



Audit of overseas provision

**Queen Margaret University and the
International Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata, India**

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Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between Queen Margaret University and the International Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata, 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.

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

The audit process for overseas collaborative links

3 In April 2008, QAA invited all UK higher education institutions to provide information on their collaborative partnerships in India. On the basis of the information returned on the nature and scale of the links, QAA selected for audit visits 10 UK institutions with links in India. Each of the selected institutions produced a briefing paper describing the way in which the link operated, and commenting on the effectiveness of the means by which it assured quality and standards. In addition, each institution was asked to make reference to the extent to which the link was representative of its procedures and practice in all its overseas collaborative activity. Institutions were also invited to make reference to the ways in which their arrangements met the expectations of the *Code of practice 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 students. The audit of Queen Margaret University (QMU) was coordinated for QAA by Mr W Naylor, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The audit team comprised Ms Ann Kettle and My Philip Lloyd (auditors), with Mr W Naylor acting as audit secretary. QAA is particularly grateful to the UK institutions and their partners in India for the willing cooperation they provided to the team.

The context of collaborative provision with partners in India

5 In India, responsibility for higher education resides with the Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resources Development. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the national body responsible for granting recognition to all higher education qualifications; it also regulates the use of university title. Constitutional responsibilities for education are shared between the national parliament and state legislatures. Both can authorise the establishment of universities, public or private, while the national government can

grant 'deemed university' status to an institution 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.

Section 1: The background to the collaborative link

Nature of the link

6 The partnership between QMU and the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM) was established in 1999. The main focus of the partnership is on the delivery by IIHM of the third year of QMU's BA International Hospitality Management, leading to the award of an ordinary degree by the University. Applicants are normally required to have completed successfully the first two years of IIHM's Diploma in International Hospitality Administration. Applicants may also choose to pursue the third year of the programme at QMU in Edinburgh.

7 Student numbers have steadily increased since the first cohort of 19 students began in 1999. The projected target for 2007-08 was 150 in total (75 QMU and 75 IIHM). Actual matriculation figures were 143 (54 QMU and 89 IIHM). Following the most recent periodic review and revalidation in 2007, QMU approved the delivery of the programme at another IIHM campus near New Delhi, commencing in September 2008.

8 No agency agreements exist with this partnership and the programme is not subject to accreditation by a UK professional, statutory or regulatory body. The language of instruction and assessment of both the IIHM Diploma and the degree is English.

9 Students who successfully complete the ordinary degree may progress to a fourth year at QMU to study for the BA (Honours) International Hospitality Management. However, the audit team heard that very few students progress to year four because the ordinary degree is sufficient to gain employment in the Indian hospitality sector.

10 IIHM was founded in 1993 as an autonomous professional institute of higher learning in the field of hospitality and tourism management. It is now part of the IndiSmart Group, a group of colleges established in the early 1990s to provide programmes of study in business, management, information technology and hospitality management. IIHM is approved by AICTE and, in 2005, was informed that the partnership with QMU did not require separate approval from AICTE. IIHM's strategic plan expresses its intention of becoming the top hospitality management school in India within the next five years.

11 QMU explained in its Briefing Paper that there had been considerable growth in its international collaborations since the link with IIHM was approved. At the time of the audit visit, the University had 10 international partnerships recorded on its register of collaborative provision which is published on its website. In terms of the management of the standards and quality of

overseas collaborations, QMU considers that the partnership with IJHM remains representative of its approach to overseas collaborations. The audit team heard that both institutions greatly value the link and believe that it has matured over time into a close collaboration between equal partners which has the potential for further growth.

The UK institution's approach to overseas collaborative provision

12 QMU's strategic approach to overseas collaboration is expressed in several documents including the Internationalisation Strategy 2007-12 and the Policy on Academic Collaboration. The latter describes the importance of collaboration in achieving various aspects of QMU's mission, including in providing greater access to its programmes and developing more routes to continuing professional development. It acknowledges that, in the case of international collaboration, there should be sensitivity in approach and content, strengthening local higher education capacity by, for example, cooperating with local institutions. The policy also emphasises that academic collaboration should provide comparable standards of academic quality, regardless of where the provision is delivered. This is echoed by QMU's Collaborative Agreements Manual, which states that the key principle of all regulations relating to collaborative programmes is that the quality and standards of awards under such agreements are equivalent to those of comparable awards delivered and awarded by QMU. If the programme leads to an award offered in the name of QMU, therefore, it will be subject to the same quality assurance processes and the same academic regulations as an award delivered solely by QMU.

