

# Review of UK transnational education in China: Durham University and Fudan University

November 2012

## Executive summary

This is a relationship between two well established universities, both within the top 100 in the world rankings (QS): Durham University (Durham), which is a research intensive university and member of the Russell Group, and Fudan University (Fudan), which is a member of the elite C9 League of Chinese universities.

The relationship is centred around the award of a doctoral programme in Business Administration (DBA) offered by the Durham University Business School. The strategic rationale for the Durham-Fudan DBA was to support the School in the internationalisation and diversification of its portfolio of post-experience business and management education, and strengthen the School's research collaborations in East Asia. Durham has adopted a conservative approach to the development of the partnership with Fudan. With the revised DBA programme, Durham and Fudan are now in a stronger position to increase collaboration in both teaching and research, building on the creation of a joint Centre for Finance Research launched at Fudan in 2010. The relationship is seen by both parties to be mutually beneficial in helping to raise their respective profiles in China and Europe.

The collaborative partnership between Durham and Fudan provides students, who for reasons of work or other constraints cannot study or travel regularly to the UK, with the opportunity to pursue a leading DBA programme that mirrors the DBA programme at Durham. Although student mobility can be constrained by employment, domestic and visa issues, the Business School is investing in developing multimedia equipment to enhance communication between students and faculty. There is a strong sense of a cohort community and mutual support network amongst the students.

The Durham DBA programme at Fudan has yet to be approved by the Ministry of Education in China; appropriate documentation generated by Durham with input from Fudan has been submitted to the Ministry in March 2013.

# Report

## Introduction

1 The University of Durham was founded in 1832. It is a member of the research-intensive Russell Group of UK universities. The 2012 QS University World Rankings placed Durham ninety-second. Durham has a collegiate structure with 25 academic departments and schools in three faculties: Arts and Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences and Health. There are 16,000 students, including 4,500 postgraduates; 21 per cent of students are from outside of the UK (2010-11).

2 Durham University's vision (Strategy 2010-20) is to be recognised as an international exemplar of the best in research and research-led education. Its International Strategy (2010-15) elaborates on its objectives for internationalisation from the perspectives of research, knowledge transfer, education, stakeholder engagement and partnerships, sustainability, and leadership and governance. At the time of the review visit, Durham had nine collaborative partnerships, of which seven were international, including two in China.

3 Fudan University was established in 1905. It is a 'comprehensive' university, located in Shanghai, with over 25,000 students at undergraduate, master's and doctoral level in 28 academic departments. In China a 'comprehensive' university typically offers a full rather than a specialised curriculum which includes a wide range of disciplines such as liberal arts, social sciences, science, technical and industrial studies. There are also 18,000 students registered in Fudan's Schools of Continuing Education and Online Education. Fudan University is a member of the elite C9 League of Chinese universities and is ranked third in national league tables and equal ninetieth in the world (QS).

4 Durham and Fudan have similar philosophies, as research-led institutions seeking to raise their profiles in China and Europe respectively. Following reciprocal visits by Fudan and Durham staff in 2004, an institutional memorandum of understanding was signed in 2005, which included a commitment to consider the development of collaborative programmes as well as staff and student exchanges and joint research activities.

5 Durham's doctoral programme in Business Administration (DBA) started in 2002 as a flexible part-time, post-experience professional doctorate that can be taken over four to six years. The programme was offered on a flexible, part-time basis at Durham, taking four to six years: stage 1 comprising six taught modules held at the Durham University Business School in a four-day block; stage 2 requiring a transfer report to be produced, for assessment at a formal research seminar; and stage 3 comprising individual supervised research and study. The Durham DBA received ESRC accreditation in 2005.

6 In 2006, discussions began between Durham University Business School and the School of Finance, Fudan University on establishing a partnership for delivery of the Durham DBA in China based on a part-time (six-year) distance-taught 'flying faculty' model, with all teaching and research supervision provided by Durham. The programme at Fudan has the same modules as the home programme and graduates receive a single degree, awarded by Durham University.

7 A formal agreement between Durham and Fudan was completed on 14 June 2007, although it was 'deemed to have been effective from 1 April 2007'. Initially for five years, the agreement was extended in May 2012 until 31 March 2013 while the School revised its DBA programme. The revised programme, with a focus on finance, will enable a greater involvement of Fudan staff. A renewal will be sought to permit admission of new students in 2013.

