



**An orientation to secondary
and post secondary
qualifications in the English-
speaking Caribbean:
evaluating students with CSEC,
CAPE and Associate degree
qualifications.**

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THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Inherited, pre-independence British model
- Provision for primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Primary Cycle

- 6 years from age five to age 11 approx.
- Exam at age 11+ to transfer to secondary
- Curricula usually include such subjects as English, mathematics, social studies, science, music and the visual arts' (Steward, 2003).



THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Secondary Cycle **cont'd**

- 5 years of (compulsory) schooling
- Up to 1978 - British GCE O' levels
- 1979 - Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) certificate, now known as CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate)
- Universal secondary education: Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis and Turks and Caicos Islands
- Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago and the OECS have transition rates ranging from 50-70%' (Jules, D., Miller, E., Armstrong, L. A. et al 2000).

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM cont'd

Post-secondary Cycle

- 2 years, voluntary
- A' level examinations
- Traditional British grammar school model
- Prepares high-achievers for university
- 1998 - Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) offered as alternative to British A' level



THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

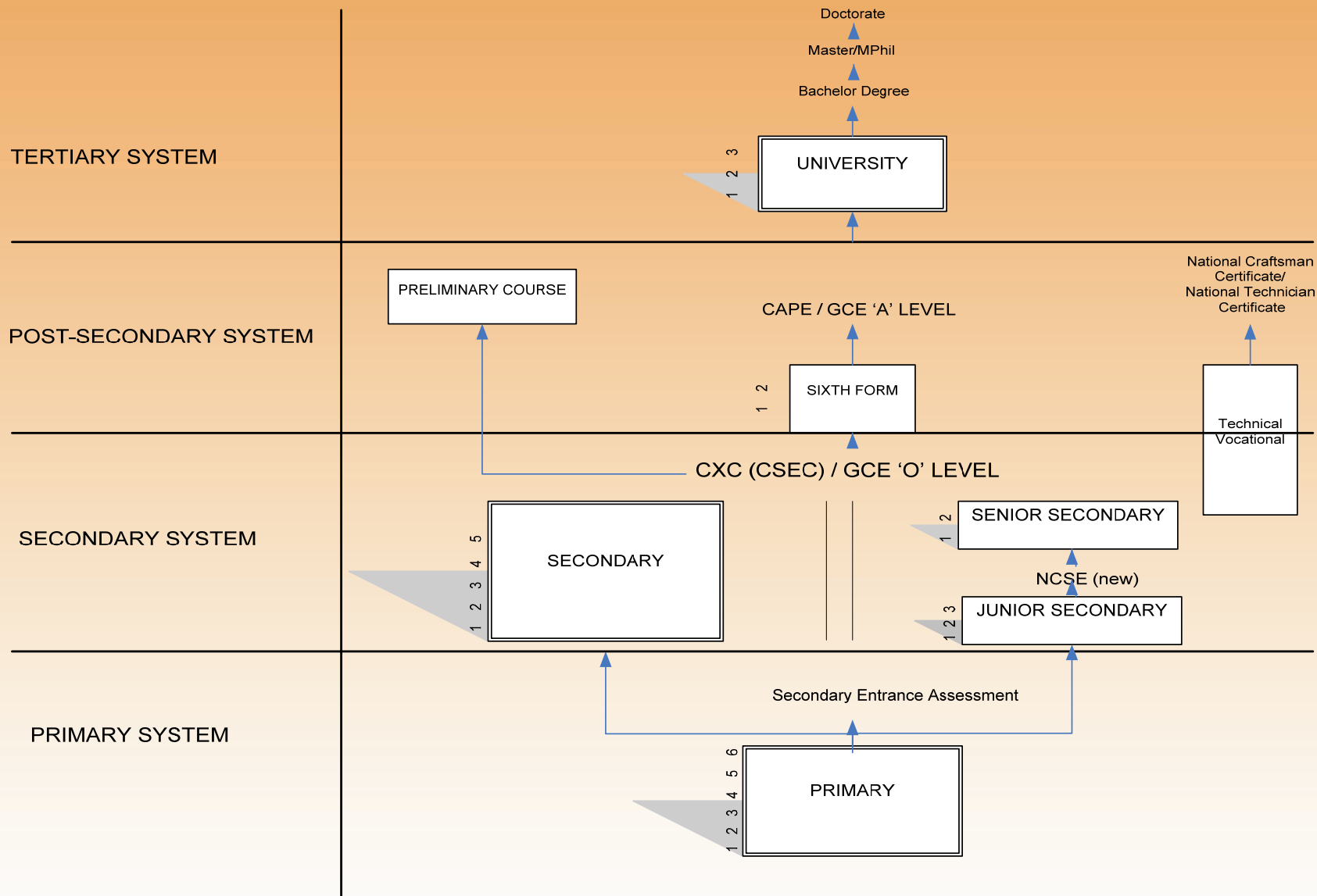
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The Tertiary Sector