13 The Collaborative Agreements Manual sets out a range of mechanisms designed to support the principle of equivalence outlined above. These encompass due diligence checks at the pre-approval stage; approval in principle granting permission for further development; formal approval of the arrangement by QMU's Senate; delivery of the approved programme in accordance with the definitive programme document; the appointment of external examiners and a board of examiners; annual reporting, periodic review; and the establishment of a formal committee structure, including the requirement for a joint board of studies for each collaborative arrangement.

14 QMU's regulations and processes for the quality management of taught programmes, including those delivered overseas through collaborative arrangements, are codified in its Governance and Procedures. They cover assessment, external examining, the management, development (including approval), modification, monitoring and review of programmes, and are supplemented by an additional set of regulations for academic collaboration. The audit team was able to confirm the statement made in the Briefing Paper that these procedures had been benchmarked against the *Code of practice, Section 2*.

15 Ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of any programme offered in QMU's name lies with the Senate. Proposals for collaborative links must, therefore, have the approval of Senate. In practice, this approval is sought by the submission to Senate of the minutes of the Educational Policy Committee. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee, which reports to Educational Policy Committee, oversees and audits QMU's quality assurance and quality control procedures and their implementation, including collaborative activity. The Academic Quality and Standards Committee considers Statements of Intent for new programme proposals, subsequent validation and review reports, and composite annual monitoring reports submitted by each school.

16 The partnership with IJHM falls within the School of Business, Enterprise and Management. The School is managed by the Dean who is the convenor of the School Academic Board. Primary responsibility for initial approval and operational management of collaborative arrangements lies at school level. The School Academic Board oversees the implementation of QMU policies and procedures at local level, including any collaborative activity, receiving the minutes of programmes committees and joint boards of studies. A joint board is responsible for overseeing the administration, general operation and monitoring of each partnership and for ensuring adequate ongoing communication between the partners.

17 The Academic Collaborations Manual and agreement state that responsibility for the operational management of collaborative partnerships lies with an academic link person. In 2007-08 this role was undertaken by the School's Academic Director (Collaborations and Partnerships), reporting to the Dean. The Academic Director had been responsible for ensuring consistency of policy and practice across the School's international collaborations and assisted in the coordination required to maintain such partnerships effectively. During its visit to QMU, the audit team learned that following the retirement of the Academic Director, the School's management of its collaborative links has reverted to a dedicated academic link person dealing with operational matters for all overseas delivery of the programme, while the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) had assumed strategic responsibility for collaborative activities.

18 The Quality Enhancement Unit provides support for collaborative activity, including liaison with academic link persons, support for joint boards, drafting memoranda of agreement, the organisation of the collaborations forum, and the scrutiny of external examiner and annual monitoring reports. The Unit also maintains and updates QMU's register of approved collaborative arrangements, listing each partner institution, the dates of the formal agreements and their renewal, the type of collaboration and programmes and awards involved, the details of those with responsibility for overseeing the arrangement at the University and the partner, and the language of instruction and assessment. A summary of the register is available on QMU's website.

19 The partnership with IIHM was developed, approved and initially managed under processes and procedures current in 1999. These processes and procedures have been subject to regular review and revision since 1999. On the basis of discussions with staff and examination of documentation, the audit team concluded that QMU's executive and deliberative structures and revised policies and procedures provided a robust platform for its overseas collaborative partnerships.

Section 2: Arrangements for establishing the link

Selecting and approving the partner organisation

20 The partnership grew from a recognition in the then University College's 1999-2003 Strategic Plan of a need to expand its international activities. India was identified as a potential focus for these activities, partly owing to QMU's experience of recruiting Indian students to its nursing programmes. QMU contacted various Indian institutions to discuss possible collaborations and selected IIHM for detailed consideration because of the close alignment of the two institutions' strategic plans.

21 The approval process combined the selection and approval of the prospective partner with the approval of the programme. It followed the provisions of the then University College's code of practice, including financial projections and due diligence investigations about the good standing and legal status of IIHM (which were confirmed by the British Council in Kolkata). QMU's enquiries established that IIHM was approved by the AICTE. A subcommittee of the University College's Academic Standards Committee considered an initial Statement of Intent, which was supported by comprehensive documentation comprising the most recent periodic review of the home programme, the definitive document and module catalogue for the IIHM Diploma, statements from IIHM describing its quality assurance and management arrangements, and a draft agreement. Agreement in principle to proceed was formally granted by University Council (the University College's most senior academic committee) in June 1999.

