Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Education

C.A.C.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT COMPONENT (CAC) OF THE SEA

MANUAL FOR PRIVATE CANDIDATES (INCLUDING HOME-SCHOOLED CANDIDATES)

Guidance for Registration, Preparation and Assessment in the CAC

2026

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Continuous Assessment Component (CAC) of the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA)
Manual for Private Candidates (including Home-Schooled Candidates)
October 2026

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About This Manual

The CAC Manual for Private Candidates (including Home-Schooled Candidates) explains the specialised arrangements through which eligible candidates access the Continuous Assessment Component (CAC) of the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) when they do not participate through a Government or Government-Assisted primary school.

It focuses on the parts of the CAC pathway that are different for Private Candidates: registration, preparation, authorised assessment arrangements, accommodations, attendance, evidence and records, quality assurance, communication, and what to do when a problem arises.

KEY MESSAGE: The administrative pathway differs; the national CAC assessment standard remains the same.

Who Should Use This Manual?

- Parents/guardians: registration, preparation, attendance, accommodations, communication and candidate support.
- Candidates: what to expect before, during and after authorised CAC assessment arrangements.
- Tutors/educators: preparation and the boundary between permitted instructional support and formal CAC assessment.
- Authorised Ministry personnel: specialised pathway requirements for administration, assessment, records and quality assurance.

Relationship Among CAC Publications

This manual forms part of a suite of CAC publications. Each publication has a distinct function and audience.

CAC Publication Suite

Publication	Primary Purpose
CAC Administrator's Manual	National administrative and operational requirements for CAC implementation, oversight and quality assurance.
CAC Guidelines and Quality Assurance Manual	National framework for assuring the quality, integrity and credibility of CAC implementation, assessment and results.
CAC Teacher's Manual	Common professional and classroom practices required for CAC implementation.

Publication	Primary Purpose
Cognate Instructional Guides	Detailed guidance for teaching and implementing learning and assessment associated with each cognate group. Issued at specific times to schools/private candidates.
CAC Manual for Private Candidates (including Home-Schooled Candidates)	Specialised administrative and assessment arrangements for candidates outside the regular Government and Government-Assisted school setting.
CAC Parent Manual	Concise information for parents and guardians on the CAC, student participation and appropriate support.
Public information materials	General information about the CAC and its phased introduction.

Section 1: The Private Candidate CAC Pathway

The CAC is the performance-based component of the SEA. When fully implemented, CAC contributes 30% of the final SEA score, and the written SEA examination contributes 70%. Private Candidates complete the CAC requirements applicable to their SEA cohort through a specialised Ministry pathway.

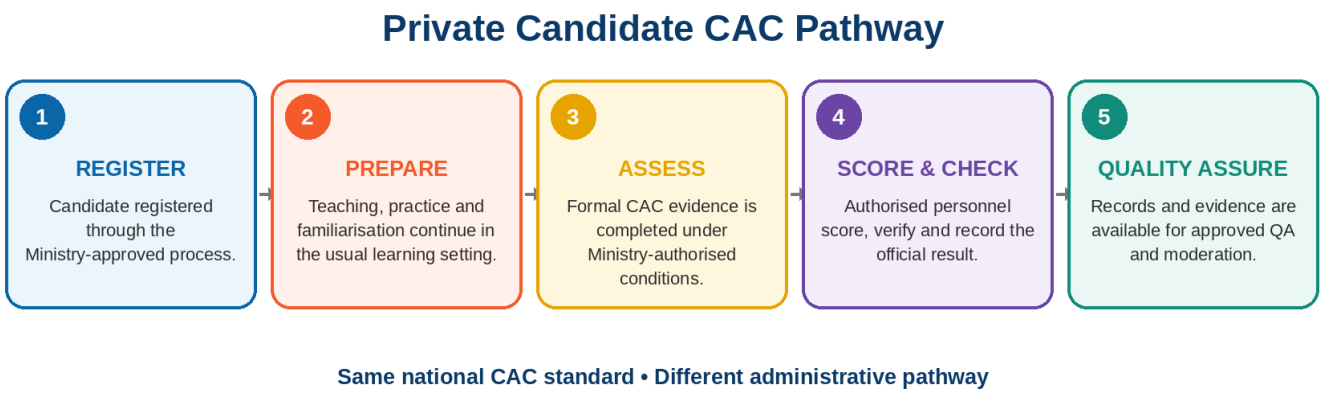


Figure 1: Private Candidate CAC Pathway

REMEMBER: Private Candidates, including Home-Schooled Candidates, are assessed against the same national CAC requirements as school-based candidates.

