



# Audit of overseas provision

**Anglia Ruskin University  
and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology**

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## Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (Limkokwing).

### The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

1 The primary responsibility for academic standards and quality in United Kingdom (UK) higher education rests with individual universities and colleges. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) checks how well they meet their responsibilities, identifying good practice and making recommendations for improvement. QAA also publishes guidelines to help institutions develop effective systems to ensure students have high quality experiences.

2 Many universities and colleges in the UK offer their higher education programmes to students wishing to study outside this country. This is a significant and growing area of activity: data published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency indicates that almost 100,000 students were studying for UK higher education awards entirely outside the UK in the 2007-08 academic year; either at overseas campuses directly run by UK institutions, or through collaborative arrangements that UK institutions have made with foreign partners. QAA reviews both collaborative arrangements and programmes delivered on overseas campuses through a process called Audit of overseas provision. We conduct Audit of overseas provision country by country. In 2009-10 we conducted an Audit of overseas provision in Malaysia. The purpose of the audit was to provide information on the way in which a group of UK universities and colleges were maintaining academic standards and the quality of education in their provision in Malaysia. The reports on the individual audits will be used in the preparation of an overview report.

### The Audit of overseas provision process

3 In April 2009, QAA invited all UK higher education institutions to provide information about their provision in Malaysia. On the basis of the information returned, QAA selected for audit visits 10 UK institutions with provision in that country. These institutions produced a briefing paper describing the way in which their provision (or a subset of their provision) in Malaysia operated, and commenting on the effectiveness of the means by which they assured quality and standards. In addition, each institution was asked to make reference to the extent to which the provision was representative of its procedures and practice in all its overseas activity. Institutions were also invited to make reference to the ways in which their arrangements met the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, particularly *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, published by QAA in 2004.

4 Audit teams visited each of the 10 UK institutions to discuss their provision in Malaysia between November 2009 and February 2010. The same teams visited Malaysia in March 2010 to meet some of the staff responsible for managing and delivering the provision, and to meet students. The audit of ARU was coordinated for QAA by Will Naylor, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The audit team comprised Professor John Baldock and Professor Mark Davies (auditors), with Will Naylor acting as audit secretary. QAA is particularly grateful to the UK institutions and, where applicable, to their partners in Malaysia for the willing cooperation they provided to the team.

### Higher education in Malaysia

5 According to UNESCO's Global Education Digest, there were about 750,000 students enrolled in higher education institutions in Malaysia in 2009. The institutions can be broadly divided into two types: public and private. Public institutions, which comprise 20 public universities, 27 polytechnics and 57 community colleges, are government-funded; private institutions, which include universities, university colleges and colleges, receive no public funding. The UNESCO Global Education Digest states that two-thirds of students in Malaysia are enrolled in public institutions.

6 Executive responsibility for higher education in Malaysia resides with the Ministry of Higher Education, which was separated from the Ministry of Education and established as a full ministry under a Federal Government Minister in 2004. Among the various departments and agencies under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education is the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). The MQA is the single higher education quality assurance agency in the country, whose scope covers both public and private higher education providers. The MQA is responsible for accrediting higher education programmes and for maintaining a definitive list of accredited programmes - the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR) - which includes programmes provided in collaboration between Malaysian and overseas partners and programmes delivered at overseas campuses in Malaysia. Students studying unaccredited programmes are ineligible for student loans and institutions providing unaccredited programmes are not allowed to recruit overseas students to them.

7 In addition, the MQA is responsible for maintaining the Malaysian Qualifications Framework, an instrument that develops and classifies all Malaysian higher education qualifications from certificates to doctorates. The Act which created the MQA also provides for the conferment of self-accrediting status to 'mature' institutions that have well-established quality assurance mechanisms. To achieve self-accrediting status, the institution must undergo an institutional audit. If it is successful, all qualifications it offers are automatically recorded on the MQR. At the time of the audit, the MQA was conducting the first round of institutional audits.

## **Section 1: The background to the collaborative link**

### **Nature of the link**

8 In 2007, ARU signed academic agreements with two subsidiaries of the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology: the Limkokwing Executive Leadership College (LELC), based at Limkokwing University's campus in Cyberjaya, near Kuala Lumpur; and the Limkokwing Institute of Creative Technology (LICT) at Kuching in Sarawak. The agreements allow for the provision by LELC and LICT of the whole of several undergraduate pathways, leading to the award of bachelor degrees by ARU. 'Pathway' is ARU's term for an approved range of modules leading to a named award. At the time of the audit, the pathways that LELC and LICT had been approved to deliver were: BA (Hons) in Accounting and Finance, Business Management, International Management, Marketing, and Tourism Management (at both sites); BSc (Hons) in Business Information Systems, Computer Science, Computer Gaming and Animation Technology (at both sites); and BA (Hons) in Graphic Design and Interior Design (at LICT only).

