



Audit of overseas provision

**London South Bank University and
Loyola College, Chennai, India**

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Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between London South Bank University and Loyola College, Chennai, India.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

1 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is a United Kingdom (UK) organisation that 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 of London South Bank University (London South Bank or the University) was conducted by QAA in March 2005.

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, in the briefing paper, 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 for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, particularly *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, published by QAA in 2004.

4 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 former students (Loyola's current students had at this time progressed to the UK). The audit of London South Bank was coordinated for QAA by Mr Matthew Cott, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The audit team comprised Professor Gareth Roberts and Dr Carol Vielba (auditors), with Mr Matthew Cott acting as 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 on 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. Further information on higher education in India is contained in the overview report.

The background to the collaborative link

Nature of the link

6 The link involves a partial franchise (meaning that London South Bank also provides the complete programme of the same title in the UK) by London South Bank of two MSc programmes to Loyola College, Chennai, India, (Loyola) which is a well-established college affiliated to the University of Madras. Students study semester one in India, where they are taught by Loyola staff, and the remainder of their programme in the UK. London South Bank does not consider this typical of its collaborative links, although it is one of several similar links to MSc programmes at the University.

7 Loyola was founded in 1925 by the Catholic Society of Jesus, the Jesuits. In 1978 it became an autonomous institution, although it maintains its affiliation to the University of Madras. The College is consistently ranked highly in India. The College is approved by AICTE and the UGC which has awarded it the status of a 'College with Potential for Excellence'. Loyola hopes to achieve degree awarding powers in the future.

8 Loyola is a broadly based college spanning undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research in the arts, sciences and commerce. Apart from the partnership with London South Bank, Loyola has agreements with universities in Mexico, France and the United States and is likely to extend its international collaborations further. Loyola's mission to encourage people from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter higher education fits well with London South Bank's emphasis on widening participation.

9 The MSc International Business was established in 1999 as part of a European Union-India programme involving London South Bank, Loyola and another partner in Germany. The Loyola link is one of several partnerships overseas that provide progression onto semester two of the MSc International Business. The other partnerships are in Thailand, China, Germany and Denmark,

and more are planned. These links operate as bilateral arrangements between London South Bank and the individual partners delivering semester one of the degree. The MSc International Business at Loyola is now self-financing and recruits around 15 students each year out of a total of 100 to 150 students registered worldwide on the programme. Loyola is content to keep its numbers on the programme at the present level in order to ensure that it is student centred.

10 The MSc Corporate Governance was established in 2005. The original London South Bank degree in London was developed in cooperation with the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators which accredits the UK version of the degree for award and exemption purposes. It does not accredit programmes overseas. India has a similar professional body but this is not involved with the degree at Loyola. The Loyola programme has recruited poorly with an intake of three students in 2005-06 and seven students in 2006-07. The future of the programme is uncertain.

11 In 2005-06 the University had some 850 students studying on collaborative provision at more than 40 partner colleges: half of these colleges, and a third of the students were overseas. Although student numbers at Loyola are small, London South Bank considers the link to be viable and numbers are sufficient for the collaboration to break even. Senior staff who met the audit team stated that the link contributes to establishing London South Bank's profile overseas. The University has developed the link with Loyola further through the validation of an MBA programme scheduled to start in 2009. The Loyola collaboration is one of only two that London South Bank has in India. India is considered an important location in developing its international strategy and Loyola's good reputation is valued by the University. Staff from Loyola who met the team expressed their appreciation of the value of the link and the aspiration to develop it into a broader partnership.

12 The courses at Loyola are taught and examined entirely in English. At present there is no professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation of the courses at Loyola. The programmes are not individually accredited by AICTE and London South Bank informed the audit team that AICTE accreditation was not required. University staff who met the team stated that they rely on Loyola to monitor such requirements.

The UK institution's approach to overseas collaborative provision

13 The Briefing Paper stated that London South Bank allows limited development of collaborative arrangements on an ad hoc basis. Partnerships are sought that have the potential for financial, academic and cultural gains at home and the provision of educational access overseas. The University's approach to collaboration focuses on individual engagements rather than the application of a particular strategic framework which the University believes might inhibit initiatives.

14 University staff who met the audit team described London South Bank's strategy for collaborative provision as emergent. However, the appointment of a Director of Collaborations is expected to achieve a more targeted approach. The University was, at the time of the audit, commencing a new planning cycle covering the next six years. The team was told that the new strategy was not expected to include any significant expansion of collaborative provision.

15 Both the current Corporate Plan and the International Recruitment Strategy identify India as an increasingly significant market that can be developed in multiple ways, including the establishment of collaborative links.

