



# Audit of overseas provision

**University of Huddersfield and the  
Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad, India**

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## Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between the University of Huddersfield and the Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad, 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 report on the University of Huddersfield (Huddersfield) was published by QAA in December 2004; this was supplemented by a Collaborative provision audit report, published in March 2007.

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 Huddersfield was coordinated for QAA by Ms J Holt, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The auditors were Professor Graham Chesters and Professor Paul Periton, with Ms J Holt acting as audit secretary. QAA is particularly grateful to the UK institutions and their partners in India for the willing cooperation they provided to the team.

## **The context of collaborative provision with partners in India**

5 In India, responsibility for higher education resides with the Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resources Development. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the national body responsible for granting recognition to all higher education qualifications; it also regulates the use of university title. Constitutional responsibilities for education are shared between the national parliament and state legislatures. Both can authorise the establishment of universities, public or private, while the national government can grant 'deemed university' status to an institution 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 collaboration between Huddersfield and the Institute of Hotel Management Aurangabad (IHM-A) involves an arrangement under which Huddersfield gives its approval for courses designed and delivered by IHM-A to lead to the award of a Huddersfield degree. Huddersfield uses the term 'validation' to describe the approval process and the term 'designed and delivered' to categorise such arrangements within its typology of collaborative provision.

7 The first validated course at IHM-A, the BA Hotel Management, started in 1996 and was upgraded to an honours degree in 2000. The BA Culinary Arts was added to the portfolio in 2005 and upgraded to an honours degree in 2006. Both courses come within the remit of the School of Applied Sciences at Huddersfield. In 2007-08, student numbers were 383 on the BA (Hons) Hotel Management and 162 on the BA (Hons) Culinary Arts.

8 IHM-A was founded in 1993 based on a joint agreement between the Maulanza Azad Educational Trust and the Indian Hotels Company Limited, which is part of Tata Enterprises (India's largest corporate business house) and includes the Taj hotel group. The aim was to create a 'world-class' centre in hospitality education, with the technical assistance of India's largest hotel chain. The Taj hotel in Aurangabad, which stands next to the Dr Rafiq Zakaria Campus on which IHM-A is located, is used as the principal training facility for the courses.

9 Both courses have gained approval from AICTE. At the time of the audit, the partners were in the process of obtaining reapproval from AICTE, the previous period of approval having just expired. Confirmation of continued approval is anticipated in summer 2009. There is no UK professional accreditation associated with the courses at IHM-A.

10 The link with IHM-A is Huddersfield's only collaborative provision in India, but in total the University has 55 collaborative partnerships, 12 of which are overseas. The link with IHM-A is considered by Huddersfield to be representative of its overseas collaborative arrangements, particularly of the 'designed and delivered' category.

### **The UK institution's approach to collaborative provision**

11 Huddersfield regards overseas collaborative provision an important part of its work in terms of allowing internationalisation of the curriculum through staff exchanges and enhancing the student experience, both at Huddersfield and its partner organisations, through the broadening of staff experience. It also provides a potential source of recruitment for postgraduate courses and raises the profile of the University and its schools. However, there has been a reduction in collaborative provision following a review by Huddersfield in 2006-07. This shifted the focus to developing strong links with fewer partners and to quality and income as the key performance indicators. Much greater weight is now placed on the financial viability of links from the very first stage of the approval process onwards (see paragraph 21).

12 Huddersfield's procedures are based on the premise that the quality assurance of any collaborative arrangement should be maintained at the same level as that expected for in-house courses and apply equally to all partnerships whether home or overseas. There are variations in the approval process according to the different categories of arrangement within the University's typology of collaborative provision. In addition to designed and delivered (as defined above), the other categories are franchise, referring to delivery of Huddersfield courses by partner organisations, and off-campus delivery of Huddersfield courses by the University's own staff.

13 The processes for the approval (validation), reapproval (revalidation) and routine monitoring (annual evaluation) of courses offered through collaborative arrangements are explained in the Quality Assurance Procedures for Taught Courses. Regulations and procedures relating to standards are found in the University Regulations for Awards. Both these documents are complemented by the Handbook for Collaborative Provision which gives detailed guidance on the operation of procedures. The partner organisation is required to make a commitment to maintain procedures for quality assurance and control.

14 In committee terms, institutional responsibility for quality and standards of collaborative provision falls within the remit of the University Teaching and Learning Committee, reporting to Senate (the senior academic committee). Responsibility for the development and implementation of Huddersfield's strategy for collaborative provision and the management of its collaborative portfolio is delegated to a subcommittee, the Standing Committee for Collaborative Provision. This subcommittee, which has the power to approve new collaborative developments, both at course and partnership level (see paragraphs 22 and 27), was created in 2006 as a successor to the Standing Panel for Collaborative Provision in a move to strengthen the University's framework for managing collaborative provision. So as to signal that the new body had a greater level of authority, it was chaired during its first year by the then Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

15 Senior staff clarified to the audit team that the chairing arrangement for the Standing Committee had been a deliberate decision for the short-term, despite the potential conflict of interest between business development and quality assurance, given that the same Pro Vice-Chancellor also chaired the University Teaching and Learning Committee. However, the team was told that since the Standing Committee was now established, its chair had not passed to the new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) who has taken over from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs); thus, there would no longer be any potential conflict of interest.

