



ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA
NATIONAL
ACCREDITATION
BOARD

abnab NEWSLETTER

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Inside this issue:

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Why Accreditation? 1

LOCAL ACTIVITIES:

ABNAB takes Quality Assurance
Message to High Schools and State College 2-3
Free Movement Committee and ABNAB 3

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Quality Assurance as a Regional Priority 4
ACTT Marks 10 years of International Conference 5
Belize Accord At Work 5

SPECIAL FEATURES:

The American International College of
Arts and Sciences-Antigua 6
Online Learning: Interview with Giffer Jones 7

DISCUSSION POINT:

Accreditation: To be or not to be... mandatory? 8

QUESTION AND ANSWER:

What does a "Letter of Recognition" from
ABNAB mean? 9
Do accredited universities give honorary degrees? 9

MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-MRS. ELOISE HAMILTON

WHY ACCREDITATION?

As consumers, when we go grocery shopping we demand great service and expect good quality products. Facebook posts at times name and shame purveyors of poor quality goods and services and laud professionalism and high standards.

So too in education, we expect our education providers to maintain high standards and offer courses and programmes of high quality. We expect that when we choose a college or university for ourselves or our children, we would not have to worry about whether or not the qualifications received would be recognized or accepted

by employers or by the public in general.

That is why the issue of Accreditation is so important. It can be seen as a stamp of approval. When an institution is accredited by a recognized accreditation agency, it means that the institution has met internationally accepted standards and that students can be confident that they are receiving education of high quality. That institution is said to be "quality assured".

The Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board, established by an Act of Parliament, is mandated to, among many other things, 'promote a quality assurance ethos and a programme of accreditation and registration



in Antigua and Barbuda'. As such, we at ABNAB continue to promote the view that even though Accreditation is not mandatory, our tertiary level institutions should seek to attain that status and so remove any doubt about the quality of the institution.

In this issue of our newsletter, you will find that we focus on accreditation and quality assurance. We want to bring information, provide opinions and create awareness on these issues. We hope that you will respond to us and let us have your opinion as well.



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LOCAL ACTIVITIES

- **ABNAB takes message of Quality Assurance to High Schools and College**
- **Free Movement Committee and ABNAB**

“Inclusive, good quality education is a foundation for dynamic and equitable societies.”

| Desmond Tutu |

ABNAB TAKES MESSAGE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE TO HIGH SCHOOLS AND ANTIGUA STATE COLLEGE

During the period March 30 to April 30, 2015, the Executive Director, Mrs. Eloise Hamilton and the Accreditation Officer, Mr. Eustace Hill visited a total of 11 Government Secondary Schools and the Antigua State College, and made presentations. At the end of each presentation, there was a very meaningful, interactive session, and then brochures advertising ABNAB were distributed. Overall, a total of about 500 brochures were distributed.

Issues addressed in the presentations included:

- *Services of ABNAB*
- *Diploma Mills - don't get caught*
- *Tips for choosing universities*
- *Online Learning - advantages and disadvantages*
- *CARICOM Skills Certificate*

The eleven (11) secondary schools visited are as follows:

*Pares Secondary School
All Saints Secondary School
St. Mary's Secondary School
Glanville's Secondary School
Clare Hall Secondary School
Irene B. Williams Secondary School
Jennings Secondary School
Ottos Comprehensive School
Antigua Grammar School
Princess Margaret School
Antigua Girls' High School*

Regrettably, plans to visit the Sir. Mc Chesney George Secondary School on our sister island, Barbuda did not materialize.

The main target group for the visits was fifth form students, except for the Irene B. Williams School where the target group was fourth form students. In the case of the Antigua Girls' High School, the visit of the ABNAB team was part of their Professional Development Day. For the Antigua State College, the visit was made to students of the Business Department as part of their "Orientation (to the world of work) Session."



Business Department of the Antigua State College



Princess Margaret School-Career Day



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LOCAL ACTIVITIES ...continued

Message of Quality Assurance ...cont'd

Special thanks must be given to the principals and teachers who made special effort to accommodate the various visits. Based on the encouraging responses from the students and staff members, ABNAB plans to make the visits to the schools and college an annual activity. In the future, students from the private secondary schools will also be invited to participate.



Ottos Comprehensive School



Antigua Grammar School



Teachers from the Antigua Girls' High School

FREE MOVEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD

Accreditation is at the heart of the relationship between the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB) and the Free Movement Committee (FMC).

