



# THE UWI QUALITY CIRCLE

VOLUME 11, MAY 2009



Stakeholders'  
Perceptions of Quality

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Volume 11 of *The Quality Circle* focuses attention on selected UWI stakeholders' perceptions of quality: administrators, parents, postgraduate students and Guild of Students. These perceptions are useful in guiding The UWI community's reflection on our efforts to continuously enhance the quality of The UWI experience for all stakeholders.

We also welcome new members of staff with the mandate to support quality enhancement of postgraduate studies across the University and of administrative and service functions at the Cave Hill Campus. These recent additions to The UWI staff underscore The UWI's commitment to meeting the challenges often encountered in the process of institutional advancement. In this process the positive contributions of each member of staff add value to institutional life. In this issue, *The Quality Circle* acknowledges the vital role played by our Administrative Assistants supporting the development of departmental quality manuals at the St Augustine Campus. Our Administrative Assistants are among our frontline staff who often demonstrate a personal commitment to quality enhancement within their own sphere of influence. This personal commitment stands as testimony to their perspective of quality. Finally, *The Quality Circle* is also pleased to feature the efforts of The UWI Open Campus to increase levels of stakeholder satisfaction.

Dr. Sandra Gift, Senior Programme Officer,  
Quality Assurance Unit, St. Augustine Campus,  
Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies.

# WELCOME!

## THE UWI QAU WELCOMES A NEW MEMBER OF THE TEAM!

### DR. SANDRA RICHARDS

**D**r. Sandra Richards joins The UWI from the UK as Senior Programme Officer for Graduate Studies. Dr. Richards, who was a lecturer in social policy, is familiar with competence-based vocational qualifications and has worked with disadvantaged, marginalised and disaffected communities.

Dr. Richards is enthusiastic about paradigm shifts that enable collaborative partnerships in the interest of quality and sharing best practice. Her broad areas of quality responsibility include policy and operations of postgraduate and research



programmes. In particular, her key tasks involve supporting quality assurance reviews and the continuous quality enhancement of postgraduate programmes. Additionally, her duties include conducting themed evaluations of postgraduate learning environments.

Dr. Richards' research interests include the implementation of social policy as it relates to social inclusion in differing educational contexts. In her work *The Way We See It*, published by Trentham Books, Richards teases out uncomfortable historical links between school exclusion and British education policy.

## THE QUALITY CIRCLE WELCOMES THE CAVE HILL CAMPUS QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER

### MR. EDUARDO ALI

**E**duardo Raoul Ali is the Campus Quality Assurance Officer at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Barbados. His overall responsibility entails coordinating the campus quality management to enhance administrative and service functions, among related areas. He has worked in the education and training sectors throughout the Caribbean at instructional, technical, administrative and policy levels for twenty years. Mr. Ali has also sat on several state and company



boards in accreditation, international education and management training and has been a member of the Board of Management of the Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE) with responsibility for programme and project development and funding, and is also a contracted researcher with UNESCO on higher education policy projects.

Mr. Ali is currently completing his doctoral dissertation with the University of Sheffield School of Education in comparative and international education policy research where he is comparing formulation and implementation of accreditation policies by five emerging CSME territories, namely Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and two regional universities, inclusive of the University of the West Indies.

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY



## One Perspective from Mona: Quality as Quality Customer Service

**D**r. Anna Perkins, Senior Programme Officer, QAU Mona, spoke with Ms. Huldah Williams, Senior Administrative Assistant, Admissions Office, Mona Campus, who shared her perspective on quality customer service.

*When persons visit various offices, for assistance, they are often sent walking all over this very large campus. Part of the quality should include thought for the customer who has to park and walk several hundred metres to any office on campus one cares to name. When*

*information is requested by visitors from staff members – directions, academic queries, registration matters – part of the service offered should be the provision of accurate information, and employees should use the facilities at their disposal to assist visitors. It can't be that hard to phone another department or get out of our very comfortable offices to assist our visitors – students or otherwise. There are establishments in this country where persons are permanently out to lunch, and where every day is April Fools' Day. UWI staff should not be practicing either scenario.*



Ms. Huldah Williams

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY



## Administrative Staff

**M**s. Angella Stephens, Administrative Officer, OBUS, shares some preliminary findings from her Doctor of Business Administration (Higher Education Management) research being undertaken at the University of Bath, United Kingdom. Five themes emerged from her interviews with senior administrative staff on the Mona Campus.