8 Six cohorts of students (57 in total) were admitted between 2007 and 2012. The first students are expected to graduate in 2014. The cohorts range from completely or mostly composed of Chinese students to one cohort, the fifth, that is more international.

## **Part A: Set-up and operation**

### **Establishing the link**

9 Durham University's Learning and Teaching Handbook defines the principles, policies, strategic framework and procedures for the establishment of collaborative partnerships leading to an award. Proposals must be aligned with the University's strategic aims and objectives, and those of the department/school and faculty involved. The rationale for the proposed collaboration is considered, together with its appropriateness in relation to existing collaborative arrangements and to other commitments of Durham University and the proposed partner.

10 The strategic rationale for Durham-Fudan DBA was to support the Business School in the internationalisation and diversification of its portfolio of post-experience business and management education, and strengthen its research collaborations in East Asia. This was consistent with Durham's University's Strategic Plan (2005-10) at the time and with the current Strategy (2010-20).

11 Any full proposal must satisfy Durham University of the robustness of the quality assurance procedures governing the partnership, and that the prospective partner organisation meets a range of legal, financial and academic criteria, and in the case of an overseas partnership, it will also have an understanding of assessment and quality assurance arrangements in the UK. In respect of overseas partnerships, the proposal must also demonstrate that in-country requirements have been investigated and meet one of a range of possible criteria.

12 Initial proposals for overseas partnerships are submitted to the Partnerships Approval Group. If the criteria are met, a full proposal is submitted to a Partnership & Programme Approval Panel (PPAP), set up by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee (QSSC). The PPAP considers the proposal: a process that includes a written report from an external specialist. PPAP makes recommendations to QSSC, which in turn makes recommendations to Education Committee. Where, as in the Fudan DBA, the proposal is for the delivery of an existing programme, a second stage will not normally need to be completed in full.

13 The Durham-Fudan University collaboration has not been subjected to review by QAA before. The Institutional Audit of Durham University (May 2009) concluded that the management and operation of the University's collaborative provision was appropriate and effective, and reflected the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*). In line with University policies, the Business School is responsible for the ongoing management of the partnership, including the quality assurance of the provision.

14 Following the review of the documentation and discussions with Durham and Fudan staff, the review team concluded that Durham University's arrangements for approving a partnership programme showed adequate due diligence with regard to legal, financial and academic risk. The initial approval process for the Durham DBA at Fudan included a site visit by two members of the PPAP. The recommendation by PPAP (December 2006) for the

proposed partnership was subject to revisions approved by Chair's action; final approval by Senate (June 2007), backdated to 1 April 2007, was also by Chair's action.

15 It was evident to the review team that Durham University has responded effectively following the recommendations of an internal review of its collaborative provision approved by Senate in November 2007; a retrospective approval visit to Fudan University was conducted in August 2008. The approval visit report was considered by PPAP in October 2008. It was concluded that the partnership with Fudan 'was consistent with the University's Collaborative Provision Strategy'; that while Fudan did not contribute to teaching, assessment or quality management of the DBA, the staff at Fudan 'had a clear understanding of the importance of quality management'; that Durham University had 'robust mechanisms for managing its own provision'; and that many Fudan staff 'had experience of higher education overseas, often in the UK or USA'.

16 The Durham DBA programme at Fudan has yet to be approved by the Ministry of Education in China. During the approval process, it was noted by PPAP 'that although the DBA was not currently approved as a degree by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the qualification was recognised within China and partnerships between Chinese universities and Western universities already existed for the delivery of DBA programmes.' Durham University was also advised by the British Council at the onset of the programme that Ministry of Education approval was not necessary. Fudan recognizes the DBA as an advanced training and professional programme. The review team were informed that a submission to the Ministry of Education for approval of the modified DBA programme, which would have academic input from Fudan, would be made in March 2013: this has now been submitted.

17 The agreement between Fudan and Durham on the DBA programme in China is in English and Standard Mandarin Language; the latter being the legally binding copy. The agreement specifies the services to be provided by Fudan, to be exercised with due diligence, and which cannot be sub-contracted without prior written consent by Durham. The agreement also specifies that Durham will retain full control in all academic matters. Financial, equality, data protection and marketing aspects, and premature termination arrangements, are all clearly described.