Management structures

16 London South Bank's academic regulations include a separate section on taught collaborative programmes. This states the requirement for formal approval of all collaborative work and the need to assure the University of the appropriateness of any partner and the equivalence, in terms of quality and standards, of any proposed programme. There is also a

separate chapter of the Handbook on Quality Management and Enhancement (QME) devoted to the development, approval and management of collaborative provision.

17 In 2007 the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) set up a working group, the Collaborations Working Group (CWG), to consider the strategic development and management of collaborative provision; CWG. reported in June 2008. The subsequent revision of the QME Handbook's section relating to collaborative provision was rewritten to reflect CWG's recommendations. The audit team received a draft version of the revised Handbook and noted that it provided greater detail on processes and procedures than the previous version.

18 QSC, which reports to Academic Board, has an overarching responsibility for collaborative provision, but delegates oversight of the area. Until recently, delegation was to the Curriculum and Collaborations Committee (CCC) chaired by the Director of Collaborations. In 2008, on the recommendation of CWG, CCC was split into two committees: the Collaborations Committee (CC) which approves, monitors and reviews collaborations; and the Academic Planning Committee which approves new programmes and manages the University's academic portfolio.

19 Most collaborative provision is initiated at a local rather than institutional level. Each faculty's academic standards committee (FASC) plays an important role in approving collaborative provision before it is sent to CC, and also has a role in monitoring and review. CWG recommended developing the structures at faculty level that relate to collaborative provision through the establishment of collaborations subgroups which would, among other things, advise on risk and collaborative programme development.

20 On the executive side, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (Students and Quality) has overall responsibility for collaborative provision. The PVC is assisted by the Director of Collaborations who chairs the CC. At faculty level there are designated posts responsible for collaborative activity, and requirements are being established for link tutors to provide the main point of contact between London South Bank and its partners.

21 The audit team concluded that the framework within which the link with Loyola had been developed demonstrated that London South Bank has effective structures and policies in place to underpin the management of its collaborative provision. This framework is currently being strengthened as a result of the work of the CWG, although it was too early for the team to evaluate the impact of the changes proposed.

Arrangements for establishing the link

Selecting and approving the partner organisation

22 The academic regulations require London South Bank to satisfy itself that a proposed partner is appropriate in terms of status, location, mission, academic portfolio and financial stability. The University has developed a hierarchy of requirements that addresses different areas of risk involved in establishing a collaborative partnership. The processes of approval of collaborative partners, and the level at which decisions may be taken, proposed in the draft revised Quality Management and Enhancement (QME) Handbook, are based on this analysis of risk.

23 There is currently a three-stage process for partner approval. Approval is designed to determine strategic fit, equivalence of the student experience and the capacity of London South Bank to manage the partnership. The first stage involves establishing an official link with a prospective partner and results in the signing of a non-legally binding memorandum of understanding with the potential partner by the Vice-Chancellor. The second stage is faculty based and involves investigation and due diligence including a visit to the partner institution. The third stage involves approval by the Collaborations Committee and the Planning and Budgeting Committee. Preparations can then be made for an approval visit and validation event,

in most cases held at the partner institution. Validation follows the procedures designed for on-campus provision. External panel members are only involved where new provision is being validated. After the panel has approved and signed-off the proposal, a memorandum of cooperation and, if necessary, a financial agreement are prepared. Low risk progression and articulation agreements are handled through a simpler approval process.

24 Loyola was initially validated as a partner in 1999, prior to the establishment of the current procedures. An internal panel considered the proposal to part-franchise the MSc International Business both to Loyola and to a college in Germany as part of the European Union-India programme. This was followed by a visit to Chennai. The visiting panel examined the compatibility of the two institutions in terms of their mission and ethos, as well as practical arrangements, to ensure equivalence and arrangements for students' progression. Loyola has a centralised approach to developing collaborative arrangements in which the senior management team is involved in detail in agreeing and monitoring provision.

25 When it was proposed to extend the franchise arrangements to include the MSc Corporate Governance in 2005, a similar two-part process was again employed. The proposal was first considered in London, after which there was a visit by London South Bank staff to Chennai. There was no external involvement in either panel, since the collaboration involved the franchise of parts of an existing approved degree.

26 The audit team concluded that London South Bank has broadly satisfactory processes in place for selecting and approving collaborative partners. Since the link with Loyola was approved, steps have been taken to strengthen the procedures involved. However, the team noted that external members are not involved in all approval decisions relating to new collaborative provision. No formal re-approval of the partnership has taken place in the 10 years since it was first approved, thus limiting the University's opportunity to review the link and its future development. The University may wish to keep the underpinning framework of the partnership under review to ensure that the written agreements are up to date and that the partnership is responsive to the views of both partners.

