



Ensuring Quality, Standards and
Recognition for Tertiary
Education

The Grenada National Accreditation Board

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Rationale

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.

As part of its functions for quality assurance and accreditation in Grenada, GNAB has established appropriate criteria and processes to facilitate Programme Accreditation for institutions seeking external review of their programmes. The process for Programme Accreditation established by GNAB evaluates a programme against its criteria which focus on areas related to its purpose, administration and resources, teaching and learning processes, curriculum, and quality enhance practices. A programme which has been evaluated by GNAB and found to have satisfied all its criteria for Programme Accreditation will be awarded the status of Accredited Programme. The criteria for Programme Accreditation are detailed in the *Criteria, Standards, and Scope of Evidence for Programme Accreditation (PACC 4.2)*.

Eligibility for Programme Accreditation

All eligible institutions which are operating in Grenada may pursue Programme Accreditation with GNAB for any of their programmes. Programme Accreditation is a voluntary process within the national quality assurance system. Institutions which are seeking to have their programme awarded the status of Accredited Programme by GNAB must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:

- The institution that is offering the programme has Institutional Accreditation status
- The award which is granted on completion of the programme being evaluated, is awarded in the name of the institution and not by a foreign awarding institution
- At least one cohort has graduated from the programme or will do so prior to the commencement of GNAB's evaluation process



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Procedural Steps for Programme Accreditation

The Head of the institution completes the application form and submits a letter to GNAB Secretariat seeking to have its programme undergo GNAB's Programme Accreditation process. The letter should include the name of the programme and evidence that it meets the eligibility requirements

GNAB schedules a preliminary meeting with the institution to discuss the criteria, process, and the programme's readiness for the review.

Following the meeting, GNAB formally responds to the institution. GNAB invites the institution to submit concise plan for pursuing Programme Accreditation. The plan should include a proposed date for the submission of the self-study report and planned site visit.

After the plan is finalised and the provider demonstrates a readiness to proceed, the programme enters the stage of candidacy for Programme Accreditation. A GNAB liaison is appointed to the institution, the liaison will provide support to the institution during the process. The liaison will also monitor the institution to ensure that it is achieving milestones established in its plan.

The institution conducts a self-evaluation of the programme against the criteria and prepares a draft report which is submitted to GNAB within the timeframe set out in the institution's plan for pursuing Programme Accreditation.

GNAB reviews the draft report and advises the institution of any omissions or areas which require additional attention to satisfactorily demonstrate that the institution meets the respective criteria. The institutions address the feedback and sends its final submission to GNAB

GNAB formally appoints an external evaluation team and confirms the date(s) for the site visit in consultation with the team and the institution. The institution is required to bear the cost of the evaluation and arrangements for the site visit.

The team conducts the site visit and prepares its report and recommendation. GNAB makes the final decision based on the recommendation of the team and the decision is communicated to the institution. Programme Accreditation is normally granted for a period of five (5) years.



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Following the evaluation for Programme Accreditation GNAB may:

- grant Accreditation
- extend the period of Candidacy (only applies to initial evaluation)
- deny Accreditation.

The *Rationale for Decision Outcomes on Accreditation (GENP 7.3)* details each possible decision outcome.

GNAB's Evaluation Process for Programme Accreditation

When conducting an evaluation process for Programme Accreditation, GNAB will collaborate with the appropriate professional bodies to ensure that the curriculum requirements for programme accreditation are fully aligned with current requirements for professional practice in the respective areas. GNAB also 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. The evaluation team that is appointed will generally comprise two (2) or three (3) persons depending on the nature of the programme. External evaluators are not employees of GNAB and provide an independent judgement of the programme against the criteria. The team makes a recommendation based on its evaluation and GNAB Board makes the final decision based on that recommendation.

The team evaluates the programme against the criteria and standards based on the written submission and evidence provided by the institution and the observations and discussions during the site visit. The written submission should be based on a comprehensive self-evaluation of the programme. Self-evaluation should be a routine part of a programme's Quality Management System (QMS). It tells the programme how well it is doing and how prepared it is to keep pace with a dynamic higher education sector. When embarking on programme self-evaluation, the institution should:

- Establish an internal panel or 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 and programme structures, processes and resources which support or go against the criteria
- Produce a written report presenting evidence of the programme's current capacity and past performance in the area of focus and make recommendations for improvement.



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Institutions should organise their written submission according to the criteria and standards for Programme Accreditation. Within the written submission, there should be a narrative for each standard that provides an evaluative account of the programme and explain how the evidence provided satisfies the requirements of the respective standard. The evidence that is provided should be relevant to the programme and directly related to the specific standard it is intended to support. These should be placed in the appendix of the submission and properly cross-referenced throughout.

Maintaining and Continuing Programme Accreditation

To maintain the status of Accredited Programme, the institution must ensure that it continues to satisfy the criteria and standards for Programme Accreditation. Any substantive change in the institution or the programme must be communicated to GNAB prior to the implementation of the change. The *Guidelines on Substantive Institutional or Programme Changes (GENP 8.2)* may assist institutions to determine what constitutes a substantive change. GNAB may revoke the Accredited Programme status if in its judgement the institution or programme engages in fraud or intentionally deceptive practices, or if any changes made subsequent to the decision to award the status results in non-compliance with GNAB's criteria for Programme Accreditation.

In order to continue to be accredited, the programme must, prior to the expiration of its period of Accreditation, submit a self-evaluation report and undergo an evaluation and comprehensive site visit by GNAB. To be awarded continuing Accreditation, the programme must provide evidence that it has addressed any recommendations made by GNAB with respect to its previous evaluation, and demonstrate continued compliance with the criteria for Programme Accreditation. Following the evaluation for continuing Accreditation GNAB may either grant or deny continued Accreditation.



Resources and support provided by GNAB to guide institutions through the process for Programme Accreditation

After an institution submits its letter of intent and the programme is deemed eligible to undergo the Programme Accreditation evaluation, the following documents are provided in GNAB Programme Accreditation Toolkit:

- Guidelines for Programme Accreditation (PACC 4.1)
- Criteria, Standards, and Scope of Evidence for Programme Accreditation (PACC 4.2)
- Programme Accreditation Application Form (PACC 4.3)
- Rationale on Decision Outcomes for Accreditation (GENP 7.3)
- GNAB Glossary of Terms

Additionally, personnel at GNAB Secretariat will provide assistance to institutions with their application for Programme Accreditation. Once an application has been submitted, the institutions should liaise with personnel at GNAB Secretariat for feedback on their application.