



TVET - Key To A WorldClass Workforce

INSIDE TVET

THE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) notes that the issue of quality and relevance in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is an area of concern for many countries around the world.

It states: "In this light curricula reform in pursuit of meeting the labour market needs...and incorporation of relevant subjects (has) become part of the major activities of UNESCO's TVET programme."

The international agency has specific projects underway to assist member states in curriculum reform and also to integrate subjects and components such as environmental training, entrepreneurship and career guidance into the TVET curricula.

Quality in TVET

The issue of "quality" in TVET is one that will be on the agenda of the upcoming conference being hosted by Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) in October 2009.

CANQATE notes that quality in tertiary education and training connotes the meeting of requisite standards and criteria established by external quality assurance agencies. It states:

"Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) are rooted in occupational standards which have been developed with input from employers and other key stakeholders.

It adds: "CBET assures that the skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes of the workforce will meet the needs of employment."

Some of the TVET related issues which the 2009 Conference is expected to address include:

- The TVET and academia
- The roles of various stakeholders in tertiary education and training; the relevance of the curricula
- The role of cooperative education in a challenging environment
- The mismatch between tertiary education and the labour market, and,
- Strategies for the transition from school to the world of work.

Other key topics to be discussed over the three-day period include developing internal quality assurance systems; strategic approaches to quality tertiary education and training, and enhancing the sector through partnerships with the alumni and the community.

CANQATE is a professional body established in 2004 as a sub-network of the worldwide organisation, the **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education** (INQAAHE). It is a new initiative in the field of Quality Assurance pertinent to tertiary education in the Caribbean. The principal purpose of the worldwide network is to "enable members to share information about the maintenance, evaluation, accreditation and

improvement of higher education, and to disseminate good practices in the field of Quality Assurance".

The aims of CANQATE are compatible with those of INQAAHE. At the regional level, CANQATE will set up a framework for communication, and for academic, professional, and collegial support in quality assurance.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of CANQATE are as follows:

- Promote and assist in the implementation of best practices in quality assurance (QA) in tertiary education;
- Provide up-to-date information on QA issues for Caribbean agencies/networks/tertiary institutions and organisations;
- Ensure mutual recognition among QA agencies in the Caribbean;
- Support regional QA agencies in identifying funding to assist in their activities;
- Advocate for national QA bodies in regional and international forums;
- Work with other professional bodies on matters of QA and accreditation in the region;



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Relevance and quality in TVET

- Support and advise CARICOM and other Caribbean regional bodies on matters pertaining to a regional framework for QA;
- Develop a cadre of professionals in the field of QA in the region;
- Encourage and support research in the field of QA in the region;
- Network regionally and internationally with similar organisations.

The way forward

At the inaugural CANQATE conference in 2004 in Jamaica, members of the Network agreed to:

- Work with institutions, governments, CARICOM, student organisations, employers and others to sustain and enhance the standards and quality of tertiary education in the region.
- Work together to increase the mutual recognition of qualifications to facilitate the movement of students and graduates within the region.
- Through cooperation on such matters as staff development (including the staff of both agencies and tertiary institutions), exchange of academic

reviewers and the sharing of information, seek to improve the capacity for quality assurance and accreditation in the region.

• Through partnership with INQAAHE and other agencies, form effective working relationships with other regional groupings of quality assurance and accreditation agencies.

• Seek to establish productive links with professional associations and other similar bodies in the region.

• Help smaller countries in the region to sustain and enhance their capability to quality assure and accredit.

• Make potential students aware of the need to inform themselves of the accreditation status as appropriate of the institution or programme in which they are interested.

• Encourage public awareness of the role that quality plays in the education system particularly at the tertiary/higher education level.

conference is **Balancing Quality and Quantity: The Global Challenge for Tertiary Education**. This theme is considered to be highly relevant across the globe as increasing focus is being given to providing greater access to tertiary education to all citizens while at the same time, improving the quality of tertiary educational provision. The subthemes are:

- Quality Assurance Trends for the Future
- Developing Internal and External Quality Assurance Mechanisms
- Developing Meaningful and Strong Partnerships
- Strategic Approach to Quality Tertiary Education and Training in the Caribbean
- Quality Tertiary Education and Training

and the Labour Market

- E-Libraries and E-Learning Resources and Distance Learning

The 2009 CANQATE Conference will provide the opportunity for participants to discuss and analyse global challenges associated with increasing student numbers and the impact on the maintenance and advancement of quality in tertiary education.

The theme for the Pre-Conference workshop is **Preparing an Effective Self Evaluation Report**. The facilitator for the workshop is Prof. Donald Hanna, Educational Communications (Distance Education), University of Wisconsin-Extension, United States. Prime Minister David Thompson will deliver the feature address, and Ronald D. Jones, MP, Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, will deliver the remarks at the opening ceremony.

The keynote speakers are Dr Richard Lewis, immediate past president of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Professor Vivienne Roberts, vice principal, Open Campus, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus and chairperson of the Barbados CANQATE Core Group, and Dr Ethley London, president, of CANQATE and executive director of the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ).

Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education

6th Annual CANQATE Conference 2009

*Balancing Quality and Quantity:
The Global Challenge for Tertiary Education*

October 6 - 8, 2009

at the Award Winning

Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre

Two Mile Hill, St. Michael, Barbados

Strands/Subthemes include:

- ★ Quality Assurance Trends for the Future
- ★ Developing Meaningful and Strong Partnerships
- ★ Developing Internal and External Quality Assurance Mechanisms
- ★ Strategic Approach to Quality Tertiary Education and Training in the Caribbean
- ★ Quality Tertiary Education and Training and the Labour Market
- ★ E-Libraries, E-Learning Resources and Distance Learning

Log on to www.bac.gov.bb or www.canqate.org for more information



CANQATE Conference 2009

The theme for this year's

"To be a high quality provider of registration, accreditation and related services in post-secondary or tertiary education and training in Barbados and beyond."