Programme approval

27 The approval processes employed at Loyola described above involved both the approval of the partner and the approval of the delivery of specific programmes at the partner. The processes for programme approval adopted by London South Bank vary with the type of link involved. In the case of both the MSc International Business and the MSc Corporate Governance, the programmes were approved and running in the UK before they were partly franchised. Where programmes are already approved for on-campus delivery, franchising involves an approval event usually held at the partner's site. The panel comprises a senior member of academic staff who acts as chair, a London South Bank academic from any part of the institution, and a member of the Quality Unit. There is no external input to the franchising process. Full validation processes involving external inputs are only employed for dual and joint awards or validated provision.

28 Approval panels can set conditions and make recommendations. The Quality Unit monitors the meeting of conditions. The Collaborations Committee maintains oversight of the approval process and, in turn, reports to the Quality and Standards Committee.

29 Programme specifications are written for all programmes. Programme amendments normally require faculty academic standards committee approval. The procedures for this are laid down in the QME Handbook. The Handbook also specifies requirements for keeping programme specifications up to date. Information from programme specifications is published through course handbooks. The audit team viewed examples of all of these documents.

30 There is limited opportunity for Loyola to adapt the programmes to meet local needs since the examinations are set by London South Bank and Loyola is one of a number of partners teaching semester one. Lecturers are able to orient examples, cases and aspects of course work to local issues. The staff from Loyola who met the audit team expressed the wish to explore further the possibility of developing the local dimension within the programmes.

Written agreements with the partner organisation

31 The academic regulations require collaborative arrangements to include formal written agreements between the partners. Both programmes are covered by formal memoranda of cooperation signed by the heads of both institutions. The memoranda cover such matters as the respective responsibilities of London South Bank and Loyola, academic standards, quality assurance and programme management, resolution of differences and termination. The 2005 memorandum is more detailed and proposes differences in practice from the memorandum drawn up in 1999.

32 The current template for memoranda of cooperation is wider ranging and includes an expiry date. The memoranda covering the two MSc programmes are open ended. The proposed new guidelines in the QME Handbook require both parties to check that they are implementing the memorandum as agreed in the course of annual monitoring; the financial aspect of the agreement is reviewed annually. There does not appear to be a London South Bank procedure for formally updating memoranda, such as those for the two Loyola MSc programmes that were concluded some years ago.

33 New policies enshrined in the QME Handbook require the production of a management handbook for each partnership setting out in greater detail the expected role of each party. The handbook is approved at initial validation and reviewed through periodic review. At the time of the audit no handbook had yet been developed for the Loyola partnership.

34 Staff at Loyola who met the audit team indicated that the memorandum of cooperation was an important platform upon which to build the relationship as it was agreed at the highest level within the College. Operational detail was then worked out between London South Bank and Loyola as the need arose.

35 The evidence seen by the audit team supported the view that the written agreements between the institutions provided a sound basis for establishing the respective roles and responsibilities of each in relation to the link. However, because of the age of the documents, particularly that pertaining to the MSc International Business, the team observed instances where the documents were not aligned with each other or current practice. London South Bank might wish to consider a formal updating process for its older memoranda.

Academic standards and the quality of programmes

Day-to-day management

36 There is a named academic and an administrator responsible for the staffing, learning resources and delivery of the programme at Loyola. They liaise with the relevant UK-based course director and course manager for each programme. A member of London South Bank staff who is a former student of Loyola, with a good understanding of the organisation and culture in Chennai, acts as the key liaison point and undertakes many of the roles expected of a link tutor, such as oversight of admissions. The formal link person is the course director. The revised procedures in the Quality Management and Enhancement (QME) Handbook define formally the role of a link tutor, although none as yet operates in relation to Loyola.