16 At school level, course committees are responsible for cognate courses within a subject area and report to the relevant school board. Within the School of Applied Sciences, the IHM-A courses are dealt with by the Course Committee for Hospitality, Tourism, Leisure and Events Management. Scrutiny of relevant minutes by the audit team confirmed that these courses featured regularly in the business of the Course Committee.

17 In terms of roles and responsibilities, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) has executive responsibility for the business of the University Teaching and Learning Committee; the Head of Registry has overall responsibility for the administrative procedures that underpin the validation of courses and modules. Deans of school are responsible for ensuring that schools properly fulfil their role (as designated by Senate) relating to the annual evaluation of courses, approval of validation documentation, preparation of documentation for periodic reviews, and any actions necessary to satisfy conditions laid down by a review or validation panel. Chairs of course committees initiate and supervise preparations for validation and annual evaluation.

18 For each partnership, Huddersfield holds an annual executive meeting with representation from both sides of the partnership. This meeting is regarded by Huddersfield as an important part of the management and review of partnerships and its minutes are sent to the Standing Committee for Collaborative Provision. The business of the meeting includes confirming the financial schedule each year; agreeing student numbers and courses to be offered; taking forward matters raised in annual evaluation, revalidation, external audit or other review processes; identifying practical issues; and planning future joint developments. With respect to IHM-A, the minutes of the 2007 meeting (held in Aurangabad) and the 2008 meeting (held in Huddersfield), indicated that the agenda covered all relevant items. The audit team noted that numbers attending the meeting at Huddersfield were less than at Aurangabad and was informed that, to date, little use had been made of communication technologies such as video-conferencing. Huddersfield may wish to consider ways of increasing the participation in the annual executive meetings in order to ensure their effectiveness as a forum for the high-level exchange of information and views.

19 All Huddersfield's procedures relating to collaborative provision are published on its website. The web pages giving information about the School of Applied Sciences allude to courses offered by international partners and include course outlines, although IHM-A is not identified as the partner. Full information about collaborative provision, partner organisations, courses and student numbers is recorded in the collaborative provision register, which is also on the University website.

20 In summary, the audit team considered Huddersfield's approach to overseas collaboration in the context of the IHM-A link to be effective and securely based. This view was derived from the team's scrutiny of strategic position papers, committee terms of reference, role descriptions and minutes of committees at all levels, and was reinforced in its discussions with staff. The University's procedural documentation provided a coherent framework for guiding consistent and appropriate practice in the assurance of quality and the maintenance of standards, and is identified as a positive feature of this partnership.

## **Section 2: Arrangements for establishing the link**

### **Selecting and approving the partner organisation**

21 The partnership with IHM-A was established several years before the introduction of the current process for approving new collaborations. This now requires (in sequence) confirmation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor that a potential collaboration satisfies the criteria for establishing a new link, approval in principle from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) to pursue the development of such a link, and the presentation of a business case to the Standing Committee for Collaborative Provision by the relevant dean of school. Particular care is taken to ensure financial clarity, with emphasis being laid on initial and annual costs, on costs to be borne by each party and on a general assessment of the resources needed. The business case must be supported by signed statements from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the Head of Registry, the Director of Finance and, where the link is overseas, the Director of Marketing.

22 Proposals successful at this stage, and which involve a new partner, are progressed through the appointment by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) of a 'rapporteur' to visit the prospective partner's premises and to prepare a report for consideration by the Standing Committee. The Handbook for Collaborative Provision outlines useful guidance on the content of this report which should cover the institutional context (informed by local intelligence, such as that available from the British Council), course and module specifications, anticipated demand for courses, resources available, staffing and staff development, and arrangements for quality assurance.

23 For proposals gaining approval to proceed, the next stage in the process is institutional approval, followed by validation of the specific course proposals. The Handbook for Collaborative Provision makes reference to institutional approval, indicating that it could be the first part of a validation event, or arranged as a separate event, and also lists documentation required in support of institutional approval. However, the audit team could find no explicit procedure for conducting the process, and there is no mention of it in the Quality Assurance Procedures for Taught Courses which refer only to 'collaborative validation' (see paragraph 26).

