UNESCO National Commission Country Report Template

Under the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC2022)

Section for Higher Education | Division for Education 2030

Higher Education Report: Curacao

UNESCO National Commission in alliance with higher education institution(s) or other organisations

Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports

Policy Department

of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports

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Abstract

Given the international developments in terms of higher education and with the aim to educate global citizens, it is important to bring Higher Education in Curaçao in line with international developments.

Content

Acronyms

Ministry of ESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Curaçao
Ministry of HEN	Ministry of Health, Environment and Nature of Curaçao
NVAO	*Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie* Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
COKHO	*Curaçaose Orgaan voor Kwaliteitsborging* Curaçao Body for Quality Assurance
HBO	*Hoger beroepsonderwijs* Higher professional education
WO	*Wetenschappelijk onderwijs* Academic education
TNE	Transnational Education
NDP	National Development Plan, Curaçao 2015-2030
UoC	University of Curaçao Dr. Moises Da Costa Gomez
UDC	University Of The Dutch Caribbean
ICUC	Inter-Continental University of the Caribbean
IFE	*Instituto pa Formashon den Enfermeria* Nursing school
ROHOC	*Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs Curaçao* Register of Higher Education Programmes Curaçao
LABO	*Landsbesluit Ambtelijk en Bestuurlijke Organisatie* National Decree on Official and Administrative Organisation

Presentation

In the context of UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC2022) in Spain, Barcelona from 18 to 20 May 2022, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports presents this report on higher education in Curaçao.

The goals and strategic scope of the conference is to deepen and expand our common efforts of knowledge production, policy dialogue, exchange, and networking. UNESCO considers the process of collective construction as the greatest richness of this conference, which aims to become a global conversation nurtured by diverse narratives on higher education.

The goal of (higher) education nowadays is to (re)generate personal, social and planetary well-being. In the new operating system of higher education, it is no longer about fitting into today's society and maximizing the prosperity of the individual and but about the well-being of all of us and the planet.

Curaçao has paid less attention to the policy and legislation for higher education in comparison with primary and secondary education. It is therefore important to establish an up-to-date policy framework for higher education and then based on this develop the general laws and regulations.

Current situation of higher education

Higher education in Curaçao is influenced by both international and regional developments. Globalization requires the formation of global citizens/knowledge workers who are internationally deployable in a multicultural environment that is subject to rapid technological change. The knowledge worker must equip himself with 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, innovative capacity and creativity, and he must be willing to learn lifelong (lifelong learning).

Higher education systems should aim as much as possible to meet global standards. The financing of higher education worldwide is also shifting from public funding to more private funding. As a result, the accountability to private parties and the focus on results of higher education has increased. The opportunities created by digitization place new demands on higher education, its teachers and its students. Furthermore, due to the increasing internationalization of higher education, being internationally competent has become important for everyone. Flexibility in educational curricula, for example by creating the possibility to follow study components abroad, to deviate from the usual language of instruction, to attract foreign (high) teachers or to have student or teacher researchers join foreign projects is of great importance.

In addition, Curaçao has an extra challenge as it belongs to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). On the one hand, the aim is to fill in higher education according to international standards, with special attention to the vulnerability of developing countries and the urgent attention to capacity building. On the other hand, account must be taken of the limited possibilities of manpower and financial resources.

1.1 Historical enrolment and graduation rates

Curaçao offers both higher professional and academic education. The bachelor programs are aimed at delivering highly qualified professionals, while the master programs are aimed at delivering scientists.

General information	Total		
Number of students enrolled in tertiary institution	1276		
Number of academic staff			

Enrolment numbers	Male	Female	Total
Total enrolment number	391	885	1276
Enrolment number in Law	54	194	248
Enrolment number in Social Sciences & Economics	139	260	399
Enrolment number in Engineering	152	44	196
Enrolment number in Education	34	269	303
Enrolment number in Social & Behavioral Sciences	12	118	130

Performance	Male	Female	Total
Drop-out number	113	257	370
Number of graduation	38	123	161
Employment number	N/A	N/A	N/A

Lifelong learning	Male	Female	Total
Number of students of 25+ years old	147	404	551
The rate of students 25+ years old	38%	46%	43%

Mobility	Total		
Inbound mobility			
Virtual mobility			
Physical mobility			

Note)
Number of students: Reference date is December 31, 2021 (excl certificate students)
Drop-out number for 2020-2021 is 29% and is based on drop-outs within the first year.
In previous years our 'first-year-drop-out-number' has been approximately 20%
Number of graduation: Interval from January 1, 2021 till January 1, 2022
Employment number is unknown to us

Figure 1

1.2 Quantity and types of higher education institutions

Curaçao offers both higher professional and academic education. The bachelor programs are aimed at delivering highly qualified professionals, while the master programs are aimed at delivering scientists.