- 37 A course board, which is a forum in which staff and students formally discuss the operation and potential enhancement of a programme, is held in Chennai each year towards the end of semester one for each programme. It is attended by Loyola staff, a member of staff from London South Bank and student representatives. Similar meetings are held in London during semester two with a broader membership.
- 38 The Briefing Paper noted that there is regular contact between London South Bank and its partner which facilitates a good working relationship and the swift solution of any difficulties. Arrangements are relatively simple reflecting the small scale of the activity. Liaison occurs at a number of levels. London South Bank module leaders liaise with their counterparts in India. University staff visit Chennai to participate in admissions, induction and assessment. In addition, a semester one lecturer visits each year to meet students and attend the course board as well as to take some classes and observe others. London South Bank recently produced a set of guidelines for staff undertaking liaison visits on the MSc International Business.
- 39 Several staff from Loyola, both academic and non-academic, have visited London South Bank. A member of staff visits the Loyola students in London each April and also holds meetings with London South Bank staff and former students. Staff in both London and India commented favourably on the extent of communications between the two institutions and the fact that communication took place at all levels from senior management to operational staff. Staff at Loyola who met the audit team noted that there was little opportunity for communications with other partners delivering semester one which limited the opportunity to share good practice.
- 40 London South Bank is responsible for recording student data, module marks and assessment decisions. When visiting for induction, University staff ensure that enrolment forms are completed to allow students to be registered at London South Bank and added to the student record system. Once registered, students receive a student number, an email address and have full access to electronic resources.
- 41 During semester one support for students is provided primarily by Loyola, although supplemented by support available through the web from London South Bank. In 2006 Loyola introduced a mentor scheme which covers some of the same functions as a tutorial system and also serves to gather student feedback. Students who met the audit team commented that staff at Loyola were readily available to provide academic and pastoral support and care.
- 42 Loyola offers a preparatory course prior to the main programme to ensure that students are ready to commence their programme. Loyola has a policy of providing additional academic support to students on the London South Bank collaborative programmes. This includes a mid-semester examination and regular checks on individual student progress.
- 43 Learning resources are also provided locally during semester one. Students also have access to London South Bank electronic resources and the virtual learning environment (VLE). London South Bank informs Loyola of the teaching resources that are expected to be provided and staff at Loyola indicated that these requests have been met. Staff at Loyola noted that the investment in resources, such as teaching rooms to support the collaboration with London South Bank, had wider benefits for the College.
- 44 Validation has confirmed that there are sufficient books at Loyola for the provision of the collaborative programmes. However, there appear to have been long running problems regarding library provision for supplementary reading at Loyola. The audit team was informed that the problem stems from the difficulty of obtaining UK published books in India. In response to this, London South Bank has offered to send excess and withdrawn volumes from its own stock.
- 45 Each student intake elects two student representatives, one male and one female, to sit on the course board that is held in semester one. There is no formal system for gathering end-of-module feedback, although some lecturers collect feedback using forms available from London South Bank. Staff and students confirmed that there is considerable opportunity for informal

feedback. London South Bank also has access to student views through the semester one course board. The audit team met former students of the two programmes who expressed favourable opinions about their experiences. However, they also commented that there was no formal means by which they could feed their opinions into London South Bank to assist the development of the programmes.

46 The audit team considered that the day-to-day management of the partnership arrangements at Loyola was effective. The strong link between London South Bank and Loyola built on regular communications, flows of information and visits, is identified as a positive feature of this partnership. London South Bank is taking steps to strengthen the management of its partnerships, particularly through the appointment of link tutors, although this has yet to be implemented for Loyola. The College gathers feedback from its students. However, there is no systematic collection of feedback by London South Bank across partners offering semester one of the degrees, thus reducing the ability to make comparisons and disseminate good practice between them. There is also no systematic collection by London South Bank of feedback from graduates of the programmes. The University may wish to consider developing mechanisms for gathering and analysing student feedback at Loyola in line with those in operation at London South Bank, and collecting feedback from graduates.

Arrangements for monitoring and review

47 Ongoing monitoring and review is divided between subject areas and the course. Subject areas are responsible for the operation of modules and for the review of external examiners' comments, assessment outcomes and student evaluations. Unit reports that are prepared by module leaders are considered by the subject area boards. Unit reports are also provided to external examiners.

48 The course report, which takes an overview of all modules, is prepared by the course director at London South Bank. The report covers provision in all locations. In compiling the course report the course director draws upon the unit reports written by module leaders.

49 The memorandum of cooperation for the MSc International Business states that the course director in Loyola and the course director in London South Bank will liaise to produce an annual report. The memorandum of cooperation for the MSc Corporate Governance states that Loyola will submit an annual report on the operation of the programme and receive feedback from the FASC. At present no annual reports are prepared by Loyola. However, staff at Loyola confirmed that they are asked for information by the London South Bank course director for inclusion in the latter's reports.

50 Course reports include comments on academic standards, curriculum developments, activities undertaken by staff and students, and an assessment of the learning resources available, as well as an analysis of student numbers, progression and achievement. The report has a section on collaborative provision and discusses recruitment, performance and other issues related to each partner. The Dean reports on all course reports to the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC), identifying issues to be taken up at institutional level.

51 The course report contains an action plan. Progress on the action plan is considered at the second semester course board, and reviewed in the subsequent year's report. The course report is considered by the programme director and any issues are incorporated into the programme director's report to the faculty academic standards committees.

