



Caribbean Area Network for
Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education

**REPORT ON THE
SCOPING STUDY OF
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN
TERTIARY EDUCATION IN
THE CARIBBEAN**

CONTENTS

1	<u>BACKGROUND</u>	1
2	<u>STUDY AIM & OBJECTIVES</u>	3
3	<u>APPROACH TO THE STUDY</u>	4
3.1	DOCUMENTARY REVIEW	4
3.2	SURVEY RESEARCH	4
3.3	UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	5
4	<u>A REVIEW OF THE CARICOM MODEL</u>	6
5	<u>A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS</u>	9
5.1	NATIONAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES IN CARICOM	9
5.2	CARIBBEAN ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY FOR MEDICINE AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS (CAAM-HP)	10
5.3	CARIBBEAN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY (CACET)	11
5.4	GREATER CARIBBEAN ENGINEERING ACCREDITATION SYSTEM (GCREAS)	12
5.5	CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY ACCREDITATION AGENCY FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING	13
5.6	TERRITORIES WHICH HAVE NOT YET FULLY ESTABLISHED NATIONAL EQAAs	13
6	<u>EQAA SURVEY DATA</u>	15
6.1	ESTABLISHMENT, JURISDICTION, RECOGNITION STATUS AND SCOPE	15
6.2	EDUCATION SYSTEMS	17
6.3	HUMAN RESOURCE & FINANCIAL CAPACITY	18
6.3.1	EQAA BOARD	18
6.3.2	FUNDING SOURCES	19
6.3.3	EQAA STAFF	20
6.3.4	ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO EQAAs	20
6.4	GENERAL APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE	21
6.4.1	FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACHES	21
6.4.2	STAKEHOLDER INPUT ON EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROCESSES	22

6.5	EQAA FUNCTIONS – ANALYSIS ON THE DEPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS	23
6.5.1	RE-EVALUATION CYCLES	26
6.5.2	KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION	27
6.5.3	CONSEQUENCES OF EVALUATION DECISIONS	27
6.5.4	MAKING THE FINAL DECISION ON EXTERNAL EVALUATION	28
6.6	EXTERNAL EVALUATOR AND TEAMS	29
6.6.1	SELECTING AND TRAINING EVALUATORS	29
6.7	AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY	31
6.8	EQAA SURVEY SUMMARY	32
7	<u>ASSESSING INSTITUTIONS' PROGRESS ON INTERNAL QUALITY</u>	34
7.1	INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS SURVEY OVERVIEW	34
7.2	INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS SURVEY METHODOLOGY	34
7.3	INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS SURVEY FINDINGS	35
7.3.1	SURVEY PARTICIPANTS	35
7.3.2	ESTABLISHING QUALITY ASSURANCE DEPARTMENTS AND RECRUITING QA PERSONNEL	36
7.3.3	USING INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY FOR EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL EVALUATION	37
7.3.4	SUBMITTING TO EXTERNAL EVALUATION BY EQAAs IN CARICOM	37
7.3.5	INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS ON BROAD EVALUATIVE THEMES OF INTERNAL QUALITY	38
7.4	INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS SURVEY SUMMARY	40
8	<u>THE WAY FORWARD - PLAN OF ACTION FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES (EQAAS) IN CARICOM</u>	41
8.1	EQAA GOVERNANCE	41
8.2	EQAA FUNCTIONS	41
8.3	EQAA FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES	43
8.3.1	FINANCIAL RESOURCES	43
8.3.2	HUMAN RESOURCES	43
8.4	EXTERNAL EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES	43
8.5	REGIONAL COORDINATING MECHANISM FOR OVERSIGHT AND STANDARD SETTING	45

8.6	STRATEGIES FOR ACTION	46
8.7	ACTION PLAN LOG FRAME	47
9	<u>APPENDICES</u>	53
1.	<u>THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL [AGENCY] BILL NO. 2002</u>	1
2.	ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS	1
24.	<u>A BILL</u>	2
25.	<u>PART III</u>	10
26.	<u>PART IV</u>	12

CANQATE acknowledges the financial support received from UNESCO in the execution of this project.

CANQATE also acknowledges the work of a member of the Network, Mr Jason Stafford, and all participants and contributors to this study including the Heads of all External Quality Assurance Agencies that participated, faculty members and staff at various tertiary institutions, senior public officials and others involved in the work of tertiary education throughout the Caribbean.

1 BACKGROUND

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was established in 1973 and consists of fifteen member countries brought together by a shared colonial history and a commitment to leverage regional integration to improve the standards of living, promote and sustain development, and enhance the region's global competitiveness. In 1989, Caribbean governments agreed to the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and placed priority on increasing access to quality higher education and removing obstacles to intra-regional movement of skilled persons. While these developments were occurring within the Caribbean region, several global trends converged to propel the expansion and internationalisation of tertiary education. Globalisation and the Information Communication Technology (ICT) revolution made the accumulation and application of high level knowledge critically important to economic development and global competitiveness. Tertiary education came to be viewed as necessary for building technical and professional capacity. This study focuses on the response of the Caribbean to tertiary education quality assurance in a context where national and regional economic growth and development potentials are now seen as inextricably linked to the efficiency and effectiveness of the education sectors in countries of the CARICOM region.

The education systems in the majority of CARICOM territories are heavily influenced by the British and consist of primary education (typically for ages 5-12 years old), secondary education (for ages 11 to 17 years old) and two years of advanced secondary education (typically from ages 16 – 19 years old). Successful graduates of advanced secondary education enter universities or colleges to pursue bachelor's degrees for a period of three to four years. Some school-leavers may also enter colleges that offer associate degrees or diploma programmes. In many CARICOM countries traditional universities which offer bachelor's and postgraduate degrees, exist alongside technical institutes and community colleges that offer associate degrees, certificates and diplomas. Some articulation agreements have been developed over time which allow students to transfer credits for those programmes towards a three or four-year bachelor's degree.

The regional focus on tertiary education in the past quarter century has seen rapid growth of tertiary education provision including the expansion of longstanding tertiary institutions, new indigenous public and private entities, off-shore universities from the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, small specialised institutes offering high-demand programmes, and a variety of other collaborative

partnerships between local and foreign institutions. Specifically, there are six major public universities in CARICOM - The University of the West Indies (UWI) which has major campuses in Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and an Open (Distance Education) Campus; the University of Guyana; University of Technology, Jamaica; Anton von Kom University, Suriname; University of Belize and the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT). There are also a significant number of publicly funded community colleges and teacher training colleges. More recently there has been an explosion in private off-shore and on-shore universities and other for-profit non-university tertiary institutions offering transnational franchised programmes.

The expansion has presented many opportunities for Caribbean people but also many challenges. Governments of the region have become increasingly concerned about the nature and performance of their tertiary education systems as they seek to establish measures to ensure greater accountability for the use of scarce resources. Quality assurance mechanisms must now focus not only on local and regional institutions offering indigenous programmes but also on a number of cross-border arrangements.

In 2002, a decision was made by regional governments to give priority to the establishment of autonomous national accreditation bodies in all CARICOM member states. This scoping study is being conducted in a context where regional leaders envisaged a network of External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) that was expected to develop common standards and measures for quality assurance and accreditation. The focus was twofold – to provide a strong regulatory framework to protect stakeholders of tertiary education from poor quality and to facilitate a culture of continuous quality improvement through robust internal quality management systems within regional institutions. The study focuses on the implementation of this network of EQAAs, including the current landscape of higher education quality assurance organisations and their existing gaps; their impact on the internal quality systems of tertiary institutions; and the way forward to strengthen and improve quality assurance systems in the region.

2 STUDY AIM & OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the study assesses the extent to which countries within CARICOM have been able to establish robust External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) within their respective jurisdictions. It fleshes out the nature of agencies where they exist, particularly their jurisdiction and scope of operations, recognition status, functions and general approach, funding and human resource capacity, and accountability arrangements. It describes the current landscape and in doing so it attempts to analyse how the actual implementation has met the initial goals for the regional tertiary education quality assurance system. How has the implementation influenced institutional improvements and what is the way forward for regional tertiary education quality assurance. The study achieves this through the following:

- i. An assessment of the current status of quality assurance organisation(s) in the Caribbean region, including a desktop review and analysis of the relevant literature.
- ii. A gap analysis on the deployment of quality assurance systems in CARICOM countries against the model proposed by CARICOM
- iii. An impact assessment of tertiary education quality assurance activities in the Caribbean region based on the feedback of quality assurance professionals located in a range of diverse tertiary institutions throughout CARICOM
- iv. A plan which discusses strategies and recommendations for future actions to benchmark and improve deployment of quality assurance systems in the region

3 APPROACH TO THE STUDY

In performing the work of the scoping study the project limited its review to member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The specific countries which were targeted in the study included Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Specifically, the project adopted an approach of methodological triangulation which included documentary review, survey research, and unstructured interviews.

3.1 Documentary Review

A desktop review and analysis of existing literature were conducted to provide a background to develop the survey instruments used in the study as well as to contextualise the work based on the body of knowledge and documents developed by other practitioners and researchers who have and continue to study tertiary education quality assurance in small states particularly those within the Caribbean. This review included published reports by CARICOM on the implementation of accreditation bodies in the region; draft and enacted legislation on tertiary education quality assurance in CARICOM territories; and articles and conference presentations on appropriate models for tertiary education quality assurance in small states.

3.2 Survey Research

Two online data collection instruments were developed and administered to support this study. The major instrument was distributed to the Heads of the twelve known EQAAs operating within the CARICOM region. These were administered over the period 13-26 December 2013 to EQAA heads or their designates. That survey focused on issues related to EQAAs' jurisdiction and scope of operations, recognition status, functions and general approach, funding and human resource capacity, external evaluators and panels, and accountability arrangements.

Additionally a second instrument was administered to 210 institutional personnel directly involved in quality assurance and improvement activities at 85 tertiary institutions throughout the 14 territories included in this

study. The sample for this survey was selected from among the membership of the Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) and the Quality Professionals Forum (QPF). CANQATE is an association of tertiary institutions, EQAAs, and quality assurance professionals involved in quality assurance and accreditation activities in the Caribbean while QPF is a virtual membership platform for regional quality assurance professionals and institutional personnel involved in quality assurance and accreditation activities to share resources and best practice on tertiary education quality. This survey asked participants a range of questions related to their institution's quality assurance and improvement activity. Participants were also asked to rate their institution's progress on several quality indicators related to five broad evaluative themes. These indicators were adapted from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Review and Improvement Model (RIM), and the institutional accreditation criteria of current EQAAs in CARICOM.

3.3 Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured telephone interviews were held with some EQAA heads or their representatives, and senior ministry officials in CARICOM territories where no formal EQAA had been established to clarify existing documents and other information on the operations in the respective CARICOM territories. Interview questions focused on the challenges and successes of implementing national quality assurance systems, existing gaps in implementation and the way forward for regional QA.

4 A REVIEW OF THE CARICOM MODEL

While formal systems for external quality assurance of higher education have existed for over a century in some jurisdictions, systems in the Caribbean are far less mature. In 2002, CARICOM through the Council on Human and Social Development (COHSOD) took a decision to give priority to the establishment of autonomous national accreditation bodies in member states. Such bodies would serve to provide the basis for the recognition of qualifications across the region and so facilitate the free movement of skills within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). Draft legislation was proposed by the Caribbean Community Secretariat which would allow governments of the region to set broad expectations for External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAAs) while giving them the autonomy to define details for standard setting, evaluation, and monitoring institutional quality.

A review of the model legislation proposed by CARICOM provides a sound starting point to assess the level of implementation of EQAAs within the region. The legislation provided a blueprint from which territories would follow. At its foundation the legislation envisaged that national bodies would be established as semi-autonomous corporate entities. Arguably this would allow the EQAA to be insulated from the political directorate in its work and judgments. CARICOM envisaged that the network of EQAAs would develop common standards and measures for quality assurance and accreditation and for assessing the equivalence of qualifications across the region. A common approach to tertiary education would provide the basis for mutual recognition of qualifications and so facilitate the free movement of skills within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). This was further emphasized by CARICOM in its decision to establish a regional coordinating body to promote harmonization.

Given the small population size of the countries, and the unique characteristics of the tertiary education systems, the legislation proposed multiple functions for regional EQAAs. In other jurisdictions such functions are usually performed by different agencies, both public and private. The CARICOM model legislation proposed several broad functions for national EQAAs including:

1. Institutional Registration

Intended for new institutions seeking to enter the local tertiary education sector, this regulatory function positions the EQAA as a gate keeper to the tertiary education sector in its jurisdiction. It ensures that minimum

standards are established and maintained by all institutions seeking to operate, it protects the public from poor quality education, and safeguards the reputation of tertiary education in the region. In a context where several institutions had been operating without a formal quality assurance system both new and existing institutions were expected to subject themselves to an evaluation for Institutional Registration once the legislation came into effect.

2. Programme Approval

This is also a regulatory function which was prescribed in the model legislation. It empowered the EQAA to evaluate and grant approval for the introduction of new programmes by institutions operating in each national jurisdiction.

3. Specialised Accreditation

The legislation also proposed that the EQAA perform specialised or programmatic accreditation. Specialised accreditation is usually related to an area of professional practice in which graduates require a licence to practice and its evaluation should be aligned to the work of professional bodies. The inclusion of this function and not institutional accreditation seemed counterintuitive since this required specific expertise in several disciplines. The function of institutional accreditation seemed more appropriate to national EQAAs since it considers the holistic characteristics of the institution and evaluates the organisational capacity to deliver quality education in several disciplines or fields while specialised accreditation focuses its attention on a particular educational programme within a specific field.

4. Conferment of Institutional Title

Within the model legislation titles such as a university, tertiary college, polytechnic, community college, technical college and technical university were protected. The legislation empowered the EQAA to evaluate institutions seeking to carry these titles and determine whether the title should be carried by the institution.

5. Recognition of Foreign or Transnational Institutions, Awarding Bodies and Programmes

The legislation envisaged the need to address cross-border arrangements and proposed that the EQAA be empowered to evaluate and recognise transnational institutions and awarding bodies which were seeking to operate or offer qualifications in their jurisdiction. It also sought to establish the EQAA as the authority to review and provide advice to the state on the recognition of all qualifications earned abroad.

6. Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications

Related to the issue of recognition, the model legislation also empowered the EQAA to evaluate and determine the equivalence of foreign programmes and qualifications in accordance with the regional qualifications framework. This is of particular significance to CARICOM as many persons migrate to Europe and North America to pursue foreign qualifications with the intention of returning to the region to participate in the workplace and economy.

7. Facilitation of Free Movement in the CSME

A major catalyst for the decision to establish EQAAs in each CARICOM territory was the introduction of the CSME and naturally the model legislation also proposed that the EQAA would facilitate free movement of skilled persons throughout the region. In establishing the CSME regional governments agreed that suitably qualified nationals would be able to move freely throughout the region for work. It was recognised that some mechanism would be required to evaluate the qualifications of persons seeking to move unencumbered throughout the region, to determine whether they were eligible to do so. Naturally, as the authority for recognising and assessing qualifications, the EQAA was also empowered to perform this function.