22 This was followed by a two-day approval visit to IIHM in Kolkata by a panel led by the former Dean of Quality Assurance and included an external member from another UK higher education institution. The panel viewed facilities, met staff and students and considered a range of evidence submitted by both institutions. The panel recommended that the proposal be approved for five years, subject to the fulfilment of five conditions. The panel's report was considered both by the Academic Standards Committee and Academic Council. Council

approved the proposal, monitored progress on the fulfilment of conditions, and received confirmation that these had all been met in April 2000.

23 Since the partnership with IIHM was approved, QMU has revised its approval procedures and these are now codified in the Academic Collaboration section of its Governance and Regulations. Under the current procedures considerable emphasis is placed on the selection of appropriate partners. QMU does not currently review the partnership separately from the review of collaborative programmes.

24 The audit team considered that the process for the selection and approval of IIHM as QMU's first overseas collaborative partner in 1999 was effective and comprehensive.

Programme approval

25 Programme approval for the partnership with IIHM was conducted alongside the partner approval. Given that the proposal comprised the delivery of an existing programme, with identical aims, curricular structure, content and assessment as the programme offered in Edinburgh, the main aim of the programme approval process was to determine IIHM's ability to deliver the programme to an equivalent standard, and also to approve an articulation arrangement. The approval panel (see paragraph 22) judged that IIHM was indeed capable of delivering the programme to an equivalent standard, and this was approved by the Academic Standards Committee and Academic Council.

26 Since 1999 QMU has reviewed and revised its approval procedures to enhance their effectiveness. Current procedures for the approval of collaborative programmes build on those for partner approval.

27 Procedures for the modification and re-approval of collaborative programmes follow QMU's standard practice for home programmes, supplemented by additional requirements specified in the regulations for Academic Collaboration. The agreement states that no amendments to the programme or to the definitive programme document may be made without the approval of Academic Council (now the Senate). Changes approved for the home programme also apply to the programme delivered at IIHM. Minor changes proposed for IIHM between reviews are considered by the Joint Board of Studies (for example, IIHM may need to adapt case study material to suit the Indian market). The audit team learned that QMU was receptive to proposals for programme amendments suggested by IIHM staff, and that some of these had been adopted for the whole programme.

28 The audit team considered that the programme approval process was effective and thorough.

Written agreements with the partner organisation

29 The first agreement between QMU and IIHM was signed following the approval of the delivery and articulation arrangement in 1999, and complied with the University College's code of practice. The partners signed revised agreements following reviews in 2004 and 2007 (see paragraph 48).

30 A formal agreement is required for each collaborative programme leading to an award of the University. The agreement must be developed before validation and approved and signed by all parties before the programme can begin. The agreement and its financial appendix are subject to annual review, but are normally only revised after periodic programme review and revalidation. Following the most recent review of the partnership, in 2007, a new agreement in a slightly revised format is now in force, signed by QMU's Principal and IIHM's Chancellor in June 2008. It is effective for five years from 1 May 2007, and comprises the agreement itself and a 10-section schedule. The agreement covers, inter alia, commencement, termination (including arrangements for students in the event of programme closure), breach, dispute resolution, intellectual property

rights, data protection and applicable law (the laws of Scotland). The schedules include sections on programme management (including staffing, staff development, approval of published information, and responsibility for academic standards); student entrance requirements and terms and conditions; the composition and remit of the Joint Board of Studies and the requirements for the programme team's annual report to the Joint Board; the expectations of each partner; provision of learning resources; minimum student numbers; and the financial memorandum. The audit team confirmed that the agreement encompasses all areas identified in the *Code of practice, Section 2*. Furthermore, the agreement clearly identifies the responsibilities of each partner and of students registered on the programme.

Section 3: Academic standards and the quality of programmes

Day-to-day management

31 The responsibilities of QMU and IIHM staff are established in the written agreement. They follow the University's standard academic and organisational regulations for programme management, supplemented by additional requirements to support collaborative arrangements. Day-to-day management is delegated to IIHM staff who are expected to provide all the physical and human resources to deliver the programme. The definitive document and programme specification approved for IIHM are consistent with QMU's parent programme and there is very close coordination between the two.

32 The recently reactivated post of Academic Link Person is responsible for the project management of approval proposals, ongoing monitoring of the health of the link, coordination with the home-based programme leader, and liaison with both School and partner staff. Administrative support at school level is provided by the School Collaborations Coordinator who arranges for the delivery of teaching materials, electronic services and day-to-day support by liaising with IIHM's programme leader, programme team and administrative staff. Staff from central QMU units also contribute to the quality management of the link, particularly those in the Centre for Academic Practice and the Registry.

