

ACTT

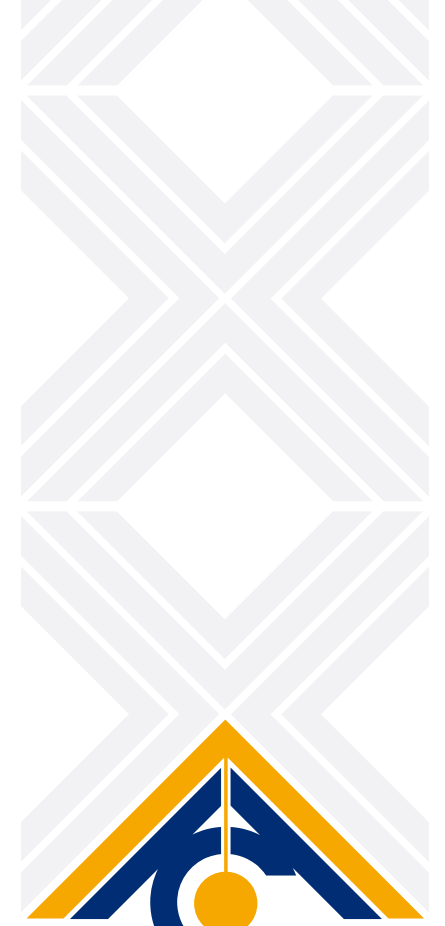
**The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago**

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key

Administrative Report

October 01, 2016 –
September 30, 2017



ACTT

**The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago**

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key

This Administrative Report summarises the activities of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago for the period October 01, 2016 to September 30, 2017.

Ground Floor and Level 3, Building B
Pan American Life Plaza
91-93 St Vincent Street
Port of Spain, Trinidad

T: 623-2500 / 800-ACTT

F: 624-5711

E: info@actt.org.tt

W: www.actt.org.tt



Vision

ACTT will be the principal authority in Trinidad and Tobago for quality assurance and continuous improvement in higher education and a leader in innovation and best practice

Mission

To assure the quality and integrity of higher education primarily through recognition, registration and accreditation as well as public education and related activities, while ensuring the efficiency and transparency of our operations and demonstrating commitment to national development and global competitiveness

Core Values

Accountability • Customer focus • Integrity • Commitment to personal growth and development • Teamwork • Trust

Contents

Vision, Mission and Core Values	iii
Executive Summary	2
Strategic Goals	3
1.0 Organisational Structure	4
2.0 Core Functions/Services	7
3.0 Policy and Development Initiatives	20
4.0 Financial Operations	21
5.0 Human Resource Development	23
6.0 Procurement Procedures	24
7.0 Client and Public Access to Services/Service Delivery Systems	26
Conclusion	28



Executive Summary

The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) is responsible for regulating higher education and training institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. ACTT was established by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chapter 39:06 and is responsible for quality assurance through the services of Conferment of Institutional Title, Registration, Accreditation, Programme Approval and Recognition of Transnational Programmes, Foreign Awarding Bodies and Institutions. At present, the Council has on its register fifty-five (55) registered institutions, thirteen (13) accredited institutions and seventeen (17) recognised foreign awarding bodies/institutions. The Council is committed to furthering the advancement of quality higher education and has embarked on several initiatives.

ACTT is committed to promoting and enhancing institutional development within its institutions through The Quality Institute (TQI). TQI was launched in 2015 and is aimed at conducting training to support higher education institutions, institutional personnel, quality professionals and other stakeholders. ACTT bestows its Quality in Tertiary Education Awards to institutions and individuals who continue to display quality in higher education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Other initiatives spearheaded by ACTT include the National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training for secondary school students and the National Essay and Poster Competition for secondary and tertiary level students. As part of its public education programme, ACTT continued with the Students Caravan initiative designed to educate communities on the importance of quality higher education. This facilitates ACTT's participation in career fairs throughout Trinidad and Tobago, targeting audiences such as secondary and tertiary level students.

