Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Education

C.A.C.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT COMPONENT (CAC) OF THE SEA

GUIDELINES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

Standards and Procedures for the Implementation, Moderation and Quality Assurance of the CAC



2026

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Continuous Assessment Component (CAC) of the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA)
Guidance and Quality Assurance Manual

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PART I: PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. Quality Statement

The Ministry of Education is committed to ensuring that the Continuous Assessment Component (CAC) is implemented as a fair, valid, reliable, transparent, consistent and nationally credible component of the primary school assessment system.

The CAC is designed to complement the existing SEA framework by providing evidence of student achievement gathered over time through appropriately designed, curriculum-aligned and moderated assessment tasks. It is intended to capture aspects of student learning and performance that cannot be adequately measured through a single final written examination.

Quality assurance is therefore integral to the design, implementation, marking, moderation, recording, reporting and finalisation of CAC results.

The Ministry shall establish and maintain a multi-level Quality Assurance (QA) system that provides reasonable assurance that:

- every student is assessed fairly;
- assessment tasks are appropriate, curriculum-aligned and age-appropriate;
- teachers are adequately trained and supported;
- nationally developed assessment criteria and rubrics are applied consistently;
- scores are based on evidence of student performance;
- school-level processes are monitored;
- national moderation promotes comparability across schools;
- assessment records are accurate, secure and auditable; and
- finalised CAC results are credible and suitable for incorporation into the student's SEA assessment profile.

The approach is based on the principle that quality cannot be added after assessment has occurred; it must be designed into every stage of the CAC process.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this Manual is to establish a coherent national framework for assuring the quality, integrity and credibility of the CAC.

Specifically, the policy seeks to:

- establish national standards for CAC implementation;

- promote fairness and equity in assessment;
- ensure consistency in the administration and scoring of CAC tasks;
- strengthen teacher assessment literacy and professional judgement;
- establish clear school-level monitoring procedures;
- establish national moderation arrangements;
- provide mechanisms for detecting and correcting administrative and scoring errors;
- safeguard the validity and reliability of CAC results;
- establish transparent procedures for queries and review before finalisation;
- protect the confidentiality, security and integrity of assessment records; and
- provide parents, students, teachers, principals and other stakeholders with confidence in the credibility of CAC results.

3. Application and Scope

This framework applies to all activities associated with the CAC, including:

- assessment design;
- curriculum and assessment alignment;
- development and approval of CAC tasks;
- teacher preparation and training;
- administration of assessment tasks;
- student accommodations where applicable;
- marking and scoring;
- use of standardised rubrics;
- school-level monitoring;
- internal verification;
- record-keeping;
- data capture and transmission;
- national moderation;
- quality control;
- score finalisation;
- reporting;
- queries and corrections;
- data security; and
- post-implementation review and evaluation.

The framework applies to all participating primary schools and relevant officers and agencies involved in CAC implementation.

4. Principles Governing Assessment

The CAC Quality Assurance system shall be guided by the following principles.

4.1 Fairness and Equity

Students must have equitable opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, competencies and achievement.

Assessment practices must not advantage or disadvantage students because of the school they attend, the teacher who assesses them or other irrelevant factors.

4.2 Validity

CAC tasks must measure the knowledge, skills, competencies and learning outcomes they are intended to measure.

Assessment should reflect authentic application of learning and should be appropriately aligned with the primary curriculum.

4.3 Reliability and Consistency

The assessment process should produce sufficiently consistent results across teachers, schools and assessment occasions.

Standardised task requirements, rubrics, teacher training, monitoring and moderation shall be used to strengthen consistency.

4.4 Transparency

Assessment expectations, criteria, procedures and quality assurance arrangements should be communicated clearly to teachers, students, parents and other relevant stakeholders.

4.5 Professional Judgement

CAC recognises the importance of teacher professional judgement. Such judgement must, however, be exercised within nationally established assessment criteria, rubrics, procedures and quality assurance requirements.

4.6 Authenticity

Where appropriate, CAC should provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning through authentic performance, application, problem-solving, creation, investigation and other meaningful activities.

4.7 Accountability

All persons involved in CAC implementation have defined responsibilities for maintaining assessment quality and integrity.