The graphic below provides a quick overview of how the CAC fits within the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA). It shows the four cognate groups, when the students are assessed across Standards 3 to 5, and how the CAC contribution to the final SEA score is being phased in by cohort.

CAC at a Glance

The Continuous Assessment Component of the SEA — the whole shape, in one page

1. HOW CAC AND THE WRITTEN SEA COMBINE (AT FULL IMPLEMENTATION)

CAC — 30%	Written SEA Examination — 70%

2. THE FOUR COGNATE GROUPS (STANDARDS 4–5)

1 **Physical Education and Life Skills**
Personal Development and Well-being

2 **Visual and Performing Arts and ELA Writing**
Creative Communication

3 **Agricultural Science and Science**
Scientific Inquiry

4 **Mathematics and Digital Skills**
Problem Solving and Innovation

3. THE PATHWAY ACROSS STANDARDS 3 TO 5

Standard 3
Preparation and sensitisation
No CAC mark contributes to SEA

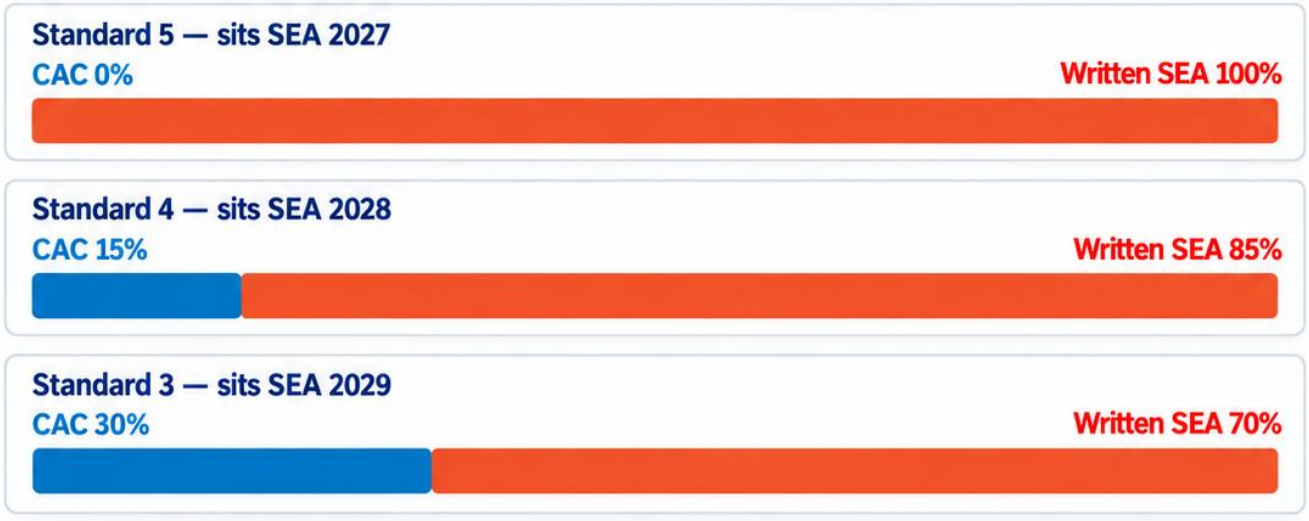
→

Standard 4
Cognates 1, 2 and 3 assessed
One per term

→

Standard 5
Cognate 4 (Term 1) + Written SEA (Term 2)

4. PHASED WEIGHTING/CAC CONTRIBUTION BY COHORT (CLASS IN SEPTEMBER 2026)



Section 2: Registration and Communication

2.1 Eligibility and Registration

Eligible Private Candidates, including Home-Schooled Candidates, must be registered through the Ministry-approved process and complete the CAC requirements that apply to their SEA cohort. The parent or legal guardian is responsible for ensuring that registration is completed within the published period and that the information supplied remains current. Key information will be communicated on the Ministry of Education website: https://www.moe.gov.tt/

Information required during registration may include:

- the candidate's full name, date of birth and current educational setting;
- parent/guardian contact information;
- previous school information, where applicable;
- information needed to establish the candidate's SEA/CAC status;
- an indication that an accommodation may be required, where applicable; and
- supporting documentation required by the Ministry.

