

HANDBOOK
OF
ACCREDITATION
&
AUDIT

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**NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES
TO THE
HANDBOOK OF ACCREDITATION**

The following changes were made to the Handbook of Accreditation Version 3.2; Revised February 2010, resulting in the current Handbook for Accreditation & Audit Draft Version 0.8; August 2012. The name was changed from Handbook of Accreditation to Handbook of Accreditation & Audit. This has resulted in the issuance of a new document coded Version 1.0, November 2012.

The date of the most recent revision of the document is reflected in the current footer.

Introduction to Accreditation

Accreditation is the status granted to institutions engaged in the training and assessment of individuals, for their programme offerings which have been found to meet or exceed established criteria of quality. To be accredited, therefore, is to be given formal recognition for that continuous quality. To be accredited an institution has to undergo a comprehensive review of its policies and practices which can be either be two (2) types, namely;

- (i) Institutional Accreditation accounts for all training and assessment programmes offered by the entire institution or
- (ii) Programme Accreditation which reviews a specific training and assessment programme.

These criteria are defined in the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard. The standard examines the institution's operations under the areas of:

1. **Quality Assurance and Control:** requires evidence that the institution has a clear commitment to ensuring and improving the quality of programme delivery and institutional processes.
2. **Staff Resources:** focuses on the institution's selection and recruitment processes to ensure that the institution provides and maintains staff at a level to support programme delivery.
3. **Physical Resources:** looks at the adequacy, availability and relevance of the institution's tools and equipment, infrastructure, inventory management, maintenance and safety systems.
4. **Client Services and Activities:** reviews the support services in place to attain client satisfaction and success from entry to completion thus meet their academic and social needs.

5. **Training:** focuses on how the institution communicates to its clients to ensure understanding of the learning and assessment methodologies. Evidence is also required to show that there are systems in place to facilitate proper planning, implementation and review of programmes being delivered to assure integrity and quality in outcomes.
6. **Assessment & Certification:** looks at the established system for assessing training outcomes and for ensuring the verification of assessment outcomes.
7. **Evaluation:** takes into account how the institution evaluates its core processes towards continuous improvement.
8. **Risk Management:** focuses on the processes and procedures put in place to forecast, evaluate and avoid or minimize unfortunate events that can impact the institution's objectives.

Accreditation is one means through which quality assurance can be established and maintained within an institution. It enables the acceptance of and public confidence in the training and assessment services provided by the institution.

Quality in the provision of technical and vocational education and training is determined by how well certified individuals meet the stated requirements of the workforce. Establishing and maintaining quality in the training and assessment process has become a major concern for a number of training institutions locally and internationally. Training providers in Jamaica are becoming more concerned about the effect of public confidence and acceptance of the services they offer. Such acceptance helps to promote the mutual recognition of outcomes that enables articulation and enhances continuity of training.

The consistency in producing certified individuals to meet these quality requirements is dependent on a number of factors, among which are: the relevance and effectiveness of programmes, the competence and continuous improvement of staff, the sufficiency and

utilization of physical and financial resources, the provision of support services offered to learners, the employment of effective training and assessment procedures and the implementation of efficient systems for the continuous review and improvement of processes. An evaluation of these factors, in order to determine if quality resides in the institution's operations, is required for accreditation.

The process of accreditation/evaluation is conducted against the Standard of Accreditation established by the **National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET)**. The methodology is based on peer and industry review and is designed to be independent and transparent.

Steps to Accreditation

The flowchart of the Accreditation Process outlines the steps to accreditation, and institutions applying for the accreditation of their programmes should be guided by same, (see Appendix I). Institutions applying for accreditation are required to register and attend one of the NCTVET's sensitization sessions. Contact the NCTVET for details. These sessions are geared towards providing information regarding the accreditation process and other quality assurance requirements.

Application

The submission of a *letter of interest* is required to begin *the first phase* of the process. *The prospective client will be referred to the Monitoring & Evaluation Department (M&E) of the HEART Trust/NTA or other authorized body, for support in preparation for a site evaluation. A duly completed Application For Accreditation form will be required to initiate this evaluation.* The application form is available at the NCTVET or may be retrieved from the website - www.nctvetjamaica.org. All applications must be accompanied by a copy (.pdf or otherwise readable by computer) of the institution's Policy and Procedures Manual, signed and dated Qualification Plan(s) and detailed documentation of the programme(s) for which accreditation is being sought. Documentation should include details with respect to the number of hours utilized

per course for both theory and practical sessions, and the delivery and assessment strategies being used for each course.

Applications for accreditation of programmes from HEART Trust/NTA registrants, whether new or existing, will be accepted for processing no later than December 31, each year. Any deviation from this arrangement will require that the requisite justification be submitted with the completed Application For Accreditation form.

The completed application form along with proof of payment of the application fee must be submitted to:

The Information & Records Management (IRM) Unit
NCTVET
P.O. Box 179
Gordon Town Road
Kingston 6.

