

## Q & A on Accreditation in TEVET

**According to TEVET Act No. 6 of 1999, it is an offence for any training providers and quality assurance body to offer any vocational training or assessment service as prescribed without prior accreditation TEVET Authority. In light of this, the TEVET Authority has recently been calling on training providers and quality assurance bodies to apply for Accreditation. Mr Charles Mataya, who is Head of Regulatory and Compliance Services at TEVETA, to shed some light on this. *Excerpts:***



### **What is the background to this call for applications for Accreditation?**

The Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) system has been undergoing reform with an aim of improving its effectiveness. One of the areas that have experienced changes is the implementation of quality assurance in the delivery of training programmes by both private and public providers. The TEVET Authority has the mandate as stipulated in the TEVET act of 1999 to register, audit, accredit, and inspect institutions for conformance to the standards of the qualifications Framework and to ensure adherence to the required set criteria as provided for in the registration and Accreditation rules.

These Accreditation guidelines are designed to work as a tool for assessment of institutions and individuals who would like to take part in the delivery of technical and vocational education. Those who aspire to be players in TEVET sector could find these guidelines useful as well.

Pursuant to this requirement, the Authority is therefore in the process of accrediting training institutions and quality assurance bodies.

### **So what is Accreditation?**

Accreditation means the certification, or granting credit or recognition, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to full fill a particular function in the quality assurance system set up by an Authority in her Act. Accreditation means the process or procedure during which TEVET Authority audits and provides formal recognition and authority to individuals and institutions to perform specific functions and activities on behalf of the Authority in accordance with agreed criteria and requirements within a specified period. If TEVETA accredits a provider, it means that provider has in effect the capacity to perform quality assurance in a particular sector.

### **Why is this call coming in now, and not before?**

TEVET Authority has been reviewing guidelines for Accreditation, a process whose product just got approved by the Board. This does not mean that the TEVET Authority has never accredited any TEVET provider since. Accreditation of providers started sometime back. For instance, some colleges like Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute, Miracle Technical Institute, which are private in nature and all public colleges were accredited in 2013. The Accreditation status of all these ends in 2018.

### **Who can be accredited, and what benefit is there when they get accredited?**

The Authority accredits registered Training Institutions or Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Centres which offer training or award qualifications according to TEVET Qualification Framework (TQF) and when it is satisfied that set quality criteria and standards have consistently being complied with. Further to that the Authority will confer Accreditation to individual trainers, assessors, verifiers, quality assurance bodies, awarding bodies and the training programmes. The Accreditation process is a vehicle that enables these providers to improve the learning experience and their performance based on an evaluation of their strengths and limitations.

### **What can a person of institutions do if they want to be accredited?**

All prospective applicants are required to provide comprehensive information about their intended scope and size of operation to be considered for Accreditation.

### **Why is it that in your call for Accreditation, you have been particular in that only providers who are registered with TEVETA can be accredited?**

The TEVET Authority shall indeed only confer Accreditation status to institutions that are registered with the TEVET Authority. This is in accordance with the TEVET Act of 1999, which stipulates that all types of TEVET Institutions offering training or intending to offer training in line with the TEVET Qualification Framework (TQF) be registered with the TEVET Authority first before they are accredited. This is so because registration is associated with achieving the legal right to practice or offer services in technical and vocational training. This is true for providers, as well as assessors.



*Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute: One of the TEVET Providers with Accreditation status.*

### **How long can a provider enjoy the Accreditation status once it is conferred on them?**

Accreditation is for five years and renewable upon consistently adhering to the set criteria.

### **What is the scope of this Accreditation, who or what can be accredited?**

Accreditation covers Institutions Trainers, Assessors, Verifiers/Moderators, Programs, Quality Assurance bodies and RPL Assessment Centres that assess candidates against the TQF and recommends the awarding of TEVET qualifications

### **What is the purpose of Accreditation?**

Accreditation is there in order to create a set of standards for all institutions of higher education. It also acts as motivation for providers to aiming to be the best they can be. Further to this, Accreditation ensures accountability of colleges and programmes in order to boost public trust and confidence.