18 Following the 2007 internal review of its collaborative provision and the 2009 QAA Institutional Audit, Durham's strategy, principles, policies and procedures for the management of collaborative provision were reviewed in mid-2009 to ensure that they remained fit for purpose and to identify any enhancements arising from changes implemented in 2007-08 and 2008-09. Recommendations to QSSC included that 'the University's policies, criteria and risk assessment for collaborative partnerships should explicitly, rather than implicitly, require all proposals for overseas collaborative partnerships to address issues of 'in-country' recognition'. Additionally, 'collaborative partnership approval and renewal processes [are] to involve the Library and the Information Technology Service (now Computing and Information Services), as currently occurs for new programme proposals'. The latter recommendation is in line with a desirable recommendation arising from the 2009 QAA Institutional Audit, on how the University could make better use of staff responsible for learning resources and student support in the approval and monitoring of collaborative programmes.

19 The PPAP considers the renewal of collaborative partnerships on the basis of the following: a proposed new/updated Memorandum of Agreement, budget and risk analysis; satisfactory reports from the Faculty Collaborative Provision Panel on annual reviews and, where necessary, an action plan to address outstanding issues; any other documentation requested specific to the agreement concerned; and, if required, a site visit by two members of the PPAP.

## **Making the link work**

20 The agreement describes the respective responsibilities of Fudan and Durham in the partnership. The specified responsibilities for Fudan include: marketing of the DBA programme in China; the provision of local administrative, academic and student support; and the establishment of a Management Committee. The responsibilities for Durham include: ensuring that the programme complies with its quality assurance procedures, QAA guidelines, and any local government criteria; the maintenance and development of the curriculum in line with the programme delivered at Durham; ensuring that teaching will be conducted by qualified academic staff appointed for the purpose by the University; the overall administration of the programme by a Programme Manager based at Durham, working closely with the Programme Director. The review team heard that while communication was an issue initially, a good working relationship has been established between Durham and Fudan, including regular telephone calls and reciprocal visits each year for Management Committee meetings. Management Committee meetings are an opportunity for Fudan staff to comment informally and formally on the programme.

21 The Board of Studies in Business has overall responsibility for the Fudan DBA programme. The programme is managed by a Programme Director in Durham, assisted by a Fudan Programme Director who provides on-site support to students and acts as a point of contact for the programme at Fudan. The School's Doctoral Programme Committee, chaired by the Deputy Dean (Research), which meets on a termly basis and reports through the School's Education Committee to the Board of Studies, maintains an overview of the DBA programme in both Fudan and Durham.

22 The agreement specifies that the Management Committee is comprised of at least six members, with equal representation from each university, and that it should meet at least annually to review the programme and the partnership. An Annual Programme Report includes consideration of the external examiners' reports, student feedback and student progression data, and identifies positive and negative features of the programme with action points where relevant.

23 The admission process, and student induction, support, supervision and training are described in the Business School's Policy on Selection, Admission, Induction, Supervision and Training of Research Students (PhD and DBA). DBA applicants must normally have a business-related master's degree, or equivalent qualification, and at least two years' managerial experience at an appropriate level. For applicants whose first language is not English, evidence of competence in written and spoken English will be required, either through their recent completion of a degree delivered in English or through a TOEFL score of 600 (minimum) or IELTS score of 7.0 (minimum).

24 Students apply to the DBA programme through Fudan, who provide Durham with monthly reports on enquires and applications. Durham ensures that entrance requirements for the programme are equivalent to those in the UK and will take all final recruitment decisions in line with appropriate admissions criteria and Durham University guidelines. The application process is supported by an administrative team in the Business School's Doctoral Office, led by the Doctoral Programme Manager. The DBA Programme Director has overall responsibility for admissions. All candidates for the DBA programme at Fudan are interviewed. Interviews are conducted by telephone, webcam or in person by the Programme Director, who visits Fudan three or four times per year. The DBA Programme at Fudan has one formal entry point per annum, although the entry month has been varied with the agreement of both parties.