- Expansion and diversification
- Traditional British model has waned
- Alignment with North American tertiary education system
- Emergence and spread of alternative qualifications e.g. Associate degree
- Associate degrees offered by community colleges and other tertiary providers

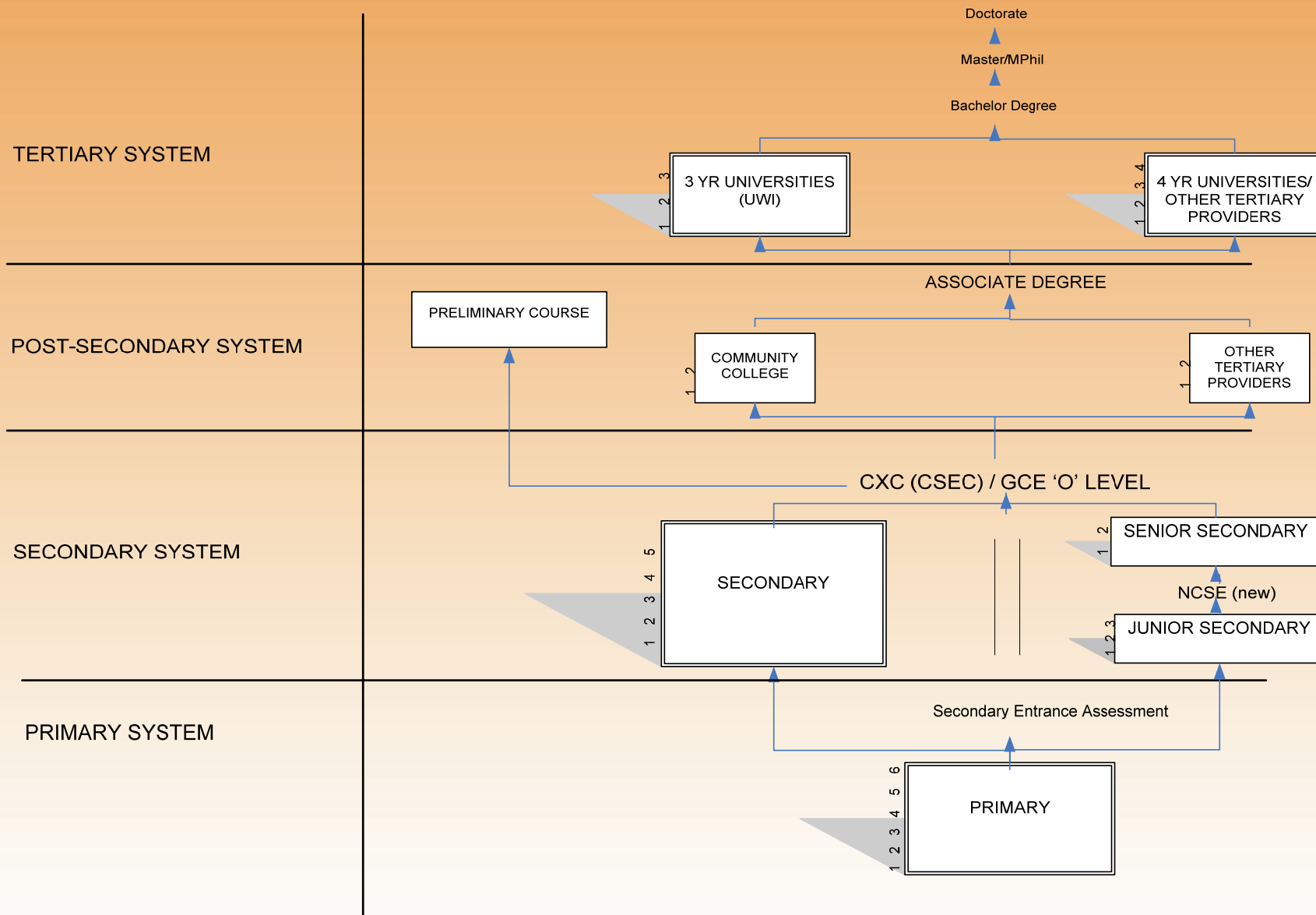


Trinidad & Tobago - Tertiary Education Ladder Traditional Route





Trinidad & Tobago - Tertiary Education Ladder Non-Traditional Route





CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Examinations Certificate) formerly known as 'CXC'