One of the key roles of the FMC is to review applications for CARICOM Skills Certificates. With a CARICOM Skills Certificate, CARICOM nationals in particular categories can move freely and work in Member States without having to obtain work permits as is the norm.

ABNAB has representation on the FMC and in addition to attending the monthly meetings the ABNAB representative provides information to members on the qualifications presented by the applicants and the accreditation status of the awarding institutions. Accreditation of the education institutions is a critical factor in the decision about whether or not the FMC recommends that the applicant be granted the Certificate.



From left to right:

MR. EVANS JONES - Department of Sports
MRS. ELOISE HAMILTON - Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board
MS. JANELA EVANSON - Free Movement Desk Officer/Secretary
MRS. SHARON PETERS - Permanent Secretary/Chairperson
MS. ASHAKI GOODWIN - CSME Focal Point-Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Industry
MR. KURT WILLIAMS - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
MRS. ELTONIA ROJAS - Labour Commissioner, Ag., Department of Labour
MR. PASCALL KENTISH - Department of Labour

Absent:

MS. DORISTEEN ETINOFF - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MRS. LOLA KIRBY-PETERSON - Department of Culture and National Festivals
MRS. DONALIE HUNTE-DALEY - Immigration Department

By the way, have you applied for your CARICOM Skills Certificate? You will soon be able to apply online, but for now you can collect application forms from our office as well as the Labour Department.



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REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Quality Assurance as a regional priority**
- **ACTT marks 10 years with International Conference**
- **Belize Accord at work**

QUALITY ASSURANCE AS A REGIONAL PRIORITY

It is just over a decade after the decision by the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) that priority should be given to the establishment of National Accreditation Bodies in furtherance of the objectives of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Since then the CARICOM Secretariat has given full support to this initiative - from developing draft legislation to providing technical assistance to new and emerging external quality assurance agencies (EQAAs). During the period 2004 to 2014, ten CARICOM territories enacted legislation for the establishment of EQAAs. The following have been established:

- *Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board*
- *Barbados Accreditation Council*
- *National Accreditation Board of the Commonwealth of Dominica*
- *National Accreditation Board of Grenada*
- *National Accreditation Council of Guyana*



RUBY S. ALLEYNE PH.D
President of CANQATE

- *National Accreditation Board of St. Vincent and the Grenadines*
- *Nationaal Orgaan voor Accreditatie (NOVA) Suriname*
- *Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago*

While legislation was passed in Belize and the Bahamas, the agencies have not yet been established. Also in Montserrat, legislation was passed in 2007 establishing the Higher Education Advisory Board. While the Board grants licenses for institutions to operate at the tertiary level and is also empowered to accredit tertiary institutions, it is not a full-fledged EQAA. It must be noted also that the University Council of Jamaica (established in 1987) and the St. Kitts and Nevis Accreditation Board (established in 1999) pre-dated the CARICOM-led initiative. Consequently, there are ten national EQAAs that are currently operating within CARICOM. There are also three (3) regional

bodies for specialised accreditation in the fields of medicine and other health professions and engineering. They are the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions (CAAM-HP); the Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET) and the Greater Caribbean Regional Engineering Accreditation System (GCREAS).

The strides made in the region with regard to external quality assurance of tertiary education are commendable.

At the 11th Annual CANQATE conference in November last year, several national EQAAs signed a Memorandum of Understanding, now referred to as the Belize Accord. The signatory agencies agreed inter alia to promote inter-agency cooperation and collaboration, work towards mutual recognition and facilitate the free movement of skills within CARICOM. CANQATE is committed to supporting the work of the EQAAs and also to working with the CARICOM Secretariat to develop a regional mechanism for the recognition of EQAAs that will provide the assurance of quality, transparency and accountability for the operations of national and regional agencies in CARICOM. We hope that this will be accomplished in the not too distant future.

"Quality is not an accident, it is a habit."

| Aristotle |



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ACTT
The Accreditation Council
of Trinidad and Tobago
Established by Chapter 39:06
Quality is the Key

The Ministry of Tertiary Education
and Skills Training

MTEST

"Thinking Global, Acting Local: The Changing Realities of Higher Education and Training" was the theme of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago's (ACTT) 2nd International Conference on Higher Education and Training.

