



THE CARIBBEAN

# EXAMINER

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P. 16  
CCSLC ENTRIES  
ALMOST TRIPLE



NEW VISION 2008-2012

# Taking CXC TO THE NEXT LEVEL

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The Caribbean Examinations Council has embarked on a process aimed at producing and implementing a strategic plan for the next three to five years.

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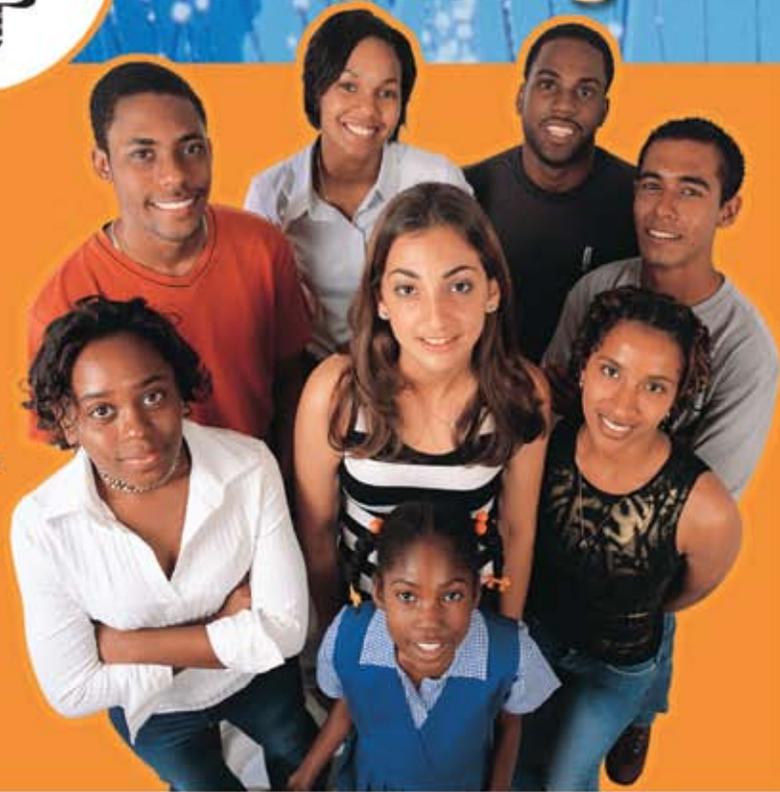




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COVER PHOTOGRAPH  
CXC future Headquarters in Barbados.  
Photo compliments SRM Architects Ltd.

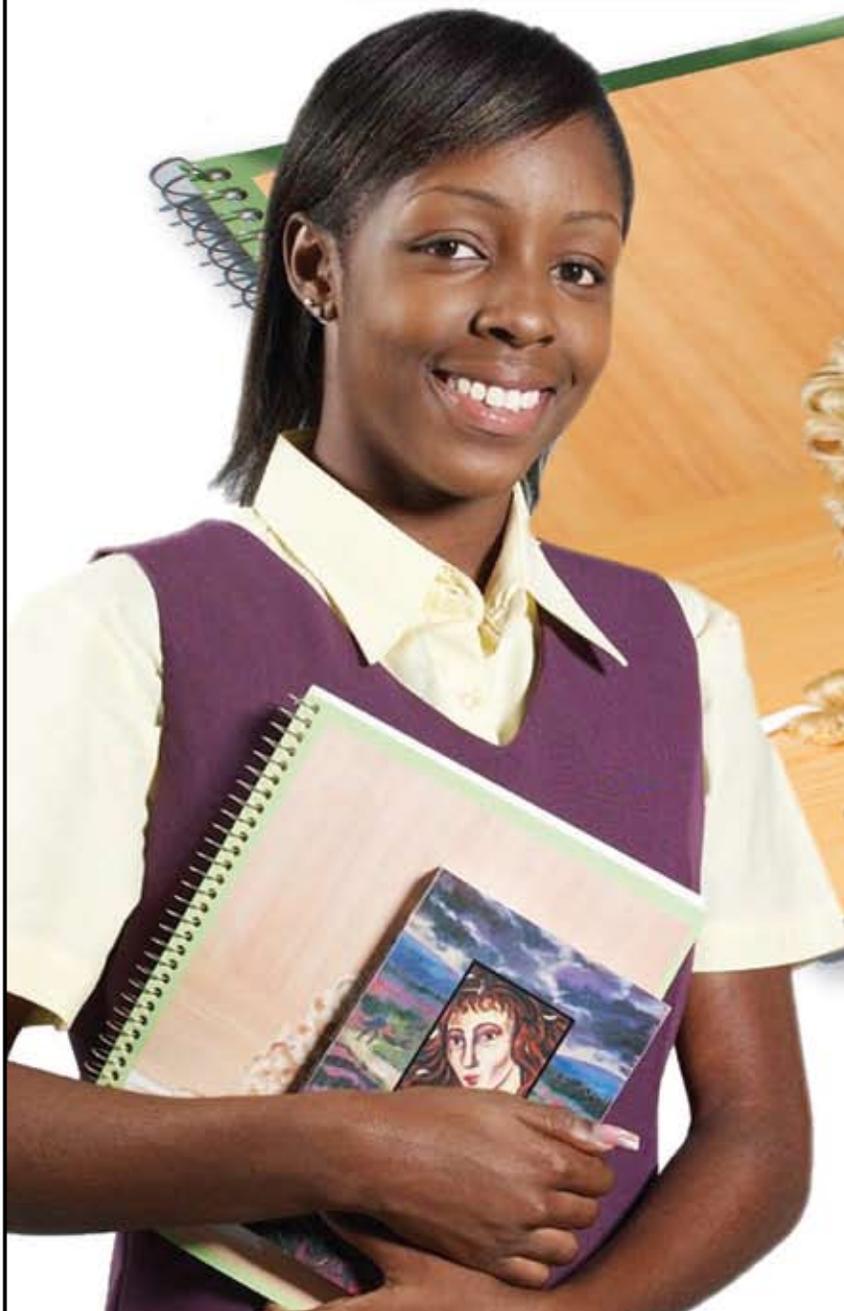
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# Taking CXC to the Next Level

This issue of *The Caribbean Examiner* is a special edition that is dedicated to “*Taking CXC to the Next Level*”. It coincides with the entry of new leadership in the organization that is committed to doing just that, and we felt that our medium should be consistent with our message. The new look of *The Caribbean Examiner* therefore is itself indicative of that new direction and that new level to which we aspire.

The feature article provides an overview of the new strategic direction that has been articulated and which is now being elaborated through an extensive process of consultation with stakeholders at all levels. The framework presentation has been shared with members of our Administration and Finance Committee, the Final Awards Committee; it has been presented at a Heads of CARICOM Institutions Meeting, presented to staff, and presented to different

of the thousands of persons, throughout the region and beyond, who are associated with CXC in one way or another. As we engage more and more of our constituencies, we are also laying the foundation for the future – in order to receive feedback from the more than 3,500 markers and examiners, we are establishing a virtual community on our website that will facilitate that consultation, but which will also be the start for the creation of virtual communities of learning and practice that will boost pedagogy and instruction and improve student performance.

Consistent with the new vision, this issue explains what is happening with the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) and the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) – two important new products that CXC is determined to make accepted forms of certification in the region.



PHOTO BY CARLEEN JULES

DR. DIDACUS JULES

vital that we never forget the effort of those who came before. In the revamping of the website therefore, a virtual Hall of Fame will record this pantheon of effort from past Chairmen, former Registrars, past Chief Examiners, Subject Panel Conveyors and long serving markers. The edifice of tomorrow can only stand tall if it fits securely on the foundations of yesterday!

*Didacus Jules*

DR. DIDACUS JULES  
Registrar, Caribbean Examinations Council

“It is highly gratifying to see where some have gone since their CXC credentials opened the door to higher education opportunity to them.”

groups of stakeholders in the member states that we have visited. The West Zone Office (WZO) in Jamaica held a staff retreat to review the framework and generate staff ideas. In September an all-staff retreat was held at HQ in Barbados (with representation from the WZO) to undertake a detailed SWOT Analysis and to identify all of the critical changes that staff consider necessary.

For us the process is as important as the product because it is through this wiki-approach that we are able to tap the ideas and the energy

Because we want to keep it real, we are highlighting a best practice in CAPE in the teaching of Environmental Science in Trinidad & Tobago as well as showcasing our current and past outstanding students. It is highly gratifying to see where some have gone since their CXC credentials opened the door to higher education opportunity to them.

Finally we record our appreciation to the former Registrar, Dr. Lucy Steward, for her outstanding contribution to the work of the Council. As we move CXC to the next level, it is

Visit our new website

[WWW.CXC.ORG](http://WWW.CXC.ORG)





Dr Jules presents Honourable David Thompson, Prime Minister of Barbados with a student's painting while on a courtesy call

# CXC Strategic Repositioning

*By Dr Didacus Jules*

The Caribbean Examinations Council has embarked on a process aimed at producing and implementing a strategic plan for the next three to five years. This initiative is predicated on the recognition that the organization has made phenomenal strides in the past and has successfully navigated the challenges of each era.

