



ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA
NATIONAL
ACCREDITATION
BOARD

NEWSLETTER abnab

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MRS. ELOISE HAMILTON

EQUIVALENCE ASSESSMENT

The expression 'the world is now a global village' is often used by persons who marvel at how lives, cultures, and economic and political systems of the nations of the world have become so closely connected, even intertwined, in fact.

People in our region have embraced the opportunity afforded by jet travel to visit all parts of the world. Places which some time ago were considered 'far flung' or 'on the other side of the world' and therefore inaccessible to us, are now just hours away.

We have students attending universities in non-English speaking countries and in unfamiliar educational systems.

This results in graduates returning to their home territories with qualifications that may not be readily understood and so encounter difficulties when they seek employment or a promotion at work or when they try to gain admission to other educational institutions to pursue further study. Often, the literal translation of non-English documents does not provide the clarity needed. These qualifications have to be evaluated and explained in terms that local persons can relate to.

Equivalence assessment is one of the services offered by ABNAB. We are able to provide an interpretation of what the foreign qualifications mean when measured against the familiar standards. At ABNAB, we also assist clients who have successfully completed a number of short



courses and want an assessment of their currency, as well as others with a variety of equivalency concerns.

In this issue of our newsletter, some aspects of equivalence assessment will be explored. As usual, our Special Feature and Question and Answer sections will provide useful information and our local and regional sections will highlight the work of the ABNAB and other quality assurance agencies. We hope that our Discussion Point which puts IT subjects in the spotlight will resonate with you and elicit a response.



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LOCAL ACTIVITIES

- **CSME students visit ABNAB**
- **Interview with Vier Dublin CEO National Training Agency**
- **Meet the ABNAB Members**

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

| Desmond Tutu |



CSME STUDENTS FROM GUYANA VISIT ABNAB

Nineteen students from the University of Guyana visited Antigua recently as part of a CARICOM mission through the region under the theme ‘Tertiary students engaging the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) through Field Promotions’.

The exercise was designed to give students practical exposure to the way in which CSME operates.

The students were divided into five groups, each with a focus on a particular CSME Regime. As part of the Free Movement Committee, we, at the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board, were delighted to host those students who were looking at the Movement of Skills Regime.

During the visit which last for about an hour, we discussed with the students the role that ABNAB plays in the Antiguan and Barbudan community in general and in particular, its critical role in the CARICOM Skills Certificates process as far as checking documents for authenticity is concerned.

In a very interactive session, the students were made aware of the importance of accreditation, the dangers of Diploma Mills and the increase in popularity of Massive Online Courses (MOOCs), among other things. In addition, they were given some examples of how some types of fraudulent documents could be detected, and they were also shown how they could check the accreditation status of some US universities.

The students participated fully and seemed to have enjoyed the session. Question time had to be cut short but most questions asked were centred on the issue of accreditation. Although time was very limited, we managed to have a short photo session and then enjoyed some light refreshments.

Tertiary students from Antigua also participated in a similar exercise in Barbados in September, 2015.

To read more about the program please [click here](#).



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LOCAL ACTIVITIES

MRS. ELOISE HAMILTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ABNAB INTERVIEWS MR. VIER DUBLIN, CEO OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY

1) What is the National Training Agency (NTA)?

The National Training Agency (NTA) is a Statutory Organization established by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to monitor, co-ordinate, and promote Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Antigua and Barbuda.

The NTA's Mandate is to provide accredited status to training providers through the process of quality enhancement and quality assurance.

2) Give us a general idea of the areas covered by Technical and Vocational Education.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) prepares people for specific trades, crafts and careers at various levels from a trade, a craft, a technician, or a high professional practitioner position in careers such as engineering, accounting, nursing etc.

It can also be at the secondary, post-secondary level, further education, and higher education level and can be interface with an apprenticeship system.

3) There is some confusion in the minds of the general public between the roles of the National Trading Agency (NTA) and the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB). Could you please clarify?

There are probably two critical differences:

- NTA ranges from focuses on post-secondary to master craftsman or engineer
- NTA relates specifically to technical and vocational education whereas ABNAB relates specifically to academic education

4) What would you consider the two most critical products and services offered by NTA?

- Accreditation of Training Providers
- Awarding of Caribbean Vocational Qualification / National Vocational qualification (CVQ/NVQ)

5) What is CVQ?

The CVQ or Caribbean Vocational Qualification is the competency based qualification. It is awarded to persons who have demonstrated competence in reaching approved occupational standards in a particular area of industry.