24 Nevertheless, Huddersfield undertook an institutional reapproval of IHM-A in September 2008, coinciding with the latest revalidation of the courses (see paragraphs 45). The panel's report covers at some length the issues relating to institutional reapproval (as implied by the list of documentation required given in the Handbook for Collaborative provision): IHM-A's mission and market, its pedagogical approach, the relationship with the Taj hotel group, student support services, and physical and human resources. The report omitted to frame any precise recommendation relating to institutional approval, although the audit team was assured that the partnership had been reapproved. The team concluded that the event demonstrated a suitable balance between robustness and a spirit of collaboration and had achieved its purposes effectively, despite the absence of an explicit recommendation.

25 The audit team was unable to reach a clear view on the effectiveness of the current procedure for approving a new partnership based on the link with IHM-A, since the procedure is recent and the link is long established. The process appeared to be based on sound principles, particularly in its attention to financial risk and in having sequential stages of approval endorsed by senior executives and/or committees, with the operational guidance found in the Handbook for Collaborative Provision being a valuable adjunct to the procedural framework. However, there remains the lack of any formal description of the process for institutional approval; therefore, Huddersfield may wish to consider expanding on this part of the overall process in its procedural documentation and including it in the accompanying flowchart.

### **Programme approval**

26 The 'collaborative validation' process is set out in the Quality Assurance Procedures for Taught Courses and there is a section dedicated to courses designed and delivered by other institutions. The essential purpose of the validation event for such courses is to establish that they are of an appropriate standard and that the partner organisation has the necessary resources to deliver them. The Handbook for Collaborative Provision contains guidance on documentation, which centres on the programme specification, supplemented by detailed module specifications, and also gives suggested agendas for meetings with staff and students in the partner organisation. Schools have responsibility for organising validation events, which are usually held at partner premises, although the procedure leaves open the possibility that events may take place by video link.

27 The outcome of the validation event ranges from full approval to non-approval of the courses, the most common outcome being approval subject to a series of conditions and recommendations. However, in order for the course to proceed, the validation report must be approved by the University Teaching and Learning Committee on the advice of the Standing Committee for Collaborative Provision and, before the course can be offered to students, all the conditions for validation must be satisfied, with the Standing Committee checking on

compliance. Courses are normally approved to run for five years. The process for revalidation is the same as the validation process, with the added requirements of a critical review of the operation of the course to date and a meeting with existing students (see paragraph 44).

28 The BA Culinary Arts, introduced in 2005-06, provided an illustration for the audit team of the process for approving a new course. The validation in May 2005 occurred alongside the revalidation of the BA (Hons) Hotel Management, including the validation of additional pathways. In compliance with the procedure for validation, the panel consisted of a representative of the University Teaching and Learning Committee in the chair, an internal subject specialist, an external subject specialist, and an administrator who also prepared the validation report. During the event, which took place at IHM-A, the panel reviewed the demand for the courses, the physical, human and learning resources, the staff development strategy, and the student placement policy.

29 From the evidence of the panel's report, the details of the proposed new course were the subject of close scrutiny and discussion; the same was true of the additional pathways. The revalidation took account of documentation prepared by IHM-A in accordance with the specified format and of discussions with the teaching team and student representatives. The report recommended validation/revalidation of the courses subject to a number of conditions of varying weight. It was received by the Standing Panel on Collaborative Provision (the predecessor body to the Standing Committee) in September 2005 and the courses were approved for five intakes. As it turned out, the new pathways were not implemented and were later withdrawn because of difficulties they introduced with respect to approval by AICTE.

30 The audit team found that the 2005 validation at IHM-A was conducted in accordance with the University's procedure for new course approval under a designed and delivered collaborative arrangement, and saw this as an important indicator of Huddersfield's capacity to assure quality and maintain standards in collaborative provision more broadly.

### **Written agreements with the partner organisation**

31 Huddersfield has a standard form of contract for its agreements with partner organisations and, in the case of IHM-A, there is a separate contract for each validated course. These are framed as memoranda of cooperation between the University and the Maulana Azad Educational Trust (acting on behalf of IHM-A) and the Indian Hotels Company Ltd. It was explained to the audit team that IHM-A is accountable to the Trust and the relationship between the two is clarified in the memoranda through a clause which states 'where obligations in this Agreement are expressed to be carried out by the Institute, the Trust shall procure that the Institute carries out such obligations'. The memoranda are reviewed annually and reissued at the point of revalidation of the courses. A financial schedule is appended to the contract, which is updated according to agreements reached and confirmed at the annual executive meeting.

32 The audit team considered the memoranda to be comprehensive and particularly clear on the operation of quality assurance procedures, including the appointment of external examiners. It noted that the termination clause took account of the impact on existing students, requiring the parties to use their reasonable endeavours to ensure that students were able to complete the course and had the opportunity of attaining the appropriate award. The agreement with IHM-A is subject to Indian rather than English law. The Briefing Paper clarified that this was necessary for approval of the courses by AICTE as the relevant government body, and that it was the only difference from the standard Huddersfield contract.