IMPORTANT: Use only the official registration form, submission channel and deadlines communicated by the Ministry.

2.2 Communication After Registration

Following registration, the Ministry will communicate the information needed for participation. This may include:

- the CAC requirements applicable to the candidate's cohort;
- preparation or orientation information;
- assessment dates or assessment windows;
- the approved venue or other authorised assessment arrangement;
- reporting time and expected duration;
- permitted or required materials;
- assessment conditions;
- approved accommodation arrangements, where applicable; and
- the designated contact or communication channel for questions or circumstances affecting participation.

CANDIDATE ACTION: Keep contact information current and monitor the official communication channels provided during registration.

Section 3: Preparing for CAC

Private Candidates may complete their regular teaching, learning and CAC preparation within their usual educational setting. Preparation should develop the knowledge, skills, and familiarity needed for integrated learning, inquiry, problem-solving, reflection, and the use of assessment criteria. The CAC Teacher's Manual and the Cognate Instructional Guides should be used during preparation for the formal CAC assessment.

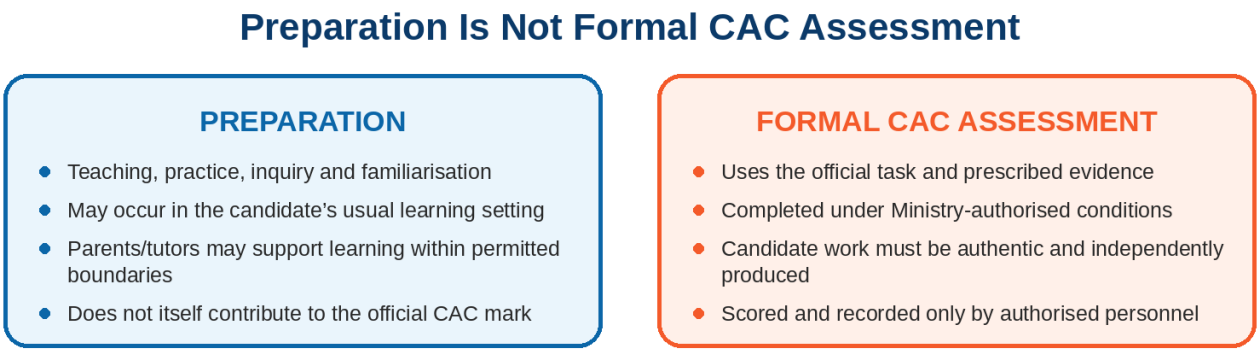


Figure 2: Preparation and Formal CAC Assessment

3.1 What Parents and Tutors May Do During Preparation

May	Must not
Teach curriculum knowledge and skills.	Obtain, reproduce, photograph, share or rehearse restricted assessment materials.
Provide practice activities that are not restricted CAC assessment tasks.	Complete, rewrite or materially improve the candidate's assessed response.
Explain general assessment criteria and how rubrics work.	Supply the answer, product, design or solution being assessed.
Support inquiry, problem-solving, communication and independent learning.	Interfere with authentication, scoring, verification or moderation.
Provide formative feedback during preparation.	Represent themselves as authorised CAC assessors unless separately appointed by the Ministry.

QUICK CHECK: If the support develops the candidate's knowledge or thinking, it may be appropriate during preparation. If it determines or produces the assessed response, it is not permitted.

Section 4: What Happens During CAC Assessment

4.1 Ministry-Authorised Assessment Arrangements

Formal CAC assessment evidence for Private Candidates is completed through Ministry-authorised arrangements. The Ministry will designate an approved assessment centre or another authorised arrangement to support fairness, security, authentication and comparability.

