



ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA
NATIONAL
ACCREDITATION
BOARD

WHO ARE WE?

The Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB) was established in 2006 by an Act of Parliament as a statutory body of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

Inside this issue:

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NEWSLETTER abnab

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WHAT DO WE DO?

Among other things:-

- We consider applications for accreditation submitted to the Board.
- We accredit and re-accredit institutions operating in Antigua and Barbuda and the programmes of study offered.
- We register institutions within and outside Antigua and Barbuda which offer programmes of study in Antigua and Barbuda.
- We advise on the recognition of foreign-based institutions and the awards which they offer.
- We determine equivalency of programmes of study and qualifications in accordance with the framework established by the relevant accreditation body.

We also:-

- Protect the interest of students.
- Provide the public with information on the quality and recognition of programmes of study and institutions in order to protect the public interest.
- Promote a quality assurance ethos within Antigua and Barbuda.
- Examine and verify certificates of recognition of Caricom Community Nationals on behalf of the Free Movement Committee.

WHERE ARE WE LOCATED?

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE DRIVE

St. John's, Antigua

Tel: (268) 562-8151/52/53

Fax: (268) 562-8173



abnab.anu@gmail.com



www.facebook.com/abnab



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**FROM
CHAIRMAN
OF THE BOARD:
MR. CLARE L.
BROWNE,
GCM**

***It is my distinct honour to welcome you
to the first issue of ABNAB Newsletter.***

A key priority for ABNAB is ensuring a more consistent outreach to all stakeholders. ABNAB Newsletter is intended to assist in facilitating this objective. I commend this publication to you and fervently hope that it will not only contribute to your expanded awareness of the services provided by ABNAB, but also your increased knowledge of quality assurance and accreditation matters, as well as other important issues germane to tertiary education. Be assured that we remain open to your constructive feedback.

I acknowledge the efforts of those who made this first issue possible.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

The Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board has embarked on a series of activities designed to make the public more aware of ABNAB's services.

Presentation to members of the Antigua and Barbuda Employers' Federation

Under the auspices of the Employers' Federation, ABNAB's Accreditation Officer, Eustace Hill and Executive Director, Eloise Hamilton, made a presentation to members of the Federation on 26th February, 2015. The audience included a number of HR professionals and other management personnel from a number of public and private sector entities.

Topics covered included, MOOCs, Diploma Mills, Credential Fraud, CARICOM Skills Certificates. Attendees were appreciative of the information shared.

This event was preceded by a presentation to members of the Executive on 4th February, 2015. Both events were held at the Conference Room of the Antigua and Barbuda Employers' Federation.

Annual College Fair

The Annual College Fair organized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology was held at the Multipurpose Cultural and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday October 22nd, 2014. The ABNAB operated a booth at the event. Our main objective was to make the public in general and the students in particular more aware of the work of the office. By and large, our objective was achieved. The vast majority of the persons who attended the College Fair were not aware of the existence of the ABNAB



and so we were glad that we had the opportunity to provide them with information.

ABNAB's Executive Director Eloise Hamilton and Accreditation Officer Eustace Hill putting the finishing touches on the ABNAB Booth at the Annual College Fair organized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.



Secondary School students engaged in discussion with ABNAB's Accreditation Officer, Eustace Hill, at the College Fair.



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ABNAB WORKSHOP

The Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board, in keeping with its mandate to provide information to its stakeholders, conducted a half day, 'Introduction to Credential Evaluation' workshop on Thursday 12th February 2015.

In attendance were staff members from the Establishment Division.

Topics covered included:-

- **Accreditation: What you need to know**
- **Diploma Mills**
- **Authentication and Fraud Issues**
- **MOOCs and**
- **Equivalence Assessment**

The workshop was specifically developed for the Establishment Division but ABNAB is prepared to offer workshops tailored to the specific needs of our stakeholders. Certificates were presented to the participants a few days later.

Receiving Certificates were:



JULIE JOSEPH



JANELE DEGALLERIE



LORRAINE SIMON



BERNADINE JAMES



FRANCIA SHEPPARD



LISA MARSH





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Equivalence Evaluation and Credential Assessment Workshop in Trinidad

Accreditation Officer, Eustace Hill, attended a two day regional workshop at the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) in Trinidad during the period September 16 and 17, 2014. The workshop entitled "Equivalence Evaluation and Credential Assessment" was organized by the Trinidad and Tobago CANQATE Core Group.

Topics addressed in the workshop included:

- Basics of Credential Evaluation and Assessment
- Degree Equivalence Evaluation
- Strategies for Verifying the Authenticity of foreign qualifications
- Authenticity and Fraud Issues

Knowledge gained at the workshop was shared first with the general public on September 20 when Mr. Hill participated in a Television interview on "Good Morning



Antigua Barbuda" with Mrs. Desiree Antonio, Doctoral Student and Education Officer of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, who also attended the workshop. Since then, Mr. Hill has had opportunity to share his knowledge with various stakeholders.

A total of 55 persons from 8 Caribbean islands attended the workshop which was facilitated by Research and Knowledge Management/Senior Evaluator - Ms. Majka Drewitz from the Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Annual CANQATE Conference 2014

The Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) is a sub-network of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and seeks to bring together agencies involved in quality assurance at the tertiary education level.

ABNAB's Executive Director Eloise Hamilton attended the Annual CANQATE Conference which took place in Belize, November 12-14. The theme of that conference was '*Quality Assurance as a Regional Priority - Partnering to improve Educational Outcomes across the Caribbean*'

The Conference was very well organized and provided useful insights for participants. One of the highlights was the signing of The Belize Accord which is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Heads of Quality Assurance Agencies of Trinidad, Surinam, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, Guyana and Antigua and Barbuda. The signatories were asked to form a task force to oversee the implementation of the MOU.



The Belize Accord and ABNAB

ABNAB expects The Belize Accord to provide a number of benefits, such as:

- Closer cooperation with other Quality Assurance Agencies in the region
- Sharing of information
- Training of peer evaluators for quality assurance activities
- Developing of quality assurance initiatives to meet the needs of diverse tertiary initiatives

Last year's conference under the theme '*10 Years of Quality Assurance in the Caribbean: Achievements and Imperatives*' was held in Antigua, and was hosted jointly by the Antigua State College and the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board at Jolly Beach Resort and Spa during the period 19-21 November, 2013.



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MEET THE NEW STAFF MEMBERS AT THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD



MRS. ELOISE HAMILTON

Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board

In May 2014, Mrs. Hamilton was appointed as the Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board. She replaced Mr. Glenford E. Joseph, who resigned after serving in this position from November 2008 to April 2014. Mrs. Hamilton, whose last position was Vice Principal of the Antigua State College, brings with her a wealth of experience in tertiary education. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (General) and a Post Graduate Diploma (Education) from the University of the West Indies; and a Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) from the University of Nottingham.

She was honored with the designation of Commander of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit (CM) by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for her services to education in the 2014 National Independence Day Celebrations.



MR. EUSTACE HILL

Accreditation Officer of the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board

Mr. Hill joined the Board on the 1st August, 2014.

He has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of the West Indies, a Master of Science Degree in Science Education from the University of Reading, England, and an Executive Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Hill has over 37 years of experience in Education. He has worked as a teacher, lecturer and also as an administrator.

In 2011 he was placed on the Queen's Birthday Honors' list for service to education. He was awarded the designation of a Member of the British Empire (MBE).

His last place of work before coming to the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board is the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology where he functioned as Head of Campus.

12TH ANNUAL CANQATE CONFERENCE

The 12th Annual CANQATE Conference will be held in St Kitts from October 7th to 9th, 2015. The theme is 'Quality Assurance and Socioeconomic Development in a Global Environment: Regional & International Perspectives'.

12TH ANNUAL CANQATE CONFERENCE
THE CARIBBEAN AREA NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

THEME:
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT: REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

SAVE THE DATES
WHEN: OCTOBER 7-9, 2015
WHERE: ST. KITTS MARRIOTT RESORT
FRIGATE BAY ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

INTERACTIVE PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS;
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING; INFORMATIVE PRESENTATIONS

HOSTED BY:

SPONSORED BY: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

A call has gone out for persons wishing to present papers on the theme.



If a college or university is not accredited, does this mean that it is a Diploma Mill?

No, not necessarily. A diploma mill is special designation given to a company that awards unaccredited degrees and provides either an inferior education or no education at all.

Admittedly, 300 unaccredited colleges and universities in the world were found to be Diploma Mills, therefore red flags must go up when an institution is unaccredited. Yet, it is possible for a legitimate institution to be unaccredited, and yet not be a Diploma Mill.

Here are seven (7) reasons why a legitimate tertiary or post secondary institution might not be accredited.

1) Voluntary - Whereas registration is a legal requirement with financial implications for defaulting, accreditation is voluntary with no penalty for defaulting in some countries. Admittedly, in the US unaccredited institutions are not eligible for federal or state financial assistance.

2) Value System - An organization might not feel that it is in the best interest of its stated goals and objectives to be regulated and controlled by an outside agency which does not share the same values. Some religious institutions fall into this category.

3) Cost - Accreditation incurs additional costs-the cost of preparing for the accreditation and the cost of conducting the accreditation. An organization in an attempt to offer affordable education to its students might deem the additional costs unnecessary.

4) Stage of Accreditation - Accreditation takes usually about two years from start to completion; an organization might be new or in the initial stages of the accreditation process and therefore might not have earned the status of an accredited institution.

5) Poor Advertising - It is possible that little or no effort was made to convince the management of the organization of the benefits of accreditation to the institution, the students and the public.

6) Record of Excellence - The organization might be in operation for several decades with a well established and recognized record of excellence, and therefore feels no pressure to be accredited.

7) Authoritative Body - Permission to operate might have been given by an authoritative body like an act of Parliament or Presidential decree and so accreditation is not part of the culture of the organization or country.

So the next time you observe that an institution is not accredited, do not write it off as a Diploma Mill or conclude that it does not offer quality education. Make the necessary checks.

Is there a difference between registration and accreditation?

Yes there is. Registration is a mandatory process for all tertiary institutions to operate in Antigua and Barbuda. It signifies that the institution has met or exceeded minimum standards. For registration, institutions are required to submit relevant documents which address issues such as:

- Governance and Mission
- Admission Policies
- Educational Programs
- Staffing and Professional Development
- Student Support Services
- Learning and Information Services
- Finances-budget and audited statements
- Physical Plant-floor plan and compliance certificates
- Institutional Plan

Accreditation, on the other hand, is a voluntary process for which only registered tertiary institutions are eligible.



ABNAB Newsletter is also about presenting interesting and controversial developments in the world of education. In this issue, we want to look at MOOCs. These are online courses which are conducted for the most part by reputable professors from a number of major universities. In some cases they are sponsored by the universities themselves.

Accreditation is both a status and a process. It is a status granted to an educational institutions or programme that has been evaluated and found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. It is a process used to evaluate the quality of the institution or programme to assist in institutional or programme development.