33 Huddersfield's procedures for overseas collaborations require evidence that essential in-country approval has been secured before courses can begin operation. The issue of AICTE approval for the BA (Hons) Hotel Management was successfully addressed in 2005; approval for the BA (Hons) Culinary Arts was sought and gained in 2007. It was explained to the audit team that the imminence of expiry of the approval period for both courses at the end of 2007-08 had

been one of the reasons why they were the subject of a revalidation event in September 2008, in an attempt to obtain a better fit with the preferred scheme in India of having the placement in the fourth year, after the academic element has been completed (see paragraphs 45-46).

34 By the time the audit team visited IHM-A, the process of AICTE reapproval of the courses was underway. Under AICTE regulations, Huddersfield, as the foreign university offering courses in India that lead to its degrees, is required to initiate the process. This entails submitting a detailed application with supporting documentation from both Huddersfield and IHM-A. The team was told that IHM-A, having greater familiarity with the system, was working closely with Huddersfield to secure reapproval of the courses by AICTE. The priority given by both Huddersfield and IHM-A to obtaining government approval of the courses is identified in the audit as a positive feature of this partnership.

### **Section 3: Academic standards and the quality of programmes**

#### **Day-to-day management**

35 At Huddersfield the operational responsibility for the IHM-A link is delegated to the School of Applied Sciences under the direction of the Dean who, according to the memoranda, is 'responsible for ensuring that the quality assurance arrangements are undertaken in a manner consistent with University policy'. Within the School, two key roles are the Head of Department for Logistics and Hospitality Management, who acts as contract manager, and the head of the relevant subject area who, as the designated academic liaison officer (DALO), is the principal contact with IHM-A. The DALO reports to the contract manager, as appropriate, and has responsibility for arranging the annual executive meeting at which the contract is reviewed. However, the essential purpose of the role is to ensure that the University's requirements are being met in relation to academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. Detailed guidance on the performance of the role is given in the Handbook for Collaborative Provision, and support and development, through briefing and discussion sessions, is offered to those who undertake the role.

36 Primary responsibility for the academic management of the courses rests with the programme teams at IHM-A where there is a separate programme manager for each course. IHM-A is therefore responsible for student academic support through the operation of a personal tutoring system, and for student feedback, through student panel meetings and evaluation questionnaires. Huddersfield oversees these arrangements during the regular visits made by the DALO to IHM-A, and by means of its routine monitoring and review processes (see paragraphs 40 and 44-45). Under a designed and delivered collaborative arrangement students have limited contact with Huddersfield staff, but the audit team was told that the DALO received copies of student questionnaires and notes of student panel meetings and was therefore informed about any concerns relating to student support.

37 With regard to administrative links, enrolment forms completed by students at IHM-A are used to create the student record at Huddersfield, which in turn allows individual student accounts to be set up, giving access to a range of computing and library services. The student record is maintained to include details of student performance, following confirmation of results by assessment boards (see paragraph 53), and the information forms the basis of the student transcript (see paragraph 58). To facilitate these arrangements there is a dedicated departmental administrative contact at Huddersfield who has recently visited IHM-A to assist in staff training, focusing on how the University's systems work. The audit team was told that IHM-A had recently designated a member of staff to act as academic registrar following requests made by both the departmental administrative contact and the DALO.

38 The audit team explored the effectiveness of the DALO role in the context of the link with IHM-A. The DALO's responsibilities include ensuring that the partner is aware of changes in University policy, giving advice, managing day-to-day issues as relevant, overseeing quality assurance processes, making proper arrangements for assessment boards and for the conduct of assessment generally, monitoring publicity and public information, acting as a point of contact for students, assisting the partner in preparing its annual evaluation report and submitting an annual report on liaison activity. The team learned that the DALO had visited IHM-A at least twice a year over the last three years, each visit being guided by the pro forma checklist for such visits contained in the Handbook for Collaborative Provision. The visit reports typically gave accounts of meetings with external examiners, students, staff teaching the course and senior staff, action points emerging from these meetings, and monitoring of actions taken. IHM-A staff further clarified that DALO visits involved observation of teaching (see paragraph 48), checking assessment procedures (see paragraph 53), monitoring administrative arrangements (see paragraph 59), and meetings with AICTE representatives as and when required (see paragraph 34).