6) How is the CVQ attained?

Candidates must provide evidence that they have the ability to perform work activities at the standards required by industry. Persons wishing to obtain a CVQ will be assessed against competencies identified in the National Occupational Standards (NOS)

7) What are National Occupational Standards?

National Occupational Standards (NOS) defines the competencies required for effective workplace performance. They specify what a person should know and do in order to carry out the functions of a particular job in the context of the wider environment.

8) What are some of the challenges faced by NTA in fulfilling its mandate?

- The main challenges are the provision of human and material resources – inadequate funding

9) How does this situation impact the lives of citizens of Antigua and Barbuda?

I am so glad that you asked this very specific question. Citizens of Antigua and Barbuda are marginalized in their own country.

They lack the necessary Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQs) and therefore cannot compete against their Caribbean colleagues. They are on the sidelines and other Caribbean nationals are employed

10) How can you be contacted if persons needed further clarification on the issues you have discussed today?

Here is our contact information:

- Location: 41 Church Street, St. John's, Antigua
- Telephone: (268) 562-6685
- Email: antiguarbarbudanta@gmail.com

For more information about the Caribbean Vocational Qualification please click this [link](#).

MEET THE ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
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REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Interview with Pamella Dottin – UWI Barbados**
- **The Belize Accord at Work**
- **Barbados Accreditation Council – National Qualification Framework**

MR. EUSTACE HILL, ACCREDITATION OFFICER OF ABNAB, INTERVIEWS MS. PAMELA DOTTIN

1. Where do you work and what are the objectives of your unit?

I am presently employed by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), The University of the West Indies as a Quality Assurance Officer; however I have been employed previously by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC). The objectives of the QAU are to:

- Improve the quality of the learning experiences of students; and
- Provide assurance to stakeholders as to the quality of the provision.

2. This sounds great. However, when I was at Cave Hill nearly forty years ago, and then recently nearly 15 years ago, there was no Quality Assurance Unit. Could you explain what has contributed to this change in emphasis?

In 1994, the Chancellor's Commission on Governance mandated the development of a full system of academic quality assurance at The University of the West Indies (UWI). This decision reflected trends in the higher education sector worldwide. The Commission's Report led to the establishment of the Board for Undergraduate Studies (BUS), which began its work in August 1996.

3. Ok. What are you saying; UWI is following a worldwide trend in assuring quality assurance. Tell me more; give some specific details about the Board's duties

One of the Board's main duties is the development and implementation of the system of quality assurance reviews and evaluations. This responsibility is conducted through the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) which was set

up in 2001. The remit of the QAU has expanded over the years and it now supports both BUS and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research (BGSR) as it relates to academic and research quality assurance.

4. Great. My reality at UWI is a pass fail system, sink or swim, and when I compared my experiences with persons who studies in North American Colleges and Universities, I always felt cheated. What I hear from you is a greater emphasis on student support; helping students to pass without compromising the integrity of the education provided. Explain for specifically the UWI system for academic quality assurance.

The UWI system for academic quality assurance has three primary aims which are to:

- *Maintain and enhance the quality of the learning experience of UWI students.*
- *Assure the maintenance and enhancement of appropriate output standards.*
- *Provide assurance to the stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, funders, collaborators and the regional Governments, of its continuing high quality and standards.*

5. Expand for me about the quality assurance evaluation

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

| Aristotle |



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Quality assurance evaluations are an internally driven process intended to be part of the QAU's formative approach to continuous quality assurance and enhancement.

6. What is the relationship between quality assurance and equivalence assessment?

QUA has several functions including conducting the evaluation of comparability of qualifications. The comparability function is important as it allows the institution or entity to compare the content, assessment methods, and the level of a programme or course from another entity to determine whether it is comparable to what it is offering; whether the students meet the matriculation requirements; whether the students may be granted exemptions and so on.

7. Could you share with us some of your specific experiences in the area of equivalence assessment?

Whilst employed by the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) I conducted a number of comparability analyses. The first step is to determine the recognition of the programme in its home country.

This is important as not all programmes are recognised. The general rule being, if a programme is not recognised in its home country, then it is not recognised. Secondly, we request information from the issuing institution in relation to content, assessment, level and so on. This allows for a similar institution in our country to undertake a comparison exercise. At that time, we also set out to determine whether the graduate is actually the person who took the programme. The final part is informing on the outcomes of the exercise.

