

Written evidence submitted by H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (OTE0014)

1. As the President of H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, the only local provider of tertiary education in the British Virgin Islands, I am acutely aware of the challenges facing BVI students who choose to matriculate to the United Kingdom for university study. The college was established in 1990 as the BVI Community College prior to being renamed in honour of its founding Chairman. In 1994, it conferred its first associate degrees and in 2015 it received institutional accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. That accreditation was reaffirmed in 2021. Associate degrees are two-year programmes that can transfer into the third year of a four-year baccalaureate.
2. As the College utilises the credit-based model familiar to American and Canadian institutions, historically the majority of students transferred to American institutions upon graduation from HLSCC. Following the opening up of access to British citizenship for the Overseas Territories, a growing percentage of graduates now choose to attend university in the United Kingdom. While much more affordable than North American options, this dynamic does offer up different challenges.
3. Currently, students in the humanities and social sciences have no issue matriculating and beginning their studies in year 1. However, students in the sciences and engineering are consistently placed in foundation years. This extends their study from 3 to 4 years, and when American schools are offering a route via transfer to completion in 2 years, several students are choosing to go there instead. Students desirous of studying medicine also find it difficult to gain entry. It is in the interest of the Virgin Islands, especially of the scholarship committee at the Ministry of Education, that students find it easier to matriculate to UK universities.
4. In my estimation, UK universities are generally unfamiliar with the credit-based system but granted that both Bermuda College and H. Lavity Stoutt Community College hold U.S. accreditations more provisions should be made for their graduates to be accommodated. This would ultimately be more affordable for scholarship programmes while encouraging more students from the Overseas Territories attend university in the UK. Perhaps this may be done through dialogue between the OT Colleges and the Department for Education facilitated via the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office.
5. Lastly, while individual efforts have been made to develop relationships with individual universities on a variety of matters, a platform to encourage a closer working relationship between select schools and the OT colleges will undoubtedly be helpful in ensuring that students from the Overseas Territories are best equipped to enjoy the benefits of studying in the UK.

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