

A guide to offshore staffing strategies for UK universities: Case studies

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and Midwifery. See
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ofnursing/collegeupdate/](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/grameen
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ofnursing/collegeupdate/)

Brief history and description of the activity

Internationalisation is central to the mission of Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and is embedded as a key priority in its vision and strategic goals towards 2015.¹ Strategies to do this include developing partnerships to support student exchange, overseas programme delivery and collaborative opportunities for research.

To this end, GCU has developed international partnerships of different kinds. It has been involved with the Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman for 15 years and has had a partnership with the University of Jinan in China for two years. More recently it has worked with Nobel Peace prizewinner, Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Foundation to establish a College of Nursing in Bangladesh.² It has other partnerships and joint research projects, and has joined a network of 700 universities via the Santander Universities Global Division. Ideally it would like partnerships in all geographical areas with strong developing economies, growing investment in higher education and with a potentially growing supply of students. It sees this as an important strategy for developing its profile, supporting its international focus and overall growth.

The partnerships differ according to the context and circumstances of the relationship.

The Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman is a private college affiliated to GCU. It started with 27 students in 1996 and now has over 2,700 students, 260 staff and offers 15 undergraduate programmes and two masters programmes. Its current principal is from Scotland, but the next principal may be an Omani national, consistent with the government's policy of giving priority to the appointment of nationals. The university regards this as a mature relationship with a great deal of independence for the college.

In China, GCU has a partnership with the University of Jinan to offer joint degree programmes, and to provide articulation pathways and student and staff exchanges. Around 400 students currently study undergraduate courses designed by GCU and the University of Jinan. They are currently in their second year of a 2+2 model, where many students are intended to study their final two years in Glasgow.

The University College for Nursing and Midwifery in Bangladesh, which opened in March 2010, is one of the initiatives of the Grameen Caledonian Partnership established in partnership with the Nobel Peace prizewinner Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Trust. The college offers a four-year, degree-level programme integrated with the diploma in nursing science and midwifery, approved by Bangladesh Nursing Council. It has a small staff of five academics, an acting vice-principal, four administrative staff and four multi-purpose staff. The founding principal is a professor from GCU. Support for the college comes from various sources, including private sponsors. Funding is being sought to allow staff from GCU to travel to Bangladesh to train academic staff there. In an unusual partnership, students and graduates from the local Dhaka University have volunteered to help nursing students with some of their subjects (for a minimal fee).

Glasgow Caledonian University has actively sought compatible partners in India and is currently exploring options.

Staffing strategy and current staff

The model used by GCU is one of increasing independence for its international partners. However, it regards a critical criterion for success to be that of finding the right partners to form the enterprise, who understand the objectives and culture of GCU. Similarly, the right person leading the enterprise is very important. At the Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman, the principal is employed by the college, but was recruited in collaboration with GCU. For the project in China, the cultural fit is most important and the current GCU representative is a native Chinese speaker from GCU who has a contract with GCU.

Staff from GCU teach for short intensive periods in Oman and China; all other staff are appointed by the Caledonian College of Engineering or by the University of Jinan. Academic and administrative staff in Oman are recruited locally. In China, the current focus of the project is on the English language and the compatibility of the local programmes with those of GCU, to enable students to benefit from tuition given by GCU staff. Language tuition staff are either employees or appointed via an agency by the University of Jinan.

In Bangladesh, the founding principal of the college is a professor from GCU, appointed on a long-term contract with the university. Other academic staff are from Bangladesh on contracts with the Grameen Caledonian College of Nursing. In India, the university may recruit through a company, for appointment of a local representative, and the contracts will be with that company.

Pay, conditions of service and benefits

GCU packages include incentives for staff to accept the contracts and to move themselves and their personal effects to the countries concerned. These include salary adjustments, accommodation, regular flights home etc where appropriate.

People providing block teaching (an intensive period of concentrated course work delivered by a visiting lecturer) also receive salary uplifts (based on recommendations from a consultancy specialising in international employment), flights, accommodation and other support required to enable them to do their work and not prejudice their work at GCU. In any event, criteria for advancement at the university include involvement in international projects or work. The university would like more of its Glasgow staff to be able to travel internationally for block teaching research and is developing policies to support this.

A lot of effort has been put into thinking through all the necessary elements for overseas contracts. They will vary depending on the country, whether the contract is short-term (one to six months) or long-term and whether the staff member is a GCU staff member or an expatriate employed in the country concerned. A checklist has been developed of matters to be dealt with prior to and after the visit, and matters to be covered during the visit. While being necessary to cover the university's responsibilities, it also gives staff peace of mind to know the extent of preparation made for their contracts.

Some of the elements of the package are already in place for academic staff providing block teaching, others are being developed to support the hoped-for increase in numbers of staff going overseas. For example, GCU plans to provide induction courses prior to leaving and as well as advice about vaccinations, people are given medicals before and after their visits. Although some health issues are location-specific, the university has contracted with its occupational health provider via its insurers to administer health matters. Security risks are evaluated according to advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and are covered by insurance negotiated with a large insurance company. The insurance is also intended to cover employer's liability and public liability.

