

Postgraduate Needs Assessment for the Greater Caribbean

Executive Summary *April 2004*

Professor Jean Stubbs, Director, & Dr. Jonathan Curry-Machado, Research Consultant
Caribbean Studies Centre, London Metropolitan University

During the six-month period of October 2003 through March 2004, London Metropolitan University¹, through its Caribbean Studies Centre (CSC)² undertook a postgraduate needs assessment of what has come to be known as the Greater Caribbean – spanning the Anglophone, Francophone, Hispanic and Dutch linguistic subregions of the insular and mainland circum-Caribbean³ (Figure 1). The assessment was motivated by a desire to explore possible Euro-Caribbean collaborative models to meet those needs.



Figure 1 – The Greater Caribbean (Note: The borders between several mainland territories are under dispute. The map does not express the judgement of the authors of this report.)

Methodology

A websearch was conducted into current postgraduate provision in 140 Greater Caribbean Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)⁴, and questionnaires were sent to 105 of those HEIs, aimed at identifying postgraduate needs and possible consortium arrangements to meet those needs. Responses to date number 32; and several others have indicated a response will be forthcoming. For the purposes of this report, the 32 questionnaire

¹ London Metropolitan University was formally constituted in August 2002 with the merger of the former University of North London and London Guildhall University.

² The Caribbean Studies Centre was formally launched at London Metropolitan University in October 2002, but its groundings are the University of North London Caribbean Studies programme, which began in 1988, drawing largely on and primarily serving the Caribbean community in Britain, and London in particular.

³ Comprising the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) member states of the Greater and Lesser Antilles, Belize and Central America, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and the Guyanas, including the ACS Associate Member French Overseas Departments, Netherlands Antilles, and British Overseas Territories, as well as the non-ACS member territories of the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

⁴ Not all HEIs of the circum-Caribbean territories were included, only those in coastal areas with a known Caribbean projection, thus several HEIs in Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela, and Central America were excluded.

responses have been viewed as a natural filter indicating HEI interest. On the basis of information received in the Caribbean questionnaires, a selective websearch was conducted of 100 European HEIs, and questionnaires were sent to 24⁵. To date only 3 have responded, in addition to our own, suggesting the need for a more directed approach. Soundings have also been taken with key persons and organisations regarding existing assessments and collaboration as well as potential consortium arrangements and funding.

Context

The study proved timely, as the need for, and drive to, cooperation is mounting. In the Anglophone Caribbean, the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network (CKLN, launched 2003), has the support of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM), World Bank, European Union and British Council. The Caribbean Universities Network (CUN, launched 2003) is more limited in scope but more ambitious in bringing together HEIs spanning the four linguistic subregions. CUN links with two distance learning networks: namely, the Caribbean University Programme for International Distance Education (CUPIDE, launched March 2004) and the Caribbean Association for Distance and Open Learning (CARADOL, launched April 2004). Networks in the French and Hispanic Caribbean are the Conférence des Recteurs et Présidents d'Universités de la Caraïbe (Conference of [Francophone] Caribbean Rectors and Presidents, CORPUCA) and Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano (Central American Higher University Council, CSUCA). Hispanic HEIs also belong to Latin and Ibero-American networks such as the Asociación Iberoamericana de Educación Superior a Distancia (AIESAD, Ibero-American Association for Distance Higher Education). Other examples of Pan Caribbean cooperation include the Association of Caribbean Universities and Research Institutes (UNICA), Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL), Association of Caribbean Higher Education Administrators (ACHEA), Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI), and organisations of scholars and non-governmental organisations such as the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) and Regional Coordination for Economic and Social Research (CRIES). UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN Networks are well-established mechanisms for developing HE collaborative links, and there are currently 16 UNESCO Chairs in the Caribbean, but no UNITWIN Networks.

Postgraduate Provision

Based purely on the websearch, and reflecting the much larger land and population size of the Hispanic territories, 83% of HEIs in the study are Hispanic, in comparison with 3% Dutch, 5% Francophone and 9% Anglophone (Figure 2).