52 The Briefing Paper stated that good practice is disseminated through the annual review process as described above, course boards and informal discussions. It also suggested that dissemination could be enhanced by greater formality. Staff at Loyola do not receive copies of the relevant annual reports from London South Bank.

53 Comparisons between the achievement of Loyola students and those based in the UK are made at both subject and course level. At subject level, comparison is facilitated by London South Bank marking all examination scripts, moderation of coursework, and the compilation of semester one results for discussion at the assessment board. Close contact with Loyola, and in particular the semester one teaching visit, allows London South Bank to assess directly the competence of the students in India. The course report looks formally at performance across the partners and identifies issues of quality and standards relating to individual partners. For example, the 2006-07 report for the MSc International Business noted a rise in referrals and a fall in the overall Pass rate at Loyola. The course reports seen by the audit team demonstrated that where significant problems had been detected in a partnership, actions were identified and progress on achieving them reviewed.

54 The audit team concluded that London South Bank has effective processes in place for monitoring its programmes delivered at Loyola. However, Loyola is not fully part of the London South Bank annual review cycle as it does not receive the reports relating to its provision. There is no parallel annual review cycle at the partner institution or annual report produced for the Loyola partnership. The University may wish to consider involving Loyola more formally in the monitoring, review and enhancement processes.

Periodic review

55 Both programmes have previously been part of subject area review (SAR) - the MSc International Business in 2006, and the MSc Corporate Governance a year later. SARs evaluate a broad range of programmes at all levels and do not focus on specific programmes or collaborations. The review focuses on degree content, academic standards, quality of learning opportunities, management, and enhancement. Staff at Loyola who met the audit team were unaware of these reviews.

56 The University undertakes ad hoc reviews to address areas of concern. In 2004 a 'focused review' was undertaken of the MSc International Business triggered by the University Academic Standards Committee's concerns about quality in some of its collaborative partnerships. The review was undertaken by a senior internal London South Bank team.

57 The 2004 review covered concerns about consistency of marking, adherence to entry standards, relative performance by students in different partners, student support at London South Bank, staff resources, as well as content and structural issues. Loyola was the subject of concerns regarding entry standards and student performance. The panel made a number of recommendations including tightening of entry requirements and the need for an annual review of partners. So far this aspect of the review's recommendations has not been implemented for Loyola.

58 The agreement signed in 2005 notes that London South Bank would expect to visit the College to review the operation of the partnership at least every four years. Under the new periodic review process there is a six-year cycle and a mid-term light touch after three years. The MSc International Business will undergo a mid-cycle review in 2009. The mid-cycle review of MSc Corporate Governance is scheduled a year later. The reviews will be carried out by internal London South Bank panels. The mid-cycle review is intended to report on the extent to which the recommendations of the previous review and annual monitoring have been addressed. End-of-cycle, six-year reviews focus on the strategic fit of the partnership, the student experience, management of quality, operational matters and future developments. The proposed new version of the QME Handbook stated that collaborative provision will be subject to an additional periodic review focusing on the specific programme and the partner institution. It is not yet clear how this double process will work.

Staffing and staff development

59 The Briefing Paper stated that staff appointment and management are delegated fully to Loyola. London South Bank does not keep any formal records of the staff teaching on the courses in India. London South Bank has sight of staff curricula vitae at validation but does not subsequently formally approve new staff that teach on the programmes, although this is stipulated in the Memorandum of Cooperation for the MSc Corporate Governance. London South Bank staff who met the audit team commented that the relationship between the two institutions regarding staffing was one of trust and that it was kept under review informally through day-to-day liaison. Staff at Loyola noted that London South Bank has offered advice on staffing matters.

60 There is no formal staff development offered to Loyola staff by London South Bank, but there is extensive teaching support. Lecturers are supplied with unit guides, assignments, lecture slides, teaching notes and materials such as case studies. Lecturers have remote access to the VLE and London South Bank's electronic library. Staff at Loyola who met the audit team noted the different approach to teaching required by the London South Bank programmes from that normally used in the College.

61 Informal development opportunities exist through regular contact and staff teaching visits (in both directions) between Loyola and London South Bank. As yet no formal exchanges have taken place. The London South Bank faculty member who undertakes a teaching visit during semester one peer observes at least one class at Loyola.

62 The procedures used by London South Bank to assure itself of the quality of teaching staff at Loyola do not fully meet the expectations of the *Code of practice, Section 2*. The University neither confirms formally the appointment of staff to teach on its programmes nor keeps records of them. The University may wish to review the processes used to approve staff teaching on collaborative provision. The audit team noted the potential for more formal and extensive staff development of Loyola staff by London South Bank to contribute to a greater shared understanding of pedagogy. The University may therefore wish to develop a greater shared understanding and ownership of the learning and assessment model deployed by London South Bank (see paragraph 72).

