



TRADE BEAT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL
LIAISON UNIT

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This issue will inform readers about how Customs builds capacity through individuals through educational programs and institutions.

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Building Customs Capacity *Developing Human Capital through the INCU*

Capacity building is an ongoing process through which individuals, groups, organizations and societies enhance their ability to identify and meet development challenges. Seen as a core element to development, capacity building has been applied to interventions aimed at producing sustained change that range from individuals to entire nations. The progress and growth of any organization, depends not only on improvements to infrastructure or capital investment, but among the key elements is developing it's human capital. In efforts to strengthen and modernize output, organizations often select a bottom-up approach to capacity building, where the human capital is targeted for development. While individuals may possess the will to improve their knowledge and technical competences independently, a systemic approach through collaborative efforts with industry players, often yield better results in a streamlined manner to achieve strengthened capabilities in the particular field.

The aim of capacity building is to increase the self-sustaining ability of people, in order to recognize, analyze and solve their problems by more effectively controlling and using their own, as well as external resources. The development of technical expertise is often considered to be essential for organizations so that they can plan, implement and evaluate appropriate programs and measures. This has been recognized and endorsed by Customs administrations worldwide, through several initiatives taken by the World Customs Organization (WCO) to address staff development and organizational capacity through a partnership based approach. The WCO offers courses independently through its headquarters, as well as through partnerships with stakeholders and their recognized educational institutions.

Underpinning this approach is the premise that developing a core of well-trained Customs personnel, decreases reliance on external consultants and increases domestic capacity to sustain development efforts, especially when funding ceases or does not exist. With strengthened domestic administrations, Customs as a whole can determine universal solutions to pertinent issues, as well as forge cohesive networks in facilitating world trade.

Among the several initiatives undertaken by the WCO along with its partners in targeting Customs human capital development is the establishment of the International Network of Customs Universities (INCU), which serves as a knowledge base for Customs professionals.

The International Network of Customs Universities (INCU)

The INCU is a not-for profit organization, which seeks to bring together governments, private sector and academia on subject matter pertinent to Customs. The INCU provides for a partnership of universities and research institutions across the globe, with particular interest in the field of Customs research, education and training. Such a partnership is necessary for the collaborative direction in which Customs administrations are geared towards, where a comprehensive professional framework is underway, which seeks to review and broaden the scope of current Customs professional standards.

The INCU is critical in promoting training of Customs staff and its global network, and allows for the significant exchange of information across administrations critical to the future development of Customs as a global institution. The scope of Customs is not only limited to the staff of each organization, but is extended to all the stakeholders aligned to Customs matters. The programmes are therefore geared towards personnel inside and outside of Customs with the particular interest to improve the knowledge and capabilities within the Customs realm. Programmes of the INCU are provided for at both the Bachelor and Masters Levels and governed by WCO professional standards. The academic programmes are available at INCU accredited institutions and are available in six different languages depending on the particular institution, namely English, Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian and Portuguese.

The INCU was established to:

- promote the academic standing of the Customs profession;
- promote academic excellence in Customs matters;
- generate research and greater public awareness of Customs matters;
- provide the WCO and other organizations with a single point of contact with universities and research institutes that are active in the field of customs research, education and training; and
- provide a global resource for governments and the private sector, and an educational source for students wishing to further their knowledge in the field of customs, international trade, and logistics.



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Developed in partnership with the INCU, the Partnerships in Customs Academic Research and Development (PICARD) programme has provided an opportunity to establish common development standards designed to maintain and raise the professional standing of Customs, particularly Customs senior and middle management. The principal objectives in developing the standards are to establish benchmarks:

- which can be developed into job profiles for the purposes of customs recruitment;
- against which the in-house training of member administrations may be measured; and
- against which academic development can be designed or procured.

The PICARD Professional Standards published by the WCO, as a foundation for Customs professional education, are being used by the academic world to develop educational programmes which provide professional qualifications for Customs staff, and others with the particular interest.