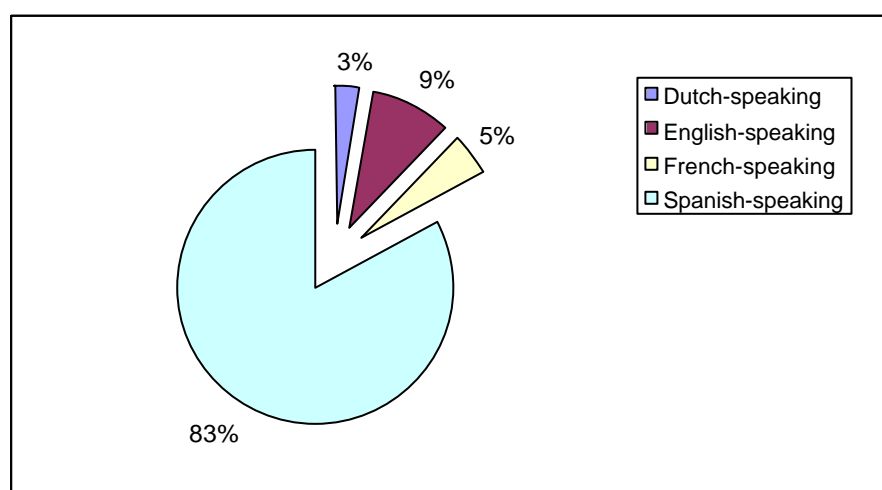


Figure 2: Numbers of Caribbean HEIs by subregional language group

⁵ Only HEIs in former colonial metropolitan countries – France, the Netherlands and Spain - were included at this stage, and questionnaires were sent only to those with known Caribbean links.

Half are in 4 countries: Cuba (20%), Dominican Republic (12%), Costa Rica (10%) and Venezuela (8%) (Figure 3).

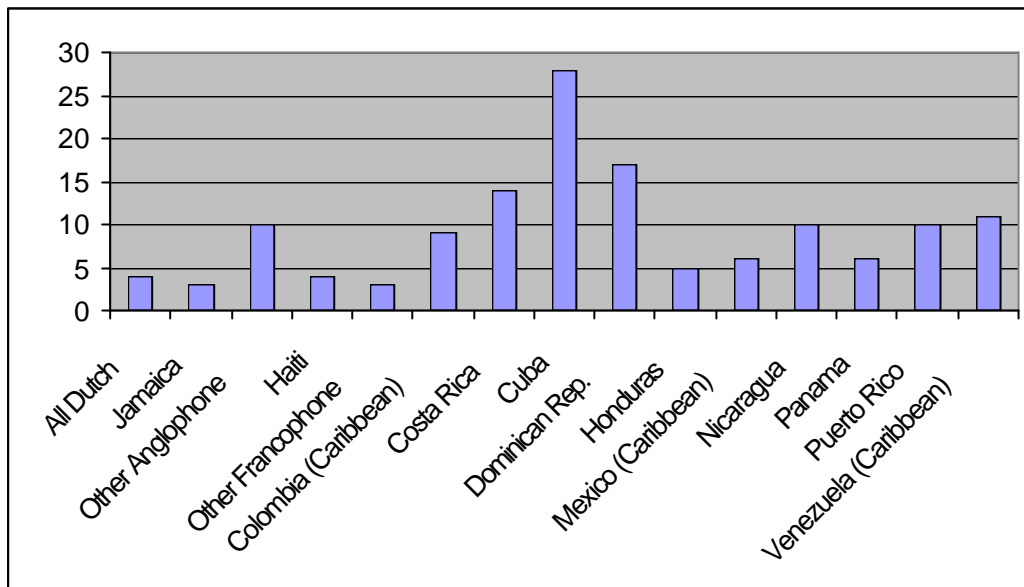


Figure 3: Caribbean HEIs by country

This was mirrored for the 1451 postgraduate level courses found: 5 (0.3%) Dutch, 40 (2.8%) Francophone, 196 (13.5%) Anglophone, as against 1210 (83.3%) Hispanic (Figure 4).

