made available freely to customers and prospective customers. ○ Evidence that the customer service statement is updated as a result of review and customer feedback. ○ Evidence that the published customer service statement meet policies, timelines and procedures used internationally by awarding bodies. ○ Details of how the customer may communicate with the provider out of

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> office hours. ○ Details of e-mail, fax, telephone and communications facilities. ○ Consumer Protection policies. ○ Marketing materials, websites with links to information job placement/career opportunities. ○ Information/appropriate links on the recognition/accreditation status of programmes with competent recognition/accreditation agencies. ○ Information/policies regarding fees, examination results, exit policy, etc.
Condition Statement 3.5	The awarding body has open and transparent procedures for complaints and appeals
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The awarding body must publish and implement an appeals and a complaints procedure which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The system for making a complaint or an appeal. b. A specified point of contact. c. The circumstances under which a centre or candidate is entitled to make an appeal or complaint to the awarding body. d. The circumstances under which a centre or candidate is entitled to make an appeal or complaint to the BAC. e. Response times and anticipated timescales for dealing with complaints or appeals. f. Any charge for making a complaint or an appeal. 2. The appeals procedure must be designed to resolve any disputes arising from assessment or verification decisions, centre approval decisions, and certification claims.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A published appeals procedure. ○ A published complaints procedure. ○ Evaluation reports. ○ Appeals register. ○ Complaints register. ○ A fees policy and list of fees charged for making an appeal or a complaint. ○ Evidence that the awarding body has kept the complainant or appellant informed of the progress of the appeal or complaint. ○ Evidence that appeals and or complaints are being resolved within specified timescales
Condition Statement 3.6	The awarding body has an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates
Indicators	<p>The awarding body must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make every reasonable effort to collect each candidate's national registration number at the point of registration. 2. Ensure that candidates who complete the requirements for a qualification or unit receive a certificate in the format agreed at the time of recognition by the Council.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ensure that certificates can only be issued when all the requirements for the qualification have been met and the claim authenticated. 4. Recognise the previous achievement of any units that may be common to other qualifications and to uphold the principle of credit transfer. 5. Ensure safeguards are in place to protect against fraudulent, invalid or mistaken claims for certification. 6. Have a system in place for the issuing of replacement certificates. 7. Ensure that replacement certificates are clearly marked as such.
Examples of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each qualification must include the agreed title, the level, the date of the issue of the certificate, and the logos and credit points (where applicable). ○ Each qualification must include the awarding body's designation ○ Evidence that the awarding body offers certificates at unit and whole qualification level. ○ Evidence that the awarding body recognises previous achievement. ○ Policies on academic integrity which include references to all modalities of delivery, learning and assessment, orientation exercised for traditional and distance education learners and faculty, etc.
Condition Statement 3.7	The awarding body has implemented a diversity and equality strategy
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The awarding body's diversity and equality strategy, related policies and procedures must comply with all current legislation. 2. The awarding body must have an equal opportunities policy that is freely available to all who may wish to make use of it. 3. The awarding body must ensure that all relevant awarding body members of staff receive training on the organisations equal opportunities strategy, relevant policies and procedures. 4. The awarding body must have a policy and procedure for special assessment arrangements, which are freely available to all who may wish to make use of them. The awarding body's policy and procedures for special assessment arrangements must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. State the procedure that centres must follow to apply for special assessment arrangements. b. Ensure that candidates who have taken ill at short notice are given fair access to assessment and verification. c. Ensure that the qualifications assessment specifications are not invalidated. 5. The awarding body must have a policy and procedure for reasonable adjustments, which are freely available to all who may wish to make use of them. The awarding body's policy and procedure for reasonable adjustments must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. State the procedure that centres must follow to apply for reasonable adjustments on behalf of candidates. b. Ensure that the qualification's assessment specifications are not invalidated.

	<p>c. Ensure that the adjustments take into consideration the current needs of the candidate and do not give the candidate an unfair advantage.</p>
<p>Examples of Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A published diversity and equality policy and procedures. ○ A published equal opportunity policy and procedures. ○ A published assessment policy and procedures. ○ Evidence of access to policies and procedures by staff. ○ Evidence that the awarding body provides training to staff in relation to its policies and procedures. ○ Evidence that the proper implementation of its policies and procedures are done.