8. Development of a Unified Credit-based System for the Tertiary Education Sector

The legislation recognised the need for national and regional qualifications frameworks which would facilitate articulation agreements and mobility across the region's tertiary institutions. It would also help employers compare the wide variety of qualifications which persons may hold throughout the region – giving them a common sense of their worth in terms of the skills and competencies holders are likely to possess. This was not an evaluation function for the EQAA but a mandate to work with relevant stakeholders to develop an appropriate Regional Qualifications Framework.

5 A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

5.1 National External Quality Assurance Agencies in CARICOM

The wide range of functions proposed in the CARICOM model legislation has presented significant resource challenges for many of the CARICOM territories. Several EQAA leaders have argued that as a consequence of the limited resources available to the regional territories, they should concentrate their efforts only on a few critical functions. Discussions with current leaders suggest that even the shortened range of functions which many of them now perform required significant resources which are still not readily available. They agree however that many of these functions are pivotal if small states like those in CARICOM were to develop their education sectors and leverage them for growth and development.

The challenge for the small states like those in CARICOM is to develop a model that is rigorous but at the same time implementable and affordable. Conceptually, the CARICOM model recognised the need for a comprehensive and rigorous model. They envisaged sweeping changes to the tertiary education quality assurance landscape. In it EQAAs were positioned as super agencies able to address a range of challenges faced by the regional tertiary education sector. Most would agree that having an integrated and comprehensive EQAA is an appropriate model for small states like those in CARICOM. Many organisations which can carry some of the proposed functions were either fragmented or simply do not exist. In a context of limited resources the rationale to avoid duplication and leverage economies of scale seemed an extremely attractive one. However the CARICOM model may have gone too far in proposing a range of functions that were not all feasible for national EQAAs.

The challenges to implementation were becoming evident by the slow pace with which EQAAs were being established and also in the ways in which their legislation and establishment had varied from the CARICOM model. The model had included some gaps which required clarity and was less affordable or implementable for most of the territories. Trinidad and Tobago was one of the first territories to enact the CARICOM-aligned legislation and establish its EQAA. In enacting its legislation Trinidad and Tobago included Institutional Accreditation as one of the EQAA's functions. It included a mandatory deadline by which all existing institutions were to be evaluated and awarded Institutional Registration. Institutions which failed to meet this

deadline faced strict penalties including the risk of closure. This legislation would now influence several that followed in other territories. By 2008 almost six years after CARICOM proposed the establishment of EQAAs in all territories seven states had established national bodies: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Most territories had gone the route of establishing EQAAs as independent corporate bodies accountable to the state through the Parliament. Where corporate bodies were established there were some variations in the composition of the governing Councils or Boards and the roles that Governments would play in the evaluation decisions of EQAAs. The composition of some governing Boards demonstrated a commitment to wide stakeholder representation while others were limited to government appointees and senior public servants. Some of the EQAA's maintained independence from government in their approaches and evaluation decisions while others were only empowered to make recommendations to the political directorate, Most EQAAs were not staffed adequately or in some cases provided with even threadbare budgets with which to operate. In general, what emerged was a selective application of the CARICOM model where prioritisation of the functions included in any particular national legislation depended on the specific internal dynamics in that territory and the resources available to perform the functions envisaged by CARICOM. This had proved that the CARICOM model was flawed both in the range of functions it conceptualized and also in the support and guidance it provided to territories as they sought to implement the broad CARICOM mandate.

Five years later in 2013 only two more EQAAs have been established. There are now nine national EQAAs within CARICOM – Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Dominica. The EQAA survey data presented in the following section of this report fleshes out in detail the level of implementation with respect to each of these national bodies.

5.2 Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Medicine and other Health Professions (CAAM-HP)

In 2001 the practice of accrediting overseas institutions was discontinued by the General Medical Council (GMC) of the UK in keeping with European Union (EU) regulations regarding academic and professional training programmes. The medical education programme of the University of the West Indies (UWI), the major

regional institution offering medical education, would no longer be quality assured. The reputation of the UWI programme and its many regional and international graduates would be negatively affected as a result.

In response to these developments and the regional thrust to ensure quality education and training in the context of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), a regional accreditation system for medical education was established. Thus, the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP) was launched under the aegis of CARICOM in 2004 to accredit the education programmes of medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, nursing and other health professions in CARICOM member states. Currently there are eleven medical programmes, a veterinary programme, and a dentistry programme accredited by CAAM-HP across the CARICOM region.

5.3 Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET)

In 1989 the Washington Accord was signed among national bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programmes. The Washington Accord (WA) recognized the equivalency of member accreditation systems and the competency of graduates from programmes accredited by those member EQAAs. Generally, the signatories of the WA are limited to larger, more developed countries and economies. Currently, there are no Latin American or Caribbean countries who are signatories to the WA. This has to a large extent driven efforts in the Caribbean to develop robust EQAAs for engineering programmes. In a context where the ability of countries to sell their products and attract foreign investments in key areas depends on its ability to demonstrate its engineering and technical capacity.

The Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET) was officially established in 2009 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, at a meeting of members of the Caribbean engineering fraternity, the national accreditation agencies in the region, academics from regional universities, and representatives of CARICOM. Subsequently, the CARICOM Heads of Governments formally agreed to recognise CACET as the regional accreditation body for engineering and related technology academic programmes. This was the culmination of several years advocacy by academics and professional engineers in the region.

CACET was operationalized with financial and technical support from the Educational Activities Board of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), and its early stages of operations benefitted from contributions and grants from other independent bodies. CACET also received support from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) based in the United States. Fees from its evaluation activities now largely cover its current operations.

In its short time of operations CACET has demonstrated its capacity to work within the existing structures - engaging in joint visits and evaluations with the national agencies in the region and international accreditation bodies which still evaluate some regional institutions like UWI, UTT and UTECH. To date CACET has accredited 13 engineering programmes in the CARICOM region. Its focus at this time is to gain sufficient experience and recognition to become part of the Washington Accord.

5.4 Greater Caribbean Engineering Accreditation System (GCREAS)

Around the same time that CACET was being established, the Greater Caribbean Engineering Accreditation System (GCREAS) was also established to accredit engineering and related academic programmes in the wider Caribbean and Latin America. GCREAS was established based on collaboration among a number of institutions and EQAAs in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Panama, Colombia and others in the wider Latin American region.

Its establishment occurred in the context of the Engineers for the Americas (EFTA) initiative which was conceptualised in response to the need for the region to access the benefits of the Washington Accord. The EFTA's specific goals are to build technical capacity in engineering for Latin America and the Caribbean. GCREAS's establishment was financed with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) with additional sponsorship by private international entities. GCREAS has not yet accredited any engineering programmes in CARICOM but is currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CACET to coordinate their quality assurance activities for engineering programmes within CARICOM.

5.5 Caribbean Community Accreditation Agency for Education and Training

There is also an Inter-governmental CARICOM Agreement to establish the Caribbean Community Accreditation Agency for Education and Training. The intent of the initiative is to establish a regional coordinating body for national EQAAs within CARICOM that would function similarly to the way the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) both function in the United States of America and Europe respectively. The main functions of the regional body will be to:

- Develop guidelines for good practice in tertiary education to assist national accreditation bodies in discharging their responsibilities
- Develop core criteria, standards and procedures for facilitating the further development of a tertiary education quality assurance system in CARICOM
- Collaborate with national accreditation bodies, professional bodies and other relevant bodies to develop training programmes designed to create a regional cadre of trained external evaluators
- Co-ordinate tertiary education accreditation initiatives in the region, including establishing a code of good practice for specialised agencies and professional bodies to maintain the integrity of the quality assurance system in CARICOM
- Provide guidance or guidelines for the evaluation of foreign qualifications

Some Heads of Government have been slow to sign the agreement and to date less than half of the 15 member states have signed. This has occurred in a context where several CARICOM member states have experienced economic hardship since 2008 and are reluctant to commit to the financial responsibility in establishing and maintaining such a body.

5.6 Territories which have not yet fully established national EQAAs

Some territories have all been extremely slow to establish EQAAs. Belize, Bahamas and Grenada passed legislation in 2004, 2008 and 2011 respectively but have not yet established national EQAAs. Belize was early to enact the CARICOM-aligned legislation but changes in leadership within the Government ministry with

oversight responsibility for tertiary education and a general lack of capacity on the island have impacted the pace of implementation. A committee was established over a year ago and has been working on a plan to revise the legislation and operationalize the EQAA.

Due to its close proximity to the USA, the Bahamas has been able to have some of its institutions and programmes evaluated by specialised and regional accreditation bodies in the USA. Additionally, courses offered in some specialized areas are evaluated locally. For example the territory has a strong nursing council which determines the standards for nursing qualifications, and evaluates institutions which offer those programmes. The ability to secure arrangements with reputable USA-based EQAAs to evaluate programmes in the Bahamas might help explain the slow pace with which government has moved to establish a national body.

In Grenada the legislation establishing the EQAA was enacted in 2011 and a Board has been appointed. Since June 2013 the Board has been working and planning on operationalizing the EQAA. A draft Bill was developed in St Lucia but no legislation has been enacted by Parliament to establish a national system for tertiary education quality assurance and accreditation. There exists however a department within the Ministry of Education that has had responsibility for developing quality assurance policies and practices. A draft implementation plan was developed to guide the way forward towards establishing the EQAA but this has been under review by senior government officials for over a year now. St Lucia recently had a change of government and some of the previous efforts were paused as the new administration sets its own priorities for the local tertiary education sector.

Montserrat is still British territory even though the local government exercises significant autonomy. In 1995 the island was hit by a major volcanic eruption which forced major evacuations and reduced the population to below 6000 persons. In 2007 the island enacted legislation to establish the Higher Education Advisory Board which was developed to accept applications from institutions for a licence to operate as a tertiary institution in Montserrat. The Board comprises ministry officials with oversight for education in Montserrat. It is also empowered to offer accreditation to institutions which are not otherwise accredited or wish to do so in Montserrat. Since its establishment the Board has approved the application of an offshore medical school but the school has since relocated to another island.

6 EQAA SURVEY DATA

The Heads of the twelve EQAAs currently operating within CARICOM were invited to participate in a survey administered electronically over the period 13-26 December 2013. The survey contained forty-four questions and collected data on issues related to EQAAs' jurisdiction, recognition status and legislation, education systems, functions and general approach to quality assurance, funding and human resource capacity, external evaluators and panels, and accountability arrangements. Ten of the twelve EQAAs operating within CARICOM participated in the survey. When the survey closed GCREAS and CAAM-HP had not completed the data collection instrument.

The discussions, presentation tables and charts in this report are based on the information provided by EQAAs in the survey. Most responses are disaggregated by the EQAA in each jurisdiction to give a detailed picture of the landscape. The responses which requested an opinion from the EQAA Head are presented in summary only to protect their anonymity. EQAAs responded to all questions which were applicable to them. Following a preliminary review of the findings follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify some areas of ambiguity which may have been as a result of the generalised instrument developed for this study.

6.1 Establishment, Jurisdiction, Recognition Status and Scope

Nine (9) of the 15 CARICOM member states have established EQAAs with oversight for all tertiary institutions and programmes in their respective countries. The Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET) has its jurisdiction in the English-speaking Caribbean and its scope is limited to only tertiary institutions and programmes in engineering and technology related fields.

UCJ in Jamaica is the oldest EQAA in the region having been established in 1987. SKNAB in St Kitts and Nevis also predates the CARICOM legislation and was established in 2001. The most recent EQAA to be established in the region is NOVA in Suriname which was operationalized in 2011.

Name of EQAA	Jurisdiction	Establishment Type	Establishment Year	Recognition Status	Legislation Enacted	EQAA Scope
Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2004	Legislation	2004	All tertiary institutions, programmes
Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2008	Legislation	2006	All tertiary institutions, programmes
Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2004	Legislation	2004	All tertiary institutions, programmes
Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET)	Regionally (English speaking Caribbean)	Supranational non-profit Agency	2009	State authorities & HEIs but no legislation	-	Tertiary institutions, programmes in a specific field
Dominica National Accreditation Board (DNAB)	Internationally (only operates in Dominica)	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2009	Legislation	2006	All tertiary institutions, programmes
Guyana National Accreditation Council (GNAC)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2006	Legislation	2004	All tertiary institutions, programmes
National Accreditation Board St. Vincent and the Grenadines (NABSVG)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2006	Legislation	2006	All tertiary institutions, programmes
National Body for Accreditation (NOVA)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	2011	Legislation	2008	All tertiary institutions, programmes
St Kitts & Nevis Accreditation Board (SKNAB)	Nationally	Statutory Board	2001	Legislation	1999	All tertiary institutions, programmes
The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ)	Nationally	Quasi-autonomous National Agency	1987	Legislation	1987	All tertiary institutions, programmes

Table 1 - Jurisdiction, Recognition Status, and Scope of CARICOM EQAAs

6.2 Education Systems

Private non-university Tertiary Level Institutions (TLIs) account for the largest group of institutions in the region. They offer a wide range of programmes from diplomas and associate degrees up to doctoral degrees in some instances. BAC in Barbados, ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago, and UCJ in Jamaica have the largest number of institutions operating within their respective national jurisdictions at 100, 87 and 47 respectively. CACET a regional specialised accreditation body estimates there are about 55 institutions in the region which offer engineering or technology type programmes that come under their oversight.

	Private Universities	Private Non-University TLIs	Public Universities	Public Non-University TLI	Total
Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT)	1	80	2	1	84
Antigua and Barbuda National Accreditation Board (ABNAB)	3	.	.	4	7
Barbados Accreditation Council (BAC)	.	95	1	4	100
Caribbean Accreditation Council for Engineering and Technology (CACET)	1	50	2	2	55
Dominica National Accreditation Board (DNAB)	2	.	1	1	4
Guyana National Accreditation Council (GNAC)	5	12	1	11	29
National Accreditation Board St. Vincent and the Grenadines (NABSVG)	4	10	1	2	17
Suriname National Body for Accreditation (NOVA)	.	6	1	5	12
St Kitts & Nevis Accreditation Board (SKNAB)	6	4	2	.	12
The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ)	1	23	2	21	47

Table 2- Institutions subject to oversight by EQAAs

6.3 Human Resource & Financial Capacity

6.3.1 EQAA Board

All EQAAs in CARICOM are governed by a Board or Council. The number of members on each EQAA Board in the region ranges from 7 to 16. Most EQAA Boards include representatives from government, tertiary institutions, industry and professional bodies. No EQAA boards in CARICOM include student representatives. As a regional specialised accreditation body CACET has representatives from CARICOM and CANQATE on its Board. Notably the governing body of SKNAB in St Kitts and Nevis is made up of government representatives and representatives of public tertiary institutions only.

