MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, United Kingdom

and

the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment, Kingdom of Thailand

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between

the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education,
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1UB, United Kingdom (UK),
hereafter referred to as QAA

and

the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment,
24th Floor, Phayathai Plaza, 128 Phaya Thai Road, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400,
hereafter referred to as ONESQA

QAA and ONESQA are referred to collectively as ‘both Parties’.

Whereas

QAA was established in 1997. Its purpose is to maintain academic standards and enhance the quality and global reputation of UK higher education. It does this by working with higher education providers, regulatory bodies and students, with the shared objective of supporting students to achieve positive educational outcomes. As a membership organisation, QAA represents and supports its university and college members, working in partnership with them to enhance the quality of their provision.

QAA works to secure academic standards in UK higher education wherever it is delivered across the globe and takes a leading role in international developments in standards and quality, maintaining close relationships with many international quality assurance agencies, governments and higher education institutions.

ONESQA was established by the 2000 Royal Decree to comply with the stipulation of the 1999 National Education Act. It is responsible for the development of criteria and methods for the external quality assessment (EQA), and to conduct assessment of achievements of educational management in order to inspect the quality of education institutions. ONESQA’s mission includes to enhance the quality of Thai education to be competitive or equivalent to international education systems.

ONESQA strives to develop EQA criteria by taking into account the maximum benefits for the development of education institutions by observing the principles of reducing burden and enhancing the quality of educational institutions.
QAA and ONESQA

Having comparable missions and institutional objectives in the assurance of quality in higher education, both parties wish to continue and deepen further their cooperation upon the terms contained herein.

Key principles: QAA and ONESQA

Both Parties understand and mutually acknowledge their respective independent regulatory responsibilities as authorised by the separate national governments and/or as membership organisations recognised by national governments.

Both Parties are members of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), with comparable missions and organisational objectives in the assurance of quality in higher education, and now wish to establish a closer professional relationship as equal partners within a collaborative framework.

Both Parties envision benefits to be achieved through dialogue and cooperation, with benefits accruing to both agencies and to the institutions under their purview.

Both Parties understand the critical necessity of maintaining the confidentiality of information related to institutions, as well as to the agencies themselves as developed through accreditation activities.

Therefore, both Parties agree to the following framework for mutually supportive and collaborative engagement.

This Memorandum of Understanding is not exhaustive and is not intended to be legally binding between QAA and ONESQA, except where specifically stated.

Areas of cooperation and collaboration

To these ends, QAA and ONESQA, in accordance with the framework of British and Thai laws and regulations, will pursue the following objectives for their mutual benefit:

(a) Mutual understanding
Work to enhance their understanding of each other’s approach to assuring quality in higher education, the respective systems in place for quality assurance and enhancement in higher education, and the critical matters relating to quality and standards in higher education in both countries.

(b) Information exchange
Exchange information and offer professional advice about each other’s activities and processes, about developments in their respective country’s higher education systems, and about cross-border providers operating in both jurisdictions, having regard for the confidentiality of the information and relevant Data Protection legislation.

(c) Staff development
Where appropriate and possible, support the development of staff from the two agencies through activities such as staff exchange, observing each other’s review processes, and provision of training.

(d) Use of each other’s reviewers
Where appropriate and possible, draw on reviewers or other specialists from each other’s system to strengthen the international dimension of each other’s review processes.
(e) Recognition
Where appropriate and possible, in operations relating to quality assurance of higher education within one Party's jurisdiction but originating from the other Party's jurisdiction, have due regard to the relevant decisions and judgements of the other Party.

(f) Collaboration
Where appropriate and possible, collaborate in relation to mutually agreed projects and activities for the benefit of both Parties, including the quality enhancement of transnational education, the identification of fraudulent institutions, awarding bodies or accrediting agencies in the UK and in Thailand, supporting student mobility and undertaking research on quality assurance related issues.

More specifically, at the end of this agreement, QAA and ONESQA aim to have achieved concrete collaboration in the following activities:

- Sharing experience in the field of evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions.
- Consulting on the improvement of standards and criteria of institutional accreditation.
- Mutually representing accreditation-related interests at national and international levels.
- Exploring opportunities for joint accreditation and higher education review activity of provision in Thailand.
- Producing a report targeted to UK higher education providers on the regulatory context for TNE in Thailand, including ways in which QAA and ONESQA cooperating together can assist in developing TNE arrangements in Thailand and secure and enhance their quality.
- Observing each other's quality assurance processes and undertaking quality enhancement activities such as a workshop for UK higher education providers operating or wishing to operate in Thailand.
- Exchanging and training of quality experts.
- Sharing experience and projects relating to matters of mutual interest, for example, academic integrity.
- QAA offering one free delegate place annually to a nominated ONESQA representative to attend its Annual Conference.

If any additional costs will be incurred as a result of the collaboration, agreement to progress any allocation/reimbursement of costs should be agreed between QAA and ONESQA before any work is undertaken.

Confidentiality
Both Parties agree to ensure that any information of a confidential nature ('confidential information') that is shared between Parties is safeguarded and remains confidential. Both Parties agree not to disclose confidential information received from the other without the written consent of the disclosing Party. Both Parties acknowledge that, in appropriate cases, they may reach a separate written agreement about the handling of particular confidential information or classes of confidential information. Both Parties agree that this paragraph is legally binding.

Retention of information
Information exchanged under this Memorandum of Understanding will be held and disposed of in accordance with the retention schedules of QAA and ONESQA. For both QAA and ONESQA, this will be up to five years.

Intellectual property rights
Any reports, notes, records, correspondence, documents, computer and other storage, such as disks or other documents and materials used in this Memorandum of Understanding,
which has been generated or is already owned by either organisation, shall be, and shall remain, the property of that organisation.

The settlement
In the event of a dispute between both Parties, it shall be resolved by friendly consultations.

Duration of Memorandum
The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect from the date of its signature and shall continue for three years unless it is terminated by the giving of three months’ notice by either Party. It may be extended on mutual agreement of both parties.

Alteration of Memorandum
This Memorandum is signed by the parties in a spirit of amicable cooperation. The terms of the Memorandum may be altered with the written approval of both parties.

Management and liaison arrangements for the Memorandum
The Chief Executive Officer of QAA (at the time of signing, Vicki Stott) and the Acting Director of ONESQA (at the time of signing, Dr Nantha Nguantad) will have responsibility for managing the implementation of the terms of the Memorandum and taking stock of the terms of the Memorandum on an annual basis. This responsibility may be delegated to relevant members of the agencies’ staff in relation to particular areas of cooperation.

Resources
Unless alternative arrangements are specifically agreed to meet particular project requirements, each Party will normally cover their own costs of implementing the terms of the Memorandum. For particular areas of cooperation, donor funding may be sought from other sources.

Signed in UK and Thailand on 07/12/2021.

Signatures of the Parties:

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