33 Coordinators at QMU are responsible for the development and management of individual modules, wherever they are delivered. The School's Head of Subject and programme leader organise visits to IIHM by module coordinators at the start of the programme and each subsequent semester to deliver a week's teaching to students and to support staff development. Module content, learning outcomes and learning experiences are all determined by the coordinator and are now, at the request of IIHM, provided in a teaching and verification pack for the use of both tutors and students. Poor communication between the School and IIHM was highlighted in both the 2004 and 2007 periodic review reports, with specific reference made to infrequency of contact and a lack of response to enquires from IIHM staff. However, the most recent report noted significant improvements, due in particular to the regular use of electronic communication, and these improvements were confirmed in meetings between the audit team and IIHM staff. The improved arrangements for coordination and support, supplemented by regular visits from QMU staff who teach, meet students and liaise with staff, strengthen the link and promote a harmonious and systematic working relationship between the QMU and IIHM programme teams. This relationship is manifest, for example, in the development of shared teaching materials. The team identified the coordination between the programme teams and the support provided by QMU staff as positive features of the partnership.

34 IIHM tutors are supported through direct email contact with their counterparts at QMU and by the University's virtual learning environment (VLE), which has dedicated spaces for each module. The Briefing Paper acknowledged that there had been persistent problems in deploying electronic resources to staff and students at IIHM and also with the VLE, partly due to information technology (IT) infrastructure problems in India. However, the audit team heard from QMU that these problems had now been satisfactorily resolved through visits by University staff to advise on

the use of QMU's remote desktop technology and alternative delivery of information. This was confirmed by the IIHM staff and students whom the team met in India.

35 At IIHM overall management of academic delivery is the responsibility of the Director, assisted by the programme leader, the Head of Quality Enhancement and International Affairs (who oversees the strategic and operational management of the partnership and takes responsibility for those IIHM students who take the programme in the UK), and by the Head of Teaching and Learning. The programme leader chairs the IIHM programme committee, liaises with the Academic Link Person, visits QMU annually, and is responsible to the Director for the operational management and delivery of the programme. A team of module tutors delivers the programme, all of whom are members of the programme committee. They communicate regularly with the relevant module coordinators at QMU. The programme committee is responsible for teaching and learning strategies, the delivery of the teaching programme, identifying resource needs, student workload, receiving external examiner reports, and appraisal and evaluation of the programme. Programme committee minutes are submitted to the Joint Board and the School.

36 The Joint Board of Studies reports to the School Academic Board and to IIHM. The membership of the Joint Board includes senior staff from both partners, staff with responsibility for the main components of the programme, and student representatives. The Joint Board is normally convened annually at IIHM to coincide with the visit of the Dean or Associate Dean of School, and it is the main forum for formal discussion between the partners. It is responsible for the overall administration and monitoring of the programme, receives minutes of the programme and student-staff consultative committees, and must approve the annual monitoring report from the programme committee. It submits its own minutes and its approved version of the annual monitoring report to the School Academic Board.

37 Staff from the Student Records department in the QMU Registry issue forms to IIHM and enter students on the QMU record system. Students' performance details, including marks, progress and achievement are maintained by QMU. IIHM staff keep their own records in a similar way, using a spreadsheet generated by QMU and shared by both institutions. IIHM is responsible for recording results and transmitting them to QMU, which it does through a module board chaired by the programme leader. The module board receives module marks and passes them on to QMU for progression and achievement decisions.

38 Student support is the responsibility of IIHM and is equivalent to the support provided at QMU. IIHM operates QMU's personal academic tutor (PAT) scheme, which covers both academic and pastoral support, and is guided by a set of expectations applying to both the tutor and the student. All teaching staff act as PATs, and the student cohort is divided into groups, each with its own PAT who deals with students' concerns as a mentor or, in some circumstances, an advocate. Additional academic support and monitoring is provided by module tutors. This has addressed the recommendation in the 2007 periodic review report that consideration be given to the effective implementation of academic support by the PAT, moving beyond just a pastoral care role. IIHM also appoints a student relations manager to provide additional assistance for students.

39 IIHM's library and IT resources, which include its own e-learning website, are available to students every day of the week. Engagement with e-learning forms a major part of the programme, both as a means of communication and as a learning tool. Students are also entitled to use QMU's electronic resources and each has a University email address.

40 Student representation arrangements mirror those at QMU. There are student members of the programme committee and the Joint Board of Studies. A student-staff consultative committee (SSCC) meets at least twice a year, providing a discussion forum for programme related matters and suggestions for development. Most of the SSCC's business is determined by the student members. Eight elected student representatives of the year three cohort are members of the SSCC, at least one of whom also attends the programme committee. Meetings of the two

committees are synchronised to ensure an effective reporting relationship. Minutes are also submitted to the Joint Board of Studies and the audit team noted that issues raised by students were considered there. The team heard from students that issues brought to the SSCC are dealt with in a positive and constructive manner.