	Total Members	Government	Tertiary Institutions	Student	Professional Bodies	Labour Organisations	Industry Business	National Training Agency	CANQATE	CARICOM
ACTT	10	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
ABNAB	7	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
BAC	9	✓				✓	✓			
CACET	14		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
DNAB	8	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
GNAC	11	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		
NABSVG	16	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
NOVA	9	✓	✓				✓			
SKNAB	7	✓	✓							
UCJ	15	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		

Table 3 – Composition of EQAA Boards

6.3.2 Funding Sources

Regionally, EQAAs receive the bulk of their funding from Government. UCJ in Jamaica is the only EQAA in the region which reports that it receives less than 50% of funding from the state. This is followed by ACTT with 70%. BAC, NABSVG, and SKNAB in Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Kitts and Nevis respectively all receive 100% of their funding from Government.

In all the territories evaluation fees are heavily subsidised or free. Jamaica has the advantage of a relatively sizable tertiary sector and a large portfolio of affiliated institutions which allows that EQAA to collect more than half of its revenue from affiliation fees. ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago and BAC in Barbados also have relatively large sectors but have been in operation for a much shorter period than the UCJ. The tertiary education sectors in most of the other territories are too small to sustain the EQAA's operations on evaluation and affiliation fees alone. However, complete reliance on government funding potentially restricts the ability of the EQAA to act independently and to pursue its own strategic direction even when it legislation allows it to do so. This might be particularly so for Barbados which has fairly robust legislation guarding its autonomy but relies totally on Government for all its funding

	Government Funding	Affiliation Fees	Evaluation Fees	Non-Governmental Grants	Other Funding Sources
ACTT	70	10	20	0	0
ABNAB	95	0	0	0	5
BAC	100	0	0	0	0
CACET	0	0	20	50	30
DNAB	80	0	20	0	0
GNAC	70	30	0	0	0
NABSVG	100	0	0	0	0
NOVA	80	0	20	0	0
SKNAB	100	0	0	0	0
UCJ	44	55	1	0	0

Table 4 - Funding Sources for CARICOM EQAAs

6.3.3 EQAA staff

ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago has the largest staff of all EQAAs in the region with 54 fulltime staff members. This is followed by UCJ in Jamaica and BAC in Barbados with 20 and 17 fulltime staff members respectively. All other EQAAs have less than 5 fulltime staff members. The amount of competent staff in each area is an important indicator of the extent to which the EQAA has adequate human resources to perform its functions.

	Management staff	Administrative staff	Technical staff	Research staff	Other staff	Total EQAA staff
ACTT	7	20	20	2	5	54
ABNAB	1	1	0	0	0	2
BAC	1	3	5	0	9	17
CACET	0	0	0	0	0	0
DNAB	1	1	0	0	0	2
GNAC	1	2	0	0	1	4
NABSVG	1	1	0	0	0	2
NOVA	2	1	0	0	0	3
SKNAB	0	1	0	0	0	1
UCJ	4	4	6	0	6	20

Table 5 - Fulltime Staff Employed at CARICOM EQAAs

6.3.4 Adequacy of Resources Available to EQAAs

When asked to rate the adequacy of their available resources, 70% of EQAA Heads say that human resources are inadequate to perform functions as well as to develop policies, processes, and criteria. Most also believe that the financial resources are inadequate. One of the major challenges for tertiary education quality assurance in the region is the problem of human resource capacity and financial resources. Overall the sector is not sufficiently large both in terms of institutions and learners to sustain EQAAs without public funding. However, governments are often required to make several financial and political decisions which are not always aligned with the work of the EQAA. For example the drive by regional governments to increase tertiary education provision can potentially be in conflict with some of the specific concerns of EQAAs who function as gatekeepers to the sector. In this context, if the desire to facilitate expansion of access to tertiary education is

over-emphasised by governments, their willingness to fund EQAAs will naturally be less enthusiastic in the pursuit of ‘quantity over quality’.

It is for this reason that the roles played by government (as investor in higher education for national development) and EQAAs which have responsibility for independent evaluation and judgement on quality must be separated as far as possible. The issue presents a major challenge for EQAAs in small states like those in CARICOM.

	Adequate		Somewhat Adequate		Inadequate		Very Inadequate	
The EQAA has sufficient staff in all areas to perform all its evaluation functions	1	10%	2	20%	2	20%	5	50%
The EQAA has sufficient staff in all areas to develop its policies, processes, criteria, and standards	1	10%	2	20%	4	40%	3	30%
The EQAA has sufficient financial resources to perform all its evaluation functions	2	20%	1	10%	3	30%	4	40%
The EQAA has sufficient financial resources to develop its policies, processes, criteria and standards	3	30%	1	10%	4	40%	2	20%

Table 6 - EQAA Heads assess the adequacy of their available resources

6.4 General Approach to Quality Assurance

6.4.1 Frame of reference for Quality Assurance Approaches

EQAAs in CARICOM have drawn primarily from the European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs), USA Regional Accreditation Systems, INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice, and the CARICOM model legislation to develop the quality assurance systems in their respective jurisdictions. A review of the approaches, criteria and processes adopted by regional EQAAs points to areas of similarity with both the USA Regional Accreditation System and the European ESGs. Two areas are particularly noteworthy. The institutional accreditation process by most CARICOM EQAAs incorporates self-assessment, site-visit, evaluation reports, and follow-up action. There is also a notable regulatory aspect in most regional processes that restricts the use of protected institutional titles and regulates entry by new tertiary education providers.

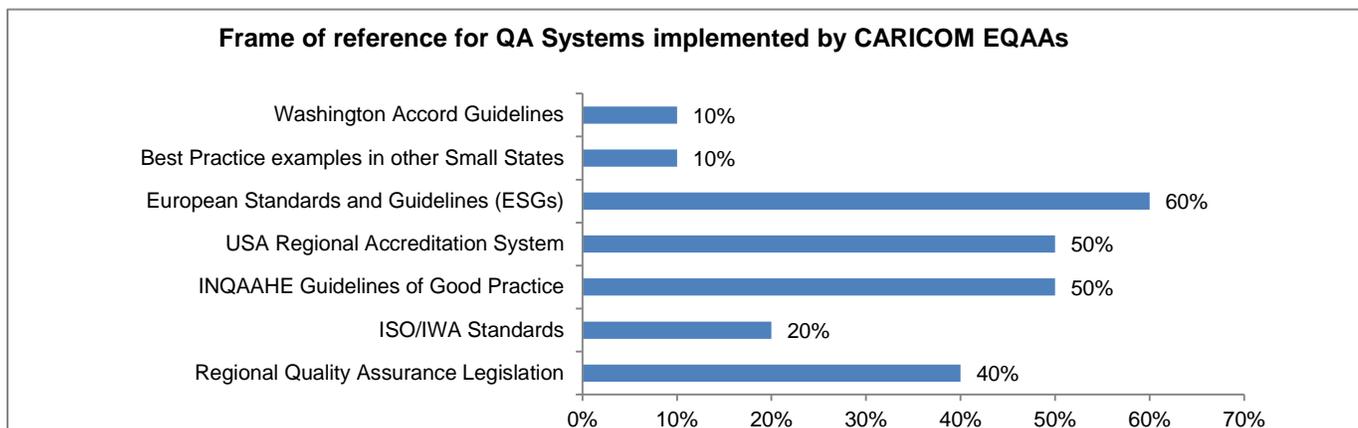


Figure 1 - Frame of reference for CARICOM QA systems

6.4.2 Stakeholder Input on Evaluation Criteria and Processes

All EQAAs formally invite institutions to provide input when developing their criteria, and processes. Ninety percent (90%) of them also invite industry representatives and professional associations. Only 40% of them invite student representatives to provide input. Among all the EQAAs their Board or Council makes the final decision on the criteria, standards and processes to be used. These are always published and available to stakeholders prior to commencement of any evaluation which EQAAs conduct.

	Student Representatives	EQAAs or EQAA Associations	Tertiary Institutions	Government	Industry Representatives	Labour Organisations	Professional Associations	Regulatory Bodies
ACTT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
ABNAB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
BAC		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CACET			✓		✓		✓	✓
DNAB	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
GNAC		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
NABSVG		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
NOVA	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
SKNAB		✓	✓					
UCJ		✓	✓		✓		✓	

Table 7 - Groups formally invited to provide input by EQAAs when developing Criteria, Standards & Processes

6.5 EQAA functions – Analysis on the Deployment of National Quality Assurance Systems

The model legislation developed by CARICOM proposed several functions to be performed by EQAAs in each territory. Currently most EQAAs within CARICOM only perform a portion of those functions. The most common functions performed include Institutional Registration (a regulatory evaluation to ensure minimum standards which is mandatory for institutions in several territories), Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, Equivalence Assessment (both are usually for expatriates or returning nationals seeking employment in the territory), and CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment (for CARICOM citizens seeking to move freely through the region for employment purposes).

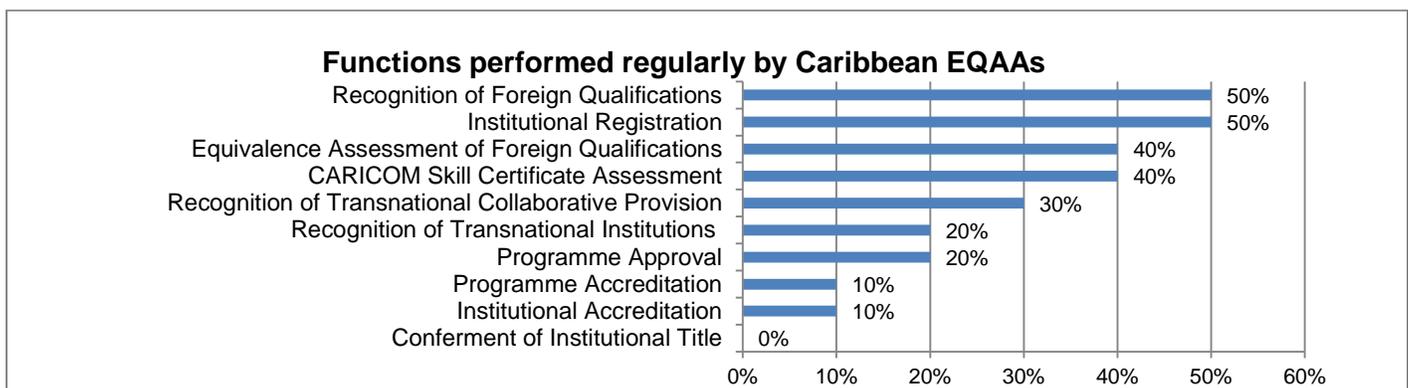


Figure 2 - Functions regularly performed by national EQAAs in CARICOM

ACTT, UCJ and BAC perform the most functions of all EQAAs in CARICOM while SKNAB only performs institutional accreditation. EQAAs like DNAB, ABNAB, NABSVG and NOVA are in a nascent stage of development and only perform a very limited range of functions. Those EQAAs which have been most recently established have given emphasis to functions related to cross border protection and facilitating the free movement of skilled persons throughout the CSME.

ABNAB in Antigua and Barbuda currently only performs Institutional Registration, CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment, Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications.

DNAB in Dominica does not perform the regulatory function of Institutional Registration but currently performs Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision, CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment, Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. DNAB's emphasis has also been on cross border protection and facilitating the CSME but the EQAA intends to perform most of its other CARICOM prescribed functions (including Institutional Accreditation) in the near future.

GNAC in Guyana does not intend to perform Institutional Accreditation as it was excluded from its legislation. However, GNAC plans to conduct programme accreditation in the near future. GNAC currently only performs Institutional Registration, Transnational Collaborative Provision, Programme Approval, Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, and Recognition of Transnational Institutions.

NABSVG in St Vincent and the Grenadines currently performs Institutional Registration, Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision, Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. Like other emerging EQAAs in the region NABSVG intends to expand its functions to most of those prescribed in the CARICOM model but its emphasis at this time has been primarily on cross border protection and regulating entry into the local tertiary education sector.

NOVA in Suriname like GNAC in Guyana intends to give emphasis to Programme Accreditation and not Institutional Accreditation. Currently NOVA only performs Programme Accreditation, Transnational Collaborative Provision, Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, and Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications.

SKNAB in St Kitts and Nevis only conducts Institutional Accreditation as its legislation predates the CARICOM model. Its focus has been particularly on cross-border protection as many off-shore universities have established major campuses in St Kitts and Nevis. SKNAB offers accreditation primarily to off-shore institutions seeking to operate on the island. None of the other evaluation functions prescribed by the CARICOM model are performed by this EQAA

CACET is a specialised body which only conducts Programme Accreditation. It has been doing this since its establishment four years ago. ACTT is the only national EQAA in the region that currently performs all the evaluation functions prescribed in the CARICOM model legislation in addition to Institutional Accreditation. UCJ in Jamaica and BAC in Barbados both perform most of those functions also. Comparatively these three EQAAs are the only ones which can be described as fully functional.

	ACTT	ABNAB	BAC	CACET	DNAB	GNAC	NABSVG	NOVA	SKNAB	UCJ
Institutional Registration	Regularly	Regularly	Regularly	Not in EQAA Scope	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly	Occasionally	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly
Institutional Accreditation	Occasionally	Not Currently	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Not Currently	not in EQAA scope	Not Currently	Not Currently	Regularly	Occasionally
Programme Accreditation	Occasionally	Not Currently	Not Currently	Occasionally	Not Currently	Not Currently	Not Currently	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly
Conferment of Institutional Title	Rarely	Not In EQAA Scope	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Not Currently	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Not Currently
Programme Approval	Regularly	Rarely	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Not Currently	Regularly	Not Currently	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Not Currently
Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision	Regularly	Rarely	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly	Regularly	Occasionally	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Rarely
CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment	Occasionally	Regularly	Regularly	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly	Not Currently	Not Currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly
Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications	Regularly	Occasionally	Regularly	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly	Not Currently	Not Currently	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly
Recognition of Transnational Institutions	Occasionally	Not Currently	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Rarely	Regularly	Occasionally	Not currently	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications	Occasionally	Regularly	Regularly	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly	Regularly	Not Currently	Occasionally	Not in EQAA Scope	Regularly

Table 8 - Functions Performed by EQAAs in CARICOM

6.5.1 Re-evaluation Cycles

UCJ, ACTT and BAC in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados respectively, subject institutions to a re-evaluation cycle for Institutional Accreditation every 7 years. However, SKNAB in St. Kitts and Nevis re-evaluates institutions for accreditation every 2 years. The re-evaluation period for Institutional Registration is 3 years in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and St Vincent. It is 4 years in Jamaica and is a one-off exercise in Antigua and Barbuda. The re-evaluation cycle for Programme Accreditation is 5 years for all EQAAs which perform that function with NOVA in Suriname as the only exception. NOVA has an annual re-evaluation cycle for Programme Accreditation. This is particularly so as NOVA is only now implementing its system and recognises that several changes and improvements in its processes are likely to take place in the short term. Some EQAA Heads were quick to point out that their systems were also in a developmental stage and not very mature.

