



Audit of overseas provision

**De Montfort University and the
Daly College Business School, Indore, India**

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Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between De Montfort University and Daly College Business School, Indore, India.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

1 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is a United Kingdom (UK) organisation which seeks to promote public confidence that the quality of provision and the standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded. 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. These are conducted by teams selected and trained by QAA and comprising academic staff from higher or further education institutions. The most recent Institutional audit report on De Montfort University was published by QAA in March 2005; this was supplemented by a Collaborative provision audit report, published in May 2006.

2 One of QAA's review activities is to carry out quality audits of collaborative links between UK higher education institutions and their partner organisations in other countries. In 2008-09, QAA conducted audits of selected partnership links between UK higher education institutions and institutions in India. The purpose of these audits was to provide information on the way in which the UK institutions were maintaining academic standards and the quality of education in their partnerships. The reports on the individual audits will be used in the preparation of an overview report on the collaborative arrangements for the management of standards and quality of UK higher education provision in India.

The audit process for overseas collaborative links

3 In April 2008, QAA invited all UK higher education institutions to provide information on their collaborative partnerships in India. On the basis of the information returned on the nature and scale of the links, QAA selected for audit visits 10 UK institutions with links in India. Each of the selected institutions produced a briefing paper describing the way in which the link operated, and commenting on the effectiveness of the means by which it assured quality and standards. In addition, each institution was asked to make reference to the extent to which the link was representative of its procedures and practice in all its overseas collaborative activity. Institutions were also invited to make reference to the ways in which their arrangements met the expectations of the *Code of practice on 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 In October/November 2008, one of three audit teams visited each of the selected UK institutions to discuss its arrangements in the light of its briefing paper. In January/February 2009, the same team visited the relevant partner organisations in India to gain further insight into the experience of students and staff, and to supplement the view formed by the team from the briefing paper and from the UK visit. During the visits to institutions in India, discussions were conducted with key members of staff and with students. The audit of De Montfort University was coordinated for QAA by Ms J Holt, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The auditors were Professor Paul Periton and Professor Graham Chesters, with Ms J Holt acting as audit secretary. QAA is particularly grateful to the UK institutions and their partners in India for the willing cooperation they provided to the team.

The context of collaborative provision with partners in India

5 In India, responsibility for higher education resides with the Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resources Development. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the national body responsible for granting recognition to all higher education qualifications; it also regulates the use of university title. Constitutional responsibilities for education are shared between the national parliament and state legislatures. Both can authorise the establishment of universities, public or private, while the national government can grant 'deemed university' status to an institution upon recommendation from UGC. Degree awarding powers are vested in universities, but there are also numerous colleges that offer the degrees of universities to which they are affiliated. Colleges may be categorised as public or private based on their ownership; however, funding arrangements blur the distinction because of the self-financing activities of public institutions and because private institutions may receive government aid. The number of private institutions has grown in recent years and these tend to offer more employment-orientated programmes than their public counterparts; some award qualifications through collaboration with foreign institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is one of several bodies established with responsibilities in particular subject areas. The remit of AICTE is broad and includes engineering and technology; business and management; hotel and catering management; architecture and town planning; pharmacy; and applied arts and crafts. AICTE introduced regulations in 2005 under which foreign institutions imparting technical education are required to obtain approval from AICTE for their operations in India. There is currently no legal framework for recognising qualifications awarded by foreign institutions on the basis of programmes delivered entirely in India. The so-called 'Foreign Providers Bill', which would introduce such a framework, has been the subject of parliamentary debate, but has yet to reach the statute books.

Section 1: The background to the collaborative link

Nature of the link

6 The partnership between De Montfort University (DMU) and Daly College Business School (DCBS) was first established in 1998 and is centred on the delivery at DCBS of the BA (Hons) Business Studies, which is a DMU award. Under the particular collaborative arrangement, the first two years are delivered at DCBS, with the final year delivered at DMU or (from 2008-09) at DCBS. DMU offers the equivalent programme in the UK through the Faculty of Business and Law.

7 DCBS is a small, private college that was opened in 1998 as an extension to the educational provision of Daly College public school. It has premises within the School's grounds and access to the School's facilities. The BA (Hons) Business Studies is currently the only programme being offered at DCBS. In 2008-09, there were 150 students on the collaborative programme in total, including those who had transferred to DMU for the final year; the breakdown in terms of year and location of study is given below, together with comparative figures for 2007-08.

Year	Year one DCBS	Year two DCBS	Year three DCBS	Year three DMU	Total
2008-09	55	43	38	14	150
2007-08	43	55	N/A	22	120

8 In September 2008, the collaborative programme gained approval from the AICTE, initially for one year. At the time of the audit, the partners had begun the process of obtaining an extension to the approval period from AICTE, with confirmation of continued approval anticipated in summer 2009. There is no UK professional accreditation associated with the programme at DCBS.

9 The partnership with DCBS is DMU's only link in India relating to programme delivery, but it is one of 10 such overseas links involving approximately 800 students. It is considered to be typical of DMU's overseas collaborative provision in that the modules being delivered are designed and owned by a 'host' faculty at DMU, and the teaching is in English. Although DMU does not usually allow delivery of the final year of its degrees by a partner organisation, the Briefing Paper indicated that the link with DCBS had been developed in accordance with the University's framework for managing the quality of collaborative provision.

