CHAPTER 3

DISTANCE AND OPEN LEARNING IN THE COMMONWEALTH

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In this chapter we present data on distance education in the Commonwealth, highlighting:

* the main areas of use of open and distance learning, by subject and level;
* the students, actual and potential, of open learning systems;
* the main media used;
* the main types of organisational structures;
* sources of training for practitioners;
* organisations at national, regional and international level, concerned with open and distance learning and their role.

3.1.2 Our report is based on the following:

* **a survey:** questionnaires were sent to just over 400 institutions, and 306 replied in time for their response to be analysed. About 20 more replies were received but these arrived too late to be included. The main part of this chapter draws on the analysis which, although incomplete, yields more comprehensive information than any previous survey. +

* **Regional reports:** we commissioned overview papers from eight regions of the Commonwealth, as follows:

  Africa: Botswana, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

  Asian Commonwealth Countries (excluding India): Bangladesh, Brunei, Malaysia, Maldives, Singapore, Sri Lanka. Hong Kong is also covered in this paper.

+ Prior to this, the best data base was at the United Nations University International Centre for Distance Learning, housed at the UK OU. We deliberately framed our questionnaires so that our data is comparable with ICDL data (which is of course worldwide). It would be useful to amalgamate the two data bases.

Australia

Canada

Caribbean region: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Christopher Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago.

India

South West Pacific Islands: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa.

The United Kingdom

[Note: Cyprus and Malta were not able to be covered within a regional report.]

* **Visits:** we made visits to 10 Commonwealth countries excluding Britain and attended an international conference on distance education in the Asia and Pacific region at Bangkok, with delegates from 11 Commonwealth countries. We also interviewed numerous visitors to London.

* **Sectoral studies:** in order to look more closely at different subject areas, with professional manpower development particularly in mind, we commissioned specialist papers on accountancy, health and medical education, and agriculture; we also commissioned short ssudies on the role of private correspondence colleges in some countries.

This chapter draws on all these sources.

3.2 Main Areas of Open and Distance Learning

3.2.1 We asked each institution to indicate the subject areas in which they offered courses. These figures are presented overleaf in rank order.

Table 3.1: Numbers of institutions offering courses in different subject areas

Subject Area	Number of institutions offering courses	%	Rank
Economics/Business Studies	120	39	1
Mathematics	114	37	2
Science	104	34	3
Social Science	101	33	4
Arts (excluding Languages)	86	28	5
Technology (and Engineering)	83	27	6
Languages	80	26	7
Teacher Training	76	25	8
Continuing Education	64	21	9
Computer Studies	60	20	10
Law	58	19	11
Medical and Health Sciences	48	16	12
Agriculture	44	14	13
Community Education	32	10	14

(N = 306)

3.2.2 Languages

Institutions were asked to indicate which languages were used for instruction. Of the 306 returns, only six indicated that they did not use English. A few other institutions indicated that they used English and one or more other languages.

3.3 Levels of Programme

3.3.1 We asked all institutions to indicate what levels of programme were offered. We presented the following options:

* Primary (Adults/children)+
* Secondary (Adults/children)+
* Further Education (Accredited but non-degree post-secondary)
* Degree
* Post-graduate
* Continuing Education: (Post-compulsory education for adults - most professional and technical studies are included under this section)

+ As the terms of reference for the study required us to concentrate on post-basic education, some institutions known to teach only at primary or secondary level were not contacted.

* Community Education: (Non-formal education for adults)

Table 3.2: Numbers of institutions offering programmes at different levels

Programme Level	Number of Institutions
Primary (adults and children)	22
Secondary (adults and children)	58
Further Education (post secondary, non degree)	165
Degree	84
Postgraduate	69
Continuing Education	107
Community Education	67
Total:	572

3.4 **Regional Differences**

3.4.1 Table 3.3 overleaf gives information about the numbers of institutions in each region offering the different subject areas. The main pattern that emerges is that, in general, institutions tend to concentrate on the more 'traditional' subject areas of mathematics, science, social science, and business studies. Few institutions in any region except the UK, provide courses in medical and health sciences, community education, computing or technology. A relatively high proportion of African and South West Pacific institutions offer courses in agriculture. Teacher training appears to be a significant area in Australia.

3.4.2 In the developed countries, there are examples of distance teaching at all levels and for a wide range of subjects, vocational, technical, and academic. New initiatives are needed to fill gaps and improve teaching systems. In most developing countries, the picture is very different, with existing distance teaching operations often restricted to certain educational sectors. Throughout the developing countries, there is very little distance education in technical, professional and science subjects, and there is very little non-formal adult education at a distance. There is also a sharp contrast between distance education in Africa and Asia. African institutions teach largely at pre-degree level, with some commercial subjects offered at secondary level, as a contribution to vocational training. Teacher training at a distance also has a strong tradition in Africa. India and Asia have a strong emphasis on academic degree studies: the emphasis is even greater than suggested by our survey, as only about two-thirds of the Indian university correspondence institutes submitted their data in time for inclusion. In Asia, it seems that many people believe that distance education refers only to university study.