To appreciate the magnitude of the contribution made by CXC to the human resource development of the region, one must place its achievements in context. The establishment of the Council in 1972 was an educational expression of the spirit of independence and regionalism that the founding fathers of CARICOM embodied.

CXC was established with a broad mandate of being the regional structure for assessment, evaluation and educational standards. It started by replacing the UK-based O'Level examinations with the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC); followed 19 years later with the creation of the region's

own A'Level product – the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE). From these core products, CXC has also extended itself to respond to the needs of Participating Territories by supporting their national qualifying examinations for entry to secondary school and by producing more recently, a Caribbean Certificate for Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC).

The examination statistics from the inception of the various examinations speak to the arithmetic of expansion and the scope of service rendered – not only to the CARICOM member states but also to some of the Dutch-speaking territories.

Participation in CAPE has grown exponentially, assisted by its increasing recognition and acceptance by international universities and institutions of higher learning as a high quality qualification. CAPE has provided entry for some of its top performers in prestigious universities worldwide such as the Royal College of Surgeons, MIT, Cambridge, Yale, York and Warwick.

Performance in secondary school examinations has historically showed a major gender differential. The strategic plan's initiatives on research will help shed light on this phenomenon and the plans for improving learning will contribute to better outcomes by males as well as females.

The overall goal of the new strategic direction is to contribute to the global intellectual competitiveness of the Caribbean



by making CXC a world class brand, and by becoming the main quality assurance and certification body in the region.

The plan has three main components:

1. **Staff Development & Engagement**
2. **Organizational Development**
3. **Products & Services**

These are the 3 pillars that will constitute CXC: its human resources, its organizational capacity and its products & services.

The Staff Engagement component is

predicated on the belief that the motivation and development of staff is a key to the creation of *a learning organization* which will ensure the on-going transformation of CXC to respond to the rapidly changing regional and international environment.

Two fundamental objectives of this pillar are the deepening of staff relations and adding value to the employment experience in CXC. The unions representing staff have been engaged in formal structures

An **IMPORTANT PRIORITY** is collaboration with other CARICOM institutions. CXC as the **MAIN QUALITY ASSURANCE BODY IN EDUCATION** for the region is a critical enabling element of the architecture of regional integration.



## Collaboration with UWI



for promoting staff welfare and concerns, and management has made a commitment to having regular meetings to proactively address human resource issues in the organization.

Value is being added to the employment experience at CXC through special financing arrangements with First Caribbean International Bank that provide highly concessionary rates, and the formation of a CXC Buyers Club which will realize economies of scale on purchasing basic domestic items.

The organizational development component is essentially about building organizational capacity and repositioning the organization for a more responsive, efficient way of working.

A major element involves making CXC an IT-intelligent organization – that is embedding the use of information and computer technology to facilitate virtual networking, web-based interaction, IP communication and video conferencing, document management and archiving.

In order to achieve this objective, it is proposed that CXC seek collaboration with some experienced actors in the IT field such as Microsoft, and the World Bank Knowledge Institute.

The CXC Website will become the basis for a new way of working – enabling the use

of the Internet for real time communication with stakeholders from students to teachers; facilitating the delivery of instructional support; and supporting a CXC Virtual Community of teachers and other resource persons across the entire region.

The redesign of the old website was the first step towards this new way of

working. This reorganization will infuse new functionalities in the redesigned website.

It should have a simpler, cleaner and more practical interface with links to all key stakeholders such as national Ministries of Education. The home page should be continually refreshed using flash technology so that every visit will constitute a fresh experience.

The changes behind the interface will be the most vital ones as they will enable the website to offer e-commerce, e-learning, virtual workflows and networking, and multi-media streaming.

Among the concrete ideas for using the website is the plan to create a virtual Art Gallery in which digital photos of original artwork by Visual Arts students can be displayed and auctioned (as on e-Bay) with the proceeds going to the student and a commission to CXC! This initiative will demonstrate to students that CXC qualifications in Visual Arts mean something and can enable a career in art.

The other major aspect of the organizational development thrust is the building of strategic alliances at the regional and international levels. At the regional level, the objective of these alliances would be to create synergies for the deepening of functional collaboration and guaranteeing



the quality of human resource development in the region.

An important priority is collaboration with other CARICOM institutions. CXC as the main quality assurance body in education for the region is a critical enabling element of the architecture of regional integration.

In this context, there is a special nexus between the University of the West Indies and CXC which must be strengthened so that the comparative strengths of each can impact the other.

UWI as the premiere public university in the region can work closely with CXC in strengthening staff capacity, providing joint services and consultancy to Ministries of Education and other entities, undertaking research on student performance and other areas relevant to strengthening CXC's portfolio.

Our international collaboration is geared to best practice learning, benchmarking and technology transfer. The collaborating entities that have been identified are institutions which are internationally recognized for their accomplishments in the specific domain from which CXC desires to learn.

Regional collaboration is also governed by the principle of setting and achieving globally competitive educational standards. All of the potential partners within the region are stakeholders whose engagement is essential to widening the scope of CXC's work and making a bigger contribution to human resource development in the region.

The third major component of the Strategic framework is the products and services offered by CXC. With respect to the existing portfolio, it is necessary to undertake a comprehensive review and to determine how we will consolidate and improve on these products and services

The planning process needs to also determine what new opportunities now exist for new products and services which can better meet the needs of the Caribbean. Part of this challenge is to look at opportunities in the global arena as well as the threats that confront us, to modernize CXC's product and service portfolio. The all-staff retreats (in WZO and EZO) that have been conducted have concluded detailed SWOT



analyses of the situation and have further detailed how threats can be changed to opportunities, and which weaknesses could be transformed to strengths.

In reviewing the relevance and acceptability of our existing examinations, we need to ensure that there is greater convergence between our syllabus in all

subject areas (and most especially in the Technical and Vocational and Creative Arts) and the world of work and industry.

The School Based Assessment (SBAs) that are currently an integral element of the assessment of candidates must be maintained and improved since it provides a unique opportunity for the teachers, who



The SWOT Analysis done at the Staff Retreat

# Our **RESPONSIBILITIES** do not end with the production of syllabuses and the administration of examinations. They extend also to helping to **RAISE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS** while **IMPROVING ACHIEVEMENT.**

ought to have a better and longer view of students' performance, to have a say in the final grading. It was comforting to see that in the world's leading conference on assessment – the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment – many countries and delegates addressed the need to build in SBAs into their examination models. CXC is already there and must do it better!

The review of our current products also offers us the opportunity to help shift the examination paradigm away from pure “academics” to seek to assess the whole person. CARICOM has articulated the notion of the Ideal Caribbean Person and it is the responsibility of the education systems

of the region to help nurture and develop this new Caribbean person.

There are areas such as athletics, sports, creative and performing arts and music in which the Caribbean enjoys a global comparative advantage. A challenge for CXC in this era of globalization is how can we re-position our subject offerings so that we can provide pathways to global excellence in these arenas for our youth.

In revising our Physical Education syllabuses, can we work with leading sporting institutions and associations such as the Caribbean Olympic Associations, the GC Foster College in Jamaica and others to define and offer the entry level qualifications that can help ensure the emergence of many

more Bolts?

Our responsibilities do not end with the production of syllabuses and the administration of examinations. They extend also to helping to raise educational standards while improving achievement. To address these dimensions, CXC will have to take a more structured approach to research and to the provision of instructional support to teachers.

Our research should help to empirically elucidate patterns of performance of Caribbean candidates, identify key areas of weakness and propose (in a more comprehensive manner than do the School Reports) what can be done to improve performance.

Many Ministries of Education have consistently called on CXC to assist with the training of teachers, especially at the higher secondary level. The incorporation of internet and computer technologies in the organization will mean that we can now undertake this in a more systematic manner. Support to teachers through virtual subject networks/associations, training through webinars, making possible downloads of instructional support material are the ways in which we can do this in the plan.

The growth of knowledge in this era is exponential and it has been postulated that this is now happening at such a rate that we must take account of the rate of obsolescence of knowledge. The implication for CXC is the need to periodically determine what new subjects are needed and at what levels. In recent times, we have seen typewriting give way to Electronic Document Preparation and Management.

What are the new and emergent industries that require new configurations of skills, knowledge and aptitude to gain competitive ascendancy?

## THE FUTURE

### 'Communication Hand'

- BE** - more united organization
  - better communication
  - IT focused
  - On-the-way to self-sufficiency
- DO** - improved quality examinations
  - global outreach with examinations and services
  - alliances with private sector and stakeholders
- HAVE** - cutting-edge technology
  - new products and services
  - more satisfied staff



How one of the groups at the Staff Retreat sees CXC in the next five years



Because this new era of globalization is characterized by such intensive competition, the Caribbean needs to ensure that its youth and workers can match and exceed the standards of that new world. Entry into leading international benchmarking examinations (PIRLS, TIMMS, PISA) will provide us with empirical benchmarking of our intellectual capacity in relation to the rest of the world.

As the incoming Registrar, in an environment in which every predecessor has made a decisive contribution to the solidity of the human resource foundation that is CXC, my term priorities pick up from the challenges passed on as well as the looming texture of the field ahead, and this strategic framework seeks to lay out these priorities.

