



Ensuring Quality, Standards and  
Recognition for Tertiary  
Education

The Grenada National Accreditation Board

# Guidelines for Short Course 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, with 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 Short Course Accreditation for providers who offer education at the post-secondary and tertiary level outside formal educational systems (formal post-secondary and tertiary institutions must seek institutional Registration and Accreditation which should address quality assurance mechanisms with respect to their short courses). Short course offerings in the informal sector are sometimes company-specific and are designed and delivered to meet the need for skilled persons in specific areas, train employees to apply new technologies or operate new machinery, or provide general knowledge and skills that can be applied across different sectors of the economy.

In establishing the criteria and standards for accreditation of short courses GNAB has adapted those initially developed by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) and currently being used and developed by other External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) in the region. These EQAAs were established based on a common CARICOM model in furtherance of goals to strengthen regional tertiary education and facilitate the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In this regard, GNAB acknowledges the work done by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT), the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC), and UCJ in developing and improving these standards within the region. The GNAB criteria for Short Course Accreditation focus on areas related the provider's mission and governance arrangements, resources and facilities, and teaching and learning practices. A course which has been evaluated by GNAB and found to have satisfied all its criteria and standards for Short Course Accreditation will be awarded the status Accredited Short Course by GNAB. The criteria for Short Course Accreditation are detailed in the *Criteria and Standards, for Short Course Accreditation (CACC 5.2)*.



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### What is a short Course?

A short course is defined as a period of study for which no more than 30 credits are assigned. When several short courses are grouped together to qualify for assignment of credits, there must be commonality in their content. A credit or credit hour is the term commonly used as a measurement of contact time at the tertiary level. One credit should be awarded for a minimum of fifteen hours of teaching or lecture time. With regard to laboratory work, three hours is usually considered equal to one lecture hour. Most short courses reside outside of the formal education system, and contribute to on-going human resource development

### Eligibility for Programme Accreditation

GNAB will accept a course for Short Course Accreditation if it meets the following eligibility requirements:

- The provider of the course is not a formal post-secondary and tertiary education institution delivering structured programmes to multiple students on an on-going basis (formal institutions must seek Institutional Registration and Accreditation)
- The course qualifies to be assigned between one (1) to thirty (30) credits where one (1) credit is the equivalent to about fifteen (15) contact hours of instruction.
- The course has at least one cohort of graduates

### Steps for Short Course Accreditation

The provider submits a letter to the GNAB Secretariat seeking to have its course undergo GNAB's Short Course Accreditation process. The letter should include the name of the provider and sufficient detail about the course to demonstrate that it meets the eligibility requirements

GNAB schedules a preliminary meeting with the provider to discuss the criteria, process, and the provider's readiness for the review. If all eligibility requirements are met and the provider demonstrates a readiness to proceed, the course enters the stage of candidacy for Short Course Accreditation

The provider conducts a self-evaluation of the course against the criteria and prepares a draft report which is submitted to GNAB

GNAB reviews the entire submission for completeness and advises the provider of any omissions which should be addressed. The provider may be able to submit omitted components or may be required to resubmit the application.



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Once GNAB is satisfied that the institution's submission is complete, an internal panel conducts a review of the submission against the criteria and standards. The panel produces a Gap analysis report which is submitted to the provider.

The provider responds to the Gap Analysis report providing additional evidence and explanations as required.

GNAB appoints an external evaluation team which conducts a site visit of the facilities used to deliver the course. The provider is required to bear the cost of the evaluation and arrangements for the site visit.

The evaluation team prepares its report and recommendation on the status to be awarded. GNAB makes the final decision based on the recommendation of the team and the decision is communicated to the provider. Short Course Accreditation will normally be granted for a period of three (3) years.

Following the evaluation for Short Course Accreditation GNAB may:

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

The *Rationale for Decision Outcomes on Accreditation (IACC 2.4)* details each possible decision outcome.

### GNAB's Evaluation Process for Short Course Accreditation

When conducting an evaluation process for short course accreditation, GNAB will collaborate with the appropriate professional bodies to ensure that learning objectives for related short courses are relevant to 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 tertiary institutions, subject matter experts, and industry professionals. The evaluation team appointed will generally comprise one (1) or two (2) persons depending on the nature of the course. External evaluators are not employees of GNAB and provide an independent judgment. The team evaluates the course against the criteria and standards based on the written submission, supporting evidence, and the observations and discussions during the visit to the provider's facilities.



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The written submission should be based on a comprehensive self-evaluation of the provider's operations and the delivery and related services for the course. Self-evaluation should be a routine part of a provider's Quality Management System (QMS). It tells the provider how well it is doing and how prepared it is to keep pace with changes in the education environment and the sector related to the course.

Providers should organise their written submission according to the criteria and standards for Short Course Accreditation. Within the written submission there should be a narrative for each standard that provides an evaluative account of the provider's operations for delivering the course and explain how the evidence provided satisfies the requirements of the respective standard.

The evidence provided should be relevant to the course and directly related to the specific standard it is intended to support. Extracts, procedures, plans and other documentary evidence should be placed in the appendix of the submission and properly cross-referenced throughout.

### Maintaining and Continuing Short Course Accreditation

To maintain the status of Accredited Short Course the provider must ensure that it continues to satisfy the criteria and standards for Short Course Accreditation. Any substantive change in the provider's operations or the course must be communicated to GNAB prior to the implementation of the change. GNAB may revoke the Accredited Short Course status if in its judgement the provider engages in fraud or intentionally deceptive practices, or if any changes made subsequent to the decision to award the status result in non-compliance with GNAB's criteria for Short Course Accreditation.

In order to continue to be accredited, the provider must, prior to the expiration of its period of Accreditation, submit a report and undergo an evaluation by GNAB. To be awarded continuing Accreditation status, the provider must demonstrate evidence of continued compliance with the criteria for Short Course Accreditation. Following the evaluation for continuing Accreditation GNAB may either grant or deny continued Accreditation.



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## Resources and support provided by GNAB to guide providers through the process for Short Course Accreditation

After a provider submits its letter of intent and the course is deemed eligible to undergo the Short Course Accreditation evaluation, the following documents are provided in the GNAB Short Course Accreditation Toolkit:

- Guidelines for Short Course Accreditation (CACC 5.1)
- Criteria and Standards for Short Course Accreditation (CACC 5.2)
- Short Course Accreditation Application Form
- Rationale on Decision Outcomes for Accreditation (IACC 2.4)

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