Before each assessment, candidates and parents/legal guardians should receive the applicable date or assessment window, venue or arrangement, reporting time, expected duration, permitted or required materials, assessment conditions and any other relevant instructions.

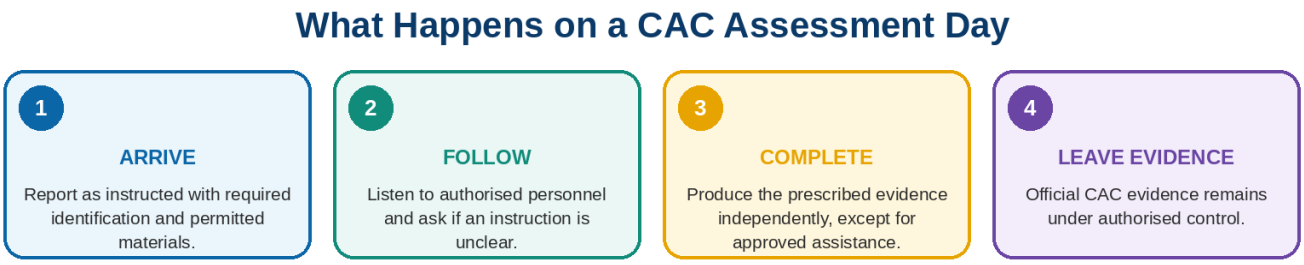


Figure 3: What Happens on a CAC Assessment Day

4.2 Candidate Expectations on a CAC Assessment Day

- arrive or report as instructed with required identification and permitted materials;
- follow the instructions of authorised assessment personnel;
- complete the prescribed evidence independently, except for assistance specifically authorised through an approved accommodation;
- ask for clarification if an instruction is not understood;
- protect the confidentiality of restricted materials; and
- do not remove, photograph, reproduce or share assessment materials or official CAC evidence without authorisation.

4.3 Assessment Materials and Security

CAC assessment materials identified as restricted or confidential must remain under authorised control. Candidates, parents, tutors and other persons must not obtain, reproduce, photograph, share or retain restricted assessment materials.

WATCH FOR: Preparation materials and ordinary learning resources are not the same as restricted CAC assessment materials. Follow the instructions issued for each assessment.

4.4 Authenticity of Candidate Work

Assessment evidence must represent the candidate's own knowledge, skills and achievement. Authorised personnel may use supervision, observation, identity checks, required declarations, evidence-control procedures and other approved measures to confirm authenticity.

CANDIDATE ACTION: Complete the work yourself. Do not seek or accept unauthorised assistance.

4.5 What Happens to the Assessment Evidence?

Official CAC artefacts, assessment evidence, and records remain under the Ministry's or authorised assessment's control. Parents/guardians may retain ordinary preparation materials that are not designated as official CAC evidence, but official assessment evidence must not be removed or informally transferred.

Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities

The specialised pathway separates preparation from formal assessment responsibilities. A parent or tutor may support learning, but does not become an authorised CAC assessor simply because they teach or prepare the candidate.