Student admissions

63 The London South Bank Postgraduate Course Guide states the general entry requirements for the MSc International Business. Publicity produced by Loyola indicates the eligibility requirements in local terms.

64 Loyola is responsible for the recruitment of candidates and undertakes advertising, answering enquiries and receiving applications. Candidates are short-listed by Loyola and take an admissions test. Candidates are also interviewed by a panel comprising the College Principal, the Course Coordinator, and a member of staff from London South Bank. Offers are confirmed by the London South Bank representative present at the interviews.

65 The audit team found the applications and admissions processes in use at Loyola to be sound. London South Bank maintains a firm oversight of the processes which contributes to the maintenance of academic standards.

Assessment requirements

66 The regulations for the assessment of London South Bank programmes are available in the Academic Handbook. The assessment regulations for the two master's degrees are the same regardless of location and are laid out in the programme and module specifications. Students are informed about assessment in their course guides.

67 The Briefing Paper stated that assessment and coursework is the same at all centres. London South Bank lecturers set coursework and specify deadlines. Assignments are marked locally at Loyola but moderated at London South Bank. Loyola selects a sample covering a range of marks which is sent to London for moderation. Examinations and the examinations timetable are set by London South Bank and the former moderated by external examiners. Examinations in all locations are held simultaneously. In order to safeguard security, a London South Bank lecturer takes the examination papers to Chennai, invigilates and returns with the scripts. The module leader marks the scripts and these are then moderated by the external examiner.

68 Assessment boards meet in London. Grades go initially to an assessment panel which confirms provisional marks half way through the year and are confirmed later by a subject area board. At the end of the programme, module and dissertation marks are reviewed by an award and progression board.

69 The Memorandum of Co-operation for the MSc International Business stated that staff teaching at Loyola are members of the relevant London South Bank assessment board; however, in the case of the MSc Corporate Governance it is stated that only the Loyola course director is a member. In practice, Loyola staff do not attend or make direct input to the assessment boards in London.

70 The Briefing Paper stated that Loyola lecturers provide students with feedback on their assignments. Students who met the audit team confirmed that extensive feedback on their work was available to them. Students who are concerned about their examination performance may contact the relevant London South Bank lecturer once they receive their results in London.

71 Anti-plagiarism software is used to check dissertations and to allow students to check their coursework. Students receive a briefing on plagiarism and how to avoid it from London South Bank staff during their induction. However, students who met the audit team commented that despite briefings they had received, they were not fully aware of the nature of academic misconduct before they came to the UK.

72 The audit team concluded that the assessment processes applied to the partnership with Loyola are effective. The effective oversight by London South Bank of the assessment process and academic standards is identified as a positive feature of this partnership. However, the lack of involvement of Loyola staff in moderation and assessment boards militates against increased understanding of, and engagement in, the assessment process.

External examining

73 External examiners are appointed by subject areas to individual modules and attend subject area assessment boards. One of the subject-based external examiners is appointed as external to the course and attends the award and progression assessment board. The criteria for appointment and termination, as well as the role and expectations of external examiners, are detailed in the Academic Regulations.

74 Reports from external examiners are received by the Quality Unit and are sent to faculties for distribution. Serious concerns require immediate response. External examiners' reports are commented on in unit review and annual programme monitoring. Faculty academic standards committees receive programme monitoring reports and note whether external examiner comments have been fully addressed. The Quality Unit provides a summary report to QSC identifying good practice and areas for improvement which are fed back to faculties.

75 The same external examiners moderate work across all centres and are thus able to ensure consistency of standards. External examiners covering collaborative provision are not required to have collaborative experience, nor are they required to visit partner locations or to meet with students. External examiners are not specifically required to comment on collaborative issues within subject reports. At course level there is reporting by exception of issues relating to

students studying in different locations. For example, in 2007 the external examiner responsible for the International Trade module commented on the differential performance of students from different centres. Staff at Loyola do not receive copies of external examiners' reports but confirmed that they are briefed by London South Bank on the performance of Loyola students.

76 The audit team confirmed that London South Bank has effective arrangements in place for external examining of the degrees part-franchised to Loyola. These arrangements contribute to the University's effective oversight of academic standards. However, the team noted external examiners are only required to report by exception on standards in collaborative provision. Greater value could be derived from external examiners' work if their reports were read by staff in partner institutions and if these staff had direct contact with externals through participation in assessment boards.