Payment of Fees

All fees relating to the services for the accreditation exercise shall be borne by the applicant. These fees are outlined in the “Fee Structure” of the NCTVET and can be accessed from the Information & Records Management Unit/Registry of the NCTVET (876-977-1700-5). Institutions should review this fee structure to ascertain the fees required for the provision of related services for the accreditation exercise. **Fees should be paid in accordance with the stipulations given by Registry of the NCTVET.**

Application fees are non-refundable.

Technical Workshop & Support

An invitation will be extended to the applicant to attend a Technical Workshop to heighten awareness of the process. A representative of the M&E Department will conduct a Gap Audit, geared towards helping the institution to identify the areas in the training and assessment processes which may have visible weaknesses or may not have sufficient evidence available. A report of the audit will be submitted to the institution and should assist the *entity*, under the guidance of *the M&E Department*, in its preparation for the evaluation activity.

Site Evaluation

A site evaluation is conducted by a visiting team of professionals and officers from the Quality Assurance Department of the NCTVET to determine compliance with the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard. This determination is made through an examination of evidence, observation of the operations and interviews with key personnel, inclusive of graduates of the training programme and employers.

Determination & Continuation of Status

The evaluation team's Verification Report, which includes the institution's response, will be submitted to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee, whose recommendation is then presented to the Council and a determination made regarding accreditation. If a decision is made not to award accreditation, the institution may appeal directly in writing to the Council for reconsideration (*refer to Section VII*). The institution is otherwise required to re-apply for re-evaluation of programmes for accreditation based on the guidance given by the Council. An award of accreditation is made for a period of four (4) years. During this period, to ensure continuous compliance, the accredited institution shall submit an annual report on its accredited programme(s).

THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The NCTVET

The National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) (hereafter referred to as the Council) was established in 1994, under the auspices of the amended HEART Act (1992). The NCTVET was established as part of the thrust to improve the quality of delivery of technical and vocational education and training in Jamaica by generating standards for worker performance and promoting the use of these standards for improving the productive capacity of the Jamaican workforce.

The Mission

The mission of the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) is to promote quality outcomes in training, and provide assessment and certification for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in response to labour market demands and national development.

Composition and Structure of the Council

The Chairman and members of the Council are appointed by the Minister with responsibility for Education and sit on the Council for a period of three (3) years.

The primary work of the Council involves the approval and promulgation of Competency Standards, the accreditation *and approval* of programmes, *ratification and approval of assessment and certification policies and outcomes* and the promotion of continuous improvement in the training and certification of occupational competence.

Members of the Council are drawn from public and private sector companies and institutions. Representation on the Council shall include:

- i. Permanent Secretaries from the Ministries with responsibility for:
 - Education
 - *Labour*
- ii. Members of major business and industrial enterprises and representative bodies (see Appendix II):
- iii. Members of educational and training institutions (see Appendix III):
- iv. Members of public institutions (see Appendix IV):
- v. Members of the NCTVET:
 - The Senior Director,
 - The Secretary/Manager of the Council/Manager, Council Secretariat *and* Promotions

The Council has established three technical committees through which it conducts its work. These are the Occupational Standards, *the* Quality Assurance and *the* Assessment and Certification *Sub-Committees*. Each *sub-committee* has at least one member of the Council and that Council member functions as the *Chairman* of that *sub-committee*.

The Quality Assurance Sub-Committee shall be responsible for all recommendations related to accreditation taken to the Council.

Responsibilities of the Council

In the exercise of its functions, the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training has been granted the responsibility to:

- *accredit and Centre Approve* technical and vocational programmes being offered in Jamaica
- accredit institutions offering assessment services leading to certification in TVET qualifications
- appoint persons or committees, as the Council deems fit, to assist in the execution of its functions
- approve Competency Standards which are used in the training, assessment and certification of individuals
- approve the issuance of qualifications such as the National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica (NVQ-J), Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) and Statement of Competencies

Role of the NCTVET

The main functions of the NCTVET are to:

1. promote quality, relevance and efficiency of technical and vocational education and training
2. *accredit and Centre Approve* programmes that have demonstrated the acceptable level of quality in the institution and in the delivery of training and/or assessment in TVET

3. establish Industry Lead Groups to guide the development of Competency Standards and *related assessment strategy* for the training and assessment of worker competencies
4. *develop assessment instruments and administer the assessment activity*
5. co-operate with other institutions and bodies, whether national, regional or international, for such purposes as the Council may deem fit
6. promote and promulgate the acceptance and use of standard in the training and assessment of competencies in TVET
7. maintain a record of all qualifications and certificates of accreditation

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCREDITATION

POLICY STATEMENT

Institutions that deliver technical and vocational training programmes can apply to the NCTVET for accreditation of its programmes and shall comply with all requirements as stated in the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard and the procedures outlined hereafter.

I Eligibility Requirements for Application for Accreditation

Institutions which deliver technical vocational training programmes that apply to the NCTVET for accreditation of its programmes, shall be registered with the Ministry with responsibility for Education and the Registrar of Companies or relevant bodies as required for its existence by the Government of Jamaica.

These institutions are required to participate in the sensitization sessions offered by the NCTVET, which are geared towards providing the requirements and guidelines for the accreditation process. Institutions should aim to put all the requirements in place to satisfy the requirements before applying for accreditation.