A major challenge is that of securing new accommodation for the headquarters in Barbados and for the Western Zone Office in Jamaica.

A significant step in this direction has been taken with the selection of a winning architectural design for the headquarters.

The ideas presented here represent only an initial framework for change in CXC. We now seek to evolve them into a comprehensive strategic plan using a broad participatory process that will seek to tap the ideas, intellect and commitment of the thousands of markers, educators and teachers who drive CXC as well as engage the public and private sectors in this rethinking.

We believe in the power of collaboration and are convinced that the stakeholders with whom we work constitute an inexhaustible



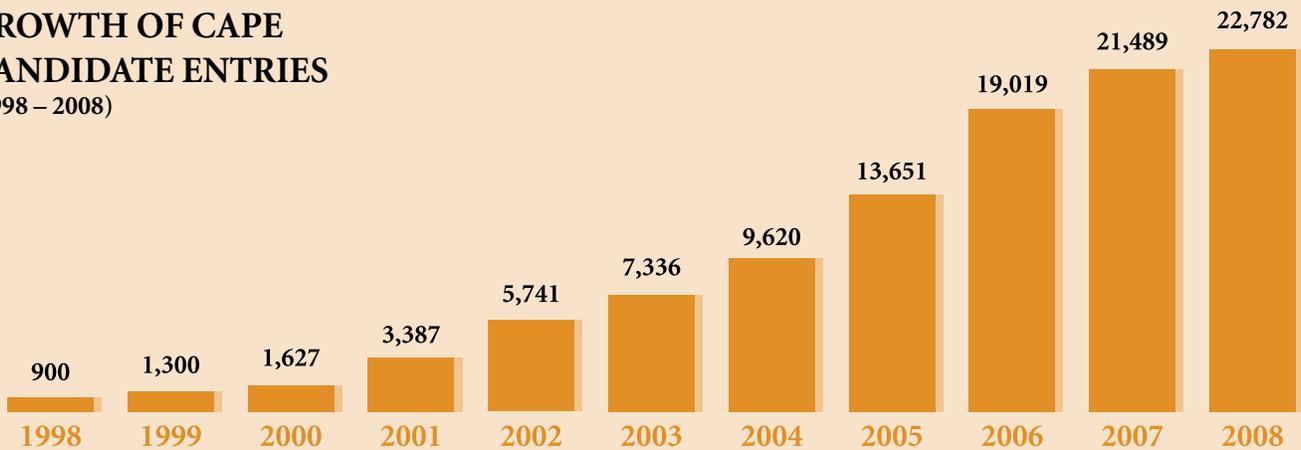
CXC staffers Maureen Grazette, Jennifer Cruickshank and Avonda Foster at the recent Staff Retreat

fount of innovation and ideas which will make the plan a consensual representation of what we need to achieve in education in the region.

Once this configuration is set, our primary focus will be on systematic implementation, looking at the staff capacity, the financing and the process re-engineering necessary to realize this vision.

*We invite you to join this exciting collaborative journey by logging on to [www.cxc.org](http://www.cxc.org) to make suggestions and recommendations.*

### GROWTH OF CAPE CANDIDATE ENTRIES (1998 – 2008)





# SCIENCES STANDOUT IN MAY/JUNE CSEC EXAMINATIONS



Performance in the Science subjects offered for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations this year showed the most significant improvement when compared with performance in other subject areas as well as with performance in 2007.

Agricultural Science (Single Award) and Physics led the way with a 27 percent and a 26 percent increase respectively when compared with performance last year. Eighty-four percent of entries for Agricultural Science (SA) achieved Grades I to III (acceptable grades) compared with 57 percent in 2007. For Physics 77 percent of the entries achieved Grades I to III compared with 51 percent last year.

Human and Social Biology (HSB) saw a 17 percent improvement in performance when compared with last year. This year, 68 percent of entries achieved Grades I to III compared with 51 percent last year.

Performance in Biology and Agricultural Science (Double Award) both increased by five percent this year. Seventy-seven percent of entries for Biology achieved Grades I to III this year compared with 72 percent last year, while 85 percent of entries for Agricultural Science (DA) achieved similar grades compared with 80 percent last year.

The other two Science subjects, Chemistry and Integrated Science recorded a four percent improvement over 2007. Sixty-eight percent of entries for Chemistry achieved Grades I to III compared with 64 percent last year, while for Integrated Science 85 percent of entries achieved acceptable grades compared with 81 percent last year.

## BUSINESS SUBJECTS

Apart from the Sciences, two business subjects showed improvement while two declined and one remained the same. Economics recorded a 12 percent improvement with 68 percent of entries achieving Grades I to III compared with 56 percent last year. Principles of Business had a four percent improvement in performance with

75 percent of the entries achieving acceptable grades, compared with 71 percent last year.

Performance in Principles of Accounts declined by two percent; 63 percent of entries achieved acceptable grades compared to 65 percent last year.

Although performance in Office Administration continues to be excellent, there was a three percent decline when compared with last year. This year, 82 percent of entries achieved acceptable grades compared with 85 last year.

Electronic Document Preparation and Management (EDPM) maintained the trend of excellent performance with 95 percent of entries achieving acceptable grades, the same as in 2007.

## MATHS AND ENGLISH

Mathematics also saw an eight percent improvement in performance, but the percentage of entries achieving acceptable grades still continues to be under the 50 percent mark. Forty-two percent of entries achieved acceptable grades for Mathematics this year compared with 34 percent last year.

“A common feature of candidates’ work was the adherence to algorithmic procedures (certain number of defined steps to solve a problem) without demonstration of the understanding of the concepts underlying the principles,” the Examining Committee to this subject noted.

The Examining Committee is recommending that teachers “use instructional strategies in which students learn mathematics in context.”

Performance in English A continues to decline for the third consecutive year. In 2006 51 percent achieved acceptable grades, in 2007, 49 percent and this year 46 percent.

The Examiners identified several weaknesses in candidates’ performance on the English A Paper among them lack of précis skills and interpretation of questions.

“In general summary skills were not always competently demonstrated,” the Chief Examiner

noted. “In extreme cases, candidates rewrote the passage.”

## BEST PERFORMER

Physical Education and Sports recorded the most outstanding performance of all subjects with 97 percent of candidates achieving acceptable grades. More than half of the entries, 51 percent of the candidates achieved Grade I.

## GROWTH IN NEW SUBJECTS

Several of the new subjects continue to grow and this resulted in an overall increase in the number of candidate and subject entries received this year. Candidate entries increased from 138 741 last year to 142 995, while subject entries jumped from 544 872 last year to 562 315 this year.

One of the new subjects with significant growth this year is Human and Social Biology. Entries for HSB increased by over 3000; from 21 431 in 2007 to 25 005 this year.

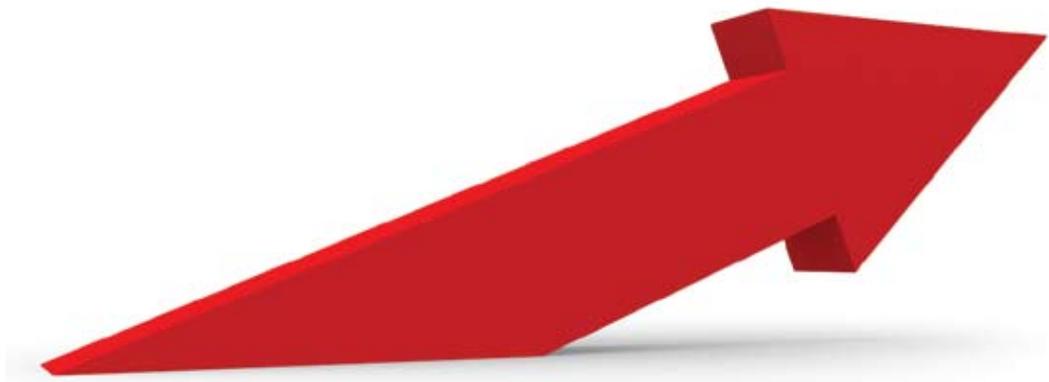
Entries for Electronic Document Preparation and Management (EDPM) jumped from 5 804 entries last year to 7 190 this year, an increase of 1 386 entries.

Physical Education and Sports is also progressing steadily with an additional 1 043 entries this year, up from 2 174 last year to 3 217 entries this year.

Economics, which is only in its second year, increased by 934 entries, moving from 2 253 entries last year to 3 187 entries this year.

In addition to the new subjects, Information Technology (Technical) continues to grow year after year and this year passed the 25 000 mark. Entries increased from 23 779 last year to 26 059 this year.

Mathematics and English A continue to be the subjects with the largest entries by far. This year 94 587 entries were submitted for Mathematics compared with 92 958 last year and 94 252 entries were offered for English A, compared with 92 371 in 2007.



# STEADY GROWTH FOR CAPE CONTINUES

The Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) continues to grow steadily in its 11th year. Both the number of candidates and the number of unit entries offered for the examination this year continue to increase.

This year, 22 782 candidates entered for CAPE, compared with 21 489 candidates last year. This is 1293 more candidates or a six percent increase. There was a similar percentage point increase in the unit entries submitted. Some 86 360 unit entries were submitted compared with 81 852 unit entries last year. This represents a five and half percent increase or 4508 more entries than last year.

Several Units saw triple-digit increases in the number of entries submitted. Among these units were Communication Studies, which has the largest Unit entry in CAPE. Entries increased from 10 770 in 2007 to 11 413 this year. This was an increase of 643 entries.

Biology Unit 2 was one of the biggest movers with an increase of 453 entries over 1 740 entries submitted last year. Following closely behind was Literatures in English Unit 1, with 450 more entries this year than the 1647 in 2007, while Management of Business Unit 2 increased by 417 entries. A total of 3 276 entries were submitted this year for Management of Business Unit 2.

Entries for Biology Unit 1 and Accounting Unit 2 also increased by more than 300 this year compared with the 2007 entries.

## PERFORMANCE

Overall, the performance across the region improved slightly when compared with 2007. Just over 91 percent of the candidates achieved Grades I to V (acceptable Grades) this year compared with 89 percent of the entries in 2007.

Performance in two of the technology-related subjects, Computer Science and Information Technology, were particularly outstanding and showed the most improved performance in 2008.

Both Units of Computer Science showed significant improvement over the performance in 2007. Ninety-nine percent of the candidates for Unit 1 achieved Grades I to V. This is a 21 percent improvement over the performance last year. In Unit 2, 98 percent of candidates achieved Grades I to V; this compared with 63 percent in 2007.

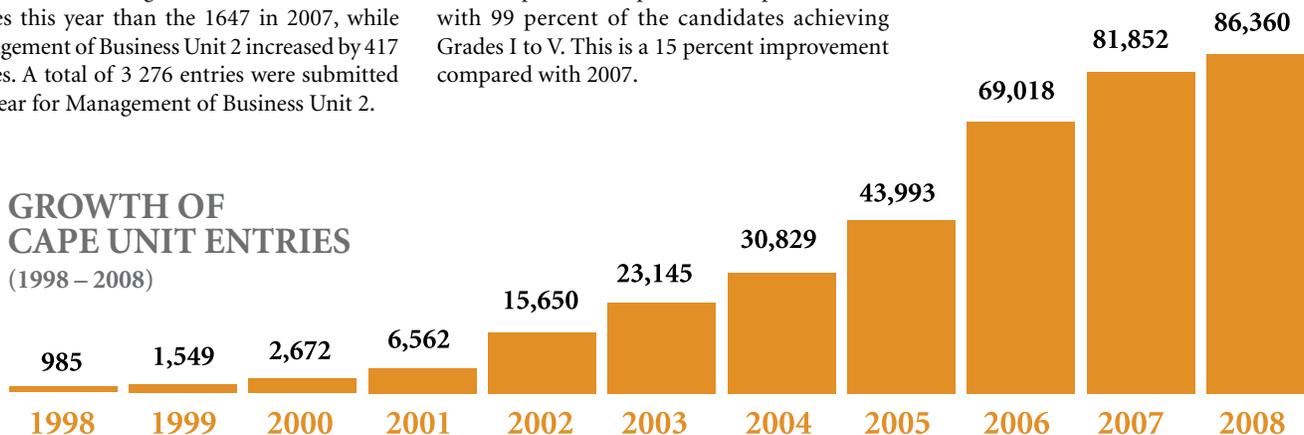
Information Technology also recorded a near 100 percent acceptable Grade performance, with 99 percent of the candidates achieving Grades I to V. This is a 15 percent improvement compared with 2007.

Performance in both Units of Environmental Science improved when compared with last year's. Unit 2 saw a significant improvement in performance with 94 percent of candidates submitted achieving Grades I to V, compared with 74 percent in 2007, while 92 percent of entries submitted for Unit 1 achieved similar grades, compared with 83 percent in 2007.

In Art and Design Unit 1 and Electrical and Electronic Technology Unit 2 all candidates achieved acceptable grades. In addition, 99 percent of the candidates for Food and Nutrition Unit 2 and French Unit 2 achieved acceptable grades.

Other Units which recorded improved performance were Accounting Unit 2, Biology Unit 1, Geography Unit 1, Law Unit 2, Literatures in English Unit 2 and Spanish Unit 1.

**GROWTH OF CAPE UNIT ENTRIES**  
(1998 – 2008)





# THE CARIBBEAN VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

By Fitzroy Marcus

At its meeting in October 2006, the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) requested National Training Agencies (NTAs), Ministries of Education and CXC to collaborate on the award of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) in schools. The meeting identified CXC as the regional body authorised by the Heads of Governments to be responsible for regional certification at the secondary school level, while the NTAs will award the CVQs to the out-of-school population, including persons in the workplace. Fitzroy Marcus provides an overview of the CVQ programme.

## What is the CVQ?

The CVQ is a certificate awarded on successful completion of modules for specified occupational standards. These standards for technical and vocational subjects were developed by the Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies (CANTA) and approved by the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD).

CANTA developed standards for over 100 areas in consultation with industry and these standards were approved by COHSOD. For each area, modules and curricula have been developed based on the standards.

These standards formed the basis for the development of National Vocational Qualification programmes at different levels.

The CVQ takes a competency-based approach to training, assessment and certification.

Currently, CVQs are planned to reflect a qualification framework at five levels. These are:

Level 1	Directly supervised/entry-level worker
Level 2	Supervised skilled worker
Level 3	Independent or autonomous skilled worker
Level 4	Specialized or supervisory worker
Level 5	Managerial and/or professional worker

## Benefits of the CVQ

*The award of the CVQ will:*

- (1) enable all students to leave school with certification in a skill;
- (2) allow students to take a mix of technical and vocational subjects and traditional subjects taken for the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC);
- (3) enhance the students' qualifications for entry-level employment;
- (4) contribute to a well-trained workforce at the national level; and,
- (5) facilitate the movement of skilled persons within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).

## CVQ and CSME

Speaking at the launch of the CVQ in Kingston, Jamaica, President of Jamaica Trade and Invest, Robert Gregory, said, "the CVQ will provide skilled persons with the opportunity to earn a qualification, as proof of their assessed competence, which legitimizes their enterprise, enabling their free movement as skilled workers within the CSME." The qualification, he noted, "gives us the opportunity to close the gap and eliminate the mismatch between the global labour market requirements and the region's ability to supply a highly competent and confident workforce."

Myrna Bernard, Director of Human and Social Development at the CARICOM Secretariat, explained that, "the issue of skill development through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and portability of qualifications have assumed renewed importance in positioning the region for competitive participation in the new economy."

The CVQ will be accessible to persons already in the workforce as well as students in secondary schools across the region.

## EXAMPLES OF OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### AGRICULTURE

Landscaping  
Growbox Operations  
Ornamental Aquaculture

### BUSINESS

Administration

### CONSTRUCTION

Air Conditioning and Refrigeration  
Blueprint Reading  
Carpentry  
Joinery  
Masonry  
Plumbing  
Tile Laying  
Domestic Electrical Installation

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Using CAD  
Using IT

### MANUFACTURING

Bench Fitting  
Lathe Operations

### PERSONAL SERVICES

Beauty Therapy  
Hairdressing  
Tailoring  
Fabric Design  
Garment Construction



**BUDDING CARPENTERS** - students build a model showing the main parts of a wooden house

consistency, accuracy and transparency in the assessment.

External verifiers visit the schools at appropriate intervals to assess candidates' work.

CXC employs a system for monitoring key factors which impact on quality. These include, but are not limited to (i) programme delivery mechanisms (ii) assessment and (iii) record keeping. This is done to ensure that the performance standards in secondary schools accessing the CVQ are kept in focus and that appropriate assessment guidelines which are in place are followed. Site visits are a significant component of the system of monitoring. These visits are intended to facilitate the gathering of essential data relative to the readiness of candidates for the award of the CVQ.

During these visits, the CXC representatives use carefully designed data gathering instruments and discussions with the teachers and students to obtain data on key aspects of implementation.

## Territories offering CVQs

During 2007, Trinidad and Tobago launched CVQ in schools and on May 8<sup>th</sup>, The Honourable Hazel Manning, then Minister of Education, and Dr Lucy Steward, then CXC Registrar, signed the first CVQ agreement. Over 1,000 candidates were registered for the units offered. CXC visited thirteen schools and assessed candidates in 27 different vocational programmes spread across nine sectors in the twin-island republic.

St Kitts and Nevis also launched its CVQ programme with a signing ceremony on May 25<sup>th</sup> last year. Officers from CXC visited six schools in St Kitts and Nevis in April this year to conduct an assessment of the readiness of schools to offer the programme. Eleven vocational programmes were being offered in St Kitts and Nevis.

*Fitzroy Marcus is a Measurement and Evaluation Officer at CXC with responsibility for CVQ.*

## WHAT DO OFFICERS LOOK FOR?

### RECORDS AND RECORD KEEPING

1. The use of **approved** standards of competence, as the benchmark of competency standards.
2. Facilities audit
3. Relevant curriculum materials and assessment plans
4. A framework for the comparison of evidence against competency standards to establish the performance level of the individual student
5. Details of qualifications and experience of assessors
6. Explicit rationale for the approach to the collection of a range of evidence
7. Effective methods for the storage and retrieval of evidence of competence
8. Efficient and effective feedback mechanisms in place
9. Evidence of appeals procedure in place
10. External verifiers' reports
11. Evidence of continuous assessment (use of logbooks; portfolios or similar documentation)
12. Records of meetings of assessors within skill areas, and with school administrators/internal verifiers
13. Internal verifiers' reports
14. Evidence of planning (meetings with assessors, internal verifier)
15. Realistic timetabling

### MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT

1. Class lists and records of achievement
2. Valid, reliable, flexible and fair assessment processes
3. Evidence of learner participation in the assessment process (signed assessment documents)
4. Evidence of planning (meetings with assessors, internal verifier)
5. Internal verifiers' reports
6. Evidence of use of a range of assessment instruments (use of logbooks; portfolios; checklists or similar documentation)
7. Evidence that facilities are in place to provide opportunities for authentic assessment of performance.
8. Relevant curriculum materials and assessment plans
9. External verifiers' reports

## Roles of CXC, NTAs and Ministries of Education

The Ministry of Education and the local National Training Agency are jointly responsible for developing the curriculum based on the approved standards; providing the required resources; training teachers, assessors and external verifiers. CXC is responsible for quality assurance to ensure that students have achieved the standards set. CXC's work also includes visiting schools, sampling students' work and awarding certificates and transcripts.

## How are candidates assessed for the CVQ?

Teachers/assessors make use of both non-traditional and traditional strategies to instruct and to gather evidence using a variety of assessment instruments. Individuals may be assessed as many times as necessary to prove competence in the specific area of work. Assessments may take the form of observation, role-play, simulation, interviews, written work, appraisal of portfolios and practical exercises. Internal verifiers provide oversight to ensure



# CCSLC ENTRIES ALMOST TRIPLED



Students of the Washington Archibald High School writing the CCSLC examination

Entries for the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) for the June 2008 sitting almost tripled when compared with entries for the first sitting of the examinations in 2007. The total number of subject entries increased to 19 048, up from 6 792 entries in 2007, while candidate entries have jumped from 2 669 last year to 7 839 this year.

Once again English attracted the largest number of candidates with 5 922, entries compared with 1 996 last year. Mathematics followed closely with 5 903 entries, compared with 1 912 entries in 2007. Three thousand, three hundred and sixty-seven entries were submitted for Social Studies, compared with 1 273 entries last year. The two foreign languages, French and Spanish,

recorded 226 and 831 entries respectively this year, compared with 109 and 609 in 2007.

### STUDENTS MASTER FIRST SITTING

Candidates' performance in the first sitting of the CCSLC last June was impressive. Of the 6 792 subject entries presented, 70 percent achieved the level of Master or Competent, acceptable achievement at CCSLC.

The most outstanding performance was in English. Eighty-four percent of the 1 996 candidates who sat English achieved Master and Competent. The largest percentage of students achieving Mastery in any one subject, 23 percent, was also achieved in English.

For Social Studies, 79 percent of entries achieved Master and Competent; Integrated Science 66 percent; Mathematics 61 percent; French 59 percent and Spanish 47 percent.

Six Participating Territories submitted candidates for the first sitting of the CCSLC. Jamaica submitted the largest subject entries with 3 987, St Kitts and Nevis 1 989, Antigua and Barbuda 505, St Vincent and the Grenadines 193, Belize 65, and Anguilla 53 subject entries.

In terms of candidate entries, Jamaica was also the largest contributor with 1 755 candidates writing the examination. St Kitts and Nevis submitted 652, St Vincent and the Grenadines 107, Antigua and Barbuda 101, Anguilla 41 and Belize 13 candidates.

CAN STRONG BEND?

# STRENGTH

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## MORE REGIONAL AWARDS ON OFFER

**Students across the region now have the opportunity to compete for more regional awards based on performance in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).**

From this year, CXC in collaboration with other partners will introduce three new regional awards in addition to the nine regional top awards already offered for outstanding performances in CAPE and the eight awards offered for outstanding performances in CSEC.

The new awards are the US Embassy/CXC National Award for Outstanding Performance in CSEC for students in Barbados and six OECS territories; the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) Award for Outstanding Performance in Agricultural Science and the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Book Prize for Outstanding Performance in CAPE History.

### US Embassy/CXC Award

The US/CXC National Award will be given to the most outstanding CSEC candidate overall in Barbados and six islands in the Eastern Caribbean – Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

In order to be eligible for this award, a candidate must attain Grade I at General or Technical Proficiency, in at least eight subjects taken at a single sitting. These subjects must include English and Mathematics, one Modern Language, one Science subject, one Business subject, one Technical/Vocational subject, one Humanities subject, one Creative Arts or Expressive Arts subject and any two other CSEC subjects.

The winner in each island will receive US\$500.00 and a commemorative plaque from the US Embassy and CXC.

### CARDI

The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) is teaming up with CXC to offer an award for the most outstanding

candidate in the region in Agricultural Science. The award is based on performance in Agricultural Science Double Award.

To qualify, candidates must obtain Grade I in Agricultural Science Double Award and Grades I or II in English and Mathematics and two other CSEC subjects.

The recipient will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the Annual Caribbean Agriculture Week hosted by CARDI each year in a Caribbean island. The awardee will also receive a cash prize and a commemorative certificate. In addition, the student will have an opportunity to speak at one of the week's functions.

"The award is in recognition of the importance of the 'New' Agricultural Science to economic development in the region," said Dr Arlington Chesney, Executive Director of CARDI based in Trinidad and Tobago. "CARDI also hopes the award will attract more students and young persons to Agriculture and Agricultural Science."

### EWMC

The third regional award being introduced this year is the Eric Williams Memorial Collection History Book Prize. The award is named after Trinidad and Tobago's first Prime Minister and world-renowned Historian, Dr Eric Williams.

This award will be presented to the most outstanding candidate in CAPE History Units 1 and 2. The recipient will receive a high-quality, full-colour coffee table book relating to history in the developing world. The student will also get an all-expenses-paid trip to the CXC Regional Top Awards Ceremony, wherever it is being hosted, to receive the prize.

"The idea (behind the award) is to instil in the students' minds the mindset that Eric Williams was so firm in inculcating: that "history" has not only been made by and in major metropolitan countries," explained Erica Williams-Conell, Chairperson of the EWMC.



# “ IN THEIR OWN WORDS ”

*Some of the Regional Top Awardees who received their prizes at the Council Meeting in St Lucia last year speak about their experiences.*



## VALENE GUERRA

*St Joseph's Convent, Port-of-Spain  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Most Outstanding  
Candidate  
in Humanities  
CAPE 2007*

“Surreal...that seems to be the most appropriate word to describe my feelings before, during and even after the experience. Never in my lifetime did I ever think that I would be a part of such a prestigious group of young scholars. My time in St Lucia was well spent. Getting to know the more “human” side of CXC along with the vibrant, energetic and sometimes troublesome group of teenagers has allowed me to gain insight, not only in the intricate workings of CXC, but also the various efforts and sacrifices made by each individual in their quest for success. This is an experience that I cherish and one which will inspire me to always work to be my best.”



## LEMUOR BELL

*Glenmuir High School  
Jamaica  
Most Outstanding  
Candidate in  
Technical/Vocational Education  
CSEC 2007*

“I was overwhelmed when I first learnt that I had won a regional award from the Caribbean Examinations Council. This was absolutely good news and exactly what I needed to hear, as it did not only make me proud, but my family, friends, school and community. Winning this award has brought on new beginnings, opportunities and experiences such as going to St Lucia for the first time and also meeting and having a wonderful time with the other awardees from the different islands. The overall reaction to my success was positive, an indication that I have left my own footprints on the sands of time.”



## WAINELLA ISAACS

*Queen's College  
Guyana  
Most Outstanding  
Candidate Overall  
CSEC 2007*

“I received the news early one morning whilst preparing to go to school. My headache instantly disappeared. I guess great news can have therapeutic effects. I would consider that moment one of the most satisfying. The St Lucian experience was a dream I wished would not end. It was most surreal to me. Fraternizing with the other awardees made this trip most rewarding. I was able to practice the bit of French and Spanish I know with the awardees and the most hospitable locals. Exchanging light banter with the Prime Minister, Honourable Stephenson King, about whose country was more hospitable was also a highlight. Being part of regional conferences of such a magnitude really encourages one to work consistently as the benefits gained are rewards enough!”



## GRACE-ANN COLLINS

*Ardenne High School  
Jamaica  
Best Short Story  
in the English A Examination  
CSEC 2007*

“When I first heard I won the award, I was in disbelief. At the time of writing the story I had not given much thought to winning an award. I was not aware that CXC had awards for top performers and I was quite amazed to be one of the recipients. The trip to, and stay in St. Lucia was amazing ...I had the best time, and the experience really has been cemented in my life. The cultural exposure I gained and the cultural variation I saw was incredible. I was shocked to find that even though all the students were from the Caribbean, there were so many differences among us...so much that I could learn. I had a spectacular time and am now motivated to excel in CAPE.”



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



## DR CHRISTINE SEARWAR

In 2001 Christine Searwar of the Bishops' High School in Guyana received the CSEC Regional Top Award for Outstanding performance in Science. She received Grade I in nine subjects including four Science subjects. She then went on to do her Advanced studies at Queen's College in Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. She obtained As and Bs for the GCE subjects and Grade I in CAPE Chemistry.

Using the scholarship offered by the CXC Regional Top Award, Christine entered the Faculty of Medical Sciences at UWI, St Augustine, Trinidad to pursue the MBBS degree in 2003.

It was a great pleasure when on July 21 this year CXC received a letter from Christine expressing her gratitude for the Regional Top Award Prize and informing the Council of her progress.

"I wrote the Phase II/Stage II MBBS final examination in June 2008 and was successful," Christine's letter stated. "I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you for all of the assistance given to me throughout the years of my study in Trinidad."

She is now employed with the Ministry of Health as a Medical Intern at the Port of Spain General Hospital in Trinidad and Tobago.

Christine has blazed the trail for many other CXC Regional Top Awardees. Most recently two of her fellow Queen's College graduates have followed her path. Shirvarnie Persaud, the 2006 Most Outstanding Performer Overall and Valencia Bailey, the 2006 Most Outstanding Performer in Science started medical studies. Valencia opted for the UWI Mona Campus, while Shirvanie, like Christine chose UWI St Augustine Campus.

*Congratulations Dr Christine Searwar!  
The Caribbean Examiner wishes Christine, Shirvarnie and Valencia all the best in their endeavours.*

## AKIMA PAUL

### London Lawyer

Grenadian Akima Paul won the award for Most Outstanding Candidate Overall in 1998 with 11 subjects. The St Joseph's Convent student also copped the award for the Most Outstanding Candidate in the Arts.

She then went on to do A-Levels at the T A Marryshow Community College. Based on her excellent performance she earned Grenada's National Island Scholarship which she used to attend the prestigious Cambridge University in the United Kingdom and read for an MA in Law. Akima also studied for a Maitrise (Master 1) in French Law at the Université Pantheon - Assas in Paris.

After completion of the Legal Practice Course, Akima now works with a leading international law firm in London, Lovells LLP, as a Solicitor.



## KAYWANA

### Mastering Economics

The last time *The Caribbean Examiner* caught up with Kaywana Raeburn, the 2001 Most Outstanding Candidate Overall in the CSEC examinations, she had just won the Island Scholarship in Grenada and was a Research Assistant in the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance. This was in 2003.

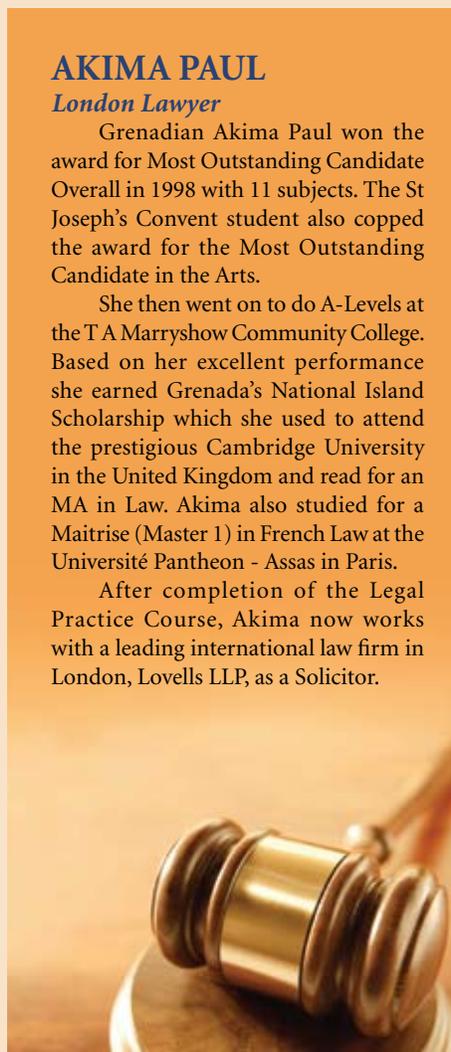
A lot has happened since then to this spark from the Spice Isle.

She went on to study Economics and Mathematics at UWI St Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago. As expected, Kaywana passed with flying colours – First Class Honours!

Kaywana is now enrolled at the Prestigious McGill University in Canada pursuing a Masters degree in Economics. She commenced the programme in August this year.

Kaywana won the Most Outstanding Candidate Overall prize in 2001 while a student at St Joseph's Convent, St Georges. The lady from St Patrick's copped the award with Grade Is in 11 subjects.

*The Caribbean Examiner wishes Kaywana all the best in her future endeavours.*





CARISSA FRANKS

ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

# One year off with CAPE QUALIFICATIONS

One whole year off your Bachelors degree when you have your CXC Associate Degree!

That’s what at least one US university is offering students with the CXC Associate Degree who wish to pursue a Bachelors degree in the same area of their CXC Associate Degree.

This, following an articulation agreement between State University of New York- Plattsburgh and CXC.

“We wish to join the Caribbean Examinations Council in advancing the educational and career prospects of students from the Caribbean,” stated Jacqueline Girard Vogl, Director of International Student Services at Plattsburgh regarding the agreement.

“To this end, we will grant 28 transfer credits to students who complete any of the CAPE associate degree programmes (four credits for each successfully completed unit),” Ms Volg added.

“This is commensurate to one full year of university study,” stated the Plattsburgh official. “In most cases, students with a CXC Associate Degree would be able to complete a bachelor’s degree from SUNY Plattsburgh in three years.”

“The agreement with Plattsburgh is great news for CAPE students who want to study in the US and are on a tight budget as they now can spend three years instead of four,” explained Cleveland Sam, Assistant Registrar with CXC

“The agreement demonstrates the *confidence* the university has in the *high standard* of the CAPE syllabuses and the pedagogy of the students qualifying with CAPE,”

## SAINT MARY’S UNIVERSITY CAPE EQUIVALENCY CHART

CAPE SUBJECTS	EQUIVALENT SAINT MARY’S UNIVERSITY	CREDIT
Accounting	ACCT 2241 and BUSI 1901	(3)
Biology	BIOL 1201 and SCIE 1901	(3)
Caribbean Studies	SSC1 1901 and SSCI 1902	(3)
Chemistry	CHEM 1220 and SCIE 1902	(3)
Communication Studies	ARTS 1901 and ARTS 1902	(3)
Computer Science	CSCI 1901 and SCIE 1903	(3)
Economics	ECON 1201 and ECON 1202	(3)
Environmental Science	ENVS 1203	(6)
French	FREN 1101 and FREN 1102	(3)
Management of Business	MGMT 1281 and BUSI 1903	(3)
Physics	PHYS 1000 and PHYS 1001	(3)
Pure Mathematics	MATH 1210 and SCIE 1904	(3)
Spanish	SPAN 1100	(6)

## SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY



and the person responsible for negotiating the agreement.

“The agreement demonstrates the confidence the university has in the high standard of the CAPE syllabuses and the pedagogy of the students qualifying with CAPE,” Mr Sam added.

Two sisters from St Kitts and Nevis, Goldha and Carissa Franks, have benefited from the agreement with Plattsburgh.

“When I received my acceptance letter from Plattsburgh I was very excited, but was overjoyed when I was told that I would receive 32 credits for my CXC Associate Degree which I received from the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College,” said younger sister Carissa.

“Any student who wants to move ahead academically should work at attaining their CXC Associate Degree,” Carissa who is a doing a degree in Accounting and Management added. “For many colleges and universities, students with a CXC Associate Degree are treated as transfer students (sophomores) and not as new students (freshman).”

As a result of the articulation agreement, Carissa entered the State University of New York as a sophomore and not as a freshman.

“One year off means one year less tuition to worry about and working on my Masters degree one year earlier,” she quipped.

### ST MARY'S

Saint Mary's University, based in Halifax Canada and CXC have also reached on agreement on credit for most of the CAPE Units. Saint Mary's has evaluated the CAPE syllabuses and is offering credits for 13 of the subjects for which

## SUNY EQUIVALENCY CHART FOR CAPE

CAPE UNIT	EQUIVALENT SUNY-PLATTSBURGH COURSE	CREDIT
Accounting Unit 1	Accounting 1	4.00
Accounting Unit 2	Principles of Accounting	4.00
Art and Design 1	Art and Design 1	4.00
Art and Design 2	Art and Design 2	4.00
Biology 1	General Biology 1	4.00
Biology 2	General Biology 2	4.00
Management of Business 1	Management of Business 1	4.00
Management of Business 2	Management of Business 2	4.00
Chemistry 1	Fundamental Prin. of Chemistry 1	4.00
Chemistry 2	Fundamental Prin. of Chemistry 2	4.00
Communication Studies	Communication Studies	4.00
Caribbean Studies	Caribbean Studies	4.00
Computer Science 1	Computer Science 1	4.00
Computer Science	Introduction to Computing and the Web	4.00
Economics 1	Introduction to Microeconomics	4.00
Economics 2	Introduction to Macroeconomics	4.00
Electrical and Electronic Tech 1	Electrical and Electronic Tech 1	4.00
Electrical and Electronic Tech 2	Electrical and Electronic Tech 2	4.00
Environmental Science 1	Environmental Science 1	4.00
Environmental Science 2	Intro to Environmental Science	4.00
GMED 1	Engineering Drawing 1	4.00
GMED 2	Engineering Drawing 2	4.00
Food and Nutrition 1	Human Nutrition	4.00
Food and Nutrition 2	Food Nutrition II	4.00
Geography 1	Physical Geography	4.00
Geography 2	Geography II	4.00
History 1	History 1	4.00
History 2	History 2	4.00
Law 1	Law 1	4.00
Law 2	Law 2	4.00
Literatures in English 1	Literatures in English 1	4.00
Literatures in English 2	Literatures in English 2	4.00
Pure Mathematics 1	Pre Calculus	4.00
Pure Mathematics 2	Calculus I	4.00
Applied Math	Applied Math	4.00
Statistical Analysis	Introduction to Statistics	4.00
Information Technology	Business Application & Info Systems	4.00
Physics 1	General Physics 1	4.00
Physics 2	General Physics 2	4.00
Sociology 1	Introduction to Sociology	4.00
Sociology 2	Sociology 2	4.00
Spanish 1	Elementary Spanish 1	4.00
Spanish 2	Elementary Spanish 1	4.00

the university has similar courses.

In 11 of the subjects, Saint Mary's will offer students three credits for each Unit and in two others; Environmental Science and Spanish, students will receive six credits for their CAPE Unit.

To benefit from the Saint Mary's agreement, students must have achieved Grades I to III.

“We have found that a number of these courses are equivalent to what is usually done in first year university if the student has demonstrated sufficiently high mastery,”

said Paul Dixon, Associate Vice President and Registrar of Saint Mary's University.

The Council is working with several other universities and colleges in the United States and Canada to conclude articulation agreements. By the end of the year CXC expects to have at least five more agreements established with institutions in the US and Canada.

In 2009 the Council plans to increase efforts to reach articulation agreements with educational institutions in North America and the Caribbean.



# TEACHING CAPE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

By Myrna Ellis

*The success of one Trinidad and Tobago Environmental Science Teacher and the approaches she has used to excite her students about the subject.*

Upon being transferred from the Palo Government Secondary School in 2004, I assumed duty at the Arima Government Secondary School (AGSS) in September of the same year. This was the first time that I have had the opportunity to teach in northern Trinidad. I was sent to teach Chemistry and Integrated Science. My love for the environment, however, caused me to attend a workshop on the Global Learning and Observation for the Benefit of the Environment (GLOBE) Programme in 2004. It was quite an edifying experience, so I decided to initiate an Environmental Club at the school.

## SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB

The club was established in January of 2005 and our initial activities involved the erection of a weather station on the school's compound, where specific parameters of the weather were

monitored on a daily basis. The parameters being monitored were cloud cover, cloud type, relative humidity, temperature, pressure, wind speed and direction and pH of rainfall.

This club traveled to all parts of the country engaging in other environmental-type activities and was fittingly called the AGSS GLOBE Trotters Environmental Club. Under my guidance the club entered the Environmental Management Authority's Green Leaf Award competition and won the award in 2005 in the youth category.

## MY VISION

My vision at this point was to get the senior students of this club to look at Environmental Science as a possible career choice. This could only have been done if we had Environmental Science as a possible option at advanced level. As a result, in 2006, against the odds of no

equipment, no laboratory, no classroom and no textbook, I started the programme at our school. Seven students signed up. Three of them were leaders of the environmental club.

## METHODS OF CURRICULUM DELIVERY

In delivering the syllabus for this subject, one has to remember that Environmental Science is a very practical subject and it involves the incorporation of all the different science disciplines. As such, an integrated approach must be taken to teaching the subject. It cannot be taught disjointedly. Schools that break up the syllabus into the different science components and have different teachers deliver each component are doing a serious injustice to the subject and their students.



Students writing their findings as they stand on the boat in the mangrove swamp



Working with samples in the Science laboratory

### REQUIREMENTS FOR MY CLASS

In order for each student to really be a part of all that I have to offer, he or she must be equipped with the following at the start of the programme: a computer, a flash drive, internet access at home, a digital camera and a voice recorder. A student will not be able to make the best of the two years without these supporting materials.

### INTRODUCTION TO STUDENTS

Each topic would usually be introduced with the use of some form of media; be it an article, a video clip, an activity or even a field trip. An overview of the module's content would usually be done using a concept map. This helps students to see the entire module in a snap shot so that they are aware of how any given topic will be navigated.

### FIELD TRIPS

Teachers need to engage the students in the subject matter. Let each topic incorporate an interesting activity. I would usually plan at least four field trips per module. These field trips, while being quite enjoyable usually involve



Bottling water samples collected from the river

picture taking, an address by an expert in the field, taking notes or voice recording and the preparation of a report on the aspect of the syllabus that the field trip targeted.

### GUEST LECTURES

If a field trip is not practical, I would invite members of the public who are experts in the field to address the students. These persons would usually come to our school or we would go to their places of work to view a video or a power point presentation that is geared toward a particular aspect of the syllabus. At these sessions, the invited guests would have produced handouts and other supporting materials to fulfill the objectives of the session. These sessions have proven to be quite rewarding.

Students love to do 'stuff'. They love to engage in activities that will cause them to think, learn and develop thoughts and ideas on their own. I have found, on many occasions, that after engaging the students and questioning them to bring out the important points, I do not necessarily have to teach content, but rather devise a mechanism to reinforce the important points, since more often than not, the key aspects have been identified without the students being told what they are.

### SUCCESS OF MY STUDENTS

The first cohort of Environmental Science students at our school was successful in the Unit 1 examinations and will all do the same at Unit 2. The most interesting aspect, however, has been the Internal Assessment which allows the students to experience the syllabus in a practical way.

### INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

During the first year, our Internal Assessment met the objectives of Module 3 of Unit 1, which looked at the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources. We looked at the health of mangroves by measuring the amount of leaf litter falling every two weeks, over a three month period, and the rate of decomposition of the leaves that fell from the mangroves. The health of the mangrove at the Caroni Swamp in Trinidad was compared with the mangrove at the Bon Accord Lagoon in Tobago. This was done over a three month period, encompassing four visits to both mangroves.

During the second year, the Internal Assessment met the objectives of Module 3, Unit 2. We did an investigation of the factors that affected the quality of the water flowing into the Courland River in Tobago. To achieve this, the students made six visits to Tobago over a two month period and water samples were collected at three points along a tributary that emptied in the river. These samples were brought back to

the laboratory to determine the levels of nitrates, phosphates, BOD, DO, temperature pH and fecal coliform present.

This was accomplished without Environmental Science laboratory, relevant equipment or appropriate textbooks on the subject matter at my school.



Collecting leaf litter in the mangrove forest

### THE FUTURE

All of my students intend to pursue careers in Environmental Science. They have all applied to UWI for entry into the BSc Environmental Science and Natural Resource Management programme and to COSTATT for entry into their BSc Environmental Management programme. They have all been accepted at COSTATT. This was based on their Unit 1 Environmental Science grades.

In closing, the teaching of this subject has put a new pep in my step as a teacher. I love it. I am excited to deliver it. I am encouraged by the response of my students to it and this motivates me even further. I am learning and improving all the time. The two years of teaching this subject have been the two most rewarding years of my teaching career.

*Myrna Ellis is Teacher III, Arima Government Secondary School, in Trinidad and Tobago.*



Collecting water samples from the stream



### PILOT PHASE

The Advanced Level Department at the Antigua State College wholeheartedly embraced CXC's CAPE programme from its inception. In fact, from the very first year of CAPE examinations in 1998, the Antigua State College (ASC) took the majority of CAPE courses on offer, teaching Caribbean Studies, Communication Studies, Functional Spanish, Information Technology and History.

The following year, when Spanish, Literatures in English, and Physics were initially examined, the college taught those courses as well, along with Unit 2 History. The college also piloted the second Units of Literatures in English, Spanish, and Physics in May/June 2000. Later, ASC piloted Geography Unit 1 (2001), Geometrical and Mechanical Engineering Drawing Unit 1 (2001), Economics Units 1 and 2 (2001 and 2002), Management of Business Unit 2 (2002), Law Unit 2 (2002), and Environmental Science Unit 2 (2003).

When Computer Science (2001 and 2002), and Sociology (2002 and 2003) were first offered, the college not only piloted them, but it did not run them concurrently with any other examining board's offering. From the onset, then, the Antigua State College was deeply and earnestly committed to CAPE.

### THE TRANSITION TO CAPE

Regional recognition of CAPE, even at the pilot stage, came from UWI. International recognition of CAPE came from United Kingdom National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) in 1999, and this information was communicated to the college. Since UK NARIC in Britain and the UWI accepted CAPE 2-Unit subjects as the equivalent of GCE Advanced Level subject, the Antigua State College began to replace the Cambridge A' Levels with CAPE subjects. In September 2000 replaced the General Paper with Communication Studies, and students wrote History, Literatures in English, Pure Mathematics, and Spanish at CAPE only. These were done in addition to Caribbean Studies. Therefore, from the very first year that the college was apprised of the opportunity for its students to write Caribbean-based advanced-level examinations while at the same time attaining both regional and international recognition, it grasped the opportunity.