### QUALITY AS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Quality for a senior administrative staff member of over thirty years [meant] satisfying the customer beyond expectations. This is how she expressed it:

*Anything we do must be done with high quality in mind, whether you sweep or you type or you deliver [a] training course we must do it with high quality in mind...satisfying the customer beyond [her/his] expectations.*

She further explained that training in the delivery of Quality Customer Care on the campus was of utmost importance in developing the right attitude and values for new members of staff “early in the day before they are spoilt by some of us who have been around and have developed bad attitudes”. Most importantly, she felt that “our leaders should also be trained in quality customer care so that they can guide the people they supervise in quality customer care”.

A member of senior executive management explained quality in the context of the leaders and their responsiveness to students' concerns. He was of the opinion that the “administrative processes here were not given a lot of attention to building quality into the architecture”, and illustrated this using the Six Sigma philosophy to quality which he felt could be applied to higher education. Here is what he said:

*Zero tolerance regulations and variations so you build to get 100% guarantees like if you are building parachutes you couldn't accept 95% quality because if 5% don't meet the standards you know they are dead people; that's the kind of approach...but it certainly can be adapted to the higher education environment.*

## QUALITY AS EXCELLENCE

An administrator of The UWI Open Campus spoke of quality in the following terms:

*Aim for excellence in what you do...with the Instructional Development Unit in place to work with faculty... I notice increasingly a lot of research seminars and workshops.*

## QUALITY AS FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

The concept of quality as fitness for purpose as used by the Quality Assurance Unit of OBUS was echoed by an administrator who said, *Academically, the fitness for purpose quality model that focuses on stakeholders and purpose and so on, has been very, very clearly articulated and formalized.*

## QUALITY AS TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) VERSUS QUALITY AS TRANSFORMATION

A director of an administrative unit felt that the University uses some aspects of TQM

but that it was outdated. This is what he had to say [some punctuation added]:

*Total Quality Management came and you know a lot of things about team work and cross-functional relationships, but underlying all that it's a very strong and also incremental change, whereas where the University is going now is that you want quantum leap changes and that's the difficulty we have right now; and that's why it is called transformation and development now because that's really where the difference is, so I think it would be fair to say we either consciously or deliberately had some aspects of TQM, you know, over the years, but what we are being forced into now is a new quality model which is a transformative model...and what that model is saying is that we need to respond urgently to what the external environment is telling us, the competition... what the society needs in terms of the output and we need to respond to that rapidly and that's why we need a transformative model.*

## QUALITY AS IMPROVEMENT

One administrator identified quality with The UWI programme review process:

*The concept is more quality improvement and the framework Mona uses has to do with the Board for Undergraduate Studies... It's not so much management as quality assurance to ensure that quality in our offerings in all aspects is maintained... They actually provide evidence that quality is being applied and is being actively pursued.*

A senior administrator with years of experience in the management of the human resources described quality as *development of the human potential as they say in the UWI statements like unlocking the human potential.* In support of this quality theme, an administrator with a thirty-year tenure felt that the performance appraisal system and the annual assessment of faculty were two instruments for assuring quality through staff performance. Here is what he said:

*Students can demand quality from lecturers in terms of assessment and they have a more stringent approach where [in the case of] academics who are not performing, it shows up there in their appraisals...so too the senior administrative staff - they are required to set objectives keeping in mind the overall objective of The UWI, with that comes the whole question of quality and what it is that you deliver at the end of the day because you must give account of your stewardship.*

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY



## Parents' Perceptions

**D**r. Anna Perkins, Programme Officer, QAU Mona Campus spoke with a few parents in Jamaica about their perceptions of a quality university education.