	ACTT	ABNAB	BAC	CACET	DNAB	GNAC	NABSVG	NOVA	SKNAB	UCJ
Institutional Registration	3 yrs.	one-off	3 yrs.			1 yr.	3 yrs.			4 yrs.
Institutional Accreditation	7 yrs.		7 yrs.						2 yrs.	7 yrs.
Programme Accreditation	5 yrs.		5 yrs.	5 yrs.				1 yr.		5 yrs.
Conferment of Institutional Title	one-off									
Programme Approval	5 yrs.	one-off	6 yrs.							
Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision	3 yrs.	one-off					one-off	1 yr.		
CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment	one-off	1 yr.	one-off		one-off					
Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications	one-off	1 yr.	one-off		one-off			1 yr.		
Recognition of Transnational Institutions	5 yrs.		3 yrs.		one-off		one-off			5 yrs.
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications	one-off	one-off	one-off		one-off			one-off		

Table 9 - Re-evaluation cycles for key functions performed by EQAAs

6.5.2 Key Requirements for Registration and Accreditation

The institutional self-assessment, site visit, external evaluation report, and follow-up action on recommendations are requirements by EQAAs in CARICOM for the process of Institutional Registration, Institutional Accreditation, and Programme Accreditation. However, ABNAB in Antigua and Barbuda does not require follow-up actions on evaluation reports as part of its process for Institutional Registration.

6.5.3 Consequences of Evaluation Decisions

The consequence of evaluation decisions for most EQAAs is the status or approval granted or denied. ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago is the only EQAA in which public funding is also tied to some evaluation decisions.

	Status/Approval Given		Funding & Status/Approval		No Consequence		Other	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Institutional Registration	60%	3	20%	1	20%	1	0%	0
Institutional Accreditation	75%	3	25%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Programme Accreditation	80%	4	20%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Conferment of Institutional Title	100%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Programme Approval	67%	2	33%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision	60%	3	20%	1	20%	1	0%	0
CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment	80%	4	0%	0	0%	0	20%	1
Equivalence Assessment of Foreign Qualifications	100%	6	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Recognition of Transnational Institutions	75%	3	25%	1	0%	0	0%	0
Recognition of Foreign Qualifications	100%	6	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0

Table 10 - Consequences of Evaluation Decisions

6.5.4 Making the final Decision on External Evaluation

In seven of the ten EQAAs, the Board or Council makes the final decision on the outcome of an external evaluation. ABNAB in Antigua and Barbuda reports that the external evaluation team makes the final decision. However ABNAB Board members are generally part of the teams which evaluate institutions for *Institutional Registration* (the only major evaluation currently performed by ABNAB). NABSVG in St Vincent and the Grenadines and SKNAB in St Kitts and Nevis are both required to make recommendation to line Government Minister who then the final decision.

NAME of EQAA	Who makes the final decision on the outcome of external evaluations performed by the EQAA
ACTT	EQAA Board
ABNAB	External Evaluation Team
BAC	EQAA Board
CACET	EQAA Board
DNAB	EQAA Board
GNAC	EQAA Board
NABSVG	Government Minister/Cabinet
NOVA	EQAA Board
SKNAB	Government Minister/Cabinet
UCJ	EQAA Board

Table 11 - Group or individual which makes the final decision on external evaluation

6.6 External Evaluator and Teams

6.6.1 Selecting and Training Evaluators

Most EQAAs report that an adequate pool of evaluators is available to them either from a national, regional or international pool. BAC in Barbados and NOVA in Suriname are the only exception. They both lament that the pool of evaluators available to them is inadequate. EQAAs facilitate the provision of training for evaluators through staff, external consultants and by leveraging opportunities provided by regional and international bodies such as the European Union (EU) and CARICOM.

	ACTT	ABNAB	BAC	CACET	DNAB	GNAC	NABSVG	NOVA	SKNAB	UCJ
Adequate regional pool of evaluators available	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
Adequate national pool of evaluators available	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Adequate international pool of evaluators available	✓	✓		✓	✓					✓
Pool of available evaluators is inadequate			✓					✓		
EQAA staff members train evaluators	✓		✓		✓				✓	✓
External consultants train evaluators	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Regional or International bodies train evaluators	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	
No regular training is available to evaluators						✓	✓			

Table 12 - Selecting and training evaluators

All EQAAs use external evaluation teams to conduct evaluations. Evaluators for these teams are selected by the EQAA. Most EQAAs select evaluators that are professional practitioners in their respective fields, foreign or local experts, and representatives from related professional bodies. Almost half of the EQAAs also include either staff or Board members on their external teams. None of the EQAAs selects student representatives on external teams.

	EQAA board or staff members	Professional bodies	Peer Evaluators	Students	Local experts	Foreign experts	Professional practitioners	Employers
ACTT	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
ABNAB	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
BAC		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
CACET		✓	✓			✓	✓	
DNAB		✓			✓	✓	✓	
GNAC		✓			✓	✓	✓	
NABSVG	✓				✓		✓	
NOVA		✓			✓	✓	✓	
SKNAB	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
UCJ	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Table 13 - Persons generally selected for External Evaluation Teams

Several of the key tasks involved in the external evaluation processes are shared between EQAA staff and external evaluation teams. ABNAB reports that both evaluators and EQAA staff provide support to the institutions during the self-assessment process. This is so because external teams have a high composition of ABNAB's Board and staff members. For most EQAAs the desktop review of documentary evidence is performed by both EQAA staff and external team members. SKNAB is the only EQAA where the external evaluation report is written by the EQAA and not the External team. Like ABNAB, the Board members of SKNAB make up a large portion of the evaluation team.

		ACTT	ABNAB	BAC	CACET	DNAB	GNAC	NABSVG	NOVA	SKNAB	UCJ
Supporting the institution during their self-assessment process	External Team		✓								
	EQAA	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Desktop review of documentary evidence	External Team		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	EQAA	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Planning the site visit	External Team		✓			✓			✓		
	EQAA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Conducting observations, interviews and reviewing evidence during the site visit	External Team	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
	EQAA		✓							✓	
Writing the external evaluation report	External Team	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	EQAA									✓	

Table 14 - Separation of key tasks between External Team and EQAA Staff in evaluation process

6.7 Agency Accountability

Only a half of the EQAAs said they had established policies and procedures to address their own accountability. Three have established a Quality Policy statement that guides the work of the EQAA and a similar number have established an internal Quality Management System. Only two EQAAs have a system for institutional research that promotes improvement. Six in ten of them have an established appeal system and also a mechanism to address potential conflict of interest by external evaluators.

Nine of the ten EQAAs do not have an established mechanism for external review by a competent authority but all of them report plans to be externally reviewed in the future. ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago reported that it is currently preparing for a review within the next year.

	Not Established		Partly Established		Established & Somewhat Effective		Established & Effective		Established & Very Effective	
EQAA Quality Policy	4	40%	3	30%	0	0%	3	30%	0	0%
Internal Quality Assurance Management System for EQAA	5	50%	2	20%	1	10%	2	20%	0	0%
Institutional Research capability to inform EQAA improvement	8	80%	0	0%	0	0%	2	20%	0	0%
System for periodic external review of EQAA by a competent authority	9	90%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Appeal system for tertiary institutions	3	30%	1	10%	1	10%	5	50%	0	0%
Mechanisms to address potential conflict of interest by external evaluators	2	20%	2	20%	0	0%	2	20%	4	40%

Table 15 - Accountability measures established by EQAAs

6.8 EQAA Survey Summary

The assessment of the Quality Assurance Landscape in the Caribbean reveals several areas of commonality and divergence among the EQAAs that have been established in the Caribbean Community. The study has revealed that the quality assurance landscape in the Caribbean is marked by the following features and trends

- Ever increasing challenges presented by low quality cross border education providers and those solely driven by a profit motive. Private non-tertiary level institutions make up an increasing majority of institutions in most territories.
- On-going quality assurance activities aimed at border protection, regulation, public accountability, and improving institutions internal quality systems - strongly influenced by governments for implementing and funding. EQAA activities have at times been at tension with the other political and governance considerations of regional leaders
- Multiple roles and functions for EQAAs in a context of inadequate resources (human and finance) to support the full implementation of quality assurance systems

- National developments which require greater alignment with regional goals have seen them at times comes in conflict with more collaborative regional approach
- Existing national QA systems which are considerably more mature a provable to provide leadership in collaborative regional QA strategies. These national systems include those such as UCJ in Jamaica, ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago and BAC in Barbados.

7 ASSESSING INSTITUTIONS' PROGRESS ON INTERNAL QUALITY

7.1 Institutional Progress Survey Overview

To assess a the extent to which the quality assurance activities within the region have been impacting the internal quality of regional institutions a survey of institutional personnel was conducted over the period 13-26 December 2013. The Institutional Progress in Quality Survey which was administered is adapted from the COL RIM Model and the institutional accreditation criteria of EQAAs in CARICOM.

The survey is premised on five broad evaluative themes namely *Change and Institutional Responsiveness* (Has the institution improved its processes for planning and managing change to be responsive to the needs and expectations of stakeholders?); *Communication and Engagement* (Has the institution improved its processes to communicate and engage with stakeholders to achieve its goals and create value?); *Learning and Scholarship* (Has the institution improved its processes to support the achievement of student learning outcomes?); *Human Resource Development* (Has the institution improved its processes to manage and develop human resource capacity?); *Managing Material and Financial Resources* (Has the institution improved it processes to effectively allocate and manage its plant and financial resources?).

7.2 Institutional Progress Survey Methodology

The survey asked participants a range of questions related to their institution's quality assurance and improvement activity. Participants were also asked to rate their institution's progress over the past three years on an ordinal descriptive scale (*Improved a lot; Improved somewhat; About the same; Declined*) in relation to 31 quality indicators linked to the five themes. The percentage points for each evaluative theme, was then computed based on the average score for participants on each indicator related to that theme. The reported percentages represent the total number of scores which were rated as either *Improved a lot* or *Improved Somewhat* by participating Institutional personnel.

Two hundred and ten (210) institutional personnel directly involved in quality assurance and improvement activities at their institution were invited to participate in the survey which was administered electronically via

e-mail. The sample was selected from among the membership of CANQATE and the Quality Professionals Forum (QPF). CANQATE is a regional association of institutions, EQAAs and quality assurance professionals involved in quality assurance and accreditation throughout the Caribbean. QPF is a virtual platform for regional quality assurance professionals and institutional personnel involved in quality assurance and accreditation activities to share resources and best practice on tertiary education quality. Faculty and Administrative personnel directly involved in the work of quality at their various institutions were invited to participate. Participants were given the assurance that data collected would be used only to provide summary findings on their general perception of institutional changes in internal quality over the past three years.

Forty-seven (47) participants responded to the survey. However, only 33 responses were selected for the analysis to allow only one response from each institution. Where multiple responses were received from an institution, one response was randomly selected to be included in the analysis. The findings presented below and the related discussions are based on the thirty-three (33) respondents selected.

7.3 Institutional Progress Survey Findings

7.3.1 Survey participants

The thirty-three participants came from nine CARICOM territories including St Vincent and the Grenadines (1), Belize (1), Barbados (4), Guyana (6), Jamaica (9), Trinidad & Tobago (8), St Lucia (2), Dominica (1), and Antigua and Barbuda (1). Forty-two percent (42%) of respondents were senior faculty members involved in quality assurance and accreditation activities, 46% were administrative staff working in a central quality office or department within their institution, and 12% were administrative staff involved in quality assurance but not within a central university office. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents have been at their institution for ten or more years, 21% for 2-5 years, and 12% for fewer than two years.

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of institutions represented in the survey offer qualifications up to the doctoral level, 33% up to the master's degree level, 24% up to the bachelor's degree level, and 7% up to the diploma level. Sixty-two percent (62%) of institutions in the survey have less than 5000 students and fewer than 500 faculty and staff members.

7.3.2 Establishing Quality Assurance Departments and Recruiting QA Personnel

Seventy-six percent (76%) of the institutions represented in the survey have a central quality assurance department or dedicated personnel coordinating quality assurance at the institutional level and 39% have quality assurance personnel at the department or faculty level. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of them have a dedicated quality assurance presence at both the institutional and departmental levels.

Does your institution have a central office or key personnel assigned to Quality Assurance?		
Yes, there is an office or key personnel coordinating activities related to quality assurance and accreditation at the institutional level	25	76%
Yes, there is an office or key personnel coordinating quality assurance and accreditation activities at the department or faculty level	13	39%
Yes, there is an office or key personnel coordinating quality assurance and accreditation activities at both the faculty/department and institutional level	9	27%
No, there is no office or key personnel either at the institutional or other level coordinating quality assurance and accreditation activities	6	18%

Table 16 – Distribution of responding institutions with a central quality assurance office.

Two thirds of the institutions have had a QA presence for less than five years, 11% for 6 to 10 years and 22% for over 10 years. As new national QA systems have been implemented across the region this has been accompanied by increased recruitment of QA personnel at several universities and tertiary level institutions throughout the region. Notably, one of the key requirements of the Institutional Registration criteria in many territories is the establishment of a robust Quality Management System which has meant that several new and existing institutions have had to develop quality structures.

How long has there been a dedicated QA presence at your institution?		
More than 10 years ago	6	22%
Between 6 to 10 years ago	3	11%
Between 3 to 5 years ago	10	37%
Within the past 3 years	8	29%
Total	27	100%

Table 17 – Length of time dedicated QA presence established in reporting institutions

7.3.3 Using Institutional Self-Study for External and Internal Evaluation

Institutional self-assessment or self-study is another key aspect of the evaluation processes established by regional EQAAs and several institutions in the region have undertaken a self-assessment in the past few years - either for a formal evaluation by an EQAA or for improvement and preparation purposes. Eighty-two percent (82%) of institutions represented in the survey have done a self-study within the past five years and 21% have done so for internal improvement purposes only.

Has your institution undertaken a self-study or self-assessment within the past five years?		
Yes for a formal external evaluation process by an External Quality Assurance Agency	20	61%
Yes for internal improvement purposes only	7	21%
No but a self-study or self-assessment was undertaken over five years ago	2	6%
No my institution has never undertaken a self-study or self-assessment	4	12%

Table 18 – Reporting institutions which have undertaken a self-study in recent years

7.3.4 Submitting to External Evaluation by EQAAs in CARICOM

Increasingly institutions have submitted themselves to the external evaluation processes of national and regional EQAAs. Two thirds of the institutions represented have been successfully evaluated by an EQAA in CARICOM either for a programmatic or institutional process. Forty-eight percent (48%) these institutions have received Institutional Registration and 24% have also have received Institutional Accreditation.