For a new institution to be eligible for programme accreditation, *that* institution must first seek approval status from the NCTVET. This status indicates that the institution has met the minimum requirements for it to function as one offering TVET programmes. Centre Approval is a pre-accreditation status, the requirements of which are components of the accreditation criteria. This process is aimed at providing a progression to the accreditation status.

II *Ethics and Integrity*

The Council must be assured *that the management of the institutions* conduct their affairs with acceptable standards of honesty and integrity.

If the Council has cause to believe that an institution that has programmes accredited or any prospect for accreditation, is acting in an unethical manner, or is deliberately misrepresenting itself to the learners or the public, it shall assess the situation and take appropriate action.

If an institution misrepresents itself in documents filed with the Council for purposes of accreditation or reaffirmation, the Council shall immediately sever its relationship with the institution and may publish the decision.

III **Site Evaluation**

Upon satisfying the requirements of the Technical Workshop & Support process, the institution shall submit a completed Application for Accreditation form and its Policy and Procedures Manual to the Manager, IRM/Registrar *of the* NCTVET, within *seventy (70) working days* (fourteen weeks) of its notification of readiness from the Monitoring & Evaluation Department (M&E). The Manager, IRM/Registrar *of the* NCTVET shall review the documentation submitted, to verify completeness, then channel the verified documents to the Quality Assurance Manager of the NCTVET who assigns the activity to at least two (2) Quality Assurance Specialists. One of the assigned Specialists is the Lead Auditor who communicates with the institution and proposes an evaluation date. Once agreed this date is recorded on the application form. The Specialist then contacts the external members of the evaluation (audit) team to confirm their availability for the agreed date, before it can be finalized.

Institutions shall pay 10% of the cost for evaluation upon the finalization of the date of evaluation. Any change in the evaluation date by the institution shall result in the loss of the deposit and upon the finalization of the new date another 10% deposit would be required. If the NCTVET changes the evaluation date, the institution will be granted a 10% reduction of evaluation fees.

IV Evaluation Teams

Nature and Composition of team

The policy of the Council is to select highly qualified evaluation teams in order to ensure the most effective evaluation of the programmes.

The team may consist of a combination of the following:

- (i) Quality Assurance Specialists, one of whom shall be the lead evaluator
- (ii) Administrators and instructors of technical and vocational institutions
- (iii) System-wide supervisors, coordinators, practitioners and directors of technical and vocational operations or enterprises
- (iv) Educators, vocational counselors and lay personnel (who have expertise in technical and vocational education)

Team members must fulfill one or more of the following:

- (i) Have expertise or experience in the field of technical and vocational education
- (ii) Be a practicing professional in the vocational area(s) under evaluation, or have a record of such past experience (members of the related industry lead group will automatically qualify)

The Quality Assurance Specialist of the NCTVET shall select the evaluation team, which shall be approved by the Manager, Quality Assurance, NCTVET. The number and composition of an evaluation team shall be based on the number of programmes being evaluated in the training institution, the number of staff members, the number of trainees and the purpose of the evaluation (i.e. initial accreditation or reaffirmation). *An audit* plan shall also be developed to guide the evaluation process. The team shall conduct the evaluation as outlined in the *audit* (evaluation) plan.

The institution will be notified of the membership of the team prior to the distribution of the evaluation plan to team members. A team member can be rejected by the institution for good cause. This must be done in writing to the Director of the *Quality Assurance Department*, NCTVET.

A member of an evaluation team shall not use any information garnered as an evaluator to solicit employment at the institution visited until after the decision of the Council is made, or, if the institution appeals or until the appeal is finalized. Anyone who violates this policy shall be removed from the roster of possible team members.

A visiting team member must state that he/she has no vested interest in, or conflict of interest with, the institution to be visited. The team member must also state that all documents and information shall be treated in a confidential manner.

TYPES OF TEAMS

A. Accreditation Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team shall evaluate the programmes to determine compliance with *the* policies, criteria and procedures of the Council.

B. Special Review Team

If, in the judgment of the Council, a re-evaluation or review of the institution for compliance with the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard and other policies and procedures is deemed necessary, a special review team visit may be scheduled to conduct a special audit.

C. Observers on Visiting Teams

An observer is an individual who attends an evaluation/audit solely to note the proceedings, but does not directly participate in any decision making. Approval must be granted by the Director or Manager *of the Quality Assurance Department* and the organisation to be evaluated (the Auditee), for an individual to be an observer of an Evaluation /Audit.

Persons observing at their own requests are responsible for their own expenses. However, in instances when an individual is invited by the Council to be an observer, the expenses are borne by the Council.

V Reporting

The institution (a single site entity) shall be provided with a copy of the evaluation team's report within thirty (30) working days of the conduct of the audit exercise and will have at most thirty (30) working days in which to respond to the audit findings.

Institutes (multiple sites entity) shall be accorded at most fifty (50) working days for provision of the report and will have at most fifty (50) working days in which to respond to the audit findings.