For staff on long-term contracts, GCU plans to provide flights at the start and end of a contract, as well as home visits, accommodation and transport of personal effects. Flights for family members may be covered where appropriate for long-term unaccompanied appointments. With regard to pensions, the university will ensure that the staff member is not disadvantaged on return to the UK and will continue to pay the required UK national insurance, as well as social security in the host country if this applies. A staff member's position on the appropriate salary scale is maintained as if they were still in Glasgow so that their continued employment at GCU is not disadvantaged by an overseas contract.

Staff appointed by the partner are given contracts linked to their local conditions of service and salary scales.

Maintenance of teaching quality

GCU has taken responsibility for appointments to the key posts at the head of its partnerships because it believes that this is essential for quality maintenance. With regard to the academic programmes, the university's policy has been to act in partnership so that the programmes are what the partner wants and are appropriate for the local context.

Guiding principles of its 2010 internationalisation strategy include the following, that students 'undertaking a Glasgow Caledonian University programme delivered at home or overseas should receive consistent/comparable levels of academic and support service' and that 'Glasgow Caledonian University's *Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook* must be adhered to in all initiatives'.

GCU staff oversee the entire programme and develop the curricula; quality assurance teams from Glasgow go to Oman and China to assure the quality of the programmes and find assessors. The need to meet admission criteria for either Chinese students coming to GCU in Glasgow for their final two years or for Omani graduates coming for postgraduate programmes in Glasgow also helps to maintain the quality of the preceding years. Incentives to enrol at the university in Glasgow are provided by ensuring that the undergraduate programmes are compatible with later postgraduate programmes, and by fee agreements.

Research

Research relationships are being developed, although there are existing individually brokered research relationships between academics in the UK and foreign partners. GCU plays a role in upgrading the qualifications of research staff in partner institutions when they register for the university's masters and PhD programmes. The university seeks to increase international exchange opportunities for students and staff. It hopes that this goal will also enhance the quality and predictability of the stream of international students to GCU.

Regulatory issues

Because there are few foreign higher education institutions in Oman, regulatory matters have been resolved relatively easily. The Ministry of Education and the quality assurance body in Oman are well organised. The ministry wants to mature colleges into universities and this goal is compatible with GCU's own aims. Once the college becomes a university, the possibility of joint degrees will be explored.

GCU did not get permission to open in China in its own name. It has, however, benefited from the experience of its partner, the University of Jinan. There have been no insurmountable regulatory issues, and the university has used a local firm of solicitors to provide guidance.

Summary: lessons learned

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) has a clear intention to enhance its international focus and one of its strategies is to do this through partnerships. It believes that these can make a contribution to its city, its region, to Scotland and internationally. In this context, it has built on the opportunities and contacts it has; there has not been a formula in setting up its partnerships – each situation was dealt with separately. The university advises that it is important to spend time understanding partners and their motives and to have strong relationships at the top so that problems can be cleared and issues facilitated at lower levels.

The 2010 International Strategy also refers to the following:

It is important not to underestimate the potential risks involved in terms of staff over-commitment and associated fatigue, mission drift through imbalance in senior management time and financial and reputational risk, if not managed successfully. Establishing campuses which employ staff overseas within foreign legal systems, whilst navigating tax equalisation issues, can also be complex.

Based on GCU's experience in Oman, the 2010 International Strategy lists the following matters to consider:

- *The academic schools, quality and international functions of the university must be engaged from the very start at conception.*
- *School ownership and commitment is vital in terms of the programme areas delivered and their phasing.*
- *Quality is paramount and a clearly articulated Quality and Operations Manual is required from the start, which unequivocally defines the responsibilities of all parties.*
- *Control over the appointment of the academic leader or principal of the joint venture university who understands the UK education system is required to maintain control of standards.*

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Xian Jiaotong University, which is based in Xian, is one of the select group of 39 '985 project' universities that receives extra funding from the Chinese Government to build on their research capacity.

Brief history and description of the activity

The University of Liverpool is a large, research-intensive university in the north-west of England with over 22,000 students on campus and some 6,000 studying online throughout the world. The latter has expanded dramatically since 2004, when the university entered into a new partnership with Laureate International Universities, who agreed to provide support in marketing and operational and technical matters. The University of Liverpool has academic oversight and runs the board of examiners. However, all staff of the online operation are Laureate employees, but they are affiliated to Liverpool so that they can access all the resources and facilities available to Liverpool staff. The operation (the largest of its kind in Europe) is regarded as highly successful by the university and has expanded beyond the core MBA with a further 20 academic programmes. The university has also benefited from acquiring some of the innovative marketing and customer service expertise and ethos, which are built in to Laureate's routine ways of working. It has found, for example, that the online student experience is ranked higher than that of some face-to-face students on the Liverpool campus.