25 Fudan keeps student records in order to facilitate any communication with students on Durham's behalf. These records supplement student records kept by Durham, which has responsibility for maintaining student records and managing the progression of students.

26 Before students start the DBA programme they are provided with an information pack, which includes a detailed DBA - Fudan University Programme Handbook, praised by students as very helpful and comprehensive, as well as including module dates, assessment deadlines and reading materials for module 1, How to do Research. An induction to the programme also forms part of module 1, including how to avoid plagiarism. Follow-up sessions provide additional support in specific areas, as necessary. Students who met the review team praised the care taken by staff during the induction process. Students contact the module leader if they have an academic problem. Students do not have a personal tutor at Fudan but they can approach staff at either Fudan or Durham if they have a personal problem; students who met the review team mentioned regular contact by email and webcam.

27 English language support depends on the students' location. Fudan provides English language courses, such as Academic Writing and Literature Reading in English; English language support can be provided when students attend the taught modules if they are not based in Fudan.

28 Fudan provides English language support for DBA students as required. A member of Fudan staff is available to deal with study-related issues and problems students may have, and also has a pastoral role and can advise students on where they can go for more directed help, including a counselling service.

29 Fudan arranges the student learning environment, including access to library resources. The review team heard that most of the learning resources that Fudan DBA students need are provided by e-journals, which they can access through Durham's virtual learning platform. Students can access the School of Finance library at Fudan but can have difficulties in accessing the central University library because they are not registered with Fudan, although they can ask for help.

30 Student feedback is coordinated by Fudan in consultation with Durham, and involves reports from the DBA Staff-Student Consultative Committee at Fudan, which are formally minuted, and module and programme questionnaires organised in accordance with Durham guidelines. Student feedback is considered by the programme committee, education committee and the School's Board of Studies. The review team noted that the Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) meets regularly (six times in 2010), considering a different module each time. Student comments on the programme are generally very favourable. Students who met the team commented on the international mix; the sense of community, particularly within cohorts; the development of structural and logical thinking; and the resources available.

31 The review team saw evidence of response to student feedback in the SSCC minutes and in the annual reports. There were some recurring issues concerning requests to have teaching materials distributed in advance of taught modules. More statistical advice and training was requested for the Business Research module and the review team heard that students now have more practice in statistical analysis, such as using the software SPSS in some modules.

32 The DBA programme is divided into taught (90 credits), transfer (90 credits) and research (360 credits) phases. There are six taught modules (15 credits per module), each assessed by a 5,000 word written assignment. After completing the taught phase, students produce a 15,000-word Transfer Document, comprising a research proposal and a literature

review. Students receive written and face-to-face formative feedback on assignments. Student progression against learning outcomes is also assessed informally through regular meetings with module leaders and supervisors. The assessment criteria for the taught phase are appended to the programme specification.

33 The mobility of students attending the Fudan DBA is often constrained by their job, family and visa issues. The review team were told that students at Durham often faced the same logistical difficulties as those based in China, because they are from all over the country as well. To help all DBA students, the Business School is investing in developing multimedia equipment to enhance communication between students and faculty.

34 The Doctoral Transfer Document and progress review is equivalent to an upgrade from master's to doctorate level in a PhD programme; students prepare a detailed introduction to their research, usually within the context of their initial research proposal. Their first supervisor is appointed at module 4, who together with a second supervisor assesses the Transfer Document and a 20-minute student presentation. The research phase normally comprises three linked projects, assessed as a single 60,000 words thesis and by a viva voce examination. Students are reviewed annually during the research phase, always in person. Supervisors contact students on a monthly basis by email/webcam and often see their students when they travel to China. A supervision blog is used for student research updates and supervisor comments; Facebook groups facilitate peer-to-peer interaction between Durham and Fudan. There are also opportunities for student exchange where Fudan students are able to spend time at Durham.

35 A student who fails the transfer process twice can register for a Research Proposal module, and their Transfer Document reassessed as a taught piece of work with a pass mark of 50 per cent, leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Business Research as an exit qualification.