**MR. FRANK THOMPSON:**  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION-JOINT  
BOARD OF TEACHER EDUCATION



Mr. Frank Thompson

*The University should be an example to the country. Therefore, my perception of quality is that it should be seen in the trademark coming from my child at the end of his/her studies. That is, my child should be rounded, not only academically but in a composite way that he/she can take on, not the whole world, but definitely Jamaica's challenges.*

**DR. DONNA HOPE,**  
INSTITUTE OF CARIBBEAN  
STUDIES:

*As the parent of an alum and a graduate-student-to-be let me give this a stab. For me the definition of quality is very qualitative. In a real sense quality has to be defined in terms of the value-added that UWI brings to the individual student who, like my son, passes through its halls. The most important aspect of this quality in a real sense for me is how his UWI experience enhances him as a person, how this broadens his horizons and expands his ability to think critically and formulate useful and creative ideas about his life and the situations around him. The other aspect of quality includes, of course, the upgrading of his academic*

*qualifications to make him more marketable and career-ready so this relates to the instructional and pedagogical methods that engaged him during the course of his studies and how relevant these were to the world in which we live and the area he studied. I have found that for my son, his experiences at UWI have equipped him very well to deal with a variety of situations in the workplace and to be very flexible and creative in his chosen area of work - Computer Science - and, even more importantly, it has enhanced his capacity to understand his role in the network of his society. And it has made him value education as an invaluable tool in the world in which we live, to the extent that at the end of his BA he was ready to pursue a Masters.*



Dr. Donna Hope



Prof Emerita, Elsa Leo-Rhynie

**PROF EMERITA, ELSA LEO-RHYNIE**

*I started thinking conventionally – relevant, cutting edge courses and programmes, up-to-date resources/technology, good grades, holistic student development, meeting national, regional and international needs. While all of these are relevant and important, ...once the student graduates the quality of that graduate's education is displayed in terms of his/her technical knowledge in a particular field; analytical thinking and problem-solving capacity; ability to think long term – if...then...; being able to motivate a team of employees; to be part of a team and a good follower when the*

*need arises; to be a leader when that is called for; to be able to communicate well, in Standard English, and possibly also in another language, orally and in writing. Very important are well developed and readily demonstrated social skills and ethical principles. Quality education, in my estimation, will produce the graduate who meets these criteria.*

# STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY



## Postgraduate Students' Perceptions of Quality

**D**r. Sandra Richards, Senior Programme Officer (Graduate Studies) conducted a random survey of 21 postgraduate students enrolled in taught master's and

research degree programmes at Cave Hill, Mona and St. Augustine; She introduced her role in the Quality Assurance Unit as the Officer focusing on graduate programmes and asked the question

'What is your perception of quality?'

Here are the perceptions of the eleven students who responded to the survey:

Quality is synonymous with value. You may be saying you're giving excellent value but if our expectation is not the same, I may consider it poor value. Any provider must always ensure that what they deliver surpasses the expectation of the recipient.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Quality is an abstract term. Quality is not physical so there is a knowledge base, past experience and goals and expectations.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Quality and this University are not linked. There are many more students...double the amount I think... and the same resources are given. Quality doesn't do that. How can quality be expected?

ST. AUGUSTINE

Quality to me means high standards. That means being treated with respect by administrative and academic staff...and being able to give feedback. Oh...and technicians are never available at the critical time we need them. In my experience we are not getting quality.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Some postgraduate students felt that quality was too reliant on individual interpretation. One student indicated that quality was dependent on the lecturer or supervisor:

I am waiting for the date of my [Oral] Defence and my supervisor has been very involved. I feel pretty confident about it; there are some changes I would make if I had time but the quality of my thesis is high because of the quality of my supervision.

CAVE HILL

There was also a feeling that more could be done to involve postgraduate students:

I don't know much about quality here [at The UWI]. We should be involved earlier in the quality reviews. We are not, and we never get feedback.

ST. AUGUSTINE

We are lucky, we have seminars and regular meetings to discuss our progress and hear from other researchers. Other students don't seem to get the opportunity to share ideas and have been waiting for supervisor feedback for ages.

ST. AUGUSTINE

We are grateful for the relationship we have with the Campus Co-ordinator. We can see real efforts to improve the quality of graduate studies here.

CAVE HILL

I'm glad someone is asking about quality. I was told by a member of staff that the priority is undergraduate programmes.

When I heard about this review I made sure I was available. This is the only chance to give feedback. To me quality means meeting expectations of excellence for all students - not just some.