Certificates and transcripts

77 Certificates and transcripts are issued by London South Bank. The Academic Regulations state that the name of the partner will only appear on the certificate if more than one third of the course has been done at the partner institution. The Academic Regulations also state that the transcript will show the location and language of any units studied at a partner institution. For both degrees exactly one third of the credits are earned at Loyola; however, for those who do not complete the dissertation and exit with a postgraduate diploma half their credits are taken at Loyola. Postgraduate diploma certificates therefore do not meet the University's regulations.

78 The examples of certificates and transcripts seen by the audit team contained limited information about the students' studies. For example, neither indicates where the semester one modules were studied; transcripts do not indicate the number of credits awarded or their date of study, and do not contain a guide to the interpretation of marks. Staff at Loyola who met the team indicated that they wished certificates and transcripts to include the College's name which was normal practice in other partnerships.

79 London South Bank staff who met the audit team acknowledged that the information provided on transcripts is incomplete. Progress is being made with developing diploma supplements that will give further information. The University might wish to accelerate this process for students studying part of their degrees in collaborative provision so that the certificates and transcripts issued to students are brought in line with London South Bank's internal regulations and the *Code of practice*.

Information

Student information

80 Prospective students can find out about the course from the London South Bank website and course brochure and from the Loyola website. Candidates meet London South Bank and Loyola staff at interviews and have the opportunity to ask questions about the course. Students who met the audit team were appreciative of the amount of information they received.

81 Loyola completes the initial induction and registration of all students. This is followed by an induction delivered by a member of London South Bank staff. This covers the same material as is delivered in the London induction. During the London South Bank induction students are formally enrolled at the University.

82 The Briefing Paper stated that London South Bank considered that the arrangements for communications between the University and Loyola students work satisfactorily. All students receive the relevant MSc course guide which contains information about course structure and content, teaching and learning, learning resources and learning support, assessment and the course regulations. London South Bank publishes much of its information for students including

handbooks online. Students get information and links to assist them in locating information. The course guide is directed to all students on the degree involved and contains no detail about the delivery of the course in partner institutions except for those elements that can be accessed remotely. Unit guides are also published for individual modules. The guides distributed in India contain relevant local information. Students also receive a local handbook from Loyola.

83 The legal agreements for the two degrees state that the academic appeal procedures of London South Bank apply. However, they differ on whose student disciplinary regulations apply: the MSc International Business Memorandum of Co-operation states that London South Bank's procedures apply; the MSc Corporate Governance Memorandum states that Loyola's disciplinary and complaints procedures apply unless the matter concerns the academic provision or the behaviour of a member of London South Bank staff. In addition, London South Bank's academic misconduct regulations apply to students on the MSc Corporate Governance.

84 The course guide for the MSc International Business contains information and advice for students wishing to lodge an appeal against a decision of the assessment board. It also indicates the procedures that will be adopted in cases of suspected plagiarism. However, it contains no information on how to make a complaint. The course guide for MSc Corporate Governance does not contain any information on such matters.

85 The students who met the audit team were unclear how to make either an appeal or a complaint. London South Bank may wish to review and align provisions for student appeals, complaints and discipline, ensuring that these are communicated clearly to students.

86 Students have the opportunity to meet London South Bank staff on four occasions during their time at Loyola: at interview, during induction, during the teaching visit and at examinations. The visiting member of staff will attend the course board where students are present and students have the opportunity to make direct contact with the London South Bank course director, administrator and lecturers as necessary.

87 The audit team was able to confirm that, with the exception of information about appeals, complaints and student discipline noted above, the information available to students was clear, accurate and reliable. The extensive induction provided to students by Loyola and London South Bank at the beginning of semester one and through the residential weekend at the beginning of semester two (see paragraph 93 is identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

Publicity and marketing

88 The Memorandum of Co-operation for the MSc Corporate Governance states that Loyola must seek approval of London South Bank for marketing text which includes the name or logo of the University. A similar clause covers the MSc International Business. However, it is not clearly specified who is responsible for giving approval. Approving and checking publicity and marketing material is not part of the draft role for link tutors. The audit team was told that advertisements are approved initially by London South Bank's marketing department and given final approval by the Faculty Director of International Activities. The course director at London South Bank who acts as the key link facilitates this process.

89 Loyola provides London South Bank with copies of its local handbook. The programme is advertised and marketed locally. Staff from Loyola who met the audit team indicated that they would welcome greater involvement by London South Bank in marketing activity.

90 The audit team concluded that there were effective arrangements in place for checking both electronic and hard copy publicity and marketing materials.

Student progression to the UK

91 Students progress to the UK to complete semester two and their dissertation immediately after taking their semester one exams. The Briefing Paper noted that the move from India to the UK has proved difficult. There is little time between the examinations and the new semester for travel to the UK and induction. Students commence semester two without knowing the outcome of their exams.