41 The definitive programme document states that student evaluation is undertaken for each module, using QMU's standard module questionnaire pro forma, submitted anonymously to the programme leader. The audit team understood from its discussion with students that this occurred at the end of the academic year, with action taken in response recorded in the annual monitoring report. The team heard that IIHM also endeavours to solicit feedback from graduates and employers.

Arrangements for monitoring and review

Annual monitoring

42 Arrangements for the monitoring and review of the programme are set out in the agreement and follow the procedures established for home-based programmes, with the exception that IIHM's annual monitoring report is additionally considered by the Joint Board of Studies before submission to the School Academic Board.

43 IIHM's programme leader compiles an annual monitoring report and action plan using QMU's standard template, in consultation with the programme team and with the help and support of the Academic Link Person. The report covers action taken after the previous annual report and action plan with an update on achievement of its objectives; response to any review event; action taken as a result of student feedback and module evaluation, staff and external examiner reports, module tutor and module moderator reports; action taken to enhance equality and diversity; analysis of performance indicators; teaching and learning (including staff development); resourcing; commentary on action taken to address QMU's Quality Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy; good practice and innovation; and an action plan of prioritised objectives for the present academic year. Achievement of the objectives identified in the report's action plan is monitored by the Joint Board of Studies.

44 The audit team scrutinised the two most recent annual monitoring reports, for 2005-06 and 2006-07. The reports recorded action taken to address issues raised by the external examiner and students, and provided clear evidence of improvement in practice. The 2006-07 report also recorded the action taken to fulfil the conditions set by the 2007 periodic review panel. The reports are approved by the IIHM programme committee and appear to comply fully with QMU's requirements.

45 Following approval by the programme committee, the annual monitoring report is submitted to the Joint Board and then to the School. The School Academic Board receives separate reports for each delivery site so that it can compare their performances. The School Academic Board considers an overview from each head of subject and a composite school report from the Associate Dean, to inform the learning and teaching strategy for the subsequent year and to disseminate good practice. Both the heads of subject and School reports include analyses of home and partner programme performance, identifying any particular issues arising from collaborative activity; this demonstrates an effective monitoring of partner delivery at school level. The consolidated reports from QMU's four schools are then considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Examples of good practice are posted on the website of QMU's Centre for Academic Practice.

46 Through its discussion with staff and students, and scrutiny of documentation, the audit team concluded that the annual monitoring procedures were working well in identifying and addressing any issues related to the academic standards and quality of the programme.

Periodic review and revalidation

47 Collaborative programmes are normally reviewed on a five-year cycle and in accordance with QMU's standard procedures, with the exception of the composition of the panel which is composed entirely of experienced staff, including staff with experience of the University's collaborative arrangements. Normally the aim of periodic review is to take an overview of the academic health of the programme, identify any problems and to confirm continuing demand for, and the validity of, the programme. However, the review of the provision at IIHM, which is held at IIHM, is limited to establishing how successfully the programme has been operating at IIHM; the broader issues of academic health, currency and relevance are addressed during the periodic review of the home programme. The IIHM review also includes a mapping exercise to determine whether or not the first two years of IIHM's Diploma in Hospitality Management continue to match the first two years of the degree programme.

48 The programme has been subject to two periodic reviews and revalidations in 2004 and 2007. The 2004 review led to the revalidation of the programme but only for three years, reflecting the conditions on enhanced staff development, communication and support for IIHM. The 2007 review recommended approval for a full five-year term, confirming the success of the partners in responding to the conditions of the previous review. The 2007 review panel commended the programme team for its commitment to development, enhancing quality through closer collaboration, and for contextualising QMU's practices, including the Quality Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, within its documentation. The conditions of the 2007 review concerned revision of documentation, compliance with QMU's policy of providing formal written feedback within three weeks (see paragraph 58), and the provision of details about the transition and bridging arrangements to be implemented by IIHM to prepare students for the revised degree programme (see paragraph 73). The 2007 review had the additional responsibility of considering whether the programme could be delivered at IIHM's campus near New Delhi, which the review panel discharged by visiting the proposed new site. The panel's recommendations and conditions set were considered by the School Academic Board and Academic Quality and Standards Committee. All conditions were subsequently fulfilled.