8. Are there any regional initiatives to develop standards to address the issue of equivalence assessment?

I am not sure that regional standards on comparability exist. However, I am aware that when conducting comparability exercises that the External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) contact their fellow agencies to ascertain whether they had undertaken a similar exercise, and then share their findings. It is

normal that EQAAs exercise mutual recognition, that is, if the qualification is recognised by one EQAA then the others will also recognise that qualification.

9. Could the development of regional standards help the process of equivalence assessment for EQAAs in the region?

The simple answer is yes but there is a need for an agency to take the lead in this regard.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

10. Perhaps this is an assignment for the newly elected Board of the

Caribbean Area Network of Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE).

I would not want to speak on behalf of CANQATE as that is the function of the President.

The Antigua and Barbuda Accreditation Board will certainly get in touch with him.

Thank you very much for your time. This has not only being very informative but also inspiring. As a two time graduate of UWI (Cave Hill), I want UWI to do exceptionally well and complete excellently in the global market place.

BELIZE ACCORD AT WORK

At the end of the 2014 CANQATE Conference in Belize, heads of quality assurance agencies who had signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) resolved to keep in close contact and continue the spirit of co-operation established. That spirit of co-operation manifested itself in a three day workshop for Heads of Caribbean External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) which was facilitated by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) and held at their headquarters in Trinidad.

It was my privilege to attend the three day workshop in my capacity as Executive Director of the Antigua and Barbuda Accreditation Board. Here are some highlights:

Day 1: After the initial meeting with the ACTT Executive Director Mr. Michael Bradshaw and senior Technical Directors, we met with staff members from the



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

Qualifications and Recognition Department. They walked us through policies and procedures used by ACTT with regard to Statements on Recognition and Equivalence Assessment. In the afternoon, we met with Accreditation Department staff and looked at policies and procedures for Programme Approval and the Accreditation of Short Courses.

Day 2: Most of the Day 2 was spent with the Qualifications and Recognition Department. We looked at the recognition of Transnational Programmes and the recognition of Foreign Awarding Bodies and Institutions.

Day 3: We met with staff from the Registration Unit and looked at issues of Registration and Re-registration. We also met with persons from the Accreditation Department and looked at Conferment of Institutional Title and Institutional and Programme Accreditation

There was a final wrap-up session with the Executive Director and his Technical Directors. Mr. Bradshaw assured us that officers of ACTT would

continue to assist the newer/smaller agencies in whatever way they could.

There was also a brief photo and presentation session.

This workshop provided me with much valuable information and the opportunity to meet many persons at ACTT who have much experience in matters of accreditation, registration etc., and who are willing to support our efforts here at ABNAB.

As hosts, the ACTT Team was exceptional. We were warmly welcomed and treated with great respect as equals in the business of quality assurance in the region. They willingly shared their knowledge and provided us with quite a bit of written material. Everyone who interacted with us went out of their way to ensure that our stay was pleasant, informative, and productive.

Thanks ACTT!

To read more about the 11th Annual CANQATE Conference click [here](#).

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

BARBADOS ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

National Qualifications Framework – Assuring Recognition of Qualifications and Lifelong Learning

Commencing from January this year, the Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC) continued to facilitate the preparation for the design, development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), with the hosting of several internal and stakeholders' workshops which were facilitated by the NQF Consultants, Dr Armand Hughes-d'Aeth, Team Leader, Dr Paulette Dunn-Pierre, Senior Expert and Ms Denise Murray-Beresford, Junior Consultant.

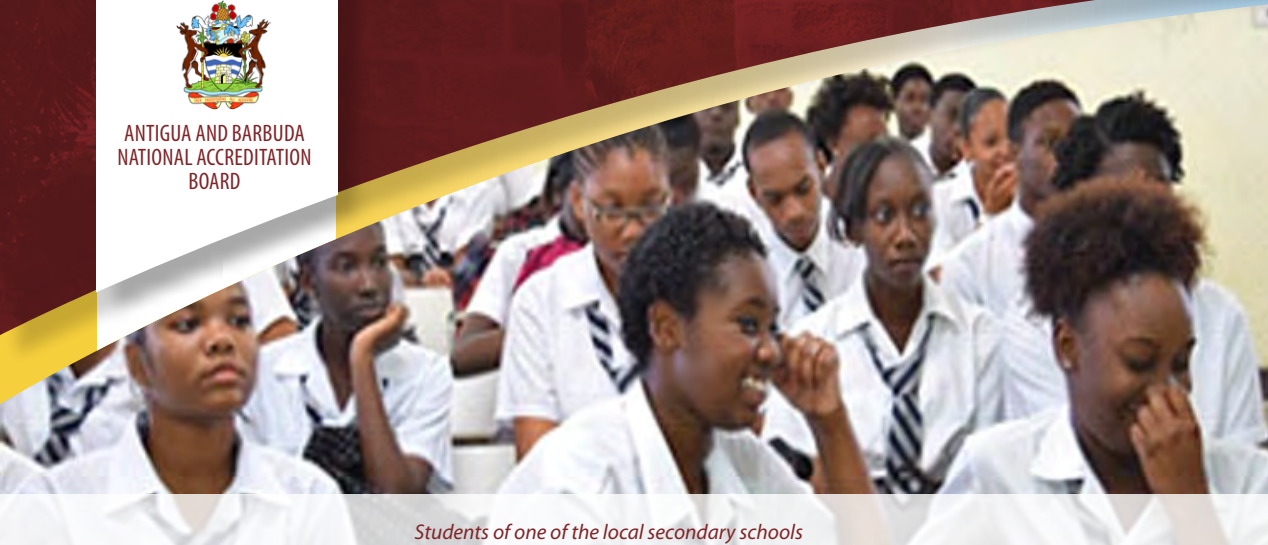


Pictured are: top left: Dr. Paulette Dunn-Pierre, Senior Expert; top right: Dr. Armand Hughes-d'Aeth, Team Leader; bottom right: Ms Denise Murray-Beresford, Junior Consultant and the participants

Over the past ten months, a total of five (5) stakeholders' workshops were held at the BAC. These workshops provided opportunities for robust discussion and feedback from tertiary educational/training providers, officials from the Ministries of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, and Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, and Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council regarding the design and development of the NQF.



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Students of one of the local secondary schools

At the final stakeholders workshop facilitated by the consultancy team, the proposed governance and management for the NQF, the proposed NQF, the proposed Implementation Strategy, Change Management and Training Plans, and other deliverables were presented and once again, stakeholders had a chance to discuss and comment on the proposed way forward for the successful implementation of the NQF.

NQF Communication Advocacy In Full Effect

The Barbados Accreditation Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development embarked on the Communication Advocacy programme for the proposed National Qualification Framework (NQF) for Barbados in January this year.

The members of the public were invited to offer valuable feedback through attendance at town hall meetings and interactive programmes on

the local television station.

A wide cross section of stakeholders, from students to educational providers also benefitted from a number of targeted information sessions, which were held to garner the buy-in for the NQF which is seen as a 'game-changer' in the educational sector in Barbados.

The next phases will be the pilot and implementation of the NQF. The implementation of the NQF will amongst, other strategic objectives, encourage lifelong learning and improve access to learning and acknowledge attainment of learning and; it will facilitate educational and employment mobility regionally and extra-regionally through the articulation/transfer of credits between educational providers and the recognition of skills.

Read more about the BAC NQF by pressing this [link](#) and for information on other NQFs please use these links, [Jamaica](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#)

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

QUOTE HERE

BOARD OF EDUCATION



School General Maintenance	-	\$25,760,000
Antigua State College	-	\$11,200,000
CXC	-	\$1,960,000
Scholarships	-	\$97,800,000
School Supplies	-	\$20,670,000
MOE Curriculum Support	-	\$11,800,000
School Furniture	-	\$6,680,000
School Books	-	\$57,580,000
School Equip. & Equip. Maintenance	-	\$11,700,000
TOTAL	-	\$245,150,000

MAKING A QUANTUM DIFFERENCE THROUGH YOUR EDUCATION LEVY DEDUCTIONS



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SPECIAL FEATURES

- **Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute**
- **A glance over the shoulders - Former Executive Director of ABNAB, Mr. Glenford Joseph**

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA HOSPITALITY TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (ABHTI), formerly known as the Hotel Training Center began in 1977 as a unit of the Antigua State College which came out of a merger of the Leeward Islands Teachers' Training College, and the Golden Grove Technical College.

In 1981, the Hotel and Catering Department moved to a larger space at a building that previously served as the Officers' Club of the United States Base Facilities at Dutchman's Bay and was renamed the Hotel Training Center.

