

# **Chapter 1**

## **Accreditation Concepts & Policies**

## **Introduction**

This manual describes the aims and objectives as well as the setup and the procedures of the accreditation system for the Technical and Vocational stream in Pakistan. It is specifically meant as means of orientation for public and private TVET institutes which seek accreditation for their programs by the National Accreditation Council of the Technical and Vocational Stream (NAC-TVS)/NAVTTTC.

The manual is developed by NAVTTTC, the Federal Apex Body which is mandated to regulate, provide policy directives, and streamline the fragmented TVET Sector of Pakistan.

### **1.1. Accreditation Authorities: The National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream (NAC-TVS)**

NAVTTTC has prepared Draft Regulations to establish an Independent National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream as a future accreditation body in the TVET sector. NAVTTTC/NAC-TVS mandate is to implement a voluntary accreditation system and to carry out accreditation processes. The overall aim is to create a *competent Pakistani workforce* that shall get absorbed in the domestic and international market and to earn respect, dignity and recognition for Pakistani Skilled labour.

NAC-TVS comprise of all major stakeholders (industry, professional organizations, and state institutions) and will be chaired by a representative of industry. Detailed regulations on NAC-TVS can be found in the appendix.

### **1.2. Need for Accreditation**

The accreditation of training programs and institutions is an established practice all over the world. This practice has taken roots in developed countries whereas the developing countries are in different stages of establishing accreditation regimes for the following:-

- 1.3.1. Quality Assurance of training programs and institutions
- 1.3.2. Recognition of various qualifications / diplomas / certifications
- 1.3.3. Decisions for Federal / Provincial funding for institutions

1.3.4. Cultivating a culture of “continuous quality improvement”

1.3.5. Prevent improper competition

### **1.3. Accreditation: Aims and Objectives**

Accreditation is an instrument to create public trust as well as national and international credibility in the quality of technical and vocational education. By setting agreed standards it helps to enhance the quality of individual programs, institutes and the TVET sector as a whole.

*“Quality”* in this context means that a program is fit for purpose, i.e. it guarantees that students will receive qualifications at the right level and acquire competencies relevant to the expectations of employers. Institutes are fit for purpose when they manage to continuously and reliably provide a range of programs that fulfil expectations with regard to qualifications levels and employers’ expectations.

The establishment of an accreditation regime in Pakistan serves a number of objectives in the development of TVET reform, such as

- to assure the quality of institutions and programs by verifying that they meet agreed and established standards;
- to develop quality and employability of workforce in the country;
- to enhance workforce mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications within the country and abroad;
- to help parents and students to identify quality TVET institutions;
- to encourage improvement of institutions or programs that have already met basic standards, through continued focus on goals and achievements;
- to involve faculty and staff in institutional evaluation and planning;
- to create goals for improvement of weaker institutions and stimulate institutional growth and development through continuous evaluation and improvement;
- to certify institutional or program sufficiency as a partial basis for decisions about the transfer of academic credit from one institution or program to another;

- to decide on eligibility of institutions for financial assistance from the government and donors;
- to facilitate networking and sharing of best practices of accredited institutions at national and international level;
- to protect institutions against harmful internal and external pressures.

#### **1.4. Benefits of Accreditation**

Accreditation will be especially effective in assuring quality in the TVET sector as it involves the major stakeholders such as students and alumni, TVET institutes, employers and industry, parents, Federal and Provincial institutions (the government). Each group benefits from accreditation in their own way while at the same time can share best practices and learn from one another. Therefore, it has been particularly important to involve as many stakeholders not only in the development of the accreditation regime but also in the process itself. Here is an overview of how stakeholders may benefit from accreditation:

##### **1.4.1. For the students**

- Helps students and parents in identifying quality institutions and/or programs to attain desired knowledge, competences and skills;
- Ensures mobility of students through credit transfer facility;
- Enhances employability across borders;
- Real value for money spent / invested;
- Students' competences, skills and certified degrees are internationally recognized make graduates globally acceptable;
- Alumni take pride in completing their training from a recognized institution.

##### **1.4.2. For the TVET institutions**

- Facilitates training institutions in identifying their strengths and weaknesses and motivates them to remove identified gaps;
- Strengthens institutional responsibility for a quality education by taking into account the institutions' own self-assessment reports;

- Supports institutions to establish a process of continuous quality improvement through self-evaluation involving feedback from stakeholders;
- Involves faculty and staff in institutional matters development thus making it more sustainable;
- The faculty takes pride in serving in accredited institutions;
- The institutions get a sense of being part of a select quality group;
- Institutional accreditation indicates that the entire institution is achieving its own specified objectives in a satisfactory manner;
- The institution takes pride in being part of select group of NAVTTC of accredited institutions which have international linkages with the Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission and UNEVOC;
- The credits earned from accredited institutions are easily transferable / acceptable in other similar institutions thereby enhancing student mobility;
- Facilitates identification of quality institutions and / or programs with a view to investing public / private funds by donors;
- Protects institutions against harmful internal and external pressure;
- Lays down criteria for professional certification.

#### **1.4.3. For the parents**

- Facilitates the identification of quality institutions and programs;
- Real value for money invested;
- Institutions with institutional accreditation will invite parents' feedback;
- The parents can participate in the career planning of their children;
- The parents are involved in counselling of their children with a view to effect improvement in the academic achievement of the children.