36 Durham is responsible for ensuring that all assessments and examinations are conducted in accordance with its regulations, and liaises with Fudan over submission dates for assessed work and dates of sessions and supplementary examinations. Durham sets and grades all assessments. It is Durham's responsibility to appoint all examiners in accordance with its usual procedures, and to hold and chair the Board of Examiners. Fudan is responsible for administering summative assessments and their submission according to Durham University regulations and under the supervision of the Chair of the Board of Examiners. Assignments and other examined material are marked by two members of the module team, as determined by the module leader.

37 Annual programme reports for 2009-10 and 2010-11 indicated the assessment process for the DBA worked and had been strengthened by the addition of a second meeting of the Board of Examiners per year, from 2009-10. The progression of students in the research phase is assessed at nine, 21 and 30 months. From the review of the documentation provided and meetings with staff and students at Fudan, the review team considered that the assessment arrangements were effective and in line with Durham's Code of Practice on assessment for research degrees.

38 When students graduate, their certificates and transcripts will be produced in line with the policy described in Durham University's Learning and Teaching Handbook.

## Part B: Quality assurance

39 Durham University is responsible for the quality and standards of all its academic awards. The academic standards of all awards involving collaborative provision must therefore be compatible with Durham's level and qualification descriptors, credit framework, and external reference points, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The quality of student learning opportunities and experiences for awards involving collaborative provision should also be equivalent to awards delivered and supported solely by Durham University, and thus should allow students to reach equivalent academic standards.

40 Durham University's policies in respect of collaborative provision ensure that the above principles are met. Collaborative partnership agreements are entered into for a fixed period, and renewal of an existing partnership requires a full review of the academic standards and quality of the provision. The 2007 *Review of University policies and procedures for the approval, monitoring and renewal of collaborative partnerships* comprehensively covered the relevant policies, regulations and procedures regarding a wide range of aspects of collaborative provision, and mapped Durham's policies and procedures for collaborative provision against the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*.

41 The programme specification for the DBA in collaboration with Fudan follows the Durham programme specification template. It addresses the aims and learning outcomes, the delivery and structure of the programme, the process of programme design, student support, and quality management and enhancement. The marking scale and assessment criteria are attached to the programme specification. The programme specification makes appropriate references to the joint statement of the UK Research Councils' Skills Training Requirements for Research Students, Durham University's qualification descriptors and QAA's *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ). In the delivery of the programme section, learning outcomes are mapped against teaching and assessment methods, showing clearly the relationship between the delivery of intended learning outcomes and the assessment of those outcomes.

42 It is Durham's policy that collaborative provision programmes are reviewed annually by representatives of the department or school concerned, who meet in person at least once per year (paragraph 22). Annual review procedures for collaborative programmes are aligned with internal annual reviews within Durham but, additionally, include a report on the operation of the partnership produced by the Programme Director and Programme Manager.

43 Each faculty has a Collaborative Provision Panel (formerly the Faculty Partnership Monitoring Panel), which receives annual reports on the programmes delivered and the minutes of the annual management review meeting on the operation of the partnerships. These faculty panels report to the Education Committee via QSSC. Prior to 2009-10, faculty panel reports on research degree programmes went to the Graduate School. If the panel identifies what it perceives to be threats to quality and standards that are not being addressed, it highlights these in its report.

44 Annual programme reports for the DBA programme operated in partnership with Fudan consider the following: student admissions; progression and achievement; curriculum design and delivery; assessment; student support and guidance; learning resources; quality improvement and enhancement; progress on actions from last year's annual review; issues arising from SSCC meetings; programme management; publicity; administration and staffing issues; and the competitive position of the degree programme. Good practice is noted, as well as areas requiring further development. The 2010-11 Annual Programme Report demonstrated some consideration about whether to change the programme to suit the market better. Effective team teaching and opportunities to practice research methods were



identified as examples of good practice. Actions taken in response to the recommendations made in the previous year's report included the inclusion of a one-day presentation and three-day writing workshop in the first year research phase, for all students.

45 The Board of Studies in Business receives regular reports on the programme via its Education Sub-Committee, which in turn receives regular reports through the minutes of the Durham and Fudan Management Committee and the Doctoral Programme Committee. Minutes of Board of Studies meetings indicate that issues with the DBA programme at Fudan can be identified and dealt with promptly.