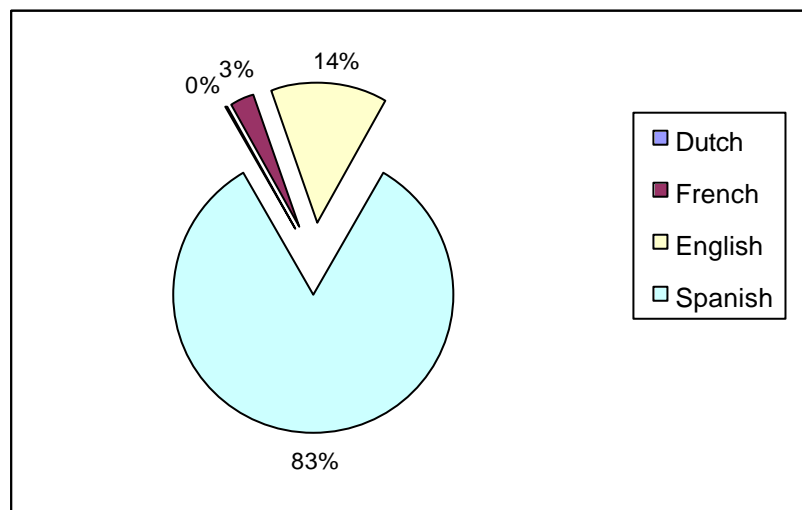


Figure 4: Subregional language distribution of postgraduate courses

More than half are concentrated in 10 HEIs: in order of strength, University of the West Indies (UWI, all campuses combined: Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago)), Universidad Central de Venezuela, University of Puerto Rico (UPR, all campuses combined), Universidad de la Habana and Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echevaría (ISPJAE, Cuba), Universidad Veracruzana (Mexico), Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico (InterPR), Universidad de Cartagena (Colombia), Universidad de Matanzas (Cuba), and Universidad de Oriente (Venezuela). The last 3 HEIs are almost matched in terms of postgraduate provision by the following 4 HEIs: Universidad del Norte (Colombia), Universidad de Oriente (Cuba), Universidad de Yucatan (Mexico), and Université des Antilles et de la Guyane (UAG, all campuses combined: Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guyane) (Figure 5).

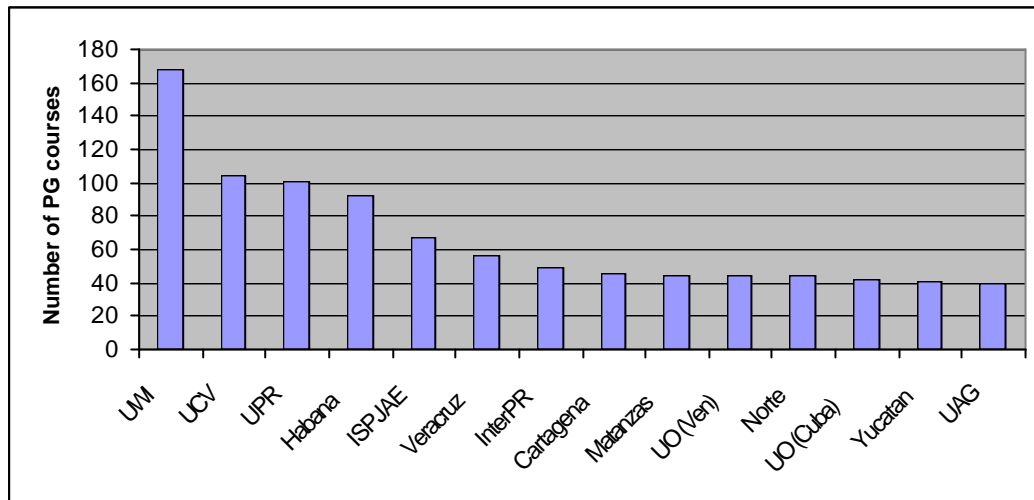


Figure 5: Principal Caribbean Postgraduate HEIs

Broken down by subject area, Science and Technology is the most provided for (35% of all courses), followed by Business and Law (20%), Medical and Health related (18%), Humanities and Social Sciences (16%), and Education (11%), with clear concentrations of strength in individual HEIs (Figure 6).

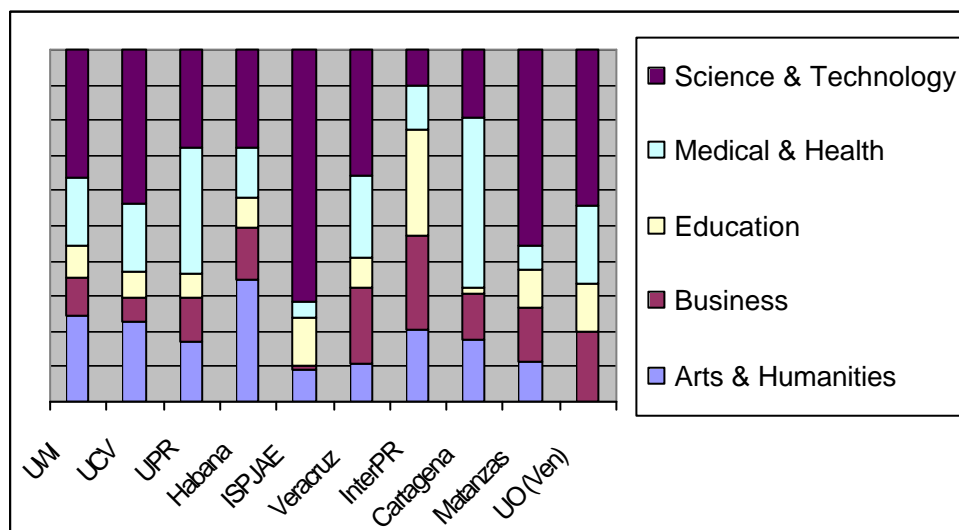


Figure 6: Subject distribution of PG courses in principal HEIs

Postgraduate Needs

Based on the 32 positive responses and data from websites of an additional 19 HEIs from whom responses are anticipated, existing postgraduate strengths and weaknesses point to two forms of need:

Need through strength: where an HEI has a marked specialisation in a particular field, and a need for collaborative relationships with similarly specialised HEIs. The most important, in terms of the numbers of HEIs potentially interested in supportive relationships, are Education and Administration & Management (Figure 7).