An institution/institute requiring an extension to the submission of their response should submit such a request in writing to the *Manager of the Quality Assurance Department, NCTVET*, within seven (7) working days before the due date of the response. Non-submission of a response from an institution after thirty-five (35) working days of the original required submission date shall result in a communique to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee for a decision to be made.

The Manager of Quality Assurance, NCTVET, shall review the responses to the audit findings to determine whether or not the organization has addressed the deficiency(ies), adequately. If the response(s) is/are unfavourable the auditee shall be notified of same and the decision to postpone the verification exercise until the requirements have been satisfied.

A verification of the institution's response shall be conducted by the evaluation team at a mutually convenient time within ten (10) working days after the receipt of the institution's response. The resulting Verification Report will be submitted to the *Manager of the Quality Assurance Department, NCTVET*, seven (7) working days after the verification exercise, for tabling at the next scheduled Quality Assurance Sub-Committee meeting.

VI Council Decisions Regarding Accreditation Status

The status of any programme shall be reviewed as specified in the procedures outlined in this handbook. The Council may take the same actions in both evaluations and special audits regarding the status of the programme(s)/institutions. The decisions that can be taken are:

1. Accreditation of the programme (with or without stipulations)
2. Granting of Transferral to Revised Qualification for a period not exceeding one (1) year (See details in section A, below)
3. Placement of an accredited programme on probation for a period not exceeding one (1) year
4. Permitting of extension of accreditation status
5. Denial of accreditation
6. Withdrawal of accreditation for programme(s) or from the institution (See details in section B, below)

A. Transferral to Revised Qualification

A transfer from one version of a Qualification Plan to an updated version, thereof, becomes effective as soon as the revised Plan is uploaded to the Information Management System {NTA Qualifications System (NQS)}.

There will be, on this system, an electronic bulletin board - “Notice Board”; all users will – at once and the same time – be notified of the revised Qualification Plans that have been uploaded, advised that the status for those particular skills have now been mapped to these new Plans, and each new student registration must be against the revised Plans. In addition to *the* electronic bulletin board, the Information Management System will be configured to send an electronic notification directly to

the ATO personnel (i.e. Director/Principals, Managers, Registrars, AAMO/AMO, etc.).

The institutions will be granted access, until their current accreditation statuses have expired or pending the outcome of the next annual review, whichever comes first. In either case, the institution will undergo a full audit to determine compliance with the requirements of the revised Plans. Failure to fulfill all requirements within the agreed period will result in a termination of the accreditation status.

Users will be made aware of these intended changes beforehand, through system-wide stakeholder consultations. In these sessions, also, stakeholders will be informed that they will still have access to the old Plans, to enable the uninterrupted training of those persons who have already started the programme. This arrangement will remain until the completion of the programme by those who are currently enrolled.

B. Withdrawal of Accreditation

The Council has the right to remove the accredited status upon the conduct of compliance or special audits of programme(s), for the non-maintenance of policies and/or procedures and non-compliance to the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard.

The institution may appeal such decision within thirty (30) working days (*refer to Section VII*). If there is no notification of an intention to appeal within the stipulated time, the decision of the Council shall be made known to the public. However, if there is notification of an intention to appeal within the stipulated timeline, the accredited status may remain in force until the final disposition of the appeal. This however, is dependent on the reason for the withdrawal of accreditation. If the withdrawal is due to an issue that may result in the image of the NCTVET being damaged in any way, the decision on the accreditation status will be postponed until the appeal process is complete. An institution that has had accreditation of any of its programmes withdrawn or denied may file a new

application for accreditation once it deems itself compliant with the standards and policies of the NCTVET.

A prospect for accreditation or an accredited institution can withdraw its candidacy or relinquish its accredited status at any time, by informing the Council in writing.

In the cases of a withdrawal or relinquishment, the institution shall return the related Certificate of Programme Accreditation to the Secretary/Manager, Council Secretariat within ten (10) working days of being advised of the decision.

C. Extension of Accreditation Status

An accredited institution can request an extension to the validity period for its accredited programme(s). Refer to Section X: Reaffirmation.

The merit of such a request is determined on a case by case basis by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee, with final approval by the Council.

Publication of Accreditation Status

The NCTVET will communicate all decisions relating to accreditation, as detailed under Section VI, to the public.

VII Appeal Procedure

A. Filing an Appeal

Should the report of an evaluation team or an interim visiting team or special deliberations of the Council lead to a recommendation to withdraw (or withhold in the case of *a* candidate institution - *a prospect*) or *deny* accreditation, the institution has recourse to the appeal procedures. Institutions that are accredited by the Council or

institutions that have formally, properly and completely made applications to the Council for accreditation may appeal the following actions of the Council:

1. Decision that accreditation be denied
2. Decision that accreditation be withdrawn
3. Decision to place the programme on probation

If an institution is aggrieved by any of the actions listed above, *the management of the institution*, with the approval of the Board of Directors or other governing body, may give notice of intention to appeal such action within thirty (30) calendar days' notice of the Council's action. The notice shall be sent in writing to the Chairman, NCTVET. The letter must indicate:

1. Justification for an appeal
2. The specific grounds for the request and the willingness of the institution to abide by the outcome of the appeal

Documentation in support of the appeal must accompany the letter.