9 Following provisional accreditation by the MQA, the first cohort of students was admitted to LICT in February 2009 and to LELC in September 2009. At the time of the audit team's visit to Malaysia in March 2010, 176 students were registered on the ARU pathways at LICT and 26 at LELC. Staff whom the team met at ARU and in Malaysia confirmed their ambition to raise student numbers significantly, particularly at LELC.

10 Limkokwing University of Creative Technology is a private university, founded by the Malaysian design, media and public relations entrepreneur, Professor Tan Sri Dato' Lim Kok Wing. It has campuses in Malaysia, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mauritius, the Maldives and the UK. The University had 25,000 students worldwide in 2009 and has stated its intention to grow substantially and internationally in the future. Originally established in 1991 as the Limkokwing Institute of Creative Technology, it received recognition from the Malaysian government as a University College in 2003. In 2007 it was given degree-awarding powers by the government and renamed the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology.

11 Linkokwing initially specialised in providing courses in design and the creative industries but has widened its curricula through links with universities in Australasia and the UK.

A very large proportion of its students is from overseas. For example, over 6,000 of the 9,000 students at the Cyberjaya Campus are from outside Malaysia. The University articulates a distinct educational philosophy that offers its students, in addition to academic qualifications, creative, technical and cultural skills intended to prepare them for employment in a global economy.

12 Limkokwing's purpose-built Cyberjaya campus in Kuala Lumpur - which LELC shares - was completed in 2004. LICT moved onto its current campus in Kuching in 2007 and has capacity for approximately 2,000 students.

13 ARU was granted university status in 1992. The University's Corporate Plan: 2009-11 includes an objective to 'educate an equal number of students off-site and on-site through remote delivery partnerships at home and abroad, and distance learning'. Following a review of collaborative provision in 2005-6, the University decided to focus the development of international partnerships in Malaysia, Singapore, Trinidad, India and Europe and on partners selected for their financial viability and academic capacity to deliver ARU pathways at appropriate levels of quality and standards. By September 2009, ARU had established 12 international partnerships involving the delivery and award of taught undergraduate and master's degrees and diplomas. Four of the partnerships were with organisations in Malaysia, including those with Limkokwing.

14 While the numbers of students registered on ARU pathways at LELC and LICT were relatively low at the time of the audit, ARU considered the partnership representative of its approach to both developing and managing international collaborative provision.

### **The UK institution's approach to overseas collaborative provision**

15 ARU's approach to collaborative provision favours a close integration between the pathways available on its own campuses and those that its partners provide, both in terms of what is taught and how standards and quality are assured. Thus, ARU's partners tend to deliver curricula that are almost identical to those provided by ARU in the UK with, in some cases, minor changes to suit local contexts. The relevant ARU faculty boards are responsible for pathways at all delivery sites. All the pathways delivered at LELC and LICT are also delivered at ARU and students at all sites are subject to the same assessments at the same times, and considered by the same examination boards. The LELC and LICT provision and outcomes are reviewed together with those in the UK as part of the same annual monitoring and periodic review processes. ARU describes this as the principle of 'synchronicity'.

16 Ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of all ARU awards, including those delivered by partners, lies with the Senate. All awards are governed by the Academic Regulations which set out curriculum structures, principles and methods of assessment, student rights and responsibilities, and procedures for handling appeals. In addition, Senate has approved codes of practice governing the approval, annual monitoring and review of all pathways and the assessment of students. A Senate Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision governs the approval of academic partnerships and their regular review. This is supported by a Procedural Document providing detailed guidance to staff, both at ARU and in partner institutions, who are involved in the development of collaborative links and the ongoing management of taught pathways. Day-to-day responsibility resides mainly with designated staff in academic departments and with the faculties that oversee the delivery of groups of pathways. In the case of the partnerships with Limkokwing, the responsible faculties are Arts, Law and Social Sciences, Science and Technology and the Ashcroft International Business School.

17 The Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision sets out explicit principles which include the equivalence of academic standards across all ARU awards, compatibility with the UK Academic Infrastructure and reference points, the avoidance of provision by third parties, and the responsibility of ARU for assuring threshold levels of learning opportunities and student experience wherever a pathway is delivered.

18 An important mechanism in ensuring partners' compliance with ARU's regulations and the codes of practice is the local Curriculum Management Committee, which meets at the partner's site and comprises responsible staff from ARU and the partner and student representatives. The operation of the Curriculum Management Committee is described in Section 3.

19 Within ARU, managerial responsibility for awards provided by partners rests with the same staff who oversee the pathways at the University: the Deputy Dean responsible for quality assurance, the directors of studies responsible for related pathways, and module leaders. They receive advice and support from the ARU Academic Office and the faculty quality assurance officers.