The UK institution's approach to overseas collaborative provision

10 DMU's overseas collaborative provision consists of a small number of collaborative programmes. It pursues new links only where these support its wider educational goals and it derives benefit from the standing of the partner organisation. Collaborative developments are not seen as a major source of international student recruitment, which is the central aim of the University's International Strategy, 2006-08.

11 As outlined in the Briefing Paper, quality assurance of collaborative provision is based on the recognition that most normal policies and procedures are appropriate for application to it, but may require specific augmentation. In this regard, there is a separate guide on managing collaborative provision covering the approval of new partnerships and programmes, and the arrangements for monitoring and review. This includes references to other guides dealing with the relevant mainstream processes. The publication of procedural guidance is one of the responsibilities of the Department of Academic Quality which provides professional support for quality assurance and enhancement.

12 DMU devolves many quality assurance responsibilities to its faculties, and central committee structures (both executive and academic) are mirrored at faculty level. Three strands of the committee system are relevant to overseas collaborative provision; these deal with strategy, planning and quality respectively. Thus the International Strategic Development Committee (an executive committee reporting to the Vice-Chancellor's Group) has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of DMU's international strategy, while faculty international committees have devolved responsibility one tier down. Similarly, within the academic committee structure, (headed by the Academic Board), the Academic Planning Committee and the respective faculty academic planning committees are concerned with portfolio management and regulation, while the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and the faculty academic committees take responsibility for the quality and standards of taught provision. In faculties having significant collaborative provision, including the Faculty of Business and Law, there is a specific subcommittee that deals with the operational management of all the faculty's collaborative provision.

13 Given that responsibility for different aspects of overseas collaborative provision is distributed across different committees, the audit team could see the challenges of maintaining a coherent perspective while avoiding overlap in committee responsibilities, particularly at faculty level. In this context, senior staff explained to the team that the strategy committees were concerned, for example, with reining in activity where the fit with strategic goals could not be demonstrated; that the planning committees aimed to ensure that proposals were located in the most appropriate faculty, while also seeking to discourage excessive entrepreneurial activity; and that the line of responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement was well embedded, as it was used throughout DMU. From reading documentation, the team found the terms of reference of committees to be clearly expressed and, from the way that business was being routed through the system, the distinctions between the different lines of responsibility appeared to be understood by staff. Nevertheless, in the context of a particular collaborative partnership the system was complex to navigate.

14 Within faculties, programme boards have responsibility for managing clusters of cognate programmes; they also act as programme assessment boards when they operate without their student membership. Collaborative programmes belong to the same programme board as their equivalent 'in-house' programme. The introduction of programme boards is a recent structural

change; previously subject authority boards looked after a range of modules contributing to several programmes. The BA (Hons) Business Studies programme board now has responsibility for the programme at DCBS, replacing the former Business and Strategy Management subject authority board.

15 The audit team appreciated that programme boards, in bringing together programme management teams would, in principle, give greater coherence to programmes than would have been possible under the previous regime of subject authority boards. However, it was by no means clear to the audit team what impact, if any, the move to programme management/assessment boards would have in relation to DCBS, particularly given that DCBS was taking on delivery of the whole degree programme, now including the final year. It was explained to the team that at operational level, everything would carry on as normal, in that the modules already existed and the relationships between module leaders at DMU and module coordinators at DCBS had already been built. However, the team was of the view that with the expanded responsibilities of DCBS for programme delivery, different ways of working should not be ruled out and that organisational change created an ideal opportunity for exploring whether or how this might be done. It seemed that DMU was according less significance than the team to the increase in the level of the programme at which DCBS was required to deliver and this is a recurring observation throughout the audit in relation to procedural arrangements (see paragraphs 22, 42, 59).

16 In terms of management roles, as well as the chairs of the relevant institutional committees, particularly important to collaborative provision and operating at faculty level are the deans, who lead their faculty executive, heads of quality, who manage quality assurance arrangements for programme development and monitoring, and collaborative coordinators, who oversee the operation of collaborative provision. Another key role is that of programme leader; this relates to the academic management of the programme wherever it is delivered, and is supported by an academic liaison role specific to each link. In the case of the link with DCBS, the Business Studies programme leader also performs the liaison role, as well as being the faculty collaborative coordinator for Business and Law, a situation that the audit team saw as having negative as well as positive aspects (see paragraphs 40, 43). The main relationships with DCBS are between the faculty head of undergraduate studies for Business and Law and the DCBS Director, and between the DMU Business Studies programme leader and the DCBS programme coordinator (see paragraphs 34, 51).

17 With regard to public information, DMU's processes and procedures relating to collaborative provision are published on its website. Also published on faculties' web pages are details of their collaborative activities, including, in the case of Business and Law, the link with DCBS. Full information about collaborative provision covering partner organisations, programmes and student numbers is recorded in the collaborative provision register, but this is not made available on the website.

Section 2: Arrangements for establishing the link

Selecting and approving the partner organisation

18 In 2007-08, DMU introduced a revised procedure for partnership approval. This focuses on new partnerships, which are normally entered into for an initial period of three years, after which a review is required to reconfirm approval; subsequent reviews normally take place at five-yearly intervals, with provision for an earlier review should the circumstances require it. Partnerships that predate the revised procedure, such as the one with DCBS, are also subject to this review process (see paragraphs 46-47).

