

**ASTTBC TECHNICAL SPECIALIST
ACCREDITATION POLICY**

FOR

SPECIAL CERTIFICATION COURSES

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INTRODUCTION

The ASTTBC *Technical Specialist Accreditation Policy (TSAP)* provides the process for accrediting formal and informal education, courses, seminars, workshops and alternate learning methods including in-company training; it provides a valuable service for students, technicians, technologists, employers, government and certification programs.

The *TSAP* ensures frequent updating to meet the needs of technological change, but preserves the academic freedom of public and private education and training.

An independent, flexible evaluation process is provided. It contributes not only to public educational needs, but also plays a role in ensuring that the needs of industry can be achieved through the availability of a competent, technical work force.

Definitions:

'Board' is the Accreditation Board appointed by the Council of ASTTBC. The Board may recommend policies, set standards and grant accreditation, as well as receive recommendations from Accreditation Teams and to make a final decision on course accreditation applications. Board members are a vital component of Accreditation Teams.

'Accreditation Team' are the persons appointed by the Accreditation Board, charged with evaluating an application for course accreditation.

'Company' is an employer or association providing a course(s).

'Course' is a formal or informal, part-time, full-time, distance education, self-paced course, seminar, workshop or alternate learning method, including in-company training. For purpose of this policy will also include and mean 'training programs'.

'Course Accreditation' is the process of accrediting educational courses, seminars, workshops and alternate learning methods including in-company training by means of periodic review against specific standards or criteria, to ensure high standards and relevance. Its purpose therefore is to identify those courses that are proven worthy of such recognition.

'Graduate' is a person who completes an Accredited course.

'In-Company training' is any organized form of learning that a company provides and for which learning outcomes can be documented.

'Institution' is a public or private educational institution, employer, association, government or individual.

'Student' is a person who is enrolled in a course.

'Technical Specialist' is a person certified by one of the Special Certification and Licensing Boards in accordance with the ASTTBC Regulations governing Technical Specialists.

TSAP

1.0 **Purpose**

This document details the policies governing the accreditation of technology courses and training by the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia.

2.0 **Objectives of Accreditation**

ASTTBC Council has endorsed the following objectives:

- 2.1 To identify for the public through consistent, reasonable standards, the levels of courses (as recognized by ASTTBC) currently offered; so as to ensure that potential students and the general public receive appropriate counseling in determining educational objectives, recognition and credit toward career goals.
- 2.2 To identify courses which meet or exceed the minimum accreditation criteria, in order to exempt those who complete the course or training from examinations for certification.
- 2.3 To assist industry, employers and the public in readily recognizing the abilities of the graduates from accredited courses.
- 2.4 To assist institutions or training agencies to maintain appropriate curriculum, training resources and facilities for existing courses, as well as developing curriculum, training resources and facilities for new or proposed courses.
- 2.5 To assist in the long term development needs of related industry standards (where applicable) and to ensure relevance, balance and rigor in courses and training programs.

3.0 **Principles**

Colleges, Institutions and Training Agencies acknowledge that they and their graduates can benefit from ASTTBC's accreditation of their courses.

- 3.1 To foster a high course standard ASTTBC shall:

Promote consistent, reasonable standards to be used in the evaluation of curricula and training without interfering with the methods used to achieve them.

Continue to keep abreast of technological change and to incorporate modifications as reasonably required.

Cooperate in the attainment of goals while recognizing educational and training realities.

4.0 **Application for Course Accreditation**

4.1 A course shall be considered for accreditation only after a written request is received.

4.2 Application shall be made in writing as prescribed in Appendix 'A'. The applicant shall be responsible for payment of all accreditation fees at the time of accreditation application and subsequent expenses as outlined in the current ASTTBC Accreditation Fee Schedule.

4.3 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that fully completed applications for re-accreditation are submitted to ASTTBC four months in advance of expiry date of an interim report (when required) and six months in advance of the expiry date for full review.

4.4 It is the applicant's responsibility to advise the Board, in advance, when an accredited course is anticipating substantive change. A substantive change is one that significantly alters its objectives, scope, or control, and/or establishes instruction or training at a new geographic location.

5.0 **Method of Evaluation**

5.1 Courses shall be evaluated on the basis of:

- a) Data as detailed in Appendix 'A', submitted by the institution and examined by the Accreditation Team.
- b) Detailed report of on-site visits, where such are received, by the Accreditation Team.

5.2 The Certification Board shall review the recommendations of the Accreditation Team in accordance with Criteria Standards (8.0) Guideline Criteria (9.0), Levels (11.0) and Period of Accreditation (12.0).

