**FOREIGN SYSTEMS: RESEARCH
REVIEW OF STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS
IN CANADA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

REFERENCE: 5266

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for

the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council

Acronyms

ACCC	Association of Community Colleges of Canada
ACTI	Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions
ACTT	Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (formerly CORD)
AD	Associate Degree
CANQATE	Caribbean Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community
CCCJ	Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica
CHA	Caribbean Hotel Association
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CORD	Committee for the Recognition of Degrees in Trinidad and Tobago
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
CTHRC-N	**Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council**
CTHRC-S	Caribbean Tourism Human Resources Council
CTLS	Caribbean Tourism Learning System
CTO	Caribbean Tourism Organisation
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
DS	Diploma Supplement
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EU	European Union
FCAR	Foreign credential assessment and recognition
FCR	Foreign credential recognition
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
NOS	National Occupational Standards
OAS	Organisation of American States
PLAR	Prior Learning and Assessment
QA	Quality Assurance
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
RAM	Regional Accreditation Mechanism
TEC	Provincial/territorial tourism education council
TLIU	Tertiary Level Institutions Unit of UWI
TVETC	**Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council**
UCJ	University Council of Jamaica
UWI	The University of the West Indies

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DRAFT

Instead of making detailed comparisons of reading lists and curricula, the assessment of foreign qualifications is increasingly seeking to determine whether applicants have a comparable level of skills and competence as they would have had if they had held a degree of the home countries. This shift is reflected also linguistically, in that there is less talk about "equivalence" and more about "recognition".[1]

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective

This research was contracted by the Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council[2] as part of its work towards developing a model for recognition of foreign credentials for non-regulated professions, and eventually creating a system to make foreign credentials recognizable in Canada.

Specifically, this review investigated the terms, conditions and processes of the development and implementation of selected standards and certification systems in education and training for the tourism sector in Canada and the Caribbean. It sought to identify what elements, if any, are common and relevant to both.

The research objectives were:

**   - to compare the Canadian process of establishing occupational standards and certification programs against that of the Caribbean;**

**   - to determine the commonalities and differences between the Canadian standards and certification system and: (1) the Caribbean Quality Assurance program and (2) the common core outcomes of the Caribbean system; and**

**   - to explore the requirements and implications of possible joint recognition of credentials between Canada and the Caribbean.**

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[1] *Recognition Issues in the Bologna Process - Final Report* of the 8th Joint Meeting of the ENIC and NARIC Networks, June 2001. Available at http://www.enic-naric.net/

[2] **This will be referred to as CTHRC-N, to distinguish it from the Caribbean Tourism Human Resources Council, which will be referred to as CTHRC-S**

1.2 Procedure and method

The review consisted of three contiguous parts: document review and analysis, and development of questions; consultations and discussions with individuals in Canada; and correspondence, consultations and discussions with individuals in the Caribbean. These were followed by a secondary analysis of information gathered, formulation of conclusions and recommendations and discussions of these with a few individuals, and drafting this preliminary report **for circulation and comment.**

I travelled to the Caribbean September 18 - 29, meeting with representatives of organizations and institutions involved in tourism education, training and certification in Barbados, Guyana, and Jamaica.

1.3 Limits and constraints of this review

Meeting with knowledgeable and experienced people during the visit to the Caribbean proved to be a challenge. While it was possible to identify individuals during the July-August period, it was not always possible to contact them and establish communications sufficiently to schedule appointments in advance. As a result, I found that some were not available - often out of the country - when I visited. This even occurred when advance appointments had been agreed. In particular, I was not able to meet with representatives of national Technical and Vocational Education and Training Councils, or the HEART Foundation/Hospitality/Tourism Training Company**, the whose training is competency-based.**

Given the complexity and diversity of education and training provision in the Caribbean,[3] this report is by no means exhaustive. It does attempt to give a reasonably indicative picture of the current environment

1.4 Structure of the report

Section 2 notes the rôle of tourism in the Canadian and Caribbean economies, and sketches salient parts of the historical background and political context of education and training provision in Canada and the Caribbean. The description of the complex situation in the Caribbean is necessarily not as brief as that of the Canadian context.

Sections 3 briefly describes the CTHRC-N's National Occupation Standards and Certification Program to provide the basis for comparison with the Caribbean programs. Sections 4-6 describe and compare the main characteristics of the education and training programs reviewed: CaribCert, the Caribbean Quality Assurance framework, and the Caribbean Tourism Learning System (CTLS) program.

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[3] **All references to the "Caribbean" in this report denote the English-speaking countries of the region, unless otherwise stated**.

Section 7 outlines some general principles and tools of foreign credential assessment and recognition, and Section 8 considers the results and potential consequences of their application to the programs reviewed, with a view to the potential for joint recognition.
Section 9 summarizes the conclusions of this study, and Section 10 presents recommendations for future steps that the CTHRC-N may take to develop one or more models and procedures for recognizing foreign credentials in non-regulated professions.

2. Background and context

2.1 The rôle of tourism in the Canadian and Caribbean economies

Tourism is an important industry in both the Caribbean and Canada. The World Travel and Tourism Council calls the Caribbean "the most tourism-intensive region in the world." The industry represents 14.8% of GDP in the Caribbean region, 15.5% per cent of total employment and generates over $90 billion of economic activity. It is the principal foreign exchange earner in many of these countries. In Canada, tourism accounts for 1 in every 7.8 jobs, 3.8% of GDP, and generates over $220 billion of economic activity. The health of the industry in both areas depends in important respects on maintaining and increasing the quality of services offered to remain competitive in relation to other markets.[4]

The quality of services in turn depends upon the quality and degree of professionalism of the industry workforce. Occupational standards on one hand, and systematic quality assurance and enhancement in education and training providers on the other, comprise the chief means of ensuring that new entrants and established workers have the knowledge, attitudes, skills and competencies to perform their tasks at the desired professional levels.

2.2 The Canadian tourism education and training context

A joint CTHRC-N and Association of Community Colleges of Canada symposium[5] in 2001 noted that the Canadian tourism industry faced increasing skills gaps, a shrinking workforce, an aging population, and immigration questions resulting from national labour shortages (including difficulties in recognizing foreign credentials). The need to recruit and retain talented, well educated and trained individuals remains just as urgent four years later. Industry wants to retain and motivate workers through a national system that facilitates mobility, both in occupation and geography.

Tourism and hospitality education and training is available through:

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[4] World Travel & Tourism Council. *The Caribbean: The Impact of Travel & Tourism on Jobs and the Economy* and *Canada: The 2005 Travel & Tourism Economic Research.*

[5] *An Articulated Pancanadian Core Curriculum: Are We Dreaming in Colour? The Tourism Learning System.*

- Work-place based training (often using national tourism occupational standards and leading to occupational certification, developed through the CTHRC-N)
- Private training programs;
- Secondary school career preparation tourism courses;
- Public post secondary programs;
- Tourism-related income assistance recipient employment programs;
- Tourism related apprenticeships.

This variety of training opportunities has brought the challenge of appropriately linking credentials in a manner that supports clear career paths. Articulation or credit transfer opportunities among training programs, prior learning assessment tools for those in industry, common core curriculum and standards, and the CTHRC's National Occupational Standards Certification Program are essential mechanisms in this process. As immigration will supply an important part of new workers in the industry, the industry also needs a credible, fair and easily accessible system for assessing and recognizing foreign credentials.

The CTHRC's National Occupational Standards (NOS) Certification Program is described in the Section 3.

2.3 The Caribbean tourism education and training context

2.3.1 General

The history of public and private provision of education and training across the region, and of externally-funded projects to enhance it, has resulted in a broad diversity of structures and offerings (notably including the articulation and franchising systems developed by the University of the West Indies), and uneven communication between and among providers and stakeholders.

The growth of distance education and of overseas providers of specific professional programs, together with continuing oversubscription of public programs, suggests that indigenous providers are unable to meet either student demand or the needs of the economy. In tourism, competition from other world regions adds pressure to raise standards and enhance quality. After previous failures at regional political and economic integration, the region's governments have once again resolved to establish a regional economic area, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). This initiative includes plans to bring some regional harmonisation in education and training, and to assure and enhance its quality.

