



*Ensuring Quality, Standards and
Recognition for Tertiary
Education*

The Grenada National Accreditation Board

Information for Institutions Seeking Institutional Accreditation

Introduction

The Grenada National Accreditation Board (GNAB) was established in 2014 and is the duly authorised body by Act No. 15 of 2011 as amended by Act No. 31 of 2014. GNAB has responsibility for quality assurance and accreditation of post-secondary and tertiary level institutions in Grenada and advising on the status of quality assurance and accreditation with respect to foreign or transnational, post-secondary and tertiary level programmes and institutions. Post-secondary and tertiary level education and training refer to institutions and programmes which generally require successful completion of secondary schooling or its equivalent, and which lead to the award of qualifications at the sub-baccalaureate, baccalaureate, and postgraduate levels

This Guide has been prepared by the Grenada National Accreditation Board (GNAB) to assist institutions seeking accreditation. It provides general information on the goals of Institutional Accreditation, outlines the Institutional Accreditation criteria, lists the steps to accreditation, and provides information on the selection of the external evaluation team, self-study process and preparing effective evaluative reports. It should be used in conjunction with other document prepared by GNAB to guide institutions during the Institutional Accreditation process.

Goals of GNAB's Institutional Accreditation process

To be eligible for Institutional Accreditation, institutions must first be registered by the Grenada National Accreditation Board (GNAB). Registration is intended to safeguard learners and members of the public and prevent poor quality providers from operating in the local tertiary education sector. It also encourages institutions to continuously improve their quality. Registration establishes a formal relationship between GNAB and the institution. It is the first step towards Institutional Accreditation. In Grenada, institutions must become accredited or lose their legal authority to operate.

Institutional Accreditation is the status awarded to an institution that successfully undergoes GNAB's evaluation process against the stated criteria of educational quality. The process is intended to assure the public of the educational quality provided by the institution and to assist the institution in strengthening its internal systems and processes which support continuous quality improvement. Institutional accreditation considers the holistic characteristics of the institution and evaluates the organisational capacity to deliver quality educational programmes at the tertiary level. Institutional accreditation does not analyse any specific programme



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individually. However, programmes are reviewed as a part of the consideration of the entire institution. Instead, it examines institutional characteristics such as governance, administrative strength, academic policies and procedures, quality of faculty, physical facilities and financial stability.

Criteria for Institutional Accreditation

The Grenada National Accreditation Board (GNAB) has five (5) broad criteria for Institutional Accreditation which include:

➤ **Mission and Purpose**

The institution must demonstrate that it has a clear publicly articulated mission, which is appropriate for tertiary education and guides all of its operations.

➤ **Governance and Administration**

The institution must demonstrate that its system of governance and administration ensures ethical decision-making and effective stewardship of human, physical and financial resources to accomplish its educational and related purposes.

➤ **Teaching and Learning**

The institution must provide evidence of student learning outcomes achievement and faculty effectiveness. It must demonstrate that it is achieving its educational objectives and has the capability to continue to do so.

➤ **Preparedness for Change**

The institution must provide evidence that its human, physical and financial resources are strategically allocated and employed to respond to the social and economic demands of a rapidly changing world.

➤ **Quality Enhancement**

The institution must provide evidence that it monitors, reviews and continuously improves its Quality Management Systems through effective planning and evaluation, sustained effort and commitment to quality.

The criteria for accreditation are sufficient to allow each institution to be evaluated in the context of its mission and purpose. Each criterion is further divided into component standards which the institution must also satisfy. These are detailed in the *Criteria, Standards, and Scope of Evidence for Institutional Accreditation (IACC 2.2)* which is provided to institutions as part of the Institutional Accreditation Toolkit.



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Steps to becoming an accredited institution

- Apply to GNAB and satisfy the eligibility requirements.
- Be accepted as a Candidate for Accreditation.
- Conduct the institutional self-study against the criteria that is prepare and submit a self-study report to GNAB
- Agree on the external evaluation team and arrangements for the site visit.
- Host the team during the day(s) of the site visit reviewing facilities and interviewing student, faculty, and staff.
- Respond to the draft external evaluation report for any factual inaccuracies.
- Await the decision.
- If accredited, he institution must work to maintain the status and to continuously improve. GNAB will issue a Certificate of Accreditation and place the name of the institution in the registry of accredited institutions. Where accreditation is not granted, the institutions may appeal the decision.



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Guidelines for the Self-Study Process

What is a self-study or self-evaluation?