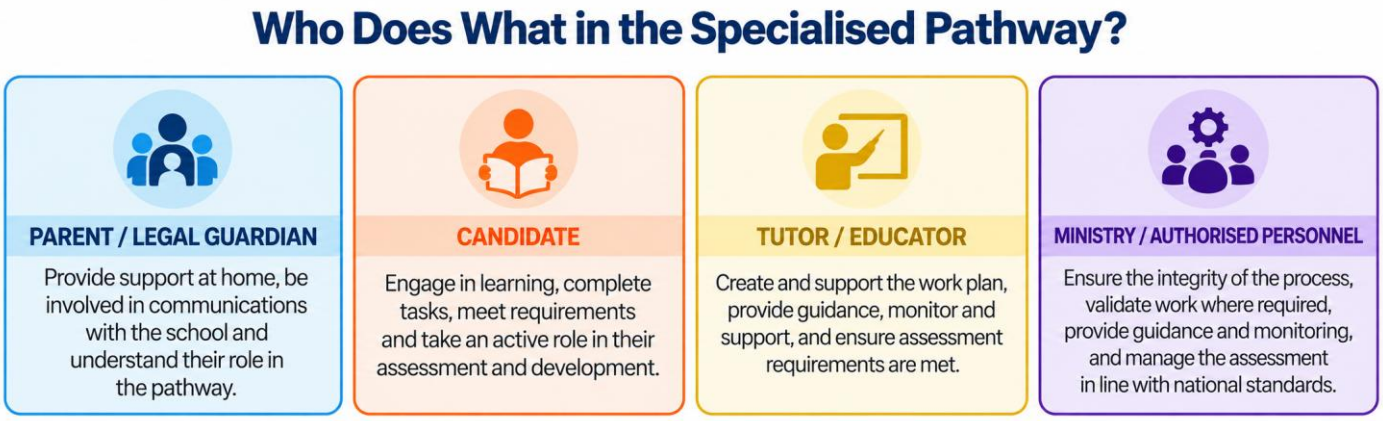


Figure 4: Roles in the Private Candidate CAC Pathway

5.1 Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities

- complete or ensure completion of registration;
- keep contact information current and monitor official Ministry communication;
- support preparation and access to appropriate learning resources;
- ensure attendance at required assessment arrangements;
- report circumstances that may affect participation;
- initiate the accommodation process where required and provide requested documentation; and
- communicate through the designated Ministry channels.

5.2 Tutor/Educator Boundary

Tutors and educators may teach and prepare candidates. Unless separately authorised by the Ministry, they must not administer, score, authenticate, verify or retain official CAC assessment evidence.

Section 6: Attendance, Accommodations and Changes in Educational Setting

6.1 Attendance at CAC Assessments

Candidates are expected to attend or participate in all CAC assessment arrangements required by the Ministry. If a candidate is expected to be absent, the parent/guardian should notify the designated Ministry contact as early as possible. For illness, emergency or another unexpected circumstance, notify the designated contact promptly.

IMPORTANT: Do not assume that an assessment date, venue, conditions or evidence requirements can be changed. Follow the authorised process and the instructions provided by the Ministry.

6.2 Approved Accommodations

An accommodation is an approved arrangement that supports a student's access to the assessment without supplying the assessed response or compromising what is being assessed. Candidates who require accommodations must use the Ministry's authorised accommodation process. Possible needs should be raised as early as practicable, and any required documentation should be submitted through the approved route at least two years before the year of administration.

- Only approved accommodations may be used during a formal CAC assessment.
- Approved arrangements must be implemented as authorised.
- An accommodation supports access to the assessment; it must not supply the assessed answer, response or product or change what is being assessed.

PARENT ACTION: If the candidate already receives support, or you think an accommodation may be needed, raise the matter early through the designated Ministry process.

Section 7: Changes in Educational Setting

A candidate's educational setting may change during the CAC cycle. A change must not break the continuity or traceability of valid CAC records.

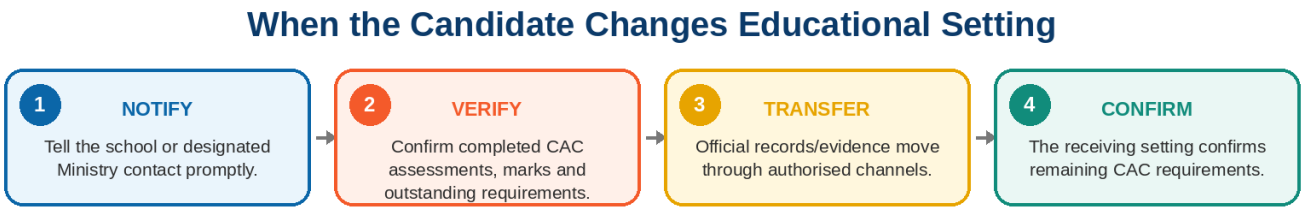


Figure 5: Transfer Between Educational Settings

Where a candidate enters a school during the CAC cycle, completed CAC assessments may be recognised where authenticated, verified and transferable evidence is available. Where a candidate leaves a school for the specialised pathway, completed assessments, verified marks and outstanding requirements must be identified and transferred through the authorised process.

