

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

1. Introduction

Accreditation is the process employed by an external accrediting body to verify that an educational institution has the wherewithal to offer education and training which are comparable with international norms, including academic level and standards, and which are in line with its mission statement. Accreditation is a means of assuring quality of educational provision. Thus, an accredited programme is deemed worthy of offer subject to the institution meeting the necessary accreditation criteria and quality assurance of delivery of the programme. For our purposes, ensuring and continuously enhancing quality of education provision is of paramount importance. Ensuring and enhancing quality is the responsibility of the provider of education and training. As per The Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill April 2005, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has the responsibility to assure the stakeholders about the quality of programmes on offer by an institution.

2. Purposes of a Programme Accreditation

The purposes of a programme accreditation are to reassure stakeholders that programmes proposed are:

- i. relevant to the socio-economic needs of Mauritius ;
- ii. of international standards;
- iii. recognised nationally, regionally and internationally;
- iv. delivered in a satisfactory manner, ensuring that resources, both human and material, meet quality control procedures administered by the TEC.

3. Criteria for Programme Accreditation

3.1 Aims and Objectives

- The Programme is designed to meet the needs of students, taking into account programme length/duration, modes of attendance, location, structure and sequence, optional elements etc.
- The Programme aims and objectives are explicit and that teaching staff are conversant with them and they inform learners of them.
- The Specialist aims and objectives are consistent with institutional mission and aims.
- The aims and objectives correspond to the needs of learners, society and the economy, as revealed by systematic investigation.

3.2 Student Recruitment, Selection and Admission

- Policies regarding student recruitment, selection and admission are in line with established practices in higher education institutions world-wide.
- Admission is on merit and includes minimum academic achievements (GCE 5 'O' levels, including English Language and Maths, plus 2 'A' levels which are essential for the programme, or their equivalent. Provision is made to enable students who do not have traditional academic qualifications, but who have the motivation and potential, including accreditation of prior learning, accreditation of experiential learning, credit accumulation and transfer work-based learning and those who are mature to enrol on these programmes) as well as desired aptitude for successful completion of the programme.
- Provision is made for student counselling in deciding the choice of programme and it should include factual information on job prospects and academic/career progression.

3.3 Programme Design, Approval and Review

- The Programme provides an appropriate balance of specialist content, general conceptual skills and personal, transferable skills.
- The Programme is up-to-date in terms of specialist developments and current trends on programme development and delivery.
- Provision is made for periodic review of programmes
- There is an established system of regular liaison between the institution and industry, public agencies, professional bodies and other potential end-users.

3.4 The Teaching and Learning Environment

- The academic environment, physical and social, is generally conducive to learning, and the level of research and other scholarly activities is appropriate to the level of teaching.
- Teaching accommodation is sufficient in quantity and is appropriate for the programme on offer and for the full range of students. They meet health and safety regulations currently in force.
- There are adequate specialist facilities - including practical and experimental learning facilities - for the programme on offer.
- Ancillary facilities (staff accommodation, storage space, preparation rooms, amenity accommodation etc.) are adequate
- The physical environment is adequately maintained in terms of safety, cleanliness, repairs and decor.
- Accommodation, especially specialist accommodation, is optimally used as evidenced by suitable plans, schedules, timetables and control systems.

3.5 Staff Resources and Ancillary

- The teaching staff establishment is sufficient to deliver the programme.
- The teaching staff complement is suitable for the programme, in terms of the mix of qualifications and skills, experience, aptitudes, age, status etc.

- There is adequate support in terms of library, technician, administrative, student services, staffing, etc.
- Staff resources are effectively deployed: roles and relationships are well defined and understood; duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience and aptitude; there is provision for review, consultation and redeployment.
- Staff development needs are systematically identified, in relation to individual aspirations, the programme and institutional requirements.
- All staff, academic and non-academic, are given the opportunity with necessary support to undertake appropriate staff development related to identified needs: induction, in-service training, secondments, consultancy, research and other scholarly activities.

3.6 Learning Resources

- There are sufficient physical resources to deliver the programme, including equipment, materials and Information and Communications Technology.
- Equipment is up-to-date, readily available and effectively deployed.
- Library, audio-visual, internet access, appropriate software and hardware and other academic services are adequate for the programme.

3.7 Programme Organisation and Delivery

- Learning programmes are effectively organised and managed.
- Teaching programmes are clearly articulated, made known to learners and regularly monitored.
- Coursework and assessment are systematically scheduled.
- Feedback is regularly obtained from learners, employers, moderators and auditors, and analysed and acted upon as appropriate.

