



QAA

Audit of overseas provision, India

Overview report

July 2009

Acknowledgements

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India



Map showing audit team destinations

Introduction

The primary responsibility for academic standards and quality in UK higher education rests with individual universities or colleges. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) checks that they are meeting their responsibilities for the education of students; its remit does not include the evaluation of their research activity. QAA identifies good practice and makes recommendations for improvement. It provides public information about quality and standards in higher education mainly by publishing reports resulting from a peer review process of audits and reviews, which are conducted by teams largely made up of senior, experienced staff from UK higher education institutions and the professions.

One of QAA's activities is to carry out quality audits of collaborative arrangements between UK universities and their partner organisations in other countries. The purpose of these audits is to provide information on how well the UK institutions are maintaining academic standards and the quality of education in their partnerships. In 2008-09, QAA conducted 10 such audits involving collaborations by UK universities with partners in India, as listed below. These involved discussions between the QAA team and appropriate staff and students at both the UK university and the partner organisation.

- University of Bradford and
Institute for Integrated Learning in Management, Gurgaon, Delhi
- Cranfield University and
Institute of Clinical Research India, Delhi
- De Montfort University, Leicester and
Daly College Business School, Indore
- Edinburgh Napier University and
Institute of Advanced Management, Kolkata
- University of Huddersfield and
Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad
- London South Bank University and
Loyola College, Chennai
- Oxford Brookes University and
Institute for International Management and Technology, Gurgaon, Delhi
- University of Plymouth and
International Maritime Institute, Greater Noida, Delhi
- Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh and
International Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata
- Staffordshire University and
University of Madras, Chennai

To give a more extensive picture of UK collaborative arrangements in India, QAA has also prepared eight case studies on particular aspects of institutional partnerships and three thematic studies on broader patterns emerging from the review. The case studies are based on information provided by the universities concerned, according to a format suggested by QAA. There were also discussions between QAA and appropriate staff at the UK universities and their partner organisations. QAA selected the topic to be explored through each case study, and also the title, as listed below:

- **Appraising a tried and tested approach**
University of Central Lancashire and
Padmashree Dr D Y Patil Vidyapeeth University, Mumbai

- **Realising equal responsibility for quality**
Coventry University and
M S Ramaiah School of Advanced Studies, Bangalore
- **Shaping a new venture**
Kingston University and
Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal Institute of International Studies, Mumbai
- **Facilitating access to higher education**
University of London External System and
Russell Square International College, Mumbai
- **A link in abeyance**
Northumbria University and
Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research, Mumbai
- **Managing growth**
Nottingham Trent University and
Pearl Academy of Fashion, Delhi
- **Impact of change in the UK**
University of Sunderland and
AIMA College, Kochi
- **Shifting the balance of responsibilities**
University of Warwick and
Confederation of Indian Industry, Mumbai
- **Reducing the distance**
A thematic study on how UK universities and their Indian partners facilitate contact between their respective staff and students, 'reducing the distance' between them
- **Staff development**
A thematic study
- **Student exposure to the workplace**
A thematic study

In preparation for the audits, senior QAA staff, including the Director of Reviews and the Head of International Affairs, travelled to India in November 2008 and met representatives from the following government bodies:

- Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD)
- University Grants Commission (UGC)
- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)
- National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

QAA is grateful to these organisations and their representatives for providing important background information for the audits.

The QAA team comprised six auditors and three QAA assistant directors. Visits to the UK universities were made in summer 2008 (in relation to case studies) and in autumn 2008 (in relation to audits). The visit to India took place between 27 January and 14 February 2009. The team was based in Delhi during the first week and then split into three sub-teams, one based in Chennai, another in Kolkata and a third that travelled to Indore and Aurangabad. The whole team regrouped in Mumbai to complete the visit programme. The schedule included partner visits relating to both audits and case studies. As part of the cooperation between the UK and India in the area of quality assurance, some of the case study visits, but not the audit visits,

were attended by a representative from NAAC. The 10 audit reports and 11 case studies were published on the QAA website in June 2009.

This overview, as well as briefly introducing each of the audits and case studies, gives a short description of the landscape of higher education in India at the time of the audit so as to give a better understanding of the context within which the various collaborative arrangements are operating. It also provides some analysis of the extent of activity by UK universities in India, based on survey results obtained before the audit. The general themes emerging from the audits and case studies are highlighted and the report ends with some conclusions about the effective management of overseas provision.

Higher education in India

Higher education in India covers all post-secondary education (beyond Class 12) and includes three levels of qualifications: bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral and other research degrees. Degree awarding powers are vested in universities, while colleges offer programmes leading to the degrees of universities to which they are affiliated. Colleges mainly offer undergraduate education, whereas universities also offer postgraduate education and conduct research. Open universities offer distance-learning programmes.

Constitutional responsibilities for education are shared between parliament and the state legislatures. Both can authorise the establishment of universities, public or private, while the national government can grant 'deemed' university status to an institution initially founded as a public or private institution. Government responsibility for higher education resides with the Ministry of Human Resources Development, which has a specific Department of Higher Education. An analysis of universities by type, as at September 2008, is given in the table below.

Central universities	25
State universities	230
Deemed universities (a status conferred by the Indian government)	113
Universities of national importance (Centre)	33
Universities of national importance (State)	5
Private universities	28
Total	434

UGC, November 2008, Higher Education in India: Issues related to Expansion, Inclusiveness, Quality and Finance

In addition, there are over 20,000 colleges, the majority affiliated to state universities. In terms of ownership, colleges may be categorised as public or private; however, funding arrangements make it difficult to distinguish between public and private higher education because of the self-financing activities of public institutions and because privately owned institutions may receive government aid. In recent years there has been significant growth in the number of private institutions, including some which award qualifications in collaboration with foreign universities. The owners of private institutions may be individuals or families, religious endowments or the corporate sector, often through charitable trusts. Similarly there is no longer a clear divide between the education and training sectors, as some training providers have entered into partnership with higher education institutions.

Official statistics indicate that in November 2008 over 11.5 million students were enrolled in universities and colleges. Latest available information for 2005-06 shows 13 per cent were enrolled in university departments and 87 per cent in affiliated colleges. Analysed by level of study, undergraduate programmes accounted for 89 per cent of enrolments, taught postgraduate programmes 9 per cent and research programmes 1 per cent, with the remainder being diplomas and certificates. A breakdown of student enrolments by subject area is given below.

Arts	46%
Science	20%
Commerce and Management	18%
Engineering and Technology	7%
Medicine and Veterinary Science	4%
Law	3%
Other	2%

UGC Annual Reports 2006-07

The high level of enrolments in arts-related subjects means that the pool of graduates specifically trained for the workforce is relatively small. There is 'pent-up' demand for employment-orientated programmes, which is being met by an increasing number of private institutions operating in India (some in partnership with foreign institutions) and by students going abroad for higher education, either independently or through collaborative arrangements allowing transfer to the foreign institution.

A number of 'apex' bodies, responsible to the Ministry of Human Resources Development, oversee higher education institutions, some with a remit to concentrate on particular subject areas and professional disciplines. Those with relevance to this report are the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

UGC is the apex body that grants recognition to all higher education qualifications and regulates the use of university title. It has overall responsibility for the coordination and maintenance of the standards of teaching, examination and research in universities, which in turn have responsibility for assuring the quality of education in their affiliated colleges. The National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC), established by UGC in 1994 as an independent body, has responsibility for quality assurance. NAAC evaluates and grades institutions according to key criteria; it offers accreditation to both public and private universities and colleges, although accreditation is not mandatory.

AICTE is the apex body for a broad range of technical subjects, including engineering and technology, business and management, hotel and catering management, architecture and town planning, pharmacy, and applied arts and crafts. Its responsibilities cover planning, coordination, promotion of quality, and maintenance of standards of technical education. The National Board of Accreditation (NBA), established by AICTE in 1994 as an independent body, has responsibility for the quality assurance of technical education. NBA evaluates institutions and programmes according to criteria specified by AICTE and recommends the recognition and de-recognition of institutions. NBA has become a provisional member of the Washington Accord, which recognises the equivalence of engineering programmes accredited by its members.

AICTE introduced regulations in 2005 relating to foreign institutions imparting technical education in India. These apply to awards at all levels from diplomas to doctorates, and to all educational activities carried out by a foreign institution, whether through a collaborative

arrangement or otherwise and whether existing or planned. The regulations also stipulate that the partner organisation in India must be recognised by AICTE. Under these regulations foreign institutions are required to obtain approval from AICTE for their operations in India and must submit details of facilities, staffing, fees, courses, curricula and funding arrangements for a period of three years, to be verified by a site visit. At present there is no legislation that mandates the UGC (in its capacity as the body granting recognition to higher education qualifications) to oversee the implementation of AICTE regulations, but there have been cases where Indian courts have upheld AICTE's attempts to close programmes not meeting its requirements.

Foreign institutions operate within a complex regulatory environment in India. Currently there is no mechanism for officially recognising qualifications awarded by foreign institutions on the basis of programmes delivered entirely in India. This is in contrast to the situation where students complete their programmes abroad and qualify for an award from the foreign institution. There is no barrier to foreign institutions entering into collaborative arrangements that lead to unrecognised qualifications, and these qualifications may in practice be valued by students and employers despite their lack of official recognition, but there are adverse implications for students in terms of their opportunities for public sector employment and progression to further study in India. Legislation that would introduce a regulatory framework for foreign institutions operating in India has been the subject of parliamentary debate, but has not reached the statute books. Since the 2009 general election in India there is a renewed expectation that higher education will be opened up to foreign educational providers.

This section draws heavily on information contained in the following publications:

NUEPA (2009) *'Facing Global Challenges: the New Dynamics for Higher Education'*, National University for Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, February 2009.

Agarwal P (2007) *'Private Higher Education in India: Status and Prospects'*, The Observatory on borderless higher education, July 2007.

Bhushan S (2006) *'Foreign Education Providers in India: Mapping the Extent and Regulation'*, The Observatory on borderless higher education, March 2006.

Collaborative activity in India by UK higher education institutions

Source information

In July 2007, QAA conducted a survey of 170 UK higher education institutions, in order to establish the nature and extent of collaborative arrangements in place between such UK institutions and partner organisations in India. Response to this survey was very good, reaching just over 95 per cent, and the results were used as the basis for selecting particular links to be looked at more closely in the QAA audit of collaboration with India. The 2007 survey was repeated in May 2008, when the UK higher education institutions were requested to provide updated information. Taking the two surveys together, the response rate was 99 per cent, so summary information drawn from the surveys should be complete and undistorted by non-responders. The results of the surveys, given below, combine the results of both stages and describe the situation found for the academic year 2007-08.

Scope of the survey

QAA adopts a broad definition of collaborative provision¹. For the purposes of this analysis, collaborative arrangements deemed to be within the scope of the survey have been classified into the following types:

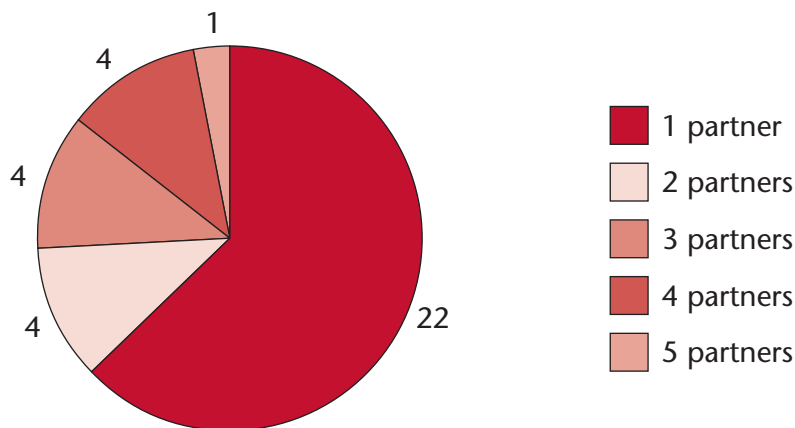
- programmes studied entirely in India (in-country)
- programmes studied partially in India and partially in the UK (twinning)
- programmes studied in India that lead to a qualification from the Indian partner, giving entry with advanced standing to a programme offered by the UK institution (articulation)
- distance-learning (including e-learning) programmes, offered by the UK institution to students in India with learning support provided by the Indian partner (distance learning).

Collaborations involving non award-bearing programmes, such as contribution by a UK institution to the design or teaching of training or continuing professional development courses were deemed to be outside the scope and are not included in the results. The same applies to collaborations solely involving research, without leading to the award of any associated qualification. All the collaborations surveyed involved programmes leading to an award of the UK institution.

Scale of collaborative activity

There were 35 UK universities with active collaborative arrangements that fell within the scope of the survey (a list of these is given at the end of this overview report). Collectively, they had links with a total of 53 Indian partner organisations, covering 135 programmes that were active in 2007-08.

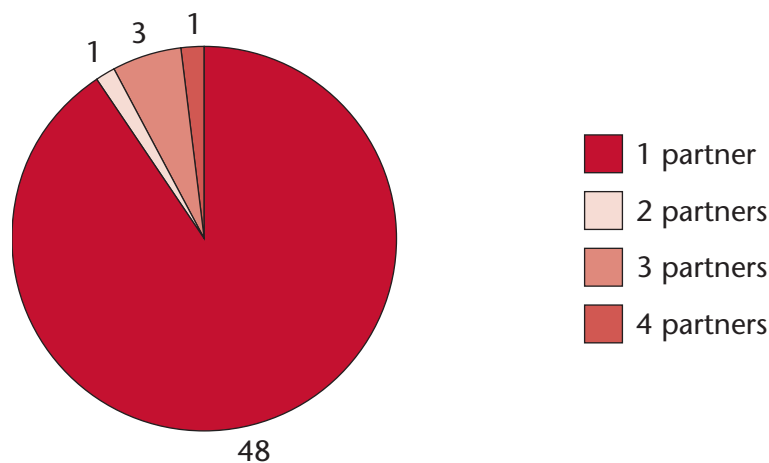
Most universities (22, or 63 per cent) had links with only a single partner in India, but others had multiple partners, with one university having partnerships with five separate Indian organisations. The total number of active partnerships was 63.



Indian partners per UK institution

¹ Collaborative provision denotes educational provision leading to an award (or to specific credit toward an award) of an awarding institution delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation (*Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, QAA 2004.)

Most of the Indian institutions linked with universities in the UK were only associated with one such institution (48 out of the 53, or 90 per cent). However, five Indian institutions had multiple UK partners, with one being involved with four separate UK universities.



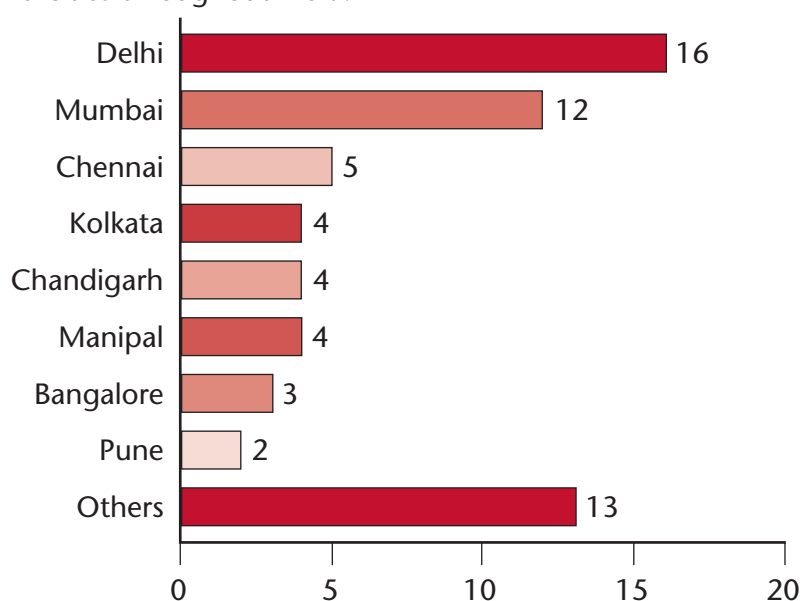
UK partners per Indian institution

In addition to the 63 active partnerships, the survey revealed a further 13 at the planning stage. Of these, five involved UK universities without an existing collaboration in India, while the remaining eight involved UK universities, already with established collaborations in India, that were planning to embark on new collaborations with different partner organisations. As well as entirely new partnerships, extensions of existing partnerships were also being planned. Five of the 35 UK universities (14 per cent) with active collaborative links in 2007-08 had plans to extend these collaborations to new programmes in the near future. Assuming all these plans came to fruition, the number of programmes offered would rise from 135 to 161.

Summarising the position with both active and planned links combined: the survey found 40 UK universities (24 per cent of those surveyed) to have a total of 76 separate partnerships involving 62 Indian partner organisations.

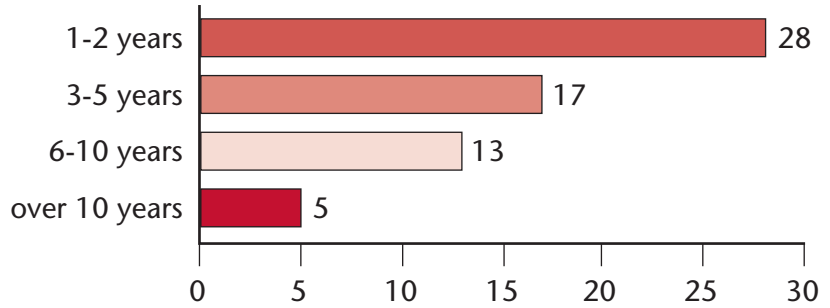
Characteristics of the active collaborations

The survey showed many of the collaborations to be with partners in India's major cities, and approximately 60 per cent were in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai or Kolkata. However, the remainder were widely spread among towns and cities throughout India.



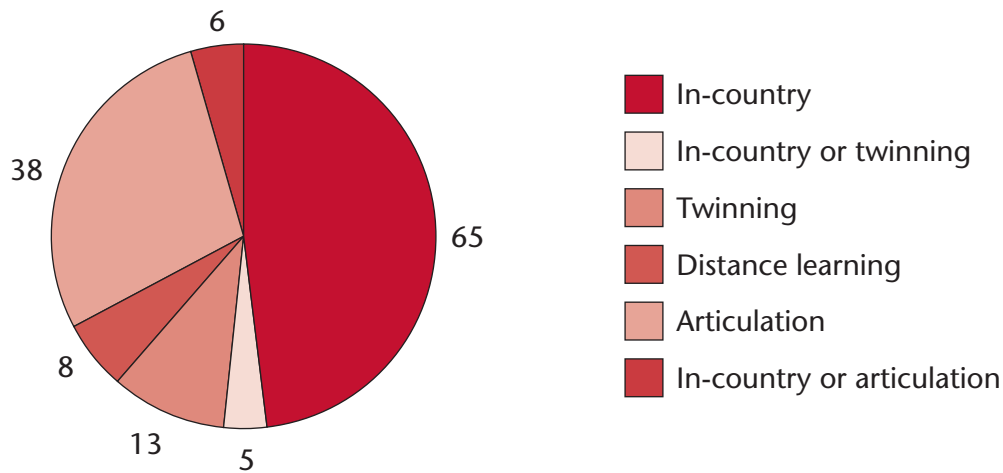
Collaborations shown by geographic location

Nearly half of the collaborations had been started quite recently (within the last one or two years), but there were also many others that were well established, with five having been set up more than 10 years ago. The oldest partnership found in the survey commenced in 1989.



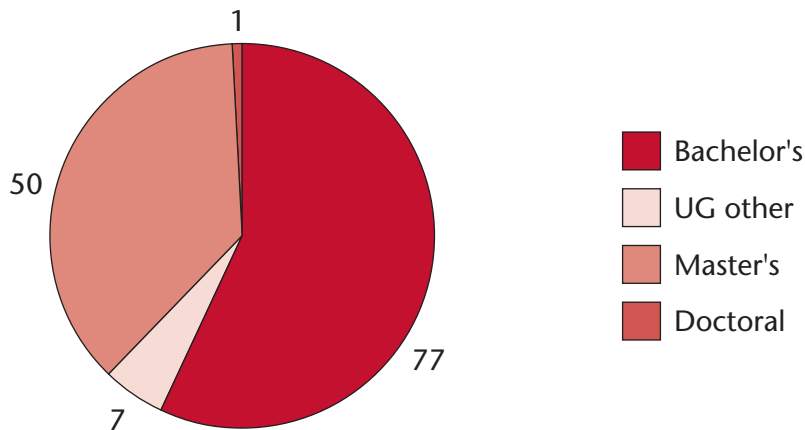
Collaborations shown by age of partnership

The 135 programmes on offer were classified according to the types of collaborative arrangement (as defined above). Approximately half the programmes were studied entirely in India (in-country) and another 6 per cent were distance-learning programmes. Other programmes involved students transferring to the UK, either through articulation arrangements (28 per cent) or twinning arrangements (10 per cent). The pie chart indicates 11 programmes that had options either to be studied in India or in the UK through articulation or twinning arrangements.



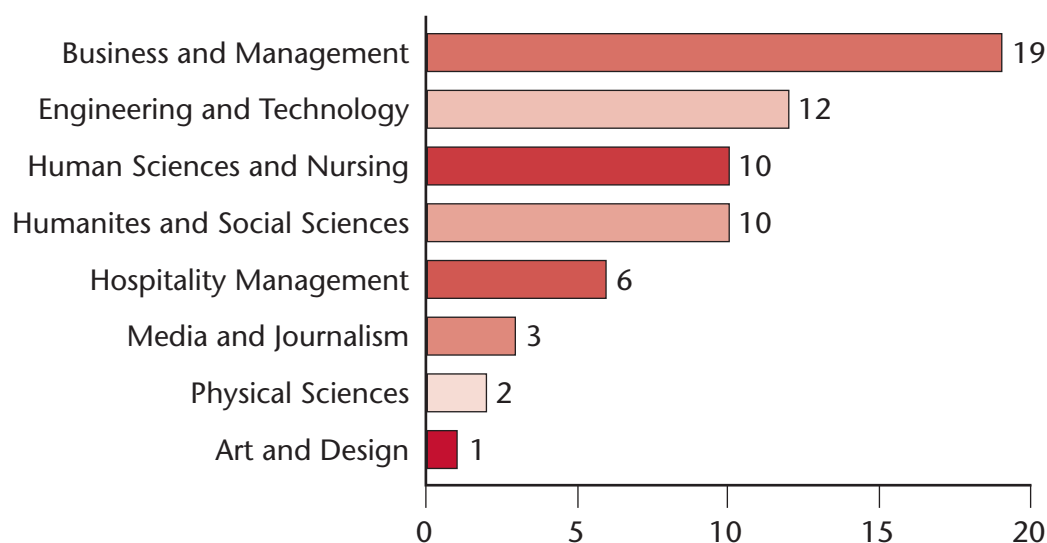
Programmes shown by type of collaboration

The majority of programmes on offer were at undergraduate level - mainly leading to a bachelor's degree. However, 37 per cent of programmes were at master's level.



Programmes shown by level

In terms of the subject areas covered by the collaborations, there was a wide range. Business and management was the main subject area in 30 per cent of the collaborations, while engineering and technology accounted for about 20 per cent. The least well-represented subject areas were art and design and the physical sciences.



Collaborations shown by main subject area

The audits in brief

University of Bradford

The University of Bradford has a collaborative arrangement with the Institute for Integrated Learning in Management (IILM), under which it has been approved to deliver five degree programmes leading to the award of BSc (Hons) from the University: Business and Management Studies; Accounting and Finance; Marketing; International Business and Management; and Human Resource Management. IILM has several campuses in northern India, but the audit focused on delivery of the programmes in Delhi. The partnership was established in 1996 and student numbers had grown to around 400 by the time of the audit. IILM regards the link as the cornerstone of its undergraduate provision. The audit identified two main areas of strength: the role of the University's Director of Studies and the close working relationship between the partners. The audit also suggested a number of points for further consideration, particularly in relation to external examining.

Cranfield University

Cranfield University has longstanding links with education organisations in Europe, relating to 'dual awards', but its collaboration with the Institute of Clinical Research, India (ICRI) was its first overseas collaboration to lead to a solely Cranfield award. The University has no other collaborations in India. The collaboration involves the joint delivery by the two institutions of Cranfield's MSc Clinical Research and started in 2006-07. The programme is offered at several ICRI campuses throughout India, which is where most students choose to study, although a small number take up the option to study at Cranfield. The average student intake has been in excess of 400 per year. The collaboration has encountered many problems, which have stemmed from inadequate planning, a failure accurately to assess the staff resources that would be required to run the programme and handle the workload of student assessment, and a failure to control the number of students admitted to the programme to match the resources available. A series of attempts was made to tackle issues as they arose, although the University was slow to grasp the

magnitude of the task. While a situation of stability has not yet been reached, serious steps have been taken to get the management of the programme back under control. The audit was positive about Cranfield's current approach, but found it too soon to see clear evidence of the results.

De Montfort University

De Montfort University, Leicester, has one collaboration in India and this is with Daly College Business School (DCBS), a small private college in Indore, about 500 km north-east of Mumbai. It involves the delivery by DCBS of De Montfort's BA (Hons) Business Studies; there are currently about 150 students. The course is delivered according to a '2+1' model, in which students follow the first two years of the course in India and then transfer to the UK for the final year at De Montfort. However, the University has recently launched a '3+0' option, under which all three years of the course are studied at DCBS. The audit highlighted a number of good points about the collaboration, including the regular and reciprocal staff visits, the careful oversight of student admissions by the University, and the high quality of the information about the course made available to students.

Edinburgh Napier University

Edinburgh Napier University's collaboration with the Institute of Advanced Management (IAM) in Kolkata and Goa is one of a number of links with institutions in China, Malaysia and India. The main focus of this collaboration is the delivery by IAM of the third year of the University's BA Hospitality Management, leading to an ordinary degree. Applicants are normally required to have completed successfully the first two years of IAM's Diploma in Hospitality Administration. Student numbers have grown steadily: 76 students were admitted in 2006, 114 students in 2007 and 191 in 2008. The audit highlighted a number of good points about the link including the comprehensiveness and clarity of the collaboration agreement, the effectiveness of the University's first cohort review process and the frequency and usefulness of visits to IAM by University staff.

University of Huddersfield

The University of Huddersfield has one collaboration in India, with the Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad (IHMA), and this dates back to 1996. IHMA has important links to Tata Enterprises, ultimate owner of the Taj hotel group, and is based close to the Taj Hotel, Aurangabad, some 250 km east of Mumbai. The collaboration involves two programmes (one in Hotel Management and one in Culinary Arts), designed and delivered by the Institute, but which Huddersfield has approved, such that students successfully completing a programme may be awarded a Huddersfield degree. Currently, student numbers on the two programmes total 550. The audit highlighted a number of good points about the collaboration, including the arrangements for academic and administrative liaison between the institutions, and the effective use of external examining, both in securing standards and raising the quality of provision.

London South Bank University

London South Bank University has one collaboration in India, with Loyola College in Chennai. It involves the delivery by Loyola College of the first semester of two of the University's awards: MSc International Business (established in 1999 as part of a European Union-India programme) and MSc Corporate Governance. There are currently 26 students from Loyola College on these programmes. Students progress to the UK to complete the second semester and their dissertation after having taken examinations at the end of the first semester. The audit highlighted a number of good points about the collaboration, including the regular communication and visits between the partners; the extensive induction provided to students; the opportunities for students to learn about international business in an international context; and the rigour of assessment processes.

Oxford Brookes University

Oxford Brookes University has one collaboration in India, with the Institute for International Management and Technology (IIMT), a small private college in Gurgaon, near Delhi. It developed in 2000 from an initiative by the owner of Radisson hotels in India, who wished to improve the qualifications available to the hospitality industry. The collaboration involves the delivery by IIMT of four of the University's awards: BSc (Hons) Hotel and Restaurant Management, BBA (Hons) Business Administration, BBA (Hons) Retail Management and MSc International Business. The programmes are delivered in their entirety in India, although many students undertake placements in the UK; student numbers are currently about 350. The audit highlighted a number of positive features of the collaboration, including the strong links between the staff at the two institutions, sustained through regular communication, visits and staff development; the transference of the University's learning and teaching approach; and the security of academic standards.

University of Plymouth

The University of Plymouth has an articulation arrangement with the International Maritime Institute (IMI), based just outside Delhi. This is one of three such articulation arrangements the University has with institutions in India and it has another 10 elsewhere, mostly in South-East Asia. IMI runs HND programmes in Nautical Studies and Marine Engineering and these articulate with the final stage of Plymouth degree programmes, respectively in Marine Studies and Marine and Composites Technology. The first students transferred from IMI to Plymouth in 2005-06 and, up to 2008-09, 17 such transfers have been made. The audit identified as a strength the effective arrangements for student progression to the UK, but also suggested that there might be greater consistency in the use by the University of its formal monitoring processes to track the progress of students who have transferred to Plymouth through articulation arrangements.

Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Queen Margaret University's partnership with the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM), in Kolkata, is focused on the delivery by IIHM of the third year of the University's BA International Hospitality Management, leading to an ordinary degree. Applicants are normally required to have completed successfully the first two years of IIHM's Diploma in International Hospitality Administration. Since 1999, student numbers have increased steadily from 19 to a current level of around 90. The University has recently approved programme delivery at another IIHM campus, near Delhi, beginning in September 2008. The audit identified a number of good points about the partnership, including the regular reciprocal visits by staff, robust assessment procedures and students' direct relationship with the University.

Staffordshire University

Staffordshire University's partnership with the University of Madras, Chennai is one of two collaborations it has in India. It commenced in 2004 with support from the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, and involves Staffordshire's MA Sustainable Development, which is taught and assessed by Staffordshire staff using internet-based distance learning. Madras staff support weekend student workshops, which are organised each year in Chennai; they have also become increasingly involved in providing student support and in the development of new modules. There are currently 30 students in the Madras cohort, although there are also students based across India, as well as in Mauritius, the Seychelles and the Maldives. The audit highlighted a number of positive features of the collaboration, including the opportunities for students working in public bodies and non-governmental organisations in India; the effective academic and pedagogic staff development, including the sharing of e-learning strategies; and the quality of regular monitoring and reporting.

Lessons from the audits

Partner relations

The importance of a good relationship between the partners can hardly be overstated. Many of the links demonstrated the benefits of this and the audits identified a number of areas of good practice. These centred on regular communication between the partners and regular (often reciprocal) staff visits. In some collaborations the meshing of administrative arrangements between the partners was also highlighted. In cases where recommendations were made by audit teams, these focused on encouraging the UK university to facilitate a greater level of involvement or engagement by the Indian partner organisation in the university's quality assurance processes.

However, the audits warned about the potential dangers of a university relying too heavily on a single person to liaise with and support the partner in India. While such an arrangement can work very well (as was generally the case in the instances seen by the audit team), certain issues have to be considered. These include: provision of cover during absences; succession planning; the possibility that such individuals may lose objectivity; the possibility that such individuals may have to report to themselves in quality assurance processes; and the potential curtailment of the partner's ability to develop and engage directly with quality assurance processes.

Some important aspects of partner relations have been made on the subject of thematic studies: electronic links to improve communications for both staff and students; student links as a means of enabling students in India to identify with the UK university; and staff links, closely associated with the process of staff development (see thematic studies *Reducing the distance* and *Staff development*). In the audits these aspects were usually highlighted as positive features, but there were some recommendations encouraging more systematic staff development arrangements.

Approval procedures

The audits of several partnerships found positive features in the procedural documentation and the guidance made available relating to the establishment of overseas collaborative arrangements. However, in several cases, audits also drew attention to the importance of understanding the risks associated with this process, both at the start of a new partnership and at different stages of a partnership's development. There is a need to make sure appropriate approval procedures are in place for undertaking due diligence of a partner organisation, including an assessment of the 'strategic fit' between the partners, as distinct from a focus on the academic and operational considerations relevant to delivering a particular programme. There is also a need to take a detached view of potential risks consequent upon the development of existing partnerships, even if these have worked well in the past. For instance, the risks that might arise if a partner were planning to operate from additional sites, or involve 'sister' organisations, or deliver programmes at a higher academic level. The audits found that some universities' procedures were not flexible or subtle enough to identify situations or proposals that might embody such latent risks and to apply appropriate decision-making processes to them.

Most universities have processes for central oversight (often through the direct involvement of a central quality assurance unit) of the establishment of overseas collaborative arrangements, in recognition of the higher perceived risk. The audits found that problems sometimes arose when there was a greater level of responsibility delegated to the faculty level, and made recommendations, in some cases, for a review or strengthening of relevant procedures.

In the context of 'in-country' approval of collaborative arrangements, the audit team was clear in its view that the UK university needed to be actively involved in obtaining the necessary approvals in India, with support from the Indian partner organisation. There were examples in two audits (De Montfort University and University of Huddersfield) where the partners, working in concert, had accorded particular priority to securing recognition in India of their collaborative programmes.

Written agreements

All the collaborations audited were the subject of formal written agreements between the partners, normally signed at an appropriate time before programme delivery was underway. Increasingly, these agreements are drawn up according to standard templates and, more consistently than in the past, include specific provisions to protect students' interests in circumstances such as termination of the agreement. One agreement was singled out by the audit team as being particularly comprehensive and clear (Edinburgh Napier University). However, while agreements were in place, they were not always kept up to date to deal with changes that occurred over time. This was the subject of a recommendation in several cases and is an important point because the existence of a relevant and up-to-date agreement is extremely helpful in guiding the partners should something go wrong in the relations between them. Obviously, trying to apply an agreement that is inappropriate or out of date at such a sensitive point in the relationship may simply exacerbate any disagreements between the partners. Where the reviewing and updating of formal written agreements was tied into a university's cycle of monitoring and review, this problem of agreements being inappropriate or out of date was much reduced.

Equivalence of academic standards (assessment and external examining)

The UK universities had a direct involvement in assessment and external examining, since the collaborative programmes led in all cases to their awards. Criticisms in the audits focused on the need for better engagement between partners in areas such as communication of marking criteria to staff at the partner organisation, dealing with plagiarism and providing written feedback to students. Arrangements for external examining were generally sound, although the need was identified to communicate clearly the respective roles of external examiners in cases where there was both a UK-based and India-based external examiner.

With regard to the record of student achievement, the involvement of the partner organisation in India was normally shown on the transcript, and sometimes also on the certificate. However, the audits still found instances where this information was not included in either document. This tended to be because the UK university was accommodating a preference of the students or the Indian partner that such information be omitted. Nevertheless, the audit team was clear in its view (following the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, published by QAA) that all information necessary to understanding the achievement of the student should be appropriately recorded in certificates and transcripts, and some recommendations were made to this effect.

Assuring the quality of provision (monitoring and review processes)

All the universities audited had well-established processes for monitoring the operation of programmes. Good practice was found in several audits where special attention was given to an early review of progress in the operation of a new partnership or programme, as the prompt resolution of issues or misunderstandings between partners would often prevent the development of greater problems later on. An example of a potential misunderstanding well worth sorting out early on (since it was an issue in more than one audit) is the very different interpretation of the term 'placement' in India compared with the UK: in India placement refers to securing a job after graduation, whereas in the UK it means a planned period of learning, normally outside the institution where the student is enrolled, but forming an integrated part of the programme of study. Placement learning is one aspect of a thematic study (*Student exposure to the workplace*), which also covers work-based learning and student employability.

Where monitoring processes came in for criticism in the audits this tended to centre on the need for consistency between processes employed for overseas collaborative programmes and those employed for in-house programmes - particularly in areas where there might be 'cultural' differences between the UK and India, such as in the operation of student representation or

feedback systems. The other topic that arose several times was the importance of being able to monitor and track the performance of students on overseas collaborative programmes so as to compare this with the performance of students following an equivalent programme entirely at the UK university (or at other locations where the programme was offered).

Information

There were generally suitable procedures in place for the UK university to check publicity material produced by the partner, including relevant websites. The high quality of information made available to students (by both the UK university and the partner organisation) was noted in a number of the audits. Any shortcomings found centred on communication of information about procedures for student appeals and complaints. Information, induction and support for students transferring to the UK university were generally found to be satisfactory and appreciated by students.

Most of the UK universities had compiled a comprehensive register of their collaborative arrangements and programmes, although few were making this publicly available (as would be required to meet the precept of transparency in the *Code of practice*). However, collaborative programmes were publicised through universities' websites, along with all other programmes.

The case studies in brief

Appraising a tried and tested approach

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has a substantial portfolio of overseas collaborations, mainly involving undergraduate degree programmes. These generally operate on the '2+1' model, whereby the first two years are delivered at the overseas partner institution, after which students transfer to UCLan to complete their final year for the award. UCLan has one such partnership in India, with Padmashree Dr DY Patil Vidyapeeth University, Mumbai, to deliver two undergraduate degree programmes in the subject area of Biomedical Sciences. The partnership has worked well, but wishing to expand its activities in India, UCLan is having to assess whether its tried-and-tested '2+1' model is best suited to the developing educational landscape in India. The sustainability of the model may be subject to a number of risks and UCLan has therefore identified several new options through which it might realise its objectives.

Realising equal responsibility for quality

Coventry University has a well-established collaboration with the M S Ramaiah School of Advanced Studies (MSRSAS) in Bangalore, which delivers postgraduate programmes in engineering that lead to Coventry awards. When the collaboration started in 1999, it involved the delivery by MSRSAS of two taught master's programmes that had already been operating for some time at Coventry. As confidence in the partnership has increased over the years, the number of programmes has expanded and the framework within which the collaboration operates has been progressively adjusted to give MSRSAS an increasing level of responsibility for the management of the quality and standards of the provision. This journey from a 'franchise' model to a 'validation' model is described in the case study, focusing on the key factors that have helped to make it successful.

Shaping a new venture

Kingston University has as one of its objectives to recruit more international students and saw the establishment of collaborative arrangements in India as an important part of this strategy, building upon an international portfolio that already included a partnership in Sri Lanka. The University therefore searched for suitable partners in India and has since entered into partnership with Shri Vile Parle Kelavani Mandal (SVKM), a public charitable trust, based in Mumbai, which has founded over 20 independently run educational institutions since being established in 1934. The collaboration involves several undergraduate degree programmes in business and computer science, for which students transfer to Kingston to complete their final year. The case study charts the history of Kingston's collaboration with SVKM, including how it was set up in 2006, and how the partners are dealing with issues that have needed to be resolved. The main issue has been a lower level of student recruitment than anticipated, which has led the partnership to examine carefully the market for its programmes, and to introduce appropriate changes.

Facilitating access to higher education

The University of London External System has a partnership with the Russell Square International College (RSIC) in Mumbai, relating to the delivery of two diplomas, in Economics and Social Science. The academic direction of the programmes, including the syllabus and learning materials, is the responsibility of the London School of Economics, on behalf of the University of London, which confers the awards. The diplomas offered by RSIC are designed to give access to higher education to students who typically do not have standard entry qualifications. Students successful in obtaining a diploma may be eligible to progress to a degree programme through the External System, and a number of RSIC students have graduated having followed this route. RSIC is also trying to develop progression arrangements for graduates so that they are facilitated in applying for master's programmes at universities in India, such as the University of Delhi.

A link in abeyance

Northumbria University established a collaboration, in 2005, with the Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research, based in Mumbai, for the delivery of several of the University's undergraduate degree programmes in business. Welingkar is ranked as one of the top 30 business schools in India and, although student recruitment to the programmes has been below forecast levels, the partnership has developed successfully. However, there has recently been some confusion and uncertainty over the exact requirements for 'in-country' approval of the programmes. This has led to a decision by the partners to suspend recruitment, for the time being, until these issues can be resolved.

Managing growth

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) has a longstanding partnership, dating back to 1995, with the Pearl Academy of Fashion. The collaboration involves NTU in providing validation services to its partner, under which the University verifies the academic standard of each programme and confers the awards, while responsibility for the quality of provision is delegated to Pearl. In the early years, the collaboration centred on a single programme - the Diploma in Integrated Fashion Technology - but more recently undergraduate degree programmes have been introduced in such subjects as Fashion Design and Fashion Merchandising and Production. Student numbers have grown significantly to almost 1,000, and further growth is planned. Programme delivery has expanded from Delhi to two new sites, in Jaipur and Chennai. NTU has also developed further collaborations with 'sister' organisations of Pearl, involving a venture in a new subject area (business) and a neighbouring country (Bangladesh). The case study explores the development of the partnership and how NTU and its partner have worked together to meet the challenges of growth.

Impact of change in the UK

The University of Sunderland has, over the past five years, had partnerships with two different institutions in India to provide a route for students with the Indian diploma in nursing to 'top-up' their qualification to a BSc (Hons) Nursing, awarded by the University. The current collaboration is with AIMA College, Kochi. The programme involves a period studying in India, followed by a transfer to complete in Sunderland. Graduates would normally gain entry to the UK Nursing and Midwifery Council's Overseas Nursing Programme, also offered by Sunderland, successful completion of which would lead to registered nurse status and the prospect of working in the UK health sector. However, the Nursing and Midwifery Council has recently increased the English language competency required for entry to the Overseas Nursing Programme. As a consequence, the attractions of Sunderland's offering, relative to other opportunities available to its prospective students, have been significantly reduced. This has led to a sudden collapse in recruitment to the University's degree programme.

Shifting the balance of responsibilities

The University of Warwick has a long-established partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which is the Indian equivalent of the Confederation of British Industry. It developed from the mutual interests of the parties in bringing together industrial links in India with academic provision from Warwick. The collaboration is centred on Warwick's MSc Engineering Business Management, which is delivered in India by staff employed by the University. The programme is part-time and attracts students from a wide variety of employers. The case study explores the particular challenges of entering into a collaborative arrangement with a non-academic partner and how Warwick is supporting the CII to take on a greater share of responsibility for certain aspects of the programme.

Reducing the distance

UK universities seek to establish efficient and effective communication channels with their partners in India. These channels take a variety of forms, explored in this thematic study under the headings of electronic links, staff links and student links.

Staff development

UK universities attach particular significance to staff development, understood as the induction of staff in the Indian partner organisation into procedures for delivering and assuring the quality of the collaborative programmes. This thematic study considers the various approaches taken to staff development, including where partners see themselves as equals and regard staff development as a joint responsibility.

Student exposure to the workplace

Exposure to the workplace in collaborative programmes can take many forms: work-based learning, placements, sandwich programmes, internships, live projects, or industrial visits. This thematic study examines the topic with reference to students' employability, work-based learning and placement learning.

Observations on the case studies

A number of general points emerged from the case studies as follows.

- In every partnership, the UK university was the sole awarding institution. The responsibility for the curriculum mainly rested with the UK university, although there were a few collaborations where the Indian partner organisation was able to design programmes leading to awards of the UK university. The responsibility for the teaching in India normally lay with the partner organisation.
- Many of the collaborations were in a state of change, either recently implemented or imminently to take place; usually these changes were quite significant, sometimes involving fundamental revision of the collaborative model in operation. Generally, the driver for change has been the increased capacity of the partner organisation to take on more responsibility for the provision.
- Most partnerships were looking to extend provision through mechanisms such as introducing related programmes, moving into different subject areas, and opening new delivery sites. Normally these plans were founded on the increased level of trust that was built up as the partnership developed. However, in a few collaborations existing programmes were being rationalised or replaced in response to disappointing levels of recruitment.
- There was a tendency towards over-optimistic forecasting of student numbers in the early years of collaboration. This was particularly evident in recently established twinning arrangements (under which the first part of the programme is delivered in India, and the final part in the UK). However, whereas intakes in India were lower than predicted, progression rates to the UK were strong. The exception was when students had the option of completing the programme in either India or the UK; then fewer students than forecast actually transferred to the UK.
- The UK universities were concerned that their quality assurance and enhancement processes should be sensitive to the local context and facilitate adjustments to curriculum or teaching strategies to ensure relevance in India.
- The Indian partner organisations were willing to adopt processes from the UK, customising these to their particular needs. Several examples related to pedagogical exchange through staff development programmes, including, in one instance (Nottingham Trent University), joint delivery of the UK university's postgraduate certificate in higher education.
- The importance of employment and career opportunities for students was evident in many of the collaborations. Some related specifically to qualifications for professionals already employed in India. Others were increasingly considering offering placement opportunities for students in the UK, while some facilitated two-way student exchanges using funding from the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI)² for this purpose.
- The UK universities demonstrated a willingness to comply with in-country regulations, but, although there was a general appreciation that the situation was complex, there was by no means a full or common understanding of the requirements.

² The UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) was launched in April 2006 to improve educational links between India and the UK. UKIERI makes funding available to UK and Indian institutions to facilitate the development and delivery of UK degrees and professional qualifications in India through institutional partnerships. The UKIERI project is managed by the British Council.

Conclusion

The survey of collaborative activity in India by UK higher education institutions found that about a quarter of such institutions had collaborations in India, either active or planned. A significant number of these were longstanding links, some more than 10 years old. However, many reflected the fruits of recent efforts to establish partnerships over the last two or three years, with some having utilised funding from the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI).

The case studies provide examples of models of collaboration that have worked well and of those that have encountered problems. They show how partnerships can evolve and adapt over time and how communication and trust between the partners can develop to bring success to a collaboration.

The audits looked more closely at institutional processes for setting up and managing collaborative arrangements. Many of the lessons learned from the audits seem to be fairly obvious points, but the implications of ignoring them are also plain. They can be listed, simply, as follows:

- do necessary due diligence at the outset
- understand risks at every stage and respond
- do not over-delegate responsibilities
- have a written agreement between the partners and keep it up to date
- make realistic forecasts of student numbers and resource requirements
- do not make a single individual the lynchpin of the partnership
- communicate well and visit often
- try to anticipate cultural differences and potential misunderstandings
- review the operations regularly, especially early on
- stay closely involved with assessment and examining
- maintain transparency in all collaborative activities.

Many of the audits showed that these points were being handled well, with some highlighted as areas of good practice. In other cases, the points were mentioned in the context of recommendations for improvement.

There is no evidence that collaborative activity in India has reached any sort of saturation point, although old models may need to be modified to meet changing conditions. Players and potential players will no doubt be watching closely for developments as they may affect foreign educational providers, following the 2009 general election in India. Taken together, the audit reports and case studies provide a useful resource for institutions considering embarking upon a new collaborative venture in India, enabling them to draw on the experiences of others that have gone before.

Annex

UK institutions with partnerships counted in the survey

University of Abertay, Dundee	University of London External System#
University of Bedfordshire	London South Bank University*
University of Bradford*	Northumbria University, Newcastle#
University of Brighton	Nottingham Trent University#
University of Central Lancashire#	Oxford Brookes University*
University of Chester	University of Plymouth*
City University, London	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh*
Coventry University#	University of Reading
Cranfield University*	Staffordshire University*
De Montfort University, Leicester*	University of Sunderland#
Edinburgh Napier University*	Swansea University
University of Glasgow	Thames Valley University
University of Huddersfield*	University of Wales, Newport
Kingston University#	University of Wales Registry
Lancaster University	University of Warwick#
University of Leeds	University of West of England, Bristol
University of Leicester	University of Wolverhampton
Liverpool John Moores University	

* audit report

case study

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