



**The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**



**Guidelines for the Introduction of NEC  
Programmes**

**Level 11, Tower A**

**No. 5 St. Vincent Street**

**Port of Spain**

**2019**

## **The National Examinations Council is committed to:**

- Advancing the aspirations of certified skilled professionals.
- Offering opportunities for widest participation for public examination and certification.
- Providing nationals with regional and internationally accredited certificates of achievement.

## **Vision Statement**

A customer-oriented unit of the Ministry of Education, equipped to provide Quality Measurement, Testing and Certification services, to both private and public sector training institutions.

## **Mission Statement**

To satisfy its customers by providing timely and accurate examination and certification services within a rapidly changing and expanding education and training enterprise.

## **Introduction**

**In April 1965, Cabinet by Minute No 574, agreed to the establishment of The National Examinations Council (NEC).**

The Ministry of Education and Culture was given oversight for the NEC, whose mandate included inter alia, to assess and certify Technical and Vocational Education and Training in private and public institutions. The Ministry appointed as its first Secretary to the NEC, Dr. Norbert Masson, who played a pivotal role in

guiding the formation and implementation of Technical-Vocational Education and Training as it is conceptualized today.

During the formative years, Technical Education as it was commonly referred to, was organized into seven major fields. These comprised:

- Mechanical/Building Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Land Surveying
- Business Education and Management
- Graphic and Applied Arts
- Home Economics and
- Distributive Education

In concert with an evolving framework for a modernized TVET philosophy, complete with authorization by Cabinet to manage responsibility for administering and certifying national examinations, came a national thrust in a new direction. This unique venture by the NEC carried vast potential for the future development of the TVET craft programmes at the sub-professional level in Trinidad and Tobago. Fortuitously, this transition in education coincided with the conceptualization of the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute in Port of Spain, the cornerstone of which was laid on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1961.



The rationale advanced for the creation of this institution was primarily in preparation for meeting the industry demands of our developing society. This premier Technical-Vocational training facility inaugurated its initial cohort of students on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, 1963. As a consequence, the first National Examinations Council examinations were prepared and administered in December, 1965, for full-time and part-time candidates at three venues. These examination centres were the John S. Donaldson Technical Institute, the San Fernando Technical Institute and the Government Vocational Centre in Point Fortin.

The role of preparing both sub-professional and professional craftsmen and technicians within the framework of a Technical-Vocational educational programme was resisted in many quarters. One such group consisted of householders who held concerns about their charges' intellectual limitations, and their future capacity to earn a *decent living by trade*. Coincidentally, certain local professional bodies also resisted bestowing the title of 'professional' as it applied to graduates from Technician programmes, a manoeuvre they applied as tacit resistance to the relegation of their status. This antipathy toward full acceptance of Technical-Vocational education and expertise, formerly associated with certain sections of our society, has subsequently given way to a better understanding of the evolutionary economic, educational, and societal issues required for developed

nation status.

Moreover, an objective assessment of the unique national product resulting from Technical-Vocational education, reveals the role played by this important institution which carries historical significance, plus vast potential for present and future development of the character of our nation. Currently, the NEC Technician and Craftsmen certificates are accepted for employment promotion and as matriculation requirements for further studies locally, regionally and internationally. The recognition of NEC certification was attained on the basis of commendable performances of NEC graduates in the work place in conjunction with a high degree of fidelity to quality technical content in the classroom.

At present, the National Examinations Council assesses and certifies forty-three Level I programmes, twenty Level II Craft programmes and one Level III Technician programme, at private and public institutions throughout the country.

### **Guidelines to Introduce the NEC Craft Programmes at Institutions of Learning**

The guidelines hereunder are to be followed by institutions desirous of introducing the NEC Craft or Technician programme to prospective students:

## **Step One**

The requesting body expresses interest in introducing the new programmes by writing a letter of request to the Secretary of the NEC, Ministry of Education. This letter should include:

- The name of the programme and the level at which the institution is desirous of offering it to its students.
- The recommended list of resource personnel together with their qualifications to support the implementation of the intended programme.
- A brief description of the infrastructure, the list of equipment and materials to be used for theory and shop-work, together with the applicable tools and consumables required by the programme, all of which will be the responsibility of the training institute.
- The proposed date of commencement of classes.
- The name and contact number of a liaison person at the institution.

## **Step Two**

Officials of the NEC visit the institution to meet with the key stakeholders in order to make some preliminary assessments.



These assessments are done via a walk-through of the physical facility, an audit of applicable tools and teaching aids, any ancillary equipment, as well as the safety protocols in place. This audit enables NEC officials to determine the institution's state of readiness together with its ability to meet the NEC requirements for the intended programme.

### **Step Three**

The Council issues a notification to the institution either giving its approval to commence training, or a denial of the request due to deficiencies in meeting the minimum standard required by the NEC. If the institution's request to commence training is denied, written recommendations are given to assist the institution in attaining the required standard of readiness. Once those deficiencies are corrected, an approval letter from the Secretary is issued detailing the following advice inter alia:

- The administration and staff are committed to the delivery of the instructional material, and possess a clear understanding of the official curriculum, which would have been supplied by the NEC.
- There is general agreement with guidelines for the timetabling and scheduling of the intended programme, so

that a smooth flow of the subject matter is delivered in the stipulated timeframe.

- Workshop activities are industry-led and undertaken by staff who will prepare students with the complementary mix of theory and practice, and who, when successfully trained, will be ready to join the national workforce.
- Upon completion of year one craft training programme, the institution will facilitate an internal assessment by its teaching staff so that students can be matriculated to the second and final year of the programme.

#### **Step Four**

Mutually agreed visits are scheduled and conducted each term by NEC officials, to continuously monitor and assess conditions. This provides opportunity for feedback and assurance that the recommendations given in **Step Three** are being implemented and are meeting the standard. As a result, this verification process will confirm compliance with recommendations, which will be communicated in a written report to the institution.



## **Step Five**

At the end of the recommended two-year craft training period, the training institution's authorized person provides written notification to the Secretary, NEC, of the names of students eligible to write the final examination in the applicable skill discipline. Upon such receipt, the NEC will then make the necessary arrangements for preparing and outfitting an examination centre, capable of absorbing the number of students, from among the many authorized examination centres throughout the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

The National Examinations Council is the Technical-Vocational arm of the Ministry of Education which administers a reliable, transparent, accredited examination and assessment process, for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Trinidad and Tobago.

In recognition of its assigned role, the NEC maintains appropriate control of its repository of knowledge, skills and abilities, by conducting all aspects of its professional responsibilities in an ethical manner. This includes taking full responsibility for the confidentiality of its examinations,

addressing complaints requiring case management intervention, while following conventional rules and laws governing the administration and certification of Technical-Vocational Education in a transparent and objective manner.

The NEC strives to empower all candidates nationwide in fulfilling their professional goals in institutions that are welcoming and inclusive, equally serving all candidates and members of faculty and staff, in our pluralistic and democratic society.