Level	Secondary; standardized regional examination
When	At end of fifth year of compulsory secondary education
Age	Normally at 16 or 17
Structure	General, Technical & Basic Proficiencies
Assessment	Combination of internal school-based assessment (SBA) – 20% (up to 40% in practical subjects); and external assessment - 80%.
Grading (up to 1997)	Overall Grade Scale – I to V; Profile Grades (A to ?) for Skill or Content Areas
Matriculation	Grades I and II at General and Technical Proficiency levels acceptable for matriculation to post-secondary and 4 year tertiary education programmes
Grading (from 1998)	Overall Grade Scale: I to VI; Profile Grades (A to F) for Skill or Content Areas
Matriculation	Grades I, II and III at General and Technical Proficiency levels acceptable for matriculation to post-secondary and 4 year tertiary education programmes



Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)

Level	Post-secondary
When	Two year course, usually after 5 years of secondary schooling (CSEC).
Age	Normally at 18 or 19
Structure	<p>One and Two Unit qualifications (each Unit consists of 3 Modules).</p> <p><u>Compulsory Single Unit Quals:</u></p> <p>(i) Communication Studies; & (ii) Caribbean Studies</p> <p>Combinations of one unit qualifications → broad-based foundation;</p> <p>Combinations of two unit qualifications → greater depth in a subject area</p>
Assessment	Combination of final examination, school-based assessment (SBA) & continuous assessment
Grading	<u>Overall Grade Scale</u> – I (highest) to VII (lowest); <u>Module Grades</u> – A (excellent) to G (unsatisfactory) for Skill or Content Areas



Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) cont'd

Matriculation	Six (6) CAPE Units at level one; or 2 or 3 CAPE subjects studied to Unit Two level are considered as satisfying normal matriculation requirements for entry to 3 year degree programmes.
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THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATE DEGREE

- Objective of preparing students for progression to the last two years of a Bachelor's degree programme or entry into the work place.
- Parallels basic tenets of the North American Associate degree in that:
 - Transfer degrees have an academic focus
 - Applied degrees have a vocational focus
 - General education platform of core liberal arts subjects
 - Electives available within the programme(Peters, Roberts, Whittington & Best 2002)



Caribbean Associate Degree

Level	Tertiary
Duration/ When	Two year course, usually after 5 years of secondary schooling (CSEC).
Categories	Assoc. in Arts (transfer); Majors in the Humanities Assoc. in Science (transfer); Majors in the Natural, Physical or Social Sciences Assoc. of Applied Arts (vocational/transfer); Majors in the Humanities Assoc. of Applied Science (vocational/transfer); Majors in the Natural, Physical or Social Sciences
Structure	General education core; provision for electives; one or more major areas of study
Assessment	Usually continuous assessment or examination or a combination of the two
Credits	Usually between 60-72



Table 1: Summary of Agreed Models for OECS Associate Degrees

Adapted from: The Associate Degree in the Caribbean: with particular reference to the OECS, (Peters, B., Roberts, V., Whittington, L. & Best, G. (eds) 2002

	AA	AAA	AS	AAS	AS (Soc.Sci)	AAS/AAA
Gen. Ed	18-24 credits	21-24	30	36	24	15
Majors	30-36 credits	30 or more	32-48	36	20	36
Minors					10	
Electives	9-12 credits	9-12			6	9
Gen Ed	IT/Comm. Studs./Mod. Lang/Stats/Car'ibbean Studs/Nat. Sci.					
Target Institutions	North American & Regional Universities e.g. UWI, UG, Suriname, UTECH, St. George's etc.					



Caribbean Associate Degree Recognition and Articulation

- Articulation agreements with the University of the West Indies:
E.g. smooth 2+2 arrangement for hotel and tourism management programmes
- Private tertiary level providers e.g. those offering off-shore degrees:
E.g. Various COSTAATT Associate degrees enjoy advanced standing and are accepted for second or third year transfer into University of Greenwich (UK) programmes offered through a local provider.

Recognition and Articulation cont'd

- Smooth 2 + 2 transfer arrangements already exist with international universities:
E.g. COSTAATT agreement with:
 - SUNY Plattsburgh for 3rd year transfer into Bachelor's degree in Psychology.



THE CXC ASSOCIATE DEGREE

- In 2005, CXC announced introduction of associate degrees in nine areas:
 - Business Studies
 - Computer Science
 - Environmental Science
 - General Studies
 - Humanities, Mathematics,
 - Modern Languages
 - Natural Sciences
 - Technical Studies

STRUCTURE OF THE CXC ASSOCIATE DEGREE

- A minimum of seven units of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), including the compulsory Units: Communication Studies and Caribbean Studies.
- A minimum of 70 credits (10 credits per unit)
- A Unit comprises three Modules and takes roughly 150 hours to complete, inclusive of contact time and assignments.
- Students may opt for ‘breadth of study by taking a combination of single Units from the available 1-Unit and 2-Unit courses’, or depth by ‘taking both Units of several 2-Unit courses.’