20 In the view of the audit team, the policies and procedures used by ARU to manage overseas provision, through franchise agreements which authorise partners to deliver a whole or part of one or more of its approved pathways, are precisely and comprehensively specified in its Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and the accompanying Procedural Document. The team confirmed that this approach had been fully implemented in reaching the agreements with LELC and LICT.

## **Section 2: Arrangements for establishing the link**

### **Selecting and approving the partner organisation**

21 The ARU Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision defines three stages in the selection and approval of collaborative partners. Stage one considers the strategic and business case leading to approval in principle by the Corporate Management Team. This stage includes due diligence checks on the academic standing and financial and legal status of the proposed partner.

22 Stage two, the academic case, focuses on the educational objectives, organisational capacity to manage the academic standards and quality of ARU's pathways, and the learning and teaching environment of the proposed partner. These judgements are based on a briefing document from the partner, a formal two-day visit by an approval panel, known as an Institutional Approval Event, leading to a report considered by ARU's Senate. Stage three is the approval of pathways of modules leading to named awards.

23 The principles and processes for pathway approval are set out in the Senate Code of Practice on the Approval, Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review of Taught Pathways and in its associated Procedural Document. Pathway approval also involves a formal Pathway Approval Event at the partner's delivery site leading to consideration and a decision by the Senate's academic Standards, Quality and Regulations Committee (ASQRC). In the case of overseas partnerships, institutional approval and pathway approval, while remaining distinct events, can be undertaken concurrently to minimise disruption and cost.

24 In the case of LELC and LICT, the strategic decision to embark on the partnership in early 2007 was prompted by the ARU Vice-Chancellor's prior knowledge of Limkokwing. This predated Senate's adoption of the current Code of Practice in June 2007. However, the audit team was assured that ARU had completed the requisite due diligence on the partner, drawing heavily on Limkokwing's detailed and successful application to the MQA for university status.

25 Academic agreements were signed with LELC and LICT in October 2007. The agreements were 'franchise agreements' defined by the Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision as links where ARU 'agrees to authorise delivery of the whole or part of one or more of its approved pathways by a partner institution in the UK or overseas, leading to an Anglia Ruskin award'. Institutional Approval Events took place at LELC in June 2007 and LICT in January 2008. The former predated the full implementation of ARU's Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and no academic or resource conditions were set; the report of the approval event was considered by the Senate's Partnership Subcommittee in October 2007. The event at LICT set a number of conditions, including a resources plan for investment in staff and other teaching resources, and in February 2009 the panel chair reported to Senate that the conditions had been met.

26 The audit team was interested to understand why ARU had made separate agreements for the two delivery sites, rather than a single agreement with Limkokwing University. It learnt that the separate agreements were largely a consequence of LICT's distinct legal status - a reflection of Malaysia's federal structure - and ARU's concern, within the context of the *Code of practice*, to avoid any risk or impression of serial franchising.

27 The audit team was also interested to know why the agreement for the provision in Cyberjaya was with LELC rather than with Limkokwing University itself, and what implications this had for students. ARU and Limkokwing staff explained that this was due to conditions attached to Limkokwing's attainment of university status in 2007, in particular that Limkokwing, in common with other private institutions achieving university status, must cease providing programmes franchised from institutions overseas within 10 years. The agreement with LELC allows the partners to continue providing franchised programmes beyond that deadline. The team noted that the agreement with LICT offered a similar protection.

28 The audit team noted that all the pathways franchised to LELC and LICT had provisional accreditation from MQA and were explicitly registered on the MQR against LELC and LICT, rather than Limkokwing University.

29 The audit team concluded that ARU's procedures for selecting and approving partner organisations are clearly defined by the University's Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision, offer appropriate protection against likely risks, and were adequately followed in the establishment of these links.

### **Programme approval**

30 Pathway Approval Events took place in January 2008 at LELC and in February and November 2008 at LICT. ARU Senate received confirmation that both partners had met the conditions of these events in 2009. Limkokwing then sought provisional approvals for all pathways from the MQA, and these were granted between August 2008 and January 2009. Under the academic agreements with ARU students may be admitted to the pathways in either February or September, allowing 'synchronicity' with the home provision to be maintained.

31 The pathway approval process is governed by the Senate Code of Practice on the Approval, Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review of Taught Pathways and is common to all pathways wherever they are delivered. The process, which draws on external subject specialists, considers proposal documentation including: module descriptions (in the form of module definition forms); programme specifications (in the form of pathway specification forms); staffing information (through the consideration of staff curriculum vitae); learning support (evidenced by a draft student handbook and by discussion and inspection of facilities); and, where appropriate, consideration of practice and placement opportunities for students. ARU's Code of Practice defines the principal issues on which the panel should focus as: the articulation of appropriate academic standards; the design and coherence of the curriculum; the student experience and support for it; staffing and learning resources; and the arrangements for monitoring and enhancement. The Approval Panel may recommend refusal, unconditional approval or conditional approval. Students may not be recruited until full approval is granted. Final approval is given by the ASQRC on behalf of Senate.