Has your institution successfully submitted itself to a formal external evaluation process by an External Quality Assurance Agency in the CARICOM region		
Yes, Institutional Registration	16	48%
Yes, Institutional Accreditation	8	24%
Yes, Programme accreditation	12	36%
Yes, Other evaluation process	12	36%
No	11	33%

Table 19 – Institutions which have successfully been evaluated by a national or regional EQAA in CARICOM

Although the progress has been slower than anticipated, several EQAAs have had notable achievements in assuring and improving tertiary education quality in their respective jurisdictions. A review of the total numbers of major evaluations successfully performed by national bodies shows that UCJ in Jamaica, ACTT in Trinidad and Tobago, and BAC in Barbados have made the greatest strides in this regard. The table below highlights the successful evaluations performed for Institutional Registration, Institutional Accreditation, and Programme Accreditation by all national EQAAs in CARICOM since establishment

	ACTT	ABNAB	BAC	DNAB	GNAC	NABSVG	NOVA	SKNAB	UCJ
Registered Institutions	75	6	40	-	27	5	-	-	47
Accredited Institutions	6	-	2	-	-	-	-	8	1
Accredited Programmes	Nil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	220

Table 20 – Major successful evaluations conducted by regional EQAAs since establishment

7.3.5 Institutional Progress on Broad Evaluative Themes of Internal Quality

The percentage points for each evaluative theme is computed based on the average score for participants on each indicator related to that theme. The reported percentages represent the total number of scores which were rated as either *Improved a lot* or *Improved Somewhat*. The general findings on the broad evaluative themes suggest that institutions have improved their internal quality over the past three years.

The feedback from institutional personnel suggests that the desired impact on the internal quality systems of institutions has been steady despite of the challenges faced by EQAAs in the region. However, it should be noted that this survey focused on the perception of quality assurance professional within their institutions and stopped short of a more in-depth probe into the actual structures and systems of these institutions. This is important because the respondents to the survey are those within these institutions with responsibility for quality assurance activities. In some instances they may be more inclined to present an overly favourable rating

Evaluative Theme	Institutions with a central Quality Assurance Office or dedicated QA personnel	Institutions without a central Quality Assurance or dedicated QA personnel	Conducted a self-study within the past five years	Has not conducted a self-study within the past five years	Has successfully undergone an external evaluation process by an EQAA within CARICOM	Has not successfully undergone an external evaluation process by an EQAA within CARICOM	All Respondents
	Improved n=27	Improved n=6	Improved n=27	Improved n=6	Improved n=22	Improved n=11	Improved n=33
Change and Institutional Responsiveness	74%	100%	82%	67%	82%	73%	79%
Communication and Engagement	85%	67%	78%	33%	82%	82%	82%
Learning and Scholarship	78%	100%	78%	100%	73%	100%	82%
Human Resource Development	70%	67%	70%	67%	64%	82%	69%
Managing Material and Financial Resources	51%	33%	52%	33%	45%	54%	48%

Table 21 – Institutional personnel ratings on institution’s progress related to the five broad evaluative themes

Differences between institutions grouped based on those having conducted a recent self-study, undergone an external evaluation or been successfully evaluated by an EQAA are inconclusive. This is in part explained by the small sample within some groups. As such the findings do not point to a clear relationship between these process and improvements in internal quality as perceived by respondents.

It is noteworthy that the ratings from institutional personnel in areas related to finance and budgeting and human resources development are lowest. These indicators may be directly related to the economic downturn the region has experienced over the past 3-5 years and the difficulty institutions throughout the region have had in managing limited financial resources while also asking faculty and staff to do more.

7.4 Institutional Progress Survey Summary

The responses of QA professionals, administrators and faculty members directly involved in the work of quality assurance suggest that the internal quality systems within institutions have progressed notably in the past few years. Key developments include:

1. The establishment of central QA offices and dedicated personnel at the institutional level and in some cases also at the department level is an increasing phenomenon in the past five years.
2. Evidence that institutions are increasingly engaging in self-review and evaluation - whether for a formal external evaluation or to improve overall internal quality. This is further emphasised in the number of institutions that have successfully been evaluated for either a programmatic or institutional status.
3. Increasing confidence among institutional personnel that their institutions have improved their planning processes to handle change and respond to stakeholder needs and expectations; have also progressed in their processes for communicating and engaging stakeholders to achieve common goals; and are progressing in the way they support and encourage the achievement of student learning outcomes.

However, institutional personnel were less optimistic about the progress being made by institutions in their processes to manage people, plant and financial resources. These factors significantly affect the level of quality institutions can offer to learners and should be monitored more closely by EQAAs. As EQAAs in the region continue to develop their processes, consideration will have to be given to how they guide and support institutions in addressing their challenges. This is particularly important as the system matures and moves from a regulatory emphasis to one of continuous quality improvement and developing a quality culture.

8 THE WAY FORWARD - PLAN OF ACTION FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES (EQAAS) IN CARICOM

8.1 EQAA Governance

Several territories have gone the route of establishing EQAAs as independent corporate bodies accountable to the state through the legislature. However the composition of some governing bodies has demonstrated a commitment to wide stakeholder representation while others comprise mainly government appointees and senior public servants.

It is proposed that the autonomy of the EQAA, particularly with respect to decision-making, should be preserved while general oversight of its operations and its effectiveness maintained by government authorities through the legislature. In this regard all regional EQAAs should be established as independent corporate bodies with a Governing Board whose members are appointed based on their representation of key sector interests.

8.2 EQAA Functions

Although most of the EQAAs in CARICOM are still in the embryonic stages of development, a few have forged ahead to provide a wide range of services. These EQAAs are charged with the responsibility for carrying out multiple functions which, in developed countries with more resources and more expansive higher education sectors, would be performed by different agencies, both public and private. As a consequence of the limited resources available to the regional territories, it is essential that they concentrate their efforts on key strategic areas. This plan proposes that national EQAAs focus only on:

- Institutional Registration
- Conferment of Institutional Title
- Institutional Accreditation
- Specialised Accreditation (in collaboration with professional bodies and regional partners)

- Recognition of Transnational Institutions (and awarding bodies) seeking to offer cross-border or distance programmes

The provision of multiple services will continue to present significant resource challenges for some EQAAs but it is necessary if small states like these are to use higher education as a catalyst for growth and development. There is need for a mandatory regulatory mechanism which ensures that all institutions operating in the sector meet minimum standards for the provision of educational services. This will be achieved through Institutional Registration which is now compulsory in some territories. This should be replicated in the legislation of all member states across the region since it provides a mechanism to ensure that the public is protected from poor quality and ensures that fraudulent providers are appropriately penalized. Conferment of Institutional title (regulation of degree-granting powers) is closely related to mandatory Institutional Registration since it protects students from poor quality, fraudulent or unsustainable institutions by evaluating their capacity to offer quality education at the relevant level prior to permitting them to establish their operations.

Institutional Accreditation should be a voluntary evaluation process which promotes meaningful and sustainable quality improvement within institutions. EQAAs should provide the impetus and support for institutions to pursue institutional accreditation. This external evaluation process would go beyond assessing capacity to offer good quality and towards an evaluation of the institution's success in achieving its educational and other stated outcomes. Specialised accreditation should also be offered in collaboration with national and regional professional bodies and specialised regional accreditation agencies. The collaboration is important for both building capacity and also to ensure that the EQAA's accreditation status bestowed on any will be fully accepted within the profession

Finally, the evaluation and recognition of foreign institutions and awarding bodies seeking to offer cross-border or distance education has become a matter of increasing importance for small states, such as those in CARICOM, in the context of globalisation, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the rapid improvement in Information Communication Technology (with the attendant opportunities for fraud). This must continue to be a priority for regional EQAAs

8.3 EQAA Financial and Human Resources

8.3.1 Financial Resources

The model of a privately funded EQAA which derives the bulk of its funding from affiliation and services seems less feasible in small states where revenue exclusively from fees and other activities is unlikely to sustain and support the expansion of these national agencies. In small states, governments are often the only available source of funding to initiate and sustain external quality assurance systems. In some mini states even governments are unable to allocate adequate resources to successfully achieve and sustain full operations of an EQAA. In such instances these territories will require some regional and extra-regional financial assistance.

The plan also supports an arrangement at the regional level that co-ordinates national initiatives, pools resources and is managed by a regional coordinating agency. In it a duly established EQAA in any territory can outsource some of its functions to a better equipped national body in a neighboring territory.

8.3.2 Human Resources

Human resource capacity is another area of major concern for EQAAs in small states. Quality assurance professionals in higher education within CARICOM territories are in short supply and they are demanding higher compensation for their services. As the region has moved to establish national EQAAs, some of the challenges include attracting and retaining competent professional staff. Many EQAAs will be required to expend significant resources in training and retention of key personnel. The number and skill levels of staff required by EQAAs will depend on the extent to which they outsource services or perform them internally, and also on the size of the higher education sector in which they operate.

8.4 External Evaluation Methodologies

Methodologies that are overly prescriptive and rigid, risk eroding the autonomy and integrity of the institution or programme it seeks to evaluate, while those that are not well- documented or appear to be expressly

subjective, risk being perceived as lacking rigour and objectivity. EQAAs must achieve a delicate balance. This plan endorses an external evaluation model for key services discussed earlier comprising four main stages:

- I. Self-assessment or self-study (against broad clearly defined criteria as the central feature of the external evaluation process)
- II. External review (peer or professional) including site visits
- III. Evaluation report to the EQAA (completed by reviewers and including recommendations on the status to be awarded).
- IV. Follow-up action based on recommendations (as required)

Self-evaluation as the central component of external evaluation is recommended because its absence may result in a prescriptive exercise in which too much is imposed on the institution and emphasis is purely on compliance, thereby stifling creativity and innovation within higher education institutions. The self-evaluation process is not without challenges. One of these is the increasingly competitive nature of higher education as private, “for-profit” or commercial provisions expand. Self-evaluation should not become an exercise of self-presentation to the external team but remain a valuable tool for rigorous assessment and institutional quality improvement. There is also the challenge of overcoming institutional cynicism for the accreditation process. A collaborative relationship between the EQAA and the institution is required throughout the external evaluation process.

The relatively small pool of reviewers within each territory from which to choose (when issues of sector size, conflict of interest and areas of professional expertise and specialisation are considered) creates a need for EQAAs to expand the body of reviewers beyond the peer group. The regional coordinating body when established should maintain a readily accessible database of trained, expert reviewers, who are familiar with the processes adopted throughout the region. EQAAs would have access to this pool and the database should include those with expertise in higher education and experienced professionals in a wide range of specialised fields. While emphasis would be placed on professionals within the Community, international expertise should also be sought. One of the issues that emerge is the prohibitive cost to the institutions of fees to be paid to evaluators for their work. Reviewers should be paid an honorarium and not a fee for professional services. Over time, a culture which encourages professionals to view their contribution to the evaluation exercises as an

opportunity to contribute to human development, in general, and to nation-building and regional development should become institutionalized in the sector.

The final aspect of the model is the preparation of an evaluation report by the review team following the site visit. This report should relate the institution's self-study report to the EQAA's criteria and the site visit observations. It presents evidence to support the recommendations for improvement and the status to be awarded to the institution (or programme). The institution must receive and review the report for accuracy prior to any decision by the governing board. The institution should also have the right to appeal the decision of the EQAA.

8.5 Regional Coordinating Mechanism for Oversight and Standard Setting

A regional body should co-ordinate the efforts of national EQAAs to support collaboration and resource sharing. The regional body would facilitate common standards for key external evaluation processes such as Institutional Registration and Accreditation that can be adopted by national bodies. It would also facilitate technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of national bodies. The training of peer reviewers, for example, can be facilitated at the regional level and a pool created from which all countries can benefit.

This plan proposes a model in which the regional body would also facilitate external reviews of the operations of national bodies and support mutual recognition agreements between them. The regional body would function for EQAAs in CARICOM similarly to the way organisations such the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) both function in the United States of America and Europe respectively.

8.6 Strategies for Action

A comprehensive assessment of the tertiary education landscape reveals that the process to establish a robust Network of EQAAs and strengthen the overall Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in CARICOM has been far slower than regional leaders had expected. Only three national EQAAs are fully operational and sufficiently well-resourced to perform most of its functions namely UCJ, ACTT and BAC in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados respectively. The others territories are at different stages of development and all still require significant assistance.

Since its establishment CANQATE has played a pivotal role in developing regional and national quality assurance systems for higher education in the Caribbean. This plan proposes an enhanced role for CANQATE to strengthen the network of EQAAs and overall quality assurance system for higher education in CARICOM

Three main strategies are proposed by this plan including:

I. Public Education and Advocacy

Facilitate an aggressive public education and advocacy agenda targeting policymakers, sector leaders and the public on the importance, key processes and functions of Higher Education Quality Assurance.

II. Synergy & Harmonisation

Promote synergy and harmonisation between regional EQAAs taking a leadership role in developing and advocating for a common legislative model, shared services, and harmonised policies, and criteria

III. Training and Technical Capacity Building

Provide training and technical capacity building support for the cadre of regional QA professionals in EQAAs and tertiary institutions, and the regional corps external evaluators.

8.7 Action Plan Log Frame

The following framework presents the strategies and actions proposed by this plan.