49 As well as participating in the review of the programme delivered at IIHM, IIHM staff are also invited to contribute to the periodic review of the home programme which considers the broader issues of academic health, currency and relevance. In consequence, IIHM staff may influence the design of the programme wherever it is delivered, and the partners regard as indicative of the growing maturity of their relationship.

50 Changes to the programme also impact upon the curriculum of the IIHM Diploma, and new transition and bridging arrangements were implemented in May 2007, in anticipation of the commencement of the revised programme in October 2007 (see paragraph 73).

Staffing and staff development

51 The written agreement specifies the staffing responsibilities of each partner. IIHM is responsible for appointing a programme leader, teaching team and administrative support staff. Normally academic staff teach on both the Diploma and degree programmes, although newly appointed academic staff tend not to teach on the degree programme straight away. Periodic review panels scrutinise IIHM staff curricula vitae (CVs) and IIHM submits a current list of CVs to QMU at the start of each academic year so that the School may see the qualifications and experiences of the teaching team. IIHM is required to notify QMU of any staffing changes.

52 QMU identifies its priorities for staff development at IIHM through periodic review and revalidation, annual monitoring and by talking to IIHM staff, including during visits to India. Staff development forms an important part of the visits to IIHM by QMU staff. The audit team saw much evidence of the development activities provided by a number of different staff, including the QMU programme leader, the Director of QMU's Centre for Academic Practice and, in

particular, the recently retired Academic Director (Collaborations and Partnerships), whose responsibilities have now been assumed by the Academic Link Person. The broad range of development activities evidenced by QMU encompassed assessment practice, research and scholarship, avoiding plagiarism and the University's quality assurance processes. QMU staff formally report on their activities at IIHM when they return.

53 IIHM also organises its own staff development programme that module tutors are required to follow (normally during one Saturday each month). In addition, several IIHM staff visit QMU each year, during which they take part in a range of development activities including QMU's biannual collaborations forum. The partners hope that all teaching staff at IIHM will eventually have the opportunity to visit QMU.

54 The audit team regarded the staff development activities provided by QMU and IIHM, including the reciprocal visits, as comprehensive and symptomatic of a high degree of coordination between the two partners. The team identified this as a positive feature of the partnership. The team also observed, however, that QMU does not evaluate the effectiveness of its staff development activities at IIHM as a whole. The team considered that a more systematic approach to the evaluation of these activities might be beneficial.

Student admissions

55 Entry to the programme is open to students who have successfully completed the first two years of IIHM's Diploma in Hospitality Management and maintained an 85 per cent attendance record. There is also provision for students from outside IIHM to gain admittance by the accreditation of prior learning, and a small number have done so. Applicants must complete a QMU application form; IIHM then identifies eligible applicants and offers them a place. IIHM forwards successful applicants' completed application forms, along with Diploma examination profiles, to the QMU Registry which issues matriculation forms. QMU undertakes matriculation on receipt of the completed forms. QMU retains the right to decline applications from applicants whom it regards as insufficiently qualified or unsuited to the programme. After matriculation students are entered onto the QMU record system.

56 The audit team considered that QMU has effective arrangements to ensure the admission of suitably qualified students. These arrangements are consistent with the relevant sections of the *Code of practice*.

Assessment requirements

57 QMU's regulations on assessment apply to the collaborative programme at IIHM in all respects. The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is based upon a combination of lectures, tutorials, secondary research and presentations, assessed through the application of theory to operational or management subjects. The pattern of assessment at QMU and IIHM is identical, although some contextualisation is permitted, for example, by allowing students to use Indian examples in their assignments. All summative assessment is devised by QMU programme staff and the assignments verified under the University's standard procedures.

58 QMU provides guidelines to staff on assessment specifications and feedback, with recommended examples of good practice in the design of assessment feedback pro formas. The guidelines state that feedback should be provided as quickly as possible in writing and that it should explain the provisional mark or grade, be linked to criteria and structured to indicate the extent of achievement of learning outcomes. One of the conditions of the 2007 periodic review was that formal written feedback must be provided to students in accordance with QMU policy (normally within three weeks) with the proviso that marks remain provisional until they have been ratified by the board of examiners. In its 2006-07 annual monitoring report, the programme team at IIHM undertook to implement this arrangement from the beginning of the 2007-08 academic year. The definitive document now explains the University's policy on providing feedback outlined above, and the programme team endeavour to comply. In its

discussion with staff and students, the audit team heard that the three-week turnaround was now generally achieved, with occasional exceptions.