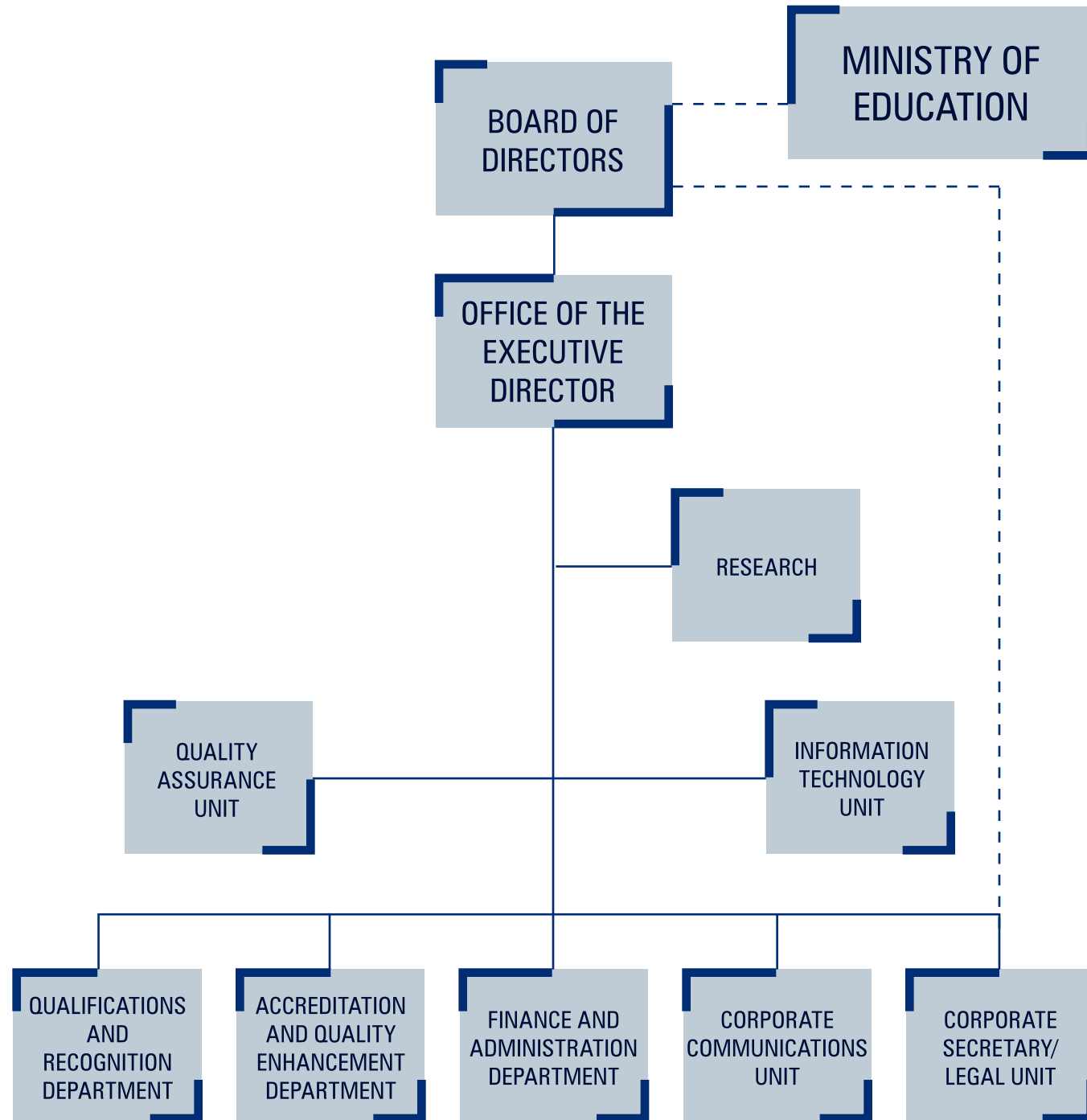
As ACTT pursues its statutory mandate of assuring quality in higher education and training, the Management and Staff of the Council will continue to serve Trinidad and Tobago to ensure that a culture of quality assurance is built into the higher education and training sector.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Guided by our vision and mission, ACTT strives to achieve the following strategic goals:

- Facilitate the growth and development of human capital to meet national development needs
- Support the continual improvement of quality within institutions inclusive of their programmes
- Provide an enabling framework to monitor the development and implementation of quality standards and to enforce the law applicable to its services
- Strengthen relationships with local, regional and international stakeholders towards the learning and sharing of international best practice in quality assurance
- Create a corporate image that positions ACTT as the leader in quality assurance and accreditation
- Introduce the latest developments in information and communication technology throughout the organisation
- Strengthen and develop ACTT's internal human resource capacity
- Acquire facilities to house ACTT's head office

1.0 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



1.1 ACTT'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

ACTT is governed by a Board of Directors (the Board), which is responsible for charting the overall direction of ACTT. Section 4 of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago Act Chapter 39:06 (the Act) provides the areas of representation on the Board. All appointments to the Board are made by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and are required to be published in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette.

1.2 ACTT'S STAFF

ACTT's staff comprises fifty (50) members in the following departments/units:

- Office of the Executive Director
 - Research
 - Quality Assurance
- Accreditation and Quality Enhancement
- Qualifications and Recognition
- Finance and Administration
- Office of the Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer
- Corporate Communications
- Information Technology

1.3 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

ACTT has the overarching responsibility and jurisdiction over the registration and accreditation of post secondary and tertiary education institutions and programmes in Trinidad and Tobago. By virtue of the Act, ACTT is empowered, *inter alia*, to:

- develop, implement and monitor national quality standards for the higher education sector
- confer institutional titles
- register post secondary and tertiary level institutions

- accredit institutions and programmes
- recognise qualifications awarded by foreign institutions
- grant approval for locally developed programmes
- collaborate with recognised accrediting and professional bodies in the fulfilment of its mission

In the execution of its functions, ACTT must comply with the legislative requirements for the submission of an annual report to its line Minister detailing the Council's activities and containing financial statements and such other information relating to the operations and policies of the Council.

1.4 OFFICE OF THE CORPORATE SECRETARY/LEGAL OFFICER

The Office of the Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer provides legal advice, support and service to the Board and the Council itself. The Unit ensures legal and regulatory compliance in all of the Council's operations, including procurement activities. This allows the Council to achieve its objectives in a manner that complies with established law. The Unit ensures compliance with internationally accepted corporate governance principles in all the Council's operations and in all decisions taken by the Board and implemented by the Council. The Unit also ensures that all Corporate Secretarial functions in support of the Board are effectively discharged.

1.5 DELEGATED LEVELS OF AUTHORITY

The table at right summarises the levels of authority for the approval of expenditure for the purchase of articles/works/services that have been procured, in keeping with the Policy and Procedures.

