



INSIDE TVET

BARBADOS will next month get its first locally qualified National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) awardees.

In a ceremony scheduled for February 10, approximately 40 candidates who have completed either full NVQs, or units of an NVQ, will be formally recognised as being the first members of Barbados' workforce to demonstrate their occupational competence by completing a work-based qualification that is designed to provide proof of their ability to perform their jobs to internationally-benchmarked standards.

NVQs are based on national occupational standards, which describe the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to undertake a particular task or job to a nationally recognised level of competence. NVQs are awarded to individuals who have demonstrated competence by being assessed against employer-specified occupational standards, in either a real work or realistic working environment.

Included among next month's awardees will be six of the Sandy Lane Hotel's golf turf maintenance staff who have become the first people in Barbados to complete the NVQ in Amenity Horticulture Level 1.

Meanwhile 23 people who have completed customer service training and assessment through the National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE) programme will receive unit recognition for the customer service Level 2 unit: Give Customers a Positive Impression of Yourself and Your Organisation.

In addition, some 16 trained assessors will be awarded the NVQJ Level 4 in Assessment, while four will receive unit recognition for the same NVQJ.

The training and certification of the assessors was once again conducted by the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), Jamaica, in collaboration with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council here.

The NVQ – and its regional equivalent the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) – is a competence-based assessment and certification programme that will serve as the foundation of workforce training and development in Barbados, and throughout CARICOM.

With the introduction of the NVQ system, Barbados is taking steps to ensure the quality of its workers with a workforce development model that has competence-based training, assessment and certification at its core.

Individuals will be able to undertake certification either as part of a training programme in an institution, as part of their employers' in-house training and development programme or as evidence of existing competence or prior learning.

NVQs certify that individuals have met the standards of competent performance for a particular occupational area and level whether it is, for example, in management, customer service, information technology or carpentry.

The NVQ system is in keeping with the international move to focus on human resource development and specifically, revamp worker education and training. This has resulted in the development of national



AMENITY HORTICULTURE (left) and occupational safety and health (above) are two of the areas in which the TVET Council has so far introduced NVQs. (FPs)

A first for Barbados

40 to receive awards at National Vocational Qualification ceremony



THE OTHER occupational areas in which the TVET Council has introduced NVQs are: customer service (below left), bar service, care of the older adult (above), food and drink service (above left), food preparation and cookery (below), housekeeping (left), management and reception. (FPs)



competence-based education and training systems that seek to equip workers with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to meet the needs of the 21st century labour markets.

The NVQ system has several benefits:

- Individuals will have quality assured and portable occupational qualifications that facilitates freedom of movement;
- Employers will benefit from the assurance that they can identify qualified employees;
- Employers can structure more objective plans for staff upgrading and development where skill or performance gaps exist;
- Labour mobility throughout the greater Caribbean Community (CARICOM) labour market will be facilitated by enhancing the transferability of skill. Both employers and individuals are expected to benefit because of the ability to match trained individuals with jobs throughout the CARICOM market; and
- Workforce preparation can be improved. Occupational standards can drive curricula change and bring instructional content in line with the results expected in employment.

The TVET Council has so far introduced NVQs in approximately ten occupational areas including customer service, amenity horticulture, bar service, care of the older adult, food and drink service, food preparation and cookery, housekeeping, occupational safety and health,

management and reception. It will shortly be introducing NVQs in security services and entrepreneurship.

As part of the process, it will also be recruiting occupationally competent individuals to undergo training and certification to serve as assessors.

Assessors – together with the verifiers (that is, moderators) who carry out the quality checks to ensure sound assessment decisions – will form the foundation of a reliable system of quality assurance for Barbados' NVQ programme.

TVET Council's manager, technical services, Wendy McClean, explained: "The integrity and credibility of the NVQ programme is built on three pillars – clear, well defined occupational standards; valid and reliable assessment and robust quality assurance."

Assessors and verifiers are critical to the strength of the latter two pillars. Having assessments being carried out by persons who are trained and certified and having their work verified by occupational experts in the field builds confidence in the NVQ award."

McClean added: "The TVET Council is therefore placing heavy emphasis on the training of NVQ assessors and verifiers. Our goal is to ensure that those persons who meet the national standards of competence for a work role and only those persons are awarded the NVQ."