2.3.2 Public providers

Tertiary-level institutions in the region have grown from 12 in 1945 to "about 70 public institutions, 61 indigenous private institutions and 47 overseas providers", while "[t]he number of virtual universities and programs [was] difficult to determine."[6]

Two well-established national tertiary-level accreditation bodies exist: the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ) and the Committee for the Recognition of Degrees in Trinidad and Tobago (CORD). The University of the West Indies (UWI) is a regional institution with an established international reputation. Its Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU) helps develop and negotiate articulation agreements and Associate Degree programs that broaden access to higher education for learners in the other states where national accreditation bodies are not yet solidly established. There are now "some thirty-four institutions offering programs in Hospitality and Tourism at the postsecondary level in fifteen countries."[7]

While this development has provided some impetus towards harmonized standards and approaches to quality assurance and accreditation, local political and economic circumstances and institutional conservatism (particularly perhaps in smaller states) have prevented universally accepted methods of quality assurance to emerge.

A report commissioned by the CTHRC-S comments:

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[6] p. 10. Vivienne Roberts. *Accreditation and Evaluation Systems in the English-Speaking Caribbean: Current Trends and Prospects.* UNESCO/IESALC): Caracas, October 2003.

[7] p. 10. Ethley D. London and Denis F. Paul. Quality Assurance And Articulation: Hospitality and Tourism Programmes in The Caribbean. Typescript November 2003.

"...institutions in the region are at different stages in the development of their Quality Assurance processes and a great variety of practices are in use." But "while the individual institutions may be satisfied with their efforts in assuring the quality of their programmes, there is no competent and impartial third party verification on which other institutions and the public may rely."[8]

At the same time, in a study for UNESCO, Vivienne Roberts summarizes this turbulent context:

> ...different types of validation patterns [for accreditation and evaluation] have emerged and become established in the region.... the institutionalization of accreditation bodies requires the displacement of some of these entrenched systems and assumptions. Generally, the impetus for change has come from outside of the academe and this thrust has been experiencing resistance or inertia, at best... The overarching challenge for policy makers and change agents is now one of winning stakeholder support through helping new quality assurance systems to find pragmatic, cognitive and moral legitimacy.[9]

She also observes that there is "an erosion of the boundaries between secondary and higher education and between academic and occupational education and training"; consequently, there is a "need for re-ordering and clarification through accreditation."[10]

The efforts of many organizations have encouraged the development of a genuine regional framework for quality assurance and the accreditation of institutions and programs. These organizations include the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT, formerly CORD), the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI)[11], the Caribbean Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC), the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ), and the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). Most recently, the initiatives of the UCJ in developing its Tertiary Qualifications Framework and a system for recognizing short courses, and its instrumental rôle in establishing the Caribbean Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) have strengthened this movement.

2.3.3 The private sector

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[8] London and Paul, p. 15.

[9] Roberts, p. 2.

[10] Roberts p. 11

[11] ACTI has 64 full members, 22 associate members and 10 honorary members.

The tourism industry itself provides a variety of short term training with no commonly accepted certification or other credential. This partly reflects a perception by some that education institutions do not understand the daily realities of the business, and produce graduates who are not job-ready. But it also provides efficient ways of enabling employed staff to learn new skills.

The number of overseas and distance-education private providers is increasing, particularly in niche professional areas of health disciplines and business, but also including tourism. For example, I was told of two Canadian initiatives: one a bartending course offered by a Vancouver-based company, the other a Canadian "university" where some tourism officials are earning tertiary-level qualifications in mixed distance and on-site modes.
The combination of clear demand for education and training, and a public emphasis on the legitimacy conferred by national accreditation has led some observers to worry that some small states may be selling accreditation to overseas institutions and enterprises with little or no validation of quality.

The Caribbean Tourism Organisation, CTHRC-S's parent body, actively promotes regional occupational standards and harmonisation of education and training provision, as well as industry collaboration with public providers. The Caribbean Hotel Association enthusiastically supports CTO's initiatives, and believes that these trends are gaining force. It shares with CTO the ambition to achieve international recognition for regional standards.

2.3.4 Multilateral and bilateral investments

Over the past decade, motivated by the belief in tourism as an engine for development, a variety of multilateral and bilateral organizations (CIDA, EU, IADB, OAS, Commonwealth Secretariat) have funded projects to strengthen the regional tourism industry through human resource development projects.

Unfortunately, there appears to have been little communication among donors and recipients, let alone coordination of project activities with institutions and providers not directly involved. Moreover, few if any of these projects have proved sustainable: when donor funding has run out, no adequate resources have been identified and acquired to continue.

2.3.5 CARICOM's promotion of regional standards

As part of its Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) initiative, CARICOM is moving towards creating in all important economic sectors regional standards that will be internationally recognized. It has already adopted standards for goods; and is now moving to adopt standards for services, including education and training. These latter are also intended to facilitate regional mobility of skilled labour.

Concern about the international competitivity of the region's postsecondary institutions in the face of foreign providers has strengthened the political will for harmonizing education and training standards across the CARICOM region, and for establishing a regional qualifications and accreditation framework to foster the portability of diplomas, certificates and other education credentials.

CARICOM governments have agreed on a "Mechanism for Equivalency and Accreditation as one of the planks for the operation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy."[12] In 2003, the CARICOM secretariat drafted the National Accreditation Council (Agency) Bill 2002. That same year, CARICOM proposed the establishment of the Caribbean Community Regional Accreditation Agency with an initial budget of $250,000. This proposed body is referred to as the Regional Accreditation Mechanism (RAM).

Vivienne Roberts has commented:
> The role of the RAM in the harmonization of standards for education and training is evident and documented. Its role in the credentialing of skills and experience is not.[13]

2.3.6 Current responses to the pressure for regional, internationally recognized provision

Among the broad variety of tourism education and training programs, two have explicitly included the goal of eventual external recognition in their conception and development: CaribCert and the Caribbean Tourism Learning System (CTLS). The elaboration of a regional Quality Assurance Framework was an essential step in preparing the environment for developing and launching the CTLS, and for moving towards regional harmonization of standards which is necessary for international recognition.

CaribCert is a private sector certification program developed with funding from the Caribbean Hotel Association and the IADB. It is intended to contribute to the competitiveness of the regional industry, but has no formal links with CARICOM initiatives.

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[12] Roberts, p. 58

[13] Roberts, p. 59

The *Quality Assurance Framework* has emerged from a history of institutions operating credibly without accreditation and a number of studies sponsored by both multilateral and regional bodies and organizations. As a further step towards a process of regional harmonisation of education and training provision, the framework contributes to the development of CARICOM's views and understanding of assessment and equivalence.

The *CTLS* has been developed in a partnership of the public and private sectors, in part conceived by its sponsor, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, as contributing to CARICOM's regional economic development strategy to increase the supply of better-qualified personnel and the efficiency of the network of education and training bodies.

The participation in the CTLS program of a broad variety of public and private institutions as well as industry representatives incidentally illustrates the "erosion of the boundaries between secondary and higher education and between academic and occupational education and training" observed by Vivienne Roberts.

The main characteristics of these three programs are described and compared to the NOS Certification program in Sections 4-6.

3. The CTHRC-N Certification Program

The **CTHRC-N** Certification program has been developed to promote, recognize and strengthen the professional competence of individuals already working in the industry, on the assumption that the recognition furnished by Certification will reduce transient employment and expand career opportunities. As a voluntary challenge program, it does not prepare individuals for employment in the industry; rather, it provides an incentive to acquire improved skills because career paths are defined.

The CTHRC Certification Program includes the following elements: *Requirements/Criteria, Program Standards, Testing and Evaluation Tools, Recognition Tools, Training Programs, Administrative Tools, Practices and Support, Governance, Marketing, and National Certificates criteria for wording*. The CTHRC Policy and Procedures Manual[14] describes these program elements in detail, including how standards and certification are developed.

In the following sections I use these elements as categories to make initial comparisons with the three systems in the Caribbean.

The processes of developing standards and certification (or qualification) constitute the skeleton, as it were, of any system of assuring the quality of both acquired knowledge and demonstrated performance. It is therefore important to describe briefly the processes used by the CTHRC-N to serve as a reference point in comparisons with the Caribbean systems.