QUANTUM OF PURCHASE/TENDERS	Authority
Up to TTD\$30,000.00	Director, Finance and Administration
Up to TTD\$100,000.00	Executive Director
TTD\$100,001 - TTD\$5,000,000.00	The Board on the recommendation of the Tenders Committee

1.6 REPORTING FUNCTIONS

The table below summarises ACTT's reporting functions and responsibilities, in relation to the Council's operations.

REPORTS	Line Minister	Ministry of Planning	Ministry of Finance	Auditor General	Parliament
Annual Operating Budgets	✓	✓	✓		
Strategic Plan	✓	✓			
Monthly/Annual Financial Reports	✓		✓		
Annual Financial Statements	✓			✓	
Monthly/Annual Performance Reports	✓	✓	✓		
Annual Audit Report	✓			✓	✓
Annual Administrative Report	✓				✓
Public Sector Investment Programme: Monthly, Quarterly, Bi-annual and Annual Reports	✓	✓			
Freedom of Information Act Report	✓				
Contribution to the Ministry of Education's (MoE's) Budget Presentation/Achievement Reports	✓	✓	✓		
Monthly Board Meetings	✓				
Performance Monitoring Reports	✓	✓			
Quarterly Reports on 1-year Action Plan	✓	✓			

2.0 CORE FUNCTIONS / SERVICES

2.1 CONFERMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL TITLE

Conferment of Institutional Title is the granting of permission to institutions to use any of the titles protected by law. These are as follows:

- College
- Community College
- Polytechnic
- Technical College
- Technical Institute
- Technical University
- Tertiary College
- University

In accordance with Chapter 39:06, ACTT has the authority to confer institutional titles on post secondary and tertiary level institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. This applies to institutions established subsequent to the proclamation of the Act in 2004, as well as to institutions that wish to change their name. In Trinidad and Tobago, an institution must apply for Conferment of Institutional Title if it wishes to carry any of the protected titles.

Conferment of Institutional Title is the only service offered by ACTT to institutions prior to Registration. All other ACTT services are accessible after Registration.

There were no institutions requiring Conferment of Institutional Title during the period under review.

2.2 REGISTRATION OF POST SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Section 8 (2) (c) of the Act requires that local and foreign post secondary and tertiary level institutions desirous of operating in Trinidad and Tobago be registered by ACTT. Registration is mandatory and it is the process through which an institution is evaluated to determine if it has met the requirements to offer post secondary and tertiary education and training to the public. Registration provides the legal status to do so.

An institution must be registered before it can access any of the other quality assurance services offered by ACTT. The only service that may be accessed before Registration is Conferment of Institutional Title. Registration by ACTT is akin to Pre-Accreditation in the United States. There are seven (7) criteria and twenty-two (22) standards catering for a wide scope of institutional activities including Legal, Policy and Regulatory Requirements; Governance and Administration; Quality Management System; Resource Management; Teaching-Learning Process; Review; and Continuous Improvement. An institution must provide relevant narrative and evidence, demonstrating how it has met or surpassed the requirements of the standards for Registration.

As part of the evaluation process, the evidence submitted by the institution is examined and subsequently a site visit is conducted to verify the evidence, conduct interviews with key stakeholders and examine facilities and resources to determine suitability and appropriateness for efficient and effective programme delivery. The evaluation is conducted by a team of External Evaluators who are education and subject matter experts in fields relevant to the programmes to be offered by the institution. An institution may be registered for a maximum period of three (3) years.

2 During the reporting period, ACTT conferred Registered status on two new institutions

ACTT conferred Registered status on **11** eleven institutions (continuing)

1 During the period, ACTT denied Registered status to one institution

The number of registered institutions as at September 30, 2017 was **55** fifty-five

2.3 ACCREDITATION OF POST SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

In Trinidad and Tobago, ACTT is the official body responsible for accrediting post secondary and tertiary institutions operating locally, as well as programmes offered by these institutions.

Accreditation is a voluntary process through which ACTT, as the external quality assurance body, evaluates registered institutions in order to assure academic quality, improve accountability and support continual institutional development. While Registration ensures that institutions have basic systems to operate, Institutional Accreditation examines the effectiveness of these systems. The evidence to be provided and the comprehensive site visit for Institutional Accreditation are greater in scope and depth than that of Registration. Institutional Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution that has been evaluated and found to have met or exceeded stated criteria of educational quality. An institution may be accredited for a maximum period of seven (7) years.

Specialised Programme Accreditation examines programmes offered at an accredited institution, focussing on programmes requiring a licence to practise, such as Medicine, Engineering and Law. These specialised programmes are evaluated in collaboration with the relevant national, regional or international statutory and regulatory bodies, such as the Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago for programmes in Nursing and the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions (CAAM-HP) for programmes in Medicine and Allied Health. A close working relationship between ACTT and recognised professional associations helps

to ensure that the requirements for accreditation are related to the current requirements for professional practice.

Programme Accreditation evaluates programmes using criteria that include, but are not limited to, the quality of teaching and the support of learning; design and planning of programmes of study; assessment and feedback to learners; learning environments and learner support systems; programme evaluation and quality assurance systems.

