

# DCBC promotes Canadian brand

By Katie Skerkowski

The Diver Certification Board of Canada (DCBC), located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, is recognized globally as upholding a strong Canadian brand. Since 2003, the DCBC has been accrediting programs outside of Canada; promoting the quality of Canadian accrediting bodies. Recently the organization has taken its excellence one step further by beginning the process of becoming ISO 9001 certified.

ISO 9001 is a series of international standards developed by quality experts from around the world. It is used by companies that want to implement their own in-house quality systems or want to ensure suppliers have appropriate quality systems in place. The standards were developed for both quality management and quality assurance and are developed and maintained by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

When the DCBC first formed, it had very limited resources, so board members felt that ISO registration was too expensive and would not add value. Today, as the DCBC has become more international, "ISO can add real value to our 'brand'," says David Parkes, DCBC executive director.

For the past month the DCBC has been putting in motion the steps to becoming ISO 9001 certified. The organization has been revising its existing policies and procedures to

meet ISO standards. The DCBC also recently hired a consultant to review the work that has already been completed and tell them what work is left to do.

"The goal is to be ready by September," Parkes says.

Once the DCBC registers as ISO compliant, an ISO registrar will perform a site review to ensure ISO 9001 standards are met.

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Once the DCBC has been approved and registered as ISO compliant Parkes says "it will tell the rest of the world that we are a quality business that's here to stay."

Parkes also says becoming ISO certified is a good move because it tells the world your business has a quality control system in place and "it makes it easier to market your business internationally – that's the beauty of it."

An effective quality management system can lead to reduced costs and greater operating margins. Well-designed and implemented quality management systems that are based on ISO 9001 can provide organizations with the following benefits: having well-defined and documented procedures improves

the consistency of output; quality is constantly measured; procedures ensure corrective action is taken whenever defects occur; defect rates decrease; defects are caught earlier and are corrected at a lower cost; defining procedures identify current practices that are obsolete or inefficient; and documented procedures are easier for new employees to follow. As well, ISO standards means cost reductions through improved product reliability, better process control and flow, better documentation of processes, greater employee quality awareness and reductions in product scrap, reworks and rejections.

The process of becoming ISO certified generally requires four main tasks: a formal application is made to the ISO registration body; a review is held where the body will look over your quality manual and if weaknesses are spotted they will be identified so the manual can be modified; the body may hold an assessment check or if no problems exist you will go straight to the audit; the audit is held, at which point your documentation and your manual/procedures will be put to the test; and finally certification is granted.

After becoming ISO certified, periodic audits are done for the life of the certification. Compliance with the current standard is necessary to maintain certification.

To learn more, visit the ISO website at [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org).

○ SUMMER ○ 2009

# AAAC

*The National Leader in Accreditation*

## The Accreditation Bulletin

## Accreditation programs go international

By Katie Skerkowski

In the past few years, the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP), along with the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) have been working hard to put Canadian accreditation programs on the international map. These associations, along with other national organizations responsible for accreditation, are reaffirming the high reputation of quality education standards in professional degree and university programs in Canada.

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR  
ACCREDITATION OF PHARMACY  
PROGRAMS

The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs has granted provisional accreditation status for 2009-2011 to the College of Pharmacy at Qatar University (QU) in Doha, Qatar.

This was a pilot project for

CCAPP stemming from the board's strategic plan. Board members felt it was appropriate to consider international pharmacy programs for accreditation.

"There are not a lot of ways for pharmacy programs outside North America or the European Union to undergo accreditation reviews using rigorous standards recognized internationally," says David Hill, executive director of CCAPP. "We believe there is merit in permitting pharmacy programs in other countries to be evaluated against Canadian educational standards."

Since the Canadian brand with respect to education is so strong, the board knew there would be interest in accreditation from universities in different countries.

Three years ago, CCAPP competed for a contract for a benchmarking study from the Higher

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## Message from your Executive Director

Our May 7-8 2009 meetings were held in Ottawa and took place over a day and a half – with 19 Members taking part. Hosted by the Canadian Medical Association, we owe great thanks to Edward Brado of CMA for making the arrangements that made the meeting so successful.