The growth of the local hospitality and tourism industry led to the upgrade of the Center to meet the needs of the industry. The Government of Antigua & Barbuda with the assistance of the European Union closed the Center in 1998 for refurbishment and expansion of the facilities. In October 2003 the upgrading of the facilities was completed and the Center reopened with a new name – The Antigua and Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute (ABHTI).

ABHTI currently offers Associate Degree Programmes in Food Beverage Management, Culinary Arts,

Hospitality Management and Resort Management. These can be completed in as little as two (2) years, or take up to three (3) years as a part-time student. There are one



ABHTI
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
HOSPITALITY
TRAINING INSTITUTE

Affiliated with



(1) year Certificate Programmes in Food and Beverage Operations, Basic Cookery, Reception and Sales and Hospitality Administration.

There are also opportunities for continued education through our affiliated institutions: the University of the West Indies or Monroe College, New York, St. Lucia, or online. Graduates may opt to transfer credits from a completed Associate Degree programme with ABHTI to complete a bachelor's programme with any of these two (2) institutions, in as little as 18 months.

Prospective students may choose between day or night sessions for the Culinary Arts Degree, while the Resort Management Degree and the Hospitality Administration Certificate are currently offered during the evenings, affording flexibility for the working professional.

ABHTI offers a number of short courses; the most popular are Essentials of Housekeeping Management, Service Ambassador, Baking 101 and Essentials of Front

Office Operations. We also provide bespoke training programmes for hospitality-oriented operations and functions.

Students who wish to enter/re-enter the world of work have great opportunities for successful engagements through internship and work placements with local and regional operations in the hospitality industry.

The Institute continues to be a hallmark of excellence, constantly working to build and sustain relationships with the hospitality and tourism sector to meet its training and education needs.

Registration for the September 2016 intake will open in January 2016. For more information call us on 268-462-3066 or e-mail – admissions@abhti.com; follow us on Facebook or visit our website www.abhti.com to keep informed of activities, events and opportunities.



ABHTI 2014 Valedictorian





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SPECIAL FEATURES

A GLANCE OVER THE SHOULDER

Mr. Glenford Joseph, the first executive director of ABNAB takes a look back at some of the 'teething pains' of the agency.

The Quality Assurance Agency in tertiary education was recently introduced in the sector in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) by way of the various national accreditation boards or councils in each of the member states. With respect to Antigua and Barbuda, legislation was put in place in 2006 to enable the establishment of the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB). The Accreditation Act of June 2006 allowed for the formation of a Board of Directors to direct the operations of a secretariat, which began operations in November 2008.

During the first three years of the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board's operation, its business was conducted from borrowed space within the Ministry of Education's Headquarters. This was the case although the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board was a statutory body, which suggests a measure of independence beyond that practiced by departments in a

government ministry. The fact was that the Board did not have the wherewithal to exist as an agency, independent of the Ministry of Education. In fact, it was very dependent on the Ministry of Education to assist in much of the supporting work that had to be done to make it operational.

The matter of adequate staffing presented some difficulty in that it was unable to employ the full complement of staff that had been agreed for the operation of the agency. In the circumstance, the work at the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board was carried out by its first executive director. However, it has to be said that the secretary to the Board of Directors gave invaluable assistance to the executive director during the first three years of operation before becoming fully employed as the accreditation officer in the fourth year of operation. It would not be a surprise to learn that other emerging quality assurance agencies in the OECS also experienced difficulties to those experienced at the ABNAB that affected the operation of their agency.

A rather perplexing problem experienced during the first few years of the ABNAB was the matter of funding for the agency's operation. The agency never was able to receive the full amount of the subvention agreed at the establishment of the Accreditation Board. In fact, no more than the promised amount was ever received in a calendar year. The reason for this might be, among other things that the ABNAB was a new creature in the realm of budgetary allotment, and the need for funds to keep it operational may have been slightly overlooked by the holders of the purse strings. In this particular situation, though, the Board of Directors was very adept at successfully "besetting" those same holders of the purse strings and pleaded the agency's cause well.

One of the other matters that arose during the start-up phase was the conception of "accreditation" among the local public. "Accreditation" had become a buzz word after the public learnt about the agency and its mission. Queries were posed by some companies that offered in-house training,

wanting accredited status to be conferred on coursework delivered in their training program. Cosmetologists also tried their utmost to have others they trained be accredited for the skill acquired in the training. Of course, the ABNAB could not accommodate many of such-like requests since they did not fall within its mandate of tertiary education, including tertiary coursework. As such, disappointment was incurred because of some of the public's misunderstanding of the agency's mandate.