3.8 Teaching and Learning

- Teaching and learning are based on explicit learning outcomes which are consistent with programme/course aims.
- Teaching methods are innovative, varied, and appropriate to the stated learning outcomes and make effective use of available facilities, equipment, materials and aids.
- Teaching is well planned and prepared and effectively performed, taking account of the needs of all categories of students.
- The style and pace of teaching and learning takes due account of the nature of the programme, learners' varied abilities and prior learning, and the specific needs of the very able or weak learners equally.
- Teaching approaches encourage independent learning with critical thinking and learners take responsibility for their own learning.
- Learning is enriched by appropriate reference to cross-curricular links, current research, industrial applications and development of generic skills such as communication and teamwork.

3.9 Student Support

- Students' needs for guidance and support are recognised and provision made for advice and assistance in the programmatic, vocational and personal domains.
- Responsibility for particular aspects of student support is clearly located and effective liaison maintained between arrangements at all levels.
- Adequate provision is made for information and advice to potential learners during the application and enrolment phases.
- Learners are effectively supported during their studies by systems of induction, course tutors, personal tutors and provision for remediation and curricular choice.
- Learners are adequately prepared for the next stage of study or employment by appropriate contacts, information, advice and training.

3.10 Monitoring and Assessment

- A range of assessment methods including coursework, projects, research and examinations etc is used in a planned manner to serve diagnostic, formative and summative purposes.
- Assessment schemes are compatible with the aims and aspects of the programme as taught.
- The scope and weighting of assessment schemes are clear and known to all concerned and the standards applied are explicit and consistent with the programme.
- Procedures are regularly applied to ensure that, as far as possible, assessment schemes are valid, reliable and fairly administered.
- Coursework is regularly set and assessed and is at the appropriate level of attainment.
- Coursework faithfully reflects the full range of programme aims, including the development of generic skills.
- Learners' achievement, as represented by their coursework, is comparable with that of learners on similar programmes elsewhere.
- Learners' performance and attitudes indicate a positive and successful learning experience.
- A systematic procedure for keeping record of learner progress, for providing feedback to them and taking corrective action where necessary is effectively employed.
- Learners have ready access to reasonable appeal procedures.

3.11 Output, Outcomes and Quality Control

- Performance indicators are regularly used to inform organisational assessment of achievement in relation to educational aims and learning outcomes.
- Results are monitored and analysed and appropriate action taken.
- Results against these or other appropriate indicators compare favourably with organisational or national norms.
- Quality Control arrangements at organisational, department, subject and/or programme/course level are consistent and coherent.
- Quality standards, policies and strategies, are consistently applied and periodically reviewed within the cognate area.
- There is a general commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, apparent in staff and learner attitudes in all aspects of provision.

3.12 External Examiners

- External examiners, as implied, are independent of the organisation and are appointed for a specified period not exceeding three years.
- They are from reputable institutions and have the necessary expertise and experience.
- Terms of reference are explicit and should include moderation of question papers and model answers, moderation of scripts and providing feedback on performance of students. A feedback on the programme should be included.
- Ethical practice is given due importance.

3.13 Collaborative Provisions

- The collaboration is legally binding through a memorandum of understanding.
- Collaborating institutions/organisations undertake the responsibility to ensure that programmes are of the required standard and are offered with the same rigour as those in the parent institution.
- Learners benefit from the same standard of resources as the regular students of the awarding institution.
- The awarding institution undertakes the responsibility to assure the quality of the educational provision under the collaboration.
- The partner organisation is subject to quality assurance procedures.
- Learners are fully informed of the nature of the collaboration between the institutions/organisations concerned.

3.14 Industrial Links/Work-based Experience

- A committee comprising the institution and industry and other principal stakeholders meets regularly for the purposes of manpower planning.
- An active interface exists with industries for the purposes of identifying programmes of study and suitable work experience compatible with the learners' programme.
- The industrial sector is encouraged to participate in programme design and accreditation.

4. Accreditation Decision

Following an accreditation exercise, subject to the programme meeting the criteria stated above, the programme is granted provisional accreditation for the duration of the programme. The accredited status is valid for the specified period and thereafter it is subject to review on a periodic basis. With this provisional accreditation the applicant has the approval to offer the programme, but is subject to quality assurance procedures during the entire period of the programme which will be undertaken by the TEC.

Consequently, if the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division of TEC is not satisfied that the organisation is able to deliver the programme in a satisfactory manner, it will recommend to the TEC Board for the institution to be disallowed to enrol new students during the provisionally accredited period.



If the accreditation panel is not convinced that the programme meets all the criteria, but is of the opinion that it is of a standard which warrants further attention, then it is referred back to the applicant with recommendations. The applicant then has to resubmit the revised and consolidated programme within a period of three months for further consideration.

If the panel is not convinced that the programme meets the criteria to a significant extent then it is rejected outright.

The recommendations of the panel are communicated to the TEC Board for approval and the outcome is communicated to the applicant.

Six months prior to the lapse of the provisional accreditation of the programme, the institution may apply for the grant of full accreditation for the duration of the programme. Subsequently six months prior to the lapse of full accreditation the institution must reapply for the programme to be granted full accreditation.