David Parkes completed his tenure as chair and Marlene Wyatt was elected for 2009/2010 at the AGM. Pauline Vinette attended as our facilitator for the strategic planning session on Thursday afternoon and on into Friday. The results of that much-needed exercise will be posted in the members area of the website this summer.

A number of round-table workshop topics were discussed during the meetings. It was agreed the November meeting would start on Thursday morning and finish at noon Friday to make it more worthwhile to those coming from afar and to cover critical issues such as distance learning programs and outcomes assessment.

Members are reminded to make use of our online course for program evaluators – suggested changes to the program are welcome. Have a great, and productive, summer.



## Submit your ideas and suggestions



One of the many topics discussed at the May AAAC meetings focussed on the name, and the content, of this newsletter.

The previous name, “*The Voice*,” referenced the AAAC being “the voice of accreditation in Canada,” however, members felt a new more informative name should be implemented. So welcome to the first edition of the “*The Accreditation Bulletin*,” which is the new name selected by members.

The topics and articles in the newsletter were also discussed with members agreeing they would like to see more in-depth features on the accreditation issues of the day. In this edition, we have two articles that are sure to make you informed on what is happening in the field. International accreditation processes is a challenge facing many associations in today’s global economy.

Likewise, developments in ISO 9001 registration / certification will inform those who are heading down that road in the future.

However, at the end of the day, *The Accreditation Bulletin* is a member’s publication produced for internal use and to educate both the public and private sectors. In an effort to make the newsletter lively, interesting and informative, we are reliant upon members for article suggestions and submitted material like photos, announcements, and issues of relevancy to readers.

With all of the great discussions that take place on the ListServe, we know the newsletter can reflect the ongoing information-sharing that makes AAAC such a vibrant organization. Submissions and suggestions can be sent to Meghan Howard at [editor@megram.com](mailto:editor@megram.com).

The deadline for submissions for the fall issue is set for September 15, 2009.

A reminder will be sent out on the ListServe in advance of the deadline. We look forward to hearing from you!

### International accreditation continued from front

Colleges of Technology (HCT) in the United Arab Emirates. The HCT wanted two pharmacy programs in Dubai and Abu Dhabi to be benchmarked against other known high-quality standards. CCAPP won the contract against several other international competitors.

“We used our standards to go to the HCT and do a report on the two pharmacy programs that existed,” Hill says. Now, the HCT is considering applying for CCAPP accreditation for its two baccalaureate programs next year based on the benchmarking study that CCAPP conducted in 2007.

Two years ago, Qatar University also expressed interest in accrediting its new pharmacy program. The program was purposely designed to match pharmacy schools in Canada and closely modeled its curriculum to that of the University of British Columbia (UBC) as several faculty members at Qatar University are former UBC faculty members or graduates.

“They also assured us that [students’] clinical placements would be comparable to those in Canada,” Hill says.

The stipulations used by CCAPP to permit QU to apply for accreditation included the pharmacy program having a close paradigm with Canadian educational outcomes and pharmacist competencies; that it understood the comprehensiveness of the accreditation standards, and that the role of a pharmacist (and regulation of pharmaceuticals and quality of the national health care system) is comparable to that in Canada (or is developing in that direction).

One major difference between the Canadian pharmacy programs and those at Qatar University is the gender selection process. There are separate campuses for men and women at QU, and the university has determined as there is not as great an interest in pharmacy among male students, the cost would be high to have the same program offered on both campuses; therefore, only women are enrolled in the pharmacy program at QU at this time.

The site visit to Qatar took place last October and the program has since been granted provisional accreditation. Full accreditation cannot be granted until one year after the graduation of the first class of students, so the program will likely be considered for full accreditation in 2012. In the meantime, CCAPP will perform annual site visits.

“It’ll be a five-year process,” Hill says.

