

The government of trinidad and tobago education essay

[Education](#)



The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has developed a framework for sustainable development based on seven (7) interconnected pillars as the cornerstone of our strategy. One of these pillars is to develop " A More Diversified, Knowledge Intensive Economy – Building on the Native Genius of Our People." To meet this goal and, as a part of Trinidad and Tobago's response to rapid changes in both the global and local economic environment, there is need for significant changes in the landscape of tertiary education, technical and vocational education and training, and lifelong learning. Our country, our democracy and our institutions are works in progress requiring a unique kind of 21st century citizen who must, among other things, be innovative, entrepreneurial, community-oriented, civic-minded, ethical and capable of critical-thinking and possess the ability to creatively confront the plethora of challenges which face us, while grasping the opportunities as they arise. The Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training was established in 2001 as an arm of Government that would foster the development of a rich, diverse, highly capable and adaptable Human Resource pool. Since this time the organization has experienced significant growth in its capacity and in the delivery of product and services. These initiatives have all been designed for the betterment of citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. The Ministry provides a number of programmes which are geared toward the development of a more diversified and knowledge intensive economy. Such initiatives have been developed to enable a smooth and seamless transition from primary and secondary education to tertiary education, encouraging industrial growth and development for enhancing economic stability. Unconventional avenues for achieving and ensuring a

highly competitive and competent Human Resource pool have been realized through the establishment of a number of new and accredited qualification schemes such as the Caribbean Vocation Qualification (CVQ), previously the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualification (TTNVQ). Since its inception the Ministry has successfully launched and implemented a number of Tertiary Education and Technical Vocational Education training programmes within its portfolio and these include:

The Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme

Since its inception the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme has become synonymous with tertiary education. The programme is accessible to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago pursuing tertiary level education, who have been resident in Trinidad and Tobago for a minimum period of three years prior to submitting an application for funding. GATE is applicable for programmes of study that lead to recognized tertiary level qualifications. GATE is available to citizens pursuing approved programmes at local and regional public and private tertiary level institutions. The programme was also implemented parallel to the establishment of the Accreditation Council which ensures that all providers of tertiary education programmes ensure that they operate within set criteria for the delivery of quality tertiary education. It also ensures that programmes offered by institutions are relevant both locally and regionally and in sync with international standards.

The Higher Education Loan (HELP) Programme

The HELP Programme provides further financial assistance for expenses attached to tertiary education. This soft loan facility has enabled students to enjoy the full benefits of the tertiary education experience by allowing them access to a number of critical resources which were not afforded under the GATE grant initiative/grant. Students can access loans at a maximum of \$25,000.00 per year for the duration of the programme at local institutions and \$75,000.00 per year for the duration of the programme at regional institutions. A loan capacity of a maximum value of \$25,000.00 per year for five years locally and \$75,000.00 per year for five years regional is made available for Medical students.

Distance Learning

The Distance Learning Secretariat is responsible for the development of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) at the post-secondary level in Trinidad and Tobago. Its current mandate is to provide an enabling framework via national policy and projects for the further development of distance learning offerings at existing tertiary education and training organizations in the country. By developing standards for Open and Distance learning and strengthening Local Tertiary Institutions to broaden and increase their DL programme offerings, the Distance Learning Secretariat aims to improve the quality of the learning environment available to citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Higher Education Services Division (HESD)

The Higher Education Services Division conducts planning, developmental studies, monitoring and evaluating of national higher education systems, structures, institutions and practices. This is done with respect to:

Accreditation and Qualifications, Benchmarking and Performance, Colleges and Universities Curricula, Distance, Open and Education, Education Innovations, Funding and Financial Awards, Lifelong Learning Publications and Registration.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Division plans, designs, develops and monitors systems for: Labour Market Signalling, National TVET Certification, On the Job Training Programme, Retraining Programme, TVET Curriculum Planning, TVET Accreditation and National Qualifications Governance and Skills Development Programmes. We understand that human capital development is a major contributor to economic growth and sustainable wealth creation. Our principal strategy, therefore, is to expand and develop tertiary education to a 60% participation rate, a target which is attainable because of the increased public sector incentives for accessing tertiary education programmes since 2000. Technical and vocational education and training will also be strengthened as part of a seamless system to allow for alternative pathways to further and higher education.

While the Government's Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) will be secured and expanded in new and innovative ways to close the opportunity-gap in tertiary participation for at-risk groups, the policies of the MSTTE will be directed towards the rationalizing of the post-secondary sector to avoid

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duplication, wastage and needless overlap, to build efficiencies and effectiveness in the system and to support accountability and synergy in the sector. Now that the consultation process has been completed it is the Ministry's aim to develop a system that will guide the governance, management and operations of tertiary education, technical and vocational education and training, and lifelong learning in Trinidad and Tobago. In the context of the Framework for Sustainable Development, the Government recognises that tertiary education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and lifelong learning play a pivotal role in the social, economic and cultural development of modern societies. The country has reported significant increases in the local tertiary education participation rate within recent years, from approximately 7% in 2001, to 15% in 2004 and 40% in 2008, steadily increasing through government incentives so as to achieve a targeted participation rate of at least 60% by 2015. At present, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is the primary source of tertiary education and in so doing, ensure that the sector as a whole has the knowledge and capacity to advance the achievement of social and economic development goals, and to bring about improvements in quality, effectiveness and efficiency. To stimulate, direct and mobilise the human capacity for learning and create an enabling environment that provides equal opportunities and access for all citizens to acquire the knowledge, skills, capabilities and values required for self-fulfilment and career development. b. To address the development needs of sectors of the national economy and provide the labour market with the competencies and expertise required at all levels, in support of sustainable development and the building of a

competitive, knowledge-driven economy. c. To facilitate and support stronger linkages between research, scholarship and teaching for the creation and dissemination of knowledge and knowledge-driven innovation that is dependent upon high-quality research and development in the area of new and emerging technologies. d. To contribute to the development of responsible and enlightened citizenship and civic engagement based on ethical awareness, critical thinking, reflection and commitment to the common good. e. To meet the education and training needs and aspirations of all citizens with the desire to learn throughout their lives by capturing and enhancing the creative and intellectual abilities of all persons for professional, vocational or recreational purposes. The dramatic increase in Tertiary Enrolment is, in large measure, a result of the introduction of the Dollar-for-Dollar Programme in 2001 and the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) programme in 2004. Government's present commitment to expanding the GATE programme to include technical and vocational education and training (TVET), entrepreneurial development and research is based on the objective of steadily increasing access to tertiary education so as to achieve a participation rate of 60%.