19 According to the Briefing Paper, the revised procedure has brought greater clarity to the sequencing and timing of the various stages of the approval process. The complete process from exploratory enquiries to the signing of a collaborative contract is subdivided into intermediate stages as follows: gaining faculty support through the programme board and faculty executive; obtaining approval in principle to proceed with the collaboration from the Vice-Chancellor's Group (in the case of overseas partnerships, on the recommendation of the International Strategic Development Committee); drafting the collaborative contract; and collaborative approval. The latter involves a panel including external representation which first considers the institutional and management aspects of the collaboration at a pre-meeting at DMU and then conducts a formal approval visit to the prospective partner. The panel's decision must be endorsed by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, and if approval is subject to conditions or recommendations, progress made in dealing with these is reviewed by the Department of Academic Quality after six months, and then reported back to the Committee in summary form.

20 One of the improvements in the process highlighted in the Briefing Paper is the earlier involvement of the Department of Academic Quality to provide advice and guidance to prospective partners, and to instigate due diligence checks promptly. These are based on scrutiny of various documents obtained from the prospective partner and on statements requested from its former or present associates and involve other University departments, such as Legal Affairs and the International Office, as appropriate. The results are presented as a risk assessment to inform the in-principle approval decisions made by the Vice-Chancellor's Group.

21 The development of a new partnership is, in most cases, linked to the development of an arrangement for collaborative programme delivery and a flowchart (published in the institutional guide on managing collaborative provision), outlines the whole process in the context of both new and existing partners. The essential difference is that the risk assessment made by the Department of Academic Quality, which informs approval in principle of a new partner, is omitted in the case of an existing partner, as it is concerned with the risk of entering into collaboration with a new partner rather than with the risk associated with some development of an existing arrangement. Approval in principle of a partnership gives the faculty the go-ahead to develop the programme proposal, and this part of the process is the same for both new and existing partners (see paragraph 25). When the proposal is submitted for approval (termed validation) in the case of a new partner, partnership and programme approval are routinely considered at the same event.

22 It was clarified to the audit team that the validation of the final year of the BA (Hons) Business Studies for delivery by DCBS did not entail a formal risk assessment. However, the team noted from the validation report that certain risk factors were addressed in relation to DCBS, such as the suitability and sustainability of staffing, the quality of delivery of the first two years of the programme, as well as operational issues, and that, on the basis of track record, the faculty had seen the partnership as low risk. However, there were other risks that, in the team's view, might have been identified. These centred on the fact that the delivery of the final year of a degree programme (honours level) was a first experience for DCBS and, although there was experience within the Faculty of Business and Law of franchising the final year of degree programmes to two overseas partners, the delivery of an entire degree programme by a partner organisation was not a usual occurrence for DMU. There were also risks attached to approving a work placement as an optional fourth year of the degree at DCBS, since the concept of assessed work-based learning, as opposed to placement in a job, is not well understood in India (see paragraph 29). Finally, there were risks associated with operating within the complex regulatory environment for higher education in India, and meeting the requirements for approval of the provision in India by AICTE has necessitated considerable input by both institutions (see paragraph 32).

23 The treatment of the proposal as a low-risk development (as perceived by the faculty) of a longstanding partnership that did not involve approval of a new curriculum meant that there was no procedural requirement for an external adviser on the validation panel. There would have been such a requirement had the collaboration either involved a new partner or a new programme (see paragraph 26). The audit team acknowledges that procedures had been followed correctly and also accepts that validation of the delivery of the final year(s) of the programme at DCBS involved only minor modifications to curriculum content (see paragraph 28), which of themselves would not have necessitated the input of an external adviser. Nevertheless, given that an important aspect of this role is to consider the collaboration as a whole, DMU may wish to consider making wider use of external advisers when dealing with proposals that have unusual risk profiles not adequately expressed through the dichotomy between new and existing partnerships.

Programme approval

24 The approval process for the delivery of programmes by partner organisations is covered by two institutional guides, one dealing with programme planning and the other with programme validation. There is, in addition, specific guidance on making curriculum modifications to previously validated programmes. These guides make appropriate reference to qualification and level descriptors, subject benchmark statements and the *Code of practice*.

25 The planning process starts with the preparation of an outline proposal for programme delivery, for which there is a standard form. Support for this proposal must be gained from the putative programme board, followed by approvals from the relevant faculty academic planning committee and the central Academic Planning Committee via its subcommittee for collaborative provision. Planning approval is concerned with the rationale for programme delivery, covering market demand, student number projections, graduate employment prospects and strategic fit with the faculty's programme portfolio. Having secured planning approval, the proposal is developed in detail for validation. In the case of the first programme(s) to be delivered at a new partner organisation, partner and programme validation are usually combined (see paragraph 21).

26 The validation process takes place according to a timescale agreed with the Department of Academic Quality, which offers guidance to the programme board and faculty academic committee on procedural and documentary requirements, and makes arrangements for the validation event (normally held at the partner organisation) and the appointment of the panel. Where a programme is already validated by DMU and is being considered for delivery at a partner organisation, there is, according to the guide on validation, no requirement for external representation on the panel, since the event does not focus on the curriculum, but on the ability of the partner organisation to deliver the programme. However, in all other circumstances an external adviser is required. Approval decisions, which must be endorsed by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, may be subject to conditions or recommendations. Programmes normally remain valid for an indefinite period, subject to satisfactory review, and this was the outcome for DCBS; however, the approval period may be fixed if the subject area is new, or the sustainability of the market for the programme is in doubt.

27 The audit team was able to track the process in relation to the 2007 validation at DCBS through documentation and minutes and the professional support from the Department of Academic Quality in providing guidance prior to, and during, validations, and tracking conditions and recommendations post-validation is identified as a positive feature of this partnership. Moreover, the wider contribution made by the Department of Academic Quality in facilitating the operation of special procedures for collaborative provision, while also ensuring their integration with normal arrangements, was a feature identified on several occasions by the team (see paragraphs 11, 20, 47, 49, 61).

28 The validation, although it focused on the delivery of the final year of the BA (Hons) Business Studies by DCBS, also approved minor changes to the curriculum. These related to local adaptation of the first-year syllabus and the adoption of a second-year module and a final-year module that were not part of the programme at DMU. The extent of curricular change was considered by the panel to have negligible impact on the previously validated programme in terms of intended outcomes or student progression, and the optional work placement at DCBS was regarded as equivalent to the sandwich placement at DMU.

29 Similarly, the audit team saw the changes to the curriculum as relatively small and noted that the external examiner was, in any case, involved in the approval of the final-year module. However, the placement appeared to the team to have been considered in terms of support arrangements, rather than any requirements for certification of work-based learning. The team appreciated that take-up of the placement was likely to be low, since it was optional and attractive mainly to students seeking work experience as a prerequisite for an MBA, nevertheless, there was little evidence that the parameters for the placement had been properly defined in the context of India, where sandwich degrees are not a familiar model. DMU may wish to consider defining more explicitly the parameters for the placement, in order to avoid potential misunderstandings at a later date.

Written agreements with the partner organisation

30 The most recent collaborative contract relating to the partnership was signed in January 2009. It takes the form of a 'supplemental agreement' to the memorandum of cooperation drawn up in 2001, with an annex that provides for students to complete the whole programme at DCBS, and details the relevant financial arrangements between the parties. Introduced in 2008 as a necessary part of the AICTE approval process, this annex also stipulates that the degrees awarded to students at DCBS and DMU should be regarded in the UK as equivalent.

31 The audit team found the contract to be clear in outlining responsibilities on each side of the partnership. Specifically covered were the arrangements for quality assurance (programme validation, delivery, staffing, monitoring and review), academic management and student assessment. DMU's responsibilities in relation to DCBS students registered for its awards were explicitly stated, including a commitment to ensure that they would be able to complete their degree in the event of termination of the contract by either party. The team considered that the contract was fit for purpose and consistent with the guidance given on drafting written agreements in the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*.

32 The audit team noted that the contract had been drafted to take account of AICTE's requirements for approval of the programme. Senior staff met by the team stressed the importance of being attuned to changes in the regulatory environment in India, in particular, the introduction of the 2005 regulations for foreign universities offering technical education, and both partners indicated that the process of obtaining the necessary approval from AICTE had not been problem free. Even so, the importance accorded by both DMU and DCBS to securing recognition of the degree in India, as well as in the UK, is identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

Section 3: Academic standards and the quality of programmes

Day-to-day management

33 As mentioned above (see paragraph 14), DMU's management of the programme at DCBS is through the BA (Hons) Business Studies programme board. The DMU programme leader has overall responsibility for the academic management of the programme irrespective of its delivery location, while the DCBS programme coordinator has responsibility for local management of the delivery of the programme. The team at DCBS, headed by the Director, comprises seven full-time

teaching staff, including the programme coordinator, and six non-teaching staff, including a librarian. Staff have regular informal meetings.

34 Much of the day-to-day communication is between the DMU programme leader and the DCBS programme coordinator, particularly since the programme leader has also adopted the academic liaison role, which normally requires visiting the link twice a year and preparing a report for consideration by both the programme board and the faculty collaborative provision committee. A programme administrator handles administrative liaison and keeps a record of correspondence between staff operating on both sides of the link, including that between DMU module leaders and their counterparts at DCBS.

35 Student admissions to the programme at DCBS are jointly managed. DCBS has responsibility for the initial selection of students, while DMU has final responsibility for their acceptance and subsequent enrolment at the University (see paragraph 54). The programme administrator visits DCBS annually in connection with student enrolment, accompanying the programme leader on one of the twice-yearly visits.

36 Following enrolment, the records of DCBS students, including details of their academic progress, are managed in the same way as those for any other DMU student. These records are used in the production of certificates and transcripts (see paragraph 62). Consideration of student performance and progression is undertaken by DMU in accordance with its regulations and is not devolved to DCBS (see paragraph 56).

37 Enrolment with DMU gives DCBS students online access to its library (supplementing library provision available at DCBS), its virtual learning environment, which has developed into a key resource for module information and learning materials, and also to plagiarism detection software. As far as the audit team could ascertain, the virtual learning environment was straightforward to navigate and technically reliable; the team was given a live demonstration during its visit to DCBS.

38 DCBS has responsibility for student support arrangements and there is an established system of academic and pastoral guidance centred on tutor support, with each student being allocated a personal tutor to act as first port-of-call for any problem that arises and to conduct progress and performance reviews at regular intervals. Visits by DMU staff serve to reinforce students' understanding of UK teaching methods, as well as to support the transition of those completing the programme at the University (see paragraph 71).