39 Given that the same individual has filled the position since the beginning of the collaboration, the audit team enquired as to how Huddersfield was managing the risk that the DALO might lose the objective distance necessary to carry out a monitoring role on behalf of the University. Staff meeting the team stressed the importance of the DALO in building up trust within a partnership over a period of time, while ensuring that the role was subject to suitable checks and balances. The latter included the line management of the DALO by the Head of Department and the requirement for the DALO to submit formal reports to the relevant course committee at Huddersfield on visits made to IHM-A. The team was also told that, in order to minimise the risk of placing so much responsibility on one individual and to facilitate succession planning, the University had recently established the role of deputy DALO and had already made such an appointment in respect of the IHM-A link. The team noted that, previously, a second liaison officer had been appointed to support the DALO when a significant expansion of courses and pathways was being planned; however, the post was later withdrawn when these plans were not implemented. The team concluded that the DALO role was well conceived and was being effectively executed. The arrangements for both academic and administrative liaison, centred on the DALO, with support from a deputy and the departmental administrator, are identified in the audit as a positive feature of this partnership.

### **Arrangements for monitoring and review**

40 All Huddersfield's collaborative provision is subject to regular monitoring through the University's annual evaluation process which is led by schools. In the case of designed and delivered arrangements, the DALO supports each partner organisation in writing its own annual evaluation report. This report is produced to a standard format and addresses external examiner comments, assessment, teaching and learning issues, data on student recruitment, progression and achievement, and student feedback. Since 2006-07, the DALO has been required to write a short report to accompany the annual evaluation report, summarising the outcomes of partner visits and outlining any actions for the coming year. All annual evaluation reports, together with the DALO reports, are considered first by the relevant course committee and then by the appropriate school-based annual evaluation committee. The latter includes a representative external to the school and nominated by the University Teaching and Learning Committee which prepares an independent report. Deans are also required to provide summaries of the annual evaluation reports for collaborative provision within their respective schools for consideration by the Standing Committee on Collaborative Provision.

41 According to staff at both Huddersfield and IHM-A, the DALO has encouraged the programme teams to be more evaluative in relation to the operation of the courses and student progress, and has assisted in amending drafts of the annual evaluation reports to improve the quality of reporting. The audit team read the relevant reports on both courses for 2006-07 and

2007-08 and found these to be relatively comprehensive and informative. It noted, for example, that the reports dealt with matters relating to student support, representation and feedback, and concluded that the University's monitoring had assisted in highlighting the benefits of introducing formal systems alongside the open-door policy operated by IHM-A. The team was also able to identify the same areas for improvement as had been highlighted already at the annual executive meetings, namely, the need for more incisive analysis of statistics and the need for sufficient information on staff research and publications to demonstrate the linkage with the curriculum. However, overall, the team was of the view that the annual evaluation reports prepared by IHM-A contributed significantly to Huddersfield's capacity to monitor the quality of provision and the maintenance of academic standards of the collaborative courses.

42 The audit team also looked at how annual evaluation reports contributed to Huddersfield's broader oversight of quality and standards in collaborative provision by tracking the reports on IHM-A relating to 2006-07 through the full monitoring cycle. The team noted that while the minutes of the school-based annual evaluation committee made no reference to these reports, the University Teaching and Learning Committee nominee commented favourably on the international activity in India. The Dean's summary mentioned specific issues relating to the IHM-A reports and also identified action taken to address these issues, outstanding actions and, finally, examples of good practice in the link, including the registration of IHM-A staff for doctoral studies.

43 The 2007 QAA Collaborative provision audit report had recommended a strengthening in Huddersfield's oversight and analysis of statistical information provided by partner organisations. The current audit team heard that steps had been taken to make sure that the annual evaluation process addressed variability in student performance across delivery locations and noted that this priority had been communicated to IHM-A; the DALO had made clear at a recent course assessment board that the University would be analysing student performance across comparable courses in Huddersfield, IHM-A and other relevant links. While it was too early to evaluate the use being made by Huddersfield of comparative statistical data, the team was clear in its view that the system of annual evaluation reports worked well in the context of the link with IHM-A, in that issues identified through this monitoring process remained visible in university-wide monitoring processes.

44 With respect to periodic review, Huddersfield's main process (subject review) evaluates the contribution that collaborative provision makes to the general direction and performance of a school or subject area, but does not extend to the review of individual courses. However, the course revalidation process serves as a form of periodic review in that it requires a critical appraisal of the operation of the courses over the previous approval period (normally five years). In the case of designed and delivered collaborative arrangements, it is the partner organisation that prepares the appraisal which must include a review of how well the relevant quality assurance processes have worked, an analysis of student statistics, and details of actions taken in response to external examiner comments and student feedback. Guidance on preparing documentation is given in the Handbook for Collaborative Provision.

45 In addition, Huddersfield has been conducting a pilot scheme for a mid-point review of its collaborative arrangements. In 2007-08 four such reviews were carried out through a paper-based exercise entailing checks of documentation, including external examiner reports, student panel minutes, course committee minutes, annual evaluation reports, and annual executive meeting minutes. The original intention had been that IHM-A would be involved, but this was overtaken by the decision to engage in a major overhaul of the courses and submit them for revalidation ahead of schedule. As noted above (see paragraph 33), IHM-A was driven by the dual influences of AICTE and the hospitality industry to restructure the courses so that the placement constituted the fourth year of the degree. It was explained to the team that the need for revalidation of the courses made it logical to integrate institutional reapproval within the event.