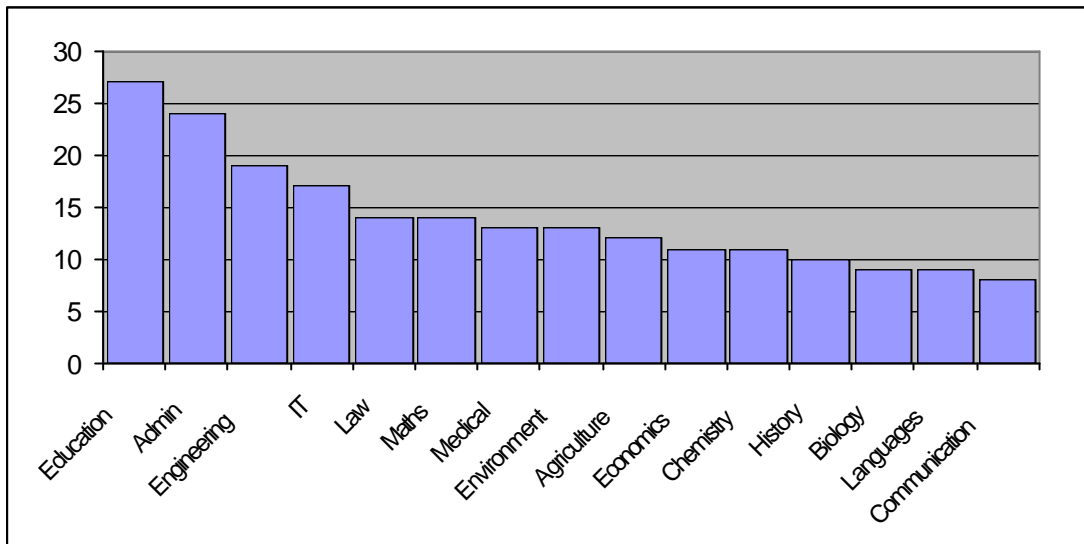


Figure 7: Principal subjects showing need through strength (by number of Caribbean HEIs)

Need through weakness: where an HEI has an apparent weakness in a particular field and a need for links with HEIs strong in the field, judged by the number of HEIs that teach a subject without postgraduate provision, and (where a response has been received) indicated this subject would benefit from supportive links with other HEIs. The most important, in terms of the numbers of HEIs, is again Administration & Management (Figure 8).

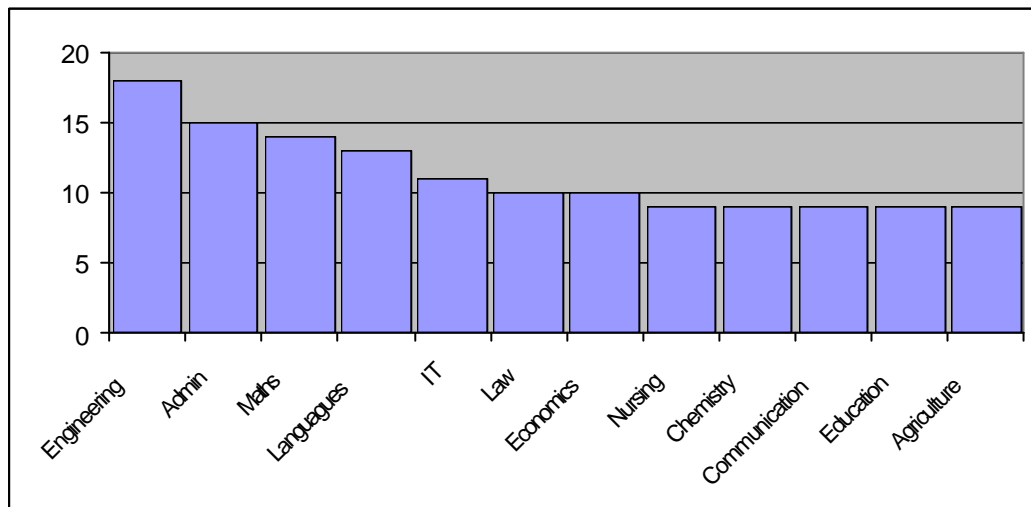


Figure 8: Principal subjects showing need through weakness (by number of Caribbean HEIs)

In the region, Education and Administration & Management are the two areas for which there appears to be the most widespread expertise that could be shared on a postgraduate level. Of the other subjects for which a high level of need was expressed, a pool of expertise appears to be available in the Caribbean for Agriculture, Information Technology, Mathematics, Economics, Medical Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Law, Chemistry, Languages, and Engineering. In a number of subjects, for which a notable level of need was expressed, there is much scarcer potential for provision: notably Communications, History, Biology, Nursing (Figure 9).