The purpose of Accreditation is to:

- evaluate the standard of education to assure its quality
- encourage institutions to improve the quality of their offerings
- ensure that institutions are accountable for their educational offerings
- foster public confidence in educational institutions

The benefits of Accreditation include:

- acceptance of qualifications internationally from graduates of accredited institutions and programmes
- easier access to programmes and scholarships
- smoother transfer of students and credits between institutions
- increased confidence that graduates from accredited institutions have the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for the workplace

During the reporting period, ACTT conducted Mid-term Reviews for Institutional Accreditation for the following two institutions:

MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)
– March 28, 2017

Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI)
– March 29, 2017

3 During the reporting period, ACTT conducted Comprehensive Site Visits for Institutional Accreditation for the following three institutions:

Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies (CCLCS)
– June 12-14, 2017

College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)
– July 03-07, 2017

The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)
– September 26-30, 2017

1 During the reporting period, the following institution retained its Candidacy for Institutional Accreditation:

National Energy Skills Center (NESC)

During the reporting period, ACTT reviewed Annual Accredited Institution Reports for eight institutions.

8

By the end of the reporting period, the total number of accredited institutions was thirteen:

The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus

The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)

College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT)

Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business (ALJGSB)

University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)

Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies (CCLCS)

Caribbean Nazarene College (CNC)

St Andrew's Theological College (SATC)

Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI)

Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (THTI)

MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)

West Indies School of Theology (WIST)

UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (UWI-ROYTEC)

2.4 PROGRAMME APPROVAL

This quality assurance process ensures that local or indigenous programmes are consistent with the institution's mission, are appropriately designed and structured, have stated learning outcomes and assessment strategies appropriate to the level of the qualification to be awarded and are adequately resourced for delivery. Further, it ensures programmes developed locally are aligned or referenced to other countries regionally and internationally. It is a mandatory activity that registered post secondary and tertiary institutions access as a means of validating the quality of their locally developed programmes.

The programme submitted by an institution for approval is evaluated by an External Evaluator who is an expert in the relevant field. The programme, once evaluated and found to have met the standards, is approved for a maximum period of three (3) years and coincides with the institution's period of registration. Prior to the expiration of the period of approval, the programme must be submitted for re-evaluation. Further, any substantive changes to programmes must be approved by ACTT before being implemented.

16 During the period, ACTT approved sixteen programmes from accredited institutions

During the reporting period, ACTT approved six programmes from registered institutions

6

2.5 QUALIFICATIONS AND RECOGNITION

Recognition is a process through which ACTT verifies that foreign institutions and programmes have been quality assured by the relevant quality assurance agency in the country of origin. Internationally, when an institution or programme is quality assured by a legitimate quality assurance authority, it is only guaranteed acceptability within the country in which it was quality assured. Institutions and programmes that are quality assured in one country are required to be recognised in another country. Recognition does not transcend national boundaries. However, quality assurance by a legitimate agency lays the foundation for recognition across borders.

The Act mandates that ACTT recognise programmes and awards of foreign institutions operating in Trinidad and Tobago. The aim of recognition is to verify that requirements are met for the delivery of foreign post secondary and tertiary education and training programmes through partnership arrangements with institutions registered by ACTT. While local institutions may apply for recognition of individual transnational programmes, a foreign awarding body/institution may alternatively seek recognition by ACTT. A transnational institution is one that has its origin and main establishment in a foreign territory and is offering programmes in collaboration with a registered institution in Trinidad and Tobago.

Through this process, foreign awarding bodies and institutions must provide evidence that the transnational qualifications offered locally are equivalent and comparable to the qualifications that carry the same or similar titles in the country of the awarding institutions. The foreign awarding bodies/institutions must also ensure that the local context is considered in the design and delivery of the programmes.

Foreign awarding bodies/institutions must also implement reliable and tested systems to avoid credential fraud and maintain the highest integrity of the qualification. Enrolled students should also

have the same rights of access to information regarding changes in fees, policy, examination results and other information available to students at the awarding institutions.

During the reporting period, ACTT conducted three site visits to review foreign awarding bodies/institutions for Initial Recognition.

ACTT also conducted two site visits to review foreign awarding bodies/institutions for Continuing Recognition within that period.

During the reporting period, ACTT conducted one site visit each for Initial Registration of a local awarding body, Continuing Registration of a local awarding body and Continuing Accreditation of a local awarding body qualification.

ACTT also conducted five site visits for Continuing Recognition of transnational programmes.

ACTT reviewed Annual Reports from nine ACTT-recognised foreign awarding bodies and institutions...

...and reviewed Annual Reports prepared by twenty-one institutions in Trinidad and Tobago involved in collaborative provision with ACTT-recognised awarding bodies and institutions.

During the reporting period, ACTT reviewed Annual Reports for eight recognised transnational programmes.

Additionally, ACTT reviewed an Annual Report submitted for a qualification from a local awarding body accredited by ACTT.

2.6

ISSUANCE OF STATEMENTS ON RECOGNITION

Employers, higher education institutions and other entities (e.g. those responsible for awarding scholarships) require that local and foreign institutions and programmes be recognised. ACTT provides authoritative advice and guidance on the recognition of local and foreign qualifications. A Statement on Recognition confirms the status of qualifications from local and foreign institutions/awarding bodies.