Log frame Matrix	Strategy and Action Plan to Strengthen the Network of EQAAs and overall Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in CARICOM		
Description	Indicators of Achievement	Sources of verification	Assumptions
<p><u>Plan Goal</u></p> <p>Strengthen the Network of EQAAs and overall Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in CARICOM</p>			
<p><u>Plan Strategies</u></p> <p><i>I. Public Education and Advocacy</i> Facilitate public education and advocacy targeting policymakers, sector leaders and the public on the importance, key processes and functions of Higher Education Quality Assurance.</p> <p><i>II. Synergy & Harmonisation</i> Promote synergy and harmonisation between regional EQAAs through similar legislative arrangements, shared services, and harmonised policies, and criteria</p> <p><i>III. Training and Technical Capacity Building</i> Provide training and technical capacity building among the cadre of regional QA professionals in EQAAs and tertiary institutions, and external evaluators.</p>			

<u>Plan Deliverables</u>			
a. Regional Communication/Advocacy Plan	Communication Plan including milestones are approved by CANQATE Board	Communication plan is published on CANQATE website CANQATE Core groups are fully established in all territories	CANQATE membership supports strategy to increase communication and advocacy for QA in the region Funding can be sourced to develop and write the plan Plan will be effectively implemented by EQAAs, Core groups, & CANQATE Administration
b. Model Legislation	Consultant is assigned to review existing models and develop revised model for regional EQAAs Revised model legislation is presented to CANQATE membership and regional leaders at CANQATE annual conference	Model legislation is published on CANQATE website	Funding can be sourced for a legal consultant to revise CARICOM model legislation for EQAAs CANQATE membership supports the strategy for a revised model develop by CANQATE Public Education and Advocacy initiatives will lead to enactment and legislative reforms in regional territories
c. Model Policy Manual	Policy research and technical review panel is established Draft policy manual is presented to CANQATE membership	Model policies are available on CANQATE website and related written publications	Regional experts are willing to participate in research and technical review panel and lead the development of a model policies CANQATE membership supports the strategy of addressing regional policy gaps developing common policies for regional EQAAs Funding can be sourced to develop and write and publish the manual Material will be effectively utilised by EQAAs

<p>d. Model criteria, standards and procedural guidelines for Registration, Accreditation, Transnational Recognition & Collaborative Provision.</p>	<p>Draft Model criteria, standards and procedural guidelines for Registration, Accreditation, Transnational Recognition & Collaborative Provision are presented to CANQATE membership</p>	<p>Model criteria, standards, etc are available on CANQATE website and related written publications</p>	<p>CANQATE membership supports the review of regional criteria, approaches towards improvement and harmonisation</p> <p>EQAAs willing provide access to have their criteria, standards, etc reviewed by a regional technical team.</p> <p>Regional experts are willing to participate in review and lead the development of a revised/harmonised criteria, standards, etc</p> <p>Material will be effectively utilised by EQAAs</p>
<p>e. Regional Best Practice handbook</p>	<p>Consultant is assigned to develop best practice handbook</p> <p>Published Best Practice Handbook is available for EQAAs, QA personnel, and other stakeholders</p>	<p>Published Best Practice Handbook is available for download/purchase from CANQATE</p>	<p>CANQATE membership supports the development of a best practice handbook</p> <p>Regional experts, EQAA Heads, and CANQATE membership are willing to submit material and feedback in development of the handbook.</p> <p>Funding can be sourced to develop and publish the handbook</p>
<p>f. Partnership/linkage programme between mature EQAAs and lesser developed EQAAs in the region</p>	<p>Five (5) or more EQAAs participate in the programme</p>	<p>Evidence of milestone achievements in the programme</p>	<p>Funding is available to support the programme</p> <p>EQAAs are supportive of the programme</p>

<p>g. Structured Professional Development Programme for QA Professionals in tertiary institutions</p>	<p>Consultant is assigned to develop and deliver professional development programme</p> <p>100 or more QA professionals throughout the region participate in structured Professional development activities</p>	<p>Published schedule of training events facilitated by CANQATE</p> <p>Participant feedback report</p> <p>Results of learning outcomes assessment</p>	<p>CANQATE membership supports a structured professional development facilitated by CANQATE</p> <p>Funding can be sourced for a training consultant to develop and deliver professional development activities</p>
<p>h. Structured Training Programme for External Evaluators and Team Chairs</p>	<p>Consultant is assigned to develop and deliver professional development programme</p> <p>50 or more External Evaluators participate in structured training programme facilitated by CANQATE</p> <p>30 or more External Evaluation Team Chairs participate in structured training programme facilitated by CANQATE</p>	<p>Published schedule of training events facilitated by CANQATE</p> <p>Participant feedback report</p> <p>Results of learning outcomes assessment</p>	<p>CANQATE membership supports a structured training programme for External evaluators facilitated by CANQATE</p> <p>Funding can be sourced for a training consultant to develop and deliver training activities</p>
<p><u>Plan Activities</u></p>			
<p>1. Establish a Communication Committee to solicit feedback from membership and develop a comprehensive plan</p>	<p>Milestones on the plan are achieved during the period</p>	<p>Quarterly reports of the Communication/ Advocacy committee presented to CANQATE Board</p>	<p>Suitable members of CANQATE are willing to part of Communications committee</p>
<p>2. Increase technical capacity/manpower of CANQATE's research and publications arm</p>	<p>CANQATE embark on research agenda</p>	<p>CANQATE research agenda is published on website</p>	<p>Funding and expertise is available to strengthen CANQATE's research and publications operations</p>

3. Strengthen existing CANQATE Core groups and establish new Core Groups with emphasis on advocacy and public education initiatives	CANQATE Core groups prepare an undertake annual agenda of activities f	Biannual reports of Core group activity are submitted to CANQATE Board	National EQAAs and Education Ministries are willing to provide support to Core groups
4. Write model legislation and regulations for regional EQAAs	Revised model legislation is presented to CANQATE membership and regional leaders	Model legislation is published on CANQATE website	Funding is available for a legal consultant to revise CARICOM model legislation for EQAAs
5. Establish regional technical team for policy research and to review regional processes, criteria and standards for Registration, Accreditation Transnational Recognition & Collaborative Provision.	Major gaps and areas for improvement, and harmonisation are identified by team	Biannual reports of policy research and review committee are submitted to CANQATE Board	Suitable members of CANQATE and other stakeholder representatives are available and willing to part of the technical team facilitated by CANQATE
6. Write model policy manual and guidelines which give emphasis to priority areas	Model policy manual is published	Policy manual	Funding is available to retain personnel to write and compile the manual
7. Write model criteria, standards and procedural guidelines for Registration, Accreditation, Transnational Recognition & Collaborative Provision	Model criteria, standards and procedural guidelines for Registration, Accreditation, Transnational Recognition & Collaborative Provision are published	Model criteria, standards and procedural guidelines for Registration, Accreditation, Transnational Recognition & Collaborative Provision	Funding is available to retain personnel to write and compile the manual
8. Write best practice handbook for EQAAs on issues including regional database of evaluators, outsourcing and shared services, mutual recognition agreements, external review	Best Practice Handbook is published	Evidence of Regional Best Practice handbook for EQAAs	Funding is available to retain personnel to write and compile the manual
9. Establish CANQATE Education committee to determine key learning outcomes for QA professionals, institutional personnel involved in QA, and External Evaluators	Major skill gaps, areas for technical capacity building, and desired learning outcomes are identified by committee	Biannual reports of the Education Committee are submitted to CANQATE Board	Suitable members of CANQATE and other stakeholder representatives are available and willing to part of the CANQATE Education Committee

10. Develop an internship and work attachment programme for staff from lesser developed EQAAs to facilitate knowledge transfer & technical capacity building	Three or more internship/work attachment arrangements are facilitated between lesser developed and mature EQAAs	Report on internship and work attachment programme is published	Funding is available to provide sponsorship to programme participants EQAAs are willing to facilitate internship and work attachment arrangements
11. Develop professional development programme for QA professionals within tertiary institutions	Professional development content is compiled and available to participants	Published professional development programme/schedule	Funding is available to retain personnel to develop and compile training and professional development content Tertiary institutions are willing to support the programme
12. Develop structured training programme for External evaluators & Peer reviewers	Training material is compiled and available to participants	Published training programme/schedule	Funding is available to retain personnel to develop and compile training and professional development content
13. Develop structured training programme for External evaluation Team Chairs	Training material is compiled and available to participants	Published training programme/schedule	Funding is available to retain personnel to develop and compile training and professional development content
14. Implement training programmes through Webinars, online modules face-to-face training workshops and regional publications	Achievement of learning outcomes demonstrated by QA professionals and external evaluators after training.	Attendance registers Assessment results of Learning outcomes	Funding is available to retain personnel to deliver and facilitate training and professional development sessions

End of Report

9 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - EQAA SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. What is the name of your EQAA? _____

2. Is the EQAA a current member of CANQATE?

- Yes
- No

3. Name of respondent and contact information:

Name	
Job Title	
E-mail Contact	
Telephone Contact	

LEGAL FRAMEWORK, JURISDICTION & SCOPE

4. Which best describes the jurisdiction in which your EQAA was established to operate?

- A single Caribbean country (eg. Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, etc.)
- A specific group of Caribbean countries (eg. CARICOM, OECS)
- Internationally
- Other _____

5. When was your EQAA officially established?

- Year _____

6. Which of the following best describes the establishment of the EQAA?

- Quasi-autonomous national agency
- Government department or committee
- Supranational non-profit agency

- Other _____

7. Does the EQAA have a board or governing council?

- Yes
- No

8. Which interest groups\bodies are formally represented on the governing body? (Select all that apply)

- Government minister\ministry representatives
- Tertiary Institutions (private or public)
- Professional association representatives (engineers, accountants, educators, medical practitioners, etc...)
- Labour organisation representative
- Industry/Business representatives
- National training agency representatives
- Students
- Other (Please specify) _____

9. What is the scope of your operations?

- All tertiary institutions and their programmes
- Only private tertiary institutions and their programmes
- Only public tertiary institutions and their programmes
- Only tertiary programmes in a specific discipline of field of learning
- Other _____

10. What is your best estimate of the number tertiary institutions operating in your jurisdiction?

<i>Institutional type</i>	#
Public universities	
Private universities	
Public non-university tertiary institutions	
Private non-university tertiary institutions	

11. To what extent is your body recognised as having responsibility for external quality assurance in your jurisdiction?

- Not fully recognised
- Recognised by the state authorities and HEIs but not in law
- Recognised by legislation
- Other _____

12. If recognised by legislation when was it enacted?

- Year _____

13. Is your EQAA the only one recognised to conduct external evaluations (related to your scope of operations) in your jurisdiction?

- Yes
- No

14. Has your EQAA conducted any external evaluations (either programmatic or institutional) since it was established?

- Yes
- No

15. Does your EQAA conduct external evaluations regularly?

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. To what extent does your EQAA currently perform any of the following evaluations?

(dropdown list provided)

	How regularly are these generally conducted?	What is time cycle (in years) for re-evaluation	What is the general consequence following a decision?
Institutional Registration			
Institutional Accreditation			
programme Accreditation			
Conferment of Institutional Title			
Programme Approval			
Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision (local & foreign joint arrangements)			
CARICOM Skill Certificate Assessment			
Foreign Qualifications Equivalence Assessment			

FINANCIAL & HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY

17. To what extent does your EQAA have the resources it needs to function effectively? Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements in the table below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The EQAA has sufficient staff in all areas to perform all its evaluation functions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The EQAA has sufficient staff in all areas to develop its policies, processes , criteria, and standards	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The EQAA has sufficient financial resources to perform all its evaluation functions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The EQAA has sufficient financial resources to develop its policies, processes, criteria and standards	<input type="checkbox"/>				

18. How many fulltime staff members are directly employed in the work of the EQAA?

Type of staff	Number
Management staff	
Administrative staff	
Technical staff <i>(directly involved in evaluation processes)</i>	
Research staff	
Other staff	
Total staff at the EQAA	

19. What is the approximate percentage of funding received by your EQAA from the following sources? (The sum of your responses must total 100%)

Funding source	%
Government	
Affiliation/subscription fees from Institutions	
Evaluation services fees	
Non-governmental grants & donations	
Other sources	

GENERAL APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

20. Which sources provide the general frame of reference for the approach to Quality Assurance adopted by your EQAA? (select all that apply)

- Quality Assurance Legislation
- ISO/IWA Standards
- INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice
- USA Regional Accreditation System
- Other _____

21. How important are the following areas to the overall mission of your EQAA in the evaluations it performs?

	Very Important	important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not important
Student protection					
Quality improvement					
Accreditation					
Accountability					
Transparency					
International comparability					

22. When developing your criteria, standards, and processes for external quality assurance of tertiary institutions which of the following stakeholders are formally invited to provide input? (select all that apply)

- Student Representatives
- Other Quality Assurance Agencies or EQAA Associations

- Tertiary Institutions
- Government
- Industry & Labour Representatives
- Professional Associations
- Other _____

23. Who makes the final decision on criteria, standards and related processes?

- Government Minister/Cabinet
- EQAA Board
- Other _____

24. Are the criteria and standards always published and available prior to commencement of any evaluation?

- Yes
- No

25. Who makes the final decision on the outcome of external evaluations performed by the EQAA?

- Government Minister/Cabinet
- EQAA Board
- External evaluation team
- Other _____

26. Which are requirements in the process for evaluations performed by your EQAA? (Respond to only those evaluations which are performed by your EQAA. Select all applicable requirements for each type of evaluation)

	Self-assessment conducted by institution	External evaluation & site visit	Evaluation report	Follow-up action on recommendations as required
Institutional Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
programme Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognition of Transnational Collaborative Provision (local & foreign joint arrangements)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAMS

27. Does the EQAA use external evaluation teams for its major evaluations?

- Yes
- No

If no skip to next page

28. Who appoints the external evaluation teams used by the EQAA?

- Government Minister/Cabinet
- Institutions being evaluated
- EQAA
- Other_____

29. Who are generally members of external evaluation teams used by your EQAA? (select all that apply)

- EQAA staff members
- Professional organisations representatives
- Administrators and faculty members of tertiary institutions
- Students
- External experts (local)
- Professional practitioners
- Employers
- External experts (foreign)
- Other_____

30. Do you have ready access to a pool of competent external evaluators to conduct evaluations?

- Yes
- No

31. Does the EQAA facilitate regular training and professional development opportunities for external evaluators?

- Yes
- No

32. How are functions separated between the EQAA and the external evaluation team during evaluation processes? (Select both team & EQAA where they are perform collaboratively)

	Functions are not performed	External evaluation team	EQAA
Supporting the institution during their self-assessment process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desktop review of documentary evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning the site visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducting observations, interviews and reviewing evidence during the site visit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing the external evaluation report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY

33. Has your EQAA established policies and procedures to address its own accountability?

- Yes
- No

34. To what extent are the following mechanisms for accountability in place? (Please respond to each statement below)

	Not established	Partly established	Established & somewhat effective	Established & effective	Established & very effective
EQAA quality policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Quality assurance system for EQAA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutional research capability to inform EQAA improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Periodic review of EQAA by a competent authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appeal system for tertiary institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mechanism to address potential conflict of interest by external evaluators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

35. What is the current status of the EQAA with respect to submitting itself to external review by a competent authority? (Please select all that apply)

- EQAA has been reviewed in the past
- EQAA plans to subject itself to review in the future
- EQAA is current planning for a review to conducted within the next year
- EQAA does not plan to subject itself for external review

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

36. Is institutional self-assessment required for any evaluations conducted by the EQAA?

- Yes
- No

If no skip to next page

37. Which stakeholders are typically part of the institution's self-assessment team or committee?(select all that apply)

- Faculty members
- Alumni
- Senior management
- Administrative staff members
- Students
- Other _____

38. What type of information is generally required to be part of the self-evaluation report?
(select all that apply)

- Financial report and figures
- Student data (enrolment, progression, etc...)
- Alumni studies
- Faculty data
- Staff data
- Other _____

SITE VISITS

39. Is a site visit required for evaluations conducted by the EQAA?

- Yes
- No

If no skip to next page

40. Who conducts the site visit?

- EQAA staff members only
- External teams only
- External team and EQAA member to observe
- Other _____

41. Which of the following typically form part of the site visit? (select all that apply)

- Interviews with faculty & staff
- Review of documentary evidence
- Tour of the campus facilities
- Observations of teaching in the classroom
- Interviews with students
- Interviews with external stakeholders of the institution
- Meeting with institution's management to present general findings

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORTS

42. Who is consulted before the external evaluation report is finalised? (select all that apply)

- Government
- Institution being evaluated
- Professional bodies
- Industry
- Students
- Other _____

43. Are external evaluation reports made available to members of the public?

- Yes
- No

44. What kinds of follow-up actions are possible based on recommendations in the evaluation report? (select all that apply)

- Follow-up site visit
- Request for a plan
- Request for a status report
- Repeat of evaluation exercise
- Other _____

APPENDIX – 2 – ASSESSING INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS SURVEY

1. Name of respondent and contact information:

Name	
Job Title	
Institution name	
E-mail Contact	
Telephone Contact	
Country (institution)	

2. Which employment category best describes your position at your institution?

- a. Faculty member
- b. Quality Assurance staff
- c. Other non-teaching staff

3. What is your total length of employment at your current institution?

- a. Fewer than 2 years
- b. More than 2 years and fewer than 5
- c. More than 5 years but fewer than 10
- d. 10 years or more

4. Which is the highest qualification level (or equivalent) offered at your institution?

- Diploma
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate

5. How many students does your institution have in total?

- Up to 500
- Between 500 and 1000
- Between 1000 and 5000
- Between 5000 and 10000
- Between 10000 and 30000

6. How many employees does your institution have in total? (all categories included)

- Up to 100
- Between 100 and 300
- Between 300 and 500
- Between 500 and 1000
- More than 1000

7. Does your institution have a central quality assurance office or key personnel specifically assigned to quality?

- Yes
- No

8. How long has this office or position been established?

- More than 10 years ago
- Between 6 to 10 years ago
- Between 3 to 5 years ago
- Within the past 3 years

9. Has your institution undergone an external evaluation by a quality assurance agency or team established for that purpose in the past three years?