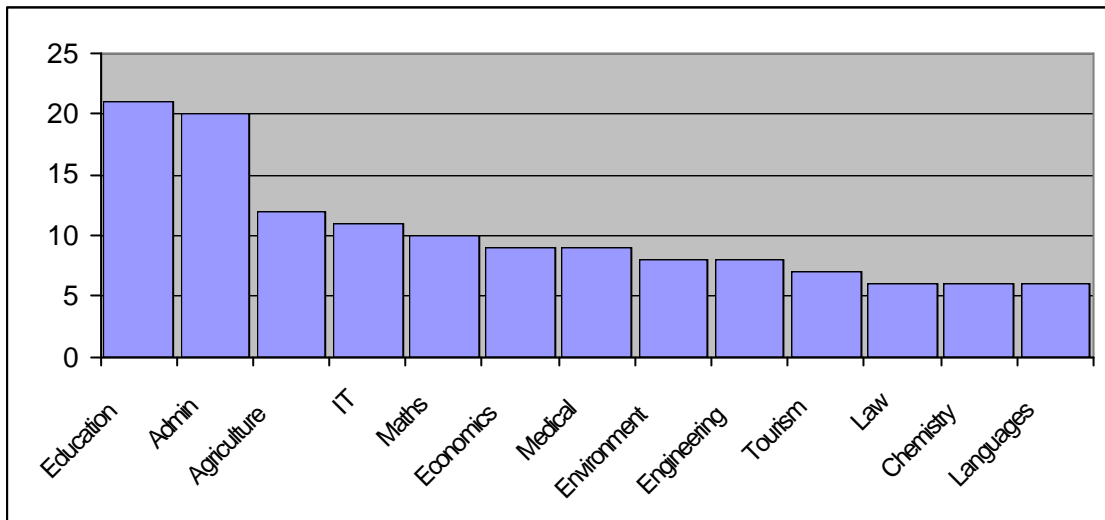


Figure 9: Principal subjects showing sharable strength (by number of Caribbean HEIs)

Research needs

The areas emerging for collaborative research relationships are: Business management; Agriculture; Sustainable Agriculture; Plant Biotechnology; Botany; Forestry; Caribbean Studies; Development Studies; Productivity and Competitiveness; High Power Electrical Systems; Energy; Environment; Human Development; Epidemiology; Regional Languages; Tourism; Natural Products; Economics; Education; Seismology; Marine Sciences.

Educational support needs

Areas of general concern for academic staff development are foreign language, teaching skills, distance learning, and information technology.

Foreign Language English language need was expressed by 26, French language by 22, Spanish and Dutch each 7; 23 offered Spanish, just 4 English and only 1 each French and Dutch; 22 claimed to provide language teacher training and to need additional support (Figure 10).

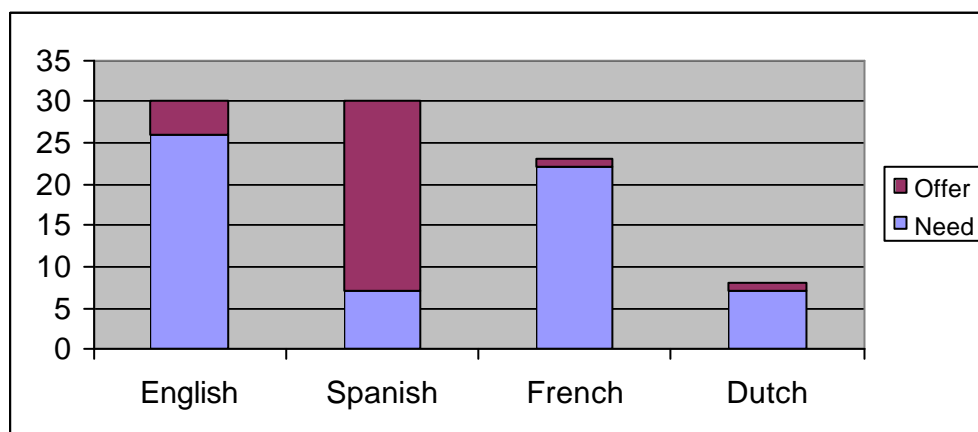


Figure 10: Offer and need expressed for support in principal Caribbean languages

Teaching skills Postgraduate need was indicated by 28, undergraduate by 23, and research degree supervision support by 25; 28 have the capacity to help others with undergraduate teaching skills training, 25 at postgraduate level, and 17 with research supervision skills (Figure 11).

