

## ACCREDITATION

To be eligible to submit programmes for accreditation, local institutions must first seek registration by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). In the case of overseas institutions seeking accreditation/recognition for programmes delivered in Jamaica, the institutions must first be accredited/recognized by the credible authority in the country of origin. On that basis, those institutions would not need to be registered by the UCJ.

## REGISTRATION

The aim of registration is to certify that an institution meets certain minimum operating standards required for the conduct of a tertiary institution in Jamaica. It is a first step towards the accreditation of programmes offered by an institution. Registration, therefore, is a pre-accreditation status. The criteria for registration are closely related to the criteria for accreditation since they are meant to provide registered institutions with a foundation for logical development towards accreditation. Accreditation is a voluntary process. The registration process is as follows:

### **Step 1 APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION**

- The scheduling of a preliminary meeting with the institution to discuss the quality assurance framework, the requirements of the documentation and the registration process;
- Institutions are provided with the following documents:
  - The Registration Process: Guidelines for Registration
  - Application for Registration
  - Registration Process
- The institution's submission of an Application for Registration;
- The processing and review of documents submitted by the institution to determine eligibility for Registration visit.

### **Step 2 SITE VISIT**

- The selection and training of an evaluation team for the Registration visit;
- The interviewing of relevant stakeholders of the institution on-site and evaluation of the institution's facilities and resources by the evaluation team.

### **Step 3 REPORT WRITING**

- The preparation of the Registration report by members of the evaluation team.

### **Step 4 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

- The Registration report is sent to the President/Principal of the institution for review;
- The institution prepares a written response to the UCJ to address the recommendations in the Registration report.

### **Step 5 REGISTRATION DECISION**

- The institution submits the response to the Registration report to the UCJ.
- The review of the Registration report and the institution's response by the Accreditation, Curriculum and Development Committee (AC&D) and the submission of a recommendation to Council;



- The Council's review of the recommendation of the AC&D;
- Council may delay a decision and ask that the institution address particular issues. In such a case, the application would revert to Step 4 of the process;
- The decision of Council is communicated to the institution in writing.

Once registered, an institution has a maximum of four years to submit programme(s) for accreditation.

Accreditation is the status granted to a programme or an institution that has been found, through self-study and peer review, to meet or exceed established standards for educational quality. Accreditation promotes the improvement of educational quality through self-evaluation, self-regulation and accountability. The role of the accrediting body is to ensure the attainment and maintenance of quality through application of educational standards. The process for programme and institutional accreditation is outlined below:

## **A) PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION**

### **Step 6 APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION**

- The scheduling of training of staff of the institution in preparing for accreditation;
- Institutions are provided with the following documents:
  - The Accreditation Process: Guidelines for Programme Accreditation
  - Application for Programme Accreditation
  - Accreditation Process
- The institution's submission of a completed application for programme accreditation;
- The processing and review of documents submitted by the institution to determine eligibility for an accreditation visit.

### **Step 7 ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT**

- The selection and training of an evaluation team for the accreditation visit;
- The interviewing of relevant stakeholders of the institution including students, graduates and employers of graduates and an evaluation of the institution's facilities and resources by members of the evaluation team.

### **Step 8 REPORT WRITING**

- The preparation of the Accreditation report by members of the evaluation team.

### **Step 9 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

- The Accreditation report is sent to the President/Principal of the institution for review;
- The institution prepares a written response to the UCJ to address the recommendations in the Accreditation report.

### **Step 10 ACCREDITATION DECISION**

- The institution submits the response to the Accreditation report to the UCJ.
- The review of the Accreditation report and the Institution's response by the Accreditation, Curriculum and Development Committee (AC&D) and the submission of recommendation to Council;



- The Council's review of the recommendation of the AC&D;
- Council may delay a decision and ask that the institution address particular issues. In such a case, the application would revert to Step 9 of the process;
- The decision of Council is communicated to the institution in writing.

#### **Step 11** Monitoring

- The institution that has been granted programme accreditation submits annual status reports during the period of accreditation. For first time accreditation, the maximum period of accreditation is four years. Subsequently, the maximum period is five years.

#### **Step 12** Re-accreditation

- The institution submits an application to renew accreditation at the end of the period of accreditation. A full re-evaluation of the programme(s) is undertaken.

### **B) INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**

Institutional Accreditation is the status granted to an institution that has been found to meet or exceed established standards for educational quality. Institutional accreditation is the comprehensive evaluation of the institution and its academic and administrative effectiveness, with specific focus on the robustness of its Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system and on overall systems, policies and practices of the institution and how they impact the quality of all programmes offered by the institution.

The Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system of the institution has mechanisms that ensure through evaluation and application, *inter alia*, whether its:

- mission and goals are appropriate;
- academic programmes meet the standards for the discipline and the profession and are consistent with the mission of the institution;
- teaching staff are competent, appropriately qualified and providing effective teaching and learning experiences (the institution should also apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment of its staff/faculty);
- learning resources are adequate and appropriate to enable students learning (including library and information, technological and physical resources);
- student support services are appropriate and readily accessible;
- management of its financial resources in changing economic conditions is adequate and effective;
- engagement in continuous improvement is informed by gathering and analysing data on its effectiveness and on student success, and that such data is used to guide planning, decision making and resource allocation.

An institution seeking institutional accreditation must undergo the following process:

**Step 1 LETTER OF INTENT**

- The Institution submits an expression of interest.

**Step 2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- Submission of evidence of meeting eligibility criteria.
- If the eligibility evidence is deemed satisfactory, the institution is granted *Candidacy for Institutional Accreditation*.

**Step 3 CANDIDACY**

- An institution having received Candidacy will proceed to prepare and submit the Institutional Self Study (ISS).

**Step 4 APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY**

**Step 5 SITE VISIT**

- The selection and training of an evaluation team for the accreditation visit;
- The interviewing of relevant stakeholders of the institution including students, graduates and employers of graduates and an evaluation of the institution's facilities and resources by members of the evaluation team.

**Step 6 REPORT WRITING**

- The preparation of the Institutional Accreditation report by members of the evaluation team.

**Step 7 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE**

- The UCJ dispatches a report of the visit to the institution and the institution submits a formal response to the UCJ

**Step 8 THE ACCREDITATION DECISION**

- The institution submits the response to the Institutional Accreditation Report to the UCJ.
- The review of the Institutional Accreditation Report and the Institution's response by the Institutional Accreditation Review (IAR) Committee and the submission of recommendation to Council;
- The Council's review of the recommendation of the IAR Committee;
- The decision of Council is communicated to the institution in writing.

**Step 9 MONITORING**

- The Institution granted Institutional Accreditation submits annual status reports and a mid-cycle review is undertaken during the period of accreditation.

**Step 10 RE-ACCREDITATION**

- The institution submits an application to renew accreditation at the end of the period of accreditation. A full re-evaluation of the institution is undertaken.