- Yes programmatic evaluation only
- Yes an institutional evaluation only
- Yes both programmatic and institutional evaluations
- No an evaluation was conducted more than three years ago
- No my institution has never submitted itself to external evaluation

10. Does your institution have a current affiliation or status awarded by an EQAA in the region? (whether national EQAA or specialised regional body) Select all that apply

- No
- Yes institutional Registration
- a. Yes Institutional Accreditation
- a. Yes Programme Accreditation
- b. Yes Programme Approval
- c. Yes Recognised Collaborative Provision
- d. Yes Conferment of Institutional Title
- e. Yes Other _____

11. Has your institution undertaken a self-study or self-assessment (either for external evaluation or other purpose) within the past five years?

- Yes for external evaluation by a quality assurance agency
- Yes for internal improvement purposes only
- No

1. CHANGE AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS

Rate your institutions improvement over the past three years with respect to each indicator on the following scale 1-4 (Declined; 2 - About the same; 3 – Improved somewhat; 4 – Improved a lot)

At the end of the group of indicators is a box for your brief comments about institutional changes in the past three years related to the processes or results addressed in this area

The six indicators in this section focus on the processes that your institution has in place to manage change and ensure that the institution is responsive to the needs of its stakeholders. Has the institution improved its processes for planning and managing change to be responsive to the needs and expectations of stakeholders? Please make every effort to rate all indicators in the section. You may skip an indicator if you genuinely do not know how your institution is doing on that indicator.

- 1.1 The vision and mission of the institution reflect national and community goals and the identified interests and needs and expectations of its stakeholders*
- 1.2 On-going strategic planning is informed by information about institutional performance and external environmental information*
- 1.3 Policy and strategy are communicated and deployed through a current and coherent framework of key processes that ensure consistent and coordinated delivery of services and the achievement of institutional goals*
- 1.4 Performance is reviewed regularly against agreed performance targets and improvement plans are implemented and monitored*
- 1.5 Policies and procedures support lifelong learning goals (e.g. inclusiveness, access, progression, credit transfer, non-formal learning opportunities, transparency, flexible delivery)*
- 1.6 The governing board of the institution regularly reviews existing policy and makes relevant changes to improve institutional effectiveness.*

Please use the expandable box below to briefly elaborate on any institutional changes in the past three years in this area which you think is related to the impact of increasing quality assurance activities in the region.

2. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Rate your institutions improvement over the past three years with respect to each indicator on the following scale 1-4 (Declined; 2 - About the same; 3 – Improved somewhat; 4 – Improved a lot)

At the end of the group of indicators is a box for your brief comments about institutional changes in the past three years related to the processes or results addressed in this area

The six indicators in this section focus on the processes that your institution has to build partnerships which facilitate the achievement of common goals and also to communicate and engage with its key stakeholders to create value. Has the institution improved its processes to communicate and engage with stakeholders to achieve its goals and create value? Please make every effort to rate all indicators in the section. You may skip an indicator if you genuinely do not know how your institution is doing on that indicator.

2.1 Leaders create and maintain relationships with internal and external stakeholders that are characterized by high expectations, engagement in decision making and commitment to common goals

2.2 Identified stakeholders are informed about the performance and plans of the institution and the services it offers in relation to their own interests and needs and expectations

2.3 There are structured processes for eliciting and using feedback from stakeholders to inform decision making

2.4 Strategies, policy and agendas are implemented to encourage and support educators to engage and collaborate with local and international communities to achieve common goals

2.5 Relationships with partners and suppliers locally and internationally are formalised

2.6 Feedback from students informs documented planning and other strategic processes of the institution.

Please use the expandable box below to briefly elaborate on any institutional changes in the past three years in this area and which you think is related to the impact of increasing quality assurance activities in the region.

3. SUPPORTING LEARNING & SCHOLARSHIP

Rate your institutions improvement over the past three years with respect to each indicator on the following scale 1-4 (Declined; 2 - About the same; 3 – Improved somewhat; 4 – Improved a lot)

At the end of the group of indicators is a box for your brief comments about institutional changes in the past three years related to the processes or results addressed in this area

The eight indicators in this section focus on the processes that your institution has to support effective teaching, learning and scholarship. Has the institution improved its processes to support the achievement of student learning outcomes? Please make every effort to rate all indicators in the section. You may skip an indicator if you genuinely do not know how your institution is doing on that indicator.

- 3.1 Programmes are designed and developed to meet learners' needs and reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain current and relevant to present and future needs*
- 3.2 Teaching and learning methods and delivery modes are deployed to meet the needs of learners and other stakeholders*
- 3.3 Learners are provided with information and support services that are learner/client-centred and support the academic, social and personal development of all learners*
- 3.4 Educators and learners develop effective relationships for teaching and learning*
- 3.5 Assessment and feedback to learners supports learning and provides useful information to stakeholders*
- 3.6 Quality assurance of assessment ensures that assessment outcomes are valid and fair and assessment information is reliable*
- 3.7 Strategies, policy and agendas are implemented to encourage and support educators to engage in relevant research*
- 3.8 Strategies, policy and agendas are implemented to encourage and support educators to be innovative and creative in meeting the needs of learners*

Please use the expandable box below to briefly elaborate on any institutional changes in the past three years in this area and which you think is related to the impact of increasing quality assurance activities in the region.

4. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Rate your institutions improvement over the past three years with respect to each indicator on the following scale 1-4 (Declined; 2 - About the same; 3 – Improved somewhat; 4 – Improved a lot)

At the end of the group of indicators is a box for your brief comments about institutional changes in the past three years related to the processes or results addressed in this area

The five indicators in this section focus on processes that your institution has to support manage and develop the human resource capacity with the institution. Has the institution improved its processes to manage and develop human resource capacity? Please make every effort to rate all indicators in the section. You may skip an indicator if you genuinely do not know how your institution is doing on that indicator.

4.1 Appropriately qualified and experienced educators are effectively attracted, recruited, and integrated into the institution

4.2 Educators participate in improvement-oriented performance management and are supported to engage in professional development activity

4.3 Allocation of workload is fair and transparent and reflects the vision, mission and goals of the institution

4.4 Staff contribute to interdisciplinary teams and collaborative projects with local and international colleagues to achieve valued outcomes

4.5 Staff establishment is adequate for the size and diversity and strategic direction of the institution

Please use the expandable box below to briefly elaborate on any institutional changes in the past three years in this area and which you think is related to the impact of increasing quality assurance activities in the region.

5. MANAGING MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Rate your institutions improvement over the past three years with respect to each indicator on the following scale 1-4 (Declined; 2 - About the same; 3 – Improved somewhat; 4 – Improved a lot)

At the end of each group of indicators is a box for your brief comments about institutional changes in the past three years related to the processes or results addressed in that area

The six indicators in this section focus on the leadership and operational processes that your institution has to support effective and efficient management and allocation of its material and financial resources to achieve institutional goals. Please make every effort to rate all indicators in the section. Has the institution improved its processes to effectively allocate and manage its plant and financial resources? You may skip an indicator if you genuinely do not know how your institution is performing on that indicator.

5.1 Finances are managed to support the institution to achieve its goals

5.2 Plant and Facilities are adequate for the mode and type of teaching and learning, and for the number of students at the institution

5.3 Budgeting and financial planning processes are designed support the educational and other goals of the institution

5.4 Allocation of resources throughout the institution is transparent, equitable, and reflects the vision, mission and goals of the institution

5.5 Maintenance of plant and facilities is designed to ensure the institution consistently delivers quality products and services to learners and other stakeholders

5.6 The institution has mechanisms to ensure financial integrity through regular audits and reports.

Please use the expandable box below to briefly elaborate on any institutional changes in the past three years in this area and which you think is related to the impact of increasing quality assurance activities in the region.

Appendix 3 – CARICOM MODEL LEGISLATION

1. THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL [AGENCY] BILL No. 2002

2. ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

PART I

Preliminary

3. Short title and commencement
4. Interpretation

PART II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL [AGENCY]

5. Establishment of the NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL [AGENCY]
6. Functions of the Council [Agency]
7. Appointment of the Executive Director and other staff of the Council [Agency]
8. Transfer on secondment to the service of the Council [Agency]
9. Superannuation benefits of officers and other employees of the Council [Agency]
10. Reports by the Council [Agency]
11. Power of the Minister to give directions

PART III

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

12. Funds and resources of the Council [Agency]
13. Application of the funds of the Council [Agency]
14. Use of surplus funds
15. Power to borrow
16. Exemption from taxes
17. Accounting of the Council [Agency]
18. Audit of the accounts of the Council [Agency]

PART IV

- 19. Protection of members of the Council [Agency]
- 20. Offences
- 21. Power to make regulations
- 22. Review of the operations of the council [Agency]
- 23. Transitional provisions

24. A BILL

INTITULED

AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL [AGENCY] of [.....], to vest in that body the power to grant recognition to awards obtained in [.....] and elsewhere, to determine the equivalence of all awards for the purpose of establishing acceptable standards within the Caribbean Community and for purposes connected therewith or related thereto.

[Words of Enactment]

PART I

Preliminary

Short title and commencement **1.** This Act may be cited as the National Accreditation Council [Agency] of [.....] Act 2002 and shall come into operation on a day to be appointed by the Minister by order published in the Gazette.

Interpretation **2.** In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires – “accredited” means to assess and determine whether the courses offered by an institution or provider and its awards meet internationally accepted standards [and “accreditation” shall be construed accordingly];
“accreditation” means any assessment to determine whether recognition should be conferred on [should be accorded to] an institution or a provider and its courses and awards;
[“Agency” means the National Accreditation Agency established by section 3];
“award” means any degree, diploma, certificate or other evidence of competence;
“college” means a post-secondary/tertiary institution that offers a range

of programmes and grants qualification mainly at the sub-baccalaureate level;

“community college” means a post-secondary/tertiary institution that offers a wide variety of programmes geared to meet the needs of the community in which it exists and grants qualifications mainly at the sub-baccalaureate level;

“Council” means the National Accreditation Council established by section 3;

“course” means a defined body of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired over a specified period and to which one or more credits may be awarded;

“credit” means a unit of academic measurement for a prescribed course or set of courses for which a particular qualification is awarded;

“equivalence” means an evaluation to determine the status, level and comparability of different programmes of study;

[“equivalence” means formal assurance that a programme or course is approved by a validating authority as being of comparable standard in weight, level and quality [in level and quality];

“Executive Director” means the executive Director of the Council [Agency] appointed pursuant to section 5;

“institution” means an organization with a developed structure providing for the administration, governance, delivery and certification of a range of programmes leading to the granting of awards or credits;

“Minister” means the Minister assigned responsibility for [education] [the Council/Agency];

“polytechnic” or technical college” means a post-secondary/tertiary institution that offers programmes that prepare graduates for technical occupations and grants sub-baccalaureate qualifications in applied disciplines;

“programme” means an approved curriculum composed of a series of courses in an academic or vocational specialty leading to a particular kind of certification in such form as a certificate, diploma, associate

degree or bachelor's degree;

“provider” means a person a person or group of persons or an institution offering one or more programmes for award or credit;

“re-accredited” means to appraise in order to determine whether an institution and its awards that have been accredited continue to meet the recognized standards for accreditation;

“technical university” means a post-secondary/tertiary institution that offers programmes that prepare graduates for technological occupations and grants as its major qualifications, baccalaureate and post graduate degrees and also conducts research with an emphasis on applied research;

“tertiary education” means the teaching and learning process that occurs following completion of secondary schooling or its equivalent and leads to the award of sub-baccalaureate qualification , baccalaureate and [post graduate degrees and conducts pure and applied research;

“validate” means to determine after assessment whether a new course leading to an award satisfies the recognized standards for that award.