46 Durham requires all academic departments to complete an annual review of postgraduate research degrees using a standard proforma, which includes a section on collaborative arrangements. Durham's Education Committee has oversight of this process through the faculty's deliberative structure and QSSC. The Annual Review of Research Degree Provision in the Business School is the responsibility of the Board of Studies and in the two annual reviews seen the comments were largely descriptive with only brief mention of the DBA programme based at Fudan. In both reviews, the quality of students, operational delivery and facilities provided by Fudan were praised.

47 Periodic Review at Durham (currently known as Departmental Review, formerly as Enhancement-led Review), which involves external subject experts, takes place every six years, with each department asked to reflect holistically on its educational provision and research activity, and their management. Departmental Reviews take place over two consecutive days and the review includes two external subject specialists. The review report summarises the judgements of the review team, commendations of areas of effective practice, and recommended areas for further consideration and action. Review reports are received by the Education Committee, Research Committee and QSSC, and departments have 12 months to provide a written response to the recommendations in the review reports; the written response will be reviewed by the Faculty Periodic Review and Accreditation Panel.

48 The faculty of Social Sciences and Health conducted an Enhancement-led Review of the Business School in March 2010, which considered standards and quality of the taught provision, and the quality of research student supervision. The faculty review team included a student representative and members external to the faculty and University. There were over 40 programmes delivered by the School, and little is mentioned specifically about the DBA programme that is specific to the programme based at Fudan, although staff at Fudan were consulted via teleconference. Features of good practice for the DBA programme taught by the School as a whole included the research environment, regular opportunities for postgraduate students to present their work in conferences, and an electronic 'common room' facility.

49 The review report noted that training in statistical analysis was of particular value to DBA students for the research phase of their degree, and that the Business School should consider greater training opportunities: an issue that has been addressed (paragraph 30). The faculty review team noted that feedback from the Fudan DBA cohorts indicated no other substantive issues. The review report was considered by QSSC in 2011, when they reported that recommendations directed to the faculty, and a response, would be expected at a meeting of the Faculty Periodic Review and Accreditation Panel; no specific mention was made of the DBA programme.

50 The one-year extension of the agreement with Fudan (2012 to 2013; paragraph 7) has allowed the Business School to revise the overall DBA programme, which now includes a finance specialism. Renewal of the collaborative programme for a further five years is as described in Durham's Learning and Teaching Handbook.

51 The mechanism of the appointment and induction of external examiners for the taught elements of the DBA programme in this study are in accordance with the University's procedures for taught programmes at Durham. External examiners are appointed annually on behalf of the Senate, following nomination from the department. For all taught programmes the normal period of continuous service is four years. External examiners are required to make written reports annually on Durham's standard annual report form and at the end of their term of office.

52 External examiners' reports are submitted to the Academic Support Office and then circulated to the Chair of the relevant Faculty Education Committee. If matters of concern are raised, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the relevant Faculty Education Committee to ensure that appropriate action is taken. The Chair of the Board of Studies is responsible for informing the external examiner in writing of the actions to be taken in response to his/her report. Departments should also share all external examiners' reports with students through SSCCs.

53 A number of points were raised in the DBA external examiner's 2008-09 report, particularly with the issue of the balance of topics and module content, the focus of marking criteria, and the fundamental differences existing in the students' work between those studying DBA in Durham and those in Fudan. The external examiner suggested meeting a small group of students in person, having sight of the assignment questions with marking schemes, and adding several formative stages of assessment in place of the more traditional models. The questions and suggestions in this report were passed on to and answered by the Chair of the Board of Examiners. The 2009-10 report witnessed a significant improvement in almost every aspect. The external examiner was satisfied with the changes made following his concerns, although problems still existed in the selection of topics at the commencement of the study period, and a more collaborative, commercially driven approach was recommended; these issues were dealt with by the Chair of DBA Board of Examiners in a response to the Academic Support Office. The 2010-11 external examiner report recognised the high standards of rigour pursued by the research assignments reviewers that ensured that there was consistency throughout. In general, the examiner considered that policies and procedures were appropriately adhered to. The constructive feedback students received was identified as good practice.

54 From the review of the documentation submitted by Durham University, and from discussions with Durham and Fudan staff, the review team concluded that the approval process for the DBA programme at Fudan had followed the policies and procedures in place at the time, and that quality assurance processes for the DBA programme at Fudan were appropriate, with effective monitoring and external examiner and review processes that were in line with Durham University's policies and regulations.