4.8 Confidentiality and Security

Student assessment information and records must be appropriately protected from unauthorized access, alteration, loss or disclosure.

4.9 Continuous Improvement

Quality Assurance information shall be used to identify strengths, weaknesses, implementation challenges and opportunities for improving CAC over time.

5. Relationship with the Secondary Entrance Assessment

The CAC is intended to complement rather than undermine the purpose of the SEA.

The established policy direction of 30% CAC and 70% Final Test provides a balance between:

Continuous evidence of achievement and standardized high-stakes examination evidence.

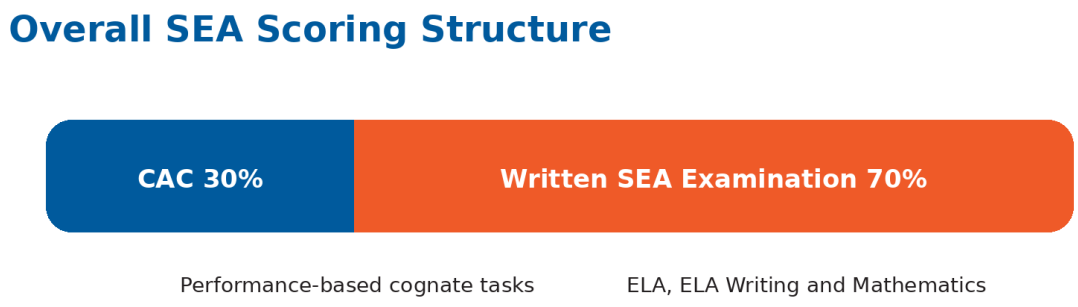


Figure 1: Overall SEA Scoring Structure

The QA framework is therefore designed to ensure that the 30% CAC component is sufficiently standardised and moderated to support its use alongside the 70% Final Test component.

The resulting assessment profile is intended to provide a broader representation of student achievement than reliance on a single examination alone.

PART II: GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6. National Governance

The Ministry of Education shall retain overall responsibility for the governance and oversight of the CAC Quality Assurance system.

The Ministry shall:

- establish national standards;
- approve assessment requirements;
- determine moderation arrangements;
- establish training requirements;
- monitor implementation;
- review QA findings;
- address systemic risks; and
- periodically review this document.

Where responsibilities are delegated to agencies or external partners, the Ministry shall retain oversight of the national quality standards.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

For the **Continuous Assessment Component (CAC)**, Quality Assurance should operate as a **whole-of-Ministry system**, with clearly defined responsibilities at classroom, school, district, technical and national levels.

Department / Division	CAC Quality Assurance Role	Key Responsibilities
Chief Education Officer	Professional and educational oversight	Provide overall professional leadership; ensure alignment among curriculum, instruction, assessment and supervision; coordinate the work of technical Divisions; resolve significant implementation and quality issues.
Division of Educational Research and Evaluation (DERE)	National CAC Assessment QA Lead	Oversee assessment design and validation; develop assessment framework and moderation procedures; conduct national sampling and audits; analyse CAC data; prepare national QA reports and recommendations.
Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD)	Curriculum and Assessment Alignment Lead	Ensure CAC tasks are aligned with curriculum outcomes, competencies and standards; review cognitive demand and appropriateness of tasks; develop curriculum-linked exemplars; ensure