The Standards and Certification Development Processes of the CTHRC-N

The *Standards Development Process* consists of six steps:

   a. A profile meeting of approximately 12 industry professionals brainstorms a comprehensive inventory of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for competency in an occupation.

   b. On the basis of the inventory, a development team prepares and circulates a first draft of standards.

   c. Development team members meet with the profile meeting participants and with corresponding committees in all the participating provinces and territories to review the draft standards, gather feedback and refine the draft.

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[14]Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council. *Certification Program Policy and Procedures Manual*. Draft, February 2004. The "Elements of the Certification Program" are outlined on pages 12-17.

d. A validation meeting follows, where the original 12 professionals review the feedback and refined draft, establish a consensus and produce another version of the standards that accurately reflects the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for competency in the occupation.

e. The development team then revises and edits the standards document, which is sent to all participants in the meetings for final ratification.

f. Once ratified, these standards are deemed to be validated. They are printed and made available to the industry.

The *Certification Development Process* uses the same principle of industry contribution as the standards development process does. The development team writes multiple-choice test items, based on the information in the validated standards. The committees that helped develop the standards also submit as many items as possible to augment and improve the authenticity of the tests. The completed bank of 300-500 test items is test-piloted with control and industry groups. A three- or four-day testing review meeting brings together three representatives from each participating province and territory with the development team to review and revise every test item, analyse the performance review and ensures that the skills and strategy for the industry evaluation are generated. Once the testing tools have been refined, finalized and formatted, the occupation is deemed open for certification.

Certification is available at three main levels: the Tourism Essentials Certificate, the Occupational Knowledge Certificate and the Professional Certification Certificate.

Tourism Essentials is a foundation credential granted to learners who demonstrate the mastery of the knowledge and skills required to obtain an entry-level, frontline job in the tourism industry. This credential is awarded to those who successfully challenge the multiple-choice exam and can illustrate 30 hours of workplace or career preparation. It is designed for new entrants to the workforce and to the tourism sector; individuals with little or no work experience

The *Occupational Knowledge Certificate* is specifically for people seeking recognition for their mastery of the knowledge of the standards for a specific occupation. Candidates who successfully complete the certification knowledge exam can use this certificate as credit towards Professional Certification. It is designed for students who are challenging the 'exam only' (often as part of formal course offering).

Professional Certification is the highest credential for industry professionals. It is awarded to employees who demonstrate that they have mastered the required skills and met the standards of their profession in a practical job setting. Certification requires confirmation of the requisite industry experience, writing an examination proving knowledge of occupational

skills, and an evaluation of practical performance skills in a real-world setting. It is designed for career-bound professionals and individuals seeking career advancement and recognition from their peers and industry.

The original standards and certification programs were first offered in 1995. By 2004, an on-line Learning Management System had been established, and the Certification Program was branded and marketed as e–merit. All documentation, including the National Occupational Standards and learning materials, are available from the emerit website (www.emerit.ca).

4. The CaribCert Program

4.1 Characteristics and components of the program

CaribCert is the regional professional certification system of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA). It was designed by Tourism Training Canada with funding from the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) under the Caribbean Tourism Credentialing Program. CHA Services, the association's training arm, oversees the day-to-day operations of the system.[15]

CaribCert's overall goal "is to improve the level of professionalism in the Caribbean tourism industry by providing a program vehicle that will help to increase self-esteem, pride and morale through professional recognition."[16] The system lays down standards of performance and task analysis for 45 hotel positions in the Caribbean, and offers proficient workers the possibility to obtain a certification. It is managed internally by the Product Development Department of CHA Services with the objective of broadening and deepening the range of training activities offered to the membership.

The certification system is based on standards established by Caribbean hospitality industry professionals, and which describe the skills and knowledge a person in an occupation needs to know and put into practice in order to provide superior service. The system identifies the skills and knowledge required to reach the next level, by training or further education. Occupational standards, performance checklists and examination banks are available both on-line and in hard copy. Candidates work with their supervisor(s) and/or employers to complete a performance checklist and write exams under the supervision of authorized invigilators.

Some 2,000 employees at line, supervisory, and management levels have been tested and certified since the program's launch in June 2003.

Because the program is still in its initial stages, its effectiveness and utility cannot yet be assessed properly. It may take a number of years before the level of its take-up by industry

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[15] Specifically, the program is managed internally by the Product Development Department of CHA Services. A general description of the CaribCert system and links to the CaribCert website, are available at: http://www.caribbeanhotels.org/CHA/subsidiaries/training_services.htm#CaribCert

[16] CARIBCERT Final Business Plan October 2002, p.8

workers becomes significant. At that point, its role in professionalising industry occupations and in promoting internationally-recognized standards can be judged.

Comparison of Elements of the CTHRC-N and of the CaribCert program*

Element	CTHRC-N Certification Program	CaribCert	Comment
Requirements/Criteria	knowledge, performance and experience	knowledge, performance and experience	basic criteria are similar
Program Standards	job competencies established by stakeholders	job competencies established by stakeholders	basic principles and process are similar
Testing and Evaluation Tools	specific occupation knowledge exam and evaluation of workplace performance or simulation	specific occupation knowledge exam and evaluation of workplace performance or simulation	similar approaches
Recognition Tools	CTHRC-N owned national pin and certificate for each occupation	CHA-owned badge and certificate	similar tools
Training Programs	Optional self-directed competency-based remedial and preparatory modules	Optional self-directed competency-based remedial and preparatory modules	similar program approaches
Administrative Tools, Practices and Support	CTHRC-N manages the program; Provincial and territorial tourism education councils (TECs); proprietary software and database	CHA administers the program; TTC manages testing	CTHRC-N program an established system. CaribCert a system in progress
Governance	Board of Directors; Standing Committee on Issues; Certification Technical Committee.	CHA Board; CHA Product Development Department; experts panel	Basic allocation of tasks and responsibilities similar.
Marketing	e-merit brand	CaribCert brand	e-merit established; CaribCert establishing
National Certificates criteria for wording	Content and format specified within CTHRC-N program	Content and format specified within the CaribCert program	CTHRC-N program is national; CaribCert regional

*Using the "Elements of the Certification Program" outlined on pages 12-17 of the CTHRC Certification Program Policy and Procedures Manual

4.2 Comparison with the CTHRC-N Certification Program

The table above illustrates in rudimentary fashion the fundamental similarities between the two certification programs. The chief differences arise from the more established nature of the CTHRC-N program, and its management by a body that represents all stakeholders – the education and training sector, employers, labour, professional and business associations, and governments. While the general structures, processes and content of the two programs are comparable, there may be differences in their application and practice. Although the CHA provided copies of 11 occupational standards and background documents, time constraints prevented me from making a detailed comparison with the CTHRC-N standards. Nevertheless, a general comparison indicates that the CaribCert standards bear very close resemblance to the Canadian ones.

 The report of the Skill Solution Group gives a comprehensive review of the CaribCert program and compares it in detail to the CTHRC-N Certification program.

4.3 Comments and conclusion

The goal, structure and content of the occupational standards of both the CaribCert and the CTHRC-N Certification programs appear compatible. Both focus on attesting to the competence of individuals already employed in the industry. It would therefore seem in principle feasible to discuss with the Caribbean Hotel Association a process and procedure for mutual recognition of certifications.

Some observers are unsure how the program can contribute to the general direction of education and training for tourism, and in particular to the coordination of training provision, as they feel it has few effective links with public institutions. They also express some concern that its sustainability depends on uncertain resources.

5. The Caribbean Quality Assurance framework

The Quality Assurance process is the core of the project to build an internationally-recognized education and training system in the Caribbean. It is supported and participated in by all stakeholder groups, and is being used to harmonize offerings across institutions/providers and among different levels and types of provision.

The standards developed through this process are modular, so that students and industry professionals can chart their own study and career paths within a recognized framework that leads to qualifications and certification that will be recognized uniformly across the region. Quality assurance provides an explicit accountability framework for public institutions. It is the primary tool that is laying the groundwork for a regional accreditation system.

5.1 Development of the framework

In 2003, the CTHRC-S contracted Dr. Ethley D. London and Dr. Denis F. Paul "to develop a Quality Assurance Framework for Hospitality and Tourism education and training programmes in the Caribbean."[17] This has proven to be an important step in the evolution of education quality assurance in the region.