The conference provided a forum for forty-one (41) international and one hundred and seventy-six (176) local higher education personnel to share internationally best practices, present research findings and review recent developments impacting on higher education and skills development.

The conference spanned three days and featured an exceptional cadre of local and international speakers. At the formal opening on April 15, 2015, Michael Bradshaw, Executive Director, ACTT presented a paper entitled: "Diversity in Higher Education and Training: The Quality Imperative." In addition, Senator the Honourable Fazal Karim, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (MTEST) delivered the keynote address entitled: "Beyond participation: Building the Global Citizen."

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES...continued

ACTT MARKS 10 YEARS WITH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



Signing of Memorandum of Understanding

Also, at this ceremony, ACTT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). This MoU allows for the establishment and promotion of international best

practices in quality assurance systems governing education and training locally. This relationship will also assist quality assurance agencies in the Caribbean affiliated with ACTT.

The conference identified challenges to promoting quality in higher education in the Caribbean and proposed sustainable solutions. It also provided a forum to review national and regional developments in higher education and training towards adopting relevant best practices.



Professor Nicole Smith — one of the Plenary Presenters



Panel Discussion

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ACCA and Angostura

Belize Accord at Work

When at CANQATE 2014 the Belize Accord was signed, a clear road map for its implementation had not been drawn up. Broad areas of co-operation between the signatories had been outlined and all involved agreed to share information and participate in joint activities which would advance quality assurance initiatives in their tertiary sectors.

Gradually, things are beginning to take shape. Not everyone has been able to take part in the Skype meetings held, but during those meetings the main concerns of the less established agencies were aired and mechanisms through which help could be extended were outlined.

One such mechanism is a training/ attachment session for the newer Executive Directors that was facilitated by ACTT in July at ACTT Headquarters in Trinidad. Details of the attachment will be shared with you in the next edition of our newsletter.



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SPECIAL FEATURES

- **American International College of Arts and Sciences - Antigua**
- **Online Learning: Interview with Giffer Jones**

THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES - ANTIGUA

The college presently offers an Associate of Science (A.S.) in Health Sciences degree and a certificate in Emergency Medical Technician Training (EMT Basic). The college is also the seat of the Antigua and Barbuda Chapter of the Caribbean Academy of Sciences. Through an articulation agreement with American University of Antigua (AUA) College of Medicine, AICASA offers a unique alternative to the traditional route from pre-medical education to medical school admission. Students can enter AICASA from high school, earn an A.S. degree and apply to medical school within two years.

AICASA began in 2004 as a pre-medical program within AUA College of Medicine, but due to its rapid growth, the AUA administration elevated the program to an associate degree granting institution independent of AUA in 2008. The quality of the AICASA program also led to its accreditation by the Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) in 2012.

The American International College of Arts and Sciences - Antigua (AICASA) is a two-year accredited college registered by the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB).

In its A.S. in Health Sciences program, the college provides comprehensive pre-medical training with a strong emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills. The curriculum includes all courses that are traditionally prerequisites to medical schools in the United States and Canada, as well as requirements for subsequent licensure. Graduates of this program can earn an MD degree at AUA College

of Medicine, which is accredited by the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP).

AICASA will soon launch a 2+2 program in conjunction with several U.S. and Canadian colleges and universities. This program is designed for CARICOM students who wish to earn a degree from a U.S. or Canadian school but prefer to start their academic journey nearer to home.

Currently, nearly a hundred students are enrolled in AICASA. The student body consists of students from the U.S., Canada, Antigua, Trinidad, and many other CARICOM countries. Financial assistance is available to all matriculated CARICOM students. They receive a 30% reduction in tuition costs plus an additional 20% if a minimum GPA is earned following the first semester and beyond. AICASA also offers a limited number of Tuition Grants to citizens of Antigua and Barbuda.





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NATIONAL ACCREDITATION
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Online learning is becoming increasingly popular. Some pursue courses and programmes which are fully accredited and some pursue courses which, even though they are not accredited, have value in terms of personal development. In this article, we share with you the experiences of Mrs. Giffer Jones with online learning.

1) Who is Giffer Jones? Tell us something about you.

An active life-learner dedicated to helping others create a sustainable life style. My motto is "anything in life is possible once you cultivate your ability to grow!" Currently, I am serving as the Vice-Chairperson on the St. John's Lutheran School Board (private Christian school committed to developing great future leaders) and employed full time at LIAT (1974) Ltd. I have been married for ten (10) years to a very supportive husband; I am the proud mother of two (2) engaging sons and hail from a close knit family.