Department / Division	CAC Quality Assurance Role	Key Responsibilities
		assessment promotes meaningful learning; participate in task validation and moderation.
School Supervision and Management Division (SSMD)	School Implementation and Compliance Lead	Monitor implementation of CAC in schools; conduct school visits and compliance checks; verify assessment records; monitor internal school standardisation; report implementation risks and follow up on corrective action.
Education Districts / District Teams	District-Level QA	Coordinate school monitoring; review implementation across schools; conduct sampling and verification; support internal school standardisation; identify district trends; provide technical assistance.
Teacher Education Performance and Professional Development Division (TEPPDD)	Teacher Competency QA	Coordinate the development and delivery of CAC training; ensure teachers understand assessment standards, rubrics, evidence requirements and moderation; monitor training completion and competency; provide targeted professional development based on QA findings.
Student Support Services Division (SSSD)	Equity and Accessibility QA	Ensure CAC accommodates diverse learners; establish guidance for reasonable accommodations; monitor fairness for students with special educational needs; advise schools on differentiated assessment and accessibility.
Information and Communication Technology Division	Digital/Data QA and Security	Manage the Online Registration System (ORS). Liaise with CXC to resolve issues regarding the ORS. Ensure that Schools can access the ORS to upload the scores. Generate reports – regarding uploading the scores and outstanding scores for candidates
Division of Education Services (DES) - Examinations Unit	Formal Assessment Administration QA	Coordinate enrolment or registration of Private candidates/Homeschoolers. Create a database of Private Candidates/Homeschoolers. Establish procedures for storage. Receive, secure and store samples of student work. Receive samples of CAC cognate work per school, generated by CXC and validate receipt of samples in good order. Maintain confidentiality.
Corporate Communications	Communication QA	Ensure CAC information is accurately communicated to stakeholders via official media releases, press conferences, websites and social media platforms.
Principals / School Assessment Teams	First-Level Institutional QA	Establish school-level QA procedures; ensure teachers comply with CAC standards; coordinate internal moderation; verify samples of student work;

Department / Division	CAC Quality Assurance Role	Key Responsibilities
		maintain records; address discrepancies and report concerns.
Teachers	First-Line Assessment QA	Administer approved assessment tasks; apply rubrics consistently; maintain authentic student evidence; provide feedback; maintain accurate records; participate in moderation; report irregularities and seek clarification where required.
CAC School Monitors	Monitor Implementation	Review implementation; Provide support for Teachers and schools; Monitor student work and score accuracy
Parents/Guardians	Provide support	Support student participation and engage with appropriate information and procedures
Students	Demonstrate their own achievement	Complete authentic assessment tasks and submit required documents and artefacts.

8. School Management and Verification

The principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that CAC is implemented in accordance with national requirements.

The principal, or designated CAC Lead shall:

- oversee CAC administration;
- ensure that trained personnel conduct assessments;
- monitor adherence to assessment procedures;
- review samples of student work;
- verify appropriate application of rubrics;
- check score records;
- ensure that required documentation is maintained;
- identify and address anomalies;
- facilitate internal standardisation where required; and
- certify the accuracy and completeness of school submissions.

The principal and designated monitoring staff are responsible for overseeing task administration, reviewing samples, checking rubric application and verifying score recording.

9. Teacher Training and Standardisation

Prior to implementation, teachers involved in CAC shall receive structured training.

Training shall address, as applicable:

1. purpose and structure of CAC;

2. assessment design and administration;
3. curriculum-assessment alignment;
4. interpretation and application of rubrics;
5. scoring and evidence-based judgement;
6. maintaining scoring consistency;
7. identifying and avoiding assessment bias;
8. student authenticity;
9. record-keeping;
10. reporting procedures;
11. internal verification;
12. moderation procedures; and
13. handling assessment queries.

Teacher preparation in assessment design and administration, standardised rubrics, scoring consistency, fairness, record-keeping and reporting are core Quality Assurance requirements.

Standardisation Activities

Where appropriate, teachers shall participate in:

- exemplar review;
- sample student-work marking;
- collaborative marking;
- discussion of scoring decisions;
- interpretation of rubric descriptors; and
- calibration exercises.

The purpose is to establish a common understanding of the national assessment standard before teachers undertake formal scoring.

10. Professional Accountability

Teachers and school administrators are expected to exercise professional judgement responsibly.

Quality assurance does not seek to remove professional judgement. Rather, it provides the structures necessary to ensure that professional judgement is:

- informed;
- evidence-based;
- consistent;
- transparent; and
- aligned with national standards.

Where concerns regarding assessment practice arise, the Ministry may require additional training, monitoring, moderation or corrective action.

PART III: ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION

11. Minimum Assessment Standards

Every CAC assessment must satisfy the following minimum standards.

Standard 1: Curriculum Alignment

Tasks must be aligned with approved curriculum outcomes and the intended learning competencies.

Standard 2: Age Appropriateness

Tasks must be suitable for the developmental level of primary school students.

Standard 3: Clear Assessment Criteria

Students and teachers must have a clear understanding of what is being assessed.

Standard 4: Standardized Scoring

Nationally developed rubrics or marking guides shall be used where prescribed.