Self-evaluation should be a routine part of an institution's Quality Management System. Institution-wide self-evaluation such as the one required for Institutional Accreditation is usually conducted every 5-7 years or planned to coincide with an institution's preparation for external review. Depending on the size or complexity of the institution's operations, an effective self-study process may take between 1-2 years, from the planning stage to the completion of a final self-evaluation report. It tells the institution how well it is doing and how prepared it is to keep pace with a dynamic higher education sector. When embarking on institution-wide self-evaluation the institution should:

- Establish an internal panel or committee (often referred to as a Self-study Steering Committee) to oversee and coordinate the process and sub-committees with specific responsibility for certain tasks or focal areas.
- Engage in open, honest and thorough discussion and analysis on the areas of focus.
- Involve all stakeholders at some level so that there is ownership of, and active participation in the process.
- Probe institutional structures, processes and resources against the criteria by asking the following questions:
 - What is it that we do?
 - How well are we doing it?
 - What do we have?
 - How well does it work?
 - What can we do to improve it?
- Produce a written report presenting evidence of the institution's current capacity and past performance in the area of focus and make recommendations for improvement. It is common that multiple drafts of the report are completed before there is consensus on what should be included in the report and how it should be written.



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Style and format guide for the self-study report

The self-study or self-evaluation report is the outcome of the institution's internal self-evaluation against GNAB's criteria for Institutional Accreditation. The report should outline:

- The range of programmes and services offered.
- The structure of the institutions' operations (key personnel, roles and responsibilities).
- Assessment of institutional strengths and major achievements over the period of review.
- Areas for improvement including any improvements currently being undertaken.
- New developments that are in advanced stages of planning and have already been approved for implementation.

The report should be an analytical, evaluative, factual account of information obtained from the self-evaluation. It will involve reviewing and selecting evidence, analysing it, making conclusions, and putting forward these conclusions in statements that evaluate the institution's performance based on the evidence highlighted.

When writing effective evaluative statements institutions should:

- Choose data that makes the best case for meeting a criterion or standard.
- Write evidence-based evaluative statements using different types of evidence that are salient and relevant to a particular criterion or standard.
- Use a single complete thought to clearly specify the evidence, balancing content and detail.
- Ensure that each statement contains context, evidence, and judgment elements.
- Include only evidence-based evaluative statements that deal with the issues directly related to the criteria or standards; that are relevant and important to the organisation; and that support your evaluation and judgment.
- Provide information relevant to the organization's mission, context, and priorities.
- Limit the number of evidence-based evaluative statements since a standard may require only three or four evidence-based evaluative statements to make the point concisely.
- Provide information that is relevant and useful to the improvement of the institution, or to enhancing or reinforcing organisational strengths and accomplishments by focusing on actual accomplishments, impact, or results rather than on activities.
- Do not contradict other statements found elsewhere in the report.
- Avoid excessive descriptions or elaborations to ensure that evidence-based evaluative content is based on objective observations and sound rationale.
- Ensure that the evaluative statements are self-explanatory and avoid jargon.



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Institutions may find the template below useful when preparing their self-study report:

Self-Study Report Template for Institutional Accreditation

- a. Cover page
- b. Table of Contents
- c. Table/List of Exhibits
- d. Institutional Profile
- e. Chapter I - Introduction
 - Self-evaluation process
 - Organisational background
 - Registration history
 - Progress on concerns from last accreditation of registration period
- f. Chapter II - Criteria for Accreditation
 - Mission and Purpose
 - Governance and Administration
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Preparedness for Change
 - Quality Enhancement
- g. Chapter III - Conclusion

For each criterion the report should provide:

- An analysis of the evidence considered, with appropriate reference to each standard.
- Cross-references to relevant materials in other parts of the report.
- Analysis of relevant strengths and challenges.
- Recommendations for improvement.



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Selection of the External Evaluation Team

GNAB maintains a database of trained external evaluators from Grenada, CARICOM, and other countries. These include senior faculty and administrators from other tertiary institutions, subject matter experts, and industry professionals. A team may comprise of between three (3) to five (5) persons selected.

External evaluators are not employees of GNAB and provide an independent judgment of the institution against the criteria. GNAB makes the final decision on the composition of the team and invites feedback from the institution to ensure that a diverse independent team is selected. The team makes a recommendation based on its evaluation and GNAB Board, with the approval of the Minister of Education, makes the final decision based on that recommendation.