59 The programme complies with QMU's policies on the consideration of extenuating circumstances, penalties for late submission, and anonymous marking. Moderation is undertaken by both partners. First, all work is double-marked and moderated by IJHM tutors and an agreed sample submitted to QMU for further moderation. That sample is then sent to the external examiner who has the option of viewing all student work during the visit to IJHM to attend the award board of examiners. All assessment results must be confirmed by the board. A copy of the student's work, plus a copy of the marker's comments, must be retained by IJHM for 12 months to allow for any appeals.

60 The Briefing Paper reported that there had been concerns in the early years of the partnership about marking standards and plagiarism. These concerns were addressed through dedicated staff development and the provision of detailed guidance for students. Recent comments by the external examiner reveal that the situation is now much improved. The 2007 periodic review set a condition that QMU's new regulations on plagiarism and assessment should be implemented within the programme once they had been approved by Senate. The new regulations were subsequently incorporated into the definitive programme document.

61 The board of examiners is established according to QMU's Governance and Regulations, and is responsible to Senate. The board is convened at IJHM, usually by the Dean of School or, in his absence, an approved alternate. It is normally attended by IJHM's Director, the programme leader, teaching staff and an external examiner. The board is serviced by a member of QMU's Registry. The Dean/Associate Dean, or approved alternate, and external examiner attend all boards for the programme to ensure comparability of standards across the different delivery sites; comparative statistical data has recently been made available to boards to aid this function. The board considers results documentation (compiled by School administrative staff) and analytical reports on the operation of the assessment process commenting on student performance and the effectiveness of marking moderation (compiled by each University module coordinator). Minutes and confirmed Pass lists are prepared by the board secretary and forwarded to IJHM for communication to students.

62 The Joint Board meeting is usually held at the same time as the award board of examiners, to ensure representation by both partners. Semester one and retrieval boards are normally held via video-conference.

63 The University's assessment procedures for the partnership are robust. They include module teaching and verification packs, module leader reports, which ensure equity and comparability, and the provision of detailed feedback to students. The audit team identified these procedures as a positive feature of the partnership.

External examining

64 The arrangements for external examining follow QMU's regulations and its Handbook for External Examiners. The external examiner for the programme in Edinburgh also examines the provision at IJHM and produces a separate report for each site. The audit team scrutinised the reports from 2005-06 to 2007-08. It was clear that QMU had addressed any problems that the external examiner had identified. Moreover, in the 2007-08 report, the team noted that the external examiner commended an improvement both in student performance and in the management and teaching of the programme between the two sites.

65 The external examiner submits the report on the IJHM provision to QMU's Principal and Vice-Chancellor. Copies are circulated by the Registry to the Dean of School, the Academic Link Person, the School Manager and to the IJHM programme leader, along with a report distribution form that highlights any issues which require a response. The report is discussed by the IJHM

programme committee, and the programme leader is required to provide a response within eight weeks. The report and response are then sent to the Dean for approval. The response is formally recorded in the annual monitoring report action plan and monitored through the next round of annual monitoring.

66 The audit team considered that the external examining for the programme is operating effectively. The external examiner reports clearly identify any potential problems and there is a procedure to ensure that the partners consider, and respond to, the reports. The procedure is consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining*.

Certificates and transcripts

67 The University Registry produces degree certificates and transcripts and sends them to IIHM either by courier or with the QMU staff attending the local graduation ceremony (usually the Principal or a vice-principal). The certificate and transcript provide full details of the programme including the name and location of IIHM. They are, therefore, consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 2* and with the European Diploma Supplement. There is no reference on the certificate or transcript to the study at levels 1 and 2 (the IIHM Diploma) or the results achieved, which is standard University practice for any progression arrangement.

Section 4: Information

Student information (oversight by UK institution)

68 Each student is given a student programme handbook and a QMU student handbook. Between them these two documents provide comprehensive information about students' entitlements, access to learning resources, welfare, academic support and guidance, and complaints, grievance and appeals procedures. The programme handbook also gives named contacts at QMU and IIHM. Module information is provided to students through separate verification packs. The audit team discussed the range of information provided with students in India and the UK. The students regarded it as accurate and complete.

69 The agreement states that students have the right of appeal against a decision of the board of examiners according to QMU regulations, but the appeals may be delegated to IIHM provided that its procedures are equivalent to those operating at the University. There have been no such appeals to date. Similarly, IIHM is required to have procedures governing student complaints and discipline, and an equal opportunities policy that are equivalent to those of QMU. The audit team confirmed that these are all in place.