Standard 5: Adequate Evidence

Scores must be based on sufficient and appropriate evidence of student performance.

Standard 6: Consistency

Comparable standards must be applied across classrooms and schools.

Standard 7: Authenticity

Student work must represent the student's own performance, with support limited to what is permitted by the assessment requirements.

Standard 8: Documentation

Assessment evidence and scores must be appropriately recorded and retained.

Standard 9: Moderation

Specified samples of student work and scores shall be subject to internal and/or external moderation.

Standard 10: Accuracy

Scores must be checked for marking, recording, calculation and transmission errors before finalisation.

12. Task Development and Approval

Quality assurance begins before the task reaches the classroom.

The Ministry shall ensure that CAC tasks:

- reflect approved curriculum outcomes;
- assess clearly identified competencies;
- are age-appropriate;
- provide sufficient opportunity for students to demonstrate achievement;
- contain clear administration instructions;
- contain clearly defined scoring criteria;
- incorporate appropriate accommodations where required; and
- are reviewed and approved through established Ministry procedures.

13. Standardised Assessment Tasks and Rubrics

Each nationally prescribed CAC task shall be accompanied by appropriate assessment guidance.

Where applicable, the rubric shall:

- identify the assessment criteria;
- define performance levels;
- provide descriptors for each performance level;
- indicate the basis for awarding marks;
- reduce ambiguity in scoring; and
- support consistency across classrooms and schools.

The use of nationally developed rubrics identifying criteria, performance levels and descriptors is a principal mechanism for achieving objectivity and consistency.

14. Phased implementation and readiness

The proposed phased introduction of CAC beginning in **September 2026** provides an important quality assurance opportunity. Ample sensitisation and practice is conducted to provide familiarity for both students and teachers before formal assessment takes place.

This approach reduces implementation risk and allows evidence from early implementation to inform continuous improvement.

PART IV: CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT AND SCORING

15. Teacher Marking and Scoring

Teachers shall assess student work using the approved assessment criteria and standardised rubrics.

Marking must be:

- evidence-based;
- consistent;
- transparent;
- professionally defensible;
- free from personal bias; and
- supported by appropriate student evidence.

Teachers shall record scores promptly and accurately.

Where required, collaborative marking sessions may be conducted to strengthen consistency.

16. Within-School Standardisation

Within-school standardisation or ‘Internal school moderation’ is a school-based quality control process.

It may include:

- review of a prescribed sample of student work;
- checking the application of rubrics;
- comparison of marking between teachers;
- discussion of borderline or unusual cases;
- verification of calculations;
- review of missing or incomplete records; and
- correction of identified administrative errors.

Internal school moderation should take place before the school's final submission.

17. Levels of quality assurance

The CAC shall operate through a **multi-layered quality assurance model**.