2) What traditional and online training have you done, and during what periods?

My traditional education institutions include the Ottos Comprehensive School from 1993-1998, the Antigua State College (Advanced Level Department) from 1998-2000 and a series of short courses throughout 2000 – 2014.

In 2012, I was introduced to online learning through the University of the West Indies where I pursued an Executive Diploma in Management. In 2014, I sampled the Massive Open Online Classes (MOOC) through Coursera and absolutely loved it. I completed several courses using the Coursera platform such as Analyzing Global trends for Business and Society; and International Leadership and Organizational Behaviour (ILOB).



ONLINE LEARNING: Interview with Giffer Jones

3) To what extent do the courses that you have done address the issue of impersonation?

Coursera has a verified certificate program for certain courses. Before you submit your test or upload any assignment, you are required to log on, using the program provided, take a snapshot of your government ID (Passport, Driver's license), type the paragraph provided (this captures your unique typing style) and accept the code of conduct. The Coursera Staff verifies your information and if you have successfully met the requirement for that course you will be issued a Verified Certificate.

4) Some argue that the content in online degrees is diluted compared to traditional courses. Is that a fair comment?

In my experiences, the content was not diluted. I compared notes with a close friend who was enrolled full time at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus and I was very satisfied to know that my online content was the same.

5) Do you not think that the hype about the level of interactivity of online classes is over exaggerated?

Over exaggerated? Not at all! You have required posting every day or per week in the discussion forums, group chat rooms, and various other ways of communicating. One great benefit about a discussion forum is that it allows the most introverted student to participate.

6) What were some of the significant benefits of online classes for you?

Firstly, the flexibility of attending class at any point during a twenty-four (24) period from any location is great. This allowed me to tailor my timetable within the specified limits to enjoy a full family and work life.

Secondly, interacting with cohorts from different cultures expanded my thinking, decision making, and learning process.

Coursera, a MOOC platform is very user friendly. It offers many courses from universities throughout the globe for free.

I have been able to capitalize on information which otherwise would not have been available to me.

7) What are some of the greatest challenges you faced with online learning?

A facilitator may not respond to a question in a time span you would like; therefore you are forced to find other resources.

8) What skills do you consider critical for success in online classes?

Discipline and an open mind are critical for success.

9) Is the cost of online degrees significantly different to traditional degrees?

Online degrees cost less because travel, accommodation & lab costs are excluded. However, many universities are requiring a week residency at the commencement of their masters' degrees.

10) What final advice would you give to someone who is thinking about pursuing an online degree?

Ensure that you conduct research about a potential online educational platform that you wish to use. A great way is using the Antigua & Barbuda National Accreditation Board to ensure that the institution is accredited. Online learning should not be taken for granted. Discipline yourself to stay on track and do not quit when tough situations arise.





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DISCUSSION POINT

ACCREDITATION: TO BE OR NOT TO BE... MANDATORY?



"Accreditation is a means of self-regulation and peer review adopted by the educational community. The accrediting process is intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher education, making it worthy of public confidence."

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Here are ten (10) benefits of Accreditation. The benefits are divided into three categories namely, benefits to the institution, benefits to the student and benefits to the nation.

A Benefits to the Institution:

- 1) *Self-evaluation and self-direction-* Accreditation provides an opportunity for self-evaluation and self-direction which can create a sense of ownership and team spirit among staff members thus enhancing institutional capacity.
- 2) *Peer-Review-*Through peer review, an institution can benefit from the consultation and advice of experienced individuals and professional organizations in the field.

- 3) *Increased enrollment-*The possibility of increased enrollment is enhanced since in several countries financial aid from government sources to students is only given to persons enrolled in accredited institutions.
- 4) *Staff Confidence-*Accreditation provides public certification that an institution has met the established standards of the profession. This certification can only inspire confidence in the minds of the faculty and staff.

B Benefits to the Student:

- 5) *Credit Transfer-*The ability to transfer credits from one institution to another, in many instances, is easier if the student is transferring from an accredited institution.
- 6) *Employability* –An informed Human Resource Manager is more likely to consider applicants from accredited institutions than those from unaccredited institutions.
- 7) *Personal Confidence-*Good performance in an accredited institution is likely to provide a student with confidence concerning his/ her ability to perform at higher degree level studies, and also in the workplace.