The contract required the consultants "to develop a process and policy guidelines for the establishment of a Quality Assurance (QA) Model/Framework for tourism/hospitality at the institutional and programmatic levels in the English-speaking Caribbean countries which are beneficiaries of the CIDA/CPEC project", and to "develop general program articulation guidelines for use by participating Tertiary Level Institutions." [p. 1] This mandate was particularly significant because no universally accepted methods of quality assurance existed in the region, although "[a]ll stakeholders share[d] the vision not only of quality assurance but also of quality enhancement."[18]

The CTHRC-S thus sought to build explicitly upon an externally-funded project and the regional tradition of articulation, giving further support to the gradual convergence and increasing coherence of programs in the region. Quality assurance has been the basic process underlying the development of standards and accreditation by the University Council of Jamaica, the Committee on the Recognition of Degrees in Trinidad and Tobago, and the various government ministries responsible for education accreditation in the other states. It also lies at the heart of programming in colleges that offer associate and bachelor degrees.

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[17] London and Paul. *op. cit.*

[18] Roberts, p. 55.

5.2 Characteristics and components

Quality assurance and enhancement are used throughout the region with varying degrees of rigour as part of the drive to harmonize tertiary-level programs.

London and Paul reviewed four methods of quality assurance, and recommended a voluntary system comprised of institutional standards and program effectiveness standards:

Institutional standards categories include institutional guidelines incorporating standards for legal authority; mission, goals and objectives; planning; resources; governance and administration; relations to the public; and institutional assessment.

Program effectiveness standards categories include teaching/training staff; curricula; student support services; facilities; internships and on-the-job training; and personal attitudes and skills.

Their recommendation also includes suggestions for the extent and duration of developing institutional Quality Assurance policies, plans, self-study, and external evaluation, as well as for the structure and operation of a Regional Quality Assurance system in Hospitality and Tourism. The governing board of this system would comprise representatives from the CTO, the CTHRC-S, Caribbean hotel associations, education and training institutions, employers, boards of tourism and ministries of tourism of the regional governments, postsecondary education authorities in the region, and regional labour organizations. Marketing the Quality Assurance system "regionally and globally to secure reciprocal recognition from other systems" figures among its functions.[19]

The report goes on to recommend the CTLS model as an open system "based on the uniform occupational standards of the region"[20], one which is committed to quality improvement and will efficiently facilitate student mobility.

The description of this Quality Assurance Framework concludes with an implementation plan to be carried out by the CTHRC-S. The CTO accepted the recommendations of London and Paul, and through the CTHRC-S has moved to implement them.

London and Paul's recommendations thus build on local and regional experience and expertise in tourism education and training while responding to external challenges to the Quality of programs.

[19] London and Paul, p. 39

[20] London and Paul, p. 51

In the perspective of establishing the legitimacy of accreditation, and in particular of regional accreditation, the strategic importance of the London and Paul report is highlighted by Roberts' observation that, "... Quality assurance is not seen as synonymous with accreditation .... [it] is a wider issue and a more familiar concept. Quality Assurance is a part of the daily experience [of institutions]"[21]

Roberts goes on to observe:

> While policy determination for national and regional accreditation is taking place at the formal level, policies, guidelines and practices are being put in place sometimes informally mainly to support institutional quality but inevitably also to create the necessary conditions for national and regional accreditation.... the prospect for the rapid development of institutional quality assurance is excellent...[22]

and further:

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[21] Roberts, p. 39

[22] Roberts, pp. 55-56

Institutional Quality Assurance is a sure path for the development of transparent administrative policies which can only enhance institutional efficiency and competitive advantage.[23]

Another step in the institutionalization of quality assurance in the region was the establishment in 2004 of the Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE). It includes working to increase mutual recognition of qualifications to facilitate the movement of students and graduates within the region among its objectives.

5.3 Comparison with the CTHRC-N Certification Program

Strictly speaking, it is neither correct nor appropriate to compare the Quality Assurance Framework with the Certification Program. They have entirely different purposes. The QAF is a method for ensuring that education and training providers offer courses and programs that meet academic and employer standards. It does not test or certify or award qualifications to individuals. Nevertheless, some *pro forma* comparisons illustrate some common ground of concerns as well as fundamental differences in final purpose.

The chief similarities between the two systems appear in their initial stages, in the processes of establishing standards and using them to develop the content of programs. Both use an extensive participatory and consultative process involving representatives of as many stakeholder groups as possible. This is of course an essential strategy for establishing the credibility and legitimacy of the standards and programs.

Another instructive comparison can be made with the following processes used by the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ) to maintain standards in the Associate degree in Hospitality, Entertainment and Tourism:

- Development of the Curriculum with Industry Partners
- Reports from students who go on work experience - students' reports as well as employer's report are considered.
- External examiners who vet examinations and curriculum
- Partnering with institutions such as Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Product Development Co. (TPDCo. Ltd.), Jamaica Hoteliers Association
- Use of occupational standards
- Site visit to Colleges to ensure that standards are maintained:
    - Resources are up-to-date
    - Material being used by Colleges are current
    - Laboratories are well furnished and equipped.

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[23] Roberts, p. 56

Again, the principles, values and approach of this quality assurance process are congruent with those of the CTHRC-N Certification Program. The use of student reports – feedback from the client – is a notable exception.

5.4 Comments and conclusion

The categories covered by the institutional and program effectiveness standards of the Quality Assurance Framework address the same policy and practical concerns as does the CTHRC-N Certification Program Policy and Procedures Manual. As the basis for implementation of the CTLS, the Framework serves as a guarantor of the legitimacy of the CTLS program as a training provider for the Caribbean tourism industry. The qualifications awarded by the CTLS program will be recognized throughout the region.

Comparison of Elements of the CTHRC-N and of the Quality Assurance Framework*

Element	CTHRC-N Certification Program	Quality Assurance Framework	Comment
Requirements/Criteria	knowledge, performance and experience	institutional guidelines incorporating standards for legal authority; mission, goals and objectives	basic concepts of establishing quality are similar
Program Standards	job competencies established by peer-perceived occupation experts	developed by qualified staff in consultation with external experts and stakeholders	basic principles are similar
Testing and Evaluation Tools	specific occupation knowledge exam and evaluation of workplace performance or simulation	not strictly applicable	regular periodic internal and external review by appropriate examiners
Recognition Tools	CTHRC-N owned national pin and certificate for each occupation	not applicable	QAF leads towards accreditation
Training Programs	Optional self-directed competency-based remedial and preparatory modules	not applicable; training for external assessors	QAF covers the full gamut of types and levels of study and training
Administrative Tools, Practices and Support	CTHRC-N manages the program; Provincial and territorial tourism education councils (TECs); proprietary	Regional QA board; CTHRC-S secretariat; institution internal QA mechanism	CTHRC-N program an established system. QAF for CTLS a system in progress.

	software and database		
Governance	Board of Directors; Standing Committee on Issues; Certification Technical Committee.	General oversight: CTHRC-S Policy, guidelines, criteria: QA Board External assessors for institutions	Allocation of tasks and responsibilities similar.
Marketing	e-merit brand	CANQATE	e-merit established; QA well-established in region, association new.
National Certificates criteria for wording	Content and format specified within CTHRC-N program	not applicable	CTHRC-N program is national; QAF is regional

*Using the ''Elements of the Certification Program'' outlined on pages 12-17 of the CTHRC Certification Program Policy and Procedures Manual

6.   The Caribbean Tourism Learning System

6.1 Characteristics and components of the program

In her study of trends in accreditation and evaluation systems in the Caribbean, Vivienne Roberts observes that there is "an erosion of the boundaries between secondary and higher education and between academic and occupational education and training", and adds that there is a "need for re-ordering and clarification through accreditation." The development of the CTLS/AD program presents a case study, as it were, of this circumstance.

The Caribbean Tourism Learning System (CTLS) is an ambitious and comprehensive program that strives to establish a regionally-integrated and accredited education and training program to enhance the quality and international competitivity of the Caribbean hospitality and tourism industry. It consists of a common, competency-based curriculum for a two-year Associate Degree in Tourism Studies that prepares graduates for entry-level management positions. Offered through tertiary institutions, it includes both in-course practical assignments and work placements, and a 3-month summer internship.

According to London and Paul, "The core is based on industry endorsed occupational standards and is designed to impart problem-solving skills appropriate for managers in the industry. This curriculum ensures that the essential learning objectives of all programmes will be quite similar" and: "The CTLS will be linked to a quality assurance framework which aims to ensure that the standards of all programmes in the region do not vary significantly from one another."[24]

To ensure that the Associate Degree program would be well accepted in the region and that it represented the most advanced current thinking about Hospitality and Tourism Education, the selection of CTLS standards reviewed a large sample of standards, including:

- Caribbean national tourism standards from Jamaica, Bahamas, Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados
- Caribbean regional standards from the Caribbean Tourism Industry Standards Project (CTISP) which has incorporated the American Hotel and Lodging Association standards
- Canadian tourism industry occupational standards
- Asia tourism occupational standards
- Freeman standards licensed by the CHA for the Caribbean Tourism Credentialing Project
- Other tourism standards works

CTO then held a number of consultations with tourism educators across the region in 2000 and 2001 to get feedback on the relevance of the CTLS for the Caribbean Region. As a result,

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[24] London and Paul, pp. 46 and 48

program is designed not simply to improve the level of professionalism in the industry, but also to provide consistent delivery of core content so employers will have realistic expectations of program graduates. Beyond this core curriculum, students may select any courses offered at their institution. The Associate Degree and ensures transferability and articulation with other colleges and universities within the region, and meets applicable regional occupational standards.

The CTLS/Associate Degree program has just been launched in September 2005, with twelve institutions committed to the programme thus far[25].

6.2 Comparisons with the CTHRC-N Certification program

A quick comparison (more properly a juxtaposition) of the curriculum outline for the AD core Tourism Studies and Food and Beverage Operations courses with National Occupational Standards for occupations whose content parallels that of the courses highlights the main

Indicative simplified comparison of selected content of the CTLS Tourism Studies core curriculum with the content of the National Occupation Standards for several occupations

	Tourism Studies	**National Occupational Standards**
1	*Tourism system*: This course provides students with the understanding of how the global tourism system operates and provides them with the basic tools and techniques to function effectively within the system.	*Transferable Skills*: Tourism Knowledge *Bartender; Food and Beverage Server*: Tourism awareness *Front Desk Agent*: "have tourism information"
2	*Accommodations 1: Unit 1* 3.0 Front Office Systems Past And Present 5.0 Registration/Check-In Procedure 6.0 The Reservation Procedure	*Front Desk Agent*: B. Guest services C. Reservation and Sales D. Arrivals and Departures

[25] Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute; Barbados Community College/Hospitality Institute; Clarence Fitzroy Bryant Community College (St. Kitts/Nevis); Dominica State College; Brown's Town, Excelsior and Montego Bay Community Colleges in Jamaica; T.A. Marryshow Community College (Grenada); Trinidad & Tobago Hospitality & Tourism Institute (both campuses); University of Belize; and University of Guyana. These last two will implement the program in the next academic year, 2005-2006.

	7.0 Front Office Accounting Methods 8.0 Guest Checkout And Account Settlement	
3	*Accommodations 1: Unit 2* 9.0 Housekeeping Equipment 10.0 Cleaning Chemicals 11.0 Cleaning Procedures 16.0 Communication Methods	*Bartender; Food and Beverage Server*: Tools and Equipment; Sanitation and Safety *Front Desk Agent*: Safety and Security *Essential Skills*: Value Safety All Standards: Professionalism/ Communication Skills/ Interpersonal Skills
4	*Practical courses* are calculated at 30 hours per credit with a minimum of 4-6 credits per course. Instruction methods: practicum; simulated exercises; practical demonstrations; field trips; practical food preparation; situational learning	*All Occupations*: Performance test *Tourism Essentials*: illustrate 30 hours of workplace or career preparation
5	*Internship summer course*	*All Occupations*: Performance test *Tourism Essentials*: illustrate 30 hours of workplace or career preparation

Comparison table of Elements of the CTHRC-N and of the CTLS/AD*

Element	CTHRC-N Certification Program	CTLS/AD	Comment
Requirements/Criteria	knowledge, performance and experience	knowledge and performance	Certification attests to competence in the workplace; degree affirms graduates ready for management job entry
Program Standards	job competencies established by stakeholders	quality assurance and occupation standards used to develop curricula with stakeholders	CTHRC-N acts as a *de facto* QA body, using industry endorsed standards. The CTLS QA framework sets out institutional quality standards
Testing and Evaluation Tools	specific occupation knowledge exam and industry performance evaluation	degree program course tests, examinations, practical units and summer internships	performance counts for more in the Canadian system; the AD program covers a broader range of knowledge as a component of regional development.
Recognition Tools	CTHRC-N owned national pin and certificate for each occupation	Associate Degree and Applied Associate Degree	symbolic items signify completion of an open, coherent process
Training Programs	Optional self-directed competency-based remedial and preparatory modules	post-secondary associate degree curriculum including practical placements and summer internship	CTHRC-N modules specific in scope and short in duration. CTLS/AD two-year program broader in scope.
Administrative Tools, Practices and Support	Provincial and territorial tourism education councils (TECs); proprietary software and database	Secretariat (CTHRC-S), institutions, national accreditation bodies, quality assurance network	established Certification system. Caribbean system in progress
Governance	General oversight: Board of Directors. Policy and direction: Standing Committee on Issues reports to Board	General oversight: CTHRC-S Policy and direction: QA Board of Governors Program integrity:	Certification program somewhat more centralized; basic allocation of tasks and responsibilities similar.

	of Directors. Program integrity: Certification Technical Committee.	experts panel	
Marketing	e-merit brand	CTLS brand	e-merit established; CTLS establishing
National Certificates criteria for wording	Content and format specified within CTHRC-N program	Content and format regulated by national accreditation bodies and/or government ministries	CTHRC-N program is national; CTLS anticipates a Regional Accreditation Mechanism

difference in perspective of the two systems. The content of the National Occupation Standards can in many cases be read as a rudimentary procedures manual. The standards spell out in detail what the worker must know and do: this is fitting and appropriate, given the performance requirement of the NOS Certificates. By focussing on demonstrated performance based on specific acquired knowledge and experience, the Certification program encourages professionalism, and gives Certificate holders a sense of developing career.

The AD curriculum, on the other hand, spells out what the student will learn, and includes various kinds of practical experiences, including demonstrating certain skills in class, short-tem placements during term, and a summer internship. Only in the latter component do personnel active in the industry rate the student's performance. In general, the knowledge component of the AD curriculum is considerably broader than required by the knowledge component of the Certification program, while the performance component consists of acquiring experience rather than demonstrating it. The AD program is designed to prepare students for entry-level management positions.

Another comparison of the two programs using the "Elements of the Certification Program" outlined on pages 12-17 of the CTHRC-N *Certification Program Policy and Procedures Manual* brings out similarities and differences in their basic structures and purposes. All of these can be attributed to their different environments (national and regional) within which both are seeking to facilitate labour and student mobility through the establishment of common or at least comparable and compatible occupational and curriculum standards developed through extensive consultation with stakeholders as a guarantor of quality. The Canadian program focuses on demonstrating capability by "looking back" at an individual's experience; the Caribbean program aims to develop capability by "looking forward" to a student's entry into the job market.

One further comparison (or again more properly a juxtaposition), this time from the Caribbean perspective, illustrates how the organizing framework of the two approaches differ. The categories and comments on the CTLS component are drawn from the section of the London and Paul paper which presents their basic rationale for the appropriateness and legitimacy of the CTLS program.

In broad terms, the Canadian and Caribbean frameworks share fundamental values, and their structures bear a reasonable resemblance. At the same time, the categories demonstrate the broader scope and range of the QA Framework that underpins the CTLS. The AD is an education and training program that results in a qualification, requiring resources for inputs, maintenance and sustainability considerably greater than does the Certification testing program.

Comparison of Key Parameters Of CTLS and the CTHRC-N Certification Program*

CTLS	CTHRC-N	Comments
Relations to the Public	Employers and workers	Both systems address the concern that quality considerations should be guided by the needs of the industry
Student Support Services	Information for those working in the profession	CTLS looks at the nature of the support provided. The CTHRC-N Certification program provides tools for workers to learn standards.
Training Curriculum, Internships, Other Related educational activities	Job experience pre-requisite	CTLS is clear about the need to implement the training in a comprehensive way involving practical training and on-the-job experience. CTHRC-N program certifies demonstrated knowledge and competence.
Training Staff	Experts and evaluators	CTLS requires qualified staff. CTHRC-N program requires industry experts to develop standards and conduct exams.
Institutional Resources	Employers, TECs and CTHRC	CTLS aims to provide a supportive learning environment. CTHRC-N program provides local/regional training support and requires industry validation of standards.
Planning, Governance, Institutional Assessment	CTHRC, Standing Committee on Issues	CTLS includes training outside of academic institutions. CTHRC-N program develops, validates and monitors standards and exams in the workplace.
Legal Authority	Certifying authority	CTLS recognizes the need to regulate the authority to train and to make awards of certificates and degrees that genuinely reflect the acquisition of valuable skills and knowledge. The CTHRC-N program ensures that certification confirms the acquisition and performance of competence.
Mission, Goals, and Objectives	Mission, Goals, and Objectives	CTLS is based on the belief that clarity in these areas is a fundamental basis for assuring quality in any enterprise. The National Occupational Standards clearly describe the nature and content of each competency, and are designed to improve the quality of work in the industry.

*Using categories from Table 3 of London and Paul.

6.3 Comments and conclusion

Standards for the AD core curriculum are in effect second-order standards: they are derived from occupational standards, but do not reproduce them. Students are not certified as qualified in specific competencies; earning the AD attests to their capabilities. They demonstrate certain abilities and competencies in their work placements and internships, which are evaluated by industry supervisors trained in the application of occupational standards.

One interesting feature of the program is a provision arising from long experience in the region with transfers among institutions: student applicants can be given advanced standing in the program for previous knowledge and experience.

While the program will be monitored and assessed on a continuing basis, assessment of the effectiveness and utility of the CTLS for the workplace cannot begin until a minimum of three years from 2006, by which time the first cohort should have graduated and begun to seek employment.

One strength of the CTLS program from the regional point of view is that the Associate Degree is accredited, and has been developed within the Quality Assurance framework. It remains to be seen how closely its standards and credential will be judged to be compatible with the regional accreditation criteria which CARICOM's initiative is aimed at establishing.

It is also a sustainable program, as it is approved as an integral part of the programs offered by participating institutions.

Unlike the CTHRC-N Certification and CaribCert programs, the CTLS/Associate Degree program prepares learners to enter the labour market. Conceiving how to develop a system or procedures for joint recognition with the CTHRC-N Certification program presents a significant challenge, one moreover that should be addressed given the region's goals of harmonisation of provision and credentialing, and of international recognition.

The straightforward comparison with the CTHRC-N program yields little insight on how we might proceed to develop a joint recognition mechanism. Applying some established international foreign credential assessment and recognition (FCAR) principles and tools may suggest some possibilities.

7. Legal frameworks and general principles of Foreign Credentials Assessment and Recognition (FCAR)

7.1 Legal frameworks

Since the 1990s, international discussions of how to ensure that the knowledge and skills that individuals acquire in one jurisdiction through a variety of experiences are assessed and recognized fairly in other jurisdictions have evolved under the sponsorship of UNESCO and of a variety of other inter-governmental networks. In 1997, the *Lisbon Recognition Convention* established a general framework for these discussions, and for the implementation of procedures by signatory states.[26]

During this same period, the European Union developed the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), and subsequently the Diploma Supplement, to ensure student academic mobility within Europe. These tools move the process of assessing a prior qualification from making a detailed comparison of reading lists and curricula, to seeking to determine how the level of skills and competence of a student from one country compares to that of a similar student in another country. In other words, recognition depends increasingly on establishing similar outcomes - what can an individual with qualifications from one country demonstrably know and do, and where and how do these outcomes fit in the qualifications framework of another country?

The Diploma Supplement model is designed to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It describes the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which the supplement is appended. It is supposed to be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition.

7.2 General principles

Several interesting guidelines and principles for assessing foreign qualifications have evolved in this process. The general principles in the Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications[27] of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee include statements that:

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[26] Canada signed the Convention in 1997, but has not ratified it. The full text is available at: http://www.cepes.ro/information_services/sources/on_line/lisbon.htm

[27] For the full texts cf. UNESCO/Council of Europe *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* (Riga, 6 June 2001) and the *Explanatory Memorandum*:
 http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/Code%20of%20good%20practice_EN.asp

..... alternative recognition may include: ....

(iii) full or partial recognition of the foreign qualification subject to the applicant successfully taking additional examinations or aptitude tests

 Examples of learning outcomes may be one or more of the following:

(I) ability to pursue a specific occupation or profession at operational, management or technology development level.
In evaluating a foreign qualification, more emphasis should be given to the outcome of the education process (i.e. the knowledge and skills certified by the qualification and the ability to undertake further activities) than to the process itself (i.e. the education programme through which the qualification was earned).

The 1998 "General Guiding Principles for Good Practice in the Assessment of Foreign Credentials"[28] prepared by the Canadian Provincial Assessment Committee (which consists of provincial international credential assessment organizations) and the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) mirror those that have evolved in international discussions. Most pertinent for the purpose of this review is the principle that:

The same basic methodology should apply whether the statement [of assessment] is for:
- general employment purposes
- entry into secondary and postsecondary institutions
- entry into a regulated occupation

It is fair to say that the core values and objectives of both the European and Canadian approaches to FCAR include the systematic application of agreed criteria and procedures which define a clear path towards recognition of previous qualifications and experience, and leads to appropriate placement for studies and employment, and fair pay in employment.

7.3 Standards in education and training

Processes and procedures concerned with the establishment, maintenance, development and integrity of standards in education and training have developed internationally over this same period. These include Quality Assurance (QA), articulation, and the accreditation of programs and institutions. While many Canadian institutions use these processes and mechanisms, and a number of national agreements and guidelines exist to promote student and labour mobility, no common standards – let alone agreed common procedures – exist for their use. Moreover, accreditation is

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[28] available from the CICIC website at http://www.cicic.ca/pubs/prncpen.stm

only used in Canada for professional programs such as dentistry, engineering and medical professions. In the Caribbean, institutions across the region have extensive experience with articulation and QA. The work of UWI and its TLIU, together with that of the UCJ and CORD, has led toward a consistent and coherent understanding and application of these processes which has enabled serious consideration and discussion of a regional accreditation mechanism.

One other tool (or more accurately, an approach) for helping individuals to acquire new competencies and knowledge at appropriate levels exists: Prior Learning and Assessment (PLAR). PLAR techniques continue to be developed and refined, and have been accepted as legitimate in many applied fields in particular. Some of them mirror the "challenge" procedure of some certification programs; but PLAR cannot claim to be a standardized rigorous mechanism. While many Canadian colleges use PLAR methods in placing learners, most Canadian universities consider them to be unreliable at best. Caribbean tertiary institutions' systematic use of articulation with internal and external quality assurance seems virtually to include surrogate forms of PLAR.

7.4 Can the international environment of FCAR discussions help formulate principles for joint recognition between the two CTHRCs?

Two emerging concepts or factors and one instrument in international practice of FCAR would seem to offer pointers for the consideration of joint recognition between the CTHRC-N Certification Program and the Caribbean Tourism Learning System Associate Degree program: learning outcomes, and alternative recognition of qualifications and the Diploma Supplement (DS).

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes **comprise at least general knowledge and** knowing-how, i.e. basic understanding of a skill and its domain, and capability to perform it. A stronger version would include general and theoretical knowledge of a skill domain, and demonstrated performance of the skill, confirmed to be at defined educational/training and occupational standards.

Alternative recognition

The concept of alternative recognition of qualifications acknowledges that recognition may require specific tests or evaluations, or that such recognition is a step towards authorization to practice an occupation, whether regulated or not.

The Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement form may provide a "neutral" way to compare the learning outcomes of the CTHRC-N Certification Program and the CTLS Associate Degree Program – "neutral" because it has been developed for European tertiary institutions, not for Canada or the Caribbean. It consists

of eight sections requiring information on: the identity of the holder of the qualification; the identity of the qualification; the level of the qualification; the contents and results gained; the function of the qualification; additional information; certification of the supplement; and information on the national higher education system[29].

Information required	CTHRC-N Certification Program	CTLS Associate Degree Program
1. Identifying the Holder of the Qualification	Named on the certificate	Named on the diploma
2. Identifying the Qualification	Specified on the certificate	Specified on the diploma
3. Level of the Qualification	Specified on the certificate	Specified on the diploma
4. Contents and Results Gained	Information available on-line and in hard copy	Information available on-line and in hard copy
5. Function of the Qualification	Attests to professional competence; access to further levels	Access to further study and labour market entry
6. Additional Information	Available on-line and in hard copy	Available on-line and in hard copy
7. Certification of the Supplement	Official seal	Official seal
8. Information on the National Higher Education System	Information on the training system	Information on the regional tertiary education system

The Associate Degree easily fits this academically-oriented rubric. The Certification Program requires some flexibility in relation to details such as field of study (in item 2) and length of program (item 3), and likely should provide more additional information (item 6) than need the AD. But it would seem in principle feasible to find paths towards mutual recognition through this type of approach. Item 5, information on the function of the qualification, is the only item where substantive difference exists. It is in this area that the principles of alternative recognition and assessment for general employment purposes can be applied.

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[29] The outline of the Diploma Supplement and explanatory notes on completing it can be found at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/diploma_en.html

8. Possible paths to investigate

8.1 Some questions

Qualifications stipulate the learning outcomes of the individuals who hold the qualification. They signal what the holder knows and can do. We can ask a number of initial questions concerning the learning outcomes signalled by the CTHRC-N's Certificates, CaribCert Certificates, and the Associate Degree of the CTHRC-S CTLS program:

1. What, if any, are the specific differences in the content and processes of the two Caribbean programs compared to the Canadian Certification program? Are these differences significant: do they suggest substantively different outcomes?

2. How much outcome equivalence to the knowledge component of the Associate Degree does the knowledge test of a CTHRC Certification represent?

3. How much outcome equivalence to the performance component of the Certification program do the summer internship and in-course placements of the Associate Degree represent?

4. How can we measure differences in outcomes? Are they differences in kind, degree, substance, or a combination?

5. What could be done to make up any differences in these outcomes? Or are the differences too great?

6. What costs are involved in investigating, developing and adopting a joint recognition mechanism?

These questions can be addressed on one level to individual qualification holders, and at another, to the programs.

At the individual level, the testing systems of the qualifications programs differ in the relative weight given to performance and knowledge, and in specific areas of substance. This factor argues for returning to examining learning outcomes as the main focus for a search for a path to joint recognition.

At the program level, both CaribCert and the Quality Assurance framework of CTLS have much in common and parallel to the National Occupational Standards system for developing standards and seeing that they are met. This congruence would seem to justify using alternative recognition.

8.2 General considerations

Any exploration of paths by the CTHRC-N towards mutual recognition must be begun in collaboration and regular consultation with Caribbean counterparts: the CHA and the CTHRC-S. The representatives of both organizations with whom I met indicated a strong interest in collaboration towards this objective, calling the timing of this first investigation "good".

While the results of this brief review suggest there are reasonable substantive grounds to engage in discussions, it is clear that a considerable amount of work will need to be done before mutual recognition can be contemplated with confidence. The following parts of this section suggest a number of directions and objectives that the CTHRC-N could pursue. They do not in any way constitute a road map to joint recognition; they are simply indications of sites that bear visiting on the way.

8.3 Certification

It seems in principle very feasible to discuss with the Caribbean Hotel Association a process and procedure for mutual recognition of certifications between the CaribCert program and the CTHRC-N Certification program. The goal, structure and content of the occupational standards of both programs appear compatible and even, perhaps, congruent. Both focus on attesting to the competence of individuals already employed in the industry.

In addition to a comparison of the details of the occupational standards for comparable occupations, the partners will wish to familiarize themselves with the context and specifics of testing, both for knowledge and for performance.

While at first glance it should be possible to make a strong case for mutual recognition, and to develop standards, processes and procedures for it, reaching agreement will depend to a great extent on mutual confidence in the actual testing procedures, and in their reliability in confirming the learning and performance outcomes of individual candidates.

It should also be noted that in their review for the CTHRC-S, London and Paul examined the professional certification model as "an interesting alternative" to the CTLS proposal. They noted that such a system requires a quality assurance mechanism such as the CTLS system that they recommend, but concluded that practical difficulties related to examinations and cost would make it difficult to implement and sustain.[30]

8.4 Articulation

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[30] London and Paul, p. 56

It would not be difficult, in principle, to develop strategies for processes for recognition of qualifications between Caribbean and Canadian Postsecondary Institutions, institutions, and eventually of joint recognition. The education and training programs of both the Caribbean and Canada institutions prepare students to enter the labour force.

For example, some exploration of issues and challenges could be developed in articulation agreements between Canadian college programs and CTLS Associate Degree programs. Institutions in the English Caribbean have considerable experience with the concept, procedures and institutional consequences of articulation, and with a broad variety of articulation agreements.

A first step might be a meeting of the heads of Caribbean schools/programs of Hospitality and Tourism with Canadian counterparts. Beyond articulation, these institutions might develop mutual recognition agreements.

8.5 The CTHRC-N Certification Program and the CTLS Associate Degree in Tourism Studies: Filling the gaps

It is evident from the comparison of these two programs and from the consideration of some general FCAR principles that any mechanism of joint recognition in this case will require some innovative adjustments. The Diploma Supplement example illustrated one possible framework within which these might be developed, all the while following the spirit of recognition of learning and performance outcomes. Developing confidence in the reliability and legitimacy of innovations would be the fundamental challenge of discussions of this possibility.

With the exception of the management-level certifications, the CTHRC-N knowledge tests do not include general knowledge of the tourism industry. Nor does the management-level certification cover this area in the same depth as does the curriculum of the Tourism Studies AD program.

With the exception perhaps of the summer internship, the practical performance elements of the Associate Degree do not match the extent and level of job experience and demonstrated performance competence required by the Certification program. The summer internship may enable students to achieve the same standard of 30 hours of workplace or career preparation as is required of the Tourism Essentials Certificate. Ideas of how to approach this issue may be suggested by examining the cases of students who challenge the 'exam only' part of the Occupational Knowledge Certificate as part of a formal course offering.

Similarly, discussions in Canada of the core outcomes for Tourism and Hospitality Programs that are common to college diploma programs and industry standards may provide useful ideas, as could the provisions in some Caribbean institutions for advanced standing based on work experience.

Finally, one rudimentary mechanism could be contemplated: a "make-up" test for candidates wishing joint recognition. Canadians would sit a modified but comprehensive knowledge exam; Caribbean candidates would take a performance test appropriate for the certification level sought. The existing tests in each case would have to be modified in light of costs, and could incorporate what may be called a "local knowledge strategy", to allow candidates to demonstrate capability within acceptable standards, rather than capability – knowing how to locate information, advice or brief tutoring.

8.6 Special immigration temporary worker program

There is considerable experience in both Canada and the Caribbean with special immigration temporary worker programs. Most have been designed to address local market needs for labour, but some Canadian programs also provide work experience for students and young workers in order to acquire or strengthen qualifications. Any joint recognition mechanism that the CTHRC-N may develop will affect how holders of recognized qualifications will be assessed by immigration departments when they apply to work in another country.

At a minimum, contacts should be developed with officials in appropriate departments when discussions of joint recognition mechanisms begin to hold promise.

8.7 University Council of Jamaica recognition of short courses

The UCJ has recently begun considering a mechanism for recognizing short courses, such as are offered by private sector training providers, within its Tertiary Qualifications Framework. It would be interesting to apply this mechanism, once it has become established, to the CTHRC-N Certification Program. The experiment might yield useful suggestions.