32 ARU's Briefing Paper indicated that the approval processes for LELC and LICT provided valuable experience informing the subsequent development of other partnerships Malaysia and elsewhere. For example, ARU now involves the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of the Academic Office as panel members for both Institutional Approval and Pathway Approval to reflect both the level of risk and the importance that the University attaches to these processes.

33 In the cases of LELC and LICT, conditional pathway approval was initially recommended. The conditions set involved the purchase of books, provision of staff development plans, submission of updated staff curriculum vitae, the appropriate allocation of staff to modules, and updated pathway specification forms, module definition forms and student handbooks.

Satisfactory responses from Limkokwing were reported to the ASQRC at its meetings between March and October 2009. In addition, the responses to the conditions were monitored at on-site planning meetings attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of the Academic Office. When the audit team visited the LELC and LICT campuses in March 2010 it was able to confirm with staff and students that the various conditions had been adequately met.

34 Despite the explicit attention of the approval process to admissions criteria and their application, in April 2009, ARU became aware that a significant proportion of the initial intake of students to the Business and Computing pathways at LICT had been admitted on the basis of entry qualifications that fell short of ARU's defined levels. This matter is discussed under Admissions below.

35 The audit team noted that Limkokwing makes awards in its own name in some of the same subject areas as those delivered under the agreements with ARU. The team learnt that Limkokwing regards the markets for Limkokwing and ARU degrees as quite distinct: ARU programmes tend to attract a high proportion of non-Malaysian students keen to obtain a UK degree without bearing the relatively high costs of studying in the UK; the Limkokwing degree programmes appeal mainly to home students from Malaysia. The team confirmed in discussion with staff and students that students studying for Limkokwing awards are taught and examined entirely separately from those on ARU pathways.

36 Some Limkokwing staff teach on both Limkokwing and ARU programmes. The audit team met some of these staff during its visit to Malaysia. They confirmed that their approach to teaching and assessing ARU students was significantly different from the approach for Limkokwing awards: the ARU pathways involved more independent learning, fewer assessments and a more interactive style of teaching.

37 The audit team concluded that there is considerable merit in ARU's insistence that the same pathway approval and ongoing management processes apply to home and collaborative programmes. The involvement of staff who deliver the equivalent pathways in the UK, together with the participation in the key events of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of the Academic Office, ensure, as the minutes of the relevant meetings evidenced, detailed and continuing attention to matters affecting standards and quality. As ARU's Briefing Paper explained, the robustness of its approach has been the subject of comment and surprise by new partners. However, the staff whom the team met at LELC and LICT indicated that they would like greater face-to-face contact with staff teaching the pathways at ARU, either through visits to the UK or by arranging for ARU staff to visit Malaysia. The staff commented that they currently had no input into the setting of assignments and questions for assessment and this limited their ability to contextualise the pathways for Malaysia. They highlighted that this would need to change in the future because higher level modules were more specific to national legal frameworks.

### **Written agreements with the partner organisation**

38 The signed academic agreements follow a standard template and cover: admissions, staffing, staff development, provision of learning resources, assessment, student appeals and complaints procedures. They recognise ARU's ultimate responsibility for academic standards and make explicit how that responsibility is exercised and the ways in which it is delegated to the partner.

39 Although the signed documents allow for additional degree pathways to be provided by mutual agreement, ARU informed the audit team that separate Pathway Approval Events would be necessary before any new ones could be added.

40 The signed academic agreements were given further detailed substance by the documentation required for pathway approval, the recommendations of the approval panels and the minutes of the planning meetings that preceded final approval. Taken together the documentation provides a detailed account of the location of responsibilities for standards and quality and how these responsibilities have been met prior to the admission of students and the start of teaching.

### **Section 3: Academic standards and the quality of programmes**

#### **Day-to-day management**

41 The academic agreements require the partners to follow the 'Rules, Regulations and Procedures' set out in the ARU codes of practice and other regulatory frameworks. The codes define precisely sets of academic and administrative roles (Pathway Leader, Course Coordinator, Director of Studies, Student Adviser). This essentially means that LELC and LICT replicate as far as possible the structures and roles employed by ARU in the UK. A detailed organisational chart had been developed by the partners indicating which individuals carried out matching roles in the ARU and Limkokwing teams.

42 In addition, ARU has, through its experience of other partnerships, found it valuable to designate within each responsible faculty at ARU a link tutor as the primary point of contact for any academic or administrative enquires. Link tutors have, therefore, been appointed for each of the pathways delivered at LELC and LICT. The audit team met the link tutors and learnt of the frequent email contact between them and staff in Malaysia.

43 The ARU students at LELC and LICT are registered on the ARU database in the same way as ARU students in the UK. In this way the Limkokwing student records and student data on progression and achievement are managed together with home students. Students in Malaysia were able to see their marks via the e-Vision portal. However, at the time of the audit, staff at LELC and LICT did not have access to the student data system so data on registration was entered by ARU staff following submission of hardcopy from Malaysia. Since all assessed work was submitted directly to ARU for second marking, the Limkokwing staff were in the unfortunate position of not being able to see the marks awarded to their students on the web. The lack of access to e-Vision was regarded by staff at both Limkokwing campuses as an inconvenience. It additionally meant they could not see the aggregated results of the online feedback questionnaires filled in by their students. The audit team encourages ARU to investigate further ways of allowing teaching staff at LELC and LICT to obtain access to e-Vision, possibly by appointing them to honorary or associate staff member status at ARU.

44 When the academic agreements were signed it was envisaged that overall governance of the franchises would be conducted by partnership liaison groups headed by deans from ARU and Limkokwing and pathway leaders and managers from the partners. These groups would meet at least once a year to discuss and resolve all matters concerned the delivery of pathways. A higher level of oversight would be provided by a joint Executive Group comprising ARU's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Enhancement, subsequently retitled Academic) and the chief executive officers of LELC and LICT, supported by senior managers such as deans. In the event these planned structures were replaced by more broadly-based curriculum management committees that meet at least once a semester on the Limkokwing campuses and are attended by a broad range of staff and students able to discuss all aspects of the pathways and their support.

45 The curriculum management committees were established as a mechanism for joint local oversight during the academic year 2009-10 and the first meetings were held at LICT and LELC in October and November 2009 respectively. The minutes of these meetings are submitted to

the relevant programme leaders at ARU and to the Partnerships Subcommittee of the Senate's Academic Standards, Quality and Regulations Committee (ASQRC) which in turn reports on curriculum management and delivery to the Senate. The terms of reference for the Curriculum Management Committee charge it to ensure, on behalf of the ARU Senate, that the academic standards set out in the curricula are maintained and that an appropriate quality of educational support is provided by the partner.

46 The Curriculum Management Committee is also required to: ensure the local application of ARU codes of practice and associated procedures; consider matters raised by students, who are represented on the Committee; review annual monitoring reports before they are submitted to programme leaders at ARU; approve and monitor local staff development strategies; and identify ways of enhancing the curriculum and student experience.

47 The Curriculum Management Committee is chaired by the local HE director or academic manager and attended by all local module leaders and managers of educational support services. Relevant academic managers and pathway leaders from ARU attend as observers (although the minutes show they tend to play a full part in the discussions). Student representatives attend the committees, although the minutes of the first cycle of meetings at LELC and LICT showed they had not attended the whole of the meetings. ARU staff suggested that cultural conventions in Malaysia inhibit the participation of students in the discussion of all matters of programme and staff administration. They indicated that in future students were likely to be admitted to the whole of the Curriculum Management Committee meetings. The minutes of the second cycle of meetings held in February 2010, shortly before the audit team's visit to Malaysia, confirmed that the student representatives attended the whole meeting. The audit team also discussed student representation with Limkokwing staff and students and learnt that while students might not attend those parts of committee meetings given over to reserved business, the student representatives were given appropriate opportunities to share in the management of their pathways and to raise matters that concerned them.

48 The audit team concluded that the arrangements for the day-to-day management of the pathways were appropriate and satisfactory.

### **Arrangements for monitoring and review**

49 At the time of the audit only the February 2009 student intake at LICT had been included in an annual monitoring round.

50 The annual monitoring of ARU programmes (programmes consist of groups of cognate pathways) encompasses all delivery sites. It is conducted on a faculty basis and governed by the Senate Code of Practice on the Approval, Annual Monitoring and Periodic Review of Taught Pathways and in its associated Procedural Document. The process of reviewing the previous year begins in September, when the annual programme monitoring reports are compiled by programme leaders. Following their consideration at Faculty Annual Monitoring Subcommittee meetings, overview reports are approved by faculty boards in February or March and then submitted to the Academic Office. The process concludes in April with the consideration by Senate of a Summary Report of the process and its outcome prepared by the Head of Quality Assurance.