B. Composition of the Appeal Panel

The Chairman of NCTVET shall appoint *two (2)* members of the Council to sit on the appeal panel. *Three (3)* additional persons *that are non-Council members that satisfy the established criteria* shall be appointed on the approval of the *Council* Chairman to sit on the panel. The Secretary/Manager shall record all proceedings.

The panel shall not include any member of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee who participated in the decision under appeal. The panel shall not include any member of the Quality Assurance staff.

C. Appeal Proceedings

The Secretary/Manager of the Council shall set the date, time and place of the proceedings of the appeal at least *twenty (20) working days* in advance and notify the institution at least *twenty (20) working days* before the proceedings.

The members of the panel shall select a chair. The designated chair shall preside at all proceedings and will rule on all procedural matters. Prior to convening the meeting of the panel, the Secretary/Manager shall present all documentation relating to the accreditation decision under appeal to the members. These shall include:

1. All correspondence between the NCTVET and the appellant institution relating to the decision under appeal, including application form and letters.
2. Reports of the evaluation team and the organisation's response to the report.
3. Statement from the appellant institution on the accreditation decision.
4. Reports/Minutes on all meetings of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee at which discussions on the appellant institution's accreditation was discussed.

Decisions of the panel shall be based upon a majority vote of the panel members. In all appeals, the decision of the panel is final.

- **Changes to Submission**

Any changes to the submission during the investigation may result in an automatic withdrawal of the appeal and a decision will be made by the appeals committee.

- **Withdrawal of Appeal**

The appellant institution can withdraw its appeal by submitting in writing to the Chairman its decision to withdraw its appeal submission. The withdrawal

can be made within fourteen (14) calendar days after its initial submission or at least ten (10) calendar days after the notification of the appeals' proceedings from the Secretary/Manager of the Council.

D. Appeals Panel Reporting

The appeal panel shall prepare a written report to the Chairman of the Council. The report will state the decision of the panel. The report must be sent to the Chairman within thirty (30) calendar days following the last appeal panel proceeding. The Secretary/Manager, Council Secretariat, shall send one copy to the institution and place the report on the agenda of the next Council meeting.

VIII Continuation of Accredited Status

An award for Accreditation is for a period of four (4) years. An additional year may be allowed at the discretion of the Council. During this period, a number of audits may be conducted including annual reviews, assessment and special audits to determine if the institution maintained compliance with the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard. The annual review audit is the only mandatory audit that shall be done for all Accredited Training Organizations over the four (4) year period.

(i) Annual Review

A review shall be conducted annually which focuses on the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the institution's operations. This review shall be a comprehensive examination of the institution, to evaluate its performance as measured by the operating standards and to ensure that the institution continues *to* conform to the requirements of its policy, procedures and all standards as per its accreditation status. Institutions shall submit an annual report to NCTVET to facilitate the annual review. The Annual Report from the institution should include details of the following areas :

1. Changes to the Management and/or Structure
2. Financial Statement
3. Audit Report and/or copy of Organization's budget
4. Changes in staff complement
 - a) Resignation/Retirement
 - b) Staff Profile - New recruits and upgraded staff
5. Staff upgrading and development plan
6. Changes in Programme(s) being delivered
7. Changes in inventory (i.e. tools/equipment)
8. Intake and completion information
9. Up-to-date Risk Register
10. Summary of achievements and difficulties/limitations encountered over the previous twelve (12) months, and actions that have been taken to correct these difficulties/limitations. Changes that may have occurred, to any policy, procedure or systems, under the various clauses of the *NCTVET's* Accreditation Standard.
11. Any other applicable information requested by the NCTVET

The Annual Report shall be submitted to the Manager, Quality Assurance, NCTVET, for review, within thirty (30) working days after the anniversary date of the institution's accreditation.

The following includes the areas of focus:

- Outstanding corrective actions outlined in reports from previous audits conducted
- Entries in the Risk Register
- Details outlined in the annual report submitted by the Institution
- All sections of the *NCTVET's Accreditation Standard* (sampled)

In the event of failure to address non-conformances or complete activities, repeat of any non-conformance, non-submission of annual reports from institutions within the required time, *the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee shall be so advised by the Director and /or Manager, Quality Assurance through the Manager, Council Secretariat.* The following actions could be taken by the *Council:-*

- the suspension of accreditation (Timeline to be determined by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee).
- ordering of Special Audits by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee for a reconsideration of Accreditation status based on the results of the Audit. The results of same will be analyzed by the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee for a recommendation to be made regarding the institution's accreditation status. The recommendation from the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee will be submitted to the Council for a decision on the institution's accreditation status. Special consideration will be given where the non-conformance requires major capital injection for corrective action to be taken and especially where

the delayed action does not directly affect the training, assessment and certification processes.

(ii) Assessment Audit

This audit shall be conducted on institutions that are accredited by the NCTVET.

The frequency of conduct shall be in accordance with an established Assessment Audits Schedule. The purpose of the audit is to examine the institution, specifically, in terms of its capability to maintain the requisite systems in offering sound assessment that meets the standard for certification by the NCTVET. These audits conducted using a risk-based approach. The institution shall be provided with a copy of the team's report within twenty one (21) working days.