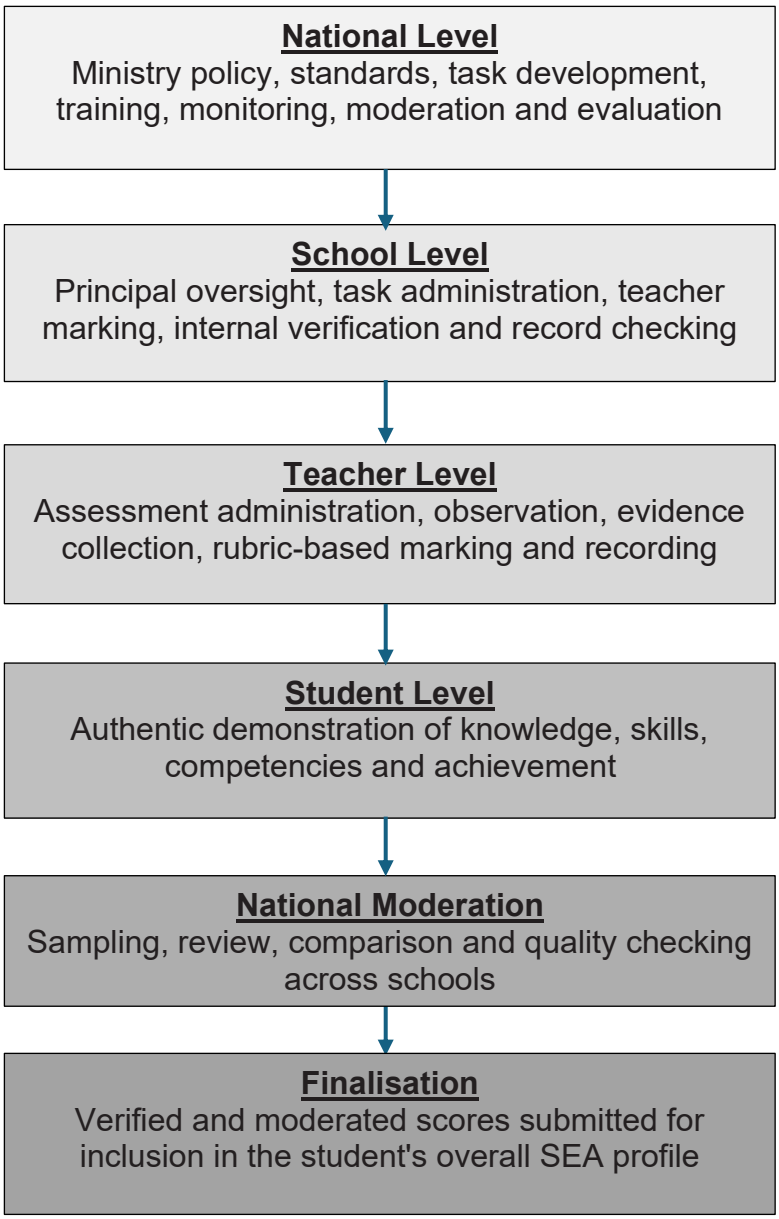


Figure 2: The Multi-layered Quality Assurance Model

This structure ensures that quality assurance is not dependent on a single person or single checking point. There are several check points for quality control to catch problems early, reduce possible time lost, and prevent minor issues from escalating to costly failures.

PART V: MODERATION AND QUALITY CONTROL

18. National External Moderation

National moderation provides an additional quality check to ensure comparability across schools.

The Ministry shall establish a national moderation process involving appropriately qualified personnel, and an established independent external Quality Assurance body - the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).

National moderation may include:

1. selection of representative samples of student work;
2. review of teacher-assigned scores;
3. examination of supporting evidence;
4. comparison of scoring patterns across schools;
5. identification of unusual scoring patterns;
6. investigation of significant discrepancies; and
7. application of approved moderation procedures.

External moderation is a national quality check involving sampling of student work, review of teacher-assigned scores and comparison across institutions.

19. Moderation and score adjustment

Where moderation identifies significant inconsistencies, the Ministry shall apply approved procedures to address the issue.

Any adjustment must:

- be evidence-based;
- be applied according to established national procedures;
- protect student fairness;
- be documented;
- be capable of audit; and
- promote national comparability.

Moderation is intended primarily to ensure that students are assessed against a common national standard rather than to penalize individual teachers or schools.

20. Quality Assurance Checkpoints

The CAC system shall have defined quality checkpoints:

Checkpoint 1 – Task Quality

- ✓ Is the task valid, curriculum-aligned and age-appropriate?

Checkpoint 2 – Teacher Readiness

- ✓ Are teachers trained and sufficiently standardised?

Checkpoint 3 – Administration

- ✓ Was the task administered according to requirements?

Checkpoint 4 – Marking

- ✓ Was the approved rubric correctly applied?

Checkpoint 5 – School Verification

- ✓ Are scores and supporting evidence accurate?

Checkpoint 6 – National Moderation

- ✓ Are standards sufficiently comparable across schools?

Checkpoint 7 – Data Validation

- ✓ Are the scores correctly recorded and calculated?

Checkpoint 8 – Finalisation

- ✓ Has the result met all required QA conditions?

PART VI: RECORDS SECURITY AND DATA

21. Confidentiality, Security and Integrity

All persons involved in CAC shall be required to protect:

- student assessment records;
- student work;
- assessment materials;
- scores;
- moderation information;
- personal information; and
- assessment-related communications.

Unauthorised alteration, disclosure or manipulation of assessment information shall be treated as a serious breach of assessment integrity.

22. Data validation and submission

The integrity of CAC results depends not only on marking but also on accurate data management.

