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# Erasmus+ National Policy Reviews 2024 Trinidad and Tobago

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## Trinidad and Tobago

### Contributor

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This national policy review provides a detailed analysis of Trinidad and Tobago's educational policies and their alignment with the Erasmus+ programme. It offers official, first-hand information into the country's engagement with Erasmus+ from 2021 to 2024, highlighting opportunities for improvement and identifying strategies to enhance integration and outcomes. Prepared and submitted by the Erasmus+ National Focal Point, this review contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen international cooperation and to maximise the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme in Trinidad and Tobago.

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## Reviews of policies, initiatives, projects, and/or stakeholders

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### National Education Policies

Trinidad and Tobago has the following policies listed by the Ministry of Education

- Education Policy 2023 – 2027
- Cultural Transformation Policy
- Home Schooling Policy
- Patriotism Policy
- Digital Transformation Policy
- Re-Engaging For Success
- Education Act
- The Concordat of 1960
- Education Policy Paper 2017-2022
- National School Code of Conduct
- Dress Code Policy
- Registration of Private Schools Policy
- Inclusive Education Policy
- Draft Special Education Policy
- National Policy on ECCE: Standards for regulations ECCE Childhood Services
- Policy on tertiary Education, Technical Vocational and Training and Lifelong Learning
- Policy on the Development and Implementation of a National Life Skills Curriculum for Personal Development and Employment Enhancement

These documents may be downloaded at the following link:

<https://www.moe.gov.tt/policy-documents/>

### Change in Regulations for Student Funding for Higher Education

In a media release in 2020 on the matter of National Scholarships, Bursaries, and Government Assistance for Tuition Expense (GATE), the Ministry of Education advised of the following changes to the funding system for higher education.

Investment in education has been a hallmark of governance in Trinidad and Tobago, as is reflected in budgetary allocations over the years since independence. Apart from providing children with free primary and secondary school education, which is their right, there has been historical investment since 1963 in funding assistance for post-secondary training.

The number of Island Scholarships offered over the years increased from five to ten in the 1960s and 1970s to 20 in the 1980s, and by the year 2008, that number progressed to 261, reaching a maximum of 447 in 2014, then settling at 400 annually from 2016 to 2019. This has carried with it a significant investment, as an Open Medical Scholarship costs, on average, 600,000 per year for five years, an Open non-medical – \$450,000 per year for 3-4 years and an additional scholarship of \$225,000 for 3 years. During the period 2008 – 2019, over 1586 national scholarships were awarded at a cost of approximately \$TT800 million. In addition to National Scholarships, the Government of T&T also funds the GATE programme, which is intended to widen access and make tertiary education affordable to all.

The Government is committed, even in a time of great financial difficulty as 2020 has proven to be, to ensuring that nationals are assisted in undergraduate training through these two (2) initiatives as it continues to invest in developing our greatest resource: the people.

However, as has been elucidated repeatedly by the Ministry of Finance (MOF), we are in challenging times. The Prime Minister has spoken of the requirement to make the necessary adjustments to each sector of society to continue to meet important needs without undue hardship to any citizen. In this regard, the Cabinet has decided to make critical adjustments to the GATE and Scholarship Programmes, which will allow for greater equity in the distribution of precious resources and focus the assistance where it is most required. Accordingly, with immediate effect, no more than 100 National Scholarships will be awarded annually, and 500 National Bursaries will be made available to students who are citizens of Trinidad and Tobago and who would have sat CAPE over a period of two (2) consecutive years in Form 6, including the year of the award.

### Scholarships

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will offer a maximum of 100 scholarships. No more than 10 (5 open and 5 additional) will be awarded in each of the 10 cognate groupings based on the performance of the top 10 students in the cognate group.

The award of these scholarships will be based solely on academic achievement. The ten (10) cognate groupings are:

- Business Studies
- Creative and Performing Studies
- Environmental Studies
- General Studies
- Information Communication and Technology Studies
- Language Studies
- Mathematics
- Natural Sciences
- Technical Studies

### National Bursaries

Students who have not been awarded a National Scholarship and have attained at least eight units at Grades I and II over a period not exceeding two consecutive years in Form 6 are eligible to apply for a National Bursary. Students must show evidence of being accepted to an accredited/recognised local tertiary-level institution or a regional campus of the UWI. Applications for the National Bursary will be evaluated using the following criteria with attendant weightings:

- The intended course of study should be in alignment with priority areas of development (15%)

- Extracurricular activities/contribution to community/country (15%)
- Purpose statement (10%)
- Academic performance (30%)
- Need as evidenced by Means Test (30%)
- A Bursary will comprise the following
- A book allowance of \$9,711/\$5,711 (medical studies – first-time payment / annually) and \$8,062/\$4,062 (non-medical studies)
- First-time payment / annually)
- A personal maintenance allowance of \$3,043.00 per month
- 100% GATE funding for study at the local institution

The amended National Scholarship and Bursary Programme will take effect immediately, based on the 2020 CAPE results. The expenditure to be incurred for the scholarships and bursaries is estimated at \$57,193,005.00. Further details regarding the application process for the National Bursary will be provided at a later date.

### Government Assistance for Tuition Expense (GATE)

The Government has reviewed the GATE Programme to ensure that the Programme is maintained within the budgetary allocation and that students who need it continue to receive assistance toward tuition fees at the post-secondary and tertiary levels. The proposed revision to the GATE Policy is anticipated to have an expenditure of \$TT 400Mn in fiscal 2021. Accordingly, the Government proposes that effective August 2020: All applications for GATE funding will include a mandatory means test- failure to complete the means test will disqualify the application from being considered for GATE funding.

- Where the household income is below \$10,000 per month, students will be eligible for 100% GATE funding for tuition fees.
- Where the household income is above \$10,000 per month but less than \$30,000 per month, students will be eligible for 75% GATE funding for tuition fees.
- Where the household income is above \$30,000 per month but less than \$75,000 per month, students will be eligible for 50% GATE funding for tuition fees
- Where the household income is above \$75,000 per month, students will be ineligible for GATE funding

With immediate effect:

- Funding under the GATE Programme will be provided for no more than one (1) programme up to the undergraduate level;
- Funding for postgraduate programmes will be discontinued
- Citizens are asked to note that:
- Students currently enrolled in postgraduate programmes will receive GATE funding until August 2021.
- Students currently enrolled in undergraduate programmes will continue to be funded for the normal duration of the programme.
- Students enrolled in programmes at regional campuses of the University of the West Indies (UWI) that are offered at the UWI, St. Augustine campus, will be provided the equivalent level of funding at the St. Augustine campus.
- Students already possessing undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications, regardless of whether they were beneficiaries of the GATE Programme, cannot access funding for any other programme.
- The HELP Loan remains available for Tertiary students through the partnership of the Government with commercial banks.

### Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ)

The Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) is an award that represents the achievement of a set of competencies that define the core work practices of an occupational area, consistent with the levels articulated within the Regional Qualifications Framework. CVQs are awarded to candidates with job-related competencies based on the Regional Occupational Standards.

CVQs can be achieved at your job through the workplace competence certification route. CVQs can also be obtained at training providers such as schools and technical institutes or through community-based programmes that have successfully used workplace activities in accordance with the NTA's policies related to certification.