The Director/Manager of the Quality Assurance Department will present a summary of findings of Assessment Audits to the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee for review, at the end of each financial year. Major deficiencies shall be tabled at the earliest sitting for appropriate action (refer to (i) Annual Reviews, above).

(iii) Programme(s) Changes/Changes to Competency/Qualification Offerings

Institutions offering or wishing to offer higher level qualifications for programmes already accredited by the NCTVET shall apply to the NCTVET, using the 'Amendment to Competency Offering Application Form', located on the NCTVET website (www.nctvetjamaica.org). The institution wishing to remove any programme/qualification from its profile shall use the same form and shall indicate the details of same to be removed.

Upon receipt of the application for amendment, the Manager *of the Quality Assurance*, NCTVET, shall appoint an auditor to lead the conduct of the compliance audit, which will involve the following:

- Preparation and submission to the institution of an audit plan outlining the date of the audit and the relevant sections of the *NCTVET's Accreditation Standard* which will be reviewed to determine compliance.
- An audit exercise focusing on all sections of the *NCTVET's Accreditation Standard* to determine the institution's compliance.
- An audit report to be submitted to the Council for approval to be granted for the addition of such programmes.

Institutions offering new programmes/qualifications which have never been accredited will be subjected to a full evaluation exercise rather than a compliance audit.

(iv) Special Audit

A Special Audit may be conducted based on a special request from the Council, Quality Assurance Sub-Committee or the Director *of the Quality Assurance Department* as a result of some anomaly revealed through an evaluation, another audit, complaint or any evidence of fraudulent activity.

The procedures to be followed in respect of complaints concerning alleged injustices or unethical practices by accredited institutions will depend upon the nature of the charges and documentation offered.

The Council will consider and process only written and signed complaints, including the complainant's mailing address, the alleged violations of the policies,

criteria and/or procedures of the Council. The complainant must attest that all available institutional remedies have been exhausted.

The Council determines its own methods of review and action, which may include a Special Audit.

If in the judgement of the Council, reasons exist to indicate significant departure from accreditation requirements or to otherwise question compliance, the Council may request an interim report, schedule a special team visit and/or require the institution to complete a new application and host a visiting team earlier than previously scheduled.

The team may evaluate any area of the institution's compliance with the policies, criteria or procedures of the NCTVET. The institution shall be provided with a copy of the team's report within thirty (30) working days and shall have thirty (30) working days in which to respond to the team's findings.

Disruption of an institution by forces beyond its control shall not result in a summary loss of accreditation. However, prolonged inability, for whatever reason, to conduct its programmes will require a review of the institution and a reconsideration of its accreditation status.

(v) **Facilities Audit**

These audits will be conducted on request. Facilities Audits will examine the institution to be audited specifically in terms of its capability to facilitate training and assessment *for the requested programme(s), in accordance with Section 3 of the NCTVET's Accreditation Standard.*

The Director of the Quality Assurance Department shall determine the status to be granted to the audited programme(s). An approved status shall be valid for twenty-four (24) months.

(vi) Centre Approval Audit

Centre Approval Audits are conducted based on the criteria outlined in the NCTVET Guidelines and Requirements Centre Approval. The criteria are separated in five (5) sections as follows:-

- Management & Communication
- Support to Clients
- Qualifications of Trainers & Assessment Personnel
- Physical Resources
- Assessment *Activities*

Approval is granted *by the Council upon the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee*. Centre Approval Status shall be valid for three (3) years and shall be subject to periodic review. Further details *are* available in the aforementioned NCTVET Guidelines and Requirements for Centre Approval.

The institution shall be provided with a copy of the auditor's report within thirty (30) working days and may respond to the findings within thirty (30) working days. The response from the institution, if submitted, shall be considered in the approval process and shall be subject to verification.

Approval is considered after the Verification Audit is conducted.

IX Substantive Changes

Changes that Accredited Institutions Shall Report to the NCTVET

Accredited or Candidate Institutions shall notify the NCTVET immediately of any changes in:

- ownership and management
- programmes
- facilities (including arrangements with external contracted facilities/satellite locations)
- financial standing
- location

or any other changes that could substantially affect the policies, staff, curricula, reputation, legal or financial status of the institution.

The NCTVET must approve any substantive change within an accredited institution for continuation of accredited status. A substantive change may require a visit by representatives of the Quality Assurance Department. When a visit is required, the team may audit the institution for compliance with any of the policies, criteria and procedures of the NCTVET.

Failure to notify the NCTVET of any substantive changes as listed above in the accredited programmes may result in a loss of accredited status (see Discontinuation of Accreditation Status).

X Reaffirmation

Institutions shall be notified, in writing, by the Registrar/Manager IRM, one (1) year prior to the ending of its accreditation status. Any institution desiring to continue its accreditation status shall indicate same to the NCTVET, in writing. This process is

termed Reaffirmation. The Reaffirmation of an institution's accredited programme(s) shall occur at the end of the accreditation period or any subsequent continuation decision previously made by the Quality Assurance Sub-committee of the Council.