The next academic year, 2001-2002, the college increased the number of subjects it offered at CAPE level alone, and by the 2003-2004 academic year the students who entered the A' Level Department at the Antigua State College were taking all their subjects at CAPE only, with the exception of Art and Politics (the latter of which is not offered at CAPE). Bearing

this in mind, there are students from the State College who have graduated from universities who would have written one or more of their subjects at CAPE, but who would not have taken CAPE units exclusively.

### UWI GRADUATES – 2006

Several of the top performers from the 2006 UWI graduating class have attributed their success in part to the CAPE courses they studied.

credited CAPE Calculus with helping him when he entered UWI. Kristen Mascall, who won the Dean's prize for being the most excellent graduating science student, said the CAPE Calculus assisted her immensely when she began her undergraduate studies.

All of these 2006 Cave Hill honours graduates wrote CAPE subjects at the Antigua State College.

### ISLAND SCHOLARS

Safiya Roberts was the 2005 Antigua and Barbuda Island Scholar. She now studies Law in England, and she was in the top two percent of students who took Law at CAPE. Besides Politics, she took all her subjects at CAPE, and is now continuing her excellent work in Law.

Nicole Roberts is Antigua and Barbuda's 2006 Island Scholar. Nicole, a science student, has continued her stellar career in science at the prestigious Yale University in the USA. French, one of Nicole's favourite subjects, is another course that she is pursuing at Yale. Nicole took 10 Cape Units in her two years at the college, earning nine Grade Is and one Grade II.

Nicole says that her CAPE studies helped her in many ways. She notes that though she had to approach her SAT II Math examination in a different way from the approach she took at CAPE, very little of the material was new.

"I am definitely very well prepared in the subjects that I am taking," the Yale Pre-med student said. The university offers different levels for its courses, from very basic to advanced, and incoming students can take placement exams to decide at which level of a subject they will start. In Nicole's case, she said, "I was placed into a very high-level French class because of CAPE French." The same is true of the placement test she took for Maths. "My Mathematics background has proven to be strong enough for the courses I am pursuing." Nicole, who studied only CAPE subjects said, "CAPE has prepared me well for the level of difficulty of the work that I am doing, as my grades remain good."

### CONCLUSION

Despite a few hiccups in the pilot phase of CAPE, many at the Antigua State College have seen the usefulness of writing examinations that have a strong focus on the Caribbean and that examine Caribbean issues, but with international standards. The subjects and the content of those subjects have been of special use to students in their further studies, whether they are done here in the Caribbean or at universities abroad.

*Gordon George is  
Head of the A' Level Department  
at the Antigua State College.*



One honours student in Humanities said that the topic he studied in CAPE West Indian History were similar to the ones he did at Cave Hill, and this made it easier for him.

Hazra Medica, who won the prize for the most outstanding Humanities student in the Class of 2006 at Cave Hill, says that CAPE Literatures in English thoroughly prepared her for, and made it a very smooth transition to the undergraduate level.

In science, one First Class Honours student



Wendy Patrick, the Registrar's Private Secretary pins the CXC golden brooch on Dr Steward

## FAREWELL DR STEWARD

Dr Lucy Steward, Registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council from 1998, demitted office on March 31 2008. Dr Steward received a fitting farewell from officials throughout region over the last five months of her tenure, with several functions being held in her honour in Participating Territories.

Several governments, through their Ministries of Education, held farewell functions in the Registrar's honour. In addition, CARICOM, through the Council on Human and Social Development (COSHOD) honoured the Registrar at its meeting in Guyana. At the meeting, Ambassador Lolita Applewaite, Deputy Secretary General presented the Registrar with a golden CARICOM pin.

The Ministers of Education of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) also honoured Dr Steward at their meeting held in Dominica. At the meeting, the Ministers presented the Registrar with a framed scroll of a resolution paying tribute to her.

*"Dr Lucy Steward, Registrar, Caribbean Examinations Council, has given exemplary service to the educational systems of OECS member states,"* a stroll presented to her read. *"During her tenure she has worked consistently to maintain and improve the standards of the various examinations prepared, administered and graded by the Caribbean Examinations Council"*

The Ministers added, *"Dr Steward has been extremely visible in the OECS countries, ensuring that policy makers, professional educators including teachers and principals, administrators, as well as parents and the general public, know about and support the work of the Council and the Secretariat."*

### SURPRISE DINNER

Council gave Dr Steward a grand surprise at the posh Sandals Grande St Lucia Resort on the night of December 7.

The Registrar thought she and her husband were being taken to dinner by Professor E. Nigel Harris, CXC's Chairman and Mr Glenroy Cumberbatch, the new Pro-Registrar. However, on arrival at Sandals as the door was opened at the Sandals Grande Ballroom, the applause went up and so did those gathered for the occasion as they gave her a standing ovation. On seeing the crowd, the Registrar could hardly believe her eyes and had to try hard to hold back the tears. She was surprised!

At the dinner, several persons paid glowing tribute to the Registrar for her dedicated service to the Council and the region. Speakers included Professor Harris, Chairman, Sir Roy Augier, former Chairman, Mrs Maria Jones, Permanently Secretary in the Ministry of Education Jamaica, Mrs Clara Gardiner, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Turks and Caicos Islands and Ms Angela Iloo, Principal of Holy Faith Convent in Trinidad and Tobago. Mrs Gardiner also presented the Registrar with a gift from her government as a token of appreciation for service to the region.

The Registrar was presented with a golden CXC brooch, which Mrs Wendy Patrick, the Registrar's Secretary had the honour of pinning to her lapel.

**STAFF**

Staff at Headquarters in Barbados and the Western Zone Office in Jamaica paid their tribute to the Registrar on March 10<sup>th</sup> and March 28<sup>th</sup> respectively.

At both events staff representing the various bargaining groups highlighted her accomplishments and presented gifts to the out-going Registrar. At least two poems written in her honour were read at the events and then presented to her.

**KING'S HOUSE**

The Ministry of Education in Jamaica and the Governor General, His Excellency, the Most Honourable Kenneth Hall, ON, OJ, a past Chairman of CXC, held what was the final farewell in grand style at King's House, the Governor General's official residence, on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

**CHALLENGE**

*"As I look back, perhaps one of the most challenging activities was the implementation of CAPE,"* Dr Steward said on reflection. *"Numerous discussions had taken place before I joined the Council and as soon as I came to office the discussions continued to convince educators and, in some instances, policymakers that CAPE provides a sound post-secondary education for our young people."*

Dr Steward said although CAPE is now fully implemented in most territories, there is still work to do. *"Discussions will have to continue as we work with the tertiary institutions to enable the articulation of CAPE with their programmes and to explain how CAPE and the CXC Associate Degrees complement and are not in competition with similar programmes,"* the former Registrar noted.

**REWARDING**

Two of her most rewarding experiences were the development and implementation of the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competency (CCSLC) and the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ).

The implementation of the CVQ especially resonates with Dr Steward. She believes it will have *"far-reaching effects in the region."*

*"For me it is personally gratifying because in 1989, the first assignment I had at the CARICOM Secretariat was to develop a regional strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and even at that time we saw a regional certification such as the CVQ as enhancing the status of TVET and providing an alternative pathway for higher education and training."*

**DR DIDACUS JULES, A ST LUCIA NATIONAL SUCCEEDED DR STEWARD AS REGISTRAR FROM APRIL 2, 2008.**

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*The Caribbean Examiner wishes Dr Steward a happy retirement.*



Dr Steward is surprised as she and her husband are escorted into the Grande Ballroom by Glenroy Cumberbatch (right) and Roslyn Harewood (left)

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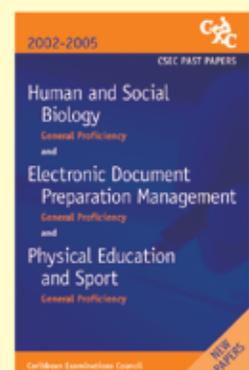
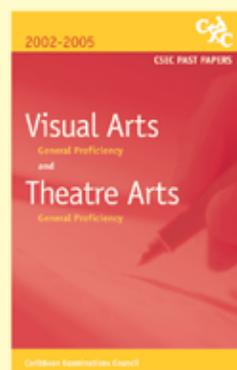
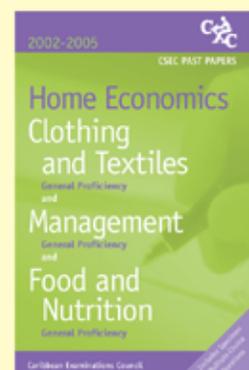
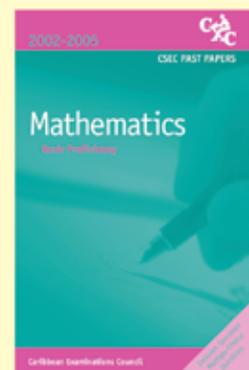
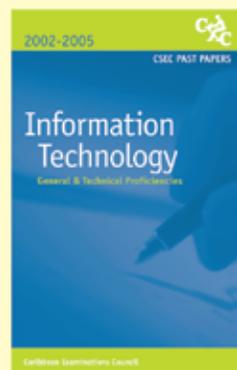
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