Table 3.3: Numbers of Institutions by Subject Areas and by Region

Subject Areas	Aust	Canada	UK	India	Africa	Asia	SWPac	Carib	Total	Rank
Economics/ Bus. Studies	24	23	38	11	11	6	6	1	120	1
Mathematics	20	20	36	8	17	7	5	1	114	2
Science	20	16	37	6	14	6	4	1	104	3
Social Science	20	22	28	12	10	3	4	2	101	4
Arts (excl. Languages)	17	23	19	10	10	3	3	1	86	5
Technology (& Engineering)	13	12	49	1	2	2	4	0	83	6
Languages	10	13	17	12	16	6	5	1	80	7
Teacher Training	26	11	15	7	8	4	3	2	76	8
Continuing Ed.	9	8	29	6	5	3	3	1	64	9
Computer Studies	13	9	28	2	2	3	2	1	60	10
Law	10	7	23	5	5	2	5	1	58	11
Medical & Health Sciences	14	7	19	1	3	0	2	2	48	12
Agriculture	8	6	9	3	12	0	5	1	44	13
Community Ed.	4	6	12	3	3	1	1	2	32	14
Total institutions per region	46	43	140	21	29	9	7	2	297	

3.5 **Overall Provision of Courses**

3.5.1 In most countries the development of distance education has been haphazard and provision remains piecemeal. Only a handful of Commonwealth countries, all with relatively small populations, have virtually no distance education: Belize, Brunei, Cyprus, the Gambia, the Maldives, Malta, the Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, and those Caribbean and Pacific Islands not covered by the Universities of the West Indies and South Pacific. Only a few countries have institutions which provide courses of all kinds. In most countries, distance education is unrecognised as a potential complement to the whole formal education and training system.

3.5.2 At the postgraduate or in-service professional levels, there is much on offer in the richer countries, and we feel that further study of each of the various sectors is necessary to sort and classify the courses available. Our impression is that for certain basic subject areas, there is considerable duplication but that for the more specialist subjects there are many gaps. Subject areas which are weakest at this level appear to be medical and health sciences, agriculture and computer studies. In educational studies, linguistics, technical and engineering subjects and management and business studies, further work needs to be done to identify specific areas where provision remains weak.

3.5.3 At first degree level, sheer numbers of courses available suggest that there is much duplication. Our impression is, however, that the majority of these courses are conventionally academic. There is a need for courses following curricula designed for working adults, especially in work-related subjects such as technology and business studies. There are also few courses available in study skills and English language skills for academic purposes.

3.5.4 New Zealand and Australia, with the recent addition of Britain, are the leaders in post-school vocational and technical training. Elsewhere, this job is left largely to commercial organisations. In many countries this sector is sadly neglected.

3.5.5 Finally, although school-level and basic education is outside our terms of reference, we note that in many countries without universal schooling, there is no distance teaching alternative for adults, and little non-formal adult education. It is recognised that a good general education can contribute to the well-being and productivity of individuals and their communities. For example, the child of a woman with primary schooling is more likely to survive than the child of an unschooled mother. It seems to us that general education for adults should not be neglected in favour of post-school studies.

3.6 Sector Study: Accountancy

3.6.1 The Sector Study (Paper 14) provides a detailed picture of open learning in accountancy. Our primary survey revealed that over 120 institutions offer courses in Economics/Business studies. In order to determine which of these institutions offered courses in accountancy, we conducted an additional survey. We wrote to 102 of these institutions and received 23 positive replies. Information from both surveys indicate that approximately 25% of the 120 institutions teach courses in this area.

3.6.2 These surveys indicate that there are very few courses available in this subject area in Africa, except those offered by the private commercial correspondence colleges. At the first degree level, programmes are particularly poorly provided for. There also appears to be a need to develop applied accountancy courses at the very basic level, to cater for the needs of small businessmen, shopkeepers, cooperative farmers, etc, in developing countries. There appears to be a significant reservoir of courses available at pre-degree (certificate/diploma) level in Australian and Canadian institutions. In addition, some of the courses that are available at postgraduate level, particularly in the UK, for example the Master of Business Administration (MBA), tend to be aimed at a narrow target group (ie English-speaking middle and senior management) and are composed of specialist materials that cannot easily be adapted for teaching in other areas. However the pedagogic quality of some of these courses may be less than could be desired, especially those of the commercial correspondence colleges.

3.6.3 We have found a number of interesting examples of collaboration particularly at the postgraduate level, (Master of Business Administration), both intranationally and internationally. For example, Wolsey Hall and the University of Warwick in the UK have recently developed an external MBA which is available to overseas students, and the University of Strathclyde UK, in collaboration with Deakin University in Australia, has also produced an MBA course. In addition, there has been a recent collaborative union at the undergraduate level between the University of the South Pacific and the City of London Polytechnic. Other examples include the BA/BA (Hons) Business Studies by Open Learning, currently under development in the UK, which is a large intranational collaborative activity which intends to serve an international market in the future. Full details of this initiative are provided in Paper 14.

3.6.4 We believe that although accountancy is a difficult subject to teach, a large amount of the content is universal and easily transferable. There is also a worldwide demand for accountants in general, and accountancy teachers in particular. The development of awareness and expertise in the areas of accountancy, economics and business studies is a necessary prerequisite for development in the Commonwealth.