#### **1.4.4. For employers and industry**

- Helps employers and industry identify institutions that provide adequately qualified graduates who meet the expectations;

- Helps employers in making a choice in hiring employees;
- Steady supply of quality skilled work force;
- Employers can provide specific feedback to the institution with a view to making their trainings service provider's demand driven;
- Facilitates in decisions for technological up-gradation of industry;
- Better inland investment prospects;
- Motivates setting up of joint ventures with foreign companies particularly where production deletion programs are involved;
- Facilitates industry in resolving technical glitches;
- Facilitates in industrial research.

#### **1.4.5. For the Alumni**

- Lifelong professional pride;
- Facilitation in career progression;
- Employer preference;
- Social networking.

#### **1.4.6. For the Country**

- Gains confidence of international investors that quality human technical resource is available;
- Helps in achieving portability of skills throughout the country.
- Facilitates international skills portability (human resources export);
- attracts students from regional and third world countries;
- Provision of consultancy services to developing / under developing countries;
- Promotes innovation and knowledge resource through interaction among accredited institutions.

## 1.5 Accreditation: Definition

Accreditation is defined as *'a process of evaluating quality against a defined set of standards and criteria'*, the state of being accredited i.e acknowledged by the Commission/Council as having successfully completed an accreditation process.

The major aim of accreditation is to inspire public trust in the accredited programs/institutions and qualification awarding bodies.

Accreditation is a quality assurance mechanism. It is an instrument of external quality assurance and uses the results of the TVET institutes' internal quality assurance as an input into the process. It is internationally acknowledged that the responsibility for a quality education lies with the institutes providing professional and/or vocational programs.

Accreditation is a continuous process, i.e. a program and/or institution is accredited for a certain period of time (three years) and will have to undergo the whole process on expiration of accreditation status. This way it ensures whether the accredited institution/program is able to maintain the standard or it has improved or deteriorated over the period of time.

There are two types of accreditation:

- **Program accreditation** focuses on the design and delivery of a professional or vocational program and assesses its fitness to qualify students for a defined qualification level and to provide them with skills and competencies that meet employers' expectations.
- **Institutional accreditation** assesses the capability of a TVET institution to successfully manage to provide a quality education over a period of time. Institutional accreditation mainly assesses the internal quality management processes of an institute.

### **1.5.1 Accreditation Principles**

Accreditation is based on certain internationally acknowledged principles which are given below:

- The Council (as accreditation agency) acts on an established legal basis.
- It sets standards and criteria agreed among stakeholders to approve, recognize or grant accreditation status. The standards are understood to be minimum standards.
- The Council is autonomous in its decisions.
- The review process and the requirements are thoroughly documented.
- The Council employs independent accreditation assessors in the assessment process to control bias and avoid conflict of interest. Accreditation assessors are experts in their fields and have undergone an adequate training for the accreditation process.
- The accreditation is based on the internal self-report of the institute.
- The assessment report written by the accreditation assessors states the conformity or non-conformity with the standards. It moreover indicates areas of strengths and weaknesses to help the institute to enhance its quality.
- An appeal procedure is established involving independent experts.

### **1.5.2 Accreditation Standards**

Accreditation standards are developed using both input and output levels.

- Top down Approach (input): Structure/processes and standards defined at central level following traditional evidence based technical norms and protocols.
- Client Preference Approach: where quality is explored through qualitative/quantitative market practices, LMIS it involves industry, private sector, employer, TVET institutes (training providers).

### **1.5.3 Accreditation Assessment Team**

In agreement with international practice NAVTTC/NAC-TVS nominates independent experts to serve as assessors in the accreditation process. NAVTTC has issued a code of



conduct for assessors, which describes the requirements of professional conduct<sup>1</sup>. NAVTTC / NAC-TVS maintain a database with assessor's names and fields of expertise. All assessors undergo training before their first accreditation process.

The accreditation team includes pedagogical and methodological competencies as well as technological/trade and industry-related competencies. The accreditation assessment team is headed by a *lead assessor*.

The lead assessor is preferably a senior TVET professional with longstanding teaching, administrative and auditing experience from a public or a private TVET institute.

The team of assessors typically includes:

- an assessor with pedagogical and methodological expertise and relevant expertise in the technology / trade of the program who is usually a graduate engineer with some years of teaching / administrative experience and
- an assessor from a relevant sector of industry with expertise in qualification demands of industry.

The size and composition of the accreditation assessment team needs to be adjusted to the scope of the accreditation process. In cases where more than one program is accredited in the same process, it must be assured through the composition of the accreditation assessment team that all programs can be adequately assessed.

The accreditation assessment team is supported by a *convener* of NAVTTC/NAC-TVS for secretarial support.

#### **1.5.4 Accreditation Fees**

The details regarding payment of Accreditation Fee by the applicant TVET institutions will be issued by NAVTTC/NAC-TVS from time to time keeping in view the actual expenses being incurred on travelling and boarding / lodging expenses of Accreditation Assessment Teams.

However, for the promotional period of the NAVTTC/NAC-TVS accreditation regime, each applicant institute would be required to deposit a fee of Rs. 40,000 along with application and relevant documents for the accreditation of their institutes.

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<sup>1</sup>See handbook for assessors for more details on assessors and Code of Conduct



## 1.5.5 ACCREDITATION PDCA CYCLE