46 The audit team tracked from documentation the various stages of the revalidation process and was able to confirm that these were in compliance with the relevant procedure. The panel's scrutiny appeared to be probing, as evidenced by the report on the revalidation event. This examined the revised course structures in considerable detail with respect to the progressive build-up of intellectual challenge, the alignment of the courses with Huddersfield's credit framework, and the purpose of the placement. Following the revalidation event, there was a significant reworking of the course documentation to improve the clarity with which these aspects of the revised courses were expressed. However, it was explained to the team that the changes made to programme and module specifications, although extensive, were mostly presentational and not needed because of a deeper-seated problem with course design. It was also clarified that the revalidated courses were being phased in, with new entrants following the revised course structure, while existing students were continuing on the previous structure, and that this would afford ample time for finalising the detail, especially in relation to the final-year placement.

47 The audit team accepted the reasoning behind the cautious approach to implementation, particularly given the intricacies of the course and credit structures, and the speed with which changes to course documentation had been made to permit the courses to start in 2008-09. In the team's view there were still issues that needed to be resolved, including the exact credit status of the final-year placement and the number of credits at an appropriate level required for the award of an ordinary degree. Also, there were certain inconsistencies between the methodology for classification of degrees approved at the revalidation event and the University regulations. Moreover, discussions with staff revealed no common understanding of the circumstances in which an ordinary degree might be given as an exit award. Huddersfield may wish to consider how it can bring these outstanding structural and regulatory issues to a satisfactory resolution, such that the treatment of students is consistent with that on other comparable courses leading to Huddersfield degrees.

### **Staffing and staff development**

48 The staffing for collaborative courses is approved as part of the validation process which includes scrutiny of the curricula vitae (CVs) of relevant staff at partner organisations. The appropriate school board approves the CVs of staff subsequently joining the teaching team and schools have responsibility for keeping an up-to-date file of 'approved' staff. The audit team saw evidence of this process having been applied to several IHM-A staff, following initial checks made by the DALO that key criteria had been met (for example, in relation to the individuals' qualifications). It was explained to the team that one of the principal functions of the DALO role was to provide Huddersfield with assurance about the quality of staff resources at partner organisations. In the case of IHM-A, this assurance was informed by regular visits, meetings with the programme teams, observation of teaching, and interchange with external examiners.

49 IHM-A itself has recognised the challenge of recruiting suitably qualified teaching staff in certain specialisms and the audit team learned that IHM-A had used a management consultant to address recruitment and staffing issues more generally. Newly appointed staff were sometimes skilled practitioners but less experienced as teachers, and it was clarified to the team that the senior, more experienced, staff taught the later years of the degree. Another response had been to invest in staff development. The teaching staff at IHM-A are subject to appraisal which, in line with Huddersfield's expectations, includes feedback on their teaching activities through peer observation and student evaluation. The team noted that the 2005 and 2008 validation/revalidation reports both addressed these aspects of staffing policy in some detail. Support and staff development is also offered directly by the DALO during visits to IHM-A and this entails familiarising staff with University processes and giving feedback on teaching. With the exception of the DALO, there is limited contact between subject staff at Huddersfield and those at IHM-A.

50 External examiner reports relating to 2006-07 called for an increase in pedagogical staff development and more opportunity for IHM-A staff to engage in research. In the context of scholarly activity at IHM-A, it appeared to the audit team that this focused more on research and opportunities for staff to take further qualifications than on pedagogical staff development. The 2008 revalidation report drew attention to IHM-A's support, through financial grants and adjustment of the workload model, for research publications, conference participation and liaison with external researchers. In the same vein, a workshop at IHM-A on research methodology is planned for 2008-09 to be conducted by Huddersfield staff. In contrast, arrangements are not yet in place for the workshop on teaching and learning proposed in response to the external examiner reports, and the main purpose of the visit made by culinary arts staff to Huddersfield in November 2008 (participation in a food festival) was not explicitly related to the development of pedagogy.

51 The audit team noted how frequently issues relating to curriculum design were raised at validation and revalidation events. These included a lack of precision in mapping the intended learning outcomes of the course to individual modules, the need to demonstrate how the curriculum facilitates progression in learning, and the use of subject benchmark statements in drafting programme specifications. The team was of the view that Huddersfield had probably underestimated the challenge of embedding among IHM-A staff an understanding of UK reference points; however, it found from its scrutiny of the module handbooks recently produced by IHM-A for the revised courses (see paragraph 60 below), and also from its meeting with IHM-A staff, that progress was now being made to address the issues. Huddersfield is encouraged to use this as a platform for a more sustained strategic approach towards pedagogical staff development at IHM-A, rather than dealing with problems as they arise, particularly given that the team arrives at similar conclusion in the context of assessment design (see paragraph 54 below).