55 The DBA Programme Director for Fudan, who is based at Durham (paragraphs 20 and 21), allocates qualified staff to conduct all the teaching on each taught module of the DBA, both in Durham and Fudan (paragraph 6) and ensures that all other staff involved in the programme are fully briefed. Fudan provides staff to support each module of the programme. Fudan administrative officers are valuable in allocating resources to students, contacting students, and helping to complete review processes. Durham is considering appointing staff from Fudan to be members of Durham's Board of Studies.

56 Apart from the Durham academic staff who teach on the programme, Durham has appointed visiting professors from Stanford University and a Distinguished Research Professor from Cardiff University, as well as a visiting professor in Durham to teach on two of the modules. This has been done to strengthen the principles of 'research-led' teaching and of exposing the students to world-class research.

57 Staff development policy and procedures in the Business School are in line with Durham University's training policies. A staff development working group is responsible for implementing the relevant policies and procedures. The Dean of the Business School oversees and monitors the decisions of the group, which are implemented by the Staff Development Officer. Existing practices include consideration of the staff need, an induction and mentoring scheme for new members of staff, annual staff review, and peer observation of teaching.

58 Each DBA student is allocated two research supervisors, both of whom are based in Durham. As per the current DBA Fudan programme handbook, students are allocated a primary supervisor to mentor them through the taught phase of the programme: a practice which has been well received by students. As its expertise lies more in finance than in management, Fudan has not provided formal supervision in practice, but students may consult Fudan staff if their thesis is on a Chinese topic.

59 The revised DBA programme, with the Finance specialism (paragraph 7) will enable a greater contribution from Fudan staff for both the taught and research components of the DBA programme.

60 Staff from the two institutions meet at Management Committee meetings, during visits to teach at Fudan, and during research visits to Durham and Fudan. Some minor communications issues between the two programme offices were raised in 2009-10, mainly due to role ambiguity. Training has been undertaken at Fudan in an attempt to resolve these difficulties. Clear statements of responsibilities have been put in place, together with an online content management site to facilitate the tracking of activities.

## **Part C: Information**

61 The DBA Fudan programme is categorised as 'distance teaching' in Durham's Register of Collaborative Provision. Durham University's policy states that for distance learning programmes, publicity is currently the responsibility of the particular Durham department involved in the collaborative provision.

62 The DBA programme publicity brochure contains comprehensive and detailed information on Durham University, department and the programme. Based on the agreement, Fudan consults Durham University regarding the advertisements placed in newspapers and periodicals. It is Durham's responsibility to approve advertising copy and advertising medium. Fudan will provide to Durham for approval, all marketing materials used by Fudan for the promotion of the programme and will translate this into English as necessary. Durham will review all marketing materials and use of its logo. The review team heard that initially the challenge was the novelty of DBA in China; the marketing was initially through Fudan alumni - so predominantly to Chinese applicants. Durham sends information about the course to its own alumni. By the third cohort, marketing and recruitment was more international.

63 The DBA - Fudan University Programme Handbook (paragraph 26) is a comprehensive document, providing students with all of the essential information on the course and on the advice and support available. The review team heard from the students they met that the information provided on the DBA programme was accurate and helpful.

## **Conclusion**

64 The collaborative partnership between Durham and Fudan provides students, who for reasons of work or other constraints cannot study or travel regularly to the UK, with the opportunity to pursue a leading DBA programme that mirrors the DBA programme at Durham.

65 Durham has adopted a conservative approach to the development of the partnership with Fudan. With the revised DBA programme, Durham and Fudan are now in a strong position to increase collaboration in both teaching and research, building on the creation of a joint Centre for Finance Research launched at Fudan in 2010.

66 For Durham and Fudan, the partnership has helped to raise their respective profiles in China and Europe.

## **Positive features**

The following positive features of the partnership are identified:

- the value-adding features of the DBA programme at Fudan, including language skills, broader networking and professional development experience (paragraphs 26 and 30)
- the excellent course handbook (paragraph 28)
- the strong induction programme (paragraphs 23 and 26)
- the strength of the research phase (paragraphs 34 and 37)
- the student exchange arrangement supported by Durham University Business School and Fudan (paragraph 34).