3.7 Sector Study: Agriculture

3.7.1 Relatively few institutions teach agricultural subjects at a distance. We suspect that this is partly to do with a belief that agriculture, as a subject with a significant practical element, is difficult to teach via open or distant methods. Such a view would conflict with experience in New Zealand where there is a strong tradition of teaching agriculture at a distance. Moreover in many developing countries it is important for national development to persuade rural people to remain in the countryside working the land. Distance education could help them to farm better and make more profits without leaving their land.

3.7.2 There are three ways in which distance education could have an impact. The first is farming education for farmers; examples are the farm radio forums of the 1960s and 70s and more recently, radio learning groups and the correspondence courses for farmers run by the Institut Africain pour le dèvelopment èconomique et social (INADES) in Africa and some agricultural universities in India which reach only a tiny proportion of farmers. The second is in-service training and upgrading for agricultural extension workers; an example is the diploma course about to be launched by the Indira Gandhi National Open University for rural development workers. The third is in-service training of professional agriculturalists; an example is the new University of London External Diploma and Masters Degrees in Agricultural Economics.

3.7.3 Examples of agricultural education at a distance are isolated. Our survey indicates several programmes in Africa, an encouraging sign although several of these are rather academic secondary-level courses. In Asia and India there is very little reported, although a few agricultural universities which offer courses failed to submit data in time. We do not believe that the lack of courses suggests a lack of demand, but indicates misplaced doubts about the ability of open and distance education to fulfil agricultural training needs. We believe that there is great unexploited potential in distance teaching for agriculture. This topic is discussed more fully in Paper 15.

3.8 Sector Study: Health and Medical Sciences

3.8.1 Distance education is highly suitable for in-service training of health care and medical personnel, as they can learn without having to leave their place or area of work. It is also suitable for health education for the general public, because of the potential impact of the mass media. This topic and our findings are discussed in detail in Paper 16.

3.8.2 The majority of these were in-service courses for professionals, such as opticians, radiologists, nurses, normally leading to higher qualifications. Most of these courses were in Australia, Canada or Britain. The lack of such courses is a major gap in developing countries.

3.8.3 There were very few courses for middle-level or paraprofessional health workers. One example is the correspondence courses for various kinds of rural health workers offered by the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) in East Africa. This kind of course would seem to be a major need everywhere.

3.8.4 Finally, we found very little evidence of health and medical education courses available for the general public, and see this as another priority for development.

3.9 Private Correspondence Colleges

3.9.1 Our survey received a number of returns from commercial correspondence institutions, mostly based in the United Kingdom. Accurate information is difficult to acquire so that we know little about the extent of their operations. A special study of commercial colleges in Nigeria was undertaken for this project

3.9.2 During the 1970s, Nigeria, like many other African countries, experienced a rapid increase in the number of commercial correspondence colleges attempting to penetrate the educational market. In order to avoid the danger of exploitation, the Federal Government passed the "Educational Correspondence Colleges Decree" in 1977. This Act was an attempt to monitor and control the activities of the commercial education sector. A correspondence unit was set up by the Federal Ministry of Education with responsibility for this. In 1978-79, 82 institutions applied for Federal Government recognition. Subsequent investigation revealed that only 16 were actually operating.

Inspections are carried out every three years along with periodic impromptu visits during the interim. At present only four colleges are accredited with a further 16 awaiting the outcome of recent inspections. Most of the 20 operational colleges are located in urban centres, five out of the six with the largest enrolments being located in Lagos. Three of these act as agents for overseas correspondence colleges.

The majority of institutions (18) have enrolments below 5,000 students, one college has an enrolment of 10,000 and one of over 15,000. These institutions concentrate mainly on secondary school leavers providing General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level and Advanced Level courses, along with professional and vocational non-degree courses.

Fees for these courses tend to be considerably less (50%) than the charges levied by their privately owned formal face-to-face counterpart institutions. These colleges are not accredited to grant certificates and diplomas and can only offer tuition leading to federally recognised examinations. They are expected to increase their share of provision in the future as the State finds it increasingly difficult to meet demand.

3.10 Actual and Potential Beneficiaries

3.10.1 We asked each institution to give us the total number of students who first enrolled in 1985 or for the latest year in which figures are available. We calculated that the 306 institutions in our survey currently enrol 704,011 students annually.[+] Approximately 53% of these study in institutions located in Australia, Canada or the United Kingdom. It is difficult to say how this figure relates to the real number studying at a distance. Several institutions did not tell us how many students they have enrolled;

[+] It is virtually impossible to get a reliable count of those students who continue their studies over several years, because of the different methods used by institutions to keep their records.

in some cases, we know there are no students as yet, in others we know that teaching is well-established. We also know of many institutions which did not send us returns, and in particular, we did not contact all the commercial organisations. We think it would be realistic to double our total to 1.4 million students at present.