1,132

During the reporting period, ACTT processed one thousand, one hundred and thirty-two Statements on Recognition

437

ACTT also collaborated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the assessment of four hundred and thirty-seven qualifications for issuing CARICOM Skills Certificates

15,114

To date, ACTT has issued fifteen thousand, one hundred and fourteen Statements on Recognition

2.7 EQUIVALENCE ASSESSMENT

This service determines the comparable academic value of foreign qualifications in Trinidad and Tobago. An Equivalence Assessment is an evaluation of a foreign qualification to determine its comparative level and value to a similar qualification awarded by an institution in Trinidad and Tobago.

ACTT conducts assessments of foreign post secondary and tertiary level qualifications and issues statements on the equivalence of these qualifications. An Equivalence Assessment also provides information on the accreditation/recognition status of the institutions and programmes of study and may:

- assist a student to gain access to further study in Trinidad and Tobago
- facilitate credit exemptions

However, the institution receiving the student makes the final decision on the acceptability and value of credits towards completion of its programmes.

40 During the period, ACTT completed forty Equivalence Assessments

2.8 QUALITY ENHANCEMENT / INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Quality Enhancement Officers provide current and prospective institutions with guidance on meeting the requirements of ACTT's criteria and standards for the various services offered. Quality Enhancement is achieved through one-on-one preparatory meetings, workshops, seminars, training and technical support.

Quality Enhancement support is also provided to registered and accredited institutions through The Quality Institute (TQI), which offers training to strengthen an institution's ability to deliver quality education and training. It also extends its services to quality assurance bodies in the wider CARICOM region, facilitating attachments to ACTT and observation at site visits for registration and accreditation.

Monitoring of an institution's progress in maintaining registered or accredited status is also under the remit of quality enhancement support. This monitoring is achieved through the evaluation of progress reports, annual reports, mid-term reviews, scheduled focussed site visits and unscheduled site visits.

During the reporting period, ACTT hosted two workshops to prepare External Evaluators to conduct evaluations on behalf of ACTT:

External Evaluator Training
– October 17-19, 2016

Report Writing for Team Chairs
– October 25 & 26, 2016

ACTT also hosted three workshops entitled 'Guide to the Self Study Process' for the purpose of Continuing Institutional Accreditation for the following institutions:

Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business
– April 12, 2017

University of the Southern Caribbean
– June 08, 2017

MIC Institute of Technology
– July 21, 2017



Nyron Seaton, Accreditation Officer, ACTT, conducts a session during a Self Study Process workshop at Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business in April, 2017

2.9 SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Quality Assurance Month – October 2016

ACTT's Quality Assurance Month featured activities aimed at promoting quality assurance in higher education and training. The Council hosted a training workshop on *Report Writing for Team Chairs*, as well as a workshop for persons wishing to become External Evaluators. In addition, ACTT hosted the *Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony* to recognise the contributions of institutions and individuals to the development and advancement of quality assurance systems, policies and procedures for post secondary and tertiary education.

Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony

ACTT hosted the *Excellence in Higher Education Awards Ceremony* on November 02, 2016, at which Quality in Tertiary Education (QuiTE) Awards were presented to exemplary institutions in the following categories:

- Excellence for an Established Quality Management System
- Excellence for Student Support Services in Tertiary Education
- Excellence in Teaching and Learning

ACTT also presented awards to individuals in the higher education sector in the following categories:

- Excellence in Applied and Academic Research
- Excellence in Teaching

Winners of 2016 QuiTE Awards were as follows:

Institutional Awards

Excellence for an Established Quality Management System

1st Place: UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (UWI-ROYTEC)

2nd Place: Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI)

3rd Place: CTS College of Business and Computer Science Limited

Excellence in Student Support Services

1st Place (Medium Category): CTS College of Business and Computer Science

2nd Place (Medium Category): Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business – UWI

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

1st Place (Medium Category): Hugh Wooding Law School

1st Place (Large Category): University of the Southern Caribbean (USC)

Individual Awards*Excellence in Applied and Academic Research*

Professor Jayaraj Jayaraman, Professor of Biotechnology and Plant Microbiology, Department of Life Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine

Excellence in Teaching

Dr Farid Youssef, Lecturer in Human Physiology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine



Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director, ACTT, presents the 1st place award to Wendy Augustus, Chief Executive Officer, UWI School of Business and Applied Studies Limited (UWI-ROYTEC)



Dr Lovell Francis, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, presents the 1st place award to Wanda Chesney, VP Academic Administration, University of the Southern Caribbean

6th National Essay Competition for Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions

The Essay Competition targets secondary school students of forms 5 and 6 and undergraduate students of local registered and accredited institutions. It aims to foster an appreciation for issues related to quality assurance in higher education and the impact on and benefit to students, institutions, society and the economy. This competition seeks to build participants' knowledge base and foster appreciation for issues related to quality assurance in higher education and training. In 2016, the theme for the competition was *'Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training in Trinidad and Tobago: Fostering Institutional Development for Continual Improvement'*.



Winners of ACTT's 6th National Essay Competition

CATEGORY	Winners, School
Form 5	
1st place	Marcus James – St Mary's College
2nd place	Jose Pillai – St Mary's College
School Prize	St Mary's College
Form 6	
1st place	Joshua Parris – St Stephen's College
2nd place	Meagan Gopaulsingh – Naparima Girls' High School
3rd place	Celine Rasool – ASJA Girls' College, San Fernando
Honourable Mention	Arun Seeram Maharaj – Naparima College
School Prize	St Stephen's College
Undergraduate	
1st place	Darcel Bernard – SAM Caribbean Ltd
2nd place	Ariea Cobham – COSTAATT
3rd place	Sarah Jagoonanan – University of Trinidad and Tobago
Honourable Mention	Lisa Thomas – The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine

4th National Quiz on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Training

ACTT hosted its 4th annual National Quiz for third- and fourth-form secondary school students, from October 13 to November 11, 2016. This competition was conceptualised to inform students, their parents and teachers about the importance of pursuing programmes at quality assured higher education and training institutions.