## **Recommendations**

The Durham University is recommended to take the following action:

- address the recruitment strategy for the DBA programme to ensure a more consistent level of recruitment (paragraphs 24 and 62)
- ensure institutional oversight of the collaborative provision with Fudan through more detailed reporting from the periodic review process (paragraph 49).

## Glossary

**Academic Infrastructure** The core guidance developed and maintained by QAA in partnership with the UK higher education community and used by QAA and higher education providers until 2011-12 for quality assurance of UK higher education. It has since been replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Quality Code**).

**accreditation of prior learning (APL)** The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past (perhaps as the result of a previous course, self-directed study, or active experience), which is taken into account when admitting a student to a programme of study.

**articulation arrangement** A process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent part or year of a programme of a degree-awarding body. Arrangements, which are subject to formal agreements between the parties, normally involve credit accumulation and transfer schemes. Read more in the glossary of *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others* of the Quality Code.

**C9 League** A group of nine major research universities in China, established in 2009.

**CET** The College English Test, a national 'English as a foreign language test' in China.

**CFCRS** Initialism for Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools, denoting cooperation between foreign and Chinese educational institutions in order to establish educational institutions or educational programmes. The activities of CFCRS are governed by regulations introduced in 2003.

**Code of practice** A core element of the **Academic Infrastructure** (now superseded by the **Quality Code**).

**collaborative provision** or **collaborative arrangement** A term used to describe how institutions work together to provide higher education, including learning opportunities, student support and assessment, resulting in a qualification from one or more awarding institutions.

**comprehensive university** A university in China that typically offers a full rather than a specialised curriculum, which includes a wide range of disciplines such as liberal arts, social sciences, science, technical and industrial studies.

**dazhuan** A three-year tertiary education diploma in China.

**due diligence** Enquiries relating to the governance, ethos, status, capacity, reputation and general suitability of a potential delivery organisation or support provider to satisfy the requirements of a degree-awarding body for an arrangement to deliver learning opportunities.

**flying faculty** An arrangement whereby a programme is delivered by visiting staff from the UK institution. Support for students may be provided by local staff. Also known as 'fly-in fly-out faculty'.

**gaokao** National higher education entrance examination in China.

**IELTS** International English Language Testing System, an international standardised English test.

**kaoyan** Postgraduate degree entrance examination in China.

**post-experience education** A postgraduate programme that typically requires students, as a condition of entry, to have substantial and appropriate graduate-level work experience, in addition to an undergraduate degree; a programme of this nature is designed to draw on students' experience and practice.

**pre-experience education** A postgraduate programme that typically does not explicitly require students to have work experience, and is designed to be equally accessible to recent graduates and those who have some relevant experience.

**Project 211** A Chinese government programme, initiated in 1995, that is aimed at strengthening institutions of higher education and key disciplinary areas as a national priority for the twenty-first century. The '21' and '1' within 211 refer to the 'twenty-first' century and 'one' hundred universities, respectively. To be included in the programme, universities had to meet scientific and technical standards and offer advanced degree programmes. It includes the **Project 985** universities.

**Project 985** A project to promote the development of world-class universities in China, which was initiated in May 1998 and named after the date: year '98', month '5'. Much of its funding is devoted to academic exchanges whereby Chinese academics participate in conferences abroad and foreign lecturers visit China. It includes the **C9 League** universities.

**QS World University Rankings** Annual university rankings published by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).

**Quality Code** Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

**TOEFL** Test Of English as a Foreign Language, an English test by the Educational Testing Service.

### **Durham University's response to the review report**

'Durham University welcomes this positive report, and the emphasis it places on student satisfaction with the information and support provided by the University, on the value-added aspects of the DBA at Fudan programme, and on the strong sense of community amongst the student body. We are also pleased to note the confirmation that quality assurance processes for the DBA are appropriate, and their conclusion that the programme has placed Durham and Fudan in a stronger position to increase collaboration in both teaching and research. Durham will consider its DBA recruitment strategy as it increases collaboration with Fudan, and ensure that the follow-up process for periodic review references collaborative programmes more specifically.'

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