An institution seeking reaffirmation must first complete an Application for Accreditation and facilitate an evaluation audit at least three (3) months in advance of the end of the accreditation period. The Council makes decisions on reaffirmation following the complete review of the evaluation team's report(s), the institution's response and the verification findings.

Institutions must continue to meet similar requirements for reaffirmation as for initial accreditation.

Where an organization does not indicate interest for reaffirmation, the same organization shall be notified within thirty (30) working days of the end of its accreditation period of the imminent removal of those programmes from its profile, and the Information Management System shall be updated accordingly.

In the event that these programmes are the only ones listed under the organization's profile, the name of the organization shall also be removed from the Information Management System. All removals will be done within thirty (30) working days of confirmation.

The Council shall not be held responsible for any challenges experienced by the institution as a result of their non-communication of their interest in Reaffirmation as outlined above.

An institution may request an extension in respect of evaluation for reaffirmation.

However, this shall be done at least three (3) months in advance of the scheduled date for

such evaluation, except in the case of unforeseen circumstances. The request shall be in writing and must state the specific reason for the extension. The request should be addressed to the Registrar *of the* NCTVET and copied to the Director *of the Quality Assurance Department*.

The *Director of the Quality Assurance Department*, will review the application and determine whether or not to recommend the extension. A recommendation for extension will be submitted to the Council Secretariat Promotions to be tabled at the ensuing Council meeting. The Council decision will be communicated to the institution by way of the Registrar *of the* NCTVET within ten (10) working days, thereafter.

In the event of a grant of an extension or reaffirmation, the effective date will be that which immediately follows the preceding expiration date.

XI Discontinuation of Accreditation Status

Discontinuation of the accreditation status of an institution may occur based on the situation presented regarding same. The following are situations that may result in such a discontinuation:-

- a). Failure to notify the NCTVET of any substantive changes as listed under Section IX. Substantive changes relating to the accreditation of its programmes may result in a loss of accredited status.

- b). Institutions that are not actively training and assessing students in the programmes for which they have received accreditation for a period of one (1) year without any formal indication of reasons regarding same shall be sent a notification letter indicating the Council's intention to discontinue accreditation. This letter shall be sent within thirty (30) working days after the first one (1) year period of such inactivity.

All information regarding the failure to submit a notification of any substantive changes and/or the non-activity of training and assessment shall be tabled at the Quality Assurance Sub-committee for a recommendation to the Council regarding the continuation of the institution's accreditation status.

XII Confidentiality of Materials

The evaluation and accreditation of technical and vocational programmes by the Council is an activity requiring a high degree of confidentiality. The findings and recommendations and other information relating to a programme are, by implied agreement, exchanged within an atmosphere of trust, confidentiality and professional integrity. The Council shall make such information available to other agencies or individuals only upon the approval of the candidate/accredited institution or as required by law.

The participating institution may disseminate any information it receives from the Council. However, it is advised that such dissemination should occur only after the completion of the process of accreditation. A number of activities and cautions are employed by the Council to assure integrity and institution/Council confidentiality.

XIII The use of NCTVET Logo

Accredited Training Organisations (ATOs) are entitled to use the NCTVET's logo as part of a statement indicating their status/partnership/membership with the NCTVET and to promote their training programmes that are accredited by the NCTVET.

The ATO must seek and obtain the permission of the NCTVET to use the NCTVET's logo. The NCTVET will be responsible for providing the ATO with the duly approved image.

An institution must be accurate in reporting to the public its accredited status with the Council. In catalogues/prospectuses, brochures, advertisements and news releases, any reference made to its status with the Council must be accurate, including the specific programmes covered by the accreditation.

Any institution that is found to misrepresent its status with the Council shall issue a news release in the appropriate newspaper(s) and/or other news media to correct the misrepresentation. Documentation that the correction has been made through the news media must be submitted to the Council.

XIV Partnership

1. New Accreditation Applicants

An institution applying for accreditation can partner with another entity that is not accredited for the purposes of using that entity's facilities for the conduct of training and assessment. However, the following requirements must be met:

- *All partners must be declared at the point of application so that they can be audited during the evaluation site visit*
- *There must be a valid partnership agreement between the two entities detailing the terms and conditions of the partnership and be valid for a minimum of four (4) years (the period for which accreditation status is to be granted).*
- *The partner must satisfy occupational health & safety and legal/statutory requirements as well as facilities standards specific to the skill area.*

- *The partnering entity shall not be accredited for the programme for which accreditation is being applied.*

2. An Accredited Training Organization (ATO)

(a) For any ATO that gained accreditation for a programme by way of partnering with another entity:

- *The ATO entering into such arrangement must have a valid agreement between the partnering entity and itself that covers the duration of accreditation period.*

(b) An ATO may enter into partnership arrangements with entities seeking to have their trainees assessed. However, the following requirements must be met:

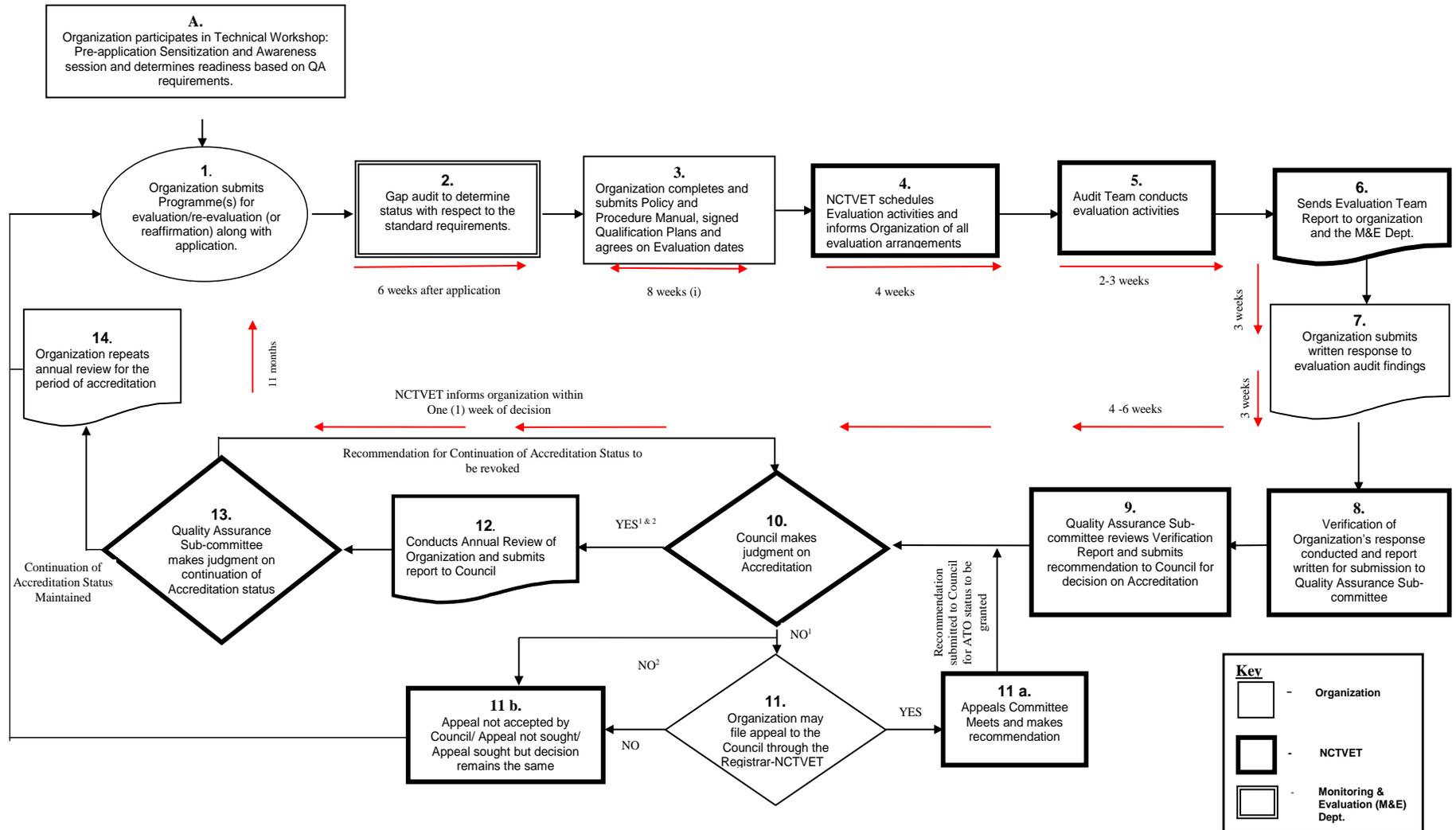
- *The ATO entering into such arrangement must have a valid agreement between the partnering entity and itself.*
- *The assessment can take place at the ATO site or at the facilities of the partnering institution. If the assessment is to be done at the partnering institution, an evaluation of its facilities must be conducted by an NCTVET certified auditor to ensure that there is conformance with the required standard for the conduct of the assessment.*
- *A favourable, valid, duly completed Facilities Audit report or Material Requirements Checklist(s) shall be retained for audit purposes.*
- *The ATO is required to maintain all documentation pertaining to this arrangement for inspection during compliance audits.*

Should the partnership be terminated/dissolved for any reason, the NCTVET must be notified of the change, in writing, immediately.

XV Litigation

Matters pertaining to litigation shall be channeled through the Council's legal team.

APPENDIX 1 Flow Chart of the Accreditation Process



**APPENDIX II- Members of major business and industrial enterprises and
representative bodies**

Construction

Agriculture

Information Technology

Manufacturing & Service

Commercial Distribution & Retailing

Engineering

APPENDIX II - Members of public, educational and training institutions

The Bureau of Standards
The HEART Trust/NTA
The University Council of Jamaica
The University of the West Indies
The University of Technology, Jamaica
The Council of Community Colleges
The Joint Board of Teacher Education
Overseas Examination Council
Jamaica Employees Federation
Ministry of Labour
Jamaica Council
Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions