

Education system

# Curaçao, St. Maarten and the BES islands

described and compared with  
the Dutch system

This document contains information on the education system of Curaçao, St. Maarten and the BES islands. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from this area for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

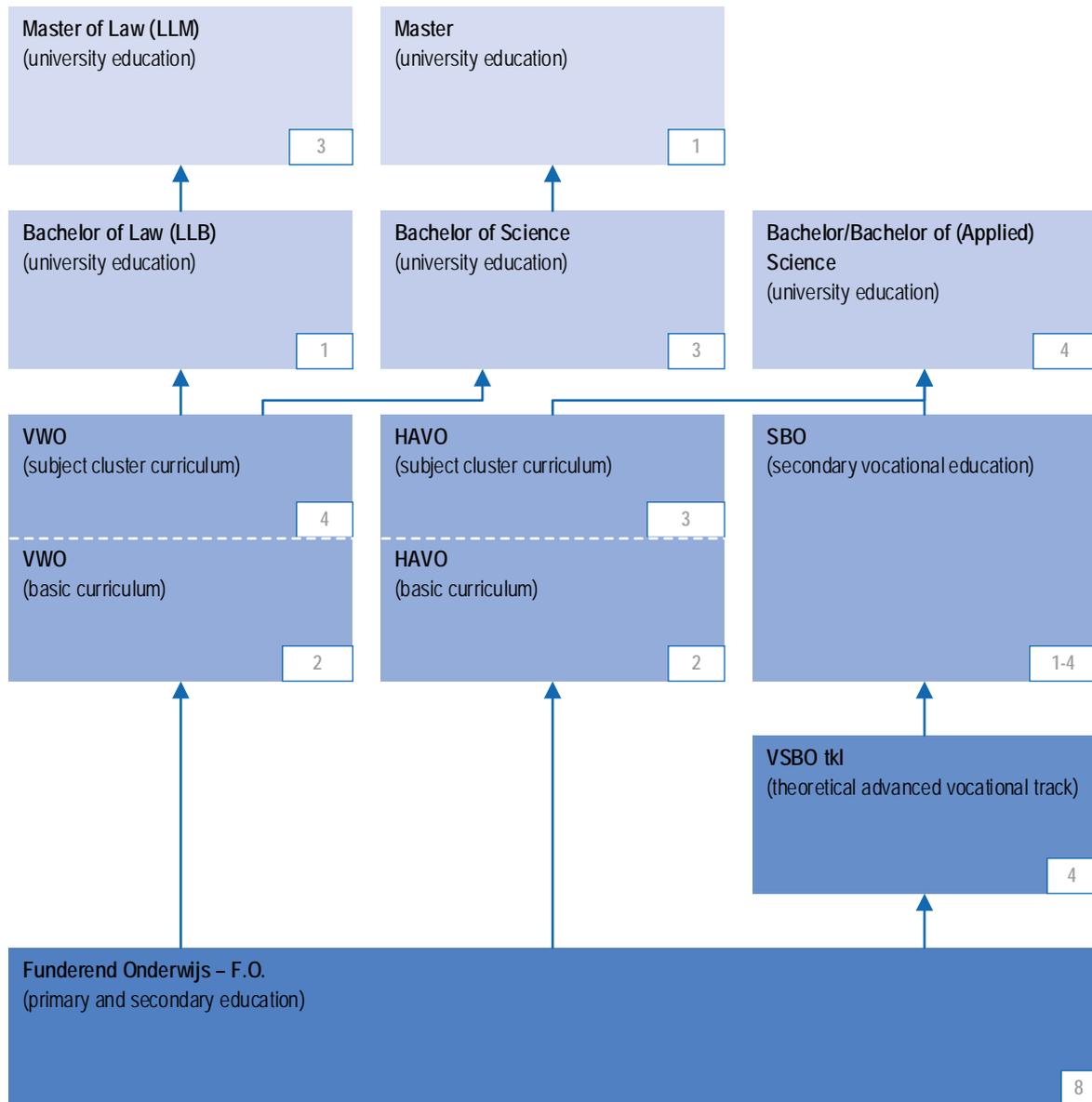
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## Education system Curaçao, St. Maarten and the BES islands



 Duration of education

## Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications applicable to admission to higher education. The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

Degree or qualification	Dutch equivalent and NLQF level		EQF level
<i>VSBO-tkl/MAVO-diploma*</i>	VMBO-T diploma	2	2
<i>HAVO-diploma*</i>	HAVO diploma	4	4
<i>VWO-diploma*</i>	VWO diploma	4+	4
Certificate of Secondary Education (CXC-examen) with at least 5 subjects at the level of general and with the marks 1, 2 of 3 (St. Martin, Caribbean Examination Council)	approximately HAVO diploma	4	4
<i>SBO-diploma (level 4) of management training</i>	MBO diploma (qualification level 4)	4	4
Associate of Arts (in Business/ in General Liberal Arts) (University of St. Martin)	MBO diploma (qualification level 2 or 3)	2/3	2/3
Bachelor of Arts in Education (University of St. Martin)	HBO bachelor's degree (LOBO)	6	6
Bachelor of Science (University of Curaçao)	WO bachelor's degree	6	6
Bachelor of Applied Science (University of Curaçao)	HBO bachelor's degree	6	6
Bachelor (University of Curaçao)	HBO bachelor's degree in engineering	6	6
Bachelor of Education (University of Curaçao)	HBO bachelor's degree (LOVO)	6	6
Bachelor of Law (University of Curaçao)	WO bachelor's degree	6	6
<i>Akte van Bekwaamheid tot volledig bevoegd onderwijzer (Akademia Pedagógico Kòrsou)</i>	HBO bachelor's degree (LOBO)	6	6

\* automatic recognition

## Education system Curaçao, St. Maarten and the BES islands

Surgical assistant, <i>Operatieassistent</i> certificate (Instituto pa Formashon den Enfermaria)	3 years of HBO	6	6
Master of Law/ <i>Meester in de Rechten</i> (University of Curaçao)	WO master's degree	7	7

## NB

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework. EQF = European Qualifications Framework.
- The EQF/[NLQF level](#) is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person's knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: [the Dutch education system](#).
- [The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market \(SBB\)](#), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.

## ■ Introduction

**The Netherlands Antilles ceased to exist on October 10, 2010. The archipelago, consisting of the 5 islands of Bonaire, Curaçao, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba, has acquired a new administrative structure within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.**

Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius, also known as the BES-islands, have become special municipalities of the Netherlands. They are now part of the Dutch government structure, but have been assigned a separate Caribbean status. Curaçao and St. Maarten have acquired the status of autonomous countries within the Kingdom, comparable to the status that was granted to Aruba in 1986.

Aruba, Curaçao, St. Maarten and the Netherlands (including the BES islands) now form the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The intermediate layer of government and States of the Netherlands Antilles no longer exists. Curaçao and St. Maarten are now responsible for their own state administration and legislation. The BES islands are now a public body, or special municipality, of the Netherlands and as such fall directly under Dutch rule.

The BES islands, like all Dutch municipalities, now have a mayor, alderman and council. On these islands, Dutch legislation will gradually be introduced where desirable or necessary, in such sectors as law enforcement, taxation and health and education. New developments concerning state administration are discussed in the *Koninkrijksconferentie* (Kingdom-wide conference), which is organised once a year. The BES islands are controlled by a local government: the Governor, the Executive Council and the Island Council. Members are elected for a period of 4 years.

### **Recognition of diplomas**

The Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1954) formulates the state affairs of the member countries of the Kingdom Relations, including independence in their own affairs. Education belongs to this category. In the past, agreements were made on ministerial level between the former Netherlands Antilles, Aruba and the Netherlands concerning the recognition of diplomas of secondary and vocation education. Automatic recognition of general secondary education is still in force. Secondary vocational education in the former Netherlands Antilles will gradually be adjusted in view of automatic recognition by the Netherlands. Other diplomas from the former Netherlands Antilles are treated as foreign certificates by the Netherlands.

Prior to the statutory reforms in 2010, the Minister of Education of the Netherlands Antilles was responsible for matters concerning education. The educational structure of the Netherlands Antilles was established in 2002 in the

*Landsverordeningen* (State Ordinances): for students from 4 to 12 years in the Nursery and Primary Education Ordinance, for pupils aged 12 to about 18 years in the Secondary Education Ordinance.

In 2002, *Funderend Onderwijs* (F.O.) was introduced, a continuing learning pathway for pupils aged 4 to 15. In 2008, the Ordinance which regulates secondary vocational education, was introduced. Legislation to launch a Higher Education Ordinance is being developed in order to replace the University Ordinance of the Netherlands Antilles (LUNA), which dates from 1979.

The effects of the constitutional reforms on the legal status of education in the former Netherlands Antilles have not (yet) been determined. It is expected that legislation in the field of education on Curaçao and St. Maarten will become further removed from the Dutch government because of their own administrative structure. The BES islands on the other hand, being special municipalities, now fall under the auspices of a Dutch minister who is responsible for education.

The education system of the former Netherlands Antilles has largely been derived from the Dutch system. Education is largely funded by the government. On the islands, both public and private (mainly Catholic) education are offered.

### **Language**

Three official languages are spoken in former Netherlands Antilles: Dutch, Papiamentu and English.

In primary education, Papiamentu and Dutch (Bonaire) respectively English and Dutch (St Eustatius and Saba) are the languages of instruction. In practice, English is the most important language of instruction and Dutch is an elective.

In secondary education, Dutch is the language of instruction and examination on Bonaire and St Eustatius. Papiamentu is an elective on Bonaire. English is the language of instruction on Saba, as pupils complete secondary school with the (English) CXC-examination. Dutch can be chosen as elective and exam.

For all three islands, the language of instruction and examination in secondary vocational education (MBO) is Dutch. For level 1 and 2, authorities can decide to select English (St Eustatius and Saba) or Papiamentu (Bonaire) as instruction and examination language.

Education is compulsory for the age group of 4- to 18-year-olds. The academic year runs from early August to late June.

## ■ Primary and secondary education

The differentiation within general secondary education according to duration and degree of difficulty is similar to that in the Netherlands. Automatic recognition applies in this context, with the exception of English-language programmes.

There are both public and private secondary schools. Public senior general secondary education (HAVO/VWO) schools on Curaçao are: the Maria Immaculata Lyceum, the Peter Stuyvesant College and the Raduphus College. Private schools are the Vespucci College, the Omega College and the Abel Tasman College.

### Period prior to 2002

#### Primary education

Primary education included non-compulsory nursery education and the 6-year primary education (age category 6 to 12 years). After leaving primary school, pupils were able to attend secondary education that was divided into general and vocationally oriented education.

#### Secondary education

General education was split into the nominal 4-year junior general secondary education (MAVO) (including the basic curriculum), the 5-year senior general secondary education (HAVO) (2 years of basic curriculum plus 3 years of second stage) and the 6-year pre-university education (VWO) (2 years of basic curriculum plus 4 years of second stage). In 2003 junior general secondary education (MAVO) ceased to exist as a separate type of school and was merged into preparatory secondary vocational education (VSBO) (theoretical advanced vocational track).

In terms of level, the VBSO-tkl/MAVO diploma is comparable to a VMBO-T (theoretische leerweg) diploma in the Netherlands.

Pupils who pass the final examination for junior general secondary education (MAVO) can move on to the fourth year of the nominal 5-year senior general secondary education (HAVO). After completing the basic curriculum, pupils can also move on directly from primary school to the first class of senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO).

Pre-university education (VWO) is the most advanced programme at the level of general secondary education. The final examination for pre-university education (VWO) covers seven subjects and the final examination for senior general secondary education (HAVO) covers six subjects.

In terms of level, the HAVO diploma is comparable to a HAVO diploma in the Netherlands.

In terms of level, the VWO diploma is comparable to a VWO diploma in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands Antilles have their own national examination for general secondary education. MAVO, HAVO and VWO diplomas obtained in the Netherlands Antilles are automatically recognised in the Netherlands.

On the island of St. Martin, general secondary education is taught in both Dutch (HAVO and VWO) and English. The English-language schools (St. Dominic, St. Maarten Academy) prepare pupils for the Caribbean Examination Council examination. The Milton Peters College is a Dutch-language combined school. The island of Saba offers the same type of English-language general education.

The Caribbean Examination Council examination (*CXC-examen*) is taken at various levels (general, technical and basic) and is completed with the Secondary Education Certificate.

In terms of level, the *CXC-examen* with at least 5 subjects at general level and with the marks 1, 2 or 3 (whereby 1 is the highest) is approximately comparable to a HAVO diploma in the Netherlands.

Curaçao also has private English-language secondary schools: The International School of Curaçao and The Curaçao American Preparatory School. Both are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in the United States. Diplomas obtained at both of these schools are therefore treated in the Netherlands as an American diploma.

Bonaire has one combined school for secondary education, Liseo Boneriano (before: *Scholengemeenschap Bonaire*, SGB), whilst St. Eustatius has a school for vocational training and junior general secondary education (MAVO) and a senior general secondary education school (Gwendolyn van Putten School). Saba has an English-language school for vocational training (Saba Comprehensive School).

### Vocational education

Vocational education in the former Netherlands Antilles consisted of pre-vocational education (BVO) and secondary vocational education (MBO).

### Pre-vocational education

Pre-vocational education (BVO), which ceased to exist in 2003, was created through the integration of lower vocational technical training (LTO) and economics, tourism and administrative education (ETAO). BVO has a basic curriculum lasting 2 years, followed by a second stage lasting a further 2 years. BVO has three levels: BVO-A level, which is practice-oriented; BVO-B with a somewhat greater degree of complexity, followed by a further 2 years of education to achieve BVO-D level, as well as a transfer version that leads on to the secondary vocational education (MBO) programmes. The BVO-D is equivalent to the *MAVO-diploma*.

### Secondary vocational education

Secondary vocational education (MBO) lasts between 1 and 4 years. The admission requirement is the *BVO-D*, the *LTS diploma* or the *MAVO diploma*. There are two different types: the continuing studies version and the practical version. In the case of the former, the curriculum is more general. The last phase of MBO is a practical year, with a compulsory work placement lasting between 3 months and 1 year.

Secondary vocational education is provided by both public and private schools. An *MBO diploma* (transfer version) obtained through management training grants admission to higher education.

## **Period after 2002**

### Primary and secondary education

Nursery and primary education plus the basic curriculum for secondary education have been merged to become *Funderend Onderwijs* (*F.O.*, primary and secondary education). This will be a continuous learning pathway for children aged 4 to 12, divided into two cycles, each lasting 4 years. The implementation of the first cycle (children aged 4 to 8) was officially commenced during the 2002/2003 academic year.

Senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO) start with a 2-year period with a basic curriculum, followed by a year in preparation for the subject cluster stage. The structure of the second stage is similar to that in the Netherlands with its four subject clusters, on the understanding that Papiamentu is also a compulsory subject within the common part in addition to English and Dutch. General natural sciences and general social sciences are included in the common part. The subject cluster structure

was introduced in 2002 (with three subject clusters) and was changed to the Dutch model in 2007.

On Bonaire, the private UNI-college has been set up and offers senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). Since 2006, the public SGB has offered pre-university education (VWO) in addition to preparatory secondary vocational education (VSBO) and senior general secondary education (HAVO). On St. Eustatius, the Gwendolyne van Putten School offers preparatory secondary vocational education (VSBO) and senior general secondary education (HAVO). On Saba, preparatory secondary vocational education is offered by a VSBO-school. There are no schools offering senior general secondary education (HAVO) on Saba.

#### Preparatory secondary vocational education

Preparatory secondary vocational education (VSBO) has replaced pre-vocational education (BVO) and junior general secondary education (MAVO). Until Primary and Secondary Education has been fully introduced, education at the VSBO schools consists of a 2-year basic curriculum and a 2-year period of learning tracks in three sectors: Technology, Health and Personal Care and Welfare, and Economics. The learning tracks are: the theoretical advanced vocational track (TKL), the practical advanced vocational track (PKL) and the practical basic vocational track (PBL). Central examinations are taken for all subjects in all learning tracks. The aim of VSBO teaching is to achieve a smooth transition to secondary vocational education (SBO). Progression to senior general secondary education (HAVO) is, however, also possible in a number of cases. VSBO was introduced in the third year, therefore after the second year of the basic curriculum, in the 2002/2003 academic year.

#### Secondary vocational education

Secondary vocational education (SBO) has a broader structure than senior secondary vocational education (MBO). It also extends to programmes for which a preparatory secondary vocational education diploma (*VSBO diploma*) is not necessarily required.

There are two SBO learning tracks: learning through practical experience (*werkend leren*, WL) and practical experience through learning (*lerend werken*, LW) and four qualification levels (assistant, professional, skilled worker and middle manager). SBO was introduced during the 2004-2005 academic year. The programmes last between 1 and 4 years.

In terms of level, the SBO diploma (level 4) obtained through management training is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 4.

In the case of the VSBO-tkl, HAVO, VWO and various SBO programmes, students have the option to take national examinations in the former Netherlands Antilles, similar to the state examinations in the Netherlands.

### **University of St. Martin**

The University of St. Martin on St. Martin – not to be confused with the non-accredited St. Martinus University on Curaçao – offers English programmes, both at Associate's and bachelor's level in cooperation with universities at other Caribbean islands. The 2-year secondary vocational education (MBO) programmes are completed with the degree of Associate of Arts. Students who have obtained the Associate of Arts degree are admitted to the bachelor's degree programmes on offer at the university. The admission requirement for the Associate of Arts programmes is a VSBO-tkl diploma or the American General Educational Development diploma (GED-diploma).

In terms of level, the Associate of Arts issued by the University of St. Martin is comparable to an MBO diploma at qualification level 2 or 3, depending on the specialization.

Upon obtaining the Associate Degree students may transfer to a 3- or 4-year bachelor's programme which is jointly offered with the St. Vincent University of Canada or a bachelor's programme offered in cooperation with the University of the Virgin Islands. These are usually part-time programmes for those already working.

Information on the bachelor's programmes is available under [Higher education](#).

### **The College of the Dutch Caribbean (CDC)**

The CDC is located in Curaçao and offers secondary vocational education in Dutch on SBO level 3 (duration 2 years) and level 4 (duration 3 years).

From a number of these programmes there is also a part-time variant. The SBO 3 diploma offers the possibility to continue with a SBO 4 study programme. With the SBO 4 diploma it is possible to continue with higher professional education or with a bachelor's study at the University of the Dutch Caribbean.

Other institutions offering programmes at SBO/MBO level which are approved by the Minister of Education of Curaçao are OTC (Opleiding & Trainingen Curaçao N.V.), New Horizons/IPEA (Instituto pa Enseñansa pa Adulto) and Feffik (Fundashon pa edukashon di Fishi i Kapasitashon).