39 There are also established systems for student feedback and representation. Module feedback forms, completed by students at the end of each academic year, are sent for analysis to DMU which sends back a report to DCBS to inform any resultant changes. Students meeting the audit team confirmed the feedback mechanism was in place. There are students elected to represent each year group and these have regular meetings with the DCBS programme coordinator to relay student issues. There is no formal student/staff consultative committee, but both staff and students stressed the value of informal arrangements and face-to-face contact in the context of small-scale provision.

40 The audit team concluded that the day-to-day management of the link was working satisfactorily and the effectiveness of both academic and administrative liaison arrangements was reflected in the positive comments of staff both at DMU and DCBS. However, the team had some concerns that the liaison role was being combined with the roles of programme leader and faculty collaborative coordinator, such that all three roles were carried out by one person. While accepting that there could be advantages in this arrangement in terms of the person concerned having a broader understanding of issues, and there being no communication breakdowns between the roles, the team considered that there were also disadvantages in terms of a lack of constructive critique, the overreliance on a single individual and the greater difficulties posed for succession planning. The team could also see the potential for the individual to be faced with

reporting to himself as part of the annual monitoring process (see paragraphs 42-43). DMU may wish to consider reassessing the implications of assigning the responsibilities attached to multiple roles involved in the management of a partnership to the same individual.

Arrangements for monitoring and review

41 DMU has introduced a revised method of annual programme monitoring from 2007-08, replacing programme journals with programme enhancement plans that cover all delivery locations. Produced to a standard format, these prioritise issues to be given particular attention in the coming year (termed 'areas of focus'), as informed by the evaluation of 'key monitoring information'. The latter comprises student performance data, external examiner reports, student feedback and various review reports, including any relating to accreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, or to collaborative provision. The plans are considered by programme boards in the autumn and at special meetings of faculty academic committees held in the spring, with the minutes of these meetings routinely submitted to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

42 With the implementation of the new method, partner organisations are required to produce an annual report (and where the collaborative programme does not run at DMU, a programme enhancement plan as well). Annual reports comment on student data and on feedback from students and external examiners, identifying good practice and how any weaknesses would be addressed. The audit team was informed that the programme coordinator at DCBS drafted the report (according to the DMU specification), which was then polished in conjunction with the DMU programme leader before being incorporated, as relevant, into the programme enhancement plan.

43 The audit team considered the annual report to be detailed and clear. However, it saw the process by which the report was compiled as illustrative of how the DMU perspective on the programme at DCBS could be being narrowed by the programme leader having plural roles, particularly since the other main source of monitoring information, the twice-yearly visit reports, were also prepared by the programme leader acting in a liaison capacity. The team found these visit reports to be thorough and informative and their consistent presentation enabled issues to be tracked from one visit to the next, while also providing the means for monitoring progress made with ongoing developments.

44 The delivery of the final year of the degree by DCBS has been the main focus of action plans resulting from recent annual monitoring cycles. It was recorded as being under consideration in the 2006-07 programme journal and dealt with more fully in the 2007-08 programme enhancement plan for the BA (Hons) Business Studies, in which 'collaboration' had been designated an 'area of focus'. In the context of DCBS, the audit team noted that staffing and staff support, and communication links at module level were identified as requiring attention in the coming year. It appeared to the team that the explicit emphasis now given to quality enhancement and exception reporting in annual monitoring had not lessened the import of quality assurance through the scrutiny of monitoring information or inhibited the identification of pertinent issues. The team appreciated that the move to programme enhancement plans would encourage aggregation of module data at programme rather than subject area level, and this in turn would facilitate comparison of data between different locations, particularly once the delivery of the final year became established at DCBS.

45 The audit team noted that DMU was keeping the revised method of annual monitoring under close review. Faculty academic committees were required to carry out random checks that programme teams were utilising monitoring information effectively in the preparation of their enhancement plans, and a full-scale review of the implementation of the process, after one year of operation, was being undertaken during 2008-09.

46 As mentioned above (see paragraph 18), DMU's periodic review procedure for collaborative provision (collaborative review) entails an initial review after three years of operation with subsequent reviews occurring every three to five years. Collaborative review confirms approval of both the partnership and the delivery of the associated programmes, while the continued validity of the programmes is considered as part of the University's mainstream periodic review process, which is based on subject areas and looks at cognate programmes within clusters.

47 The collaborative review draws on critical appraisal reports from the partner organisation, the relevant faculty and professional service departments at DMU, and the review process is managed centrally through the Department of Academic Quality. The guide on managing collaborative provision gives details of this process, the requirements for documentation and associated pro forma. The review panel must include an external adviser whose preferred profile combines relevant subject expertise with experience of collaborative provision. As with validation, the review comprises a pre-meeting of the review panel, meetings at the partner's premises and culminates in a report to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, with the Department of Academic Quality following up any recommendations within six months. The most recent review relating to DCBS, carried out in 2004, provides an illustration of the process.

48 Overall, the audit team found that DMU's procedures for monitoring and review, as applied to the link with DCBS, were effective in providing the University with the means to oversee the quality and standards of the programme. This supports a broader conclusion that the procedures are fit for purpose for collaborative provision in general.

Staffing and staff development

49 DMU considers staffing in terms of the adequacy of the overall resource and the quality of teaching staff through its validation and review processes. For instance, the staff base at DCBS was considered at both the 2004 collaborative review and the 2007 validation events. In addition, partner organisations are required to submit annually a list of staff teaching each module, together with the curricula vitae (CVs) of any new or replacement staff, for approval by the chair of the relevant DMU programme board. The Briefing Paper explained that DMU had recently strengthened this procedure by issuing a deadline (typically the end of February) for receipt of the information by the Department of Academic Quality, with defaulters being sent a reminder from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality) that missing a further 'final' deadline would initiate action to suspend recruitment to the programme(s). The audit team was informed that this firm stance was having the desired effect, and that although some CVs were still arriving late, (and not because some staff appointments were made late) the system was improving. The team probed with senior staff how suspending recruitment would affect continuing students and was satisfied with the response that, if a satisfactory arrangement could not be negotiated, as a last resort, DMU would undertake the teaching itself.

50 The visits made by DMU staff to DCBS (see paragraph 34) are used as a means of ensuring that DCBS staff are kept well informed and up to date about the University's administrative procedures, regulatory requirements and arrangements for quality assurance. They are also used to support pedagogical development and, in this context, it is normal practice for the programme leader to be accompanied on visits to DCBS by a module leader (as evident from visit reports) and it is customary for visiting DMU staff to give guest lectures. The audit team noted that DCBS, without any stipulation by DMU, had introduced peer observation of teaching that was entirely developmental, each observation being kept confidential between the staff involved.

51 The audit team met several module leaders who had visited DCBS, as well as DCBS staff who had visited DMU on a similar basis. Both teaching teams separately expressed the view that such visits served to reinforce relationships that were already well established through email contact or collaborative working, such as in the joint development of case studies. The DCBS Director has visited DMU on several occasions to extend his working relationship with senior faculty staff and has also given a guest lecture. The team concurred with the partners' own assessment that lines of

communication were effective because they were simple and well understood, and it identifies the regular and reciprocal visits between DMU and DCBS staff, which have served to strengthen relationships at all levels, as a positive feature of this partnership.

52 In addition, the audit team learned from its visit to DCBS that several staff had well-developed networks within universities in India, particularly where they had taught in other universities, and that a staff development fund supported conference attendance. Other staff were being encouraged to gain further qualifications, with some registered for research degrees. In addition, Daly College (the School) has excellent conference facilities and was able to host symposia and draw on its contacts with business to attract eminent speakers; DCBS was able to take advantage of this resource. In the team's view the benefits to a small college of drawing on the expertise of visiting lectures from local universities and business were clearly recognised from the top down.

Student admissions

53 The entry qualifications for the BA (Hons) Business Studies at DCBS are set out on the DCBS website. Students are admitted on the basis of their result in the A-Level equivalent Class XII examination (in which they must score at least 60 per cent), an aptitude test and a personal interview. The weight given to each component is specified, together with the assessment criteria for the interview. The website makes clear that there are separate admission streams according to whether candidates intend to transfer to the UK for the final year or remain in India, and that there is a financial penalty attached to taking a place on the basis of going to the UK and later deciding not to transfer to DMU.

54 DMU has the final say on whether students are accepted onto the programme, irrespective of where the final year is to be studied and it receives details of all applications, which form the basis of the student record kept by the University. Students transferring to DMU require a UK visa, and the necessary supporting documentation, prepared centrally by the University, is personally delivered to DCBS by the programme administrator (see paragraph 71). The team concluded that the admissions process was thorough and robust. The careful oversight by DMU of student admissions is identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

Assessment requirements and arrangements

55 Students on the BA (Hons) Business Studies are subject to the same assessment whether they follow the programme at DCBS or at DMU, as the learning outcomes of component modules are the same regardless of where these are delivered. There is scope for some variation in assignments to reflect the local context, subject to approval by the DMU module leader, but the learning outcomes must remain unchanged. Module specifications are prepared according to a standard template and give details of how the module will be assessed, what each form of assessment will test, and how marks are to be distributed between different forms of assessment. The DCBS programme handbook contains all relevant information for students on assessment, together with references to DMU's regulations for undergraduate awards for an explanation of degree classifications (see paragraph 66).

56 Students at DCBS sit the same examinations as those at DMU, with question papers set by DMU module leaders and moderated according to the University's normal procedures. Examinations are conducted simultaneously at both locations and DMU carries out regular audits of examination arrangements during site visits by the programme administrator. Initial marking of coursework and examination scripts is undertaken by DCBS, with second-marking and moderation conducted by the DMU module leader on a sample basis. A further sample of assessed work from both DCBS and DMU students is sent to the external examiners. The performance of students at DCBS is considered separately, but at the same assessment board as that of the students on the programme at DMU. Under the new one-tier system, the programme assessment board considers student performance at module and programme level, and makes

decisions about student progression and degree classifications. External examiners are members of the assessment board.

57 In keeping with the University's assessment policy, students are given provisional grades for coursework (subject to confirmation by assessment boards) and feedback (on a standard pro forma) within four weeks of their having submitted the work. DCBS students meeting the audit team confirmed that the feedback they received was suitably referenced to the assessment criteria for the piece of work. They also demonstrated a clear understanding of academic referencing and plagiarism, which the team noted were covered comprehensively in the programme handbook.

58 Both partners regard the congruence of assessment as evidence that the awards students attain are equivalent whether programme delivery is wholly at DMU or DCBS, or split between the two institutions. In the Briefing Paper, DMU referred to DCBS as an extension to the faculty, such that the policies adopted by the faculty applied equally to DCBS. For its part, DCBS clarified to the audit team that the College had been pleased to adopt policies based on the expertise of DMU, recognising it would have taken years to develop this level of expertise for itself.