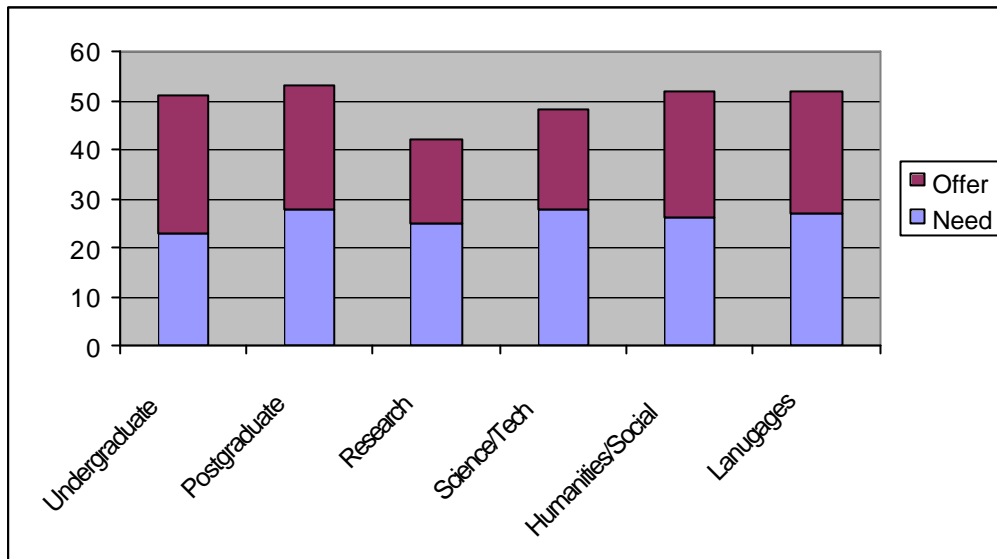


Figure 11: Offer and need expressed for support in key teaching skills

Distance Learning Most HEIs do not have capacity but are interested in developing it, and a number of the most important Caribbean HEIs already have. Postgraduate courses available by Distance Learning span a number of key areas, and indications are that others could be developed.

Information Technology In terms of IT preparedness, 8 have the capacity to provide technical or training support for others, and 4 to meet their own requirements; 14 need additional technical support; 15 needed staff training and 20 technical assistance in developing infrastructure; 8 are currently developing such capacity; 8 would like to receive assistance in this from others; 19 have experience of preparing on-line curricula and materials, and 15 have developed educational software, most commonly in Administration & Management and Information Technology.

Key collaborative areas

CUN having identified a number of key collaborative areas for the region, the most promising of these for broader collaboration are: Language Learning; Teaching, Research & Learning Effectiveness; and Information Technology, followed by Cultural Heritage; Natural Resource Management; Caribbean Studies; Health, Welfare, Poverty Reduction, Social Security; Economic, Financial and Legal Services, Tourism, Agricultural Diversification & Sustainable Agricultural Development, Public Service Management, and HIV/AIDS (Figure 12).