3.10.2 Present beneficiaries are only a small proportion of the potential. In order to get an idea of potential beneficiaries and their needs, we asked the writers of regional papers to provide an overview of educational needs and gaps in provision where distance and open learning might help. Reference should be made to the regional papers (Papers 1 to 8) for the views of experts in each of the regions identified for this study. Each region (and indeed each country) generally has strong views on the priorities for open and distance learning in their areas, and there is no unanimous view. Numerous needs were identified, with an emphasis on advanced technical and professional training coming from the richer countries, and more basic requirements including first degree studies in demand in the poorer countries. (We also note that several smaller countries have no open or distance education systems, although some of these have recognised the need.) We seek in Chapter 6 to highlight some areas where there is wider accord on subject area and target audience, and recommend that these areas become priorities for supported collaborative projects.

3.10.3 A general impression arising from the visits made and views expressed is that there are very few areas of post-school learning that cannot be addressed by open or distance education methods, providing sufficient attention is paid to the design of the programme and the provision of as much student support and practical experience as the subject matter requires. It appears to us that, if the need is great enough and the will strong enough, most subjects and most people can be taught in this way. Investigations must determine whether open and distance education is the most educationally and cost effective means and, organisationally and politically, the most attractive or appropriate. These matters are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.12 Different Patterns of Enrolment

In a few countries we were satisfied that we had a fairly good coverage and have calculated for a sample of these the proportion of the adult population studying at a distance.

Table 3.4: Total number of Distance/Open Learning Students first enrolled in 1985 as a percentage of the total population for selected Commonwealth countries (in rank order)

Country	Population in millions*	Distance/Open Learning enrolment-1985	% of the total population
New Zealand	3	44,875	1.49
Botswana	1	8,160	0.81
Australia	16	93,371	0.58
Canada	25	141,172	0.56
Zimbabwe	8	25,476	0.30
United Kingdom	56	136,408	0.24
Malawi	7	10,000	0.14
Sri Lanka	16	15,000	0.09
Zambia	6	4,298	0.07
Lesotho	1	589	0.05
Tanzania	21	4,554	0.02

(*Source: World Bank, **World Development Report 1986**, Oxford University Press p.226)

3.12.1 An interesting feature of these examples is the considerable size of certain commercial operations. In Zimbabwe, the vast majority of students (24,176 in 1985) are enrolled with two commercial colleges, the Central African Correspondence College and the Zimbabwe Distance Education College. The quality of courses provided by both is highly questionable. In Britain, 13% of enrolments are with Chart Foulks Lynch, the long-established commercial college which provides accountancy training; 30,000 enrolled in 1985. The only other large British institution in our survey is the British Open University which enrols around 30,000 new (undergraduate, postgraduate and associate) students annually.

3.12.2 Another notable feature is the large number of very small distance-teaching operations; many of these are probably too small to be cost effective (see chapter 4). In Australia 87% of our sample enrol less than 5,000 students and 65% of the British institutions and nearly half of the Canadian ones have less than 1,000.

3.13 Main Teaching Patterns

Institutions were asked to indicate the media and methods they used from a given list of options. Table 3.5 shows the results.

Table 3.5: Media and methods used

Media/Methods	Total number of institutions	%	Rank
Text Based	264	86	1
Audio	161	53	2
Practical Work	127	42	3
Study Centres	118	39	4
Telephone Teaching	116	38	5
Video	115	38	6
Computers	83	27	7
Residential School	79	26	8
Kits	78	25	9
Regional Services	74	24	10
Radio	44	14	11
Television	28	9	12

It can be seen that the majority of institutions use text (86%). A large number (53%) stated they use audio. The broadcast media (radio and television) are used by the smallest number of institutions with only 14% using radio and 9% using television. We are not able to tell how extensively each medium is used. Individual case studies suggest that texts are generally the most important medium, with other media supplementary. We suspect that few of those who mention computers use them for teaching. We would expect them to be used more often for marking tests or even merely for administration.

3.14 **Organisational Structures**

This survey has drawn a broad distinction between those institutions which were set up primarily as distance-teaching institutions, that is, 'dedicated' institutions, and those that are part of a conventional establishment. Institutions can be further sub-divided into private or public and university or non-university level groups. Figure 3.1 presents this classification with examples.

Figure 3.1: A Classification of Distance Teaching Institutions in the Commonwealth

- Conventional Institutions (including dual-mode)
  - -Public
    - -University Sector
      - -University of Manchester
      - -Murdoch University
    - -Non University Sector
      - -Adelaide College of TAFE
      - -NALGO Education Department
  - -Private
    - -University Sector
      - -
    - -Non University Sector
      - -Austin-Rover Open Learning Unit
      - -YMCA National College
- Dedicated Distance Teaching Institutions
  - -Private
    - -University Sector
      - -International Technical University
      - -Open College Hong Kong (UEA)
    - -Non University Sector
      - -Rapid Results College
      - -ICS Canada Ltd
  - -Public
    - -University Sector
      - -Athabasca OU
      - -Sri Lanka OU
      - -UK OU
    - -Non University Sector
      - -Centre for Continuing Education Ministry of Health, Uganda
      - -Technical Correspondence School, Brisbane

3.14.1 Athabasca University, Canada, provides an example of a "dedicated" distance teaching institution. The description below is of its governance and organisational structure.

The Organisation of Athabasca University

The chief academic and administrative officer is the President of the University. The University has three Vice-presidents, each of whom heads one of the University's three operational divisions: Learning Services, which is responsible for academic functions; University Services, which provides administrative services in support of the University's academic operations; and Finance and Facilities, which is responsible for financial affairs and facilities planning.