51 The annual programme report is written by the Programme Leader and is the product of data collected on progress and completion rates for all delivery sites, reports from external examiners, student evaluations on modules and pathways, and feedback from former students and employers. The reports also review the outcome of action plans arising from the previous year's monitoring and set out new action plans for the coming year. The audit team noted that while there was understandably little mention of the first-year cohorts of Limkokwing students in the annual monitoring reports, the system had succeeded in alerting ARU to a slightly higher than 50 per cent failure rate on one of the modules delivered at LICT.

52 ARU's annual monitoring process is detailed and thorough, and is distinctive in the way it contains all delivery sites within a single process. This clearly offers opportunities for the comparison of outcomes and for the sharing of good practice. However, only experience will show whether the system is sufficiently fine-grained and sensitive to register and respond appropriately to events on campuses many thousands of miles apart. The audit team raised annual monitoring procedures with the staff it met in Malaysia. Since the process had not yet involved them in any significant way, the staff displayed little awareness of the process or of its consequences.

53 Periodic review at ARU had been suspended for three years following a curriculum review in 2005-06. A new process had been agreed and ARU academic departments will be the unit of review, including all modules and pathways delivered by their partners. The first reviews are scheduled to begin in 2009-10 but none of these would involve a department with links to Limkokwing.

### **Staffing and staff development**

54 Staff approved for the delivery of ARU modules, whether at home or in partner institutions, are entered into a Register of Approved Teaching Staff held by the Academic Office. At the Pathway Approval Events held in 2008, staff curriculum vitae were considered and staff approved for the delivery of level 1 modules. At its meeting with ARU staff, the audit team were assured that the academic knowledge and teaching abilities of staff at LELC and LICT were high and no difficulties had been encountered in recruiting appropriate staff. ARU explained how it had had frequent contact with the Limkokwing staff via email and on visits. The staff development events held during ARU staff visits to Malaysia had so far been devoted to explaining ARU's academic regulations and procedures. Further staff development was planned as the students progressed to stages two and three. These accounts were confirmed by the staff whom the team met in Malaysia.

### **Student admissions**

55 The academic agreements delegate to LELC and LICT responsibility for deciding which students to admit to ARU pathways, except for admissions decisions based on accredited prior certificated learning (APCL) or accredited prior experiential learning (APEL), which must be considered by ARU staff on an individual basis. ARU defines the accepted qualifications and levels of English language proficiency and these are set out in a list of standard entry requirements produced by the ARU International Office, referenced to guidance provided by the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (UK NARIC). In practice, where staff at LELC or LICT are uncertain about the status of entry qualifications, they seek guidance and approval from the ARU International Office. Students are registered on the ARU databases after submission of names and details from Malaysia. ARU then issues student cards and login permissions to its online facilities. There had been some teething problems with these processes, mainly owing to misunderstandings in the UK of the correct way in which to order the names of students in Malaysia.

56 In April 2009 ARU discovered that a proportion of the first student intake to the Business and Computing pathways at LICT had been admitted on the basis of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination, which ARU (and UK NARIC) regards as inadequate for undergraduate entry. ARU explained that the problem had arisen due to LICT's use of a local list of GCE A level equivalencies, published by MQA for admission to Malaysian institutions, which conflicted with the UK NARIC guidance.

57 In response, the Executive Group decided to deliver an extended year one, Semester 1 (February to August 2009), for students at LICT admitted with West African qualifications to ensure that they were in a position to begin the ARU Semester 1 modules. ARU also agreed to a second delivery by LICT of this special arrangement, provisionally called a bridging course, in the period September 2009 to February 2010 for those students who LICT had already accepted for entry in

September 2009 with the same qualifications. ARU explained to the audit team that the subsequent level 1 results of the students involved indicated that the bridging course had been successful.

58 In order to make sure the problem did not reoccur, ARU drew the attention of all its Malaysian partners to the lists of accepted qualifications on ARU's International Office website. It has also committed itself to respond within 48 hours to any enquiries from Malaysian partners about country-specific qualifications that are currently not included on this website. Clearly, where a university delegates to a partner the application of matriculation and entry requirements there will be potential for the misapplication of the rules by the partner. In the view of the audit team, the response by ARU to this problem had been timely and new arrangements for oversight should be a sufficient response, short of ARU taking direct control of entry decisions.

59 During the visit to LICT in March 2010, the audit team explored with staff and students the experience of the bridging course, by then formally known as the Transitional Degree Programme. The course had effectively been a compressed version of a LICT pre-degree foundation year programme. Both staff and students confirmed that the course had been well received and had significantly and usefully added to the students' skills. The students involved had joined the first year of the full degree programme as part of the September 2009 cohort. In the opinion of the auditors the introduction of the transitional course had been an appropriate response to the difficulty that had arisen.

### **Assessment requirements**

60 The principles governing franchised provision lead to a very specific approach to the assessment of student work. Students at partner institutions, whether in the UK or overseas, take modules in the same sequence as students at ARU's own sites. They submit the same assignments and sit the same examination papers, on the same dates and times. Generic assessment criteria and marking standards are published in Appendix 1 of the Code of Practice on the Assessment of Students. Assignments and examination question papers are set by the ARU module leaders in consultation with local module leaders, when appropriate. The local module leaders whom the audit team met indicated that so far there has been no consultation of this sort but they believed it would become necessary as the students progressed.

61 All items of assessment for a module are subject to internal and external moderation, using a sampling approach described in the Senate Code of Practice, the associated Procedural Document and the related Senate Code of Practice on External Examiners for Taught Pathways. By the time of the audit, sampling had not been necessary owing to the small numbers of students in the first cohorts. All assignments had been sent to the UK after first marking in Malaysia. Feedback on all assessed work is required by the Senate Code of Practice on Assessment within 20 working days of the submission deadline or the date of an examination. The logistics of sending work to the UK for moderation has required a separate cycle of assessment meetings for international partners, attended by external examiners, held approximately four weeks after the cycle for UK delivery locations. Staff and students on the Malaysian campuses reported to the audit team that they had not received feedback from ARU on their assessed work.

62 In the view of the audit team the principles and methods used to manage assessment are robust and ensure that uniform standards are applied to all students. However, several practical problems remain, including student access to feedback and the need to allow local teachers to introduce aspects of local context into assessment.

### **External examining**

63 The duties of ARU's external examiners extend to all the sites delivering the modules and pathways within their purview. The sample of assessed work seen by external examiners includes work assessed by partners as required by the Senate Code of Practice on External Examiners for Taught Pathways. The template for annual external examiner reports invites specific reference to

delivery at UK and international collaborative partner institutions. At the time of the audit, no assessments contributing to final degree results had been taken by the students at LELC or LICT.

64 The audit team concluded that ARU's arrangements for external examining are in principle robust.

## Certificates

65 The provision of award certificates and transcripts to international partners is governed by the Academic Regulations and applies equally to the pathways delivered by LELC and LICT. At the time of the audit, certificates and transcripts had not been required. The provision of award certificates and transcripts and the detail they contain is designed to satisfy the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 2* and ARU's progressive implementation of the requirements associated with the creation of the European Higher Education Area, including provision of a Diploma Supplement. The award certificate will not state the location of delivery and study.

## Section 4: Information

### Student information (oversight by the UK institution)

66 On registration, students received a student handbook related to delivery of their ARU pathways. A draft of each student handbook was considered at the Pathway Approval Events and the final version approved by the relevant link tutor before distribution to the first cohorts of students. The handbooks have been customised for local delivery while retaining key elements related to academic and personal support for student learning and the provision of library and IT resources, including student access to ARU's digital library.

67 All new students received a copy of the ARU Assessment Regulations containing extracts from the Academic Regulations on assessment - including information on the penalties for plagiarism and the procedures for student discipline, appeals and complaints. The students whom the audit team met confirmed they had received the handbooks and were aware of the various regulations or how to find information on them.

68 Student representatives had attended, and had been able to raise matters at, the curriculum management committees. Representatives from ARU had attended the meetings held at the Limkokwing sites. Issues recently raised by students and addressed by ARU included student access to e-Vision and the digital library, the provision of books in the LICT library and the provision of ARU student identification cards.

69 In addition to the provision made by ARU to inform and consult students, it was evident to the audit team that LELC and LICT placed particular emphasis on engagement with its students and that there had been many routes and opportunities for students to learn about, and comment on, their programmes and on student support more generally. On both Limkokwing campuses student advisers were available and well-known to the students, and had provided guidance and helped to solve any difficulties.

70 In the view of the audit team the arrangements for providing information to students and for obtaining feedback from them were good and clear. There had initially been a number of difficulties, principally to do with access to web resources, but the responsible staff at both ARU and Limkokwing were aware of these and were addressing them.

### Publicity and marketing

71 ARU's partners are required to provide advance copies of publicity and information material describing the ARU pathways. The staff at Limkokwing explained that this requirement had been followed. The audit team learnt that publicity material was sent to ARU with a request that any objections be returned to them within 48 hours. It was evident to the team that

Limkokwing was particularly adept at attracting publicity for its campuses, programmes and students. The audit team was given many examples of publicity material and noted, during their visit, the high profile of Limkokwing in the local press and other media. While all the material seen by the team appeared to be accurate, the team encourages ARU to consider a more explicit definition of the methods it uses to ensure accountability for marketing and other forms of publicity than is contained in its signed agreements with LELC and LICT.