PART II

Establishment of the National Accreditation Council [Agency]

- Establishment of the National Accreditation Council [Agency] Schedule
- 3(1) There is hereby established for the purposes of this Act the National Accreditation Council [Agency] which shall be a body corporate.
- (2) The provisions of the schedule shall have effect with respect to the constitution of the Council [Agency] and otherwise in relation thereto
- Functions of the Council [Agency]
- 4(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the Council [Agency] shall be the principal body in [.....] for conducting and advising on the accreditation and recognition of educational and training institution, providers, programmes and awards, whether foreign or national and for the promotion of the quality and standard of education of education and training in [.....]
- (2) The functions of the Council [Agency] shall be as follows –
- (a) to provide the advancement in [.....] of education, learning skills and knowledge;
 - (b) to ensure that the quality of all post-secondary education delivered in [.....] meets the standards set by the Council [Agency] to the qualifications and certificates conferred or awarded;
 - (c) to ensure that the appropriate standards set by the Council [Agency] are being maintained and improved;
 - (d) to protect the interest of students
 - (e) to promote the free movement of skills and knowledge within the Caribbean Community;
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions of this section, the functions of the Council [Agency] shall be –
- (a) to register institutions within and outside [.....] which offer courses in [.....]
 - (b) to maintain a register of approved institutions, providers and courses in [.....]
 - (c) to accredit and re-accredit the programmes of institutions operating in [.....]
 - (d) to validate and recognize new courses and programmes of institutions operating in [.....]
 - (e) to advise on the recognition of foreign institutions of education and training and their awards;
 - (f) to determine equivalency of programmes and qualifications in

- accordance with the framework established for the Caribbean Community;
- (g) to develop and maintain a unified credit base system for the tertiary education sector;
 - (h) to grant credits at the appropriate level for learning assessed by the Council [Agency];
 - (i) to accept credits granted by other bodies towards its own awards;
 - (j) to establish relationships with national and external accrediting and quality assurance bodies and to keep under review their systems of accreditation, procedures and practices;
 - (k) to provide authoritative advice on accreditation and related matters, including the conferment on institutions of such titles, as “university”, “college”, “polytechnic”, “community college”, “technical college”, or “technical university”;
 - (l) to seek to enhance the quality of tertiary education and training in [.....] and to disseminate good practice by conducting research and training;
 - (m) to promote quality assurance culture in [.....];
 - (n) to fix and collect fees in connection with the exercise of its functions;
 - (o) to provide the public with information on the quality and recognition of programmes and institutions in order to protect the public interest;
 - (p) to undertake audits, reviews and evaluations independently or in co-operation with other bodies as the Council [Agency] may consider necessary for the discharge of its functions
 - (q) to establish the requirements and the regulations with which institutions and providers must comply in order to be registered with, have their programmes accredited, reaccredited or validated, or have their awards recognized by the Council [Agency];
 - (r) to advise the Minister on the issuance of charters, licences or other authorizations to institutions and providers to operate or to continue their operations or to alter their existing operations on the basis of an appropriate evaluation;

 - (s) to establish and administer examinations councils and award in its own right or jointly with any national or international body degrees, certificates, diplomas and other evidence of competence;
 - (t) to accept courses successfully completed by students in partial fulfillment of programmes and examinations recognized by the Council [Agency];

- (u) to acquire, hold, sell or otherwise dispose of any property;
 - (v) to accept gifts or donations whether or not subject to any trust;
 - (w) to withdraw or cancel approval, recognition or title granted to, or conferred on any institution or provider for good and sufficient cause in the opinion of the Council [Agency];
 - (x) to deprive persons of awards or distinctions granted to or conferred on them if the Council [Agency] considers that there is good and sufficient cause to do so;
 - (y) to perform such other related functions as the Minister may, from time to time, assign to the Council [Agency];
 - (z) to do or cause to be done such other things as the Council [Agency] considers expedient or necessary for the performance of its functions under this Act.
- (4) The decision of the Council [Agency] shall prevail in any dispute regarding assessments conducted by other bodies of the accreditation, or recognition of institutions, providers, programmes and awards.

Appointment of the Executive Director and other staff of the Council [Agency]

- 5 (1) There shall be an Executive Director of the Council [Agency] who shall be appointed by the [President] Governor-General][Minister] for a term not exceeding five years and the Executive Director shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- (2) The Executive Director shall be paid such remuneration (including allowances) and the appointment shall be on such other terms and conditions as the [President][Governor-General][Minister] may determine.
- (3) The Council [Agency] shall appoint a Secretary and such other officers and employees as the Council may deem necessary and at such remuneration (including allowances) and on such other terms and conditions as the Council [Agency] may determine.
- (4) No salary exceeding [.....] dollars per annum shall be assigned to any post and no appointment shall be made to any post to which a salary exceeding [.....] dollars per annum is assigned, without the prior approval of the Minister.

Transfer on secondment to the service of the Council [Agency]

- 6(1) Any officer in the public service or the teaching service or any person in the employ of any public body or authority or any private body, with the approval of the appropriate authority or body and with the consent of the officer or other employed person, be transferred on secondment to the service of the Council [Agency] and any person employed in the service of the Council [Agency] may, with the consent of the Council [Agency], be transferred on secondment to the public service or teaching service or to the service of any public or private body.
- (2) Where any such transfer on secondment is effected the Council [Agency] shall make with the appropriate authority or body such arrangements as may be necessary to preserve the rights of the officer or other employed person to superannuation benefits for which the officer or employed person would have been eligible had that officer or other employed person remained in the service from which the transfer on secondment was effected.
- (3) Except where the Council [Agency] may decide otherwise, a period of transfer on secondment shall not in any case exceed five years.

[Alternatively, insert here the appropriate provision adopted in national legislation to enable the secondment of officers in the public service or the teaching service for service with the Council [Agency].

Superannuation benefits of officers and other employees of the Council [Agency]

- 7 The Council [Agency] shall, with the approval of the Minister, enter into or make arrangements by means of an insurance policy or by regulations of the Council [Agency] making provision for the superannuation benefits of officers and other employees of the Council [Agency] or their dependants or their legal representatives.

OR

[(1.) Unless other provision is made by the Council [Agency], for the payment of superannuation benefits in respect of their service

with the Council [Agency], to the officers and other employees of the Council [Agency] on their retirement therefrom the amount of superannuation benefits payable by the Council [Agency] to any such officer or employee in respect of such service shall be computed in accordance with the law or other rules applicable to the grant of superannuation benefits to officers in the public service as if for that purpose the service of the officer or other employee with the Council [Agency] were service in the public service.

(2.) Where a person is transferred to or is seconded temporarily to the service of the Council [Agency], the Council [Agency] and the former employer of that person shall establish arrangements satisfactory to the Minister for preserving the superannuation benefits of that person].

8(1) The Council [Agency] shall report to the Minister tendering advice on the quality and standards of post-secondary educational provision in [.....] and the fitness or otherwise of institutions to offer educational and training provision, to receive public funds and otherwise practice in [.....].

Reports by the
Council [Agency]

- (2) The Council [Agency] shall not later than 30 June in every year submit to the Minister a report containing -
- (a) an account of the activities of the Council Agency] during the preceding calendar year in such detail as the Minister may require;
 - (b) a statement of the accounts of the Council [Agency] audited pursuant to section 16.
- (3) The Minister may require the Council [Agency] to submit a report on any matter within the competence of the Council [Agency].

(4) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable, lay before the [House of Representatives][National Assembly] a copy of the Report submitted to the Minister pursuant to subsection (2).

9 (1) The Minister may give to the Council [Agency] directions of a general character as to the policy to be followed by the Council [Agency] in the exercise and performance of its functions and the Council [Agency] shall give effect to any such direction.

Power of the Minister to give directions

(2) The Council [Agency] shall provide such facilities to the Minister as will enable the Minister to verify information furnished in pursuance of this section.

25. PART III

Financial Provisions

Funds and resources of the Council [Agency]

10 The funds and resources of the Council [Agency] shall consist of –

- (a) such monies as may be appropriated by Parliament
- (b) special grants or other funds as may, from time to time, be provided by the Government or any other entity or agency, whether national, regional or international, for the financing of special projects and activities;
- (c) monies received by the Council [Agency] in connection with the performance of its functions;
- (d) all other property and assets duly acquired by the Council[Agency].

Application of the funds of the Council [Agency]

11 The funds of the Council [Agency] shall be applied in defraying

the following expenditure –

- (a) the remuneration, fees and allowances of members of the Council [Agency]; and Members of committees established by the Council [Agency];
- (b) the emoluments, allowances, fees and superannuation benefits of officers and other employees of the Council [Agency];
- (c) the capital and operating expenses, including maintenance and insurance, of the property of the Council [Agency];
- (d) the making and maintenance of investments of the Council [Agency];
- (e) any other expenditure authorised by the Council [Agency] in the discharge of its functions.

Use of surplus funds **12** The Council [Agency] may accumulate reserves and such reserves and all other funds of the Council [Agency] not immediately required to be spent in meeting obligations of the Council [Agency] or the discharge of any of its functions may be invested, from time to time, in such securities as the Council [Agency] may deem fit.

Power to borrow **13** The Council [Agency] may, for the purpose of discharging its functions under this Act, borrow such sums of money not exceeding in the aggregate [.....] dollars.

Exemption from taxes **14** The Council [Agency] shall be exempt from stamp duty, corporation tax, customs duties, purchase taxes, value-added taxes, motor vehicle taxes and all other taxes, charges, levies and imports on its income or profit or on assets which it acquires for its own use in carrying out its functions under this Act.

Accounting of the Council [Agency] **15** The Council [Agency] may by resolution make rules for the proper control of the systems of accounting of the Council [Agency] and for its finances.

Audit of the accounts **16** The accounts of the Council [Agency] shall be audited annually by

of the Council
[Agency]

the Auditor General or by an auditor authorized by the Auditor
General.

26. PART IV

General

Protection of members
of the Council
[Agency]

17(1) Subject to subsection (2), no proceedings shall be instituted personally against a member of the Council [Agency] in respect of any act done bona fide in pursuance of the execution of the functions of that member under this Act.

(2) Where a member of the Council [Agency] is exempt from liability by reason only of subsection (1), the Council [Agency] is liable to the extent that the Council [Agency] would be if the member were a servant or agent of the Council [Agency] so, however, that if in any case the Council [Agency] is not liable for any act as mentioned aforesaid, then subsection (1) does not have the effect of exempting such member as therein stated.

Offences

18(1) It shall be an offence for any member or any officer or other employee of the Council [Agency] to –

(a) communicate or reveal any information or matter connected with or related to the functions of the Council [Agency] to any unauthorised person or body;

(b) obtain, reproduce or retain possession of any information or matter referred to in paragraph (a) which that member or officer or other employee is not authorised to reproduced or retain in his or her possession.

(2) It shall be an offence for an institution or provider to -

(a) conduct or alter its operations without the prior approval of the Council [Agency];

- (b) offer to the public courses that are not registered with the Council [Agency];
- (c) use the word “university”, “college”, “polytechnic”, “community college”, “technical college”, or “technical university” in its title without having the authority to do so by the Council [Agency] or any internationally recognized body or authority or by any enactment;
- (d) misrepresent to the public the recognition claimed for it or for its courses or awards.

(3) An offence under this section is punishable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [.....] dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [.....] years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Power to make regulations

19(1) The Council [Agency], with the approval of the Minister, may make regulations for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

(2) Regulations made under this section shall be laid as soon as practicable before the [National Assembly]. [both Houses of Parliament] and shall be subject to [negative][affirmative] resolution.

Review of the activities of the Council [Agency]

20(1) The Council [Agency], with the approval of the Minister at intervals of six years, shall cause a review to be undertaken of the functions of the Council [Agency] in order to assess the impact of the operations of the Council [Agency] on the society and its efficiency and effectiveness.

(2) The review pursuant to subsection (1) shall be undertaken in collaboration with the Regional Accreditation Body established for the Caribbean Community and with other recognized like competent authorities.

Transitional provisions

21(1) Institutions and providers lawfully performing their functions in [.....] at the commencement of this Act shall, for the period of six months thereafter, be deemed to be authorized to continue to perform their respect functions: Provided that no new course shall be undertaken or advertised to the public by any such institution or provider without the prior approval of the Council [Agency].

(2) Any regulations governing the registration of institutions and providers and in force immediately before the commencement of this Act shall, in so far as they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, continue in force.

SCHEDULE

Section 3(2)

Constitution of the Council [Agency]

1 (1) The Council [Agency] shall comprise not less than [ten] nor more than [.....] members appointed by the [President]

[Governor-General] [Minister] one of whom shall be appointed the Chairperson and another the Deputy Chairperson.

- (2) The members of the council [Agency] shall include -
 - (a) Three persons representing tertiary institutions, including a representative in [.....] of the body known as the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions and a representative in [.....] of the Technical Vocation Education and Training Sector;
 - (b) Two persons representing bodies established to promote the interest of members of the teaching profession;
 - (c) two persons representing bodies espousing the interests of employers;
 - (d) one representative of the Ministry responsible for matters falling within the competence of the Council [Agency];
 - (e) Two persons appointed by the [President] [Governor-General] [Minister];
 - (f) The Executive Director who shall be an ex officio member of the Council [Agency].
- (3) The appointment of every member of the Council [Agency], other than the Executive Director, shall be made by instrument in writing which shall state the term of office of that member being not more than [three] years.
- (4) Every appointed member of the Council [Agency] shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- (5) In the case of the absence or inability of the Chairperson to act, the Deputy Chairperson shall perform the functions of the Chairperson and, in the case of the absence or inability of both of them to act, the [President] [Governor-General] [Minister] may Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson
- (6) A member of the Council [Agency] may, at any time, in writing resign membership of the council [Agency] which shall take effect from the date of receipt by the [President] [Agency] [President] [Governor-General] [Minister] of the communication.
- (7) Where a vacancy occurs in the membership of the Council [Agency] by reason of death, resignation or termination of the appointment by any other cause the [President] [Governor-

General] [Minister] shall appoint another person to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of office of the member who has vacated office and in the same manner in which the appointments to the Council [Agency] are required by this Act to be made.

- (8) No act nor proceeding of the Council [Agency] shall be questioned on account of any vacancy in the membership thereof; and no defect in the appointment of any member of the Council [Agency] shall vitiate any proceedings thereof.
- (9) The seal of the Council [Agency] shall be authenticated by the signatures of the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson and any other member of the Council [Agency] authorized to act in that behalf and such seal shall be officially and judicially noticed.
- (10) The Council [Agency] shall pay to the members of the Council, other than the Executive Director, such remuneration and allowances as the [President] [Governor-General] [Minister] may determine.
- (11) The names of all members of the Council [Agency] as first constituted and every change in the membership there of shall be published in the Gazette.

Meetings of the Council [Agency]

2

- (1) The Chairperson shall preside at meetings of the council [Agency] and, in the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy chairperson shall preside; in the absence of both of them from any meeting the other members present shall elect one of their member to preside at the meeting.
- (2) The quorum of the Council [Agency] shall be one-half of the membership thereof and one or two additional members in order to attain an uneven number.
- (3) Minutes in proper form of each meeting of the Council [Agency] shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be confirmed by the person presiding at the next meeting and a copy of the confirmed minutes shall be transmitted to the Minister within seven days of such confirmation.

Declaration of interest

3

A member of the Council [Agency] or a committee thereof who is in any manner, whether directly or indirectly, interested in a contract or proposed contract or has any interest in a matter under consideration by the Council [Agency] or any committee thereof shall disclose that fact at the next meeting of the Council [Agency]/or Committee and shall not participate in the consideration of, or vote on, any question relating to that

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This bill seeks to establish for [.....] a national body responsible for the accreditation and recognition of qualifications acquired elsewhere.

The accreditation body will have a strong working relationship with the regional accreditation body which is to be established for the Caribbean Community. The national accreditation body will report to the appropriate Minister annually ensuring that its operations are consistent with policy directives of the Government.

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the establishment of the national accreditation body for [.....] and Clause 4 sets out extensively the functions of the Council [Agency].

Clause 4(1) of the Bill seeks to provide that the national accreditation body to be established by the legislation will take precedence over any existing body exercising the function of evaluating professional awards or qualifications acquired or conferred in [.....] or elsewhere.

Part III of the Bill (Clauses 10-16) seeks to make provision for the financial resources of the Council [Agency], for exemptions accorded the Council [Agency] from certain taxes and for the financial accountability of the Council [Agency].

Clause 20 in Part IV of the bill seeks to provide for a review to be undertaken of the functioning of the Council [Agency] and the impact of its operations at intervals of six years.

Clause 21 seeks to provide for the enactment of transitional provisions governing the operations of existing institutions and persons offering programmes for awards or credits.

Minister of.....