### **What are the benefits of Accreditation?**

In the first place, accredited colleges offer the highest quality education available. Accreditation also makes it easier for students to determine the value of any college credits they plan to transfer. In line with this, attending an accredited college gives an opportunity to students to qualify for federal grants or loans. On the other hand, employers value qualifications from accredited colleges most. Over and above Accreditation pushes colleges to continually improve.

### **What is involved in Accreditation and what is the criteria or requirements?**



*St John Paul II Leadership & IT Institute: Accreditation Process enables TEVET Providers to improve their learning experience*

Training in the TEVET System takes place in training institutions, industries and any other designated place for that purpose. All applicants seeking Accreditation by TEVETA will be evaluated against these guidelines. Applicants for Accreditation can access these criteria accessed at our offices. The criteria underwrite the principles of fairness, validity and reliability used in conducting the evaluation.

Over and above, the basic phases of the Accreditation process that each applicant will follow are:

**Applicant sends application to TEVETA**

**Application received, logged and acknowledged by TEVETA (*within one week*)**

**QA Officer carries out preliminary evaluation and requests more information if Necessary**

**ED appoints Accreditation Panel**

**Documents evaluated by Accreditation Panel members individually**

**QA Officer collates Panel members' comments**

**Accreditation Panel meets**

**Accreditation Panel visits Applicant**

**Accreditation Panel prepares Draft Report**

**Draft Report Moderated and sent to Panel members for Endorsement (*within 4 weeks of visit*)**

**Draft Report sent to Applicant (*which has 2 weeks to comment*)**

**Final Draft Report prepared, normally after Panel requirements have been met**

**ED submits Final Draft Report to Board**

**Board decides and ED informs the Applicant and Panel members**

### **Who sits on the panel in undertaking the Accreditation process?**

- Two industry, community or professional representatives, endorsed by national bodies where appropriate;
- One external education and training representatives in the same, or similar, field (for example, from another provider);
- One officer from DHRMD; and
- A TEVET Quality Assurance Officer.

### **How long does it take for a provider to be accredited once they have submitted an application?**

The Accreditation depends on the genuine and comprehensive report submitted by the applicant. Before submitting the application the applicant should conduct a comprehensive self-assessment by making sure that all members at institutions participate in the process. If we look at the process flow of Accreditation, by the end of ninth week, providers should get final confirmation from the Executive Director about their Accreditation status. The process will be very simple where there is a very good understanding and thorough preparations on the part of providers.

### **Can a provider be de-accredited after being accredited?**

A provider can be de-accredited if there is non-conformance against the required TEVET Authority criteria. In this case, trainees registered at the provider shall be transferred at the cost of the affected provider to other providers accredited with the Authority to deliver and/or assess against the same unit standards and/ qualifications.

### **Is there room for appeal if a provider is not satisfied with a removal from accredited status?**

If a provider is not satisfied of his removal of Accreditation status, an appeal shall be made in writing within Fourteen (14) working days from the date of receipt. The appeal shall specify grounds on which such particular appeal is made. On receipt of the appeal, the Authority shall fix a date and place for the hearing which shall be communicated to the complainant. The Appellant may appear in person on the hearing of the appeal and may bring a witness.

### **Any other information?**

Let me add that for providers to retain Accreditation, providers must satisfy the TEVET Authority, through its processes of rigorous monitoring and quality audits that all quality requirements for registration and Accreditation continue to be met; and that the standard of training or assessment is comparable to those in other Vocational Training Institutions or RPL Assessment Centres in Malawi.

The addition of new programmes or a significant change in the scope of TEVET services offered must be the subject of an additional Accreditation application. Such application must demonstrate that current systems will be applied and are appropriate to the new services.