Competency-Based and Standards-Driven Curriculum Model

The National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago (NTATT) has developed National Curriculum based on the universally accepted Competency Based Model that utilises current occupational standards that are industry-driven.
1.0 Introduction

The National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago (NTATT) has developed a curriculum model for use by Training Providers in the country. The Model was approved by a curriculum committee consisting of representatives from local Training Institutions, Community –Based Programmes, Enterprises and also included persons from the Secondary Schools under Ministry of Education. It is expected that the Model will be used by all Institutions offering candidates for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) and the Trinidad and Tobago Vocational Qualification (TTNVQ).

The Model was developed to solve some of the many problems that have plagued the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector for many years. These problems include:

1. The vast differences in the quality of training among Institutions, Enterprises and Community-based Organizations
2. The fact that the Occupational Standards documents were not user – friendly and were previously being used as instructional tools given that no competency-based and standards-driven curricula were available at the time
3. The lack of standardised testing and verification of competencies by verifiers in the system
4. The lack of a quality curriculum document to satisfy the demands of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification Certification

2.0 Strategy in ensuring the quality of training

In developing the Model, the authors had to bear in mind that the quality assurance system did not possess a foolproof method to ensure that each candidate was subjected to the same assessments and assessment conditions. The design of the curriculum ensures that on completion of a course of study, all candidates would have been assessed on each of the occupational standards or competencies that comprise the course. This is achieved by including an authentic task for each of the competencies. The successful completion of the
task is one indication that the candidate is competent. During the period of training, all tasks would have been assessed by assessors, internal verifiers and supported by external verifiers for each candidate as a requisite to determining success.

3.0 Essential features of the design

There are several characteristics of curriculum development and design. These are as follows:

1. Begins with DACUM workshops to determine the competencies that comprise the occupation and to verify Industry’s standards. The use of DACUM also helps in revising the standards and providing sequence to how these tasks are performed currently

2. Maps the DACUM/Job Profile Chart with the CVQ Occupational plan to ensure compliance with CVQ certification

3. Uses SCID (Systematic Curriculum and Instructional Design) to design the curriculum

4. Ensures that it is competency-based and performance oriented

5. Includes pedagogical strategies for teaching, learning and developing employability skills

6. Includes sample assignments and activities geared towards improving attitudes and work ethic

Components

The curriculum comprises all the main components of curriculum of international standards including:

• Philosophical underpinnings: This section addresses the National Philosophy of education usually derived from national policies and directives. The country’s stand on universal principles, such as individual rights, gender issues and the treatment of persons with different leaning styles and physical disabilities are included
• **Rationale:** This component addresses the reasons for the inclusion of the course of study in the educational landscape. The rationale gives information on the target population, sometimes with the support of statistical data from Labour Market Information Surveys (LMIS). It also explains why the Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) model was adopted and justifies the instructional models chosen for the curriculum.

• **Aims:** The aims refer to a few statements addressing the reasons why students/trainees should buy into the programme outlined in the curriculum. The aims seek to show how the curriculum empowers them for entry level employment, lifelong learning and gives them opportunity to improve their quality of life and that of their families. Aims speak to certification and articulation with other programmes offered nationally, regionally and internationally which makes for a seamless education system.

**Layout**

The documents are arranged in four (4) columns as follows:

• Column 1: Performance criteria, for example, *the candidate should be able to sketch electrical circuits*

• Column 2: Evidence: *The trainee will demonstrate that he/she can make a schematic/wiring pictorial drawing that features the location of outlets including switches, socket outlets, lights and panel board*

• Column 3: Knowledge, skills and attitudes: *The trainee will show that he/she knows and understands the regulations that apply to installing electrical circuits in buildings, the appropriate symbols to be used in drawing a sketch, that sketching is vital to preparation for many tasks in electricity so as to avoid making mistakes*

• Column 4: Performance outcome: describes the performance outcome, a statement indicating the completion of the task and the result of the assessment.
Other features of the Model

There are some additional features that the Model encompasses:

1. **Consultations** with Industry, Verifiers (internal and external), national providers (water, electricity etc), tutors and teachers

2. **Attitudes and employability skills**: includes strategies including activities for team work and problem solving, suggestions for self and peer evaluation

3. **Consensus**: all stakeholders involved in review and evaluation of curricula

4. **User-friendliness**: Document speaks directly to trainee in simple language and may be used as a student’s companion as well as a training manual

5. **Modularized**: trainees learn at their own pace and receive Unit awards

Completed curriculum documents are available on the NTATT Website (www.ntatt.org)

4.0 The Curriculum Development Process