The following educational institutions offer higher education in Curacao:

De University of Curaçao Dr. Moises da Costa Gomez (UoC)

Most programs of the Uoc have gone through the assessment procedures of the NVAO[1] and for most of the programs, the outcome of the assessment is positive.

Teaching takes place in Dutch, with the exception of a number of English programs, i.e. all the programs offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Techno MBA offered by the Faculty of Technical Sciences and the second and first grade teacher program 'English' offered by the General Faculty.

Faculty of Law:

This faculty provides the academic program law.

- Bachelor of Law[2]
- Master of Law[3]

Faculty of Engineering:

This faculty of Engineering offers professional bachelor's programs[4] in the field of civil engineering, engineering, industrial technology & communication technology, and electrical systems

- Bachelor of Architecture
- Bachelor of Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Bachelor of Information & Communication Technology
- Bachelor of Industrial Technology

Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics:

This faculty offers both higher professional[5] and academic education.

- Bachelor in Applied Science of Human Resource Management
- Bachelor in Applied Science of Finance & Control
- Bachelor in Applied Science of Business Management Studies
- Bachelor in Accounting & Control Master in Accountancy

General Faculty:

The General Faculty[6] offers training for a qualification to teach at the second level and the teacher training for primary education.

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[1] The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders is the independent educational accreditation organisation for higher education institutions in the Netherlands and Flanders.
[2] In terms of level, the Bachelor of Law is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree.
[3] In terms of level, the Bachelor of Law is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree.

[4] In terms of level, the Bachelor is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in engineering.
[5] In terms of level, the Bachelor of Applied Science is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.
[6] In terms of level, the Bachelor of Education is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in education, teacher-training for secondary education

- Bachelor of Education in English
- Bachelor of Education in Spanish
- Bachelor of Education in Dutch
- Bachelor of Education in Papiamentu
- Bachelor of Education in Foundation Based Education Professional
- Master of Education in English Professional
- Master of Education in Spanish Professional
- Master of Education in Dutch Professional
- Master of Education in Papiamentu Pedagogical Certificate

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

This faculty offers the Bachelor and Master Social Work

- Bachelor of Social Work
- Bachelor of Applied Psychology

Faculty of Medicine: this faculty is not active.

Stichting Instituto pa Formashon den Enfermeria (IFE)

This institution programs in the field of care and welfare at both secondary and higher professional level. The higher professional programs concern:

- Operating room assistant
- Pharmacy assistant

Intercontinental University of the Caribbean (ICUC)

This university has established partnerships with recognized Dutch and American universities.

The programs are divided into four faculties that offer bachelor's programs, master's programs and a doctoral program.

School of Financial Management & Control:

- Bachelor in Accounting Customs Verifier Training

School of Educational Management

- Bachelor in Mathematics
- Master in Educational Sciences School of Hospitality
- Bachelor in International Hospitality & Tourism Management

School of Management & Leadership

- Bachelor in Business Administration
- Bachelor in Archiving
- Master in Business Administration
- Doctor in Business Administration

University of Dutch Caribbean (UDC)

This university is recognised by the Minister of Education of Curaçao and has been offering courses at both higher professional and academic education for more than 20 years.

The programs leading to a Bachelor's degree are:

- Accountancy Banking and Insurance
- Business Economics (Financial Management)
- Business Administration Commercial Economics (Marketing Management)
- Commercial Technical Business Administration
- Communication Management
- Cultural and Social Education
- Electrical Engineering Fiscal Economics Higher Legal Education
- International Business Languages
- International Business Study
- International Communication
- Management Business Communication
- International Communication management
- Journalism
- International Communication management
- International Marketing Management
- Social Work and Services Management
- Economics and Law Office Management
- Personnel and Labour
- Psychology
- Law
- Small Business & Retail Management
- Social Legal Services
- Social Pedagogical Assistance Leisure Management

The degree programs leading to a Master's degree are: Master of Business Administration Master of Business Administration corporate governance Master of Business Administration sustainable growth

Transnational Education (TNE)

TNE is a global development in the field of higher education, in which Curaçao has not lagged behind. TNE has developed spontaneously in Curaçao without government involvement. For years, Curaçao has been home to foreign institutions (for example the medical schools), which attract large groups of international students to whom they teach. In addition, local educational institutions provide parts of their program in collaboration with Dutch (and other foreign) educational institutions.