To help the public better understand the agency's mandate, the executive director did co-operate with the local, government-owned television station (ABS-TV) to speak directly to the public about the remit it had been assigned, but it took some time.

The teething problems experienced in the first few years were not overwhelming, from this distance, but during that period, one was required to grow just as the emerging quality assurance agency in Antigua and Barbuda grew and responded to the needs of its public.



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DISCUSSION POINTS

• *American International College of Arts and Sciences - Antigua*

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

| Ron Lewis |

EDPM MANDATORY TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

Should an IT subject be mandatory for entry into tertiary education, and also for the world of work?

A random, unrepresentative sampling was done to get a feel of the opinion of persons about this topic. Here are some unedited responses.

- “In my school, an IT subject is mandatory. You either take EDPM or IT(Computer Science) depending on your leaning”.
- “I think that EDPM should be mandatory but not IT (Computer Science)”.
- “I think that IT (Computer Science) should be mandatory”.
- “I moved my daughter from one school to another school because I was told that doing EDPM depended on which third form class you got into. EDPM is a must for me. Now my daughter is doing EDPM and she uses the Internet even to complete her assignments. I am happy now”.

Statistical information received from the Examination Department of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology indicated the following concerning EDPM (Electronic Document Preparation and Management and IT (Computer Science) in the schools in Antigua and Barbuda for the period 2011 to 2015:

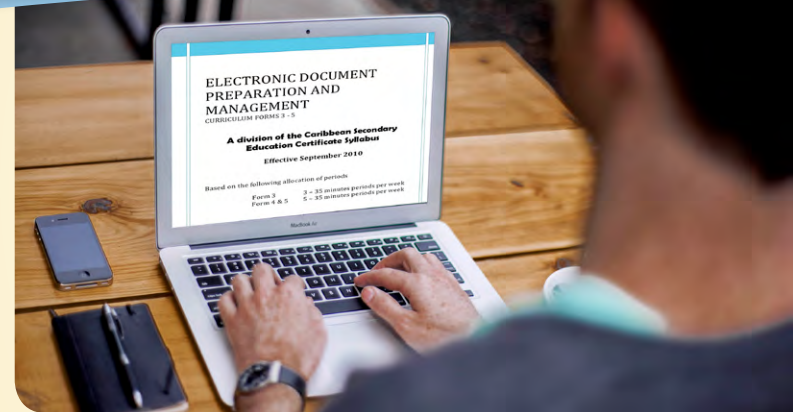
- a) There is a significant increase in the number of persons doing EDPM and IT compared to the number doing Maths - a low of 52% in 2011 to a high of 70% in 2015.
- b) There is a significant increase in the number of persons doing EDPM and IT compared to the number doing English - a low of 61% in 2011 to 74% in 2015.
- c) Maths and English by virtue of the high numbers are mandatory - in 2013, entries for Maths were 1704 and for English, the entries were 1391. There is a similar trend for the other four years.

Conclusion - EDPM or IT is not Mandatory in Antigua and Barbuda.

The fact that all secondary school students are not taking an IT centric subject is unsatisfactory and untenable for a country with a clearly articulated goal of becoming the “ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE OF THE CARIBBEAN”.

Based on an analysis of the EDPM syllabus and discussion with an EDPM teacher, the skills which are honed and developed through the EDPM programme include the following:

- Typing skills
- Office Suite Skills and
- Internet Skills



Here are therefore ten (10) reasons why EDPM should be mandatory in the secondary schools.

Ten (10) Reasons why EDPM should be mandatory

1) Typing Skills - EDPM requires that a student not only types at a speed of 60 words per minute, but also must type with an accuracy of 60% and properly lay out a document. We commend those who are able to type at impressive speeds with two fingers; however EDPM demands much more. Unarguably, accurate speed typing is an invaluable tool for tertiary education and the world of work.
Office Suite Skills

2) Word Skills - Report writing requires Word Skills. What is even more impressive is when you can combine Word Skills and Excel Skills in one document.

3) Excel Skills - Complex arithmetic, statistical and engineering calculations become “a piece of cake” by the mere application of Excel functionalities.

4) Power Point Skills - the ability to prepare engaging attractive slides which



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captivate and maintain the attention of your audience cannot be seen as optional.

5) Outlook Skills - sending and receiving documents whether Word, Excel or Power Point is also not optional.