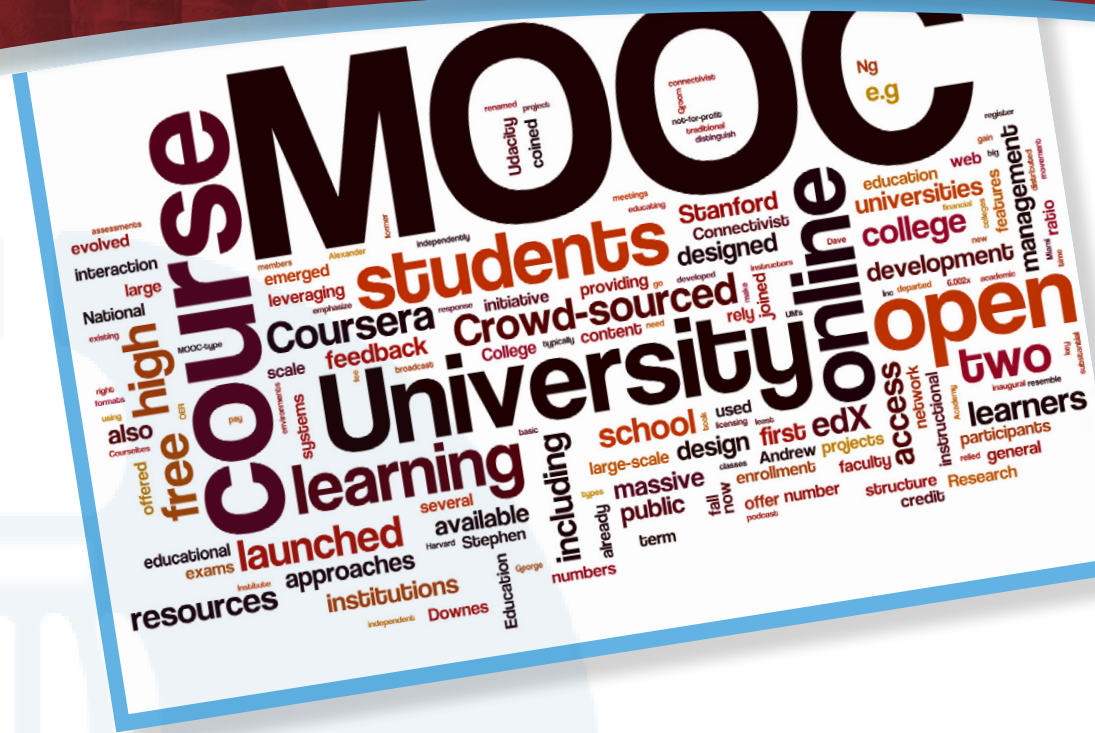
The accreditation process has five main steps. These include enrollment and registration, self-assessment, on site assessment and peer review, board's review and decision, and maintaining compliance and continuous review.

Registration is therefore usually the first step in the accreditation process.

These courses however, are not accredited and persons doing them should be advised that they will not get transfer credits if they decide later on to enroll in a face to face degree programme.

Please use your search engine and type in 'What is a MOOC?'. There you will find videos and other information on MOOCs.

Are MOOCs, as some people are suggesting, the new face of education? Will the traditional model of tertiary education survive? Would you accredit MOOCs? Join the conversation. Let us know what you think.



Can I trust online degrees to deliver quality learning experiences?

Yes, says Distance Learning Expert, Miss Jamie Littlefield. Miss Littlefield indicates that a 2009 meta-study from the US Department of Education found that students taking online courses outperformed their peers in traditional classrooms. In addition, it is noted that the growth in the number of online degrees moved from 32.5% in 2002 to 62.4% in 2012. Furthermore, online degrees are accredited by the same accrediting agencies like degrees in traditional institutions.

In short, generally speaking, online learning has proven to be effective, on the increase and accepted.

Here are five factors about online learning that are likely to enhance the overall learning experience, and therefore provide as good as or better quality learning experience than traditional classrooms.

1) Choice

Students are able to choose from a wide range of Colleges and Universities and are therefore more likely to find the types of programs which best suit their learning styles and career needs. These factors are likely to increase motivation and therefore accelerate learning.



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2) Networking Opportunities

Students enrolled in online programs can network with peers not just across states but across the world. This networking provides a wealth of varied experiences and therefore can assist in a better preparation of students for the global marketplace.

3) Time and Money

Significant time and money can be saved because the student does not have to commute for online classes. This extra time can mean more time to study and consequently improved grades. In addition, the extra money can mean better equipment, better meals and so on. All these factors can enhance the learning experience.

4) Flexibility

Online programs allow students to work at their own pace and at times and places convenient to them. A tired, hungry and sleepy student is not likely to absorb information as well as one who has had time to eat, sleep and have a refreshing bath, then study in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

5) Use of Multi-Media Technology

Online classes put a high premium on the use of multi-media technology to increase interactivity. Online programs together with the benefits listed previously are using facilities such as chat rooms, collaborative projects,

message boards, podcasting, videos and web conferencing to improve interactivity, and therefore further enhance the learning process.

There are therefore both quantitative and qualitative reasons to trust online degrees.

However, it must be admitted that online programs are not right for

everyone. Some students lack the requisite discipline, and there is a high dropout level among online learners.

We would be interested in hearing about your experiences with online learning and more specifically online degrees.



STUDYING ABROAD? ONLINE LEARNING?



**AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT AND LOSS OF FUNDS
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Tel: 1-268-562-8151/2/3 • Email: abnab.anu@gmail.com