However, TNE needs to be further developed in order to contribute to the Curaçao knowledge economy and to the diversification and strengthening of the economy, with brain gain as a side effect. In the innovation policy of the Minister of Economic Development, TNE has been identified as a priority area. Curaçao is positioned as an Educational Knowledge Hub. Increasing the potential of people with innovative qualities can be promoted, among other things, by cooperation structures with foreign education and research institutes. Furthermore, one can also think of concretizing a K-Zone (knowledge zone) with the aim of promoting knowledge and research. By attracting foreign students, lecturers/researchers and knowledge, and by

conducting high-quality research within the sector, Curaçao's competitive position improves and TNE's export opportunities are increased.

The institutes for TNE that currently offer degree programs and hold a charter, are:

Avalon University School of Medicine

- St. Martinus University
- Caribbean Medical University
- John F. Kennedy University School of Medicine
- Global Humanistic University
- SAE Bircham International University
- UNICAL, Universidad Integral del Caribe y América
- Latina Almirante Luis Brion University
- Caribbean International University (CIU)

1.3 Legal and institutional framework of higher education

In the draft of the law on higher education, the international and regional trends within this educational area were taken into account. The Dutch Higher Education and Science Act and also the Curaçao national ordinance on higher education are based on the provisions of the Bologna Declaration (1999) and the Treaty of Lisbon: the Treaty on the recognition of qualifications in higher education in the European region (Trb. 2002, 137) as well as the Regional Agreement on the recognition of studies and diplomas in the field of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Trb. 1976, 61).

This draft national ordinance on higher education also takes into account the American system of higher education. Both the American and European education systems have the bachelor's and master's structure; there are differences, but in this national ordinance the institutions are offered the opportunity to choose the European or the American system. As a result, it can therefore be indicated that this national ordinance connects to both systems of higher education.

1.4. Another relevant subheading

Current challenges in higher education

In view of the international and regional developments in the field of higher education, the complexity of Curaçao's higher education and the factors that influence the management of higher education, the Ministry faces the following policy challenges:

- There is no concrete legislation and regulations aimed at higher education which means that there is no legal framework to which educational institutions must comply;
- There is a lack of data collection of the entire higher education, as a result of which essential data about programs and institutions are not known to the government;
- Despite the fact that the communication with the PHO is designed on a structural basis, the control of the content can take place more efficiently;
- There is no government-regulated quality assurance system for higher education, which means that there is no recognition procedure in place and there is no possibility to legally convert positive education assessments into accreditation;
- There is a lack of insight and control on information transfer to students with regard to the quality of higher education;
- There is a lack of insight and guidance on the extent to which institutions strive for internationalization, so it is not clear whether Curaçao can become the educational knowledge hub it wants to be;
- There is no tool for keeping up with labour market demand for highly trained professionals;
- There is a lack of guidance on the role of science and research in higher education.
- There is limited financial resources for higher education.

Towards 2030 and beyond: recommendations for the future

In the NDP[7], education is one of the main factors for the development of a country. This is evident from, among other things, the following quote:

"Education is an investment in a nation's future, its identity, the community, the economy and in individuals themselves. Just as food is necessary for a healthy body, education is a fuel for a happy and successful life. Receiving a quality Education is never solely tied to economic outcomes, but rather it is one of the important means of developing well-rounded and principled citizens".

In order to achieve our strategic goals, strategic choices must be made. The strategies are formulated in the NDP of Curaçao. These strategies serve as a tool for translating the vision for Curaçao into practical goals and activities. The plan is based on five integrated themes, namely

1. Education
2. Economy
3. Sustainability
4. National identity

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[7] National Development Plan NDP 2015 – 2030
The NDP gives a basis for what must be done, why, and the action plan outlines who will be responsible. Extensive consultations and an in-depth stakeholder retreat confirmed these findings. The intention is that the NDP proves to be an enduring statement of agreed national directions, which will continue to be executed over the coming decade.

5. Good governance

These five themes have been developed from four Sustainable Development Goals (the so-called SDGs) or sustainable development goals, as set by the United Nations for the period 2015-2030.