59 The audit team concluded that the assessment arrangements for the programme were sound. The commonality of assessment allowed DMU module leaders to give structured support to their DCBS colleagues, which would be important as DCBS took on assessment responsibilities in relation to final-year modules. The team noted, however, that assessment had not been an aspect given much consideration in the 2007 validation, from which it assumed that changes in approach, which might derive from DCBS's involvement in programme delivery at a higher level, were not envisaged. While not expressing criticism of the current division of assessment responsibilities between DMU and DCBS, the team could see a practical difficulty for assessment boards when considering final-year students whose programme was entirely delivered at DCBS. Under present arrangements, boards would lack any direct input from DCBS staff, who were now the only ones with first-hand knowledge of the students and who were the primary internal examiners. DMU is encouraged to reflect on the possible implications for assessment processes of the programme now being delivered entirely by DCBS.

External examining

60 DMU retains full responsibility for the appointment of external examiners. Their duties are set out in the University regulations for undergraduate awards, and there is also an institutional guide giving details of the requirements for their reports and the process for dealing with them. Where a programme is delivered at more than one location, external examiners have an explicit duty to assure comparability of standards between locations; each external examiner produces a single report covering relevant modules across all locations. As explained in the Briefing Paper, the guidance notes accompanying the report pro forma have recently been amended to make clear that all sections of the report, including that on multi-site provision, must be completed. This was to overcome the problem that collaborative arrangements had tended to be mentioned only if there were specific issues to report. This appeared to be the case in relation to the link with DCBS which the audit team noted was the subject of only limited comment in external examiner reports. However, this may also be a reflection of the lesser contribution to the award made by second-year as compared with final-year modules, which until the current year have not been delivered at DCBS.

61 External examiner reports are received by the Department of Academic Quality and distributed to faculties, programme leaders and partner organisation(s). The dean of the relevant faculty has responsibility for preparing an initial response to the external examiner and for highlighting any particular matters for consideration by the programme board, as part of annual monitoring. In addition, the Department of Academic Quality produces an overview report on the issues raised by external examiners for consideration by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. DCBS staff were apparently familiar with the reporting process and with the fact that external examiner reports were an input to annual monitoring. The main value of the reports to

date has been confirmation of the comparability of standards at DCBS with other delivery locations. The audit team considered the arrangements for external examining to be effective in relation to the link with DCBS.

Certificates and transcripts

62 DMU takes sole responsibility for the production of certificates and transcripts. Students awarded the same degree are issued with the same form of certificate, which has no reference to where the programme was delivered; instead, the certificate refers to a transcript which indicates both the location of study and language of tuition. This practice is consistent with the relevant precept of the *Code of practice*. The transcript details the grades attained by the student in each module and the credit value of the module in relation to the whole programme; there are also explanatory notes as to how this information may be interpreted in relation to the appropriate UK national framework for higher educational qualifications and the European Credit Transfer System.

63 Students on the BA (Hons) Business Studies who successfully complete a year-long placement (typically between the second and final year) have their award designated as a sandwich degree (BA (Hons) (SW) Business Studies), and are also issued with a separate certificate of work-based learning. This has applied to students transferring from DCBS, even though their placement was not strictly 'sandwiched', as it was completed at the end of the degree.

64 In addition, DMU issues 'migration' certificates to DCBS students who successfully complete the first two years of the programme. In the past, these have allowed students unable to transfer to DMU to continue their studies at other institutions in India. Such certificates are expected to become less necessary now that the final year of the programme is available at DCBS. Nevertheless, DMU is continuing to provide migration certificates and, from August 2007, these have been issued to students from DCBS on graduation to assist with applications for postgraduate study.

Section 4: Information

Student information

65 DCBS publicises the collaborative programme through a prospectus and its website. Promotional material, which is vetted by DMU (see paragraph 69), makes clear that the University is the awarding institution and that the final year of the programme may be studied either in the UK at DMU, or in India at DCBS. Most students who met the audit team came from families involved in business and had learned about the programme through personal contacts or by recommendation from their school, and several had been through Daly College.

66 On joining DCBS students receive a programme handbook describing the structure of the programme, the component modules, the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Also covered are assessment policies, learning resources, student support and programme management. Students' attention is drawn to the 'fine print' of University regulations and policies and to 'frequently asked questions'. The programme handbook is jointly produced by the DMU programme leader and the DCBS programme coordinator and is modelled on the equivalent handbook for students at DMU. Students have online access to module information and learning materials through DMU's virtual learning environment.

67 There is an induction programme at DCBS and another at DMU for students who transfer to the UK. These were rated highly by the respective student groups who met the audit team. A further source of information for students is their personal tutor who is able to answer questions raised by students. Site visits by DMU staff provide opportunities for students to learn more about the UK-end of the programme and the University in general. Students at DCBS had evidently met some of the more frequent visitors from DMU and they commented favourably on the speed with which they received a response to any requests for information made directly to the University.

68 The clear view expressed by students that the information they received was more than adequate, served to confirm the audit team's own impression of the quality of the materials provided. In particular, the team considered the programme handbook to be comprehensive in its coverage and written in a style likely to be accessible to students, while still managing to convey that it was a serious document. The high quality of the information for students is identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

Publicity and marketing

69 DMU monitors the publicity and marketing of its collaborative programmes by partner organisations through a central marketing department, according to established policies, protocols and guidelines on the use of its brand. Before the start of each academic year, partner organisations are required to submit promotional material and other information aimed at students to the marketing department, which consults with the relevant faculties over the accuracy of content. Spot checks are conducted of partner websites at least four times a year, while faculties also monitor websites to ensure programme information remains accurate and up to date. One of the functions of the academic liaison role is to discuss and verify any requirements to revise published information.