## **Section 5: Student progression to the UK**

72 The academic agreements contain provision for students registered at LELC and LICT to undertake part of their studies at ARU. ARU's approach to franchised delivery encourages both this opportunity and the reciprocal opportunity for ARU students to study for one or two semesters at Limkokwing. At the time of the audit this had not happened. However, a number of the students whom the team met in Malaysia were interested in exploring the possibility of completing their pathways with ARU in the UK.

## **Conclusion**

73 In considering the partnership between ARU and Limkokwing, the audit team identified the following positive features:

- the clarity and comprehensiveness of the ARU Senate Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and its associated procedures. It was apparent that these documents had been regularly updated in the light of experience and provide a robust framework within which ARU's partnership strategy could be developed (paragraph 20, 29)
- ARU's conscientious and thorough application of the arrangements underpinning its collaborative provision, including the establishment of the curriculum management committees and attention given by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of the Academic Office. Although these arrangements are complex - particularly in respect of the requirements for synchronicity of teaching and assessment, and in the range of regular contacts between ARU and Limkokwing staff - they are clearly designed to provide ARU with close oversight of standards and the student experience (paragraphs 32, 33, 37 and 44)
- the energy and commitment to the partnership demonstrated by staff at all levels on the two campuses in Malaysia, despite the link representing a very small proportion of students within a large and rapidly developing institution.

74 The audit team also identified the following points for consideration by ARU as the partnership develops:

- allow teaching staff at LELC and LICT to make greater use of local examples in the curriculum and in assessed assignments (paragraph 37)
- facilitate direct access by LELC and LICT staff to e-Vision (paragraph 43)
- ensure students receive written feedback on work sent to ARU for moderation and assessment (paragraphs 61, 62)
- provide teaching staff at LELC and LICT with feedback on the judgements they are making on assessed work sent for moderation (paragraph 61)
- consider a more explicit definition of the methods it uses to ensure accountability for marketing and other forms of publicity than is contained in its signed agreements (paragraph 71).

75 The audit team considered that ARU demonstrated a comprehensive awareness of the *Code of practice*, published by QAA, and has established processes that are designed to achieve full adherence to it.

76 ARU's Briefing Paper provided the audit team with a full and clear understanding of the origins and current management of the links with the two partners. In addition, when the audit team visited the two campuses in Malaysia they were provided with substantial additional material documenting the ways in which LELC and LICT had managed the franchises. These were very useful in informing the meetings with students and staff and assisted in the reaching of judgements. As an example of its policies and procedures for collaborative provision, the team's findings support a conclusion of confidence in ARU's management of academic standards and systems for the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities for students studying under its collaborative arrangements overseas.

## Appendix A

### **Anglia Ruskin University's response to QAA's report on its collaboration with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology**

We, at Anglia Ruskin, welcome the very supportive audit report on our collaborative partnership with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Malaysia and the many positive features identified by the audit team. We are pleased particularly with the confidence decisions in relation to our approach to maintaining oversight of the management of academic standards and the student experience. The approach described characterises the conscientious and thorough way we seek to manage our many UK and international collaborative partnerships. We welcome the endorsement of the ARU Senate Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and the fact that our established processes are designed to achieve full adherence to the QAA *Code of practice*. Our curriculum management committees, whose constitution requires local staff and student representation and attendance by ARU representatives, held at both of the Limkokwing campuses are working effectively and the positive comments in the report are helpful in developing these further.

We are particularly grateful to our colleagues at Limkokwing for their enthusiasm and active engagement with us throughout the audit process and, as the report confirms, their ongoing energy and commitment to our partnership.

We are addressing actively the points for consideration identified by the audit team as the partnership between the two universities develops. Discussion is already underway in relation to enabling teaching staff at international partners to make greater use of local examples in both the teaching of their modules and assessment tasks. We will also work closely with staff and students to ensure that they have more detailed feedback on assessment and marking.

Additionally, as identified in the report, we are ensuring that staff at our partner institutions have access to e-Vision and will review and update the definition, contained in our academic agreements, of the methods we use to ensure accountability for marketing and other forms of publicity.

We are committed to making a success of our partnership with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, and indeed with all our international collaborative partnerships, and supporting actively the expected growth in the number of students studying on Anglia Ruskin degrees at our international partners.

Professor Lesley Dobree  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
June 2010

## Appendix B

### Current student enrolments (June 2010)

Limkokwing Executive Leadership College:

BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance	13
BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems	1
BA (Hons) Business Management	8
BSc (Hons) Computer Gaming and Animation Technology	2
BSc (Hons) Computer Science	1
BA (Hons) International Management	1
BA (Hons) Marketing	2
BA (Hons) Tourism Management	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

Limkokwing Institute of Creative Technology:

BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems	15
BA (Hons) Business Management	31
BSc (Hons) Computer Science	47
BA (Hons) Graphic Design	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

<b>Grand total</b>	<b>181</b>
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