Winners of ACTT's 4th National Quiz

1st Place

St Joseph's Convent, San Fernando

2nd Place

Cowen Hamilton Secondary School

3rd Place

Bishop's High School, Tobago

4th Place

Naparima College



ACTT's 4th National Quiz Champions
– St Joseph's Convent, San Fernando



ACTT's 4th National Quiz – top four schools

Development of the National Qualifications and Credit Framework

In keeping with the mandate to “develop and advise on a unified credit-based system for the post secondary and tertiary education sector” [Chapter 39:06 Section 8 (2) (g)], the Council is in the process of developing a National Qualifications and Credit Framework (NQCF). The Council continues to work with the National Training Agency (NTA) with regard to completion of the NQCF. Feedback collected from stakeholders will be used to refine the draft NQCF Matrix and to develop the Guidelines for the National Qualifications and Credit Framework. This companion document will provide explanations and principles for using the NQCF.

3.0 POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

3.1 TECHNICAL POLICIES

The Council's core services, as mandated by the Act, are governed by the Council's Technical Policies on Conferment of Institutional Title, Registration, Accreditation of Institutions, Programme Approval, Recognition of Foreign Institutions and Programmes and Statements on Recognition and Equivalence Assessment.

3.2 FINANCIAL POLICIES

The Council's financial policies are guided by the public service regulations and are in compliance with the following:

- The Exchequer and Audit Act, Chapter 69:01
- The Statutory Authorities Act, Chapter 24:01
- Standard Procurement procedures for the Acquisition of Goods, Services to be Provided and Works to be Undertaken and for the Disposal of Unserviceable Items in State Enterprises/ Statutory Bodies (State Agencies)
- Guidelines for Contract Employment in Government Ministries, Departments and Statutory Authorities subject to the Statutory Authorities Act, Chapter 24:01
- Circulars from the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO), Ministry of Finance, Comptroller of Accounts and the Director of Personnel Administration
- Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act No. 1 of 2015

3.3 ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

The Council maintains an Administrative and Personnel Policies Manual that provides information and procedures to all staff. This equips them with clear, specific and systematic approaches to executing their duties and to developing and maintaining ACTT's relationships with various stakeholders. It is a fundamental communication tool containing information and instructions pertinent to the duties, responsibilities and functions of staff.

The Administrative and Personnel Policies are currently being revised in accordance with Public Service guidelines and best practice related to contract employment in the government services.

4.0 FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

4.1 BUDGET FORMULATION

ACTT is funded through government subventions for recurrent expenditure and under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for specific projects and programmes. Based on the Council's projected activities for the fiscal year, and in accordance with ACTT's strategic direction, budget requests of \$23,370,859 and \$2,000,000 were submitted to the line Ministry for Recurrent and PSIP Expenditure, respectively. Arising from the budget presentation for fiscal 2016/2017, the Council was advised that its allocation of funds under Recurrent Expenditure for fiscal year 2016/2017 was \$14,000,000 and \$2,000,000 under PSIP. At the Mid-year Budget Review in May 2017, the Council was allocated a further \$5,000,000 to cover the payment of outstanding salary arrears and to fund shortfalls in basic operating expenses.

4.2 BUDGET / RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

For the financial year ended September 30, 2016, ACTT was initially allocated \$14,000,000 to fund its recurrent expenditure. In May 2017, this allocation was increased by \$5,000,000 to \$19,000,000. As at September 30, 2017, however, total releases received from Ministry of Education amounted to \$16,543,300. The Council had incurred total recurrent expenditure of \$18,171,060 for the fiscal year.

The table below summarises ACTT's recurrent expenditure for the period October 01, 2016 to September 30, 2017:

SUB-HEAD	Budget Releases \$	Actual Expenditure \$	Variances \$
Personnel Expenditure	255,000	253,742	1,258
Goods and Services <i>of which contract employment</i>	14,690,200 9,102,250	16,272,234 10,679,322	(1,582,034) (1,577,072)
Minor Equipment	10,000	9,188	812
Current Transfers and Subsidies	1,588,100	1,635,896	(47,796)
Total Recurrent Expenditure	16,543,300	18,171,060	(1,627,760)

TABLE 1A
ACTT's Budget / Actual Expenditure
October 01, 2016 to September 30, 2017

Personnel Expenditure relates to fees paid to members of the Council's Board. ACTT's Board of ten (10) members was appointed with effect from May 04, 2017. The expenditure of \$253,742 therefore represented Board fees and transport allowances paid for the period May 04 to September 30, 2017.

In September 2015, the Council received notice of CPO's approval of revised remuneration packages for the Executive Director and staff of ACTT, covering the period November 01, 2010 to October 31, 2016. Accordingly, in January 2016, partial arrears payments, amounting to \$3,356,614, were paid based on this notice. The Council was unable to pay outstanding arrears due to lack of funds. These arrears were finally settled over the period July 04 to August 25, 2017. This is reflected in the negative variance of \$1,582,034 under Goods and Services.