70 In relation to DCBS, the audit team was told that promotional material was more concerned with image reinforcement than the recruitment of large student numbers. Both institutions admitted that the materials publicising the first run of the final year of the programme at DCBS should have made clear that, at that stage, it was subject to validation. However, DMU has since reinforced this aspect of its policy and is confident that the incident was an isolated one.

Section 5: Student progression to the UK

71 While still at DCBS, students intending to transfer to DMU to complete their degree receive guidance from the programme leader on selecting final-year modules and assistance from the programme administrator with enrolment and the visa application process, as required. Students from DCBS are guaranteed accommodation in DMU's halls of residence and arrangements for this can also be set in train.

72 On arrival in the UK, DCBS students are met at the airport and subsequently commence a tailor-made, week-long induction programme, which combines sessions exclusively for them with events for international students in general. Students learn more about the final year of their programme and they are introduced to the library and its resources and receive information on student support services. They are also acquainted with other aspects of the University environment and its surrounding area. The DMU programme leader is the designated personal tutor for all ex-DCBS students. Meetings with the personal tutor are scheduled for these students throughout the year on both an individual and group basis.

73 The audit team met a group of DCBS students who had recently arrived at DMU. They commented favourably on their contact with the University prior to their transfer, and on the induction programme and other immediate support. The students were clearly enjoying the opportunity to mix with other cultures and expressed the view that the 2+1 model gave them 'the best of both worlds', particularly as during the first two years at DCBS they had already become familiar with the UK style of education, making it easier to adapt to the expectations of the final year at DMU. The effective support arrangements for student progression to the UK are identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

Conclusion

74 In considering the partnership, the audit team identified the following positive features:

- the professional support from the University's Department of Academic Quality in providing guidance prior to, and during, validations, and tracking conditions and recommendations post-validation (paragraph 27)
- the importance accorded by both sides of the partnership to securing recognition of the degree in India as well as in the UK (paragraph 32)
- the regular and reciprocal visits between DMU and DCBS staff which have served to strengthen relationships at all levels (paragraph 51)
- the careful oversight by the University of student admissions (paragraph 54)
- the high quality of the information for students (paragraph 68)
- the effective support arrangements for student progression to the UK (paragraph 73).

75 The audit team also identified the following points for consideration by DMU as it develops its partnership arrangements:

- making wider use of external advisers when dealing with proposals that have unusual risk profiles not adequately expressed through the dichotomy between new and existing partnerships (paragraph 23)
- defining more explicitly the parameters for the placement in order to avoid potential misunderstandings at a later date (paragraph 29)
- reassessing the implications of assigning the responsibilities attached to multiple roles involved in the management of a partnership to the same individual (paragraph 40).

76 The audit team considered that DMU was operating the partnership with an appropriate regard for the advice contained in the *Code of practice*. Where the team found aspects of the University's practice that could be improved in the context of the *Code of practice*, these are identified in the main report.

77 The Briefing Paper was clear and concise and particularly well referenced to supplementary documentation relevant to the link. The findings of the audit are that, in most respects, the programme at DCBS is operating in accordance with the procedures (as described in the Briefing Paper and supplementary documentation), for managing the delivery of collaborative programmes. While DMU does not usually allow the delivery of the final year of its degree programmes by a partner organisation, the link with DCBS has been developed in accordance with the University's quality assurance framework for collaborative provision and is considered by the University to be representative of its normal approach. Therefore the audit would also support a more general conclusion of confidence in DMU's management of quality and standards across its collaborative provision overseas.

Appendix A

De Montfort University's response to QAA's report on its collaboration with Daly College Business School, Indore, India

The University welcomes the positive report on its collaborative arrangements with Daly College Business School (DCBS), India, and the substantial list of positive features identified by the audit team. It is particularly pleasing that the lines of communication between De Montfort University (DMU) and DCBS, specifically the regular and reciprocal visits between DMU and DCBS staff, were seen to be effective and to have served to strengthen relationships at all levels. In addition, that the University's support for students was commended, specifically the high quality of information provided for students and the effective support arrangements for student progression to the UK.

The University is grateful to the audit team for its constructive comments and is already addressing the points identified for consideration. In order to strengthen existing arrangements, the Department of Academic Quality will now conduct a formal risk assessment in relation to every new collaborative programme proposal, including those presented by existing collaborative partners, to inform discussions of the proposal and to influence the constitution of the validation panel. This will also help us to determine the use of made of independent external advisers on programme approval panels.

The University welcomes the observations of the team regarding the plurality of roles undertaken by one individual and will reflect on the current arrangements, in conjunction with the Faculty.

The University would also wish to confirm that a revised and updated contract between both partner institutions was agreed and signed by signatories of both DMU and DCBS on the 1 April 2009. This contract now supersedes the Memorandum of Cooperation and 'supplemental agreement' referred to in paragraph 30 of the report.

Appendix B

Student enrolments for 2008-09

BA (Hons) Business Studies - Year 1: 55

BA (Hons) Business Studies - Year 2: 43

BA (Hons) Business Studies - Year 3: 38

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
www.qaa.ac.uk

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