92 In 2007 the transfer process was particularly difficult for the Loyola students who arrived after the induction session because of problems with the visa system. The course director at Loyola assists students with obtaining visas. Despite this two students were unable to transfer in 2009 because of visa problems. Staff visiting Loyola have emphasised the need for students to apply early for visas and have briefed students on the cultural differences between studying in India and studying in the UK. However, London South Bank will wish to continue to monitor the progression of students to London and consider if any further action could be taken to improve the transition.

93 Once in London all students on the MSc International Business programme attend a residential weekend which is designed to integrate the students from the different semester one locations and provide a start to the dissertation process. The students who met the audit team had found the weekend helpful both academically and socially. Current and former students who met the team valued the opportunities to experience different cultures and to learn about international business in an international context, and this is identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

94 The staff at London South Bank and Loyola and the students who met the audit team commented that differences in culture and educational practice between the two countries caused problems for students making the transition at the end of semester one. For example, students were not used to the idea of independent learning and were accustomed to very high levels of instruction and guidance which were not available in the UK. To assist students, briefings are provided both by Loyola and London South Bank staff and new students are linked with former students to explain the differences between studying in India and the UK.

95 Both the Loyola staff and former students who met the audit team commented that while the study period in London provided valuable international experience, placements were also desirable to assist the integration of theory and practice.

Conclusion

96 The audit team found that the link between London South Bank University and Loyola College was established within a sound framework of responsibilities understood by both sides. The management of the link takes place through a set of processes of approval, management and review which demonstrably safeguard the academic standards and quality of the provision. London South Bank is currently making significant changes to these processes. The link facilitates both partners to achieve their international and collaborative aims and the opportunities for study on an international programme are valued highly by students.

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

- the effective oversight by London South Bank of the assessment process and academic standards (paragraphs 30, 53, 65, 72, 76)
- the strong link built on regular communications, flows of information and visits (paragraph 39)
- the extensive induction provided to students by Loyola and London South Bank at the beginning of semester one and through the residential weekend at the beginning of semester two (paragraphs 87, 93)

- the opportunities which the link offers to students to experience different cultures and to learn about international business in an international context (paragraph 93).

98 The audit team also identified the following points for consideration by London South Bank as it develops its partnership arrangements:

- keeping the underpinning framework of the partnership under review to ensure that the written agreements are up to date and that the partnership is responsive to the views of both partners (paragraphs 26, 32, 35, 83, 92)
- developing a greater shared understanding and ownership of the learning and assessment model deployed by the University (paragraphs 30, 62, 72)
- reviewing and aligning provisions for student appeals, complaints and discipline and ensuring that these are communicated clearly to students (paragraphs 35, 85)
- developing mechanisms for gathering and analysing student feedback at Loyola in line with those in operation at London South Bank and collecting feedback from graduates (paragraphs 45, 46)
- involving Loyola College more formally in monitoring, review and enhancement processes (paragraphs 54, 55, 72, 76)
- reviewing the processes used to approve staff teaching on collaborative provision (paragraph 62)
- amending the certificates and transcripts issued to students in line with London South Bank's internal regulations and the *Code of practice* (paragraph 79).

99 The audit team considered that London South Bank makes use of the *Code of practice* in designing its structures and processes for managing collaborative provision. These processes and procedures are broadly aligned with the *Code, Section 2*; however, the University may wish to review its practice in relation to precepts A15, 17 and 24.

100 The audit broadly confirmed London South Bank's view of the link as set out in the Briefing Paper. The information supplied to the audit team through the Briefing Paper, supporting documents and institutional visits, generally support the view that the University manages its overseas collaborative arrangements satisfactorily.

101 The audit broadly confirmed London South Bank's view of the link as set out in the Briefing Paper. The audit team noted the University's view that this link is not typical of its overseas collaborative partnerships. It does, however, provide evidence to support a general conclusion of confidence in London South Bank's stewardship of academic standards and oversight of the quality of the student experience in its overseas collaborative provision.

Appendix A

London South Bank University's response to QAA's report on its collaboration with Loyola College, Chennai, India

The University welcomes the audit team's report on the operations of its collaboration with Loyola College (Chennai, India), and is pleased to note the positive conclusions of the report, and the examples of good practice identified. Especially valued were the judgements that the academic standards and the quality of the provision were demonstrably safeguarded, and that study on the programme was highly valued by students. The University is continuing to develop its framework for collaborations, and thanks the authors of the report for the helpful comments which will inform that process.

Appendix B

Student enrolment for 2008-09

MSc International Business

Semester 1: 14 students

Semester 2: 12 students

MSC Corporate Governance

No enrolment

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