5.3 Courses applying for re-accreditation may be examined on the basis of a joint evaluation. The recommendations for accreditation will be independent.

6.0 **The Accreditation Team**

6.1 Accreditation Teams shall be selected by ASTTBC staff in conjunction with the Board. In selecting team representatives, geographic location and available expertise will be considered. The team will include, whenever possible, senior representatives who are:

- a) from industry, preferably those which are likely to employ graduates from the course being reviewed;
- b) instructors familiar with the course being reviewed;
- c) from public bodies which may employ graduates from the type of course being reviewed;

- d) from the ASTTBC's Council, Accreditation Board, Board of Examiners, Special Certification and Licensing Boards, individual members of ASTTBC or other professional bodies.
- 6.2 On-site visits, where necessary, will be scheduled to provide for evaluation of facilities and equipment. On-site visits will provide adequate time for discussion with, and questioning of staff.
- 6.3 Accreditation Teams are a key part of the procedure. Teams shall assess the various qualitative factors associated with the courses (e.g. quality of staff, atmosphere, environment) as well as the more tangible factors such as education and training materials, staff/student ratios, facilities, equipment, admissions, and examination procedures. The team will provide a summary of their findings, along with recommendations to the Board.
- 6.4 Whenever possible the original Accreditation Team will be assigned to interim reviews.
- 7.0 **Processing Accreditation**
- 7.1 The recommendations of the Accreditation Team will be submitted for comment before the Accreditation Board review is completed.
- 7.2 The findings and recommendations of the Board and its teams shall, if applicable, be forwarded to other Boards and Committees of ASTTBC.
- 7.3 Provision is made for appeal to the ASTTBC Council under Section 13.
- 7.4 Publication of recognition shall be made as prescribed in Section 14.
- 8.0 **Criteria For Accreditation (Standards)**
- 8.1 The stated objectives of a course will be examined for clarity, for measurable or observable student outcomes, and to ensure that they accurately reflect the intent of the course as governed by the purposes of the institution or company. The course objectives will then be evaluated for consistency with the requirements for certification as determined by appropriate Special Certification Board(s). Once the course objectives have been examined, the overall course will be examined to determine whether the course objectives can be achieved.
- 8.2 ASTTBC will consider courses for accreditation that lead a graduate toward certification as a registered 'Technical Specialist'.
- 8.3 Other courses will be considered for accreditation in a 'technical specialist' field at the discretion of the Registrar.
- 9.0 **Guideline Criteria**
- 9.1 The tests for acceptance of a course are outlined under Section 8 Criteria for Accreditation (standards). Other guidelines which will normally be considered in the course accreditation are included under 9.2 to 9.14.

9.2 **Graduates**

Accreditation of a course can be granted only when graduates of the course are employed in industry and proof of industry satisfaction and job success is available. If adequate evidence is not available, a survey may be requested.

9.3 **Curriculum**

The standards for certification established by the appropriate ASTTBC Special Certification and Licensing Board shall be used where applicable to assess curriculum. The standard will be utilized as a reference for establishing minimum academic requirements. The intent is not to establish standard curriculum, but to identify minimum levels of competency or depth of knowledge in a particular discipline.

9.4 **Facilities**

Where appropriate, applicants must have, or have access to, adequately equipped laboratories and shops to ensure that course objectives can be achieved. Students must have access to industry facilities to the extent that appropriate training is achieved.

9.5 **Instructional Staff**

Instructor qualifications should be such that about 60% of the total course hours are taught by instructors with advanced level standing in the course.

Instructors should have a minimum of five years of relevant experience in an appropriate industrial setting and be able to demonstrate on-going professional development.

Instructors should be eligible for registration in an appropriate professional association.

Instructors should have training in adult education.

9.6 **Course Duration**

Where appropriate, courses should provide instructional contact time to adequately cover the course content as outlined in the appropriate standard.

9.7 **Examinations and Reports**

Written and oral evaluations and laboratory and technical reports should be consistent with learning objectives and reflect appropriate standard of communications.

9.8 **Textbooks and Reference Material**

Textbooks and reference material available to students should be relevant to the objectives and be representative of current industry practices and methodology.

9.9 **Library (includes ‘on-line’ resources)**

Access must be provided to adequate reference material (library) to support the course being considered for accreditation.

9.10 **External Resources**

Courses shall, wherever practical, provide an interface with the community through guest speakers, field trips, practicums, etc.