From an operational point of view, the University's two primary academic functions, course development and programme services delivery, cut across organisational lines .... Currently, the programme areas, which are Liberal Studies and Administrative Studies, administer the production of courses and exercise budgetary control of this process was In addition, the programme areas provide much of the subject matter expertise required to produce course content. Courses are delivered and administered by course co-ordinators who are academic staff within the programme areas.

Other units involved in the production of courses are: Instructional Development, which provides expertise in making courses instructionally effective; Editorial Services, which ensures that subject matter is presented in clear, readable English; and Media Services, which provides expertise in the effective visual presentation of course content and is responsible for the physical production of course materials. Units primarily concerned with providing support services to students are: Regional and Tutorial Services, which is responsible for administering the system of tutors and for co-ordinating the use of various delivery mechanisms such as television, radio, teleconferencing, and satellite; Student Development Services, which provides students with information and advice on career and educational planning; and the Registry, which is responsible for student administration and student records. The Library, Computing Services, and Course Materials also provide students with support services. There are other units within the University that essentially provide administrative support to instructional activities or are concerned with institutional management.

(Source: Shale, Doug 'Athabasca University, Canada', in Greville Rumble and Keith Harry, **The Distance Teaching Universities**, 1982, pp 47-48)

3.14.2 In contrast to Athabasca University, the Correspondence and Open Studies Institute (COSIT, formerly COSU) of the University of Lagos is representative of the second type of institution. The unit proposed by the University Senate in 1975 was to be independent of any single faculty and would eventually provide correspondence programmes for all faculties and centres of the university. Its organisational structure is described below.

The organisation of COSU, University of Lagos

COSU was created as part of the Continuing Education Centre (CEC), a service arm offering extension activities to the population outside the University through whatever internal teaching faculty might seem to be appropriate. The existing CEC, which offered such extension activities mainly through short intensive in-service residential courses, became the Further Education Unit. The COSU was represented on the academic boards of all the faculties with which it was jointly producing programmes and, from 1977, was also represented in the Senate by its director. Certain staff members of subject departments with which COSU was to produce courses, moreover, were seconded full-time to COSU for fixed periods and then returned to their departments without loss of status and without damage to their promotional prospects. Agreements were reached between COSU and faculties determining the balance between such full-time secondments and the employment on a part-time basis of staff members who carried a full internal teaching load.

A Senior Assistant Registrar and an Accounts Assistant were recruited for, and seconded full-time to, COSU to supervise the administrative and financial concerns of the Unit.

COSU was also empowered to employ outsiders on a part-time basis as tutors, course assessors and even course writers (it was agreed that at least 60% of any course should be written by internal university staff).

The purpose of this constitutional structure was to tie the programme very tightly to an existing and established university, and to enable it to capitalise on the part-time capacities and interest of existing university staff and facilities (and in a few cases, where necessary, non-university staff and facilities), both in Lagos and elsewhere.

(Source: Dodds, T, **Administration of Distance-Teaching Institutions, Case Studies,** International Extension College 1983, pp 77-79)

3.14.3 The principle point of distinction between the two broad sub-divisions hinges around the degree of autonomy the respective institutions enjoy. Figure 3.2 elaborates upon this concept.

Figure 3.2: Degree of autonomy of distance-teaching institutions.

Component	Full Control — Degree of Autonomy — No Control
Finance	----x-----------------------------------*----
Examinations and Accreditation	----x-----------------------------------*----
Curriculum and Materials	----x-------------------------*-------------
Delivery and Support Systems	-----------x----------------------------*----

x Dedicated Institutions
* Institutions located within conventional establishments

Generally speaking, dedicated distance-teaching institutions have a greater degree of autonomy in all areas while institutions that form part of conventional establishments tend to have less autonomy. Nonetheless, it is important to note that all distance-teaching institutions have to enter into cooperative and collaborative arrangements, either intra-institutionally or inter-institutionally, to function effectively.

In addition, organisational structures should be regarded as dynamic. They can and do evolve to reflect and capitalise on changing contextual conditions. For example, Armidale College of Advanced Education in Australia orginally set up as a conventional institution, is not only now a 'dual-mode' body (ie it has both internal and external students) but also its distance learners outnumber their conventionally taught counterparts.

3.14.4 In our survey we asked participants to classify their institutions according to a fourfold division: distance-teaching institutions, conventional institutions with a distance-teaching department, conventional institutions developing or planning to establish a distance-teaching programme, and an open category for institutions who felt they did not fit into any of the categories above. We asked these institutions to specify the nature of their institutions. Upon analysis, it was often possible to re-allocate institutions into one of the three primary alternatives.