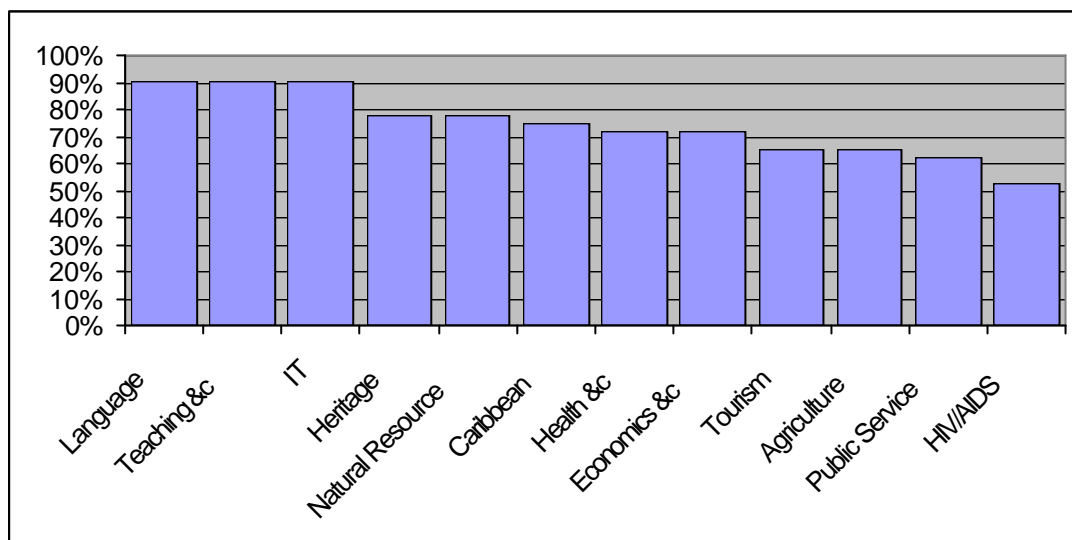


Figure 12: Engagement with key collaborative themes (percentage of total responding HEIs)

HEI collaboration

Respondent HEIs differ greatly in level of postgraduate provision and need, suggesting the following would need to be considered in a consortium arrangement:

- Size of HEI as a teaching institution;
- Likely contribution to a consortium;
- Likely level of demand upon such a consortium;
- Impact involvement likely to have upon the HEI;
- Importance of research for the HEI's involvement.

Respondents HEIs can be broken down into the following three groups:

- Large HEIs, by number of subject areas covered: UASD (42), ISPJAE (40), Las Villas (36), UWI Mona (34), La Habana (32), Simón Bolívar (32), Guyana (30), Veracruzana (30), Cartagena (27), Oriente (Ven) (26).
- Medium HEIs: Sancti Spíritus (24), Norte (23), Matanzas (22), URACCAN (20), Ciego de Avila (17), INTEC (17), Suriname (16), Agraria Habana (13), ULC (12), UNITEC (12), Notre Dame (11), Cienfuegos (11).
- Small HEIs: UNACAR (9), Belize (8), St George's (8), Observatorio (8), Nordesteana (7), Yacambú (6), Sagrado Corazón (6), Netherlands Antilles (6), ISA (3), CRSC (2).

Respondent HEIs can also be divided according to how many subjects could be made available to others in a consortium; and in how many HEIs could benefit from the provision of other HEIs, that is in how many subjects they would be extracting services from the consortium:

- High contribution, High extraction: ISPJAE, La Habana, Matanzas, UWI Mona, Veracruzana, Simón Bolívar, Oriente (Ven).
- High contribution, Medium extraction: Las Villas.
- High contribution, Low extraction: ULC.
- Medium contribution, High extraction: Guyana.

- Medium contribution, Medium extraction: Norte, Cartagena, Observatorio, INTEC, UASD, Notre Dame, Yacambú, Cienfuegos.
- Medium contribution, Low extraction: None.
- Low contribution, High extraction: Suriname, Sancti Spiritus.
- Low contribution, Medium extraction: URACCAN, Netherlands Antilles, St George's, Agraria Habana.
- Low contribution, Low extraction: Ciego de Avila, Sagrado Corazón, ISA, UNITEC, Belize, Nordestana, UNACAR, CRSC.

Respondent HEIs can also be categorised according to the proportion of all subjects taught that might benefit from collaborative arrangements, whether because of 'strength' or 'weakness':

- Half or more of subjects expressing need through strength: Veracruzana, UWI Mona, La Habana, Matanzas, Simón Bolívar, Yacambú, Netherlands Antilles, Sagrado Corazón, Observatorio, ISA, Cienfuegos
- Between a quarter and half of subjects expressing need through strength: Norte, ISPJAE, Oriente (Ven), URACCAN, Notre Dame, INTEC, Cartagena, St George's
- Between a tenth and a quarter of subjects expressing need through strength: Las Villas, Guyana, Sancti Spiritus, UNITEC, UNACAR, Belize, Agraria Habana
- Fewer than a tenth of subjects expressing need through strength: UASD, Ciego de Avila, Suriname, Nordestana, CRSC, ULC
- Half or more of subjects expressing need through weakness: Guyana, Sancti Spiritus, Suriname, St George's, Netherlands Antilles
- Between a quarter and half of subjects expressing need through weakness: Veracruzana, URACCAN, Notre Dame, Sagrado Corazón, Belize, Agraria Habana, Cienfuegos
- Between a tenth and a quarter of subjects expressing need through weakness: Norte, UASD, UWI Mona, ISPJAE, Matanzas, Simón Bolívar, Oriente (Ven), Ciego de Avila
- Fewer than a tenth of subjects expressing need through weakness: Las Villas, La Habana, UNITEC, INTEC, Cartagena, Nordestana, Yacambú, UNACAR, CRSC, Observatorio, ISA, ULC

