

Commonwealth Distance Training Course in Legislative Drafting: An Appraisal of the Pilot Module

A Memorandum by the Commonwealth Secretariat

1. For the information of Ministers, attached and entitled "Proposals From the Course Developers" is an analysis of the evaluation of the pilot module for the Commonwealth Distance Training Course in Legislative Drafting, prepared by the course developers after the module had been field tested at the training course presently under way in Barbados. The conclusions of the developers were carefully considered and endorsed by the Advisory Group when it met by tele-conference on 29 September 1993. Also attached is the evaluation itself.
2. The documents are distributed to governments in view of the keen interest in the undertaking expressed by Senior Officials when they met in Singapore last year. It is also important that the course enjoy the confidence and respect of Law Ministers, as it has potential not only for underpinning any national arrangements for training but also for reaching the level of local government - an area of drafting need which the Commonwealth has not yet had the resources to attempt to reach.
3. It is hoped that the finalised course will attract the support of Law Ministers and that, where appropriate, some recognition (in the form of salary increments or otherwise) will be extended to those who complete it successfully. The concept involves not the mere completion of a set course, but completion to an assessed and monitored international standard and successful completion will be marked by an appropriate award.
4. It is as yet too soon to say how the final course will be "marketed". Clearly there will be a continuing role for Commonwealth funding, but it is the expectation of the partners involved in the course's development that other institutions (e.g. regional developments banks, the World Bank, UNDP and others) will be prepared to fund "scholarships" for named individuals taking part in the course. There will be a host institution selected in open competition which will handle the course in the first instance, with the expectation being that once the bugs have been worked out of the operation it will lend itself to being placed in several host institutions, and in all regions of the Commonwealth. The hope is that a diversity of funding sources will render the course self-supporting. The expectation is that the fees involved are likely to be only about 15 per cent of the cost of a six months' face-to-face course.
5. Once the course is successfully up and running, consideration will be given in the light of experience to its being extended to cover additional drafting areas and at higher attainment levels. The possibility of materials being developed for computer-assisted drafting (which in a few years' time will be available to a number of member countries) will be kept under consideration. Naturally, further follow-up action will depend to a certain extent on the level of take up of the initial course as well as the availability of further development funding.

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