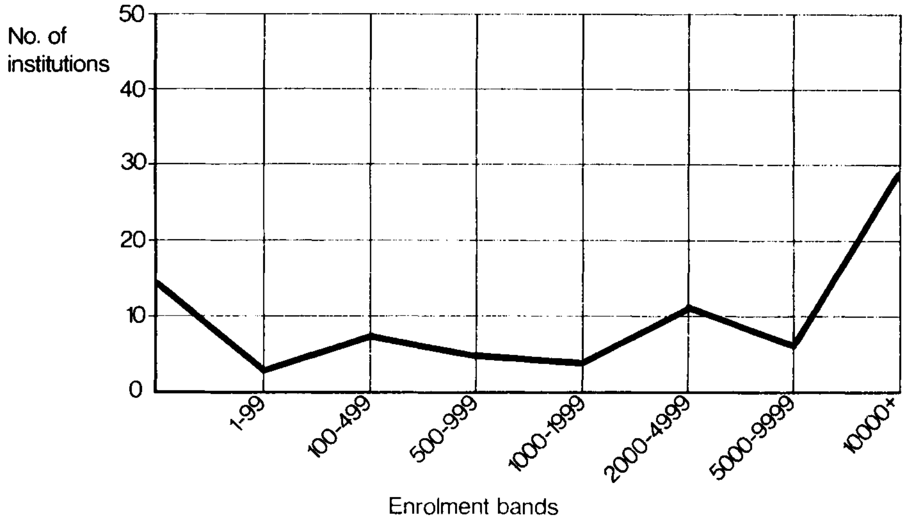
A total of 81 institutions (26%) were classified as dedicated. An additional 158 institutions (52%) were placed in the second category. A further 47 institutions (15%) said they were developing or planning to establish a distance learning programme. The remaining 20 institutions (7%) were hybrids that did not fit easily into the classification.

The line graphs in Figure 3.3 overleaf show the numbers of institutions in each category and the size of their student enrolments.

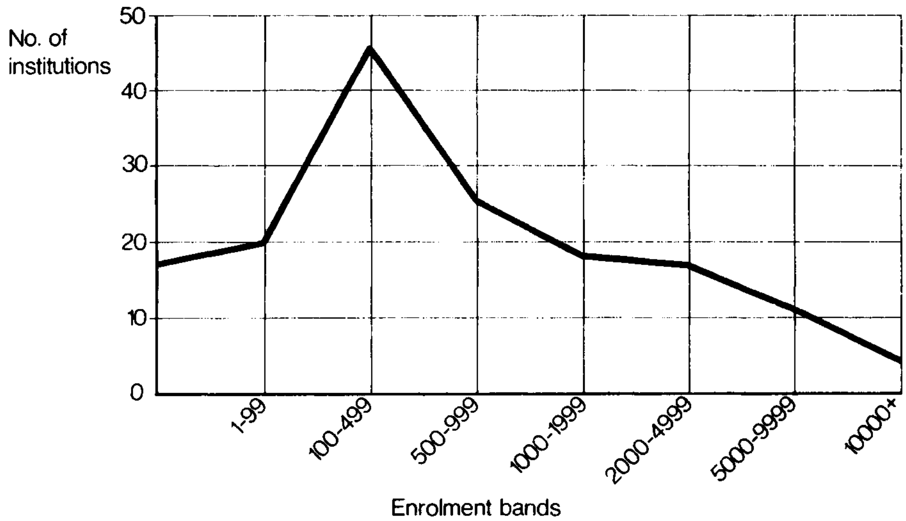
Figure 3.3

Types of institutions and the size of the student enrolment

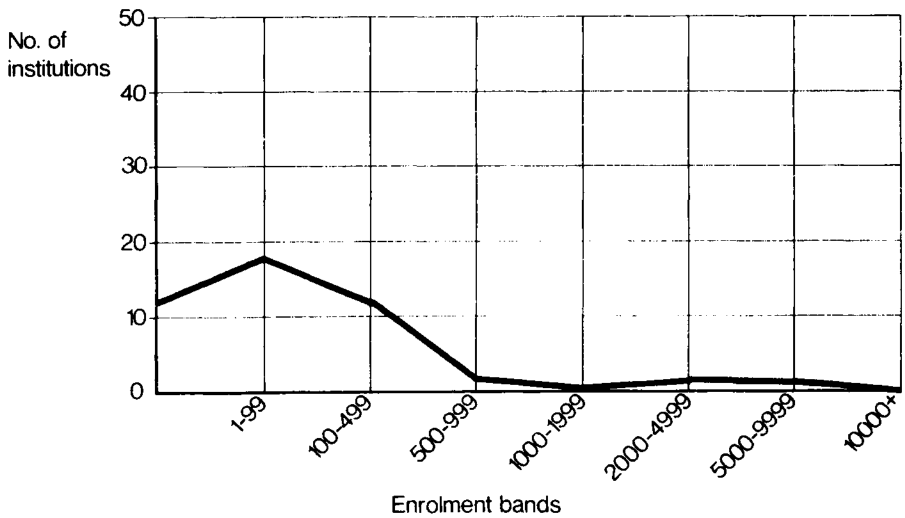
Type A 'Dedicated' (N = 81) Distance teaching institutions



Type B (N = 158) Conventional Institutions with a distance teaching department/unit/programme



Type C (N = 47) Conventional institutions developing or intending to develop a distance teaching programme



3.15 Staffing Patterns

3.15.1 We also collected information relating to the staffing levels in different institutions. We asked each institution to give us the total number of full-time professional staff employed, along with the total number of staff employed full-time for open learning and the total number employed part-time for open learning. Many institutions interpreted this question differently and it has been difficult to delineate patterns.

