

INTRODUCTION

This revised directory has been prepared by the International Extension College at the request of the Commonwealth Secretariat. It contains basic information about the use of correspondence education by university, government and other non-profit making organizations within the Commonwealth. Thus it is a factual rather than a critical document, and does not discuss the major questions of how best to use correspondence education, or whether it is an appropriate tool for use today. Its aim is more modest: to serve as a starting point for co-operation between Commonwealth institutions and to provide an up-to-date reference document.

Each entry gives comparable information about the institution concerned, together with a brief factual account of its work. Entries have been compiled from information provided by the institutions themselves. The information should be of particular use to three sets of people: first, those working in recently established correspondence institutions who may wish to contact others with relevant experience, or who may wish to investigate the possibility of purchasing course materials from other institutions; second, those working in education generally who require accurate information on correspondence facilities available in their countries to advise prospective students; third, those who are themselves seeking a course of study and who can thus obtain information on courses open to them in their own or, in some cases, in other countries. An address is included with each entry so that readers may contact institutions for further information.

It is not easy to assess the costs of correspondence education. What evidence there is suggests that it can be substantially cheaper than conventional education. It tends to be cheaper partly because correspondence needs fewer buildings, and less capital investment. It can make use of educational facilities at times when they would otherwise be lying idle and, more important it enables a teacher to reach more students.

One of the concerns of those trying to promote Correspondence Education is to prevent inefficient and possibly unscrupulous colleges tarnishing the good record of the medium. For this reason the existence of the International Council for Correspondence Education and a number of regional associations is to be welcomed. Appendix 1 lists these regional associations. But the Commonwealth Secretariat believes that more supervision needs to be exercised to ensure that high standards are established and maintained. In some countries the Ministry of Education takes responsibility for this control but in many the position is less clear. Therefore, Commonwealth countries may be interested in the Council for the Accreditation of Correspondence Colleges (UK) whose terms of reference are given in Appendix 2, and in Nigeria's creation of a similar council. A list of the colleges accredited by the United Kingdom Council is supplied in Appendix 3 and the publication of similar lists by Ministries of Education or Councils for Accreditation in each Commonwealth country is to be encouraged.

With the growth of correspondence education, the training of personnel has become an important issue. Some institutions have produced their own training materials, which could be of use to others. Such cases have been noted in individual entries.