



BARBADOS

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GUIDELINES FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING (COL)

1. Key challenges and opportunities (not more than 3 each) for 'learning for development' in your country.
2. Status of distance education/elearning in your country.
3. Identify (not more than 5) top priorities that you would like COL to take up during the next Three Year Plan 2012-15

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Key challenges and opportunities

- Creation of linkages to support Open and Distance Education (ODE).
- Accreditation and the equivalency of qualifications earned through the distance modality.
- Creation and enforcement of written quality assurance policies and procedures re ODE.

Status of ODEs in Barbados

- The Government of Barbados approved the country's National Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015. This plan provides the necessary mechanisms and framework to exploit the power of ICTs to benefit all Barbadian and improve the quality of life. The ICT Strategic Plan has been conceptualised against the background that with technologies as an enabler, the provision of services to Barbadian citizens, both at home and abroad can be revolutionised.
- Establishment of the Open and Flexible Learning Centre (OFLC) of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) was conceptualised in 2002, as a result of the SJPP obtaining support from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation. This fund made provision for one year of consultancy support for a

needs analysis and development of a plan for an institutional centre for ODE. The centre was officially opened in 2003 and a review was conducted in 2009 – 2010 to determine if the original objectives had been accomplished. Several courses are offered using online modalities or a combination of paper-based and online modalities. Some examples of courses offered include Fundamental English and Maths, Occupational Health and Safety, Business Law, Garment Making, Introduction Computers, Electrical Installation, Geriatric Studies, Sound Engineering, Adult Care, Disaster Management, Quick Books etc.

- The capacity development for ODE project involved the development of a new Moodle Platform; and the provision of services related to the implementation of ODL at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College and Erdiston Teachers Training College. Work on the OFLC transition plan, and a transition to elearning document has commenced.
- The UWI Open Campus is based in Barbados and is virtual in many ways, but also has over forty physical sites across the region which allows students to have face-to-face interactions. The Open Campus offers flexible and expanded access to a broad range of UWI quality programmes.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2010 – 2015

- Development and promotion of a research culture among teachers and students alike at every level of the system using generic IT solutions to encourage the development of indigenous materials for use in education.
- Development of course materials that could be suitably adapted for the use of students with special needs namely, the visually impaired, wheelchair bound, physically impaired as well as the hearing impaired.
- Streamlining and standardising many of the courses to enhance relevance and allow for programme accreditation.
- Development of a renewable cadre of skilled specialists in technology and the corresponding redressing of the digital divide through infrastructural development.
- To establish strategic alliances with other institutions and sectors both locally and internationally for the purposes of information/resource sharing, collaborative course development and delivery, articulation and credit transfer.