Some well-established institutions rely more on having full-time tutors, for example, New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute. Many distance-teaching institutions rely very largely on part-time professional staff. Examples are Athabasca University and the University of Waterloo. Dual mode institutions do not usually allocate staff exclusively to distance or conventional programmes and employ very few part-time staff (for example, Deakin University).

Table 3.6 overleaf presents figures from selected Commonwealth institutions that illustrate the enormous variations between institutions.

The headings relating to staff in Table 3.6 should be interpreted as follows:

Total Distant Student Numbers	The total number of open or distant learning students registered at the institution
Full-time Professional Open Learning	The number of full-time academic staff concerned with the provision of open or distant learning
Part-time Open Learning	The total number of part-time staff involved in the open or distant learning programmes (and not necessarily based at the institution)
Total Staff in Institution	The total full-time staff based at the institution, including non-teaching or non-open learning staff

Table 3.6: Staffing Patterns in Selected Commonwealth Institutions +

Institution	Country	Total Distant Student Numbers	Staffing: Full-time Professional Open Learning	Staffing: Part-time Open Learning	Staffing: Total Staff at Institution
Athabasca University	Canada	13,160	51	215	108
University of Waterloo	Canada	6,248	4	270	1,445
Laurentian University	Canada	1,500	5	70	290
University of Malaysia Centre for Off Campus Studies	Malaysia	2,200	40	250	1,000
UK Open University	United Kingdom	126,756	687	5,219	1,363
Rapid Results College	United Kingdom	30,000	60	400	60
New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute	New Zealand	32,000	370	30	400
Deakin University	Australia	4,619	260	25	260
Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education	Australia	4,917	300	50	490

+ Since institutions have interpreted questions differently, particularly those concerning numbers of professional staff, this table should be seen only as an indicator of great differences in staffing patterns.

3.15.2 Institutions were asked to indicate how students were charged for the courses they take. Three different approaches were adopted (sometimes with more than one at the same institution): courses that were available free, courses that were available at a subsidised rate and courses that were available at full rate. 24% of the institutions indicated that some or all of their courses were available at no cost to the student, 36% indicated that some or all of their courses were available at a subsidised rate and 50% indicated that some or all of their courses were available at full cost. It is important to note that fee patterns are largely a reflection of government policies. For example, Australian government policy at present encourages the use of open and distance learning,and 82% of the institutions from Australia indicated that they were able to make some or all of their courses available free to the student. In comparison, only 7% of the Canadian and 11% of the United Kingdom institutions indicated that this was the case.

3.16 **Staff Training**

3.16.1 In our visits and discussions, the need for more staff training was mentioned frequently, possibly more often than anything else. We have made an extensive study of training, both by questioning institutions on what training they already provide, and by commissioning a background paper on training activities. (Paper 13)

3.16.2 Institutions were asked if they had published any staff training manuals and whether they were available to other institutions. A total of 85 indicated that they had done so and named subject areas and 54 of these stated that the manuals were available to other institutions - a little known treasure chest of training material.

3.16.3 Some training for distance educators is available internationally on a regular basis. Courses we have identified (for full details, see paper 13), are as follows:

a) **Courses taught at a distance**

South Australian College of Advanced Education, Diploma in Distance Education;

Association of European Correspondence Schools, Diploma in Correspondence Education.

There is also a proposal for a joint external Diploma and Masters Degree in Distance Education currently under discussion between the University of London Committee of External Degrees and the International Extension College. In addition it is understood that Athabasca University is planning a training course. Three British higher education institutions offer courses which include elements of distance education: Dundee College of Education, Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Technology and Certificate courses in Materials Design and Course Design, Jordanhill College of Education, Diploma in Educational Technology, and University of Surrey Masters Degree and Diploma in the Practice of Higher Education.

b) **Courses taught by conventional means**

International Extension College/University of London Institute of Education: Distance Teaching for Developing Countries (annual 4 month course);

The UK Open University/British Broadcasting Corporation: Educational Television (Annual 3 month course).

There is also a Masters course in Educational Planning and Development for Developing Countries offered by the University of London Institute of Education/International Extension College, with an option in distance teaching, which allows students to take a paper and do a dissertation in distance teaching. A number of other post-graduate courses in adult education include brief treatment of distance education.

3.16.4 Several other courses are available nationally, in series or on a one-off basis. There have also been some modest regional activities.

3.16.5 Overall, given the great demand for staff training, little is available. The main demands are for:

* regional training facilities,
* short specialist courses, eg for tutors, editors, audio-writers and producers, administrators, as well as course writers who more commonly receive training,
* facilities for training trainers.

3.17 Attitudes to International Action

3.17.1 Institutions were asked if foreign students living in other countries could enrol in their courses. A total of 180 (59%) of the 306 institutions who replied indicated that this was possible. We do not know how many students have taken up the opportunity to enrol but on the whole we believe the numbers to be small.

Despite the apparent commitment of public institutions to this policy, we have found little evidence of any positive action to encourage students to avail themselves of these opportunities. Many private commercial colleges, however, encourage foreign enrolments; we know little about the quality of service they provide.