Quality assurance shall therefore include checks for:

- student identification;
- task completion;
- marks awarded;
- score transcription;
- calculations;
- missing scores;
- duplicate records;
- invalid entries;
- submission completeness; and
- final score calculations.

Schools shall be given an opportunity to verify and correct legitimate recording or calculation errors before final submission.

PART VII: RESULTS QUERIES AND CORRECTIONS

23. Finalisation of CAC scores

Following completion of the required assessment, internal quality checks and national moderation, CAC scores shall be finalised.

After moderation, the following requirements apply:

- scores are finalised and submitted as part of the student's overall assessment;
- CAC scores contribute to the student's SEA profile; and
- finalised results are considered official and validated.

Once scores have been finalised in accordance with national procedures, they shall constitute the official CAC result.

24. Queries Before and After Finalisation

The CAC is a school-based, moderated assessment and not a traditional single written examination.

The query process must therefore recognise the nature of continuous assessment while providing an appropriate mechanism to identify and correct genuine administrative or procedural errors.

Before final submission

Before final submission, schools may:

- review scores;
- verify student records;
- check calculations;
- verify transcription;
- identify missing information; and
- correct legitimate recording or calculation errors.

This is the principal opportunity for correction at the school level.

After finalisation

After results have been finalised:

- individual re-marking shall not ordinarily be undertaken;

- individual appeals against professional assessment judgements shall not ordinarily be accepted; and
- finalised results shall not be altered except through an authorised national correction process addressing a verified administrative or procedural error.

Thus, after finalisation, **no individual re-marking or appeals will be conducted** because multiple layers of school-level and national moderation have already been applied.

25. Basis of the Query Position

Unlike a single examination paper, CAC is based on:

- multiple assessment tasks completed over time;
- standardised assessment activities;
- teacher professional judgement;
- standardised scoring criteria;
- school-level monitoring; and
- national moderation.

Therefore, the results have already undergone multiple quality checks, and a traditional post-result appeal process is unnecessary.

The policy objective is to ensure that the assessment process is robust before results are finalised, rather than relying primarily on appeals after results have been released.

26. Exceptions and Corrective Action

Although routine post-result re-marking is not provided for, the Ministry shall maintain procedures for addressing verified systemic or administrative errors.

Examples may include:

- incorrect score transcription;
- calculation errors;
- incorrect student identification;
- missing assessment evidence caused by an administrative failure;
- technical/data-processing errors; or
- evidence of a significant procedural irregularity.

Such cases shall be considered through an authorised Ministry process.

Corrective action shall be based on documented evidence and shall protect the integrity and fairness of the assessment system.

PART VIII: MONITORING, REPORTING AND REVIEW

27. Risk management

The Ministry shall maintain a CAC assessment risk register covering, at a minimum:

Risk	QA Response
Inconsistent teacher marking	Training, standardisation, rubrics and moderation
Inconsistent task administration	Standardised administration procedures and monitoring
Teacher assessment uncertainty	Training, exemplars and professional support
School-to-school variation	National moderation
Recording errors	Internal verification and data checks
Student work authenticity concerns	Clear procedures and teacher monitoring
Excessive teacher workload	Careful task design, scheduling and integration with instruction
Parent misunderstanding	Public information, parent guides and clear query procedures
Procedural non-compliance	Monitoring, corrective action and follow-up
Unreliable scores	Sampling, moderation and quality-control procedures
Technology/data errors	Data validation and secure submission procedures

28. Quality Assurance Indicators

The Ministry should monitor the following indicators:

Input Indicators

- percentage of teachers trained;
- percentage of schools receiving required materials;
- availability of standardised rubrics;
- availability of assessment guidance.

Process Indicators

- percentage of tasks administered according to requirements;
- percentage of schools completing internal verification;
- percentage of teachers participating in standardisation;
- percentage of required samples moderated;

- number and type of procedural irregularities.

Output Indicators

- percentage of scores submitted accurately;
- number of recording/calculation errors detected;
- number of scores requiring moderation;
- degree of agreement between initial and moderated scores;
- percentage of schools meeting national QA standards.

Outcome Indicators

- evidence of improved assessment consistency;
- stakeholder confidence in CAC;
- comparability of assessment outcomes across schools;
- reduction in implementation errors;
- evidence that CAC captures a broader range of student competencies.