C Benefits to the Nation:

- 8) *National Pride-*Accreditation signals to the general public that the institution has voluntarily submitted itself to external scrutiny and has met or exceeded the required local, regional and international standards.
- 9) *An Invitation-*Since implicit in the Accreditation process is continuous review and feedback, Accreditation provides the public with an invitation to interact with the institution to ensure continuous improvement.
- 10) *Assurance-*Accreditation provides assurance to the public that the institution has local, but equally important, regional and international currency.

In light of the benefits of Accreditation, should Accreditation be voluntary or mandatory? That is the question, and we would like to hear your views on this issue.

See contact information on page 10.

"Ensuring quality, higher education is one of the most important things we can do for future generations."

| Ron Lewis |



1

What does a “Letter of Recognition” from ABNAB mean?

A “Letter of Recognition” is a formal acknowledgement by ABNAB of the status of the foreign qualification in Antigua and Barbuda. It can be used for employment or for seeking access to higher education. It indicates that ABNAB has not only verified that the qualification is authentic within the country of origin but it is willing to document its acceptance of the qualification based on our local quality assurance system.

For an institution from the US, ABNAB offers a “Letter of Recognition” provided that it can verify that the institution has obtained an accredited status by an authentic accrediting agency in the US.

For an institution from the UK, provided that the institution is on the list of recognized or listed bodies, and in addition has been given a favorable report from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), ABNAB is willing to issue a “Letter of Recognition”.

In short, provided that the institution can demonstrate that it has met the quality assurance standard of the country of origin, ABNAB is willing to offer a “Letter of Recognition”.

Issuing “Letters of Recognition” is one of the many services of ABNAB, as the prospective students seek to find out if their foreign qualifications will be recognized in Antigua and Barbuda when they complete their studies.

2

Do accredited universities give honorary degrees?

Yes, many accredited universities chose to award honorary degrees, honorary doctorates in particular. It is important to remember however, that the award is, as the name implies, an honorary one. The recipient did not qualify for the award by passing any prescribed examinations and in fact might not have even attended that particular university.

Traditionally, universities have used the award to honour outstanding members of the community who have made significant contributions to society in their particular field of endeavour. Awards are also given to persons whose lifetime achievements have impacted the lives of many individuals. It is awarded as a mark of esteem – for the cause of honour or honoris causa (Latin).

Persons are often confused when addressing someone with an honorary doctorate. Universities establish their own criteria for the award of honorary doctorates and have their own specific guidelines concerning the use of the title ‘Dr’. Some allow the recipient to use the title generally, while others specify that it be used only within the circles of that particular educational community. Others may require that whenever the title ‘Dr’ is written in reference to a recipient of an honorary doctorate the abbreviation for honoris causa (h.c.) be written next to it.

An honorary doctorate awarded by an accredited university, while obviously not having the same standing as an earned degree, can be regarded as a prestigious award. Regrettably, many “Diploma Mills” also offer honorary doctorates and therefore create skepticism about the value of such awards.



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12TH ANNUAL CANQATE CONFERENCE



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:



The St. Kitts and Nevis
Accreditation Board



The Ministry of
Education

DESIGNED BY VANGUARD MEDIA, ST. KITTS - WWW.VMCMEDIA.COM

Deadline for submission of proposal is August 14th, 2015.
Contact: canqate2015@gmail.com

STUDYING ABROAD? ONLINE LEARNING?



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ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD

Tel: 1-268-562-8151/2/3 • Email: abnab.anu@gmail.com

OTHER SERVICES OFFERED BY ABNAB:

- Conferment of Institution Title
- Registration and Re-registration of Tertiary Institutions
- Accreditation and Re-accreditation of Tertiary Institutions
- Program Approval
- Recognition of Foreign Programmes and Awards
- Equivalence Assessment
- Institutional Strengthening and Development

VISION STATEMENT:

To be the enabler of a guaranteed system of quality assurance in tertiary education in Antigua and Barbuda.

WHO WE ARE

The Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB) was established in 2006 by an Act of Parliament (No 4 of 2006)

WHERE WE ARE LOCATED

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE DRIVE,
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA

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

Fax: (268)562-8173



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abnab@ab.gov.ag



www.facebook.com/abnab

In the next issue:
EQUIVALENCE ASSESSMENT