### **Student admissions**

52 Huddersfield's regulations on admission to collaborative courses are covered by the University Regulations for Awards. The requirements for admission are set out in the relevant programme specification and approved at validation/revalidation. The admissions procedure is handled by IHM-A: applications are screened against agreed criteria; eligible candidates are invited to sit a test which includes assessment of proficiency in written and oral English; shortlisted candidates progress to interview and those successful are offered a place. Demand for the courses is buoyant, as shown by trend data presented as part of the critical appraisal for the 2008 revalidation event, and the audit team noted the rigour of the selection process. All applications are subject to scrutiny by Huddersfield through the DALO, and the team was informed that this was now done on the basis of a sample, as the collaboration with IHM-A was a mature relationship.

### **Assessment requirements**

53 The regulations for the assessment of students (contained in the University Regulations for Awards) are supplemented by an institutional assessment strategy, introduced in September 2002; these both apply equally to collaborative and in-house provision. Under designed and delivered arrangements, examination papers and assessment briefs set by the partner organisation are moderated by the host school at Huddersfield and, from the second year of the course onwards, by the external examiners as well. Anonymous marking of examinations is a University requirement, and for summative assessment, all scripts and coursework marked by the partner organisations are subject to internal moderation and further moderation by the DALO and the external examiners. Assessment boards are normally held at the partner organisation, with a representative from the University and external examiners present. This was the practice at IHM-A where the course assessment boards are chaired by the DALO.

54 The audit team noted that several closely related points about assessment had been raised through Huddersfield's quality assurance processes over the period 2005 to 2008 (the most recent validation term for the IHM-A courses). The congruence between learning outcomes and assessment strategies was a concern raised both in the 2005 revalidation report and in a recent

external examiner report. The 2008 revalidation report also commented on assessment design, identifying an overreliance on unseen examinations and formal essays, as well as a non-alignment with the University's assessment tariff in respect of the number of pieces of work to be summatively assessed. In addition, there were external examiner comments about systematising feedback to students on assessment and improving internal moderation processes. The team acknowledges IHM-A's responsiveness to these concerns and the progress made in addressing them. Nevertheless, Huddersfield may wish to consider taking a broader view in overseeing assessment requirements, in the context of collaborative arrangements, so that issues may be tackled collectively rather than on a piecemeal basis.

## External examining

55 As with assessment requirements, Huddersfield's normal procedures for the appointment of external examiners and for dealing with their reports apply to collaborative provision. External examiners are appointed following approval by the University Teaching and Learning Committee and are required to be present at course assessment boards when decisions on awards are made. Their reports are received centrally and distributed to the host school and to the partner organisation. Issues raised by external examiners, together with resultant action, are reported through the annual evaluation process, and annual evaluation reports are an input to revalidation events. Three external examiners work across the courses at IHM-A, two in the area of hotel management and one in culinary arts, and their reports are specific to the IHM-A provision.

56 The audit team found that correct procedures were followed in relation to the IHM-A courses. The standard University pro forma for reporting on both interim and longer-term action resulting from external examiner reports were completed with the full involvement of the programme teams. Staff whom the team met at IHM-A were evidently familiar with both the issues raised by external examiners and the monitoring process. The pro forma that the external examiners complete asks them to confirm whether or not their comments made in previous reports were acted upon.

57 The audit team saw examples of detailed external examiner reports which, as well as covering comparability of standards and assessment processes, commented on issues relevant to the student experience including, for example, introducing plagiarism detection software and spreading best practice in the format of module handbooks. The use made by IHM-A of Huddersfield's system for responding to external examiner reports was, in the team's view, exemplary and contributed demonstrably to enhancing the quality of the courses. The effective use of external examining both in securing standards and in raising the quality of provision is identified in the audit as a positive feature of this partnership.

## Certificates and transcripts

58 All certificates and transcripts are produced by Huddersfield's centralised student record system; those for IHM-A students are couriered to IHM-A for distribution (except where students have requested direct mailing). The name and location of IHM-A as the partner organisation are recorded in full on the certificate, in accordance with the relevant precept of the *Code of practice* published by QAA. The transcript, however, omits any reference to IHM-A as the teaching institution, although Aurangabad is included in parenthesis to the programme of study. Huddersfield is encouraged to eliminate this apparent inconsistency between the certificate and transcript.