The negative variance under Current Transfers and Subsidies resulted from the payment of gratuity in accordance with the revised compensation packages (mentioned above) for those positions.

Throughout fiscal 2016/2017, the Council employed stringent cost cutting measures and opted to repair rather than replace its equipment to better manage its finances. Notwithstanding these measures, the Council still incurred a deficit of \$1,627,260 due to the non-receipt of approximately \$2,500,000 of its 2016/2017 allocation. In fact, the payment of salary arrears alone accounted for 98% of ACTT's 2016/2017 overall shortfall. The Council's deficit in fiscal 2017 was met out of minor revenues generated through ACTT's services.

4.3 BUDGET / PSIP EXPENDITURE

Total funding approved under PSIP for fiscal 2016/2017 was **\$2,000,000**. This allocation was approved for funding an Enterprise Wide Document Management System (EWDMS) that was to be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. No funds were released to ACTT to fund this project in fiscal 2016/2017. Therefore, no PSIP Expenditure was undertaken for the fiscal year.

4.4 DEBT POLICY

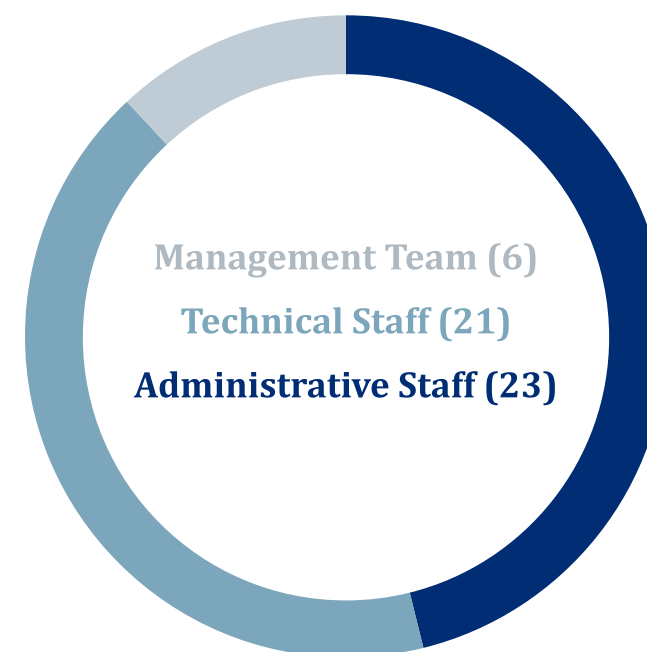
Section 19 of the Act gives the Council the power to borrow for the purpose of discharging its functions, subject to the approval of the Minister of Finance. To date, the Council has never sought to exercise this power.

4.5 INVESTMENT POLICY

Under Section 18 of the Act, the Council may "... accumulate reserves and such reserves and all other funds of the Council not immediately required to be spent in meeting the obligations of the Council or the discharge of any of its functions may be invested, from time to time, in such securities as the Council may with the approval of the Minister with responsibility for finance deem fit." The Council currently maintains an interest bearing account with its bankers, First Citizens Bank (FCB), under this proviso. Revenues generated by the Council are held in this account.

5.0 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 ORGANISATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT Category of Employees



Career Path Systems

- Contract Employment

Whenever a vacancy exists at a higher level, eligible employees may be given an opportunity to perform the duties of that position. Additionally, eligible officers may apply for higher positions when advertised in the daily newspapers.

Performance Assessment/Management Strategies

ACTT utilises a Performance Management Appraisal System as detailed in Policy 4:09 of the Council's Administrative and Personnel Policies Manual. Position Descriptions have been developed

for all offices. Periodic reviews, as well as Annual Performance Appraisals, are completed to evaluate officers' performance.

Selection Procedures

The Council recruits persons on contract in accordance with terms and conditions approved by the Chief Personnel Officer.

5.2 EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES

ACTT offers employee support as follows:

- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Coaching and mentoring activities
- Professional development workshops
- Access to learning resources
- Examination leave
- No pay study leave
- Employee recognition
- Loans for computer technology

5.3 TRAINING

In the interest of staff development, ACTT organised to have staff participate in the following workshop:

- April 26, 2017: Administrative Professional workshop – 'Unlocking Your True Professional Potential' hosted by MIC Institute of Technology

6.0 PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

The Council is guided by its existing Tenders and Procurement Policy, Rules and Procedures and has ensured that all its procurement activities are in keeping with the provisions of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property Act No. 1 of 2015 as amended by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property (Amendment) Act, 2016 and 2017. Section 7 of the Council's Procurement policy prescribes the forms of procurement that the Council uses. The following forms of tendering are used by the Council:

Open tendering

This is a process where Tenders and/or Bids are invited through advertisements or other forms of public notice. Open tendering is used in the following instances:

- When the Council's list of approved Vendors does not cater or adequately cater for particular types of articles/works/services
- Where it is competitively more advantageous
- Where the terms and conditions of the Council's borrowings so require

Selective tendering

Tenders and/or Bids are invited from the Council's list of approved suppliers. A minimum number of invitees shall be set so as to allow adequate competition in the procurement process. The invitees selected shall be the top ten (10) ranked suppliers registered to provide the particular articles/works/services. In cases where there are less than ten (10) registered suppliers, all the suppliers registered to provide the particular articles/works/services shall be invited.

Sole tendering

Where the circumstances so require, Merit Awards for purchase of materials/works/services shall be issued without inviting competitive bids.