9. Summary conclusions to the research objectives

9.1 Comparison of the Canadian process of establishing occupational standards and certification programs against that of the Caribbean

The methods of establishing standards and using them as reference points in devising the core curriculum of the CTLS and the test batteries of CaribCert and the CTHRC-N Certification Program, are essentially the same. They differ only in particular details of organization, structure and the criteria used for validation. The participation of Canadian tourism educators and trainers in the development of both the CaribCert and the CTLS programs strengthens confidence in the plausibility of this observation.

We could say that in the areas of mechanisms, processes and principles and goals, a fraternal relationship already exists between the Canadian and Caribbean programs. Their differences lie in their particular implementation. All aim at raising the performance bar and fostering professionalism in tourism on the basis of industry-endorsed standards.

9.2 Commonalities and differences between the Canadian standards and certification system and those of two Caribbean counterparts

9.2.1 The Caribbean Quality Assurance program

The documents examined and my discussions with colleagues in the Caribbean strongly indicate that the quality assurance process has contributed to a convergence and increasing coherence of tourism and hospitality programs across the region.

In Canada, quality assurance is implicit in the process and procedure used to define standards and to elaborate tests and training materials. Both the structure and the substance of the Canadian process mirror those of the Caribbean framework, which is at the heart of the development of processes and programs that are intended to culminate in a regional accreditation and qualifications system. In the CTLS program, the systematic quality assurance framework provides a defined process within which stakeholders as a group can assess and monitor the credibility of expert experience, advice and views. In the CaribCert and in the CTHRC-N Certification programs, this assurance is in effect provided by a surrogate system of peer-perceived occupation experts.

The Quality Assurance Framework is institution-oriented. It aims to enable and enhance the capability of institutions and other providers to ensure that graduates acquire knowledge and competencies that meet industry standards for entry into management positions.

The CaribCert and CTHRC-N Certification programs are oriented to the individual candidate. The certificate is in effect a guarantor, as it attests that the holder has knowledge and competencies – the necessary capabilities – to perform a specific occupation at a specific level.

Both approaches – one based on a systematic quality assurance process, the others on stakeholder consensus concerning occupation experts – comprise carefully enunciated and applied processes and procedures, and explicitly explain or enunciate tolerance limits. Both deliberately include peer-perceived occupation experts to help define standards and develop tests and learning materials or curricula.

9.2.2 The common core outcomes of the Caribbean system

The outcomes of the CaribCert and CTHRC-N Certification programs appear essentially to be the same, with a core of essential skills common to all occupations.

The Associate Degree program core curriculum orients students to a general, managerial perspective, including the national and regional development rôle of the industry. Its examinations and field/internship evaluations have a broader scope and focus than do the tests of the certification programs, and will vary with students' experience and interests.

While it is not possible to speak of "the Caribbean system", it is appropriate to characterize the values and direction of the several programs as having similar core outcomes in the competencies of award holders.

9.3 Requirements and implications of possible joint recognition of credentials between Canada and the Caribbean

The main elements of this topic have been described in sections 8. While some requirements for joint recognition of CaribCert and CTHRC-N certifications can be outlined, more will surface if and when discussions develop with the CHA; similarly, it is difficult to do more than sketch possible implications.

It may be that Canadian certification could be used as a credit for advanced standing in the CTLS system; while the performance and some of the knowledge components of the Applied Associate Degrees could be deemed functionally equivalent to those of a number of certificates at different levels. Both the Caribbean programs, like the Canadian, have entry-level components, the certification programs confirming competence, the AD program affirming it.

All three programs have been developed to promote, recognize and strengthen professional competence on the assumption that this will reduce transient employment and expand career opportunities. In this perspective, all those I contacted and all the documents I reviewed assume

that the implications of joint recognition, and even of discussions to consider it, would be positive for the industry and for individuals.

9.3.1 Recognition at the institutional/organizational level

The Quality Assurance environment and the awareness of international standards for assessment and recognition is much more alive in the Caribbean than in Canada. The tertiary institutions in particular have longer, greater and more varied experience with articulation, credit transfer agreements, and cross-certification than do their Canadian counterparts. Both have considerable experience with staff and student exchanges, including Caribbean-Canadian exchanges.

The CTLS/AD program and, more generally, the Caribbean context seem to afford greater flexibility than the CTHRC-N program in the use of tools and processes to determine the extent of recognition that might be given to another credential. This capability stems from the UWI-originating experience of articulation with institutions in the smaller island states, franchising, student transfer, and the Associate Degree programs, and which is finding new expression through national accreditation agencies and the aspiration for a Regional Accreditation Mechanism.

9.3.2 Political considerations

The current climate in both the Caribbean and Canada for pursuing discussions of joint recognition is positive.

In the Caribbean, the general outline of CARICOM's top-down vision of a Regional Accreditation Mechanism (RAM) provides encouragement to those working from the bottom up to develop standards, curricula and programs which institutions and organizations across the region can endorse. As several people said to me in various ways, they are working to put in place the nuts and bolts of a *de facto* regional system, which will provide a working basis for the *de jure* regional mechanism when the CARICOM governments implement the RAM.

In Canada, both federal and provincial governments have recently recognized an urgent need to recognize the qualifications and experience gained in other countries. A number of programs have been established with a variety of resources to strengthen existing advisory mechanisms, carry out experimental pilot projects, and investigate requirements and implications of potential recognition mechanisms.

10. Recommendations for future steps

The CTHRC-N should consider the following actions during the next 6-12 months:

10.1   Commission review(s) by Canadian and Caribbean content/curriculum experts of the details of the standards, curricula, learning materials, (knowledge and performance) tests and evaluations of the three qualifications, and in particular of their various "essential", "core" and "entry-level" components. Particular attention should be given to the national TVETs and the HEART Foundation, as this review does not include them. This exercise should enable the CTHRC-N to select specific occupations and standards for initial consideration in further discussions with partners and stakeholders.

While the comparisons in this review conclude that adequate comparability exists at this level among the programs, the appropriate conservatism/caution of Canadian institutions and employers concerning the validity of such general comparisons argues for more thorough confirmation of these conclusions.

10.2   Commission a study of the costs and resources required to develop a joint recognition system. This would entail estimates based on the experience with the development of standards and procedures of the following bodies, at a minimum: CTHRC-N and -S, CHA, UCJ, CCJ, ACTT, the national TVETs and the HEART Foundation. No reliable estimates were available during the course of this review, other than recurrent statements that these processes and procedures require considerable support in time and money.

10.3   Initiate discussions with the CHA and CTHRC-S of the possible ways to develop joint recognition outlined in this review, in order to select one or more for further exploration and development. Involve the UCJ and ACTT once priorities have been established.

10.4   Consult with Canadian Tourism and Hospitality education and training providers to establish the extent of experience and confidence in international institution articulation and credit transfer agreements.

10.5   In collaboration with the CHA and CTHRC-S, organize a meeting of key stakeholders from the Caribbean and Canada – representatives of Tourism and Hospitality providers, professional and industry associations, labour and governments – to discuss the results of this review, and subsequently of the results of the other initial steps.

10.6   Identify funds and sources of funding for each activity, and apply for funding alone or in partnership with other organizations and institutions, as appropriate. Among others, multilateral and bilateral agencies which have funded previous HR projects in the Caribbean region should be approached.

Appendix I

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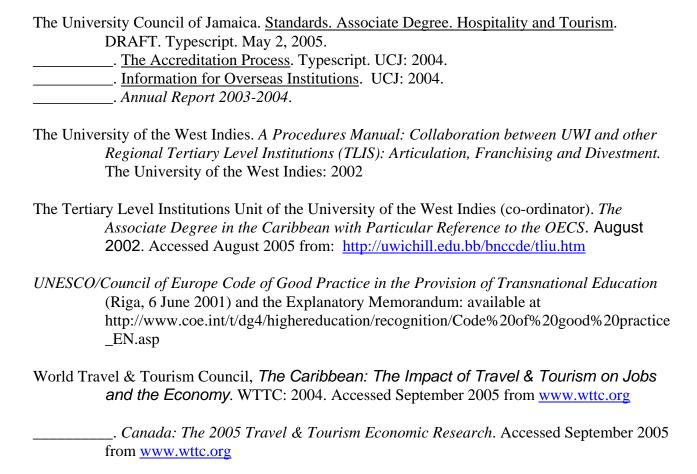
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Appendix II

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