## Section 4: Information

### Student information

59 The main source of programme information for IHM-A students is the course handbook which is compiled by year of study and contains a schedule showing when each module runs, together with a scheme of work and reading list for each module. Students also receive institutional handbooks from both IHM-A and Huddersfield. The IHM-A Student Handbook focuses on what is expected of students on the Aurangabad Campus, while the Huddersfield Students' Handbook of Regulations is a heavily administrative document containing information on assessment regulations, academic misconduct, appeal mechanisms, and guidance on mitigating circumstances and complaints; it is not specifically designed for collaborative provision. The team was informed that these documents, together with the relevant programme specification, were loaded onto individual students' laptops following enrolment. The Briefing Paper explained that the information provided to students was checked by Huddersfield on at least an annual basis.

60 As noted above (see paragraph 46), the 2008 revalidation led to major revisions to course documentation and this is having a positive impact on the information available for students. From its own scrutiny of the schemes of work, it had been evident to the audit team that the information these provided on learning outcomes and assessment criteria was rather restricted and also variable from module to module. However, by the time of the audit visit to IHM-A, work had clearly progressed, and the team was shown examples of individual module handbooks, which had largely dealt with the previous limitations, as well as specific handbooks on placement/on-the-job training and dissertations. In the team's view, the quality of this information was high, with the placement handbook serving to meet the expectations of the relevant section of the *Code of practice*. Overall, the documentation reassured the team that students now had access to an overview of the course structure, as well as information on individual modules; those students whom the team met confirmed their understanding of the whole programme. Nevertheless, the extent of the presentational changes made to course documentation in connection with revalidation does cast doubt on whether sufficient attention was being paid to student information in the regular monitoring of the IHM-A courses.

### Publicity and marketing

61 Huddersfield requires any publicity or marketing material produced by partner organisations that uses its name or logo to be approved by the DALO. It also produces a guide on the use of the University logo for issue to partner organisations by the DALO. On the few occasions, none related to IHM-A, when the University has found that publicity misrepresented its position, then urgent action was taken; one example given was the legal 'cease and desist' letter issued where a partner organisation is in breach of the rules. In publicising the courses on its website, IHM-A gives recognition to Huddersfield as the validating institution and clarifies that the degrees are conferred by the University.

## Conclusion

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

- the University's procedural documentation, providing a coherent framework for guiding consistent and appropriate practice in the assurance of quality and the maintenance of standards (paragraph 20)
- the priority given on both sides of the partnership to obtaining government approval of the courses (paragraph 34)

- the arrangements for both academic and administrative liaison, centred on the designated academic liaison officer, with support from a deputy, and the departmental administrator (paragraph 39)
- the effective use of external examining both in securing standards and in raising the quality of provision (paragraph 57).

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

- finding ways of increasing the participation in the annual executive meetings in order to ensure their effectiveness as a forum for the high-level exchange of information and views (paragraph 18)
- expanding on the process for institutional approval in the procedural documentation and the accompanying flowchart (paragraph 25)
- bringing to a satisfactory resolution outstanding structural and regulatory issues relating to the courses, such that the treatment of students is consistent with that on other comparable courses leading to Huddersfield degrees (paragraph 47)
- taking a broader view in overseeing assessment requirements, in the context of collaborative arrangements, so that issues may be tackled collectively rather than on a piecemeal basis (paragraph 54).

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

65 The Briefing Paper was helpful in the insights that it gave into the policies and systems that underpin the partnership, although it did not always explain the operation of these policies and systems in the context of the link. The findings of the audit are that in most respects the courses at IHM-A are operating in accordance with the procedures (as described in the Briefing Paper and supplementary documentation) for the designed and delivered category of collaborative arrangement. Given that the link is representative not only of this category, but also reflects the principles governing all the University's overseas collaborative arrangements, the audit would also support a more general conclusion of confidence in Huddersfield's management of quality and standards across its collaborative provision overseas.

## **Appendix A**

### **The University of Huddersfield's response to QAA's report on its collaboration with the Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad, India**

The University welcomes the positive report on its collaborative arrangements with the Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad, India and the identification of good practice included in the report. The University is pleased to note that its procedural documentation, the arrangements for academic and administrative liaison and the use of the external examining were considered to be effective.

The University acknowledges the constructive comments made by the audit team and is taking steps to address the points identified: refining the procedural documentation to include explicit reference to Institutional Approval and clarifying details in the programme specification documents regarding the conferment of interim awards and the calculation of award classification.

## **Appendix B**

### **Student enrolments for 2008-09**

BA (Hons) Hotel Management Year One	122
BA (Hons) Hotel Management Year Two	119
BA (Hons) Hotel Management Year Three	89
BA (Hons) Hotel Management Year Four	90
BA (Hons) Culinary Arts Year One	56
BA (Hons) Culinary Arts Year Two	57
BA (Hons) Culinary Arts Year Three	52
BA (Hons) Culinary Arts Year Four	0

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