REQUIREMENT: Official CAC records and assessment evidence move through authorised Ministry/school channels. Parents/guardians must not transport or informally transfer official CAC evidence between settings.

What parents/legal guardians should do

- notify the school and/or designated Ministry contact promptly;
- provide requested information about the candidate's current status;
- follow the official transfer process; and
- wait for confirmation of the candidate's remaining CAC requirements before making assumptions about what must be repeated or completed.

Section 8: Scoring, Records and Quality Assurance

Private Candidates are assessed against the same national CAC requirements as school-based candidates. Formal assessment is based only on the evidence identified for scoring in the official task materials.

Figure 6: Scoring, Records and Quality Assurance

8.1 Official CAC Records

The Ministry or authorised assessment arrangement maintains the official records required for the specialised pathway. Records may include registration and candidate information, attendance, official CAC evidence, completed rubrics and marks, authentication documentation, accommodation records, verification and quality-assurance records, and the official CAC result.

IMPORTANT: Official CAC evidence and records remain under authorised control and must be protected against unauthorised access, alteration, loss or damage.

8.2 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance may include assessor standardisation where required, verification of marks and supporting records, and external moderation. Verification checks completeness and accuracy; it is not a second marking exercise.

REFER TO:
The CAC Guidelines and Quality Assurance Manual and the CAC Administrator's Manual provide the detailed national QA requirements.

Section 9: When Something Goes Wrong

Assessment issues should be reported quickly. Parents, candidates and tutors should protect relevant evidence and avoid creating their own assessment solution.

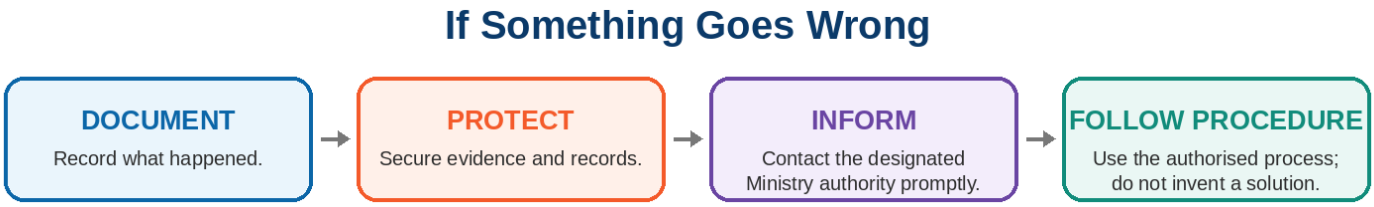


Figure 7: Response When an Assessment Issue Arises

Common situations

Candidate misses a formal assessment requirement

Notify the designated Ministry contact promptly; provide any requested explanation or documentation; follow the authorised next step.

Approved accommodation cannot be implemented

Inform the designated authority promptly; do not substitute an unapproved accommodation.

Assessment evidence is lost, damaged or incorrectly identified

Report the problem immediately; do not recreate evidence or estimate a mark independently.

Suspected unauthorised assistance

Protect the evidence and report the concern through the approved Ministry route; do not resolve it privately.

Restricted material may have been shared

Prevent further disclosure where possible and inform the designated authority promptly.

Candidate or record information appears incorrect

Preserve the original information and report the discrepancy through the approved process.

Academic Integrity

Assessment evidence must represent the candidate's own work. Deliberate unauthorised assistance, misuse of restricted materials, falsification of records or other conduct that compromises fairness or validity must be documented and referred through the approved Ministry process.

Section 10: Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Short answer
Is CAC required for Private Candidates taking SEA?	Eligible candidates must complete the CAC requirements applicable to their SEA cohort.
Does my child have to attend a primary school every day to participate?	Normal instruction may continue in the candidate's usual educational setting. The candidate must attend or participate in the Ministry-authorised CAC assessment arrangements required for the pathway.
Is CAC easier or different for a Home-Schooled Candidate?	The administrative pathway is different; the national assessment standard is the same.
Where will CAC assessments take place?	The Ministry will communicate the approved assessment arrangement after registration. This may include an approved assessment centre or another authorised arrangement.
How will the Ministry know the work is authentic?	Official CAC evidence is completed under authorised conditions using appropriate supervision, identity checks, evidence-control and other authentication procedures.
Can a parent or tutor assess the CAC work?	No, unless the person has been separately authorised by the Ministry to perform the relevant assessment function.
What happens if my child is absent from a CAC assessment?	Notify the designated Ministry contact promptly and follow the authorised procedure and instructions provided.
Can my child receive accommodations?	Yes, where approved through the Ministry's authorised accommodation process. Raise possible needs as early as practicable.
What happens to my child's assessment work?	Official CAC artefacts, assessment evidence and records remain under Ministry or authorised assessment control for the required assessment and quality-assurance processes.
What happens if my child moves between the specialised pathway and a school?	Valid completed CAC assessments may be recognised where authenticated and transferable evidence is available. Official records move through authorised Ministry/school channels.
Who should I contact if I have a question?	Use the designated contact provided during registration. General CAC enquiries: cac@moe.gov.tt.

Appendix A: Parent/Guardian Readiness Checklist

Use this checklist before each formal CAC assessment arrangement.

Readiness item	✓
Candidate registration is confirmed.	☐
Candidate/reference information is available.	☐
Contact information is current.	☐
The applicable cognate and assessment period are understood.	☐
The approved assessment venue/arrangement is confirmed.	☐
Reporting time and expected duration are confirmed.	☐
Transport arrangements are made where an in-person venue is required.	☐
Required identification is ready.	☐
Permitted or required materials are ready.	☐
Approved accommodation arrangements are confirmed, where applicable.	☐
The candidate understands that formal CAC evidence must be their own work.	☐
Parent/tutor understands the boundary between preparation support and assessment assistance.	☐
The designated Ministry contact information is available.	☐

PARENT/GUARDIAN REMINDER: If any requirement is unclear, use the designated Ministry contact before the assessment day.

Appendix B: Candidate Assessment-Day Checklist

Before the assessment begins, I can confirm that:

Candidate reminder	✓
I know the assessment venue/arrangement, reporting time and expected duration.	☐
I have the required identification.	☐
I have only the materials permitted or required for the assessment.	☐
I understand that CAC assessment evidence must be my own work.	☐
I will follow instructions from authorised assessment personnel.	☐
I will ask for clarification if I do not understand an instruction.	☐
I will not seek or accept unauthorised assistance.	☐
I will protect any restricted assessment material.	☐
I will not remove, photograph, reproduce or share official CAC assessment materials or evidence unless authorised.	☐

CANDIDATE REMINDER: Ask if you do not understand an instruction. Do not guess about assessment rules or seek help from an unauthorised person.

Appendix C: Private Candidate Quick Reference

If you need to know…	Remember this
Registration	Use the Ministry-approved process; keep candidate and contact information current.
Preparation	Teaching and practice may continue in the usual learning setting; preparation is not formal CAC assessment.
Formal assessment	Attend or participate in the Ministry-authorised arrangement exactly as communicated.
Parent/tutor role	Support learning; do not produce, improve, score or authenticate official CAC evidence.
Candidate role	Follow instructions and complete official assessment evidence independently, except for approved assistance.
Accommodations	Apply early; only approved arrangements may be used during formal CAC assessment.
Official evidence	Remains under Ministry or authorised assessment control.
Absence or problem	Notify the designated Ministry contact promptly and follow the authorised procedure.
Transfer	Official CAC records/evidence move through authorised channels, not through parents/guardians.

Use the designated contact provided during registration; general enquiries: cac@moe.gov.tt.

Useful Terms

Term	Plain-language meaning
Private Candidate	A candidate who participates in SEA through the Ministry-approved Private Candidate pathway, including a Home-Schooled Candidate.
Assessment evidence	The work, product, performance or other material identified for formal CAC assessment.
Accommodation	An approved arrangement that supports access without supplying the assessed response or changing what is being assessed.
Verification	A check that marks and required records are complete and accurate.
Moderation	External quality-assurance review that supports comparability against the national standard.
	FINAL REMINDER: Prepare well. Follow the authorised assessment arrangements. Keep the official work authentic and secure.