CAVE HILL

The response to the question about perceptions of quality was largely enthusiastic with mixed views. A number of students requested anonymity, and when assured that their views formed part of a wider exercise to ascertain stakeholder perceptions of quality, raised a number of concerns. Indeed a Mona student stated that "quality does not seem to apply to us" and went on to acknowledge that reviews provide an opportunity for UWI quality to be benchmarked internationally.

Although a number of students were disgruntled and cynical and expressed frustration, they welcomed the 'quality' question seeing it as a step in the right direction in terms of including graduate students in the interpretation of quality. The majority of respondents were happy to learn that their views were being sought concerning quality and keen to have their opinion included in any quality reports and surveys.

In the final analysis, 40% of the respondents had a clear perception of quality equating it with standards and values; 60% offered a response that did not define quality but implied recognition of the importance of quality.

## Guild of Students' Perceptions of Quality



Dr. Sandra Gift, Senior Programme Officer, Quality Assurance Unit at St Augustine discussed with the President and Executive members of the St. Augustine Campus' Guild of Students their perceptions of a quality university education. Participating in the discussion were Guild President, Mr. Hillan Morean; Vice President, Mr. Daren Mitchel; Secretary, Ms. Nkese Parris and Treasurer Mr. Latoya Lewis. The discussion focused on students' expectations of university education; their current UWI experience and what they would have considered to be a quality university education retrospectively.

## A Higher Level of Intellectualism

The Guild members felt that when contemplating higher education students have expectations of a learning experience that is different from what they experienced at secondary school. At university, they expected to be more proactive in their own learning and to move away from the method of “rote learning and regurgitation.” They expected to be exposed to “a higher level of intellectualism” in terms of discussion and an “opening up of the mind”; to be able to go to lecturers with their own ideas and be guided along the right path.

## Opportunities for Leadership and Participation in Decision-Making

One indicator of the quality of students’ actual UWI experience is the availability of opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership. The University Charter and the Guild’s clubs and societies provide opportunities for students to be part of The UWI’s decision-making processes, though taking advantage of these opportunities depends on the personal motivation of individual students. The Guild Executive noted, however, that students’ heavy workload prevents many students from being as active in Guild activities as one would hope. They added that while The UWI provides students with opportunities for leadership and involvement in decision-making, it must, at the same time, give serious consideration to students’ inputs. They noted, for example, that many students do not feel The UWI pays attention to students’ feedback relating to the end of course evaluation exercise.

## More Hands-on Learning and Acquisition of Skills

For these students a quality university education means opportunities for hands-on learning, internships, sandwich programmes and greater

exposure to skills such as communication, project management and entrepreneurship skills.

## More Opportunities for Co-Curricular Learning

Students felt strongly that quality at The UWI St Augustine is compromised by an inadequate provision of co-curricular activities, particularly in the area of sport. They argued the need for “a more highly developed co-curricular programme” that is well marketed within the University community and that should be as well planned and implemented as the academic programme. A good university experience, they indicated, is one where there are sufficient resources to meet all the competing needs of the Campus, without sacrificing the quality of student life.

## Retrospectively Speaking

Turning to what they would consider to have been a hallmark of a quality UWI experience retrospectively, Daren Mitchel, Guild Vice-President stated :

*I want to be able to look back and feel I was active in University life; that I gave to the raising of student consciousness and that I was part of a process of change; that we made things better...*

Ms. Nkese Parris, the Guild Secretary shared her own perspective:

*I would like to feel that the University promoted holistic development; that it was not about work only; that there were opportunities for involvement in a wide range of activities.*

## CAVE HILL

### Quality Makeover: Cave Hill Launches Pilot for Enhancing Quality of Non-Academic Offices

Being the first within The UWI system to do so, the Cave Hill campus launched a pilot project in order to establish total quality systems for non-academic offices on Wednesday February 11th, 2009. Twenty six senior officers, professional staff and administrators from different offices participated in the launch and a quality enhancement leadership workshop which was hosted by the Office of the Principal Campus Quality Assurance Programme and conducted by the Campus Quality Assurance Officer. Total quality at Cave Hill has three strands: administrative, academic and customer services quality. In addition to the academic quality assurance work conducted by the Board for Undergraduate Studies, the initiative provided the first in a series of workshops to train faculty and staff in

becoming quality enhancement leaders to establish the Campus’ Quality Management System which was approved by the Cave Hill Academic Board. It also officially launches a Campus Quality Enhancement Corps which comprises trained and capable leaders across all disciplines and offices. These persons would embrace total quality, enhance quality within their environments and contribute their competencies to enhancing quality of other places on campus as peer evaluators.