Appendix III

Post Recognition Monitoring Process

Each awarding body is responsible for its own qualifications, ensuring that each qualification it makes available is fit for purpose, and maintaining programme quality with each partner educational provider. The awarding body is responsible for complying with the Barbados Accreditation Council's *Criteria for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies*.

The Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) may pursue several monitoring interventions to ensure that an awarding body is compliant with its *Criteria for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies*. Monitoring enables the BAC to:

- identify where there is a risk to the standards of qualifications or to how these qualifications are delivered;
- understand how an awarding body is performing;
- understand whether a qualification or a group of qualifications is fit for purpose; and
- gather evidence to inform its regulatory decisions.

The BAC may choose to monitor each awarding body in a different way. The monitoring intervention used is affected by the outcome(s) of an assessment in relation to an awarding body's possible responsibility for something going wrong with its qualifications and the impact should something go wrong. The BAC makes no hard and fast rule about which intervention method to use. To this end, the monitoring intervention used will be the one best suited to address the issue the BAC is seeking to resolve. The types of interventions which may be used include:

- a) **Routine Monitoring** – refers to the minimum level of day-to-day monitoring and reviewing that the BAC undertakes throughout the year on an awarding body. This monitoring could, but does not normally, include a site visit. This intervention is used to help inform the BAC's:
 - decisions about the need for further monitoring of an awarding body;

- understanding of both individual awarding bodies and of the sector as a whole.

The different facets to Routine Monitoring include for example:

- an annual review of information the BAC has about an awarding body, such as its statements of compliance, complaints received by the BAC about the awarding body, information available to the general public about the awarding body, and data returns requested by the BAC;
- monitoring of events that the BAC has been formally notified about that have the potential to cause problems
- the BAC can also look for further data or information to improve its understanding of whether there is a need for further investigation

In Routine Monitoring specific information is requested from the awarding body, including its statement of compliance. The awarding body will be informed of any additional information required thereafter. The results of Routine Monitoring:

- provide the basis on which the BAC may decide that there is the need for a more indepth look at an awarding body;
- is used to inform the BAC's views on the likelihood of the awarding body's responsibility for something going wrong with the way it designs, delivers or awards qualifications, and the impact if something goes wrong;
- may raise questions, for example, about an awarding body's performance, its willingness to address shortcomings, or its capacity to respond to a rapid increase in demand for its qualifications.

The BAC does not actively set out to monitor an awarding body further during the year. However, based on the outcomes of the routine monitoring exercise the BAC may follow up using one of its other monitoring interventions.

- b) **Self-investigation** – refers to the situation where the BAC decides to use the awarding body's own investigation findings into a particular matter. In this instance, the awarding body would have accepted that something had gone wrong and the BAC may ask the

awarding body to investigate the matter, or the awarding body may offer to investigate the matter directly. The BAC must then determine whether it will accept the awarding body's own investigation to inform any action it may take, or whether the BAC should do its own investigation.

This monitoring intervention is only used when the BAC is confident about the thoroughness and objectivity of the approach that will be used by the awarding body. It is expected that the investigation will be carried out by an external body, or with external input. The terms of reference for the investigation, such as key dates for interim and final reporting, publication arrangements for the reporting of any findings, etc., is agreed between the BAC and the awarding body. The BAC typically wishes to have direct access to the persons undertaking the investigation and retains the right to observe any aspect of the investigation.

- c) **Investigating Concerns** – where the BAC has evidence to suggest that an awarding body has breached or is likely to breach the *Criteria for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies* in relation to any aspect of the awarding body's practice, then the BAC will investigate the concern(s). The awarding body is normally given notice of the investigation to be undertaken and the reasons for the investigation. The timeline within notice is given will be determined by the urgency of the need to investigate. In addition, the awarding body will be informed about who will be conducting the investigation, when the visit will be made, the people the investigating team will need to see, and the information the investigating team will ask for.

Evidence will be obtained by talking to staff and reviewing documents and processes. Educational providers who used the awarding body's qualifications may also be visited to gather information. The findings of the investigation will be reported along with any recommendations for taking regulatory action. It should be noted that the monitoring plan may be changed at any stage of the investigation should the BAC's concerns about the awarding body widen.

At the end of the process, the BAC will determine whether regulatory action is needed and if it is, then the awarding body will be informed of same. The outcomes of the investigation may be published and included in relevant BAC reports.