## ■ Admission to higher education

The HAVO diploma, VWO diploma and SBO-4 diploma generally grant the holder access to higher education. The admission route depends on the programme the student wants to follow.

## ■ Higher education

On Curaçao, St. Maarten and the BES-islands mainly higher professional education is offered. The University of Curaçao (UoC) – before November 2013 known as the University of the Netherlands Antilles (*Universiteit van de Nederlandse Antillen*, UNA) – and the University of St. Martin (USM) are recognised institutions (partially recognised in the case of the USM) and are subsidised by the government. The University of the Dutch Caribbean is a government-recognised institution that is not funded by the government.

Off-shore universities are also located within the island empire, namely the American University of the Caribbean (AUC), St. James School of Medicine, St. Martin University, Xavier University School of Medicine (XUSOM) and the Saba University School of Medicine (SUSOM), which are not recognised by the Department of Education of Curaçao.

For the university last mentioned, the SUSOM, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), has positively assessed the study programme *Master Doctor of Medicine* in 2013.

### University of Curaçao

The University of Curaçao (UoC), recognised by law, is situated on Curaçao and offers both higher professional and academic education. From September 2012, 23 out of the total of 26 programmes offered, have gone through the assessment procedures of the NVAO and for most of the programmes, the outcome of the assessment is positive.

Teaching takes place in Dutch, with the exception of a number of English programmes, i.e. all the programmes offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Techno MBA offered by the Faculty of Technical Sciences and the second and first grade teacher programme 'English' offered by the General Faculty.

The UoC has 5 faculties:

- The General Faculty offers training for a qualification to teach at the second level in Dutch, English, Papiamentu and Spanish, and the teacher training for *Funderend Onderwijs* (LOFO). The admission requirement is the HAVO diploma, an SBO/MBO diploma at level 4, or VWO diploma. The nominal duration of the programmes is 4 years. These programmes are completed with the degree of Bachelor of Education. The faculty also offers a 2-year

training programme for a qualification to teach Papiamentu. On Bonaire, this faculty offers teacher-training for primary and secondary education. In addition, the General Faculty also offers professional master's programmes, i.e. teacher-training for a qualification to teach Dutch, English, Spanish and Papiamentu at senior secondary education level. The admission requirement is at least the degree Bachelor of Education, or the qualification to teach these languages at primary and secondary level, or an equivalent diploma in one of the mentioned languages with teaching experience. The nominal duration of the teacher-training programme is 2 years. These programmes lead to the degree of professional Master of Education with first grade qualification to teach the language for which one had already a second grade qualification. Since September 2012, the professional master's programme Special Educational Needs is offered, with a nominal duration of 2 years.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Education* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in education, teacher-training for secondary education.

- The Faculty of Law provides the academic programme law. The admission requirement is the VWO diploma. The nominal duration of the bachelor's degree programme is 3 years and that of the master's degree programme is 1 year. The degrees Bachelor of Law and Master of Law respectively (with effect from the 2004/2005 academic year) are awarded at the end of the programme. Before the introduction of the bachelor's-master's degree structure, the degree conferred was that of *Meester in de Rechten*.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Law* is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree.

In terms of level, the *Master of Law/Meester in de Rechten* is comparable to a WO master's degree.

- The Faculty of Social Sciences and Economics offers both higher professional and academic education. The admission requirement for the higher professional programmes is an SBO/MBO level 4 diploma, HAVO or VWO. The nominal duration is 4 years, and the programmes are completed with the degree Bachelor of Applied Science in the field of study. The nominal duration of the academic programmes Accountancy & Controlling and Business & Economics is 3 years and are completed with the

degree Bachelor of Science. The admission requirement is a *VWO-diploma* or an equivalent diploma. The master's programme in Accountancy has a nominal duration of 2 years and is completed with a master's degree. In September 2012 the new academic master's degree programme Business Management started.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Applied Science* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Science* is comparable to a WO bachelor's degree.