# Developing the Quality Manual



**D**r. Sandra Gift, Senior Programme Officer, Quality Assurance Unit, St Augustine Campus conducted a Quality Forum on the theme Developing the Quality Manual on Thursday 12 March, 2009. The Forum was designed as a follow-up to the April 2008 Quality Forum on the same theme. Some of the participants from the 2008 Forum made significant progress in developing a first draft of departmental Quality Manuals in collaboration with their Heads of Departments. In the 2009 Quality Forum there were nine participants representing the Faculty of Social Sciences (Economics, Management Studies, Behavioural Sciences, Center for Gender and Development Studies); the Faculty of Humanities (School of Education, Liberal Arts); the Faculty of Science and Agriculture (Physics, Mathematics and Computer Science) and the Faculty of Medical Sciences (Medical Sciences Library). The Faculty of Engineering, of necessity, maintains and updates departmental Quality Manuals in keeping with relevant accreditation criteria and was not represented at the Forum. Participants presented work in progress on departmental Quality Manuals using the QAU guidelines for developing a Quality Manual.

The Quality Assurance Unit, St. Augustine Campus highly commends the following participants for their willingness to serve as a catalyst in their departments by embarking upon and following through with the exercise, with the encouragement and support of their Heads of Departments: Ms. Adeltrude Bain, (Liberal Arts); Ms. Camille Charles (Physics); Miss Asha Claxton (Economics) Mrs. Anita Khoon Khoon-Ali (School of Education); Ms Wenda Rocke (Behavioural Sciences) and

Ms Claire Rogers (Medical Sciences Library). The work being done by these Administrative Assistants is indicative of good practice that should be shared with other departments.

All of the participants found the forum to be very useful in helping them to better understand the processes involved in developing a Quality Manual. The Quality Circle shares their feedback about the Forum:

*I think it is beneficial, more so for clarifying what is required but allowing for introduction and further networking between and among the Administrative Assistants and their various departments.*

*The Quality Manual at all categories carries the same goal for all.*

*Very useful to have heard other departments' [Quality] Manual experiences. Much clarity has been received in what and how it could be done.*

*The manuals done by other departments have offered some guidance for further development.*

*Much to share with and receive.*

*Well placed and very knowledgeable.*

*Emphasized the importance of developing and maintaining a Quality Manual for my department.*

# THE OPEN CAMPUS: Reengineering for Quality

The Open Campus started operations in August 2008, embarking on a number of initiatives designed to enhance the quality of its provision to its stakeholders. Its service charter sets out six statements that encompass the roles and responsibilities of the Open Campus to its students. In summary, these seek to assure students that:

1. They will be provided with academically qualified and dedicated faculty members;
2. They will receive or have access to all required course materials;
3. The response time to e-mails will be no more than 48 hours after receipt;
4. There will be constructive feedback to interactive online communication within 48 hours of being posted or sent;
5. Graded course assignments/activities will be marked and returned within 14 calendar days after the deadline for submission;



*Ms. Jacqueline Moniquette,  
Senior Programme Officer  
Quality Assurance Unit  
Cave Hill Campus*