- d) **End-to-end Compliance Investigation** – where the BAC has serious concerns about an awarding body’s ability to develop, deliver or award qualifications; or when the BAC has the most serious concerns about an awarding body’s suitability to be recognised; or to investigate serious concerns about malpractice or fraudulent behaviour, then this monitoring intervention will be utilised. This intervention is used to check whether an awarding body is fully compliant with the *Criteria for the Recognition of Awarding Bodies*. The BAC may co-opt the services of external experts to assist with the investigation.

The awarding body will be informed about the investigation to be undertaken and the reasons for the investigation. Notice of the visit and the expected duration of the investigation are provided to the awarding body by the BAC. The persons to be interviewed and the type of information that will be required are also included in the notification to the awarding body.

During the visit, evidence is gathered by interviewing staff, reviewing documents and processes, and possible visits to other users of the awarding body’s qualifications such as other educational providers, assessors, employers, etc. The resultant findings including any recommendations will be reported. However, the timing and nature of the feedback to the awarding body will be determined by the investigation findings. If the BAC determines that regulatory action is necessary, it will inform the awarding body. The matter may also be referred to another agency such as the Ministry responsible for Education or the police.

It should be noted that the awarding body is expected to co-operate with the BAC during the monitoring exercise.

Regulatory Actions

The awarding body is held accountable for the quality and standards of its regulated qualifications. The BAC will act as appropriate to:

- ensure that the awarding body complies with its conditions for recognition, as directed by the BAC and take further action if it does not;
- prevent the awarding body from making any gains from any breach of its conditions for recognition;
- deter other awarding bodies from similar breaches;
- refer matters to other bodies to investigate, if necessary; and
- foster an environment of transparency in respect of its regulatory action(s) to promote public confidence in the work of the BAC and the quality of the qualifications.

The BAC retains the right to revise its actions as appropriate.

The following outlines how the BAC will use its powers to take regulatory action when the BAC believes it is appropriate:

Warning

The awarding body will be issued with a warning where the BAC concludes that the organisation is on a course where it may soon be in non-compliance with the BAC's *Criteria for Recognition of Awarding Bodies*. A warning is a private sanction and does not affect the provider's accreditation status. The awarding body will have six (6) to 12 months to address the areas identified for action or the BAC can decide to remove it from 'warning' status and place it on probation.

Probation

Probation will be levied where an awarding body fails to maintain compliance with the BAC's *Criteria for Recognition of Awarding Bodies*. While on probation the awarding body is expected to address the areas identified for action and be subject to monitoring, which may include a requirement to submit periodic reports as specified. The probation report must show that the awarding body has rectified all the deficiencies identified by the BAC.

The probationary status remains in effect until the BAC makes a decision, based on the probation report, to continue or withdraw recognition, or extend probation for up to one (1) year. A probation decision cannot be appealed. If an awarding body is placed on probation in the year in which its renewal for recognition application is expected to be submitted, the BAC will consider the probation report at the next face-to-face meeting after it is submitted.

Probation may be removed based on the recommendations of a comprehensive evaluation team (which may comprise both external and/or internal evaluators) and the Board of Directors.

Denial of Recognition

An awarding body may be denied recognition as an awarding body (or renewal of recognition) on the advice of an evaluation team or review committee.

Withdrawal of Recognition

1. The BAC may withdraw any recognition or accreditation conferred upon an awarding body or programme of study for reasons which the BAC may deem to be good and sufficient including:
 - a) the failure of the awarding body or its programme(s) of study to maintain the standard required by the BAC after undergoing a recognition of awarding body or accreditation/re-accreditation process; or
 - b) failure of an awarding body to provide the BAC with requested information relating to its structure or to the programme(s) of study offered.

2. Where the BAC makes a determination to withdraw any recognition or accreditation conferred upon any awarding body and/or its programme(s) of study, the BAC shall give written reasons for its decision. The awarding body may appeal in accordance with the provisions of the BAC's *Appeals Process*.

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- Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)
- Scottish Qualifications Authority
- Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual)
- The University Council of Jamaica

For further information contact:

Barbados Accreditation Council

First Floor

The Phoenix Centre

George Street

St. Michael, BB11114

Barbados, W.I.

Tel: (246) 535-6740

Fax: (246) 622-1089

Email: info@bac.gov.bb

Website: www.bac.gov.bb