- The Faculty of Engineering offers professional bachelor's programmes in the field of civil engineering, engineering, industrial technology & communication technology, and electrical systems. The admission requirement is a HAVO diploma with physics and mathematics B, an MTS diploma with a higher professional education continuing studies package. The nominal duration of these programmes is 4 years. The programmes are completed with the degree of Bachelor in the field of study. The Faculty also offers a professional master's programme; Techno MBA for professionals working in the technical world with a Master of Science or Bachelor of Science. The program is completed with an MBA-degree.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in engineering.

- The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, started in 2008, offers the *Bachelor* and *Master Social Work*. This new faculty was opened in 2008. The admission requirement for the *Bachelor Social Work* is SBO/MBO diploma level 4. The nominal duration is 4 years. The nominal duration for the Master Social Work is 2 years, and the admission requirement is the Bachelor Social Work, or in a related field of study (for instance *Maatschappelijk Werk*, *Cultureel Werk*) with at least 3 years of working experience.

#### University of St. Martin (USM)

The 4-year primary school teacher-training offered by the University of St. Martin is recognised by the Department of Education of Curaçao. The starting level is that of the HAVO diploma. The programme is completed with a Bachelor of Arts in Education.

In terms of level, the *Bachelor of Arts in Education* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in education, teacher-training for primary education.

### **University of the Dutch Caribbean (UDC)**

The University of the Dutch Caribbean (previously *Zeelandia Opleidingen Groep*) is situated on Curaçao. The UDC is recognised by the Minister of Education of Curaçao.

The institution offers bachelor's degree programmes in higher professional education. The minimal admission requirement is a MBO/SBO niveau-4 diploma. The nominal duration of the programmes is 4 years. Teaching takes place in Dutch, yet the international programmes are taught in English. The UDC offers these programmes on both a full-time and part-time basis. The programmes are completed with a *Bachelor Getuigschrift* recognised by the Minister of Education of Curaçao.

The UDC offers the following programmes: Business Economics (*Bedrijfseconomie*, BE), Commerce (*Commerciële Economie*, CE), higher education in law (*hoger juridische opleiding*, HJO), Tourism and Recreation (*Hoger Toeristisch & Recreatief onderwijs*, HTRO) and International Business & Management Studies (*Bank- en Verzekeringsmanagement*, IBMS). In addition to this, it offers a 2-year programme in banking and insurance management that leads to an Associate Degree. In 2012, the NVAO positively assessed the quality of the new, nominal 4-year HBO-bachelor's programme Business Administration (full-time and part-time).

In terms of level, the *bachelor's programmes offered by UDC* are comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree.

### **Akademia Pedagógiko Kòrsou**

The Akademia offered higher professionally oriented teacher-training for primary education. The admission requirement used to be the HAVO diploma, the nursery teacher A-certificaat, the MTS diploma and the MAVO diploma. The programme had a nominal duration of 4 years. As of August 2010, the programme is offered within the University of the Netherlands Antilles (UNA) under the name LOFO (*Lerarenopleiding voor het Funderend Onderwijs*, Teacher-Training for Primary and Secondary Education). The same year, the Akademia merged with the UNA. And since 2013 the UNA is called the University of Curaçao (UoC).

In terms of level, the *Akte van bekwaamheid volledig bevoegd onderwijzer* is comparable to an HBO bachelor's degree in education, teacher-training for primary education.

### **Stichting HOGMA**

Through a ministerial decision by the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth- and Sport in 1998, the HOGMA foundation was appointed to offer *hogere opleidingen voor gedrag en maatschappij* (tertiary programmes in behaviour and society). The admission requirement was the SBO/MBO diploma (level 4) or the HAVO diploma. The nominal duration of the evening programme was 4 years. The *Diploma Hoger Beroepsonderwijs, Sociaal Agogische Beroepen* is awarded.