6) Publisher Skills - whether it is a banner, business card or certificate, no office can function effectively without skills in the use of Publisher.
Internet Skills

7) Internet for Research - The virtual library has outstripped the brick and mortar library. Who goes to the library to find out the spelling of a word or the date when Martin Luther King was born?

8) Internet for Distance Education - What topic can you not find on You-tube delivered by a competent communicator. More importantly, between 2002 and 2012, the number of online degrees has moved from 32.5 % to 62.5%, almost doubled. The number of students currently enrolled in Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) is staggering. Coursera alone now boasts 2.7 million users from 196 different countries, with 1.4 million course enrollments each month.

9) Internet for Business - the E-commerce success of Amazon.com attests to the importance of doing business on the Internet. Amazon.com recorded 7 billion sales in 2014, and locally E-commerce is pervasive.

10) Internet for Communication - who would question

the pervasiveness of the use of the Internet of communication. The total number of worldwide email accounts is expected to increase from nearly 3.9 billion accounts in 2013 to over 4.9 billion accounts by the end of 2017. This represents an average annual growth rate of about 6% over the next four years. Social Networking will grow from about 3.2 billion accounts in 2013 to over 4.8 billion accounts by the end of 2017. In addition, tools such as Skype, Viber, Magic Jack and Tango, to mention just a few, have simply transformed our world.

The overall goal of the EDPM program, as mentioned previously, is to hone the ten (ten) skills mentioned above for optimal productivity. The Computer Science or IT adds an additional component namely computer language and software engineering.

There is indeed something significant about the ten (10) skills mentioned above that is inescapable.

- a) They are interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary, and they are invaluable for functioning in today's IT Centric World.
- b) Collectively, they have become the new communication system-the new accepted language.
- c) They represent problem solving tools to address any situation

Responses "a" to "d" represent the same criteria which have caused English and Mathematics to be mandatory.

Then how could we deny EDPM to be listed among the courses which are mandatory

In this discussion, we have shared the strong feelings of some persons concerning an IT centric subject being mandatory; we have gleaned from the statistics from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology that as recent as 2015 EDPM is not mandatory, however we have demonstrated that overwhelming pervasiveness

DISCUSSION POINT

of IT centric competencies in today's world based on an analysis of the EDPM syllabus. The conclusions are inescapable; therefore the next move is yours.

We strongly advise that you do NOT take the action of removing your child from his/her school. What we do advise is that you encourage the POLICY MAKERS to make EDPM for the world of work and entry into tertiary education, soonest.

But wait a minute. "Youth is lost on the young" is a pertinent statement here. The young people will acquire the IT skills whether EDPM is mandatory or not. The real challenge is the persons in strategic positions

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ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
NATIONAL ACCREDITATION
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DISCUSSION POINT

THE DILEMMA: MASTER'S DEGREE OR DIPLOMA

Discussion Point:

I am currently a secondary school teacher with a bachelor's degree, and I want to continue my career in education. I have been given the option of a scholarship to do a master's degree in education or to be trained as a teacher. Could you advise me on what you consider is the preferred option?

Answer:

The preferred option is to take the scholarship and become trained as a teacher. More specifically, I recommend the Post Graduate Diploma in Education from the University of the West Indies which is offered by the Teacher Education Department of the Antigua State College.

Why?

Because that program would educate you in the "Science of Teaching", no more "guess work".

One of the major learning you would glean from attending the Antigua State College is the concept of "Lesson Planning".

Some of the most critical elements of Lesson Planning include the following:

- Introduction - how to "hook" the attention of the student, and how to maintain that attention.
- Objectives - how to write objectives. Objectives must be SMART-specific, measurable, attainable and time-bound.
- Teaching methods - choosing

appropriate teaching methods. Not only is it important to know various teaching methods such as the lecture method, demonstration, panel discussion, or group work to name a few, but to know which ones are most appropriate for the specific objective, the specific learning environment and the specific class.

- Evaluation Strategies - should you use



true and false questions, multiple choice questions, short answers or essays, or is this objective better evaluated by a project, a portfolio or an interview?

- Closure - how to bring it all together, and finally ensure impact and retention.

Not only would you be taught how to prepare appropriate lesson plans for varied learning styles and different environments, but you will be clinically supervised.

You would be attached to a school for a period of one year where you would be supervised by a trained and competent teacher from the Teacher Education Department. That person would not only meticulously inspect your lesson plans, objectively observe your teaching but also diligently give you detailed feedback, intended to hone your teaching skills over time.