9.11 **Advisory Board**

Each Course should have an ‘Advisory Committee’ of three or more people knowledgeable in the course material that will monitor standards and delivery of the course. The Course Advisory Committee shall include representation from industry who shall provide regular input into the course.

9.12 **Professional Development**

Adequate provisions shall be made for professional development of staff.

9.13 **Relevancy**

Courses must be current and the method used for updating courses should be effective and readily apparent.

9.14 **Admission Policies**

Admission procedures shall include suitable checks and balances to minimize ‘drop-out’ rates and ensure entrance of qualified students with demonstrable aptitudes.

10.0 **Role of Accreditation Boards Related to the TSAP**

10.1 The Board is appointed by the ASTTBC Council in accordance with the ASTT Act & Regulations. The Board shall act at all times in compliance with the Act & Regulations and the provisions of this policy manual.

10.2 The Board shall review policy and standards and from time to time recommend such changes as may be necessary to maintain or raise educational standards, assist in the development of new courses and ensure continued relevancy.

10.3 Although Board members may be appointees of institutions or companies or other professional associations, they must at all times act to avoid conflict of interest.

10.4 Board Members should be given every opportunity, and are expected to seek to gain experience in a accreditation review.

10.5 Appointments to Accreditation Teams will be made by the Registrar in consultation with the Board.

11.0 **Level of Accreditation**

11.1 The Board may recommend recognition of a course as follows:

11.1.1 **Accredited Course**

A course which has been examined and having met all requirements is granted accredited status.

Graduates are exempt from those conditions for certification.

11.1.2 **Accreditation Pending**

A course may be granted a status of ‘Accreditation Pending’ where the course is operational, has made application for accreditation, was subject to a team visit, has met the ASTTBC accreditation criteria, but does not, as of the time of the team visit, have graduates employed in industry. The change in status from Accreditation Pending to that of an Accredited Course will be made by ASTTBC upon the receipt of a report that demonstrates to ASTTBC that the accreditation requirements respecting course graduates has been satisfied.

12.0 **Period of Accreditation**

12.1 The accreditation status of a course is subject to periodic review.

12.2 Full accreditation of a course may be granted for a minimum of one year and a maximum of five years. If the maximum of five years is granted, it may be subject to an interim review at the discretion of the Board, acting on the recommendation of the Accreditation Team.

12.3 The term of the accreditation for a course where a change in status from Accreditation Pending to that of Accredited Course is made shall not exceed a maximum of five years from the date Accreditation Pending was granted. In no instance shall the term of Accreditation Pending exceed three years for any one course.

12.4 When an Accredited Course undergoes substantive change (as defined in 4.4) or if its educational effectiveness is legitimately questioned at any time, the Board reserves the right to review the course as required.

13.0 **Appeals**

13.1 In the event that an applicant wishes to appeal a decision on accreditation, written notice of appeal and grounds shall be given to the Registrar of ASTTBC within 30 days of the date of notification of the decision. The Board will review its decision and either uphold or modify the decision. This decision on the appeal will be communicated to the applicant.

If the applicant is not satisfied with this decision the applicant may appeal to the ASTTBC Council within 30 days. The procedure for such appeal follows.

- 13.2 Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the President of ASTTBC will appoint a Special Committee of the Council. The applicant has the right of representation and/or appearance in person at the appeal hearing.
- 13.3 Written submissions from both the administrators of the course and the Board will be accepted by the committee.
- 13.4 The special committee will communicate its findings to the next meeting of Council for a decision. This decision will be promulgated, notified to the applicant, the Board, and subsequently published.
- 14.0 **Publications**
- The following policy applies to all public disclosures concerning ASTTBC course accreditation:
- 14.1 Definitions of their terms which may be applied to courses examined for accreditation are given under Section 11.
- 14.2 All references to ASTTBC course accreditation must avoid any confusion with a certificate, diploma or degree of technology and a degree from a university course; refer only to those courses which are currently accredited; and, not imply accreditation or endorsement of non-accredited courses or of an institution as a whole.
- 14.3 An institution may cite the ASTTBC objectives in referring to ASTTBC accredited courses. Such a reference must be completely factual and professional in tone. The reference itself shall include the following phrase: ‘An ASTTBC Accredited Course’.
- The applicable specialty for the accredited course should also be noted. Examples include Building Design, Construction Safety, Fire Protection, Property Inspection, Public Works Inspection, Site Improvements Surveys, Steel Detailing, Onsite Wastewater or other specialty recognized by ASTTBC.
- 14.4 The preliminary recognition status of ‘Accreditation Pending’ may be noted in publications of the institution. The statement that these are subject to periodic review is to appear with such notations.
- 14.5 If an accreditation is withdrawn or discontinued, the institution shall no longer refer to the course as accredited.
- 14.6 A list of currently accredited courses will be routinely published as ‘ASTTBC - Accredited Courses’ and will include all accredited courses, pending accredited courses and courses requesting accreditation.
- 14.7 Notification of accreditation results will be communicated by ASTTBC to the applicant. For Colleges and Institutes, notification will be provided to the President, Department Heads, Deans and others as is appropriate. Results will go to the ASTTBC Special Certification and Licensing Board, Accreditation Board, Board of Examiners and other Committees as appropriate, and will be published as described in section 14.6.