70 Meetings with degree students, and Diploma students who intend to progress to the degree, are an important part of the visits to IIHM by QMU staff. The audit team noted that the convenor of the board of examiners, the external examiner, the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and the School Academic Link Person all meet students regularly, providing students with an opportunity to garner advice and information directly from QMU staff. The team considered that this provides students with a valuable direct relationship with QMU. The team regarded it as a positive feature of the partnership.

Publicity and marketing

71 The agreement and Collaborative Agreement Handbook specify that all materials bearing the name or logo of QMU must be approved prior to publication and distribution. One of the Academic Link Person's responsibilities is to approve the marketing material for the programme before IIHM publishes it.

Section 5: Student progression to the UK

72 Most Diploma students progress to the degree. IIHM provides a bridging programme to facilitate the transition to year three of the degree through specialist modules at level 2 of the Diploma, and an induction and orientation programme, both for students who are continuing at IIHM and for those travelling to QMU. IIHM provides further bridging support at the beginning of year three which commences with an induction period. At QMU there is a 10-day, two-part programme and also a full-time tutor to support all direct entry students. Students studying at QMU are also supported by IIHM's International Liaison Tutor who visits annually.

73 The 2007 period review report set a condition requiring the '...formal confirmation and documentation of the transition arrangements and bridging programme being undertaken by the Institute that leads to the new award'. In addition, the panel recommended that the bridging programme should be embedded within IIHM's existing Diploma. In its 2006-07 annual monitoring report, the programme team recorded the fulfilment of that condition by providing revised modules for level 2 of the Diploma programme. The students whom the audit team met regarded the bridging programme as an effective preparation.

74 For the small number of students who proceed to QMU to study for the honours degree, there is a further induction programme and a dedicated direct entry tutor provides academic and pastoral support. Most of those progressing beyond the BA programme apply for master's programmes.

Conclusion

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

- the coordination between the partners' programme teams and the support provided to IIHM by QMU staff (paragraph 33)
- the regular reciprocal visits and coordinated staff development programmes (paragraph 54)
- robust assessment procedures which include teaching and verification packs, module leader verification reports and written feedback to students (paragraph 63)
- students' direct relationship with QMU (paragraph 70).

76 The audit team also identified the following point for consideration by QMU as the partnership develops:

- consider the systematic evaluation of its staff development activities at IIHM as a whole (paragraph 54).

77 The audit team considered that QMU's management of academic standards and quality is consistent with the *Code of practice*, published by QAA.

78 The Briefing Paper, which was jointly developed by the partners, provided the audit team with a full and clear understanding of the origins and current management of the link. As an example of its policies and procedures for collaborative provision, the team's findings confirm a conclusion of confidence in QMU's management of academic standards and systems for the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities for those students studying under collaborative arrangements overseas.

Appendix A

Queen Margaret University's response to QAA's report on its collaboration with the International Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata, India

Queen Margaret University (QMU) thanks the QAA audit team for its report on QMU's collaboration with the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM) in Kolkata. The University welcomes the many positive comments within the report, and in particular, the conclusion that QMU's executive and deliberative structures and policies and procedures provide a robust platform for its overseas collaborative partnerships.

We particularly welcome the four areas of commendation set out in the report, namely, the coordination between QMU and IIHM programme teams and the support provided to IIHM by QMU staff, the regular reciprocal visits and coordinated staff development programmes, the robust assessment procedures and students' direct relationship with QMU. We will seek to build on the good practice identified in these specific aspects of the collaboration.

In the matter of the one recommendation relating to a systematic evaluation of staff development activities at IIHM as a whole, we would reaffirm that staff of the School of Business, Enterprise and Management (BEAM) engage in active monitoring of the effectiveness of staff development through regular communication with staff and students at IIHM, and peer observation. While these mechanisms have served to enhance practice, the School is currently considering how best to build on these existing approaches in the manner suggested by the audit team. These discussions will inform the forthcoming institutional review of staff development activities for overseas partners being coordinated by the University's Centre for Academic Practice.

The final published audit report will be circulated widely within QMU, including to the QM Collaborations Group and to the University's collaborative partners as a means of sharing good practice. It will also be discussed in detail by the University's Educational Policy Committee which will consider and determine whether or not the report's findings lead to any changes in current policy or practice. Specific recommendations arising from that consideration will be referred to the Senate of the University, and will inform the future development of the University's Collaborations Manual.

Appendix B**Student enrolments for 2008-09****Number of students**

In Kolkata studying level 3 BA International Hospitality Management at IIHM, Kolkata:	170
From Kolkata studying level 3 BA International Hospitality Management at QMU Edinburgh Campus:	33
From Kolkata studying level 4 BA (Hons) International Hospitality Management at QMU Edinburgh Campus:	0

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