In terms of numbers of subjects in which potentially collaborative research is being undertaken, the following division can be seen:

- High number of research subjects: Veracruzana (22), Norte (21), Las Villas (21), UASD (18), UWI Mona (15), La Habana (15), ISPJAE (15), Matanzas (14), Simón Bolívar (12).
- Moderate number of research subjects: Oriente (Ven) (10), Guyana (8), URACCAN (7), Sancti Spiritus (7), Agraria Habana (7), UNITEC (6), Ciego de Avila (6), Notre Dame (5), INTEC (5), Cartagena (5), Suriname (5), Nordestana (5).
- Low number of research subjects: Yacambú (4), St George's (4), UNACAR (4), CRSC (4), Netherlands Antilles (3), Sagrado Corazón (3), Observatorio (3), ISA (3), ULC (3), Belize (2), Cienfuegos (0).

In terms of the likely impact collaborative research would have upon each HEI, the following breakdown can be found:

- Half or more of subjects expressing potential contribution to or benefit from research collaboration: CRSC, ISA, Norte, Veracruzana, Nordestana, Yacambú, Matanzas, Las Villas, Agraria Habana, UNITEC, St George's, Netherlands Antilles, Sagrado Corazón.

- Between a third and half of subjects expressing potential contribution to or benefit from research collaboration: La Habana, Notre Dame, UNACAR, UWI Mona, UASD, Oriente (Ven), ISPJAE, Simón Bolívar, Observatorio, Ciego de Avila, URACCAN.
- Fewer than a third of subjects expressing potential contribution to or benefit from research collaboration: Suriname, INTEC, Sancti Spiritus, Guyana, ULC, Belize, Cartagena, Cienfuegos.

Possible collaborative model In envisaging collaborative model, it might be useful to break down HEIs in several ways: size of HEI as a teaching institution, likely contribution to a consortium, likely level of demand upon such a consortium, impact involvement likely to have upon the HEI, and importance of research for the HEI's involvement. Collaborative arrangements might range from bilateral through multilateral to a wide network of HEIs through which postgraduate provision can be developed according to the needs and capacities of those involved, this last being the most logical outcome of the current study. The form this takes can only be defined through negotiation between potential partners, but a number of concerns need to be considered:

- 1) There are several related regional initiatives, and it will be important not to cover ground already covered, nor to go against the flow of these other developments.
- 2) Some HEIs are considerably stronger than others, and others are in greater need of assistance and with less capacity to share.
- 3) Predefining the details of collaborative links may be less important than developing a fluid mechanism enabling HEIs to provide and benefit from collaboration as needs arise.

Responses are invited from parties interested in participating in any future such endeavour.

Annex	Respondent HEIs
Caribbean HEIs	
<i>Dutch-speaking</i>	
<i>Aruba:</i>	Caribbean Reality Studies Center (CRSC)
<i>Netherlands Antilles:</i>	University of the Netherlands Antilles
<i>Suriname:</i>	University of Suriname
<i>English-speaking</i>	
<i>Belize:</i>	University of Belize
<i>Grenada:</i>	St George's University
<i>Guyana:</i>	University of Guyana
<i>Jamaica:</i>	University of the West Indies (UWI, Mona campus)
<i>French-speaking</i>	
<i>Haiti:</i>	Université Notre Dame d'Haiti
<i>Spanish-speaking</i>	
<i>Colombia:</i>	Observatorio del Caribe Colombiano Universidad de Cartagena Universidad del Norte
<i>Cuba:</i>	Instituto Tecnológico Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría (ISPJAE) Universidad Agraria de la Habana 'Fructuoso Rodríguez' Universidad Central de las Villas Universidad de Ciego de Avila Universidad de Cienfuegos Universidad de la Habana Universidad de Matanzas Universidad de Sancti Spiritus
<i>Dominican Republic:</i>	Instituto Superior de Agricultura (ISA) Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC) Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD) Universidad Nordestana
<i>Honduras:</i>	Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana (UNITEC)
<i>Mexico:</i>	Universidad Autónoma del Carmen (UNACAR) Universidad Veracruzana
<i>Nicaragua:</i>	Universidad de las Regiones Autónomas de la Costa Caribe Nicaragüense (URACCAN)
<i>Puerto Rico:</i>	Universidad del Sagrado Corazón
<i>Venezuela:</i>	Universidad Latinoamericana y del Caribe (ULC) Universidad de Oriente Universidad Simón Bolívar Universidad Yacambú
European HEIs	
<i>France</i>	Université de Toulouse Le Mirail
<i>Netherlands</i>	KITLV, Leiden University of Utrecht
<i>UK</i>	London Metropolitan University