There are also many other foreign schools wanting to secure accreditation or undergo a benchmarking review. The next accreditations that will likely be on CCAPP’s agenda in the near future are at HCT in the UAE for its programs in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and possibly the review of the pharmacy technician program at an institute of technology in Doha, Qatar, which is actually an international campus of the College of the North Atlantic based in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hill says accrediting foreign programs is a “very positive experience.” It is a full cost-recovery operation for CCAPP that promotes the Canadian brand. His advice to other accrediting bodies considering accrediting foreign programs is to, “establish criteria and be selective with

who you want to consider for a review. And don’t modify standards in a way that lessens the quality expected of international programs compared to pharmacy schools in Canada.”

AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA

When the Agricultural Institute of Canada accreditation program began in 1998, the goal was to accredit all university baccalaureate degrees in Canada’s eight faculties of agriculture to ensure graduates met the academic and registration requirements established by the various provincial institutes of agronomists and the AIC.

Recently the AIC accreditation program gained international status when it granted full accreditation to eight programs offered under the College of Food and Agriculture at the United Arab Emirates University (UAE University).

Last year, UAE University approached the AIC to accredit its food and agriculture programs. The AIC accreditation program was known to many UAE University faculty members because many of them had studied in Canada.

Since this was the first foreign accreditation by the AIC, the process took about a year to complete.

“To prepare was a long process,” says Myles Frosst, AIC CEO. “From the time the university expressed interest, to the time they were able to get the funding for it, plus the time we were able to pull together academics to do the site review.”

Last October a group of site reviewers, following a review of the UAE University’s own self study report, travelled to the school which is located in Al Ain (the eastern region of the Abu Dhabi emirate), as part of the accreditation process. Frosst says gender issues were one of the main concerns going into the site review in the UAE. Like Qatar University, the UAE has male and female students studying on separate campuses.

“We wanted to ensure the female students received the same quality of education as male,” Frosst says, adding that he was “pleasantly surprised that the education of women was as important as anything else. There was no cultural barrier to the education of women. The women were forthright and proud of their colleges.”

Again, the accreditation process was lengthy – in essence, AIC site reviewers were reviewing 16 programs instead of eight because they had to review the same eight courses on both the male and female campuses.

Frosst says the accreditation of UAE University seems to have increased the visibility of the AIC accreditation program.

“We’ve had interest expressed from two other foreign universities,” says Frosst, who hopes the foreign accreditations will enhance Canada’s reputation for having top quality educational standards.

“By taking your accreditation abroad you are doing two things; you are helping those abroad reach the level that you’ve ascribed and you’re re-enforcing the Canadian brand,” he says. “And you’re making some damn good contacts.”

## Don’t miss the meetings!

With AAAC members gathering just twice a year in the spring and fall, those wanting to attend are reminded to mark their calendars with these dates.

The November 2009 General Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, November 26, 2009 starting at 9 a.m., concluding with a half-day on Friday, November 27, 2009. The venue is yet to be determined but will be posted this summer on the website at [www.aaac.ca](http://www.aaac.ca). The 2010 AAAC Annual General Meeting will be on Thursday, May 6, 2010 beginning at 9 a.m., concluding on Friday, May 7, 2010. The venue for the AGM is also to be determined but will be posted on the website.

If there is an agenda item or topic of discussion any attendee would like to see added to the AGM agenda or the General Meeting agenda, please contact executive director Bob Cross at [info@aaac.ca](mailto:info@aaac.ca) or by calling 613-432-9491.

## Join the AAAC

AAAC invites you to apply for membership! An application form for full members and associate members is on the website at [www.aaac.ca](http://www.aaac.ca).

Simply complete it and send it in – and the executive will review the application. If accepted, you are welcome at the next meeting to meet the rest of your fellow AAAC members and start enjoying the many advantages to membership.

Some of the full member requirements include: applicants must accredit academic programs; the program must be a “professional” one and if so, applicants should list what fields of endeavour graduates qualified to practice; and the applicant must follow established standards and processes. The AAAC’s “Guidelines for Good Practice of Academic Accreditation of Professional Programs” is on the website and clearly defines standards and processes required for full membership.

Definitions and descriptions of the requirements can also be found online or you can call us at 613-432-9491.

