Brunei Darussalam

Overview of Higher Education System
Higher education in Brunei Darussalam is in the process of rapid development. A decade ago, there was only one single local provider of university education: Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). Today, Brunei has a total of four full-fledged public universities, that is, UBD, Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB), Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) and Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPUSB), and thirteen private institutions/colleges.

Quality Assurance
All Government and private institutions are under the purview of the Ministry of Education through the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC). The BDNAC recognises the importance of ensuring the quality of education provided by higher education institutes (HEIs) and has developed a holistic quality assurance system to raise academic standards and criteria based on regional and international best practices.

All higher education providers must comply with the quality assurance requirements that have been set forth by the BDNAC. This includes developing their own coherent internal quality assurance management system in terms of organisational structure, responsibilities, procedures and provision of facilities/resources for implementing and providing quality education for the students. The system ensures that the education provider has the capability to establish and maintain an environment fit for delivering education and training that meets or exceeds the specified standards.

Public universities are self-accrediting, whereas private HEIs must be registered with and accredited by the Private Education Division of the Ministry of Education. However, in terms of the programmes or courses that they offer, they are looked into and accredited by the BDNAC.

Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
Recognition and assessment of foreign qualifications is undertaken on a case-by-case basis. The BDNAC bases its evaluation on the validity and status of two fundamental aspects of a qualification: the issuing institution, and the programme/course undertaken.

With regards to institutions, the BDNAC examines the status of the institution, particularly its legal status, financial background, local and international recognition, etc. Importantly, the BDNAC recognises that although an institution of higher learning or university may be acceptable, it should be noted that it might not necessarily be so that all programmes/courses that it offers are all accredited or recognised.

In terms of programmes/courses, six crucial aspects or criteria are taken into consideration when determining its status, these are: entry requirements, duration of the programme, course content, mode of delivery, mode of assessment, and language of instructions.

Quick Facts and Links
Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC)
The authority responsible for assessing and evaluating foreign qualifications in Brunei Darussalam, sits under the Ministry of Education.

Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) opened in 1985
Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB) opened in January 1986
Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) opened in 2007 as an Islamic university
Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPUSB) opened January 2007 as Brunei Religious Teachers University College
Politeknik Brunei opened in 2012
Issues and Challenges Concerning Foreign Qualifications Recognition
In regards to the recognition of foreign qualifications, a number of challenges exist: Firstly, gaining recognition of the qualification from the authority and country in which the qualification was issued and examining its authenticity can be difficult. Secondly, exemptions given by HEIs which lead to fast track qualification can be hard to assess. And lastly, in those cases where the applicant fails to provide sufficient relevant information about the qualification, the immediate processes and procedures of the accreditation and recognition are affected.

Progress toward ratification of the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention
The Asia-Pacific Regional Convention must be scrutinised by relevant agencies and regulatory authorities.

Commitment to Information Sharing Mechanisms
The BDNAC’s Secretariat is committed to joining the UNESCO Portal to Recognised Higher Education Institutions and will commence the necessary processes is the near future. Brunei is also planning on designating the existing BDNAC as the official National Information Centre of Brunei.

Focal Point Contact

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Criteria and Procedures for Assessment and Evaluation
The BDNAC assess and evaluates qualifications on a case-by-case basis subject to the demands and needs of agencies in the government sector, as well as some private firms and individuals.

All certificates and credential must to be scrutinised and endorsed by the BDNAC prior to employment, especially in the government or public sector.

The BDNAC follows six crucial aspects or criteria benchmarked against international best practices when assessing qualifications such as entry requirements, duration of programme, course content, mode of delivery, mode of assessment and language of instruction.