PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

TENTH PARLIAMENT

TENTH REPORT
OF THE
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON
MINISTRIES, STATUTORY AUTHORITIES
AND STATE ENTERPRISES
(GROUP 2)

ON

THE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR TUITION EXPENSES (GATE) PROGRAMME

Ordered to be printed with the Minutes of Proceedings
and Notes of Evidence

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<td>ACTT</td>
<td>Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>CVQ</td>
<td>Caribbean Vocational Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGAD</td>
<td>Funding and Grants Administration Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>GATE</td>
<td>Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>Grade Point Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTPF</td>
<td>Medium-Term Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTA</td>
<td>National Training Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGU</td>
<td>St. George’s University</td>
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<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
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### DIAGRAM AND TABLES

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MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Dr. James Armstrong
CHAIRMAN

Dr. Victor Wheeler
VICE-CHAIRMAN

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie
MEMBER

Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP
MEMBER

Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP
MEMBER

Mr. Collin Partap, MP
MEMBER

Mr. Kevin Ramnarine
MEMBER

Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP
MEMBER

Mrs. Lyndira Oudit
MEMBER

Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP
MEMBER

Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP
MEMBER

Dr. Lester Henry
MEMBER
THE COMMITTEE

Establishment

1. Section 66 of the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago declares, that not later than three months after the first meeting of the House of Representatives, the Parliament shall appoint Joint Select Committees to inquire into and report to both Houses in respect of Government Ministries, Municipal Corporations, Statutory Authorities, State Enterprises and Service Commissions, in relation to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.

2. Motions related to this purpose were passed in the House of Representatives and Senate on September 17, 2010 and October 12, 2010, respectively, and thereby established, inter alia, the Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report to Parliament on Ministries with responsibility for the business set out in the Schedule as Group 2, and on the Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises falling under their purview with regard to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.

3. The business as well as the entities which fall under the purview of your Committee is attached as Appendix I.

Secretariat Support

4. Secretarial support was provided by the following persons:
   - Mr. Ralph Deonarine - Secretary
   - Ms. Candice Skerrette - Assistant Secretary
   - Ms. Candice Williams - Graduate Research Assistant

Powers

5. Standing Orders 71B of the Senate and 79B of the House of Representatives delineate the core powers of the Committee which include inter alia:
   - to send for persons, papers and records;
   - to adjourn from place to place;
• to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not otherwise readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee’s order of reference; and
• to communicate with any other Committee of Parliament on matters of common interest.
INTRODUCTION

Background

6. The GATE programme was established in 2004 under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education to provide students with financial assistance for tertiary-level education. A realignment of Ministries was conducted in 2012 which shifted the GATE programme. At present, the GATE programme falls under the purview of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training.

7. GATE funds cover 100% of tuition expenses for undergraduate students and up to 50% of tuition expenses for postgraduate students. All students who accept GATE funds, including postgraduate students, are in theory bound by a period of national service linked to the value of the funds received.

8. In 2011, the programme was expanded to include technical and vocational training. An estimated $757,641,662 was spent on the programme during the period 2011-2012. In the said financial year it was announced that the GATE programme would be subject to more rigorous pay-for-performance rules with respect to students. These new rules were aimed at ensuring value for money spent and greater accountability from the institutions that are registered in the programme. Based on the forgoing the Committee considered that an inquiry into the programme was warranted.

Objectives of the inquiry

9. The Committee agreed that the following would form the objectives of the inquiry:

i. To determine the criteria for students receiving GATE.

ii. To determine what measures are in place to ensure proper management and implementation of the programme.

iii. To establish what percentage of GATE payments are allocated to academic subjects and technical/vocational subjects respectively; what accounts for the disparity in funding and what were the consequences of this disparity.

iv. To identify the mechanisms which are in place to deal with abuse of the program, for instance, by delinquent students or those students who have not completed courses or failed them repeatedly;

v. To ascertain what measures are in place to ensure graduates of the program fulfill their contractual obligation of work in the public or private sector.

vi. To determine expenditure on the GATE programme for the period 2009-2012.
vii. To comprehend the plans which exist for the expansion of the programme and how these plans are progressing;

viii. To gather information on the number of students that utilise the GATE Programme, annually between 2004 and 2011, as well as the institutions attended.

**Conduct of the Inquiry**

10. On Friday December 7, 2012 representatives from the GATE programme were invited to a public hearing. Prior to this, notice was given to the Ministry of the general objectives of the inquiry based on this, pre-hearing submissions were requested. These responses provided the basis for the supplementary questions pursued at the hearing.

11. The following persons were in attendance to give evidence at the public hearing on the GATE Programme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jaggernauth Soom</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary (Ag.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Michael Dowlath</td>
<td>Interim Chairman, Standing Committee on GATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Teresa Davidson</td>
<td>Director, Funding and Grants Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Anthony Webster</td>
<td>Finance Administrator, Funding and Grants Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nievel Niles</td>
<td>Education Research Specialist, Funding and Grants Division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Several issues raised at the hearing warranted detailed responses. These responses were submitted in writing to the Committee on January 30, 2013.

13. The draft of this Report was considered and approved with amendments at the meeting of the Committee held on June 21, 2013.

14. The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee with regard to this inquiry are attached as *Appendix II*. The Notes of Evidence are at *Appendix III*. 
THE EVIDENCE

Introduction of GATE

15. The GATE programme was established in 2004 to provide tuition expenses for students at tertiary level institutions. The key objectives of the GATE programme are to:
   o Make tertiary education affordable to all, denying no citizen of Trinidad and Tobago tertiary education because of their inability to pay;
   o Widen access to tertiary education to support economic development and promote social equity;
   o Build and strengthen a national quality tertiary education sector through both private and public tertiary education level institutions.

Plans for the expansion of the GATE Programme

16. A Committee was appointed in June 2010 by Cabinet to address the issue of securing and expanding the GATE Programme. The Members who served on this Committee are as follows:

   i. Ms. Margaret Richardson - Permanent Secretary, MSTTE (CHAIRMAN)
   ii. Mr. Andrew Phillips - Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI)
   iii. Dr. Puran Bridgemohan - University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)
   iv. Mr. Nigel Forgenie - Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme
   v. Mr. Cipriani Davis - Metal Industries Company
   vi. Mr. Michael Bradshaw - Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago
   vii. Mrs. Elphege Hoseph - National Training Agency (NTA)
   viii. Mr. Raphael Jones - National Energy Skills Center (NESC)
   ix. Mr. Nizam Ali - MSTTE
   x. Mr. Navneet Boodhai - MSTTE
   xi. Mrs. Teresa Davidson - MSTTE
   xii. Mrs. Shayphan Smith - MSTTE

17. The Terms of Reference of the GATE Review Committee included the establishment of guidelines for the expansion of GATE funding to accommodate Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Since July 2010 new institutions and programmes have been approved for GATE funding including expansion of the TVET programmes to include Level II (in addition to Levels III and above which were previously eligible).
18. On 5th May 2011, the Government launched the Workforce Assessment Centres which provide the opportunity for the award of Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) to persons who are considered “skilled but uncertified” in technical vocational skills-trade areas.

**Recommendations proposed by the Committee appointed to review the GATE programme**

19. The following proposals submitted by the Committee to the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training in order to ensure that the GATE programme is secure and facilitates expansion:

i. Students must successfully complete secondary level education prior to accessing the GATE programme. It is recommended that new entrants to the GATE programme provide proof of successful completion of secondary school which means five passes (inclusive of Mathematics and English) with Grades I, II or III, at the level of Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) or equivalent, including technical-vocational qualifications. Additionally, bridging programmes such as the Pre-University programme (PUP) at the University of Trinidad and Tobago or COMPASS at COSTAATT can be considered. Institutions should be encouraged to create bridging programmes to better prepare participants to enter tertiary programmes. Ensuring that only qualified students access the GATE programme will significantly reduce the drop-outs, failure rates that reduce the effectiveness of the programme.

ii. The criteria for GATE funding for programmes should be demand-led and based on the following:
   - **ACTT /or NTA Registration**: Institutions should have current registration status with the ACTT for 1-3 years and this status should not be in jeopardy of being compromised in any way as a result of non-compliance with the Conditions of Registration.
   - **ACTT Programme Approval/Recognition**: Any programme for which GATE funding is being sourced must currently have the requisite quality assurance status of Programme Approval or Transnational Programme Recognition or Recognition of Awarding Body.
The policies of Government: The conditions for awarding GATE approval must abide by any existing and/or impending policies/legislation established by the Government that may have direct or indirect implications for the criteria and/or conditions for the award of GATE approval.

The availability of financial resources: The decision on whether or not to grant GATE approval and the extent of this award must be guided by the availability of financial resources allocated for this purpose at the time of application.

An assessment of the Tertiary Education Sector: The decision to grant GATE approval must be guided by results of recently-concluded or current assessments of the tertiary education sector at the time of application.

Priority areas of Governments: The granting of GATE approval must take into consideration and be guided by priority areas outlined by the Government at the time of application.

Adherence to conditions for GATE approval: Institutions should abide by the conditions for GATE approval and should not be in breach of these conditions before, during or after the time of application. The FGAD reserves the right to suspend, withdraw or deny funding if any of the conditions agreed to is breached.

iii. The Ministry of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs (now the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development) should be requested to identify priority areas into which GATE funding should be channelled over the period 2011-2013. These priority areas should be based on:
- An assessment of current and projected labour needs arrived at through systematic analysis by the Ministry of Labour and any other relevant organisation;
- Anticipated future occupations resulting from new/emerging industries; and
- Government’s policy on the levels of entrepreneurship required to drive the economy.

iv. The establishment of a Committee to review applications for GATE funding by institutions and make recommendations to the Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education. (now the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training)

v. The development of a more objective and comprehensive method for the determination of tuition fees is required to ensure that Government is not being overcharged for programmes delivered by private institutions.
vi. An increase in the level of monitoring, compliance and auditing of GATE-approved institutions. Expansion of the staff in the Audit Unit would significantly reduce the time frame between audits of institutions. The Ministry recommends withholding payments to institutions that are not in compliance with the terms of the Agreement.

vii. Systems must be developed to ensure that students fulfil their obligations in respect of the Student Agreement.

viii. The Tracer Study that is currently being undertaken should be completed in a timely manner and submitted for the consideration of Cabinet.

ix. The sustainability of the GATE programme in its current form must be addressed. This issue cannot be adequately addressed in this Report but further research is recommended to provide the depth of information required to make key decisions in the long term.

20. In respect of new institutions the following six (6) institutions and twelve (12) programmes have been GATE approved between the period indicated in Table 1:
## Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Programmes Approved for GATE funding (emphasis on TVET Programmes)</th>
<th>GATE Approved Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Advanced Solutions Technical Institute (ASTI)</td>
<td>• IVQ Diploma in Telecommunication Systems</td>
<td>September 2011 – August 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2.  | Kenson School of Production                          | • Level 3 IVQ Advanced Diploma in Oil and Gas - Mechanical Maintenance Technician  
• Level 3 IVQ Advanced Diploma in Oil and Gas - Electrical Maintenance Technician  
• Level 3 IVQ Advanced Diploma in Oil and Gas - Instrumentation Maintenance Technician  
• Level 3 IVQ Advanced Diploma in Oil and Gas - Process | September 2011 – August 2013 |
| 3.  | Civil Aviation Authority                             | • Diploma in Aerodrome/Approach Control                                                                                       | September 2011 – August 2013 |
| 4.  | International Institute of Cosmetology and Aesthetics (IICA) | • Diploma in Cosmetology  
• Diploma in Aesthetics                                                                                                   | February 2011 – August 2013 |
| 5.  | Trinidad Tower Crane Services Limited                | • Forklift and Boom Truck Operator Training  
• Mobile Crane Operator Training  
• Tower Crane Operator Training                                                                                             | September 2012 – August 2013 |
| 6.  | Dawill Law Academy and Consultancy Services           | • LLB Degree                                                                                                                   | September 2011 – August 2013 |
Management and implementation of the GATE Programme

21. A number of measures have been instituted to ensure that the policies governing the GATE Programme are properly managed and implemented. These include:

➢ Establishment of the GATE Standing Committee

22. The GATE Standing Committee was established by Cabinet in May 2011 and comprises representatives from the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (TEST), Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Finance and the Economy, National Training Agency (NTA), Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) and the Chamber of Commerce.

23. The Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee are as follows:
   i. Review applications for GATE funding by institutions and make recommendations to the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (TEST) (formerly part of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education);
   ii. Develop a more objective and comprehensive method for the determination of tuition fees for programmes delivered by private tertiary institutions;
   iii. Continually develop and review strategies and agreements to increase the level of monitoring, compliance and auditing of GATE approved institutions; and
   iv. Continually develop and review strategies to ensure that students fulfill their obligations in respect of the Student Agreement.

24. Since its establishment, the Standing Committee has undertaken the following activities in execution of its oversight functions:
   i. Reviewed requests for adjustments in tuition fees;
   ii. Reviewed requests for GATE funding for new programmes;
   iii. Concluded consultations with private tertiary institutions on a new Agreement;
   iv. Reinforced academic performance standards for students at public tertiary institutions;
   v. Started the process of institutional strengthening of the Funding and Grants Administration Division (FGAD), which is responsible for administration of the GATE Programme;
   vi. Hosted a National Consultation on Securing and Expanding the GATE Programme; and
   vii. Presented recommendations to Cabinet in a report entitled “Securing and Expanding the GATE Programme” in August 2012 after an evaluation of the GATE Programme in relation to its sustainability and to the socio-economic development of Trinidad and Tobago.
Memorandum of Agreements signed with private institutions

25. An Agreement between the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training and the institution is signed every two (2) years (see Appendix IV) as a tool of accountability of private tertiary education institutions. This Agreement is aimed at enforcing established standards that address issues of quality, tuition fees, financial accountability, transparency, equity, obligations and compliance with Government’s guidelines and policies for tertiary education.

26. A Report entitled, “Securing and Expanding the GATE Programme” was submitted to the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training on August 17, 2012 to be presented to Cabinet for approval. This JSC requested a copy of the Report and was informed that upon approval by the Minister, a copy will be provided.

Audits and Reconciliations

27. Audits are conducted at private tertiary level institutions to account for monies received via the GATE Programme and to ensure compliance on the part of private institutions with the signed Agreement.

28. Every private institution is required to keep registers of students’ attendance for the first six weeks of every academic year. These registers are used by GATE officials as a guide. However, officials are unable to verify attendance on an on-going basis and there is nothing to prove that these registers do in fact reflect the reality.

29. The Audit process is cyclical. Due to the size of the audit unit, audits are done every two (2) years rather than annually. Audits are conducted by internal auditors of the GATE programme as well as, internal auditors within the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training.

30. Monies recovered from institutions further to audits for each audit period between 2007 and 2012 are as follows:

- 2007 - 2010: $12,185,816
- 2010 - 2011: $1,162,551
- 2011 - 2012: $11,582,487

**Total:** $24,930,854
31. In accordance with Agreements (past and present), private institutions are required to submit reconciliation statements to the Ministry. Reimbursements by private tertiary education institutions following reconciliation exercises are as follows:

- 2007 - 2010: $9,287,118
- 2010 - 2011: $4,181,491
- 2011 - 2012: $3,622,560

**Total:** $17,091,169

32. Further, monies have been reimbursed from institutions on behalf of students. These reimbursements would not have been calculated in the quarterly reconciliation statement as they would have been ad hoc drop-offs of reimbursement cheques by students. Therefore, these were calculated separately as follows:

- March 2007: $51,100
- October 2007 – September 2008: $248,940
- October 2008 – September 2009: $212,000
- October 2009 – September 2010: $226,100
- October 2010 - September 2011: $158,630
- October 2011 - September 2012: $7,261,532

**Total:** $8,158,302

➢ **Student Terms and Conditions for Tertiary Tuition Funded by GATE**

33. The Student Terms and Conditions for Tertiary Tuition Funded by GATE (see Appendix IV) constitutes an Agreement between the Government and the student. It outlines the requirements of the student with regard to academic commitment and performance in the pursuit of his/her studies, obligations in the event that he/she does not complete or does not intend to complete the programme, and periods of obligatory service upon completion of the programme for which GATE funding has been expended.

34. Student Agreements are also signed by students attending regional private institutions such as St. George’s University and the University of Technology, Jamaica.
35. The GATE Clearance policy was introduced in January 2008 by the Funding and Grants Administration Division for students in approved private tertiary institutions. The policy was instituted to reduce potential abuses of the GATE Programme.

36. The GATE Clearance Policy assesses students’ eligibility for GATE funding with due consideration to students’ academic performance and GATE history. The GATE Clearance system has been able to identify many students who have not completed their programme of study and monies paid on their behalf have been recovered via student reimbursements.

37. By 2011, over 12,000 GATE Clearance applications were denied due to poor student performance.

38. The workflow for the processing of GATE applications is documented in the following policy manuals:
   - Policy Administration Manual
   - Financial and Accounting Operations Policy and Guidelines
The workflow is illustrated by Diagram 1:
Residency Policy

39. All citizens of Trinidad and Tobago can access the GATE Programme. However, in order to do so they must provide proof of residency in Trinidad and Tobago for three (3) years prior to accessing GATE funding. The key documents requested as proof of residency are high school leaving letters and if employed, letters from employers. The residency requirement was intended to prohibit citizens who do not live in Trinidad and Tobago from accessing GATE Programme.

Monitoring and Compliance

40. Initially, there was no formal Monitoring and Compliance Unit. However, as part of the “secure and expand GATE initiative,” it was determined that such a unit should be established.

41. In the interim, monitoring and compliance of institutions are ensured via visits of FGAD’s Liaison Officers who are assigned to each institution to identify areas of non-compliance and ensure that all polices are properly implemented.

42. The Audit department will play a major role in monitoring and compliance.

Quality and Relevance of programmes approved for GATE funding

43. All tuition and training providers in the tertiary education sector are publically governed by regulatory bodies to monitor quality, equity and service delivery within the sector. In this regard, the ACTT (Chapter 39:06), and the NTA have been established to ensure that both public and private delivery of tertiary education maintains quality and training standards.

44. Additionally, the Standing Committee on the GATE Programme, in its report entitled “Securing and Expanding the GATE Programme” recommended that new GATE approved undergraduate programmes be funded at varying rates based on their socio-economic priority. Before this, an open policy was used whereby once an institution met the registration requirements and programme approval at the Accreditation Council, they were approved for GATE funding. The following policy documents would be sourced to identify the sectors with the highest economic priority:

i. National budget statement of 2011/2012;
ii. Trinidad and Tobago’s Medium-Term Policy Framework (MTPF);
iii. National Development Human Resource Needs of Trinidad and Tobago as outlined by the Scholarship and Advanced Training Division of the Ministry of Public Administration;
iv. Ministry of Labour - National Labour Market Council;
v. Sectors identified by the Ministry of Trade;
vi. Sectors identified by the Ministry of Planning;

vii. Sectors identified by the National Training Agency;

viii. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine - Centre for Workforce Research and Development;

ix. Report commissioned by the National Institute for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) entitled “Economic Priority Areas, Jobs and Skills for Growth in Trinidad and Tobago” (2012); and

x. Labour Market Studies.

**GATE payments allocated to academic subjects and Technical/Vocational subjects respectively**

45. GATE does not fund students in NESC programmes. These are covered by YTEPP, while students in the MuST Programme receive a stipend and therefore do not receive GATE funding.

46. In Table 2 below GATE funding for TVET programmes between 2004 and 2012 is stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GATE Funding</td>
<td>550,076</td>
<td>1,887,793</td>
<td>14,259,830</td>
<td>17,607,870</td>
<td>18,108,270</td>
<td>15,598,920</td>
<td>8,580,933</td>
<td>24,062,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Funding for TVET programmes (TT$):</td>
<td>102,193,273</td>
<td>179,689,121</td>
<td>472,771,454</td>
<td>501,783,052</td>
<td>574,913,141</td>
<td>584,699,646</td>
<td>624,997,024</td>
<td>757,641,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of GATE Expenditure for TVET programmes per fiscal yr. (TT$):</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. GATE expenditure for TVET programmes was determined by identifying all pre-baccalaureate (pre-degree) programmes in technical skills-trade areas that ever received funding via the GATE Programme. A major limitation to this exercise involved the process of programme identification. “TVET programmes were identified according to their “face validity” where the programme title was utilized to classify programmes as TVET. The exercise did not include an analysis of the
content, delivery or hours of practical exposure within each programme, as this information was not readily available nor was there sufficient time to permit such a comprehensive exercise.

48. In this regard, ninety-five (95) programmes have been identified as TVET programmes out of a total of over 2,000 programmes funded at public, private and regional institutions.

Abuse of the GATE Programme

49. The GATE Clearance Policy, introduced in January 2008, by the FGAD for students in approved private tertiary institutions is geared towards reducing potential abuses of the GATE Programme. The GATE Clearance Policy assesses students’ eligibility for GATE funding with due consideration to the following:
   i. Completion of prior GATE approved programme;
   ii. Completion of relevant examinations;
   iii. Maintenance of minimum academic performance standards for progression within programmes;
   iv. Not pursuing more than one GATE approved programme at a time.

50. As a result of its introduction, a number of applicants were denied GATE funding via GATE Clearance over the period 2008 to 2011 as illustrated in Table 3.

### TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Rejections</th>
<th>No. of Applications Denied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor Academic Performance</td>
<td>4,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to complete prior programme</td>
<td>6,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum funding has been exceeded</td>
<td>784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating a programme or level that is not allowed or additional information is required</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other(^1)</td>
<td>3,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Funding and Grants Administration Division (FGAD), Ministry of Tertiary Education & Skills Training*

\(^1\) ‘Other’ includes reasons that are not related to student performance such as ‘incomplete applications forms’, ‘programmes not
51. As at September 2012, recovery of monies from students for incomplete programmes is valued at $14,566,430.68 as at September 2012. Monies recovered per fiscal year are as follows:

- October 2007 – September 2008: $510,881.50
- October 2008 – September 2009: $2,401,652.67
- October 2009 – September 2010: $2,988,537.11
- October 2010 – September 2011: $3,561,638.17
- October 2011 – September 2012: $5,103,721.23

52. GATE Clearance however, is only applicable to students attending private tertiary education institutions. The limited manpower resources at the FGAD has forced them to exclude students at public institutions. It was believed that public institutions would act in the interest of the state by closely monitoring student performance and commitment to academic programmes. However, several irregularities regarding student performance have been observed in public tertiary education institutions.

53. As a result, effective September 2012, the Standing Committee on the GATE Programme, through the FGAD, enforced the student performance policy at public tertiary education institutions. This required students to maintain the minimum Grade Point Averages (GPA) determined by the respective institutions. In cases where a student’s GPA falls below the minimum set by the institution, GATE funding will be withheld until the student improves the GPA at or above the set minimum. Evaluations of the cumulative GPA of students are done on an annual basis.

54. Currently, there is a policy of ‘no repeats’ for programmes that are less than two years in duration. Only in extenuating circumstances, officials will review medicals and other reports from students.

55. Further to existing policies, the Standing Committee on the GATE Programme has recommended that the following policies be implemented by September 2013:

i. The GATE Clearance Policy to be applicable to all public and private tertiary education institutions.

ii. A policy of ‘no repeats’ to be implemented for all GATE-approved programmes at ALL approved tertiary education institutions.
Contractual Obligations

56. Students accessing the GATE Programme are bound by a period of national service in a private or public sector organization in Trinidad and Tobago, including approved Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and national service bodies. However, there are no measures in place to monitor activities of obligatory service and there is no law that prevents graduates from leaving the country to work abroad.

57. With respect to students studying at the St. George's University (SGU), none of those GATE approved students have completed their studies to date, as this programme was only extended to students at this University in the year 2009 and therefore, the issue of these students returning to Trinidad and Tobago after studies has not arisen.

58. In Table 4 below the periods of obligatory service is stated.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of Award</th>
<th>Period of Obligatory Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to $50,000</td>
<td>One (1) year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $50,000 and up to $100,000</td>
<td>Two (2) years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $100,000 and up to $150,000</td>
<td>Three (3) years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $150,000 and up to $200,000</td>
<td>Four (4) years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $200,000</td>
<td>Five (5) years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
59. Statistics in respect of the total value of awards by student count as at October 2012 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of Award/ Period of Obligatory Service</th>
<th>Total Student Count</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to $50,000 (1 year)</td>
<td>144,771</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 to $100,000 (2 years)</td>
<td>10,790</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001 to $150,000 (3 years)</td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,001 to $200,000 (4 years)</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $200,000 (5 years)</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>158,999</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6
Statistics on usage of the GATE Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students Receiving GATE Funding: 2004-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Funding and Grants Administration Division (FGAD), Ministry of Tertiary Education & Skills Training
OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS

60. The Committee considered the oral and written evidence received against the established objectives of the inquiry and submits the following observations and findings:

OBJECTIVE 1
To determine the criteria for students receiving GATE
The Committee noted with concern that submissions received suggest that at present there are no minimum academic criteria for the receipt of GATE funding. However, the Committee endorses the recommendation of the Cabinet appointed Committee to introduce a minimum academic requirement of 5 CSEC passes or equivalent including technical vocational qualifications.

OBJECTIVE 2
To determine what measures are in place to ensure proper management and implementation of the programme
Submissions received suggest that the Ministry has and intends to pursue effective strategies for ensuring that the GATE Programme is managed and implemented efficiently. This is evident by the establishment of a Standing Committee appointed by Cabinet in 2011 to periodically review the programme and make recommendations for its improvement. The other aspects of the Committee’s mandate as stated on page 20 are commendable and once properly implemented should strengthen the institutional framework of the Programme. Moreover, of particular interest was the responsibility given to develop and review strategies to ensure that students fulfill their obligations in respect of the compulsory period of service. Evidence on page 20 also confirms that the Committee has undertaken a number of activities in execution of its oversight function.

It is commendable that the Ministry has engaged private institutions who offer GATE approved programmes in order to ensure that the programmes/courses have certain matriculation requirements and adhere to certain quality standards. In addition, statistics provided for the period 2007-2012 confirm that the Ministry has recovered approximately $25 Million as a result of institutional audits. Of some concern was the admission that the credibility of student attendance information may be questionable due to unstandardized systems for the tracking student attendance at institutions.
Objective 3
To establish what percentage of GATE payments are allocated to academic subjects and technical/vocational subjects respectively; what accounts for the disparity in funding and what were the consequences of this disparity.

Data provided confirms a notable disparity in funding provided for academic subjects/courses and the amount provided to Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). However the disparity has been incrementally reduced as is illustrated by the statistics on pages 26 and 27. Funding for TVET programmes was increased from $550,076 in 2004 to approximately $24 Million during the period 2011 to 2012. It can be concluded that the disparity in the funding is due to the fact that there is a greater number of academic programmes than there are TVET programmes that are GATE approved. The Committee noted that of the 2,000 programmes/course approved for GATE funding at private, public and regional institutions, ninety-five (95) have been identified as TVET programmes.

Objective 4
To identify the mechanisms which are in place to deal with abuse of the program, for instance, by delinquent students or those students who have not completed courses or failed them repeatedly

Information received confirmed that a Monitoring and Compliance Unit was not established at the time of the inquiry, however as an interim measure Liaison Officers of the Funding and Grants Administration Division have been assigned to each institution to identify areas of non-compliance and ensure that all polices are properly implemented. The Committee noted the implementation of the GATE Clearance programme in 2008 for students in approved private institutions as a safe guard against the abuse of the programme by applicants. This procedure assessed edibility for GATE funding taking into account academic performance and the applicant’s history of GATE funding. In addition, an applicant is also required to confirm that he/she is a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago and must have been resident in this country for at least three years prior to making an application. Statistical evidence produced for the period 2008-2011 indicate that over 15,000 applicants were denied as a result of the operation of the GATE Clearance Policy. Also as at September 2012, over $5Million has been recovered as a result of the clearance policy.

However, it is also noted that the Clearance policy was not applied to public institutions despite the fact that evidence indicate that several irregularities regarding student performance have been observed in public tertiary level institutions. A lack of manpower resources was cited as the reason for the non-application of the Clearance policy to public institutions. Nevertheless, the Committee was informed that as at September 2012, the Standing Committee through the FGAD enforced the Student
Performance Policy at public tertiary education institutions. Though less comprehensive than the Clearance Policy applied to beneficiaries at private institutions, it assesses eligibility for the renewal or continuation of funding based on a minimum GPA requirement. As a consequence of this measure funding is withdrawn if a student fails to attain the required GPA. Evidence also confirms the introduction of a “no repeats” policy, which is another safeguard against the possible abuse of the system.

Objective 5
To ascertain what measures are in place to ensure graduates of the program fulfill their contractual obligation of work in the public or private sector.

The Committee was alarmed by the fact that to date an appropriate mechanism has not been instituted to ensure that beneficiaries of the programme fulfil their contractual obligation to provide a period of compulsory service to the country. The Committee considers this as a major shortcoming on the part of the Ministry, since the lack of enforcement of this policy can translate into significant economic lost on the investment made in tertiary education by the state. Thus it appears that at present, beneficiaries can breach the agreement and migrate immediately upon the completion of their programme/course. Submissions received suggest that one of the mandates of the Standing Committee was to “develop and review strategies to ensure that students honour their obligation to provide compulsory service”. However no proposal was proffered by officials to address this issue.

Objective 6
To determine expenditure on the GATE programme for the period 2009-2012

Data provided on pages 26 and 27 details the expenditure on the GATE programme from its inception to 2012. The Committee favourably noted a consistent increase in the amount spent on the programme. Statistics indicate that between 2009 and 2012 expenditure on the GATE programme increased by almost $200 Million.

Objective 7
To comprehend the plans which exist for the expansion of the programme and how these plans are progressing

As was noted before, information received indicated that as at 2012 there were 2,000 GATE approved programmes/courses, however, only ninety-five (95) were classified as TVET programmes. Written submissions confirmed that the Standing Committee on the GATE programme has been working to increase the number of TVET programmes that qualify for GATE funding. Information in Table 1 outlines new institutions and their programmes that have been recently approved for GATE funding.
Objective 8

To gather information on the number of students that utilise the GATE Programme, annually between 2004 and 2011, as well as the institutions attended.

Information in this regard is stated in Table 5 on page 28.
RECOMMENDATIONS

61. Based on the findings derived from the evidence received during this inquiry, the Committee wishes to make the ensuing recommendations with regard to the enhancement of operations of the GATE programme:

AUDIT UNIT

I. That the Ministry consider greater use of external auditors to monitor the operations of the GATE programme. This will ensure that there is a measure of independent review of the activities regarding the programme.

II. The expansion of the Audit Unit to allow for a significant reduction of the time frame between audits of institutions. This may allow each institution to be audited on an annual basis.

MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE UNIT

III. There should be different units for the execution of specialised functions. With over 2000 programmes/courses spanning multiple institutions, the Committee considers the current arrangements as inadequate. As such it is imperative that a Monitoring and Compliance Unit be established with the necessary resources.

GATE CLEARANCE

IV. The Committee agrees with the recommendations of the GATE Standing Committee that the GATE clearance policy should be applicable to all institutions, both public and private in an attempt to reduce abuses of the programme by students attending public institutions.

V. Additionally, the Committee agrees with the implementation of a ‘no repeats’ policy for programmes that are less than one year in duration.

VI. However a policy directive should be given to all institutions carrying GATE approve programmes to ensure that the attendance records of students are reviewed and verified at regular intervals.
GRADUATION RATES

VII. Graduation and pass rates should be effectively tracked in order to gauge the efficacy of state expenditure on this programme. This feedback mechanism would allow the Ministry to implement remedial action to address shortcomings in the system.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

VIII. That a comprehensive review of programmes that may be classified as TVET programmes be conducted in order to determine whether they are of strategic socio-economic importance to the country and should therefore be approved for GATE funding.

OBLIGATORY SERVICE

IX. This Committee agrees with the recommendation of the Standing Committee which suggest that a mechanism needs to be developed to ensure that students who receive GATE funding serve their contractual agreement on completion of their programme of study. As a priority the Cabinet and or the Ministry must mandate the Standing Committee to develop a strategy/mechanism to ensure that beneficiaries provide compulsory service.

X. Our suggestion is to make it mandatory for someone (close relative or friend) in addition to the student to sign as a guarantor. In the event of default, and the student fails to work in Trinidad and Tobago for the period indicated or fails to repay the loan, the guarantor will be held liable for repayment.

SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRAMME

XI. Notwithstanding the streamlining for effectiveness of the GATE system, consideration should be given to the longer term issue of sustainability of GATE as a financial support system and investment in higher education in Trinidad and Tobago.
Your Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Dr. James Armstrong  
Chairman

Dr. Victor Wheeler  
Vice Chairman

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie  
Member

Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP  
Member

Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP  
Member

Mr. Collin Partap, MP  
Member

Mr. Kevin Ramnarine  
Member

Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP  
Member

Mrs. Lyndira Oudit  
Member

Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP  
Member

Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP  
Member

Dr. Lester Henry  
Member

June 21st, 2013
APPENDIX I
BUSINESS ENTITIES

List of Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises that fall under the purview of this Committee

1. Gender, Youth and Child Development

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Adoption Board
- Children’s Authority

2. Local Government

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- National Commission for Self-Help Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited

STATE ENTERPRISES:

- Community Improvement Services Limited (CISL)
- Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited (PSAEL)
- Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (RuDeCOTT)

3. National Diversity and Social Integration

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Archaeological Committee
- National Museum and Art Gallery (Royal Victoria Institute)

4. National Security

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Defence Force Commissions Board
- Defence Council
- Firearms Appeal Board
- Strategic Services Agency
- Youth Training Centre Board of Management

5. Office of the Prime Minister

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Sport and Culture Board of Management

6. People and Social Development

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:
- Social Welfare District Boards
- Trinidad and Tobago Association in Aid of the Deaf
- Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association

7. **Planning and Sustainable Development**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Advisory Town Planning Panel
- Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI)
- Chaguaramas Development Authority
- Council for Innovation and Competitiveness
- Economic Development Board
- National Population Council

STATE ENTERPRISES:

- East Port of Spain Development Company Limited

8. **Public Administration**

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Government Human Resources Services Limited (GHRS)

9. **Public Utilities**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Regulated Industries Commission

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- The Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC)
- The Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPOST)

MAJORITY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (TSTT)

10. **Science and Technology**

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- National Information, Communication, Technology Limited (iGovTT)
- National Institute of Higher Education (Research, Science and Technology)
- Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)

11. **Sport**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- National Stadia Board of Management
- Regional Complexes
- Trinidad and Tobago Boxing Board of Control
WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

12. **Tertiary Education and Skills Training**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)
- Board of Industrial Training
- College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts (COSTAATT)
- Eastern Caribbean Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (ECIAF)
- John S. Donaldson Technical Institute
- National Energy Skills Centre (NESC)
- National Training Agency
- San Fernando Technical Institute
- Teachers Training Colleges
- Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute
- University of the West Indies
  - Open Campus

MAJORITY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Metal Industries Company Limited (MIC)
  - Government Vocational Centre

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme Limited (YTEPP)

13. **Tobago Development Infrastructure**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Tobago Regional Health Authority

14. **Tourism**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Tourism Development Company Limited
- National Academy of Performing Arts Hotel

15. **Trade, Industry and Investments**

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Betting Levy Board (BLB)
- Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS)
- Trinidad and Tobago Racing Authority (TTRA)
Weights and Measures

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Evolving TecKnologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited (e-TecK)
- Export-Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (EXIMBANK)
- Trinidad and Tobago Free Zones Company Limited (TTFZ)

MAJORITY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Business Development Company Limited (BDC)
- Point Lisas Industrial Estate
- Trinidad and Tobago Entertainment Company Limited (TTent)
- Trinidad and Tobago Film Company

INDIRECTLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- Caribbean Leasing Company Limited (CLCL) Subsidiary of BDC
- National Flour Mills (NFM)
- Premier Quality Services Limited (PQSL) Subsidiary of TTBS

16. Transport

STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES:

- Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Air Transport Licensing Authority
- Pilotage Authority
- Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
- Public Transport Services Corporation (PTSC)
- Transport Board

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- The Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

MAJORITY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- National Helicopter Company Limited
- Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPDECO)

MINORITY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- LIAT (1974) Limited

17. Works and Infrastructure

WHOLLY-OWNED ENTERPRISES:

- National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)
- National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS)
APPENDIX II

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
PRESENT

Dr. James Armstrong                          Chairman
Dr. Victor Wheeler                           Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Lyndira Oudit                           Member
Mr. Fitzgerald Jeffrey, MP                   Member
Mr. Clifton De Coteau, MP                    Member
Ms. Alicia Hospedales, MP                    Member
Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie                     Member
Dr. Lincoln Douglas, MP                      Member

Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip Stoute               Secretary
Ms. Candice Skerrette                        Assistant Secretary
Ms. Candice Williams                         Graduate Research Assistant

ABSENT

Mr. Kevin Ramnarine                          Member (excused)
Dr. Lester Henry                             Member
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh, MP                       Member
Mr. Collin Partap, MP                        Member

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR TUITION EXPENSES (GATE) PROGRAMME

Mr. Jaggernauth Soom                         Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
                                            Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training
Dr. Michael Dowlath                          Interim Chairman, Standing Committee on Gate
Ms. Teresa Davidson                          Director, Funding and Grants Division
Mr. Anthony Webster                          Finance Administrator, Funding and Grants Division
Ms. Mevel Niles                              Education Research Specialist, Funding and Grants Division

INTRODUCTION

1.1  The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:25 a.m.

1.2  Members were informed that Mr. Kevin Ramnarine had asked to be excused from the day’s proceedings.
CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

2.1 The following correction was made to the Minutes:

- Delete ‘Mrs. Lyndira Oudit - Member’ from under ‘absent’ and insert under ‘present’.

2.2 The motion for the confirmation of the Minutes, as amended, was moved by Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie and seconded by Ms. Alicia Hospedales.

2.3 The Minutes, as amended, were thereby confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Members were advised that additional information requested from the Water Resource Agency (WRA) was received.

3.2 The Secretary was directed to circulate this submission to the Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 The Chairman advised that the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Draft Reports of the Committee are to be re-circulated to Members. Comments on these Reports are to be submitted to the Secretariat via email on or before Wednesday December 12, 2012.

4.2 By letter dated November 15, 2012, additional information was requested from SWMCOL. A submission deadline of November 30, 2012 was given. This information would assist the Committee with the finalization of its Seventh Report.

4.3 The Committee was informed that SWMCOL subsequently requested an extension to December 17, 2012 to submit the requested information. The request was granted.

4.4 The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held on Friday December 14, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. to finalize the draft reports.

PRE-HEARING DISCUSSIONS

5.1 The Committee agreed that questioning would commence with Mrs. Lyndira Oudit.

SUSPENSION

6.1 The meeting was suspended at 10:05 a.m.

(Members proceeded to the J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor)

HEARING WITH THE OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR TUITION EXPENSES (GATE) PROGRAMME

7.1 The meeting resumed in the J. Hamilton Maurice Room at 10:13 a.m.

7.2 The Chairman welcomed officials of GATE. Introductions were exchanged. (See front page for names of Officials.)

7.3 Detailed below are the issues raised and the responses which emanated from the discussion with the representatives of the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training with respect to GATE:
(i) **Overview**

The GATE Programme was established in 2004 to provide tuition expenses for students at tertiary level institutions. The key objectives of the GATE programme are to make tertiary education affordable to all so that no citizen of this country would be denied tertiary education because of inability to pay, to widen access to tertiary education and to build and strengthen a national quality tertiary education sector in order to support economic development and promote social equity through public and private tertiary education level institutions.

(ii) **Standing Committee and Cabinet Committee**

The Cabinet-appointed Committee of June 2010 looked at securing and expanding the GATE Committee. One of the recommendations proposed by the Committee was the establishment of a Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee was subsequently established in May 2011.

(iii) **Differences between Reimbursements from Private Tertiary Education Institutions and other Institutions**

Private Tertiary Institutions are required to submit quarterly or biannually reconciliation statements to the GATE programme. The Reconciliation Statement must identify whether the student withdrew or did not attend classes. In instances where students do not attend classes or withdraw from study programmes the school/institution is required to reimburse funding and grants to the GATE programme.

Where students drop out or withdraw from institutions subsequent to the submission of quarterly reconciliation statements, reimbursements cheques are provided to the GATE programme by the institutions on an ad hoc basis.

If a student drops out from a study programme and desires to continue, the institution must submit a report to the GATE Programme indicating that the student wants to continue. Everything must be straightened out in funding and grants before the student can continue.

During the period October 2011 to September 2012 the GATE Programme received a large payment from the University of Trinidad and Tobago that accounted for increased reimbursements compared to previous years.

(iv) **Audits**

Audits are done at institutions to verify whether students who utilize the GATE programme attended classes.

Private institutions are required to keep registers on attendance for the 1st six weeks of every academic year. These registers are used by GATE Officials as a guide. GATE officials are however unable to verify attendance on an on-going basis.

A total of $24,930,854 in reconciliations has been collected from private institutions for the period 2007 to 2012. In one instance, an institution refused to repay the amount and it was settled in court.

The Audit process is cyclic. Due to the size of the audit unit, audits are done every two (2) years rather than annually. Audits are conducted by internal auditors of the GATE
Programme as well as the internal audit within the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training.

(v) **Differences between accessing GATE and Scholarship funding**

The GATE Programme only covers tuition expenses. Students can access the Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) to cover additional expenses such as accommodation and books.

With respect to the National Scholarship Programme, students on scholarship are covered by the Ministry of Public Administration. These students do not access GATE for their tuition. Tuition and all expenses are covered under the scholarship arrangement.

(vi) **Students at Foreign Institutions**

A Cabinet decision was taken to expand the GATE programme to students of the St George’s University in Grenada and the University of Technology in Jamaica. Previously, students could only access programs through tuition-only scholarships under the Ministry of Public Administration. Thereafter, new students access the tuition through the GATE programme.

There are students who are still being paid for under the previous scholarship arrangement with the Ministry of Public Administration.

(vii) **Monitoring and Compliance**

Initially, there was no Monitoring and Compliance Unit. However, as part of the “secure and expand GATE initiative,” it was determined that such a Unit should be established.

In the interim, monitoring and compliance of institutions is being undertaken by Liaison Officers who are assigned to each tertiary-level institution.

The Audit department plays a major role in monitoring and compliance.

Institutions are approved for GATE funding once they meet the registration requirements and programmes approval of the Accreditation Council.

No attempts were made prior to 2011 to align programmes to needs. All programmes were accepted once the quality assurance requirement of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) were met.

Measures have been put in place to monitor students at public institutions with respect to maintenance of the minimum GPA requirement and performance standards.

(viii) **Strengthening the Administrative Capacity**

The GATE programme is being restructured to ensure that it is operating efficiently.

From the onset, the GATE Programme comprised of ten (10) staff members. Subsequent to requests made to Cabinet for additional staff the number has been increased to fifty-five (55) persons.

The restructuring exercise is however ongoing.
(ix) **Requirement for GATE-funded students**

The fee structure for categories of institutions has not been standardized.

At present, the fee structure/cost credit is under the consideration of the GATE Standing Committee.

(x) **The Accreditation Council**

There are 81 institutions registered or accredited. There are only 6 accredited institutions.

The first stage is registration of the institution where the mission, vision, and teaching/learning methods are considered.

For a new programme to be sanctioned by the ACTT or the National Training Agency (NTA) a market survey must be undertaken.

Transnational and locally developed programmes have been approved by the ACTT or the NTA during the last year. This approval does not ensure GATE funding to the institution. The GATE committee on the funding and grants will determine that. The ACTT and NTA are basically the regulators with respect to approval of programmes and the registration of institutions.

Every three (3) years institutions come up for re-registration. Once an institution is deregistered or registration lapses it is no longer eligible for GATE funding in particular for new students.

(xi) **Tracking Graduation Rates**

There is no effective way to track graduation rates because institutions do not provide feedback on graduations.

(xii) **Programme Abuse**

In 2006/2007 it was recognized that students abused the programme when they signed up for GATE in more than one institution. In order to deal with this issue, a GATE Clearance Policy was instituted in 2008. Thus, before students filled out an application form they must first apply for clearance.

Only when students are cleared via the GATE clearance policy could they access GATE. This process ensures that a student has only one application.

(xiii) **Residency Policy**

A citizen must produce proof that he has been resident in Trinidad and Tobago for three years prior to accessing the GATE funding. The key documents required are high school leaving letters and if working, a letter from the employer.

(xiv) **“No Repeats” Policy**

A policy of “no repeats” is a recommendation currently before the Minister, for all GATE-approved programmes at all approved tertiary education institutes. In extenuating circumstances, officials will review medicals and other reports from students.
Securing GATE Programme

Areas considered upon securing the GATE Programme were sustainability of the GATE Programme and students performance.

Representatives of the GATE Standing Committee are from Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development and the private sector.

Public consultations were undertaken to obtain feedback from the public with respect to the GATE programme.

GATE is not going to be open to any and every programme. Measures are being put in place to ensure that programmes that are GATE-approved meet the needs of the country.

Officials conveyed that by September 2013 new policy guidelines will be implemented.

Technical Programmes

GATE is not relevant to students in NESC programmes which are covered by YTEPP and students in the MuST programme do not pay tuition and receive a stipend.

Obligatory Services

There is no law that prevents graduates from leaving the country to work abroad.

GATE funding is a one year obligatory service. Approximately 50,000 students have access to the funding.

Challenges and Successes

Challenges experienced by GATE include the inability to keep the volume of applicants in the country and to find jobs for graduates.

National service obligation although met, cannot be measured because a large percentage of grants are given to people who are working part-time.

GATE’s success include being able to provide for persons in lower income and socio-economic brackets who would not have been able to graduate with degrees without tuition assistance from the GATE programme.

GATE’s goal is for sixty percent (60%) participation in tertiary education by 2015.

Students Count

There was an increase in the student count during the period 2005/2006 to 2006/2007. This was as a result of free tuition which was instituted in January 2006. In 2006/2007 the Accreditation Council also approved more programmes.

In the 2007/2008 academic year, more students at the undergraduate level were able to access GATE.

After 2006/2007 student count in private institutions tapered off because the GATE Clearance Policy was introduced to monitor the performance of students.
Students accessing GATE in the following year had to show that they had successfully completed the previous year’s programme.

The student count is based on claims per fiscal year and not academic year. Officials admitted that claims may not necessarily have been submitted within the academic year.

(xx) Means Testing

With the establishment of GATE in 2004 students in undergraduate programmes were required to pay 50 per cent of tuition. Students who could not pay the balance would be subjected to a means testing. The difference would be paid depending on how the applicant scored in the means testing. With the introduction of free tuition in 2007, more students were able to access GATE in 2007 and 2008. Means testing at the undergraduate level was no longer utilized.

(xxi) St George’s University – Pre-Med Programme

Subsequently to Cabinet Note 1844 of 2009 dated July 9, 2009, Cabinet Minute 3090 of 2009 dated November 12, 2009, the GATE programme was expanded to include the final year of the pre med programme at St George’s University.

(xxii) Performance Standards

The GATE agreement with students requires minimum performance standards to be met for particular programmes/institutions. It is dependent on the cumulative end of the academic year that the student can continue even though they may have a course to repeat.

(xxiii) Dispute Resolution

Most disputes have been resolved internally to date. One issue has reached to court.

REQUESTED INFORMATION

8.1 Officials of the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE) Programme gave an undertaking to furnish the Committee with the following:

(i) A copy of the report entitled, “Securing and Expanding the GATE Programme”;

(ii) A List of the names of the Members appointed to serve on the June 2010 Cabinet-appointed Committee;

(iii) How does the GATE Programme ensure that those persons who were trained at St. George’s University actually return to Trinidad and Tobago?

(iv) Proposals or recommendations submitted to the Minister or Cabinet to review the programme before it was further expanded

ADJOURNMENT

9.1 The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.
Tenth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2)

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

December 12, 2012
APPENDIX III

NOTES OF EVIDENCE
Mr. Chairman: Good morning everyone, I would like to call the meeting to order now. This is the Joint Select Committee on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group 2), established to look into a number of agencies.

Today we are going to be looking and making an enquiry into the GATE programme. I would like to welcome members of GATE of the Ministry here and I would like to start by asking you to first introduce yourselves. First, could you kindly put on your mic and turn off when you are finished, and let us make sure that all cellphones are off.

[Introduction]
I would now like to ask the Members to introduce themselves starting on my left.

[Introduction]

10.15 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Could we ask for a brief overview of GATE? I don’t know who is going to speak on behalf of—just introduce GATE to us; tell us what the programme is about; when it was established; give us a sense of what the GATE programme is about.

Dr. Dowlath: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mrs. Davidson, the Director, to give us a brief overview.

Mrs. Davidson: The GATE programme was established in 2004 with specific terms of reference in respect of providing tuition expenses for students at tertiary level institutions. The terms of reference—the key objectives of the GATE programme were to make tertiary education affordable to all so that no citizen of Trinidad and Tobago would be denied tertiary education because of inability to pay; also to widen access to tertiary education that would support economic development and promote social equity and, finally, to build and strengthen a national quality tertiary education sector through both public and private tertiary education level institutions.

Mrs. Oudit: Good morning, members of the panel, representatives from the Ministry and GATE programme. I do have a number of questions, some of them require some form of answer; some may be simple clarifications. On page one of the document that you submitted, the second paragraph identifies a Cabinet-appointed committee of June 2010. However, on page two of the same document, item number two identifies a Standing Committee established by Cabinet on May 2011. My question is: is this the same committee, one and the same? And if not, what are the terms of reference for the two committees since they are identified as establishing at different times?

Dr. Dowlath: The initial committee looked at addressing the securing and expansion of the GATE Committee and one of their recommendations—that was the committee in 2010—was to have a standing committee and the terms of reference would be outlined from the bottom of page two going on. So the Standing Committee is the one that is represented here.

Mrs. Oudit: Right. So the first one was established in June 2010, that is the review committee.

Dr. Dowlath: Yes, and their recommendation was to have a Standing Committee.

Mrs. Oudit: Right. Thank you very much. Now the second question. On page three you do make reference to securing and expanding the GATE programme, a report which was submitted on August 2012. I don’t know if any such document was submitted to this committee, but I would like to request on behalf of the committee, a copy of that report.

Dr. Dowlath: That report was submitted to the Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training on the 17th of August, so that report is in front of the Minister presently.

Mrs. Oudit: What, 17 of August this year?

Dr. Dowlath: Yes.
Mr. Chairman: What report?

Mrs. Oudit: This is a report on securing and expanding the GATE programme which was submitted in August of 2012 to the Minister. But this is a parliamentary committee and I believe that a request can also be made to have the report submitted.

Mr. Chairman: Sure. So could we have a copy of it?

Dr. Dowlath: Yes. We will be happy to, once it is part of the—

Mrs. Oudit: But we will make a note that it is currently before the Minister. The next point is on page four. There is a term that you used on page four—this would be—there are two terms. It says, “reimbursed by private tertiary education institutions”. So a total of $17 million-plus was reimbursed by private tertiary education institutions. Then in the next paragraph you have, “Additionally, moneys have been reimbursed from institutions”. My question is, just for clarification: what is the difference between reimbursed by private tertiary educational institutions and reimbursed from institutions on behalf of students?

Dr. Dowlath: I will ask Mr. Webster, Financial Administrator, to answer.

Mr. Webster: The reimbursement by private tertiary education institutions—investments are supposed to submit a reconciliation on a regular basis and they are supposed to reimburse whatever—where the student did not attend classes.

Mrs. Oudit: Who is supposed to reimburse?

Mr. Webster: The institution, because we would have paid them for the students, so if they see—if the student did not attend classes for some time, they are supposed to pay back Funding and Grants to the GATE programme.

Mrs. Oudit: So they pay back to the GATE programme if a student did not access the GATE?

Mr. Webster: Yes.

Mrs. Oudit: Allowances?

Mr. Webster: Yes, if the student did not attend—a withdrawal—if the student withdraws for whatever reason, and the moneys that have been reimbursed from institutions on behalf of students—

Mrs. Davidson: As part of the agreement that we sign with the private institutions, they are obliged to reimburse—to prepare quarterly reconciliation statements. We eventually changed it to bi-annual reconciliation statements where they identify the students that withdrew or did not attend and reimburse according to the agreement. Also, some of the institutions—

Mrs. Oudit: Could I ask one question? Who reimburses who? The student is reimbursed?

Mr. Davidson: No, no, no, the school. Now, remember GATE pays to the institutions on behalf of students. So normally what the school would have done is after registration when the school has started, they would send the GATE claims to us for payment. So normally we would have gotten claims from institutions before what we call the withdrawal period of six weeks. Okay? So after
payment has been made on behalf of a student, should the student withdraw, the institution should then make a reimbursement to the—

**Mrs. Oudit:** Back to the GATE fund.

**Mrs. Davidson:** Right. And that is done through a quarterly reconciliation statement.

**Mrs. Oudit:** So that would reflect “reimbursed by private tertiary education”, because that figure is $17 million from 2007 to 2012.

**Mrs. Davidson:** Right.

**Mrs. Oudit:** That is according to your document. But then you say. “Additionally”, so therefore it cannot be—I do not imagine it is the same thing.

**Mrs. Davidson:** It’s actually again reimbursement from institutions, but these reimbursements were done not in the quarterly reconciliation statement; they would have made some ad hoc drop-off at the institution saying, “these students did not attend”, and provided us with reimbursement cheques. But because it was done separately from the reconciliation statement, it was totalled after.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Okay. So one, actually, would have been reconciled statements, and the other one would have been outside of—

**Mrs. Davidson:** Outside of the statement.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, I am still not very clear on that. If you are doing reconciliation at intervals, why would some outstanding payments not have been included? I am not clear on that. Why would those have escaped the reconciliation?

**Mrs. Davidson:** Okay. We have had some issues in terms of reconciliation statements at the institutions. Whereas some institutions follow the set pattern of doing a reconciliation statement quarterly or biannually as required, we also had some institutions that would just show up with a cheque and identify students that they were reimbursing for. Despite not being done within the quarterly reconciliation statement, we have been accepting the cheques because is it cheques returned on behalf of students. So it’s basically just that it was done outside of the quarterly reconciliation statement.

**Mr. Chairman:** What would have happened if they did not return that money then? Since you did not catch it in the reconciliation and they—it seems what—because they are honest they say, “Well, look, I have some money for you”? What would have happened?

**Mrs. Davidson:** No. We also have audits that are done at the institutions where we go and verify that the students that we have paid for did, in fact, attend.

**Mr. Chairman:** So eventually you would have been able to pick up on it.

**Mrs. Davidson:** Yes, so we would catch up with them eventually, because we do audits also.

**Mr. Webster:** The second one here, it is not all the institutions do their reconciliations on a regular
basis. Some of them miss. So if they do not do a reconciliation, sometimes you may find that there are cases in which students would have dropped out and it would not have been reported. So in that event and they want to continue a course that they dropped out, then the student would bring it to our attention, because they would want to continue a course. They may have dropped out. If they drop out they can’t just continue just like that, but if the institution itself did not make a report and they would want to continue, then this has to be straightened out in Funding and Grants before they continue.

**Dr. Wheeler:** As a follow up to that, when you say you have auditors that go to the institutions, what do they actually do to verify that a student turned up—attended the classes or not?

**Mrs. Davidson:** The private institutions are obligated to keep registers and we use the attendance registers as a guide by looking at the attendance for the first six weeks of every academic year.

**Dr. Wheeler:** But how do you know those registers do reflect the reality?

**Mrs. Davidson:** The registers are signed by the students.

**Dr. Wheeler:** For example, suppose someone just provides their student with a register—someone with a register—and they just sign it for the time that it is supposed to be signed, how do you verify that the person actually attended class?

**Mrs. Davidson:** We are not able to verify attendance on an ongoing basis, like police the institution in that way, so we have to accept the fact that the student signed the register, implies that they attended the class. The registers are usually circulated at the start of the class. Now, it is not in a student interest to sign a register if you are not attending because at the end of the day if you seek to attend another school, we would be asking you to repay for the programme that you did not complete. So there is no interest for a student to sign registers if they are not attending classes.

**Dr. Wheeler:** Okay. The other thing, you say there are some institutions that do not produce the quarterly reports as they are supposed to. The money collected here reflected in the report, is this the actual amount of money owed to GATE from students who did not attend the classes or did not complete classes, or this is just the money that you have collected and you still have more money outstanding?

**Mrs. Davidson:** This is money that we have collected, but remember, audits are ongoing, so the process of an audit is cyclic. So we finished an institution, we will eventually go back to them. Yes, we may not have enough auditors to complete audits annually at every institution, but at this point in time we try to rotate and we are back at an institution within a two-year period. But we are subject to the staff constraints in the audit unit.

**Dr. Wheeler:** Okay. Just to go on something else—

**Mr. Chairman:** Sorry, before you continue, if you do not mind. You say you are constrained by auditors. You do not have sufficient auditors and because of that it might not be adequate in terms of your—
Mrs. Davidson: Well, what I am saying is, what we would like to do is to probably audit all institutions on an annual basis, but that is not possible because of the size of the audit unit. Now remember, when we do an audit we are looking for every student signing a register for a period of time, so it is a very intense audit that takes a while, because you are looking at every programme that the institution offers. For instance, let us say a school is doing law and there are four modules, we are looking at registers from four modules. So it is an intensive audit and it is time-consuming.

Mr. Chairman: Are you using your internal auditors?

Mrs. Davidson: We have internal auditors.

Mr. Chairman: But do you use also external auditors if you think there is a backlog?

Mrs. Davidson: We have trained persons from the on-the-job training who assist with the audit and in the last set of audits we have been doing, we have gotten some assistance from the internal audit in the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Thank you.

10.30 a.m.

Dr. Wheeler: The funding that GATE provides to the student, could you specify what it comprises? Is it just for tuition, does it include books and other things; living expenses, rent? Could you clarify what it is? Further to that, what is the difference with that funding compared to someone who gets an additional national scholarship?

Ms. Davidson: The “TE” in GATE is for: “Tuition Expenses.” So GATE covers simply tuition. The additional expenses such as, accommodation and books can be covered by students using the HELP loan, but GATE pays tuition only.

Dr. Wheeler: Sorry, what is that programme?

Ms. Davidson: The HELP loan: Higher Education Loan Programme. The second question you asked was—

Dr. Wheeler: You probably answered it, because I had asked to compare it with the National Scholarship Programme.

Ms. Davidson: Okay, what I would say with respect to National Scholarships though, students who are on scholarships, those students are covered by Ministry of Public Administration. So, those students really do not access GATE for their tuition. Their tuition and all expenses are covered under their scholarship arrangement.

Dr. Wheeler: The reason I had asked it, is to try to get a distinction from someone who achieves academic excellence and gets a national scholarship as opposed to someone who just qualifies to do the programme. What really is the benefit to someone who achieves academic excellence?

Ms. Davidson: With a national scholarship you would get your tuition. You would get a monthly stipend for accommodation. You would get books. You would get travel expenses if your campus is
regionally, maybe some other little things—medical. I think all their little expenses are covered. So, for instance, if you had student fees, that would be covered, whereas things like that students would have to pay if they are not on a scholarship.

Miss Hospedales: Good morning, again. On page 18 of the report you submitted to us, there are several obligations of institutions that have been listed. What I want to find out is the number of institutions that breached agreements, how those matters were resolved and whether any terminations occurred?

Why I am asking how the matters were resolved, I saw there was a lot of media attention given to one particular institution that you all had said had owed money to you and that matter went as far as going to court. So, are there other examples of such institutions? Could you provide us with a list of the breaches, the institutions that breached, how the matters were resolved and whether there were any terminations? Thanks.

Ms. Davidson: I am not sure if I am looking at the same document as you are. On page 3 of my own, in terms of audits and reconciliation there is a statement that we collected $24.9 million from institutions based on the audit.

Mr. De Coteau: It is page 4(2) on page 18.

Ms. Davidson: Okay, on page 4. Sorry, I am using an older version. We collected $24.9 million from institutions after audit. Now this would vary. Some institutions may be $2 million. Some may be just $100,000.00.

Miss Hospedales: It does not give the specifics I am asking for. I would like to know the number of institutions?

Ms. Davidson: What I am saying is the $24 million referred to a number of institutions. I did not want to give a number. It may be about 17 or 18 in audits that were successfully completed and for money reimbursed. We had just one institution that refused to repay the amount owed and that matter was settled in court.

Mr. Chairman:—has been settled in court.

Miss Hospedales:—has been settled in court.

Ms. Davidson: Can you tell us what the outcome was?

Ms. Davidson: Basically, the judge asked that we settle between ourselves and an agreed figure was determined that the school would repay to us. I think there was one other question. It was just one institution that we debarred from GATE based on what we felt was not ethical behaviour at the time but it had nothing to do with the audit.

Mrs. Oudit: All right. I would like to go back to page 4. On page 4, I note that the section that identifies monies that have been reimbursed from institutions on behalf of students are as follows. I am just looking at the figures from March 2007 until September 2011 my calculation identifies that is roughly about $800,000 that was monies reimbursed from institutions.
However, there is a marked difference between October 2011 and September 2012 to the tune of $7.2 million. Is there any particular reason that prior to that October 2011 period, where you had monies reimbursed to the tune of $7.2 million and before that from 2007 to September 2010 that only $800,000 average was reimbursed?

**Ms. Davidson:** That period October 2011 to September 2012, I think that would represent a large payment from the University of Trinidad and Tobago. What happened is, there were teachers in the Bachelor of Education programme who was supposed to be on scholarship and apparently their GATE claims came into our division for those students. So when the matter was clarified in the Ministry, the Ministry of Public Administration paid the tuition fees for those students. The institution reimbursed us the tuition fees that were paid for the teachers who won scholarships.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Fair enough. Thank you. I have just a few questions again. GATE students on page 5. I see that you have student agreements signed with St. George’s University and the University of Technology of Jamaica. My question is, is this within the legislative framework of GATE or would it have been a little more appropriate to have it as scholarships to the foreign institutions and why are you paying GATE to students who are in foreign institutions?

**Ms. Davidson:** Initially, the students at St. George’s University and the University of Technology in Jamaica were scholars paid for by the Ministry of Public Administration. The Government of the day took a decision that they would expand the GATE programme to include students at St. George’s University and initially students doing architecture at the University of Technology because it was not available in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mrs. Oudit:** You just explained that the reason you had such a large reimbursement figure was that the students who were at the University of the West Indies, the Bachelors programme, because they straddled both Public Administration and they were also in receipt of the GATE extra, that the institutions had to repay GATE.

**Ms. Davidson:** No. It was an error on the part of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, when they submitted the GATE claims they did not realize that the Ministry of Public Administration would have paid for those students subsequently.

**Mrs. Oudit:** I understand that. Now, you are saying that at some point the administration of the day identified that while those students who were on scholarship at St. George’s University and the University of Technology Jamaica the decision was to expand to GATE—[**Interruption**]

**Ms. Davidson:** A decision was taken by the Government of the day, at that point in time, to expand the GATE programme, because previously those students could only have accessed those programmes through the scholarship division.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Right. So, my question is, if they were already on a scholarship why did we then double to give them not only scholarship but GATE.
Ms. Davidson: Actually, those students were on tuition-only scholarships. So it was not adding anything. The initial students who were on scholarship remained on scholarship in the Ministry of Public Administration, but the new students who wanted to access those programmes were told to come to the GATE programme and access the tuition through the GATE programme. So it was no doubling up. We still have students at the Ministry of Public Administration who are being paid for under their previous scholarship arrangement.

Dr. Wheeler: They are not entitled to GATE?

Ms. Davidson: It is just tuition.

Mrs. Oudit: My question is, if a person or student is on a scholarship then why are we paying—

[Interruption]

Ms. Davidson: They would—

Mrs. Oudit: No. Please. Why are we still doing a GATE allowance for a student at a foreign institution under a scholarship from the Ministry of Public Administration?

Ms. Davidson: We are not doing that. What I said to you is that, initially, the students who were at St. George’s University and University of Technology of Jamaica were on scholarships through the Ministry of Public Administration. Okay? So we had students there. Subsequently, the Government decided that they would allow students who want to access those programmes there, to access it through the GATE programme. So at that point the new students who tried to access UTech and St. George’s were told just go to the GATE department, GATE is now going to cover your tuition only at those institutions. So we do not have a duplication of students who are accessing GATE and Ministry of Public Administration. They are either at the Ministry of Public Administration under the previous arrangement or they are now coming to us to access tuition only under the GATE programme.

Mrs. Oudit: Okay. Now, just one point on that. The legislative framework of GATE, when it was established—that establishes the GATE fund—does that allow for a GATE allowance to foreign institutions? Because, while they are citizens or maybe citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, I do not know if the legislative agenda of that institution provided for GATE funding at foreign institutions.

Ms. Davidson: Well, the GATE policies are determined by Cabinet decisions. So the decision to access GATE at St. George’s and UTech were Cabinet decisions.

Sen. Oudit: Could we get a copy of that Cabinet decision please? The Minute.

Ms. Davidson: Yes, I have it. So, I can give it to you.

Mrs. Oudit: Sure. Thank you. Mr. Chair, please. I know it is a few, but I had submitted these a while ago, over a month ago, so it is just about two more for clarification.

On page 7, you identified liaison officers attached to the monitoring and compliance unit, could you identify how many liaison officers you have currently attached to the monitoring and compliance unit?
Ms. Davidson: Officially, we do not have a monitoring and compliance unit. Part of the secure and expand GATE, it was determined that we should create a monitoring and compliance unit. In the interim what we do is we have officers who are assigned to each of the schools. So each school has a liaison officer, but that officer that is not their sole job. We use that person just to act in the interim until we have proper monitoring and compliance. So each school has a liaison officer but their duties are beyond just liaison officers at a school.

Mrs. Oudit: So there was no monitoring or compliance?

Ms. Davidson: No, we have never. We had an audit unit but monitoring and compliance.

Mrs. Oudit: GATE, again as a reminder, was established in 2004. Next question. What has prevented the establishment of your monitoring and compliance Unit before 2012, especially when the GATE clearance policy was introduced in January 2008 after your establishment in 2004? In 2008 you set up the funding and grant administration division, which is your own division, but you still even after 2004, even after 2008, there was no monitoring and compliance unit, any particular reason?

Mr. Webster: Although there was no monitoring and compliance unit, the monitoring and compliance was in fact done. There was not a formal unit but the actual fact of monitoring and complying was being done in the unit in the division.

Mrs. Oudit: By?

Mr. Webster: That is done by the liaison officers. So it is ongoing.

Mrs. Oudit: But you said you have no liaison officers. You have an officer assigned to——

Mr. Webster: Yes, they are liaison officers who deal with the issues of all the units. Each tertiary-level institution has a liaison officer who deals with matters of each tertiary-level institution. So they are doing the work but we do not have them in a unit separately.

Mrs. Oudit: All right, I see.

Mr. Webster: From each of the whole Funding and Grants we identify, you are the liaison officer for this particular unit. So anything it has to do with monitoring and compliance that officer deals with it, but it is part of its overall duties.

The big part about monitoring and compliance is the audit department. The reason we can pay GATE is because we have an audit department who follows after the fact. Because, what GATE does is pay in advance. The TLIs have to comply with all the things that have to be done to get that money. But, give it up front and because we have an audit department they follow up afterwards to ensure that the TLIs have been complying. You can actually call the audit department the compliance unit.

Mrs. Oudit: Well, I would not like to call it that unless there are specific things involved.

Mr. Webster: You would not call it that but I am saying that is their function.

Mrs. Oudit: Monitoring is one thing.

Mr. Webster: That is right.
Mrs. Oudit: But the compliance part, the enforcement of, and I think that was a question, Miss Hospedales had asked, how do you deal with?

10.45 a.m.

Mrs. Oudit: So whether you have monitoring is just one thing, but how do you deal with those who do not comply, and that is a critical issue for you.

I would like to just move to one other. There is a recommendation that GATE, on page 7, be based on socioeconomic priority, and that is the recommendation that is out of the document in 2012. In 2012, the recommendation is that GATE is founded on socioeconomic priority, what was the priority or criteria used in the past before this—if not socioeconomic priority?

Ms. Davidson: We had an open policy at that point in time. Once institutions met the registration requirements and programme approval at the Accreditation Council, they were all approved for GATE funding. No attempt was made prior to 2011 to look at needs of the country and align programmes to needs. We accepted all programmes once they met the quality assurance to the ACTT.

Mrs. Oudit: My last question. On page 10, what is the proposed method it identifies to strengthen the administrative capacity?

Mr. Webster: We are at the point of doing a restructuring exercise in order to ensure that all the requirements with respect to the keeping of the memorandum that is issued by the Funding and Grants to make sure that all these matters are dealt with. So while GATE has been dealing with these matters on an ongoing basics, and I think the Funding and Grant are very strong in that regard, in that we have not had a lot of problems in that area, but there is always the need to review and to look and see whether we are operating as efficiently as possible. So we are looking at it again.

As a matter of fact, we are looking to see whether we can assist students and to realize even more by setting up an office in the south and probably—not probably—but definitely have a help desk in Tobago. So we are looking all the time to restructure. Yes, restructuring is a good work, but we review our policies on an ongoing basis. We do not wait until something goes wrong and say, let us do something. So do not have to have a big restructuring programme.

Mrs. Oudit: I am pleased to hear that. I think after the establishment in 2004 it is nice to know that maybe 2013 we will get an office in south—

Mr. Webster: Yes.

Mrs. Oudit:—or outside of Port of Spain.

Mr. Webster: Yes.

Mrs. Oudit: Thank you.

Ms. Davidson: Probably I would want to add though, when GATE started the staff structure was just 10 persons and we are now 55. So throughout that period, we have had notes going to Cabinet requesting additional staff to meet the needs. So this new restructuring is just part of an ongoing
process that has happened over the period where we are now saying, yes, we would definitely want to have the monitoring and compliance unit, and we would want to expand, in particular, the audit unit so that the audits are done in a more timely manner. So it is really just part of an ongoing process with respect to GATE.

Mrs. Oudit: Well, I wish you all the best with your organization and I think you seem to have currently a tremendous amount of support, and we look forward to a lot of good things from the GATE programme.

Ms. Davidson: Thank you.

Dr. Tewarie: Thank you very much, Chair. I want to ask some very simple straightforward questions. It is really to understand better and to clarify more than anything else.

On page 2, where you have the GATE standing committee, you have the institutions that are part of that standing committee, but for June 2010 Cabinet appointed committee you do not have the members of the committee. Do you know offhand who they are?

Ms. Davidson: The initial committee?

Dr. Tewarie: Yes.

Ms. Davidson: I do not want to give the members right now, but we do have it and we can provide it in a while.

Dr. Tewarie: Yes, if you can provide that I would be grateful because you said this committee called for the standing committee.

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. So that is the first thing.

The second thing is that I want to try and understand this structure of funding in the country of which GATE is a part for Government funded support for higher education. So what we have in Trinidad and Tobago is, first of all, what we call open scholarship winners, and that is a merit system in which students who win scholarship at that level can go to any institution in the world. Is that correct?

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Now, that is not funded by GATE?

Ms. Davidson: Not at all!

Dr. Tewarie: Right! So that is subject to funding by the Ministry of Public Administration. Then, after that, you have the national scholarship winners and those may vary from year to year, and generally there has been an upward trend. I think at the present time we have just over 300 of those and those are funded in terms of tuition, and they are funded in terms of additional support, but they are funded, as I understand it, within Trinidad and Tobago for education here and within the regional system. Is that correct?

Ms. Davidson: Correct.
Dr. Tewarie: Now, that funding comes from where?

Ms. Davidson: The Ministry of Public Administration.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. That also comes from Public Administration, and then beyond that, are the other students who would then access GATE.

Ms. Davidson: To cover tuition only.

Dr. Tewarie: And that will be tuition only? And if they needed more, they would have to go for a soft loan supported by Government. Now the requirement for all of these people, as I understand it, the open scholarship, national scholarship and GATE funded students, are that they would serve the country for a period of three years. Is that correct?

Ms. Davidson: No. It is a scale based on the amount of the grant that you have gotten, the entire grant. So it means that if you are a national scholar they are going to count the tuition, the books, everything that has been given to you and there is a scale based on that in terms of how much you should serve.

Dr. Tewarie: What is the requirement for GATE-funded students? What is the requirement of, what can I say, service?

Ms. Davidson: Okay. We use the same arrangement that the scholars use. That is a Cabinet decision in terms of the cost of awards and the period of obligatory service, and it is in the report that we submitted to you. Now that was a decision taken by Cabinet in respect of scholars, and when we went to Cabinet with respect to the GATE programme we used the same—

Dr. Tewarie: Same criteria.

Ms. Davidson:—criteria, except that our students would get a smaller grant because they are only getting tuition.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. Now, you have basically an audit and compliance and monitoring system that really focuses firstly, on the students, and, secondly, on the institution, how do you monitor for instance in a situation in which the market for education is fairly free? And if I have a private institution I can go into a joint venture with an institution from any part of the world and that could very well affect what is the cost of a programme. How do we monitor and manage or have we thought about it, or are we thinking about it, because I know that—you are talking about a relatively short time for the GATE, but how do we monitor, for instance, the range of prices within a single domain of offerings in the marketplace? For instance, if I have a master’s degree in marketing programme and the cost for that is $100,000 in one place and $35,000 in another, how do we reconcile those things in relation to GATE?

Mr. Webster: In one word, research.

Dr. Tewarie: What?

Mr. Webster: In one word, research.

Dr. Tewarie: No, but how do you get the result of the management?
Mr. Webster: Well, you have to gather information worldwide to see what fees are being charged. It is going to be from the US and the UK, you know.

Dr. Tewarie: What I am after is this: if my colleague here has a school and the price for her course is $60,000 and the price at my school is $35,000, does GATE support the cost of your student choice of going to the more expensive school for the programme, or is there something which addresses that?

Mr. Webster: We have not standardized the fee structure. When GATE started we accepted the tuition fees that the various institutions had as the base. Subsequently, we would have had a lot more new programmes added and what we have always tried to do is to look at new programmes, the requested fee, and see to what extent it is reasonable in the respect of the other programmes that we are funding. We have never tried to really go with standard fees, but we do see ourselves having a range, let us say for instance, in a management programme running from maybe $30,000 to $100 and something thousand. There is still some level of reasonableness that we expect, but we have not tried to standardize. But that is something that the GATE standing committee is now looking at in terms of the fee structure.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay. Well, I do not think it is desirable to standardize, but I think a range would be reasonable. The other thing as far as that is concerned—I mean there are various motivations for doing things.

I may be an entrepreneur and I am going into a business and that business is education, but I also have a deep interest in education. I may be an entrepreneur and I really do not have too much interest in education, I let other people do that, and my real interest is how can I increase my profit. If I have that kind of approach, then my approach will be to have as many courses as possible for which I could get as many students as possible at the highest price possible so that I can increase my margins. How is something like that managed?

Ms. Davidson: That is with the Accreditation Council because remember, we are not funding programmes just—

Dr. Tewarie: As arbitrarily.

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: So the Accreditation Council in a way is a GATE keeper for excessive behaviour?

Ms. Davidson: Right.

Dr. Dowlat: I just want to add two thoughts on what Dr. Tewarie mentioned. The standing committee is looking at cost for credit. A bachelor’s degree normally varies between 90 to 120 credits. It is one of the ways forward in terms of standardizing the costing. So you look at the institutions, you look at what they are offering, but if it is like a bachelor’s in music it might be different from something in the natural sciences. So that sometimes you have a certain flexibility in terms of the cost per credit, but there is a range that we are looking for. So it answers your first question.
The second one is that the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago and the National Training Agency—previously before the expansion to TVET areas, level 3 TVET courses were approved by the Accreditation Council on the understanding that even though it is approved, plus all the others—the associate degrees and bachelors’ and things like that—that they would not necessarily get GATE funding. After the securing and expansion, that is after 2011 with the TVET programmes coming on, the level 2 TVET programmes that are approved by the National Training Agency, in collaboration with the Accreditation Council, would now be setting the criteria, and with the criteria would be standards.

Say for example—I will just give you one—when the Accreditation Council looks at an institution, they would approve the size of the classroom for about 30 students depending on the programme and the course, given the facilities and the infrastructure. So now when the GATE committee—and the GATE committee will correspond with the ACTT, and the NTA would see 100 students have been registered, they would look back at what the ACTT approved that institution for. So you are right in summarizing that the ACTT/NTA would be the GATE keepers now.

Dr. Tewarie: For that system. Okay! Just a couple more, I would not be very long.

The Accreditation Council, though—I may be wrong about this—would accredit two things: one would be a programme and one would be an institution. Is that correct? If I am accredited as an institution and I now have this accreditation which gives me a licence basically to offer educational programmes, how is my ability to proliferate programmes dealt with by the Accreditation Council?

11.00 a.m.

Dr. Tewarie: In other words, I meet all the terms of compliance with the Accreditation Council and I get accredited as an institution, how do I now be kept in check to make sure that the growth of programmes in my institutions are at a manageable rate for an institution to continue to offer quality education? I am asking these things not to cause difficulty, I am just trying to understand because when I looked at the system, those are some of the things that present themselves as challenges in that sector.

Dr. Dowlath: Well, that is an excellent question. There are 81 institutions that are registered or accredited. There are only six accredited institutions. So the first stage is registration where they will go through the various criteria, mission, vision, teaching/learning. For a new programme to be sanctioned by the Accreditation Council or the NTA, the process starts off with a market survey to show and then you go through the whole process of curriculum development and all those kinds of things, so that both the ACTT and NTA would have the criteria with the associated standards for all of these programmes.

Within the last year, even though a programme, whether it is transnational or locally developed, would have been approved by the Accreditation Council or the NTA, there is this caveat saying that it does not mean they will get GATE funding. The GATE committee and Funding and Grants will determine
that. So yes, if you are approved by the ACTT, you could go ahead and offer your programmes, citizens will pay for it on their own, but if they qualify for GATE funding, whether the GATE funding will apply to them. So that there are—ACTT and NTA are basically the regulators in terms of approval of programmes and the registration of institutions.

One of the things that you would note is that every three years, institutions come up for re-registration. For the six institutions that have been accredited—UWI, UTT, Arthur Lok Jack, USC and recently Cipriani—the first five would have gotten seven years accreditation and Cipriani would have gotten five years. Those who got seven years have a review after three years, intense, focused, site review of all their facilities and Cipriani after one year. So that the Accreditation Council for level 3 programmes and above, and for level 1 and 2, the NTA would be looking at those institutions. So even before you get to the stage of getting GATE funding, you have these two agencies that regulate both the institution and the programmes.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. I have two questions, Mr. Chairman, if you would allow. One is that when I looked at the numbers on page 12, it said that in 2011/2012, we have 59,000 students in the system. Is there any way that you track the graduation rate? Do you have the means to do that?

**Ms. Davidson:** No, we have not really been effectively tracking graduation rates at all because the institutions were supposed to provide us with the feedback on gradations but we have not really taken that on board. It is going to be part of new monitoring and compliance unit.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. I could tell you from my own point of view in trying to do an assessment of Government performance and the results, I have not been able to get an accurate enough number of the graduation rate in the country, and I feel that that is an important number to have.

**Ms. Davidson:** The Higher Education Services Division in the Ministry are looking at collecting data like that on our behalf.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay.

**Ms. Davidson:** But in terms of our linking it with our students in the GATE database, we have not.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Okay. You see that has serious implications for international organizations like UNESCO, et cetera, classifying your country in relation to tertiary objectives. It is a real issue.

The final question, Mr. Chairman, is that on page 7 and 8, you have a list of things that guide, or are meant to guide, the policy orientation for the execution of the GATE strategy. I just want to know how many of these are not available? All right. So, for instance, the budget, the medium-term, et cetera, will be available, but I know that some of them will not be available, and if you have a suggestion as to how we can fast track that because we need to have a guidance in order to do to. Do you know?

**Ms. Davidson:** No, and in fact, we would want to depend on your Ministry to give us a lot of guidance in terms of priority areas.

**Dr. Tewarie:** Yes, I know that; well that is why I asked if you had the—[Interruption]
Ms. Davidson: Yes. So we have basically been listing the types of data and we use these in an adhoc manner currently so that we can make some determinations to pass on to the Minister.

Dr. Tewarie: So we really do need a comprehensive policy and strategy.

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Dr. Tewarie: Okay, thanks.

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Hospedales, you want to follow up on something that Dr. Tewarie—not a new? Okay. Could we just allow just the one—what is it on Dr.—?

Ms. Hospedales: Go ahead, it is a new question.

Mr. Chairman: It is a new question, sorry, we will come back to you then. Sorry.

Mr. De Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, to the members of the panel. The Hon. Minister, Sen. Karim, in the Lower House said that "permit me to list the areas that were raised by citizens in the national community.

1. They raised issues of policy administration and performance of the GATE programme during the period 2004—2011;
2. They raised matters with respect to funding and labour market needs;
3. Programme abuse and performance;
4. Standards for students;
5. Accountability of institutions and introduction of new programmes, and
6. Tuition fees."

Now, I know in skirting, I would have heard about the tuition fees, some being exorbitant, et cetera. But, during your period of stewardship, could you elaborate on the programme abuse and what measures that you have put in place to prevent these programme abuse? Could you identify the programme abuse?

Ms. Davidson: Okay. One of the early abuses that we had recognized around 2006/2007 was that students would sign up for GATE in more than one institution. So what we had is that students may have gone to, let us say one of the private institutions, they were accepted, they filled out their GATE application form and they may have gotten accepted into another institution, UWI may have given them late call. So what we found is that we may have had two applications coming into the GATE department for payment for one student in an academic year.

So in order to deal with that issue, we instituted the GATE Clearance Policy in 2008. What we said to the institutions—well, we dealt with at the private institutions only and we are now looking to implementing the public—we asked that before a student fills out an application form, they apply for clearance—if they were continuing students—they would have to give us their grade slips so that we can see the results from the year that we paid for.

So only when students are cleared via that GATE Clearance Policy they could access GATE, and that
allowed us to ensure that students only had one approval. So you could not have an approval to go to SAMS to do something and then law at another institution. So that is what we did in 2008 and that has made a big difference in terms of ensuring that students were only enrolled in one programme.

The issue we still had slightly open there is that we were not clearing students at the public institutions. We were more or less, as you say, depending, especially in terms of the GPA—that the institutions would monitor the students on our behalf and ensure that students were meeting academic performance. We realized that a lot of the public institutions were not really effectively monitoring students and students with poor performance, people who were below the minimum GPA, were accessing GATE so we have now put a stop to that by ensuring that at the public institutions, students also meet their minimum requirements.

Mr. De Coteau: Would you say that some institutions sustain themselves based on the moneys they were getting from GATE?

Ms. Davidson: I am not sure how to answer that.

Mr. De Coteau: The sustainability of some institutions was as a result of GATE funding.

Ms. Davidson: Again, I am still unclear as to the question.

Mr. De Coteau: Well, I know earlier you had spoken in terms of monitoring the institutions. For instance, Dr. Tewarie in asking about the accreditation purpose and I think Dr. Dowlath in explaining that some institutions have accreditation for one year and some for three years. Am I correct?

Dr. Dowlath: It is registration for three years and even those who got accreditation for seven years would be looked at after three years.

Mr. De Coteau: After three years?

Dr. Dowlath: Yes.

Mr. De Coteau: What I was wondering is whether there was supposed to be some continuing process during that period to ensure that standards were maintained?

Ms. Davidson: Okay. What I think I would say there is that an institution, on the agreement—we have their registration dates and institutions can only access GATE funding if they have a current registration. Once they are deregistered or the registration lapsed, they are no longer eligible for GATE funding in particular for their new students. We would see the older students through. So your GATE funding is dependent on having a current registration that is not lapsed.

Dr. Dowlath: May I add something here? I think you also asked the question about the quality of the teaching/learning in the institutions. When institutions go through the process of registration or accreditation with the ACTT and also with the NTA, it is based a lot on their quality management system. The quality management system would ask for the review of the teaching and learning and so it really depends on the strength of the quality management system in the institution itself.

One thing that I want you to note too is that you asked the question about whether institutions depend
solely on GATE funding. There are institutions that provide transnational programmes where GATE will give you for the tuition expense but they also have to pay the foreign fees to write the exams, so the students then have to put out even more. So therefore, there is this issue of the kinds of qualifications and how they are seen in terms of their importance and significance, you know, these transnational qualifications. Because a lot of students get the tuition expense through GATE and they also pay these hefty foreign fees. Probably it maybe sometimes that, you know, we devalue our local and we look to the foreign programmes having more prestige. That is why people put out so much funding to pay those exam fees because having a qualification from a British university, “yuh know”, there is a perception sometimes.

Mr. De Coteau: Are you referring to the law institutions? [Laughter]

Dr. Dowlath: No, no, I am just putting forward something that might be [Inaudible]

Mr. Jeffery: On page 7, Residence Policy. We have no problem with the first statement: all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago can access the GATE programme. The second statement: they must however provide proof of residence in Trinidad and Tobago to three years prior to the accessing of GATE funding. My question is: what must a citizen produce to prove that he has been resident in Trinidad and Tobago for three years prior to accessing the GATE funding? Two, whether or not this is rigorously followed by your administration?

Ms. Davidson: Okay, I would say yes, it has been rigorously followed. The key documents we get normally relate to students just leaving high school. They would get a letter from their high school saying that they have been attending school between that period and whatever. If someone is working, they normally would get something from their employers. So that would be a letter from the employer, you can also get something from your tax statement. Anything that puts you in the country can be used. Those are some of the key documents, but mostly we get work-related letters and as most of the students really come straight from high school, we get letters from the schools.

11.15 a.m.

Mr. Jeffrey: I would come back to page 7 in a while. On page 10, the second point at the bottom: a policy of no repeats to be implemented for all GATE-approved programmes at all approved tertiary education institutions, is there any leeway for extenuating circumstances?

Ms. Davidson: Yes. This is a recommendation, so this has not yet been implemented. It is in the report that is with the Minister right now. Yes, we have always looked at medicals and other reports from students, but as I have said, we do not necessarily have to accept every medical, but, yes, there are things that we can look at.

Mr. Jeffrey: The standing committee on the GATE programme, the report on securing and expanding the GATE programme, I think it would be interesting for us to see what the securing component really and truly entails. I do not have a problem with the expanding, it is the securing that worries me a little
as to what the securing means. I do not know if you want to give us some clarification on that.

**Ms. Davidson:** Well I think one of the key things when we looked at securing, was sustainability of the GATE programme and what we wanted to do look was to look at areas where we may find that we are not getting value for money, in a sense, in terms of students who are not performing well. So performance was one thing that we looked at under that area.

The establishment of the GATE Standing Committee, that is chaired by this interim chairman here, that was part of whole question of securing, having a committee with oversight, which is something that the GATE programme did not have before because we were really just dealing directly with the Minister, through the Permanent Secretary. So, with the GATE Standing Committee, where we have representatives from finance, planning, labour, the private sector, that has provided some measure of security to the programme.

The whole question of the public consultation, we had a public consultation where we got feedback from the public, in terms of how they see what we should be doing. So, that is also—and that is part of the report that we have provided.

We are looking at increased monitoring of the programme, in particular the public institutions, because initially, they were allowed to self-regulate and we felt that the public institutions were not really regulating in the Government’s interest, in that we had students that were performing poorly being allowed to access GATE. So, we have put some measures in place to ensure that the students at the public institutions also maintain the minimum GPA requirement, the minimum performance standards of their particular institution. So that was another way of securing and the whole question of now looking at priority needs, meaning that GATE is not going to be open to any and every programme. We want to try to make sure that the programmes that are GATE-approved meet the needs of the country.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** But how do you determine that?

**Ms. Davidson:** Well, we have a number of documents that we are currently using as a guide. I think they were all listed in report.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** Yes, I see them here.

**Miss. Davidson:** But, in terms of a whole comprehensive report, these are the documents that we would use to sort of give guidance to the whole process. As I say, it is a work in progress and we hope to have some measure of inputs from other Ministries, the Ministry of Labour in particular, Ministry of Planning and Development and, of course, the Ministry of Finance because, as I you said, it is money being spent.

**Mr. Jeffrey:** And the final result, a copy would be made available?

**Miss Davidson:** Yes, that would guide and hopefully, as you say, September 2013, we hope to be able to implement some of these new policy guidelines.
Mr. Jeffrey: My last point I want to raise is that some of the level one programmes, particularly at the NESC centres, where students have to pay, I have a little bit of concern with that. Yes from level two you have your funding and so on but think about my own La Brea constituency and I am sure Moruga maybe have a similar experience, we have poor students who do not have the wherewithal even though they are interested in pursuing the TVET courses. I am making a plug that GATE funding be made available to some of those courses, there are short courses at NESC in particular, to facilitate that process.

Miss Davidson: I am not sure what are the programmes you speak of at NESC but the level one programmes, to my understanding, most of these are covered by public entities such as YTEPP, the Retraining Programme, there is MuST and these students do not really pay tuition. They get clothing. They get a stipend. So, in terms of the GATE programme it is really not relevant to them because they are not really paying tuition.

NESC, they have come to us and they are looking at now some of their level two programmes and we are looking at the level two programmes that they want submitted for GATE approval. But even when we agree to pay tuition for those students at the level two at NESC, those students are also going to get a stipend. I think it was roughly about $80 a day. So, right now, I am not sure what students are paying, but even within the GATE programme there are other fees that students must pay. For instance there is registration fees. Some institutions may have a library or an IT fee. GATE is only covering tuition. So there are going to be fees that the parents or students are going to be faced with whether they are in GATE or not.

Mr. Jeffrey: Whatever programmes you all have, I hope that you would plug in that for such students because, given, the level of poverty in some areas, I think there is need to make funding available, whether it be for registration or as the case might be. Certainly, I know of courses at the NESC centre in La Brea, where people put out as much as $1,000 and so on and that is plenty money in my community. So, I hope that you all would take that into consideration.

Mr. Chairman: One follow-up.

Mr. Dowlath: Just to respond on that.

Mr. Chairman: Very brief.

Mr. Dowlath: Yes. It begs the question of what really defines “tuition expenses”. Does it include all of these other things or is it just the teaching/learning? That is another question that we have to grapple with.

Mr. Chairman: One follow-up, Miss Hospedales.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you Mr. Chairman. With reference to the recommendation that was made that the GATE-approved undergraduate programmes be funded as varying rates, based on the socio-economic priority, I would like to know what influence the change in the policy and whether or not your
priority list is available or it is being developed at this particular point in time and will programmes that are not considered to be priority, with reference to socio-economic development, would those no longer be accessible to the GATE programme?

**Mr. Dowlath:** You would have had a list of those documents that we are looking at. Dr. Tewarie would have said that this is still a work in progress. Even labour market studies are not available to us to really determine a concrete listing. So, that so far, programmes that are already on the GATE, (already paid tuition expenses) will not be removed. The expansion part of it would have been the TVET area. This is really something that the standing committee has to work on.

You would notice this was also one of the statements in the budget speech this year under section four: Developing Human Capital. So, the GATE committee will be looking at, together with—and if you look at the GATE committee you would notice that we have representation from the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Finance, ACTT and NTA and things like that. It really would be a work in progress, in terms of defining that socio-economic priority area.

But up to this point in time, programmes are not going to be dropped. This would determine more the programmes that will come on board. But, according to government policy, the expansion deals a lot with the TVET area; the skills-based area.

One of the things that we have to keep in mind is that after secondary school you would notice the 2011 and 2012 pass rates at the CSEC level just about 43 per cent of the students achieve five subjects and, therefore, there is close to 60 per cent of the students who would not meet the normal requirements to get into an academic programme. So a lot of these skills-based programmes will be relevant to them as they move into the post-secondary and tertiary sector. That is the imperative we have now, in terms of the expansion. The question was asked about the expansion. There would be a greater thrust, in terms of that skills-based area. So we take on board too Mr. Jeffrey’s suggestion for the level one. We would look into it.

**Dr. Douglas:** Thank you so much for coming today to respond to our questions and concerns and to share your commitment to this programme.

I was looking at page 11, in relation to the obligatory services and I was—you did say that there are no real measures put in place to monitor or make this a reality. Is that still so?

**Mr. Dowlath:** Yes. Right now 90 per cent of the students access, who get GATE funding, one-year programmes. I am sorry. It is about up to 50,000. So it is one year obligatory service. Many of the students are also working part-time and things like that. Right now, there is no real structure in place and that is one of the things the GATE Standing Committee will be looking at: how do we facilitate this social responsibility aspect of it, where the graduates now would—

**Dr. Douglas:** But do you have a minimum requirement at least, that you are working with, for example you have to live in the country for at least one year.
Mr. Dowlath: It is spelt out, in terms of the structure.

Dr. Douglas: I know what you have but I am saying that what you have is not monitored or is not implemented but, I am saying even if you have, for example, someone accesses $200,000 worth of GATE money and then they fly out of the country. I am saying you could at least implement a very minimal standard that if you access $200,000 you must live in the country for two years after that, which does not require that you have to commit to anything in particular other than you are here and we are getting the value of you being an educated person in the country. It is not a question that you have answer, but it is just a recommendation, in relation to what minimum, at least basic requirements, that can be implemented, as it relates to getting some kind of value for the money and not seeing our commitment just leave or drained out somewhere.

Mr. Dowlath: A brief response. Miss Davidson did some research with immigration and there is no law or anything that could prevent someone from leaving the country, if you understand what I mean, in terms of this kind of obligatory service. There is nothing that would say: okay if two have to stay for two years, if somebody wants to fly out, there is nothing that could keep them from. That is one of the difficulties we have. Miss Davidson could probably elaborate because we were doing some research on it.

Ms. Davidson: But I am taking your point because I am thinking what you are saying to us is that we should focus on the grants that are—the larger grants, rather and I think yes, when we start implementing our focus will be there. Although it says over $200,000/five years, most of these students get over $1 million because if they are in a five-year medical programme, the tuition is about $1.2 million. So it is not just over $200,000.

Dr. Douglas: And then you just leave and go to Dubai or something.

Ms. Davidson: So we will focus on the—

Dr. Douglas: So there has to be at least some minimum requirement or something that, at least keeps you in the country.

I would like to hear from you, I am foregoing most of—because it seems like our Chairman has some level of haste, so I am foregoing a lot of—my questions. But I would like to find out from you, what are some of the challenges—you have said some—in terms of real challenges for the implementation or the perfect implementation of the programme and subsequently what you perceive as successes or success of the GATE programme.

11.30 a.m.

Mr. Webster: One of the challenges is your last question. [Laughter] If you can help us with it, to come up with some ideas, we have an open ear. That has been a challenge because you cannot keep anybody in the country, you know, legally.

Ms. Davidson: I think it is just the volume of students—[Interrupts]
Dr. Douglas: You cannot keep them but—[Interruption]

Mr. Webster: There must be some way that you could—[Interruption]

Dr. Douglas:—there is an agreement that people sign and if leaving the country causes them to breach the agreement, then they have a problem.

Mr. Webster: Well, they might breach.

Ms. Davidson: No. I think our issue really is the volume of students who we have graduating, and we really are not in a position for them to come to us and say, okay, I have completed my study and I will like to get a job. I am willing to work. We are not in a position to find jobs for people, and I think that is where we have the problem right now. We do not even actually want—[Interruption]

Mrs. Oudit: Mr. Chair, could I just—in response to his question. In the past, there was also what was called the cess loan. If you applied for a cess loan which was a student support loan, it was a requirement, mandatory that you must have someone sign as a guarantor. In the event of default, either of your tuition or even repayment, the guarantor stood to repay that loan, you know. I suspect that it would be wise of GATE to look at some form similar to that where you have someone, not only the applicant for GATE, but someone who signs as the guarantor, and you are guaranteeing that in the event this person absconds or flees or whatever, that person is prepared to put his neck on the line whether it is the parent or a guardian or someone as a sponsor, and I am almost certain, because the cess programme worked very well in that regard that even though students who were unable to repay, the guarantors had to deal with that.

Mr. Chairman: Dr. Douglas, if you do not mind my seeking some further clarification on the very point that you are raising. In reading the—I know it is an agreement but in there it says that if you receive assistance through GATE, you are supposed to provide national service—$50,000 one year and it goes up in that scale. But if we are not able to provide the job opportunities, how then would the students, one, be able to repay? Two, why would there be an obligation? Because the students are actually signing an obligation saying that they are obligated to—I think after six months. I saw something that after six months, I think they can be relieved of that obligation.

Ms. Davidson: No. I think that is more with the national scholars.

Mr. Chairman: That is the national scholarship? That is the agreement?

Ms. Davidson: Yeah. Because we are not really looking for a job—with the national scholar you return, you go to the Ministry of Public Administration, you tell them I am back—[Interruption]

Mr. Chairman: But with GATE are you not supposed to—if you get $50,000 you are committed to one year service?

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I do not remember the scale.

Ms. Davidson: Yeah. What I am saying is the students do not come to us. It is not like if they are
coming to us now to get a job. With the Ministry of Public Administration, a student, most of them would have been foreign-based, they come back and they go to the Ministry of Public Administration with their certification and seek a job. Now, if they are not given a job within six months, then their contracts become null and void. But in our case we are not really actively looking for the students to come to us really at this point, because we are not in a position to find jobs for them.

**Dr. Douglas:** I understand. I mean, if you really look at it you have 156,000 people graduating from the GATE programme, it is not conceivable that you could create some kind of employment or some way to keep them contractual. So, that was why I was looking for some minimum formula for at least retaining especially the ones that are on the higher end, you know. There might be the need for some form of—some other department that creates, for example, within the US system students before they graduate are expected to do X amount of community service. It can actually be built into the programme itself that some hours or weeks or months or how much of community service is built into the programme itself that allows the student to make a direct contribution.

A lot of these students we need them to learn how to give back to the nation. So, we could build—if you get $100,000 worth of—you could give six months or one year of community service or six months of community service, and it can be built in along with the programme itself, so that they would not have to come out of school and not get a job as the case might be. So, it is just my suggestion and kind of recommendation as we think about it. So, that is a challenging thing I presume.

**Ms. Davidson:** Yes. That is a challenge.

**Dr. Douglas:** That is one of the major challenges. If you have any more challenges probably you could tell me.

**Mr. Webster:** I would think that on the lower end, in most cases the obligation is met although we cannot measure it, it is met because a large percentage of grants are given to people who are working part time, so they actually fulfil their obligation, you see—this 144,000 there—because tertiary education, the nature of tertiary education, for the most part, is part time.

**Dr. Douglas:** That is why I have not really focused on the lower end group because I know they are working part-time, trying to get by and—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Webster:** That is an excellent point, you know. We would take note of that. Well, I just thought I would make the point that a lot of them have fulfilled their obligations, because they are part time students.

**Dr. Douglas:** So, tell me what you consider to be the success if you were to talk about GATE, how would you consider it to be a success for this country?

**Ms. Davidson:** I think a lot of persons especially in lower socioeconomic brackets have been able to access the GATE programme. When you look at some of them sometimes you see applications for HELP loans, and you would see this person is actually studying medicine or something and you know
that that person would not have been able to do that unless the two programmes were running, GATE and HELP, you know, you see it all around. A lot of persons are graduating, having degrees that they would not have been able to do prior to the GATE programme. I think that is one of the key things, especially when you look at some of the lower income brackets.

Mr. Chairman:  Sorry. I have a few questions actually, so, once Dr. Douglas is finished, I would want to ask those. But on this point that you are responding to, because it is something that concerns me deeply. You are saying that there is some satisfaction if you see someone from a depressed community studying medicine or applying to do medicine that is what you are saying. How often do you see that? I tell you why I have the concern and maybe it is a policy issue that has to be dealt with, but as Mr. Jeffrey raised a while ago in his community for instance he was saying that a lot of people are not benefiting, all right.

This may be because of the skewed educational system that we have whereby some people in certain communities cannot access GATE, because at the secondary and lower levels they would not have performed sufficiently well to really benefit from the majority of the funds that we are using for GATE. The fear that I have—and it is something I believe you all should try to plot spatially—is that GATE might very well leave a number of communities way behind, because of the problems that we have in the educational system. I do not know whether you have statistics that will show us really where people are benefiting, at what levels.

In addition to that there is something else I also wanted to—in connection with that same thing. I saw, for instance, some courses in aesthetics. I did not quite understand what that is massages?

Ms. Davidson:  Yeah.

Mr. Chairman:  You can now—what is aesthetics and where is this? Who are the people?

Ms. Davidson:  A lot of persons in these types of programmes are able to start their own businesses, their spas, body massages, these kinds of things, facials—[^3]

Mrs. Oudit:  Those are accredited institutions?

Ms. Davidson:  Yeah. Everything must be accredited. Remember they would go through the National Training Agency for the level two and have their proper accreditation programme—[^3]

Mrs. Oudit:  The institutions or the programmes?

Ms. Davidson:  The programmes.

Mr. Webster:  And the institutions.

Ms. Davidson:  It allows for a lot of small businesses. It is one of those growing areas in terms of personal services. I think that is how NTA refers to them. There is a big demand for people in personal services.

Dr. Dowlath:  I just want to add, that there is a lot of the institutions would have what we call bridging programmes, for example, COSTAATTT will have compass. So, if you do not have all of the academic
qualifications, you spend a year doing those bridging programmes. Also in the TVET area, you have the workforce centres that would take someone who was not certified at primary/secondary levels, come off the street, go into a workforce centre and be able to get the kind of initial certification that will allow you to get into level one and level two.

So, those are the systems that are in place now under the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training to now allow access by the persons whom, Mr. Chairman, you are talking about; that is the way forward now. So, in the TVET area it will be the workforce centres. So, even if you do not initially have a certificate or any kind of certification, that is the access point; for COSTAATT and UTT, you have the bridging programmes. Even if you have one or two ordinary level subject passes, you will be able to do their bridging programmes and get into their associate degrees, diplomas and then eventually, that will lead to a bachelors.

One of the things that the Accreditation Council is dealing with right now, is a national qualification and credit framework that will cover all of the levels from level one to about level eight. There are models in Scotland, South Africa and New Zealand. They are looking at amalgamating them so that you will be able to access—even if you are in a TVET programme—it is based on the credits. If you want to do something, you want to do welding and things like that, and that is something that is being looked at to come on for September 2013. It will take into consideration the access points like the workforce centres; all of these bridging programmes. So, it will blend both the academic and the skills-based areas.

Mr. Chairman: Dr. Douglas, if you could continue, then I will finish up.

Dr. Douglas: I think it is a tremendous thing that you could get certified as a truck driver or a massage therapist as the case might be. I think it does offer a great opportunity to support what some of the Members have been asking, for a wide range of people to access the programme at different points.

When I asked the question about success, I am really interested in how you perceived the organization as succeeding, because if graduating numbers alone is a sign of success, then that tells me one thing as opposed to how we mobilize or enter these people into the workforce or into the society as the case might be. So, I am interested in how you define success as an organization, and so far I have heard numbers; if that is it, that is it, you know, but if you have another answer, I will take it. Well, let me just move on because I do not think you have another answer. I will just try—you were going to—?

Dr. Dowlath: I just want to say something, that by 2015 the goal is for 60 per cent participation in tertiary education. So, it is numbers again but in the sense of—that is why the emphasis was on the socioeconomic, because you are not just looking at the economic priority areas but all of the—you have the faith based organizations, you have all of these organizations that are involved in cultural activities institutions you know, even the universities. You will have that faculty with arts, liberal arts and all those kinds of things. So, that is why in the way forward it really would be in terms of allowing access
to tertiary education, development of the human capital, but really the focus now would be in terms of what are the needs of the country?

11.45 a.m.

One of the things that we recognized in the past is that a lot of tertiary graduates came out in areas where there were not a lot of jobs, probably because the programmes were available and were easily accessible. I think now you are asking a relevant question in terms of the guidance for the citizens in terms of what are the areas in which you get jobs. Some people do programmes for their own self-actualization; for their own appreciation, so we have to keep that aspect open too. You cannot close off that.

Dr. Douglas: I do not have a problem with that. It is my philosophy as an educator myself that the purpose of education is to make us better people and not really to find a job. So I do not have any problem with people who believe that getting education is a way of self-improvement, which, in the long run, will get you a job.

Dr. Dowlath: So you have built into it lifelong learning so that citizens at any age can access any programme.

Dr. Wheeler: Can I just say—

Mr. Chairman: You had one question, because I have a few? You have more than one? I will get back to you if you do not mind.

I want to draw your attention to Appendix 4 on page 42. There is a table there and I was examining that table. Could you explain what really happened between 2006/2007 that would have seen a significant jump in the students in a number of institutions, whereas it was quite low before and then it sort of tapered off for the following years? Are you seeing a pattern there?

Ms. Davidson: I can explain. When GATE started in 2004, students were required to pay 50 per cent of the tuition in the undergraduate programmes. In January 2006, the free tuition was instituted and you saw during that period, coming into the next academic year September 2007/2008, lots more students being able to access GATE because at that point, at the undergraduate level, there was no tuition to be paid by students. That was the critical reason and, of course, by 2006/2007 with the Accreditation Council and more programmes being approved, we had more programmes under GATE as opposed to when we started in 2004. We had tuition now completely free, so there were lots more people getting involved at the undergraduate level.

Mr. Chairman: That is in ’06 and ’07?

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Mrs. Oudit: That 50 per cent, 50:50, Ms. Davidson, is that the follow-through from the Dollar for Dollar programme?

Ms. Davidson: Yes. The only difference with the GATE and the dollar for dollar in the initial stages
was that the private institutions were then allowed to come into the GATE. Under the dollar for dollar, we were only dealing with the public institutions; in 2004, a few private institutions—it was a lot smaller in terms of the number of private institutions. I think we started with 24 private institutions and there were not as many programmes amongst those 24 private institutions. So you were basically looking at a growth period and then, with the free tuition coming in, we had lots more students coming into the programme at that point.

**Mr. Chairman:** So, if you look at No. 12, CTS College, in 06/07, 1,000, they jumped from 496 then to 1,297. You might look at Institute of Training and Development, Omardeen School of Accountancy, again it was a big jump. Why did they taper off then?

**Ms. Davidson:** So now we come to the tapering off in the private institutions. What we had was the GATE Clearance Policy where we started monitoring the performance of the students. So, for a student to access GATE in the following year, they had to show us that they had successfully completed the previous year’s programme. So we were looking at your grade slips on an annual basis. So, you were on a three-year programme, first year show us your first year results, you get into second year. If you did not successfully complete the first year, then you were required to repeat the course and then we take you up again. Those were some of the measures, but because we were actually only doing it in the private institutions at that point, the public institutions were still not monitoring the GPAs as we would have liked.

**Mr. Chairman:** The same thing happens with the—under 41 for instance, if you look at 41, College of Science and Technology—

**Ms. Davidson:** There is an error that we have not cleared there where we saw one student, in ’10/’11.

**Mr. Chairman:** Under 41, the year that I am questioning, you had 4,700 and then it goes down to 2,800 and then it goes up to 7,700

**Ms. Davidson:** The student count is student count for fiscal year and not necessarily academic year. What we found with COSTAATT in particular—that is an institution that would submit their GATE applications, not necessarily in the time frame that we would have liked, so we may have paid for students from the year before in that student count because we are really counting fiscal year, not the academic year.

**Mrs. Oudit:** I was going to ask a question on point 41 because I am affiliated with COSTAATT. As at 2010, the student population was just 8,500 and we are now, in 2012/2013, just over 12,000. I am trying to figure out how in 2009/2010, you had 8,619 and in 2010/2011 you had 12,221. It must be less than the student population.

**Ms. Davidson:** I am saying that the student count per fiscal year is the claims. We are basing this on the claims that came in. The claims may not necessarily come in in the academic year, especially with COSTAATT.
Mrs. Oudit: But you increased it in 2011/2012? So it is increasing.

Ms. Davidson: The figure for 2011/2012 may not necessarily be just for students. Those are the number of claims we paid; but the students may have been from a previous year.

Mr. Chairman: There is another concern that I have. Are you getting the impression that some entrepreneurs may be considering GATE as an opportunity for business? Are there any measures to examine that? For instance, you have not indicated when some of these schools were established, which is something I would have liked to see. There are a number of institutions here. We have no idea when they were established; whether they may have been established because of GATE.

Ms. Davidson: I am not in a position to state that because what we deal with at Funding and Grants is just a letter from the Accreditation Council that says—

Mr. Chairman: So that is outside your limit clearly.

Ms. Davidson: Yes, it is outside our—

Mr. Chairman: Miss Hospedales.

Miss Hospedales: Thank you so very much, Mr. Chair. There has been some discourse in the public domain about the means testing to determine whether or not students can qualify for the GATE programme in part or in whole. Is that going to be a new policy with respect to the GATE programme or not?

Ms. Davidson: When GATE was established in 2004, Cabinet Minute No. 229—I cannot remember the exact number—that was the policy then. The Government of the day agreed that GATE would cover 50 per cent of the tuition and the students who could not pay the balance would be subjected to a means testing and the difference would be paid depending on how they scored in the means testing. So it is a policy of GATE from the implementation of the programme in 2004.

When tuition became free in 2006, we no longer used means testing because it was no longer relevant. The means testing took place between the period September 2004 to December 2005. In January 2006, with free tuition, the question of means testing was no longer relevant.

Miss Hospedales: We had a long discourse about the monitoring activities of obligatory service. What steps are being taken to put systems in place to ensure that that level of obligatory service is monitored in a more meaningful way?

Dr. Dowlath: That question will occupy the minds of the GATE standing committee over the next year and I am sure, taking all the suggestions from this meeting today, we will come up with the significant ones, taking in mind the state of the country. You are asking sometimes for students to come back and work, as the Chairman said, and there are no jobs and things like that and the recommendation of Dr. Douglas in terms of looking at the time frame, that will occupy our minds over the next year, in terms of coming up with something, or even before that. It is high on our priority.

Miss Hospedales: At St. George’s University, there are pre-medicine students, persons who are
pursuing courses that will eventually get them into the programme. Are those students on the GATE programme at all?

**Ms. Davidson:** The GATE funding starts with Pre-Med III at St. George’s University. The students who are in Pre-Med I and II are not covered under the GATE programme, so there are students being funded for five years. Most of the students who complete A levels successfully here, who get into Mount Hope Year I, will get into Pre-Med III in St. George’s, so we have used that as the equivalency in terms of the five-year medical programme.

**Miss Hospedales:** So you all plan to continue the GATE programme where that particular course is concerned?

**Ms. Davidson:** The Pre-Med III?

**Miss Hospedales:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the question?

**Miss Hospedales:** I am asking if they will continue giving GATE support to the Pre-Med III at St. George’s University.

**Ms. Davidson:** It is a recommendation at this point with the Minister for consideration whether the Pre-Med III should be continued funding at St. George’s. One of the issues we really have with it is that many of the students seem to have problems completing that successfully in terms of the demands on them at that level. At the end of the year, you do not get any certification and the GATE programme says that all programmes must lead to some qualification.

So what we saw is that you are in Pre-Med III and you are not getting a certificate in Biology; you are not getting anything if you do not meet the GPA requirement to get into the med programme and that is a concern we have because, at the end of the day, we want that students be certified and Pre-Med III as a stand-alone one-year programme does not certify the student. I think that is our big issue right there with it. The students who do not complete successfully are not certified by the institution.

**Mrs. Oudit:** To follow that same point for the St. George’s University, Ms. Davidson thank you very much for providing the Cabinet Minute copy. I would like to refer to Cabinet Note 1844 of 2009. It is dated July 2009 for the record. I was actually going to raise that point, but seeing that you answer yes that the Pre-Med part III was being funded by GATE, then that is contrary to the Cabinet Note.

12.00 noon.

**Ms. Davidson:** No, and what I would add, there is a subsequent Cabinet Note—

**Mrs. Oudit:** Recently.

**Ms. Davidson:** No! No! Sometime, as I said before, when I told you that we were looking at students going there and saying, “Well, we need five years for medicine, the same as the students in the local institution”, the Government then took a decision to include pre-med 3, and I can give you the Cabinet Minute in respect of the pre-med programme 3. It was done separately, but, initially, the feeling was
that we should not include pre-med 3, and I think you would be seeing that in the Note there, because it was not a complete programme.

**Mrs. Oudit:** Well I think the explanation in this document is very clear, because it says here that you could actually get into St. George’s University programme, the medical programme, with just O’ levels, at the time it was just O’ levels, so that would be the CSEC level here?

**Ms. Davidson:** Yes, if you go to pre-med 1.

**Mrs. Oudit:** So this is the document that they are going through. So you do the three years before and this was the pre-clinical programme?

**Ms. Davidson:** No, that is not what it is. Let me just try to explain it again. In the American system, a medical degree is not a first degree. So if you look at it here, if you look at what the student gets in St. George’s, it is a Doctor of Medicine. So to get into a medical programme in the US you need to have a first degree first. Okay. So what they have done, is say to our students who have A’ levels, they will consider it as the first two years in an Associate Degree and will allow them to get into the third year of pre-med. If you did not do A’ levels then you start at the bottom. It is basically—[Interruption]

**Mrs. Oudit:** No, I am reading the document here as is, and it says here:

“In recent years,” the “St. George’s University has been attracting” and it went on to “members of Trinidad and Tobago into its Medical Education Programme...currently” as of that date, there were “250” Trinidad and Tobago nationals.”

It went on to say:

“Because it is possible to gain acceptance into the University’s programmes with Ordinary Level qualification, students are opting to eschew” the “Advance Level/CAPE certification in favour of entering SGU for a seven/eight-year medical programme, instead of the traditional five-year programme.”

So that is what I am referring to.

**Ms. Davidson:** Right. No, so that is correct, and that is what I said when we said we were not going to fund the pre-med, but, eventually, the Government agreed to fund the third year pre-med, which was the equivalent of having your A’ levels, so the A’ level students came in at pre-med 3. If you had O’ levels only, you went to pre-med 1 and 2, which was never funded. And, initially, in that first Note we agreed that we were not going to fund any of the pre-meds, because, again, as I said before, the pre-med 3 left the student without a qualification if they did not get into medicine.

**Mrs. Oudit:** That is just the one with the A’ levels?

**Ms. Davidson:** Yes. So, if an A’ level student, went there and did pre-med 3—okay, so now I have the other Cabinet Minute, which in 3090 of November 12, 2009, when the GATE programme was expanded to include the final year of the pre-meds programme, which allowed the A’ level students to start in pre-med 3 and have a 5-year medical programme.
Mrs. Oudit: Now, I have a question with that. Is there any explanation, because both Cabinet Notes spoke about, one, programmes that were not available at local tertiary institutions and, two, on the other hand, it spoke about national needs? I am having a little trouble that, one, we have a medical school, we had Mt. Hope, we had the university, we had many programmes available in Trinidad, and yet we funded students to go to St. George’s University where, even the entry requirements had been so far reduced that many of our students, in the beginning, simply just after O’ levels—you are talking about a 16-year old, maximum age 17—from O’ levels going to St. George’s University, funded by our Government—[ interruption ]

Ms. Davidson: Never! Never! Those students were never funded. The Government, when they started funding students, they started funding the student in pre-med 3, who had their A’ levels; students who go there at pre-med 1 and 2, go at their own expense. They were never funded. If you look at the Note there, the approval is for the medical programme, and I am going to give you the other one that gave the approval for final year of the pre-medical programme, but at no point in time were students in pre-med 1 or 2 funded by the Government.

Mrs. Oudit: Okay, so let us say we took them at pre-med 3, then how did that reconcile with, one, the programmes that were available locally, and, two, how did we then ensure—and it came back to this same question—how did we ensure that those persons who were then trained at St. George’s University actually came back to Trinidad? And that has been a recurring theme throughout this entire thing, and, again, from 2004 this was established, then we talked 2006, 2008, 2009, and we just kept expanding, and expanding this GATE programme. No means of compliance. We may have had some measure of monitoring, but almost nil, almost little or a negligible amount of compliance and yet we kept expanding.

Where did we ever offer any advice or suggestion to the Minister responsible or to the Cabinet, or to any report out of the GATE funding programme to say, “Here is what, we really do need a compliance unit, because somewhere we are not getting the money’s worth. We are not getting back what we are putting out”, and when I say “we”, I mean the people of Trinidad and Tobago. I find that is something that we have a little issue.

Mr. Chairman: Could I ask you to take note of that and kindly respond in writing to the points being raised by Mrs. Oudit, and, you know, elaborate, clarify the issue that she is raising.

Mrs. Oudit: And I would like to see if there was any proposal or recommendation to actually review the programme as is—it just kept going and going—funding.

Dr. Wheeler: I just wanted to ask, does GATE have a limit to the number of students that it can fund, or is as long as the person gets into an institution they will get automatic funding?

Ms. Davidson: Once the students meet the qualifications for a particular programme that is GATE approved, they are funded based on funding for that particular programme, meaning that if it is an
undergraduate programme, they are fully funded, if it is a postgraduate, 50 per cent, but it all depends on the programme. So we cannot really say we have a budget to know exactly how much we would need in any particular year, because it is all dependent on the enrollment in institutions.

Ms. Hospedales: I just needed to get clarity on something I read in your document. You said that if a student fails a course or does not acquire the 2.0 GPA, the GATE is suspended until they are able to bring their GPA up to the minimum, which is, I believe, 2.0, right? But say, for example, the student was able to bring their GPA back up but failed a course, what will happen in a situation like that?

Ms. Davidson: GATE is looking at minimum performance standards, so using 2.0 would relate to a particular institution, not all institutions have the same GPA. Okay. So what the GATE agreement with students simply say, is that you must meet the minimum performance standards of your particular programme/institution. Right? Now, you can have the correct GPA, you can have 2.2 GPA, let us say, you are at COSTATT, but you may have failed a subject, that is not going to debar you from getting GATE.

Once your minimum standards, your overall, we look at the cumulative at the end of the academic year, so that would allow you to continue even though you have one course to repeat, but if you start having five and six courses to repeat, obviously your GPA will not be at the minimum, and in that case you would be debarred.

Ms. Hospedales: There was some mention about the Caribbean Vocational Qualification, I wanted to know if that is recognized, regionally, because of the whole issue of the CSME, whether or not the person who receives that type of certificate can go to other islands?

Ms. Davidson: Yes, that would be recognized. That is what the training agencies within the Caribbean, that is their established standards, and that replaced—well, not replaced but we use the TTNVQ, and the CVQ is the one that is more regional because it covers the Caribbean, and is more acceptable within the region as opposed to the local Trinidad and Tobago vocational qualification.

Mr. Dowlath: And it is also recognized by CXC, Caribbean Examinations Council.

Mr. Chairman: Just one other. On page 21, 6.1, you seem to have instituted a new reporting system of financial statements, biannually, what happened as of June, did that work well? Did you get the financial statements? If you look at page 21, 6(1), (a) and (b)—and you were supposed to get statements in June.

Ms. Davidson: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Did that work well?

Ms. Davidson: Initially when we started, we were looking at quarterly reconciliation statements, so we were looking at four times a year and the institutions found it was a lot of work to do, because you are basically looking at every student and trying to give us the status of that particular student, and we realize that, biannually, it would work because you are in a semester-based system and most institutions
really had two semesters. So by using that biannual we hoped to get better results and institutions in terms of preparation of those reports.

Mr. Chairman: Just one other thing. There was mention of addressing the media, Dispute Resolutions and so on, and some issue about not going to the media until—oh, page 24.

Ms. Davidson: Yes, I know, it is the agreement.

Mr. Chairman: What has been the experience with that?

Ms. Davidson: We have resolved all our issues, internally, to date.

Mr. Chairman: Internally?

Ms. Davidson: Yes. As I said, we just had one issue that reached to the court, but, basically, we have been meeting and treating with institutions, especially in respect of audits, because at the end of an audit you may be asked to repay $2 million, $200,000, $100,000, depending on the institution, and we have really not had problems with respect to that. We have gotten repayment for everything that we have asked, except in the one instant.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Thanks. Is there anything that you would like to bring to our attention that we might not have raised? We have to prepare a report which will be tabled in Parliament and you might wish to—is there anything you want to bring to our attention?

Ms. Davidson: No, I think I am okay. I just would probably ask to get the question from Mrs. Oudit, so that I can prepare something for her, because I think it is something that needs to be clarified, and I would give you a copy of the third Cabinet Minute that relates to the pre-medical programme, but I would probably get it, I guess, from the note takers.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, so if there is not anything else that you would like to—

Mr. Dowlat: Chairman, I just want to say on behalf of the committee on Funding and Grants, we want to thank you for this opportunity. We have been enlightened to, we take on board all the suggestions and we are hoping to improve on the way in which the GATE has been administered, and, specially, in terms of reaching down, as Mr. Jeffery spoke about, to the citizens who really need, you know, the access to post-secondary and tertiary education.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Okay. And what we will do, we will also get back to you, the secretariat will get back to you with respect to the additional information that we indicated that we requested. We would like to thank you very much, one, for your submission that you have made to the committee and for being here today, and responding to the questions that we raised. Thank you very much. We now adjourn.

12.13 p.m.: Meeting adjourned.
Agreement made between the Permanent Secretary

in the

Ministry of Science, Technology and

Tertiary Education

And

____________________________

(Private Institution)
This **AGREEMENT** is made this ____ day of _______ in the year Two Thousand and Twelve between **JAGGERNATH SOOM**, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education acting for and on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (hereinafter referred to as "the Ministry") of the One Part and ______ a company incorporated under the Companies Act Chap 81:01 and is a Private Institution (hereinafter referred to as "the Institution") with its registered office situate at ______, Trinidad of the Other Part. (the Ministry and the Institution are hereinafter referred to as the "Parties" and each as a "Party")

**WITNESSETH THAT:**

**WHEREAS** the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (hereinafter referred to as "GORTT") through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education has established a programme for the assistance of funding tuition fees for post secondary and tertiary education which is known as the Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (hereinafter referred to as "GATE")

**WHEREAS** the objectives of the programme are to make post secondary and tertiary education affordable, to widen the public's access to post secondary and tertiary education and to build and strengthen the post secondary and tertiary education sector through Private Institutions.

**WHEREAS** the original Agreement expired on 31st August 2011 and this Agreement is intended to replace the original one whilst addressing some of the issues experienced during its original term.

**WHEREAS** the purpose of this Agreement is to provide the terms and conditions upon which Private Institutions may access the GATE programme and upon which the Parties agree to perform their obligations and to enforce established standards and costs to ensure that the administration of the GATE programme operates efficiently and effectively and that an open and transparent relationship exists between the Parties.
NOW THEREFORE the Parties hereby agree with each other as follows:

1 Definitions

As used in this Agreement (including the Preamble), the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below:

“**Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago**” means the body established under Chapter 39:06 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“**Act**” means the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago Act Chap 39:06 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

“**approved programme**” means a curriculum composed of a series of courses leading to certification such as a certificate, diploma, associate degree, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree or doctoral degree that is approved or recognised by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago and/or the National Training Agency in collaboration with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, and which has been approved by the Ministry for GATE funding.

“**award**” means any degree, diploma, certificate or other evidence of competence or achievement.

“**Bi-annual Reconciled Statements**" means statements prepared every six months by the Private Institutions in accordance with clause 6.1 herein.

“**fees**” means tuition fees and non-tuition fees.

“**GATE clearance**” means a finding by the Ministry which notes the eligibility of a student to access the GATE Programme consequent upon a review of the student’s past involvement with the Programme, by the Ministry.

“**graduation rates**” means the number of students who have successfully completed the programme of study divided by the number of students enrolled in the final year of the programme.

“**good financial standing**” means the ability of the Private Institution to pay its debts when they become due.

“**matriculated**” means when the student has met all the formal entry requirements for enrolment in the course or programme administered by the Institution, he/she is said to have been matriculated.
“National Training Agency” means the umbrella agency for regulating and coordinating Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Trinidad and Tobago.

“non-tuition fees” means the fees charged by Private Institutions to cover costs other than tuition fees.

“post-secondary” means all education and training programmes which are not at tertiary level but which are offered to secondary school leavers to meet their vocational or continuing education needs.

"Private Institution" means a privately-owned and managed organization with a structure that provides for the administration, governance, delivery and certification of a range of educational programmes available to members of public, leading to the granting of awards at a post secondary and/or tertiary level that is registered in accordance with the Act.

"tertiary education" means the teaching and learning process that occurs following the successful completion of secondary schooling or its equivalent and provides academic credits or competencies that lead to the award of qualifications such as certificates, diplomas and degrees. In Trinidad and Tobago, successful completion of secondary school includes the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), its national equivalent or technical/vocational equivalent.

“tuition fees” means the fees charged by Private Institutions to cover the direct costs of programme delivery.

2 Appendices

The following Appendices attached hereto shall form an integral part of this Agreement:

Appendix I - Fees

Appendix II - Checklist of information required for student files maintained by Institutions

3 Duration

This Agreement shall continue in force for a period of two years commencing from 1st September 2011 unless it is terminated in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

4 Obligations
4.1 Obligations of the Ministry

The Ministry:

(a) shall assess the Institution's application for GATE approval of its programmes within six (6) weeks of submission of all required documents;

(b) may provide or refuse GATE funding to any programme of the Institution, which have been approved or recognized by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago and/or the National Training Agency in collaboration with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, based upon, but not limited to:
   i. an assessment of the efficacy of the post secondary and tertiary education sector,
   ii. the programme’s alignment with economic and development priorities of GORTT,
   iii. labour market information studies,
   iv. the registration status of the Institution,
   v. the availability of financial resources, and/or
   vi. the policy of GORTT;

(c) shall provide reasons for its refusal to grant GATE approval;

(d) shall make GATE Application forms and all other relevant forms available to the Institution;

(e) shall offer, on request, guidance to an administrative staff member of the Institution on the operations of GATE;

(f) shall process GATE Clearance forms and make the information available to the institution within three (3) to four (4) weeks.

(g) shall process GATE Application forms and make the corresponding payments to the Institution within six (6) to eight (8) weeks of receipt of the completed GATE Application as verified by the Ministry;

(h) shall liaise with the Institution to discuss suitable arrangements for ensuring that audits are conducted with minimum disruption to the operations of the Institution;

(i) shall liaise with the Institution to collect data and records to inform its research, monitoring and compliance.
4.2 **Obligations of the Institution**

The Institution shall:

(a) be registered/accredited with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago and/or the National Training Agency in collaboration with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago in accordance with the Act and provide proof of such to the Ministry;

(b) offer programmes which are approved or recognized by the said Accreditation Council and/or the National Training Agency in collaboration with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago and provide proof of such to the Ministry;

(c) be in good financial standing;

(d) ensure that all students, for whom GATE applications are submitted, satisfy the requirements of citizenship and three (3)-years continuous residence immediately prior to the submission of the said application;

(e) ensure that all students enrolled for approved programmes have matriculated;

(f) ensure that it is an equal opportunity institution;

(g) ensure that every student is granted rights and privileges to access post secondary and tertiary education within the context of this Agreement;

(h) fully disclose to the Ministry all fees for each approved programme;

(i) inform the Ministry of all students who have registered for an approved programme and have withdrawn from the said programme of study or the Institution of his volition or by the request of the Institution, within two (2) weeks of the withdrawal;

(j) inform the Ministry of all students who have registered for an approved programme and are on approved leave, suspension or otherwise within two (2) weeks of the said event;

(k) ensure all application forms submitted for reimbursement to the Ministry are completed and the information is accurate to the knowledge of the Institution;

(l) submit all GATE claims within three (3) months of the commencement of the programme, semester or the academic year, whichever is applicable, subject to receipt of GATE Clearance;

(m) keep records of students’ registration information (including proof of student citizenship) and academic performance, GATE claims and reimbursements for a period of six (6) years (the checklist of information to be maintained on each student’s file is included as Appendix II);

(n) designate at least one member of staff to monitor the Institution’s compliance with the Agreement and act as a liaison between the Parties;
(o) refund the Ministry, via certified cheque, eighty percent (80%) of any monies paid on behalf of a student who has withdrawn within six (6) weeks of the commencement date of the approved programme;

(p) refund the Ministry, via certified cheque, eighty percent (80%) of any monies paid on behalf of a student who has joined classes after the commencement date of the approved programme and has attended less than four (4) classes of the said programme;

(q) repay the Ministry, via certified cheque, one hundred percent (100%) of any and all monies paid by the Ministry on behalf of a student who has never attended classes;

(r) reimburse the Ministry in full, via certified cheque, for all overpayments made based on audit findings;

(s) give the Ministry six (6) months’ prior notice regarding the proposed introduction of any new programme of study;

(t) inform the Ministry forthwith if any programme of study to which the Ministry has made payments has been suspended or cancelled and reimburse the Ministry accordingly.

5 Fees

5.1 Fee Period

The Institution agrees that the fees for all approved programmes shall remain in effect for a period of two (2) years commencing from 1st September 2011 as listed in Appendix I hereto.

The Institution agrees that any request for an adjustment in fees for the subsequent agreement must be made no later than three (3) months prior to the expiration of this Agreement, whereupon the Parties shall enter into negotiations for any new fee structure.

5.2 Adjustment of Fees

Pursuant to clause 5.1, any request for an adjustment of fees must be accompanied by:

(a) List of programmes for which increases are requested with the amount of the increase and the comparative fees for the previous three (3) years;

(b) Student Enrolment and graduation rates for the previous three (3) years;
(c) Reasons for the increase;
(d) Audited financial statements for the previous three (3) years;
(e) Latest Management Accounts;
(f) Segment Financial Reporting in relation to the GATE programme;
(g) Any other supporting information.

6 Reporting and Monitoring

6.1 Reports and Financial Statements

The Institution shall submit the following:

(a) Annual audited financial statements relating to its operations within four (4) months of the Institution's year end.

(b) Bi-annual Reconciled Statements every June 30\textsuperscript{th} and December 31\textsuperscript{st} commencing December 2011. The statement must include:
   i. All payment received and refunds made to the Ministry with explanations; and
   ii. A list of students registered at the Institution in relation to the GATE Programme and changes in the number of registered students and explanations for example, withdrawals, leave of absence.

A prescribed format for submission of this statement shall be provided by the Ministry as required.

(c) All other reports and documents, including financial statements, in relation to the GATE funding that may be requested.

6.2 Audits

The Ministry or its authorised agent(s) shall undertake an audit to verify the Institution’s compliance with its record-keeping and reporting obligations. In this regard, the Institution shall, upon receiving notice from the Ministry, ensure that authorised officials of the Ministry or its authorised agent(s) can enter its premises for the purpose of:

(a) auditing records of students' registration and performance, GATE claims, reimbursements and other financial records pertinent to GATE;
validating data where institutional records are required to be examined for the granting of approval to the Institution and/or programme approval;
(c) collecting by means of interviews, questionnaires and other data collection methods, research data and other information relevant to the assessment of the performance of the Institution's post secondary and/or tertiary education programmes.

The Institution, upon receipt of the said notice, shall make available to the Ministry the said records, data, documents and staff during the conduct of an audit.

The Audit will have specific focus on, but not be limited to, the accurate record keeping of student and approved programme information by the Institution.

6.3 Suspension of GATE payments

Upon the completion of the said Audit, if it is found that the Institution owes the Ministry any monies under this Agreement, the Ministry shall inform the Institution of the monies that are owing and suspend all future GATE payments to the Institution until such monies have been refunded to the Ministry.

If after the expiration of six (6) months, the Institution has failed to refund the monies owed to the Ministry under this Agreement, the Ministry may terminate this Agreement in accordance with clause 10 herein.

7 Managing Compliance

7.1 Non-Compliance Notice

If the Institution fails to comply with any of its obligations under this Agreement or is otherwise failing to adequately perform its obligations, the Ministry will engage the Institution in discussion about the matters of concern. If following such discussion the matters of concern have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the Ministry, the Ministry shall:

(a) give written notice to the Institution (a Non-Compliance Notice):
(i) providing details of the alleged non-compliance or performance failure;
(ii) advising the Institution of any action that the Ministry proposes to take in response to the alleged non-compliance or performance failure;

(iii) requesting that the Institution respond to the allegation within a reasonable period of time that will be specified in the notice (the Response Date); and

(iv) if the Ministry considers it appropriate, advising the Institution of the consequence that may arise if the Institution does not respond to the notice by the Response Date; and

(b) require the Institution to promptly supply to the Ministry such additional information as it may reasonably consider necessary to determine whether or not there has been a failure by the Institution to comply with any of its obligations under the Agreement.

7.2 Remedying non-compliance

Following receipt of a Non-compliance Notice:

(a) both Parties agree to meet as soon as possible to discuss:

(i) a course of remedial actions; and

(ii) a time-frame for implementing those actions that is reasonable having regard to the nature of the non-performance;

(b) the Ministry agrees to advise the Institution in writing of the remedial actions that the Ministry requires to be taken and the time-frame within which such actions are to be taken (a Remedial Notice).

7.3 Non-compliance

If the Institution has failed to remedy the matters concerned under this clause in accordance with a Remedial Notice, then the Ministry may, having regard to the extent and/or nature of the non-compliance, terminate this Agreement with immediate effect.

8 Amendments and Review

8.1 Amendment

This Agreement contains the full and complete understanding between the Parties and supercedes all prior arrangements and understandings whether written or oral, appertaining to the subject matter of this Agreement.
The Ministry reserves the right to amend this Agreement. The Ministry shall notify the Institution of any amendment(s) and the effective date of the amendment(s), in writing.

8.2 Review

Consultations for review of the Agreement shall commence at least six (6) months prior to the expiration of the two (2) year term of this Agreement.

9 Dispute Resolution

Prior to the exercise of any other rights and remedies at law, the Parties shall do their utmost to amicably resolve any dispute relating to this Agreement by consultation, discussion and/or mediation between the Parties and each Party shall give full consideration to any proposal for such settlement advanced by the other Party.

Each Party shall maintain in confidence, as far as is reasonably practicable, any information provided to it directly or indirectly by the other Party during any dispute between both Parties under this Agreement and both Parties agree to continue to perform each of their respective obligations where relevant under this Agreement while the Dispute is being resolved.

Each Party agrees to:

(a) not make any statement to the media relating to the dispute without giving the other Party a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed statement before it is made; and

(b) notify the other Party immediately of any issue relating to the Agreement that may be considered to have a high media or public interest.

10 Termination

10.1 Reasons for Termination
The Ministry may, without prejudice to any other right or remedy available, terminate this Agreement at any time by notice in writing to the Institution which would have immediate effect in any of the following circumstances:

(a) If the Institution commits any breach of any of the provisions of this Agreement;

(b) If after the audit investigation by the Ministry and after giving the Institution an opportunity to make representations, the Ministry determines that the Institution has wilfully misrepresented its financial records, has adjusted its tuition fees without informing the Ministry or falsely represented itself in respect of unapproved programmes or any other information;

(c) If the Institution is unable to pay its debts, inclusive of and not limited to its debts to the Ministry, is insolvent or the subject of any legal proceedings which result in it being unlikely to continue to meet its commitments.

10.2 Consequences of Termination

Following any termination of the Agreement, each Party agrees to cooperate with the other to protect the interests of, and to minimise the disruption to, all those who are affected by the termination (including students).

11 Non-Disclosure

No party to this Agreement shall, other than with the written consent of the other party, during or after the termination, determination or expiry of this Agreement disclose directly or indirectly to any person, firm, company or third party and shall only use for the purposes of this Agreement, any financial statements relating to the other party, which either party becomes possessed of.

The obligations of non-disclosure referred to above shall not extend to financial statements which are required to be disclosed by law or as part of any submission, approval or verification process of the Ministry.

12 Force Majeure

No Party to this Agreement shall be under any liability to the other or any other Party in respect of anything which may constitute a breach of this Agreement arising by reason of force majeure. Force Majeure shall include all circumstances beyond the control of the Parties including but not limited to the
following events: Acts of God, perils of the air, fire, flood, explosion, riot, civil commotion, acts of government bodies or authorities.

13 Contact Persons

Each Party to this agreement must have one (1) nominated contact person to receive communications from the other party:

The Ministry

Name: Mrs. Teresa Davidson
Address: 16 Warner Street, St. Augustine
Position: The Director of the Funding and Grants Administration Division
Tel No: 645-3934
Fax No: 663 – 7812
Email Address: DavidsonT@gov.tt

The Institution

Name:
Address:
Position:
Tel No:
Fax No:
Email Address:
14 Notices

Any notice to be given to either party by the other shall be in writing and may be served personally, by registered post, by pre-paid delivery, facsimile message or electronic mail to the correct number or addresses of the nominated contact person whichever is applicable and shall be deemed to have been received by the addressee within seventy-two (72) hours of posting or within twenty-four (24) hours if sent by facsimile message or electronic mail. All notices shall be deemed to have been made on the date of dispatch.

IN WITNESS whereof the Parties have hereunto set their hands the date hereinabove mentioned.

Signed by Jaggernauth Soom,
Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Science, Technology and
Tertiary Education for and on behalf
of the Government of the Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago in the presence of:

The Common Seal

was hereto affixed by

and signed by the within named in conformity with the

by-laws of the company in the presence of:
### CHECKLIST OF INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE MAINTAINED ON STUDENTS’ FILES AT INSTITUTIONS

1. Name
2. GATE Student ID
3. Address
4. Qualifications (copies of certificates)
5. Date of Birth

6. Programme
   - **Name**
   - **Duration**

7. Proof of Citizenship and Residence (any two (2) of:)
   - Passport;
   - Birth certificate;
   - National Identification card (copied front and back);
   - Any other valid documents proving citizenship and residence.

8. Attendance Record
9. Withdrawal information
10. Evidence of successful completion of programme
STUDENTS’ TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR TERTIARY TUITION FUNDED BY GATE

1. In consideration of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (the Government) agreeing to finance the tuition fees of the Student for the abovementioned programme of study, the Student agrees to:

   (i) submit to the discipline, supervision and control of the Institution

   (ii) apply himself/herself diligently to his/her studies throughout his/her entire programme with a view to obtaining the specified qualification and thus maintaining minimum performance standards.

   (iii) authorize the relevant institution of study to release to the Ministry of Science Technology & Tertiary Education (the Ministry) information relating to his/her progress during the tenure of the funding.

   (iv) comply with any professional standards applicable to his/her programme

2. The Student shall seek and obtain the approval of the Ministry in writing, in the event that the student:

   (i) abandons his/her programme;

   (ii) applies himself/herself to any studies and/or programme of study except that for which the funding has been approved; or

   (iii) proceeds on a leave of absence from his/her programme of study.

3. The Student agrees in the event that he/she withdraws, is suspended or is granted an approved leave of absence from the programme or institution, that he/she will inform the Ministry in writing within one (1) week, in order to access further funding under the GATE Programme.

4. The Student shall inform the Ministry if he/she intends to terminate or suspend the programme of study at the Institution. All financial assistance by the Government will cease until such time as the Student will obtain the approval by the Ministry to continue the GATE funding from the Ministry.

5. The Student shall inform the Ministry forthwith on the successful completion of his/her programme and to accept employment within the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in either the public or private sector, for the aforementioned prescribed period. The Student also agrees to inform the Ministry of the details of his/her employment and his/her period of service shall be related to the cost of the funding and shall be determined as indicated hereunder:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST OF AWARD</th>
<th>PERIOD OF OBLIGATORY SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to $50,000.00</td>
<td>One (1) year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $50,000.00 and up to $100,000.00</td>
<td>Two (2) years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over $100,000.00 and up to $150,000.00  Three (3) years
Over $150,000.00 and up to $200,000.00  Four (4) years
Over $200,000.00      Five (5) years

6. All monies expended on his/her programme shall be a loan from the Government to the Student and shall be repaid to the Government with interest, provided that if the Student serves the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the prescribed period as indicated or if the Student is released from the obligation to serve the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the repayment of such loan shall be waived.

7. In the event of the Student:
   a. abandons his/her course; or
   b. fails to obtain the qualification where such failure is due to the Student not applying himself/herself diligently to his/her studies; or
   c. fails to accept employment in the public or the private sector in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago after the conclusion or termination of the said programme for the specified period of time,

the Student binds himself/herself and agrees that he/she shall be liable immediately to refund to the Government the total amount of the loan made to him/her.

8. Any breach of this Agreement or withdrawal from the programme by failure on his/her part to attain the required performance standard as established in respect of the specified programme, will deny the Student further eligibility for funding by the Government unless approved by the Ministry.

9. If the Student serves the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for only a part of the specified period he/she shall be required to refund the Government only such proportion of the total sum loaned together with interest due thereon as the unexpired period of service bears to the total period in Clause 5 above. Such sums shall be a debt by the Student and shall be recoverable by the Government.

10. The Terms of this Agreement constitutes the complete contract between the Government and the Student and no oral statement or promises will be recognized. This Agreement may not be amended or any of its provisions waived except in writing signed by the Parties to this Agreement. This Agreement is a legally binding instrument when signed by the Student and the signatures to the front indicate that the Student has read understood and agreed to the terms herein.