Recommendation 1

First of all, the Ministry of ESCS strives to complete the National Ordinance on Higher Education and to offer it for ratification and publication. After this, work can be done on implementing laws belonging to this national ordinance. The draft National Ordinance on Educational Supervision (LOT), which regulates the supervision of education by the IDE, must also be ratified and published as soon as possible. These frameworks are necessary to regulate higher education by law.

Recommendation 2

Furthermore, the Ministry of ESCS aims for a system with which relevant data concerning higher education in Curaçao can be collected in a structural way. This primarily concerns data about the training offer. A registration obligation will be introduced for institutions that obliges them to register all their (new) programmes with the Ministry of ESCS. With this registration obligation, concrete construction can be done on the Register of Higher Education Programmes Curaçao (ROHOC). The ROHOC also shows which programmes have received recognition per ministerial decision or from which programmes this recognition has been withdrawn.

Recommendation 3

In the context of quality assurance, the Ministry of ESCS is developing a recognition procedure for higher education. This recognition procedure is developed by analogy with the recognition procedure for courses on the level of secondary professional education. In addition, due to the fact that foreign accreditation organizations are legally only allowed to assess and not recognize, a COKHO will be established. The COKHO is a public authority with an administrative task. The COKHO analyses assessments of foreign accreditation organisations that have assessed programmes in Curaçao and converts a positive assessment into accreditation if the COKHO agrees with the assessment given. For example, courses in Curaçao can be legally accredited. The COKHO does not carry out any visitations itself.

Furthermore, in the context of the quality of higher education, it is important that the institutions develop activities in the field of, for example, personnel. In terms of the competence of the staff working at an institution of higher education, the guideline that is used is that the teacher must be a level higher educated than the training where he provides education. So for college education, a teacher must have a diploma at doctoral level or a degree equivalent to it. Preferably, these teachers also have a teaching qualification. For the teachers who teach at a wo-bachelor it is expected that about 80% of the lecturers have a PhD or are working on a PhD trajectory.

In a university master's programme, the number of professors is looked at. Here too, 80% as a guideline counts as a PhD, assuming that professors in particular are used in teaching and supervising thesis. Institutions can set up their own teaching and assessment competence programme that is included in accreditation. As far as part-time teachers are concerned, the institution has the freedom to attract them according to its own quality insights, provided that the set competence requirement is pursued as much as possible. The drafting and

implementation of a personnel policy by the institution and the stimulation of professionalization of teachers (expertise promotion) is therefore one of the policy actions for the period 2020-2024.

Another important activity in the context of the quality that the educational institutions must carry out is the establishment, for each programme, of an Examination Board consisting of independent experts. The Board of Examiners examines whether a student meets the conditions set by the education and examination regulations with regard to knowledge, insight and skills that are necessary for obtaining a degree.

Finally, it is important for the quality of higher education that in areas where there is an interface with another ministry, good inter-ministerial cooperation is established. This applies, for example, to health care training: the quality of health care stands and falls with, among other things, the training of medical personnel in health care. The Ministry of ESCS and the Ministry of Health, Environment and Nature (HEN) have an important role to play in ensuring the quality control and quality assurance of institutions that provide training in the field of health care.

As far as Transnational Education is concerned, this inter-ministerial cooperation applies to the contact between the Ministry of ESCS and the Ministry of Economic Development. In cooperation with other ministries, it is important to give a good interpretation to the LABO. For this, it is important to ensure a good set-up and clear division of tasks within the framework of inter-ministerial cooperation.

Both internal communication and external communication with higher education stakeholders are of great importance for the efficient and effective completion of the policy cycle. In 2016, the Higher Education Platform (HEP) was officially in 2016 established by ministerial decree. This makes the HEP a permanent body charged with advising on Higher Education. Most higher education institutions are represented in this platform. The purpose of this platform is to promote communication, both internally and externally, with higher education.

Quality assurance guarantees that programmes provide their students with adequate knowledge, insight, skills and attitudes at the desired level, so that these students find a good and solid connection with, in the first place, the local, but also the international labour market. The quality is reliable if the pre-established standards are met. Instruments that the government can use to guarantee quality are recognition and accreditation, and, in the case of TNE, to a certain extent the charter.

In the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of higher education policy, stakeholders, being the government, interest groups, educational institutions, teachers, students, inspectorate of Education (IDE), PHO, integration science and research, centres of expertise, and inter-ministerial collaborations in the LABO are involved.

References

https://www.uoc.cw