3.17.2 **Materials available for Sale or Exchange**

Of the 306 returns, 164 institutions (54%) indicated that their materials were available for sale or exchange. Our investigation of collaboration, documented in the regional papers, shows how seldom this takes place.

3.17.3 **Membership of Associations**

A number of associations have been established to promote the use of open and distance learning. In our survey, 63% of institutions belong to one or more such organisations. The following associations have been identified:

a) **National Associations**

New Zealand: DEANZ (Distance Education Association of New Zealand): membership is open to staff of distance education institutions and students or their parents. The organisation is new, and is actively concerned with developing distance education in the national context (see also Regional paper 7).

Canada: CADE (Canadian Association of Distance Education): CADE is actively concerned to 'foster excellence in the provision of distance education services in Canada'. It organises seminars, some by teleconferencing, and publishes a newsletter and journal among other activities.

India: NCCE (National Council for Correspondence Education): once active, the Council appears to be moribund (see paper 6).

United Kingdom: Open Learning Federation: holds conferences and issues a newsletter.

Kenya: A national association was formed in 1986 but no details have yet been received.

b) **Regional Associations**

ASPESA (Australia and South Pacific External Studies Association): A well established association, which today focusses mainly on pedagogical issues of teaching methodologies and delivery modes. It publishes a newsletter and an internationally respected journal, **Distance Education.** It organises biennial conferences and a number of smaller workshops and seminars. It pays particular attention to fostering joint ventures between member institutions.

AECS (Association of European Correspondence Schools): Formed in 1985 from a merger of two organisations, it sees itself as a forum for exchange of information and ideas on current practice and developments. It runs workshops, publishes a journal, and offers by correspondence a diploma in correspondence education.

Other regional associations that exist on paper are DECASIA (The Distance Education Council for Asia), DLA (The Distance Learning Association for Southern Africa), and AADE (The African Association for Distance Education). It seems that none of these are sufficiently active to have any impact on distance education at present, although DLA in its heyday was very effective (see paper 1).

c) **International Associations**

ICDE (The International Council for Distance Education): Established as the International Council for Correspondence Education in 1938, ICDE is recognised as the major organisation for distance education. It organises regular world conferences, promotes research, publishes a regular bulletin, and establishes and maintains networks and interest groups concerned with different aspects of distance education. It tries to work in association with regional and national associations of distance education. Its membership is large with over 500 delegates at the last world conference.

With the growth of ICDE, there are moves at present to establish a more compact and exclusive international association of open universities. No details are yet available.

All these associations are voluntary, with no permanent paid staff. Only a few are effective, and thus their impact on distance education is, and has been, sporadic and limited.

3.18 Summary and Conclusions

3.18.1 We tried to identify the main areas of use of distance and open education in the Commonwealth. We discovered that much more was happening that we expected, and the amount of data we received made detailed analysis difficult. We were able, however, to identify interesting and unexpected regional differences and were surprised to find that business studies was the most frequently offered subject, and that the two key sectors of agriculture and health were among the least frequent.

3.18.2 The information we received about numbers and categories of students was disappointing. We have provided an estimate of numbers studying at present, but believe that the experience in countries well advanced in their use of open and distance education suggests that the potential is far greater. The regional papers (Papers 1 to 8) give accounts of this, indicating that the perceived demand is extremely varied. This may well be due to the tendency of organisations to believe that there is only demand for what they are already offering. In Chapter 6 we suggest some subjects that could generate a significant further demand.

3.18.3 In considering the main media used, it is not surprising that textual materials were more in evidence that all other media. The significant use of audio media results almost certainly from the ubiquity of audio cassette players throughout the world and the attraction of audio as a media - offering portability, compactness and a means of coping with language and literacy difficulties. What was undoubtedly a surprise to the project team was the very poor use of radio and television within open and distance education. A number of possibilities can be posited: that the costs of these media are too high (which seems unlikely in the case of radio), lack of access for institutions to the (often centrally controlled) broadcasting services, the supplementary nature of such media within a course of study leading to a view that on a cost-benefit basis they are a luxury. It was not possible within the time available to form a clear picture of the reasons for these findings.

3.18.4 With regard to the structure and organisation of the institutions contacted, we were interested to note that over half of all the institutions in our survey were conventional educational institutions with a distance teaching unit or department. Although open universities are receiving much of the current open learning limelight, and do provide for the majority of students, it is important to acknowledge that dedicated open and distance learning institutions are very much in the minority (only 26%). We believe that more attention needs to be paid to the role of these small but vital mixed-mode institutions.

3.18.5 Whilst it is well documented that staff training is an essential aspect of institutional development, we were surprised at the extent to which this was both acknowledged and sought by the institutions contacted. A clear picture of expressed needs emerged and recommendations are made in the Chapter 6 and in Paper 13.

3.18.6 Finally, whilst we found very positive attitudes to international activity and collaboration, we found very little happening in practice. Most institutions are involved in little or none, and the accounts we received on the various international organisations concerned to promote open and distance education suggest that most of these are rather weak. Chapter 5 addresses the range of collaborative possibilities in more detail in relation to examples drawn from current practice.