The end product is that you would experientially develop a plethora of skills which are needed for effective and efficient teaching. Furthermore, and most importantly, you would no more be locked into the paradigm, repeatedly articulated by the uniformed namely: "The student dunce; his head is just too hard". But rather you would come to understand that with the right teaching, evaluation, and remediation strategies that that

seemingly "dunce" student can get 21 grade 1's or (let us be more modest) 10 grade 1's.

No master's program, even in education (that I know of), can provide you with the critical skill set needed to be an effective and efficient teacher. I challenge you to find one.

What is most regrettable is that the Master's Degree in Education is often regarded more

highly than the Post Graduate Diploma in Education - it is more prestigious.

But the reality is that one is a professional qualification, and the other is an academic qualification. We are moving on two different tracks, there is no equivalence.

So go with confidence now to the Teacher Education Department of the Antigua State College and receive your Post Graduate Diploma in Education, knowing that whether you want to remain a class room teacher or be elevated to the position of a Principal or an Education Officer, or even the Director of Education, you need to START by knowing the "Science of Teaching".

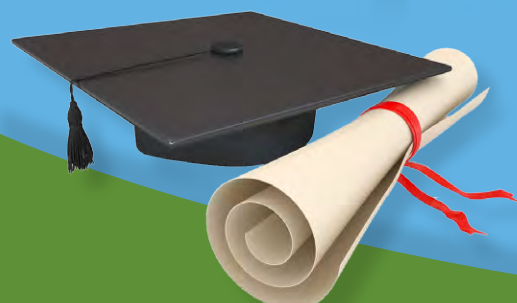
You need to be professionally trained. The Master's Degree can come later.

But do you agree with our preferred option or do you want to have the prestige of a Master's Degree?

We will continue this discussion in the next issue of our newsletter since the matter raised is just a part of the bigger issue of academic vs professional qualifications. We welcome your views on this topic.



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
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1

What is the value of the US High school diploma in Antigua and Barbuda?

The US High school diploma is a school-leaving certificate. It marks the completion of a fairly general secondary school curriculum and indicates that the individual is ready for the world of work. It also can be used as matriculation into some community colleges.

In Antigua and Barbuda, the US High School Diploma is generally regarded as equivalent to 5 CSEC (The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate) subjects, including Mathematics and English. That is, it represents the minimum requirement for entry into the Civil Service, and also for entry into a college or university in Antigua.

However, in addition to the diploma, a transcript would be needed for an assessment of equivalencies to specific CSEC subject areas to be made.

In the region too, a US High School Diploma can be used as entry into some community colleges.

2

Do home-grown courses or programs have any value?

No. "No value" is the sad and frustrating retort given to too many persons who have submitted their credentials to the Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB) for courses offered by the various government and private training agencies in Antigua and Barbuda.

The initial, glowing exuberance is quickly turned to displeasure, disappointment and dismay as the chances of promotion or increased salary seems even more remote, and the next time they see you in the supermarket there is a pretense that you do not exist.

Admittedly, the language is not so harsh and insensitive, but the meaning is "pellucidly clear".

In fact, the language used is often crafted in more palatable terms such as:

"The credentials submitted demonstrate a commitment to ensuring, continuous learning, and a desire to constantly upgrade your competencies, and unquestionably your personal development has been enhanced. This is undoubtedly commendable. However, ABNAB is regrettably not in a position to authenticate the veracity of credentials or to make recommendations concerning the value of the credentials.

The content, the teaching methods and evaluation strategies are absent, consequently, no objective assessment can be made to ascertain the value of the credentials."

Simply put, unless the "home- grown" course/program is meticulously checked by competent professionals in the discipline, ABNAB's mandate of quality assurance does not allow it to make recommendations which are likely to result in increased compensation in these instances.

The problem is further exasperated by credentials which have the designation – "Certificate of Attendance". A Certificate of Attendance is not quantifiable, not measurable. Yes, the applicant has attended the course but for how many days or how many hours or what percentage of the time? Furthermore, attendance does not necessarily translate into learning. In short, was the degree of learning tested by an effective, evaluation strategy?

I am sure that the point is clear, and further attests to the fact that in the eyes of ABNAB, the credentials have "No value...except for personal development".

In summary therefore, we strongly advise that ALL training providers (including Government) seek to have their courses/ programs accredited - checked for quality, and avoid the embarrassment of being told or their students being told "your credentials have no value except for personal development".



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
NATIONAL ACCREDITATION
BOARD

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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