ASTTBC COURSE ACCREDITATION SUBMISSION - SPECIAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

(for new accreditations and re-accreditations)

A Information Required from an Institution

Prior to Accreditation Process

In preparing a submission, the following format should be followed:

1. Course - Title
2. Discipline - Indicate specialty in which accreditation is desired; Building Design, Construction Safety, Fire Protection, Property Inspection, Public Works Inspection, Site Improvements Surveys, Steel Detailing, Onsite Wastewater and other specialties recognized by ASTTBC.
3. Course Objectives - Each course considered for accreditation must have a clearly defined set of objectives. These should include descriptive information about the course, including but not limited to: course title; course duration; entrance requirements; area of primary emphasis; secondary emphasis; etc.; general academic level of the course; a short outline of the course and a summary of overall goals.

The objectives themselves should be performance oriented describing what technical tasks the graduate would be expected to be proficient in doing upon graduation, or with six to twelve months experience in the specialty. They should also state what might reasonably be expected after the same has attained more experience. Included with the objectives there should be sample descriptions, job titles, etc., indicating potential industry areas of employment, levels of responsibility of graduates with various levels of related experience. Additional information should be provided as needed to round out the objectives.
4. Course Outline - Detailed outline of the material to be covered in the course including associated lab projects, experiments or field trips. Texts or other resource materials used should be listed with the primary texts clearly indicated.
5. Facilities & Equipment - A brief statement on existing lab equipment and facilities noting serious deficiencies and future needs.
6. Graduate Employment - Detailed information on the employment of past graduates particularly from the recent classes, i.e. employer, job title, job description, and related statistics.
7. Student Policies - Details of student evaluation methodology including samples where applicable and practices relevant to retention, remedial assistance and graduation should be clearly stated.

8. Reports & Examinations - Randomly sampled technical reports, projects and laboratory reports and an outline of policies which govern reports and projects. Sample exams should be included where appropriate or made available for Team inspection.
9. Faculty - A list of teaching staff associated with the course indicating academic qualifications and industrial experience, as well as details of professional development.
10. Advisory Committee - A list of members of the Advisory Committee indicating professional and industry background, present responsibility together with recent Minutes from the Advisory Committee.
11. Course evaluation reports from the students.
12. Course Updating – methods used for updating the course.
13. Any additional information which the Board may subsequently require in the light of the information provided under Item 1 to 11.
14. Three copies of each submission will be required.

The preceding information outlined in Appendix 'A' covers the basic data required to be submitted with an application for accreditation. It should be stressed however, that the quality of information submitted will affect the amount of time required to be spent by the accreditation teams, and, the period to time required to complete the total accreditation process. As stated elsewhere, the submitter should not feel constrained by this listing of information required or regard any of the guidelines as 'rigid standards'. Submitters should feel free to provide any and all information that they believe will contribute to the qualitative and quantitative review procedure.

B. Information Required for an Interim Review

To extend a course's accredited status or to upgrade its status, a full written report will detail all changes made since the last accreditation. The report should be brief and concise, not a simple compilation of updated course curriculum. This report must be submitted to ASTTBC at least six weeks in advance of the required date to ensure continued accreditation status. Typically, a report (3 copies) should contain the following information:

1. Objectives -- Objectives of the course and the rationale for changes made to previously stated objectives.
2. Previous Report - Implementation of, or reactions to, the recommendations made in the Summary Report of the last Accreditation Team.
3. Course Content - Changes in course content.
4. Administration and Facilities - Changes to staff, library, lab and/or classroom facilities.
5. Equipment - New lab equipment and replacement of obsolete equipment.
6. Community Involvement - Usage of advisory committee, field trips, practicums, etc.
7. Graduates - Recent statistics on placement of graduates.
8. Any additional information deemed relevant.

Following review Accreditation may be extended or upgraded in accordance with sections 11 and 12.

NOTE: After five years of accredited status, a course must undergo a full accreditation review.