

1. What is the difference between registration and accreditation as practised by the UCJ?

The UCJ's quality assurance process involves two steps: the registration of institutions, and the accreditation of programmes.

Registration

Registration of an institution by the UCJ is a prerequisite step for the accreditation of programmes offered by that institution. Registration is therefore a pre-accreditation status, the aim of which is to certify that, upon assessment by the UCJ, the institution has been found to meet threshold operating standards required for the conduct of tertiary education in Jamaica. Registered institutions are the only approved tertiary institutions operating in Jamaica.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the process whereby registered institutions submit programmes of study to be evaluated against stated criteria for such programmes, and accredited, having been found to meet the required standards. Accreditation states that a programme of study "is what it says it is", "does what it says it does", meets required standards, and is worthy of public confidence.

To date, the UCJ has registered forty-eight (48) institutions and accredited over two hundred and fifty (250) programmes.

2. What are the criteria for accreditation?

There are several criteria against which programmes are evaluated.

These include:

- The mission and governance structure of the institution.
- The quality of the programme, including: aims and philosophy; structure and content; and programme management.
- The quality of students admitted.
- The quality of staff who deliver instruction.
- Methods used to assess student learning.
- The adequacy of resources to support programmes.
- The student support services.

3. What does the process of accreditation involve?

The accreditation process involves the following steps:

- Preparation and submission of a Self-Study by the institution.
- Site visit by a team of experts selected by the UCJ.
- Report on team's findings sent to the institution for a response.
- Institution's response and team's report reviewed by the Accreditation, Curriculum and Development (AC&D) Committee of Council, and recommendation made to full Council.
- Decision made by full Council and communicated to the institution.

4. What happens after accreditation?

The UCJ monitors all accredited programmes and registered institutions to ensure that there is ongoing improvement and maintenance of standards. During the accreditation period, the institution must submit to the UCJ, annual status reports on the accredited programme.

Periodic visits to the institution are also made by the UCJ and consultations are held as the need arises.

5. What are the benefits of accreditation?

The UCJ is known, recognized and respected internationally, and its accreditation decisions are internationally accepted, bringing recognition and acceptance to programmes of study and qualifications earned at Jamaican tertiary education institutions. As part of its process, the UCJ monitors all registered institutions and accredited programmes in order to ensure that required standards have not only been attained, but are being maintained.

Accreditation has benefits for several stakeholders, including:

Students

Accreditation provides:

- a recognized qualification for employment for the professions, and
- for admission to advanced studies
- an assurance that the accredited programme has been found to be satisfactory, and to meet the needs of students.
- the basis for the transfer of credits between institutions.
- greater flexibility and marketability in the working world, locally, regionally and internationally.

Institutions

Accreditation provides:

- the stimulus for self-evaluation and self-directed institutional and programme improvement and strengthening.

- enhancement of the reputation of the institution. Accreditation also helps institutions to attain a culture of quality.

The public

Accreditation:

- assures the public that registered tertiary education institutions and accredited programmes conform to generally accepted standards in tertiary education, and are worthy of public confidence.
- promises to the public a pool of well trained, highly professional graduates of Jamaica's tertiary system, ready to fill the needs in the market place.

The country

Accreditation:

- increases a country's competitive advantage in the global market place.

6. How do I know if a programme is accredited?

The UCJ produces an updated listing of accredited programmes and registered institutions as soon as new programmes are accredited or institutions registered. This listing is available on the UCJ's website. Information may also be obtained by contacting the UCJ.

7. What can students do if they feel that a registered institution or an accredited programme is not meeting the UCJ's standards?

Signed complaints must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director of the UCJ, providing specific information.



REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION

FAQs



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