



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is Hospitality Assured?

Hospitality Assured is the quality standard created by the Institute of Hospitality, specifically for customer facing businesses. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has been awarded a license to operate Hospitality Assured Caribbean. With Hospitality Assured Caribbean, your route to business and service excellence will follow world-class processes, customer service standards and employee engagement best practices. The quality standard was created to bring professionalism and quality into the service economy and support organisations in implementing the best standards of business practice and service to their customers.

Who is Hospitality Assured for?

We work predominantly with the Tourism, Hospitality and Travel sectors. Any hospitality, leisure, tourism, travel or service-oriented organisation is eligible for Hospitality Assured certification, be they large or small, single or multi-operational. The standard is applicable to any business that has a responsibility to deliver a service to a third party whether the service is paid for or free at the point of delivery.

What are the benefits of Hospitality Assured?

The aim is to improve processes, operational efficiency and colleague satisfaction, culminating in a wide range of outcomes that can include higher profitability, process enhancements, cost savings, an improvement in reputation, increased customer loyalty and improved customer feedback outcomes.

What are the “nine steps” of the process?

The nine steps of the Hospitality Assured process are:

- Market & Customer Research
- Customer Service Excellence and Organisational Culture
- Strategy & Leadership
- Managing your Operation
- Management and Optimisation of Resources
- Employee Engagement & Learning
- Evaluation of Performance
- Service Recovery
- Continuous Improvement

What help can my organisation get with this process?

Organisations wishing to receive support during their Hospitality Assured journey can request the help of an independent, approved Hospitality Assured Business Advisor. Hospitality Assured Business Advisors are trained to support the implementation of Hospitality Assured and carry out a range of support activities. They will help the organisation to recognize its own strengths and point out areas for improvement. The Business Advisor can also help the organisation to complete the Self-Review Pack in preparation for external assessment.

What does assessment entail?

An Assessor is assigned to your organisation to assess it against the 9 steps within the Hospitality Assured Standard for Business and Service Excellence to ensure that it meets all the criteria and requirements for certification.

How long does it typically take for a business to present itself for assessment?

The length of time it takes for your organisation to present itself for external assessment will depend on what is already in place in the organisation and what remains to be done. The flexible nature of the Standard means that it can be used by organisations of all types and sizes. Typically, it takes an organisation between 3-9 months to be ready for external assessment. The exact timing can be determined by your organisation working in consultation with the Business Advisor. When your organisation is ready for external assessment, CTO will make the necessary arrangements for the Assessor's visit.

When is the best time for assessment?

You will need to consider when it best suits the business to carry out the on-site assessment, which can take between one and five days depending on the size of the business, the number of employees and units undertaking the assessment.

How do we go about achieving certification?

Your organisation will be assessed against Hospitality Assured's 9 steps. Initially, in collaboration with your approved Hospitality Assured Assessor, several employees and sites (where there are multi-site operations) will be selected for interview and a visit plan created. Before visits are made, you will complete and submit a Self-Review Pack and accompanying evidence.

Assessment visits are conducted efficiently and unobtrusively without hindering business operations. Self-assessment, online tools, desktop reviews, site visits, observations, discussions with leaders and teams from all levels of the organisational chart are all utilised to gain a realistic picture of performance. A report outlining findings is then produced to highlight key strengths, areas for improvement, the scores for the 9 steps and confirmation of the level of certification. Once minimum requirements are met, a recommendation is made to the Institute of Hospitality for certification with the Hospitality Assured Standard.

Do we get more than one chance to meet the Standard?

Yes, if the Assessor feels further work needs to be done to meet the minimum requirements, detailed feedback will be given that will help you make the necessary changes required to gain the certification. A follow up visit usually takes place within three months of the initial assessment to measure the changes that have taken place. Alternatively, you may be asked to provide additional documentation and records to demonstrate compliance to the criteria. Certification will not be awarded until the organisation has met the minimum requirements.

What are the levels of certification that an organisation can gain?

- **Certification Status** – awarded to organisations that achieve at least 50% in all 9 steps and an overall score of 60% or above.
- **Hospitality Assured Premier** – awarded to high performing organisations that achieve 75% or above in all of the steps.
- **Hospitality Assured World Class** - awarded to organisations that achieve 80% or above in all of the steps, which confirms an exceptional commitment to quality and excellence.

How can I maintain the Hospitality Assured certification?

After your main initial certification, you will be reassessed every 2 years towards recertification. You can request an Interim Review at the end of year 1 and an approved Hospitality Assured Assessor would be provided to support this activity. Interim Reviews typically take a day and will be charged at the same day rate as a standard assessment. An Interim Review is not a mandatory requirement but is encouraged as it can assist your organisation in determining what improvements and results have been achieved during the 1st year of certification and what are left to be achieved in the final year, before the organisation's next assessment.

How do I get started?

The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) acts as a first point of contact for organisations and provides support for all facets of the Hospitality Assured journey, which may involve introductory presentations on the Hospitality Assured Standard, appointing approved Hospitality Assured Business Advisors and Assessors to organisations, monitoring organisation progress and receiving applications for assessment.

How much does it cost?

Please note that every organisation is different, and our approach is based on us having a better understanding of your organisation, which we undertake firstly through requesting that you complete and submit a Hospitality Assured Application Form. The fees and the time frames will depend upon the information you provide on the application form, including size and diversity of your business, number of staff as well as your approach to certification, including your need for a Hospitality Assured Business Advisor.