Examples of CAPE Associate Degree Programmes:-

Associate Degree in Business Studies

www.tranquillity.edu.tt/associatedegree.html

Caribbean Studies. Communication Studies Management of Business	Unit 1 Unit 1 Unit 1 & Unit 2	4 Compulsory Units
Accounting Economics	Unit 1 & Unit 2 Unit 1 & Unit 2	2 Units from this group
Law Information Technology Spanish French	Unit 1 Unit 1 Unit 1, Unit 2 Unit 1, Unit 2	1 Unit from this group

The CXC Associate Degree: a post-secondary or tertiary level qualification?

Mixed reaction within the Region:

- Completely dependent on the syllabus of the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination which is a post-secondary qualification
- The CXC Associate degree has not been subject to ‘the rigour of accreditation that similar programmes face.’
- The ability of high schools to offer an associate degree is questionable as they would not be equipped ‘with the trained staff, library and other resources to offer a college degree’
- The ‘current high school curriculum in the Caribbean does not adequately develop a student’s analytical...decision-making...negotiating...or life skills.’ All of which would be considered integral to the development of the individual experiencing college level education.



Assessment and Summary

What should the Admissions Officer know about Caribbean applicants?

- English is the primary language of all former British colonies (students from those countries require no TOEFL).
- At the fifth form (Grade 12) students are assessed in the major academic subjects, mathematics, English language, sciences, art, business etc through a common examination CXC.
- Students who are successful in passing five subjects at the CXC level are deemed to have graduated high school and are eligible to go on to further education.



CXC and CAPE

- Students are accepted into regional Colleges and Universities with five CXC (CSEC) General proficiency subjects including English language at Grades I and II.
- US Universities who recruit in the Caribbean also accept students with five CXC (CSEC).
- In an experiment done in 2004 at COSTAATT, in which the College in collaboration with Grambling State University asked students with five CXCs to take the SAT, the average score amongst that group was 1090 and the highest score was 1310.
- The CAPE exam designation represents two years of concentrated work in a particular subject (similar to AP). Students are awarded those credentials after successful completion of those subject areas. The average student doing CAPE will take the CAPE examinations in three subject areas – some students attempt more.



CXC and CAPE

- CAPE GRADING is as follows:
- Grade I = 4.0
- Grade II = 3.5
- Grade III = 3.0
- Grade IV = 2.5
- Grade V = 2.0

- Universities in the US have been awarding three credits for every subject in which the student scores Grade III or higher for example students with Grade II in English Language, Biology and Mathematics will receive nine (9) credits towards the Degree (Florida System)



CAPE ASSOCIATE DEGREE

- Less than 1% of students eligible to pursue the CAPE Associate Degree do so. In states like Dominica, St. Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago, the CAPE Associate Degree is not recognized or endorsed.
- The CAPE is the proficiency course of study that is offered by high schools in the Caribbean. It is not accepted as a College degree.
- The Caribbean Examinations Council is an examining body and is not authorized by any government to bestow degrees.



CAPE ASSOCIATE DEGREE

- At the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago in Trinidad, the CAPE Associate Degree is not recognized as a College credential.
- Given the volume of concentration in the particular subject areas covered in the CAPE Associate program at the high school level, it is advised based on our assessment, that the work covered is equivalent to twenty-four (24) credits, or the first year of a four year Degree Baccalaureate program.



Caribbean Colleges Associate Degree

- Students who graduate from a Caribbean College with an Associate Degree with a GPA of 2.5 or over are generally accepted in US Colleges/Universities as having graduated from a Community College
- Universities and Colleges will determine which courses will go towards general education, electives or majors; but generally students from COSTAATT transfer an average of sixty (60) credits to US Universities.



CARIBBEAN STUDENTS

- High performers in Academic programs
- At SUNY Plattsburgh & University of Mississippi the average cumulative GPA was at 3.2 and 3.4 respectively
- Culturally they are able to adjust to the US culture in relatively quick time, making learning a lot easier
- The region is not rich, the average middle class family can afford a maximum of \$7,000USD per year for their students
- If universities are not able to provide tuition, waivers and scholarships to these students, they will not be able to afford your college.



COSTAATT

- COSTAATT has established articulation agreements with US Universities and Colleges
- COSTAATT prepares students for transfer into US colleges
- COSTAATT students perform at the top five percent at every university to which they are transferred
- Universities looking to internationalize their institution will find it easier to work with a College like COSTAATT in the Caribbean