In 2008, in close consultation with the UNA (the University of the Netherlands Antilles), HOGMA decided to stop the intake of new students, as the island was considered too small for two education institutes offering more or less the same education programmes. Therefore, from 2008 the UNA is the only provider of tertiary programmes in behaviour and society. The programmes have been phased out at HOGMA, and the last students received their diploma in 2013.

### **Instituto pa Formashon den Enfermeria (Stichting IFE)**

This institution programmes in the field of care and welfare at both secondary and higher professional level. Additionally, the institute offers a 3-year Surgical assistant training programme. The admission requirement is the HAVO diploma. At the end of the programme, students obtain the professional qualification of *Operatieassistent* (Surgical assistant).

In terms of level, the *Operatieassistent certificate* awarded by Stichting IFE is comparable to 3 years of higher professional education (HBO).

A ministerial disposal has been granted to a number of IFE's programmes: *Dokterassistent* (in 2009), *HBO-Verpleegkundige* (in 2012) and *Spoedeisende Hulp Verpleegkundige* (in 2012). This disposal means that the programmes are recognised in Curaçao.

### **Curaçao Institute for Social and Economic Studies (CURISES) & Intercontinental University of the Caribbean (ICUC)**

Formerly part of the University of the Netherlands Antilles (UNA), the Curaçao Institute for Social and Economic Studies (CURISES) became an independent institute in 2009. The Intercontinental University of the Caribbean (ICUC), founded by CURISES as its brand name, has established partnerships with recognised Dutch

and American universities. The following professional business programmes at bachelor's level offered by CURISES are state-recognised: Business Administration in General Management/International Business/International Hospitality/Tourism Management and Accountancy.

The master's programme Executive Master of Finance and Control is offered in cooperation with the Dutch Vrije Universiteit (VU) and is accredited by the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (*Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie, NVAO*).

## ■ Grading systems

The grades run from 1 (very poor) to 10 (excellent).

Numerical grade	Description	Meaning
10	Ten	Excellent
9	Nine	Very good
8	Eight	Good
7	Seven	Better than a pass
6	Six	Pass
5	Five	Almost a pass
4	Four	Unsatisfactory
3	Three	Very unsatisfactory
2	Two	Poor
1	One	Very poor

## ■ Quality assurance and accreditation

A quality assurance system for education in the former Netherlands Antilles has been set out in a policy plan. The government guarantees the quality of education by means of sound educational legislation in combination with an effective supervisory authority (inspectorate), external quality assurance via central examinations and tests (examination agency) and the accreditation of higher education. The University of Curaçao (UoC) anticipates that all of its programmes will have been accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) in future.

## ■ International treaties

The former Netherlands Antilles are a co-signatory of the Regional Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean (1974).

## ■ Composition of file

A layout for certificates of subsidised general secondary education has been adopted at a national level. No separate list of marks is issued; the marks for the final examination are stated on the certificate. A separate list of marks is issued in the case of higher education certificates.

## ■ List of higher education institutions

- [University of Curaçao](#) (UoC)
- [University of St. Martin](#) (USM)
- [University of the Dutch Caribbean](#) (UDC)
- [Instituto pa Formashon den Enfermeria](#) (Stichting IFE)
- [The Inter-Continental University for the Caribbean](#) (ICUC)

## ■ Useful links

### Curaçao

- [Website](#) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture & Sport.
- [Contact](#) details of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture & Sport.
- [Informatie](#) about the Expertise Center for Examination and Examination – *Expertisecentrum voor Toetsen en Examens* (E.T.E.).

### St. Maarten

- [Webpagina](#) of the Department of Education.
- [Contactgegevens](#) of the Division Public Education.

### Bonaire

- [Website](#) of the Public Entity Bonaire (see Education: 'Onderwijs') and [contact](#) details.

### St. Eustatius

- [Contact](#) details of the [government](#).

### General

- [Website](#) of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).