29. Quality Assurance Reporting

The Ministry shall review implementation data **annually** and prepare QA reports.

Reports should identify:

- implementation progress;
- compliance with national requirements;
- moderation findings;
- common scoring issues;
- data-quality issues;
- stakeholder concerns;
- training needs;
- risks;
- corrective actions; and
- recommendations for improvement.

QA findings should inform subsequent CAC cycles and policy refinement.

30. Continuous Improvement

CAC shall operate as an evolving national assessment system.

In this regard, the **PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act) model** in Quality Management is particularly useful for continuous improvement in the CAC as the Ministry of Education seeks to attain the

best working continuous assessment system for the SEA. Rather than treating Quality Assurance solely as an inspection exercise, the PDCA Model ensures that CAC is not merely introduced and monitored but continually reviewed and improved based on evidence from schools, teachers, students, and the Ministry of Education.

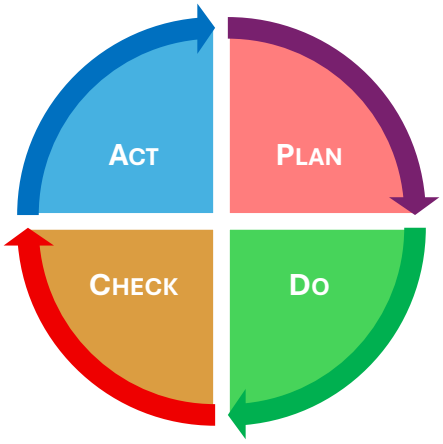


Figure 3: The PDCA Cycle

Application of PDCA to the CAC

1. PLAN – Establish what should happen and how it should happen regarding the CAC

2. DO – Implement CAC as planned

3. CHECK – Monitor and evaluate implementation, noting deviations and possible lessons

4. ACT – Correct, strengthen and improve based on information gathered

Each cycle generates evidence to inform school administrators, Ministry departments, and policymakers about the effectiveness and quality of CAC.

Findings should inform revisions to tasks, rubrics, training, procedures and QA arrangements.

31. Quality Assurance Process Flow

The National Quality Assurance Process Flow is used to identify steps in a process so that interventions may be applied at critical points to prevent errors, meet customer needs, and achieve high-quality standards.

Implementation of the CAC requires an established process flow.



Figure 4: The CAC Quality Assurance Process Flow

32. Review of the CAC Guidelines and Quality Assurance Manual

This *CAC Guidelines and Quality Assurance Manual* should be reviewed periodically during the implementation of CAC, particularly during the initial phased introduction beginning in September 2026.

The first implementation cycles should be treated as an important source of evidence for strengthening:

- assessment design;
- teacher training;
- within-school standardisation;
- moderation;
- school monitoring;
- data systems;
- workload management;
- stakeholder communication; and
- national quality assurance.

33. Assurance to Students, Parents and Stakeholders

The Ministry's quality assurance commitment is that:

- ✓ Every student should be assessed fairly.
- ✓ Every teacher should be appropriately trained and supported.
- ✓ National standards should be applied consistently.
- ✓ Student performance should be assessed against clearly defined criteria.
- ✓ Scores should be checked at multiple stages before finalisation.
- ✓ Moderation should support comparability across schools.
- ✓ Results should be credible, transparent and defensible.

APPENDIX: MINIMUM CAC QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKLIST

National Level

- Task approved
- Curriculum alignment confirmed
- Assessment criteria established
- Rubric approved
- Administration guidance approved
- Teacher training completed
- Moderation procedures established

School Level

- Teachers trained
- Task administered according to requirements
- Student evidence collected
- Rubric applied
- Scores recorded
- Internal verification completed
- Required samples identified
- Errors corrected before submission
- School submission certified

National Moderation

- Required samples received
- Student evidence reviewed
- Scores checked
- Cross-school consistency examined
- Discrepancies investigated
- Approved adjustments applied where necessary
- Moderation completed

Finalisation

- Scores verified
- Data validated
- Required corrections completed
- Results finalised
- Official submission completed
- Records securely retained

These safeguards are designed to ensure that CAC results are **fair, consistent, credible and comparable across Trinidad and Tobago.**