WCO Recognition of University Customs Curricula

Universities across the globe that offer academic programs with concentration in the Customs related areas at the bachelors and masters level may apply for formal recognition by the WCO if substantially compliant with the WCO Professional Standards. Several universities have been awarded WCO recognition for their academic programmes targeting the Customs profession. At its June 2009 Council Sessions, the WCO adopted the *Guidelines on Recognition of University Customs Curricula* which once met, may be granted the status of an INCU accredited institution through the WCO PICARD Professional Standards. These guidelines establish a process by which universities as well as their graduates, may apply for and attain WCO recognition of such accredited academic programmes, which is noted on the certificate. The programme is targeted for Customs operational and strategic managers who require special qualifications and skills critical to meet the requirements of the new international trading and strategic environment. Persons benefiting from this training or particular accreditation may be considered masters in the particular subject area who can impart knowledge and experience to their colleagues. For the first time there is a clearly defined pathway to education in Customs matters, where international standards as criteria for curricula, recruitment and career development have been established for Customs administrations, and related bodies, educational institutions and students interested in Customs matters.

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Through the various academic programs endorsed by the WCO, research as it relates to Customs issues has been brought to the fore especially under the PICARD programme. An annual PICARD conference is held through the WCO Secretariat in countries of the various institutions and provides a forum for both professionals and academia for knowledge sharing and discourse and generates a wealth of research in the field of Customs. INCU's flagship bi-annual publication, the World Customs Journal provides a means for academics and practitioners alike to publish the results of their studies and experience in the Customs realm.

The following academic programmes have been recognized by the World Customs Organization as meeting the requirements of the WCO international standards for the Customs profession.

Programme	Institution
Baccalaureate in Customs Administration and Foreign Trade	University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica
Graduate Certificate in International Customs Law and Administration	Centre for Customs & Excise Studies, University of Canberra, Australia
Graduate Certificate in Excise Studies	Centre for Customs & Excise Studies, University of Canberra, Australia
Graduate Diploma in Customs Administration	International Business and Law Institute, St Petersburg, Russia
Graduate Diploma in International Customs Law and Administration	Centre for Customs & Excise Studies, University of Canberra, Australia
Graduate Diploma in Excise Studies	Centre for Customs & Excise Studies, University of Canberra, Australia
Licentiate in Customs Administration and Foreign Trade	University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica
Master in Customs Administration and International Trade	University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica
Master of Customs Administration	Centre for Customs & Excise Studies, University of Canberra, Australia
Master of Customs Administration, Law and Policy	University of Munster, Germany
Master of Foreign Economic Activity (Customs Field)	International Business and Law Institute, St Petersburg, Russia
Master of International Customs Law and Administration	Centre for Customs & Excise Studies, University of Canberra, Australia
Professional Bachelor Programme: Administration of Customs and Taxes	Riga Technical University, Latvia
Professional Master Programme: Administration of Customs and Taxes	Riga Technical University, Latvia

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Given the increasing need to build capacity in Customs Administrations Worldwide, the WCO continues to be instrumental in achieving this objective through its various academic programs and partnerships. Educators and Institutions committed to the advancement of Customs as a profession through the WCO, continue to provide and improve academic programs designed to serve Customs personnel and its stakeholders. This is evidenced by the number of institutions seeking to be compliant with the PICARD Professional Standards as well as the popularity of the programs awarded this designation through the INCU.

Customs personnel are encouraged to take advantage of these programs in order to improve their capabilities on the job, as well as to be aligned with the global standards established for the Customs profession. Overall, the main purpose of capacity building for Customs Administrations is to provide sustainable institutional development through well trained and proficient employees, that are able to contribute to a highly efficient and specialized industry with consistent growth and development.

Persons interested in pursuing academic courses may find relevant scholarship information through the following link <http://www.mof.gov.jm/scholarships>



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