6. There will be a timely return of and access to final course grades.

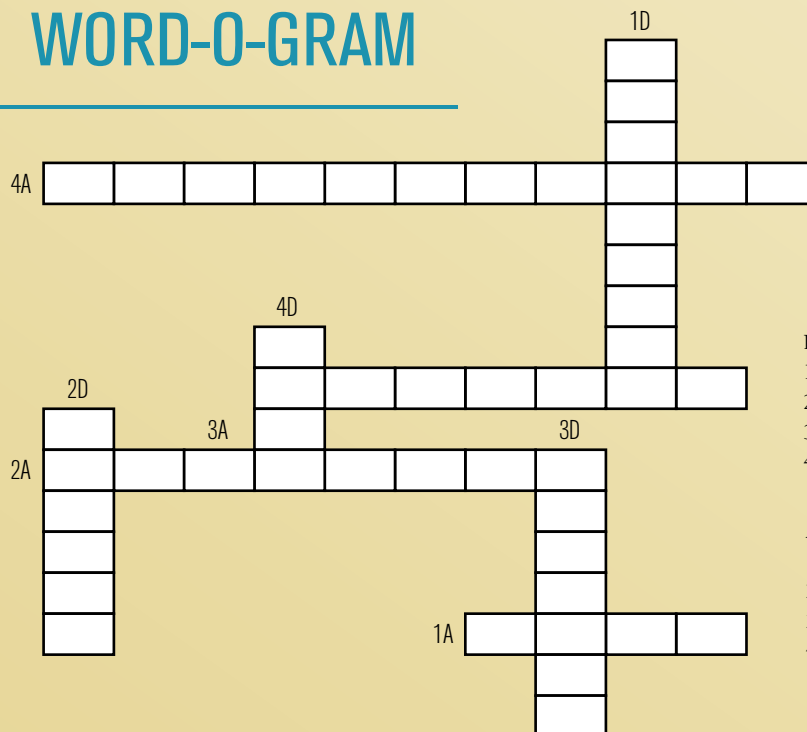
The Charter acknowledges that students must take responsibility for their own experience. They must fulfill their side of the bargain. It therefore delineates four areas of commitment for students. They

- a) are ultimately responsible for their eventual academic success;
- b) must commit the time, effort and energy necessary for academic success;
- c) must comply with all course requirements;
- d) must effectively communicate with faculty and peers.

A support and feedback system to monitor success in achieving the promise and guarantee of the charter was also established. Two important elements of this system are

*continued on page 11*

## WORD-O-GRAM



### DOWN

- 1D – Programme recently reviewed at Mona: \_\_\_\_ Work (6)  
 2D – BUS responsibility 1 (6)  
 3D – UWI is \_\_\_\_ centred (7)  
 4D – Academic Quality Assurance Committee (abbr.) (4)

### ACROSS

- 1A - \_\_\_\_ practices (4)  
 2A – We assess for these (8)  
 3A – BUS responsibility 2 (7)  
 4A – BUS responsibility 3 (11)



# NEWS OF REVIEWS, QUALITY EVALUATIONS & FORA

## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS 2008 - 2009

### CAVE HILL

- Chemistry
- History
- Cave Hill School of Business
- Philosophy

### MONA

- UTech-UWI Joint Hospitality Degree
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology, Anthropology, Demography & HRD
- Theology (St. Michael's and United Theological College)
- Basic Medical Sciences
- Instructional Development Unit
- Institute of Caribbean Studies

### ST AUGUSTINE

- School of Advanced Nursing
- Pharmacology
- Theology
- Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
- Health Services Unit

## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS 2009 - 2010

### CAVE HILL

- Sir Arthur Lewis School of Economics Studies (SALISES)
- Literatures in English
- Student Services
- Biology
- Clinical Medicine
- Sociology

### MONA

- Language
- Computer Science
- Sir Arthur Lewis School of Economics Studies (SALISES)
- Student Services

### ST AUGUSTINE

- Sir Arthur Lewis School of Economics Studies (SALISES)
- Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Public Health and Primary Care
- French
- Pharmacy
- Social Work

## QUALITY EVALUATIONS 2008/2009

### CAVE HILL

- Sociology
- Physics
- Philosophy
- Linguistics
- Spanish
- Management Studies

### MONA

- Institute of Caribbean Studies
- Theology (St. Michael's and United Theological College)
- Language

### ST AUGUSTINE

- Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Clinical Medical Sciences
- School of Dentistry

## QUALITY EVALUATIONS 2009/2010

### CAVE HILL

- Mathematics
- Meteorology
- Computer Science
- Clinical Medicine
- Education
- Economics

### MONA

- Chemistry
- Philosophy
- Economics

### ST AUGUSTINE

- Chemistry
- Physics
- Management Studies and Accounting
- Centre for Gender and Development Studies
- Institute of International Relations

## QUALITY FORA 2008/2009

- Developing a Quality Manual

- Planning and Assessing Programme Outcomes (in conjunction with the IDU)

- Follow-up to Developing the Quality Manual