Consultancy services

The Council recognises that, due to the specialist nature of certain types of professional and technical services classified as Consultancy Services, it may not be viable or economically sensible to engage in open or selective tendering. Once a determination is made by the office of the Corporate Secretary/Legal Officer that the Services are classified according to Tenders and Procurement Policies, Rules and Procedures as Consultancy Services, and suitable consultants/service providers with a proven record/reputation of efficiently providing services of the kind required are identified, the following procedure shall apply:

- **Consultancy Firms:** Except for Merit Consultancy contracts, all consulting services shall be competitively tendered either using open tendering or selective tendering as appropriate.
- **Individual Consultants:** Individual consultants are normally hired to carry out assignments for which the experience and qualifications of the individual are crucial to the task. They are selected on the basis of their qualifications and relevant experience for the assignment. Advertisement is not required and Consultants do not need to submit proposals. Consultants shall be selected through comparison of qualifications and relevant experience of at least three (3) candidates among those who have expressed interest in the assignment or who have been approached directly by the Council. Individuals considered for comparison of qualifications and relevant experience shall meet the minimum qualifications deemed relevant for the assignment and those selected by the Council shall be the best qualified and shall be fully capable of carrying out the assignment. Capability is judged on the basis of

academic/professional competence, as well as experience. Where appropriate, knowledge of the local conditions (such as local language, culture and administrative system), as well as the capacity to deliver on the proposed products or service within the prescribed timeframe required by the Council, may also be considered.

Emergencies

In cases of emergency where the safety of people, property, plant and equipment is in jeopardy, the most senior official responsible for that operation, if unable to contact the Executive Director or the Chairman of the Tenders Committee, may award contracts for Articles, Works or Services necessary to avert the danger or to bring the situation under control.

7.0 CLIENT AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO SERVICES / SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS

ACTT currently operates three (3) offices:

Head Office
Ground Floor and Level 3, Building B
Pan American Life Plaza
91-93 St Vincent Street
Port of Spain, Trinidad

South Outreach Office
40-44 Sutton Street
2nd Floor SSL Building
San Fernando, Trinidad

Tobago Office
MIC-IT/YTEPP Tobago Technology Centre
79 Milford Road
Canaan, Tobago

The public may also access ACTT's services through its website (www.actt.org.tt) and social media sites (www.facebook.com/ACTTNews and www.twitter.com/ACTTNews).

Limited access to ACTT's services is also available through the Council's Students Caravan initiative and career/college fairs.

7.1 CAREER FAIRS

ACTT participated in several career fairs that were geared towards sensitising students on the importance of attending quality assured institutions for further education and to introduce them to the following ACTT services: Registration, Accreditation and Recognition. These included visits to:

- A.S.J.A. Boys' College, Charlieville
- A.S.J.A. Girls' College, Barrackpore
- A.S.J.A. Girls' College, Charlieville
- Barrackpore East Secondary School
- Barrackpore West Secondary School

- Belmont Boys' Secondary School
- Carapichaima West Secondary School
- Cunupia Secondary School
- Holy Faith Convent, Couva
- Naparima College
- Parvati Girls' Hindu College
- Scarborough Secondary School
- South East Secondary School
- St Anthony's College
- St Charles High School
- St Stephen's College
- SWAHA Hindu College
- Trinidad Tower Cranes Services Ltd
- UK Higher Education and Skills Fair
- US Embassy College Fair
- UWI School Of Business & Applied Studies Ltd, North Campus

7.2 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

7.2.1 ACTT Partners

Local:

- The Trinidad and Tobago Group of Professionals Association (TTGPA)
- The Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad and Tobago (APETT)
- The Nursing Council of Trinidad and Tobago (NCTT)
- The Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago (MBTT)
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT)
- The Trinidad and Tobago Association of Psychologists (TTAP)

Regional:

- Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA)

International:

- The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), US
- UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC)
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK

7.2.2 Membership

ACTT has full membership with the following organisations:

- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
- Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE)
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation – International Quality Group (CHEA – CIQG)
- Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI)
- International Association of Universities (IAU)

7.2.3 Affiliations

ACTT is affiliated with the following organisations:

- Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA)
- Caribbean Tertiary Level Personnel Association (CTLPA)
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators, USA
- American Society for Quality (ASQ), USA
- Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE), USA
- The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), UK



Conclusion

ACTT is responsible for regulating the higher education and training sector in Trinidad and Tobago and plays a key role in the development of a creative and productive workforce. The Council is committed to ensuring a well-articulated and empowered human resource sector capable of supporting national development. ACTT will continue to inspire a culture of quality within post secondary and tertiary level institutions in Trinidad and Tobago.

ACTT has gained the reputation as the leader in quality assurance. External Quality Assurance Agencies in the region continually consult the Council on quality assurance matters in the higher education and training sector.

Future initiatives and plans

ACTT intends to publish the 2nd edition of the Journal of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (JQAHE), an internationally peer-reviewed journal that serves as a platform for scholarly discourse on theories, practices and policies in the area of quality assurance in higher education in the Caribbean region. This Journal, to be published electronically, will address these issues within the context of international trends and developments and best practice.

ACTT shall move towards adopting the CARICOM Qualification Framework (CQF) and rekindle its effort to develop the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) within the context of the CQF.



ACTT

**The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago**

Established by Chapter 39:06

Quality is the Key