Because the online venture was so successful, the university entered into a wider strategic academic partnership with Laureate in 2006, which aims to develop joint activities throughout the world, as suitable opportunities arise. This has already led to active interchanges with Laureate International universities in Spain, Chile, Mexico, Turkey and Peru. Prior to this agreement, the partners had decided to work together on a new university campus in Suzhou in Jiangsu Province in China; this will be the first of several similar projects.

Xian Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU) is an independent university based in the booming city of Suzhou, adjoining the vast Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP), on which over 2,000 international companies are based. The university is the world's first Sino-British venture between two research-intensive universities with its own degree-awarding powers.³ Along with the University of Nottingham's campus at Ningbo in China, it was one of the only two such foreign universities to be established under the regulations for foreign educational providers.

Having gone through an extensive quality review process by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the new institution opened in May 2006. It is technically a non-profit-making, 50/50 joint venture between the two institutions, but there are also three other key players; the owners of the SIP, who have provided the land and buildings through their educational development company, Laureate Education, which has provided the capital investment required by Liverpool, and a Chinese commercial partner that has done the same for Xian Jiaotong University (XJTU). Laureate's support was crucial to Liverpool, in that it could remove most of the financial risk, as far as its governing body was concerned.

The university aims to provide the best of both the Chinese and the British systems and students can either graduate with a degree from Xian Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU) or come to Liverpool in their final years and obtain a Liverpool degree. All tuition is in English and students study English for their first two years. Student numbers have grown rapidly and there are now about 4,000, which means that the university is well on its way to its initial target of 8,000. Students come from ten countries.

The XJTLU is governed by a board with equal members from the two partners, although Laureate also has a seat. The board is chaired by the chair of XJTU's council and its vice chair is Sir Howard Newby, Vice Chancellor of Liverpool. The board appoints all the senior staff after they have been put forward by the two partners; Liverpool nominates the executive vice-president (who is in effect the vice-chancellor) and the vice-president (academic – seconded from Liverpool), while Laureate nominates and provides the chief financial officer. XJTU nominates the vice-president for student affairs.

The operations are not intended to generate profits, but any surpluses that arise are reinvested in curriculum development or a small fund for pump-priming research. Liverpool benefits from the fact that a significant percentage of second- and third-year XJTLU students come to Liverpool to study on similar programmes (where they pay specially discounted fees). It is hoped that in 2011 some Liverpool students will take advantage of an offer to study in XJTLU and pay only the Chinese tuition fees.

Staffing strategy and current staff

The senior management team of XJTLU recruits and selects all its own staff locally, although a small number are seconded from Liverpool and are paid on Liverpool scales. There are no short-term 'flying faculty' from Liverpool.

The XJTLU website has a section seeking applications from suitably qualified academic staff. The university aims to attract staff who, 'must have an excellent command of English, typically hold PhD degrees from internationally renowned universities, have a broad global vision as well as many years of overseas teaching and research experience.' After their appointment all academic staff spend a period of induction and staff development run by Liverpool; in some cases this will involve time in the UK and may also be delivered by distance learning and online packages.

Most academic staff are not from either of the two partner institutions. The current staff nationalities are from China – about 50; from the UK – 10 and 50 from other nationalities. All non-UK staff are paid on the same salary scales and the benefits they receive are similar; these include medical cover, a housing allowance and a travel package for international staff. In order to attract the best international academic staff, salaries are set at a level that is high in the local market; despite this it is surprising that so few staff from XJTLU have volunteered to transfer; the reason may be the large distance from Xian, where XJTLU is based, to Suzhou.

The university has established a very high reputation quickly, partly due to its careful blending of the best of Chinese and UK learning and teaching methods. It is well regarded politically and has recently been given its own degree-awarding powers by the Chinese Ministry of Education. One valuable feature is that Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) helps XJTLU to acquire placements for students in its many large corporations.

Research

Having recruited academic staff with research potential, one growing issue is the strategy for providing them with the opportunity and funding to embark on research careers. SIP has again been of great assistance by building research facilities that are adjacent to some postgraduate research accommodation owned by XJTLU.

The buildings are there, but research activity is not. Current thinking is that the university's surpluses, as well as some pump-priming from Liverpool to encourage their researchers to seek partnerships with XJTLU staff, should in time bear fruit. Liverpool will selectively fund visits to China from researchers in Liverpool that would fit with the research interests of XJTLU's staff. In addition, as XJTLU acquires a reputation for quality, its leading academic staff will become known and should be capable of generating research income from Chinese state sources.

Summary: lessons learned

The realities in China made direct employment of local staff by XJTLU more practical. However, XJTLU has been in discussion to place some contracts with Laureate for help in marketing and the recruitment of staff and students. In addition, senior management in Liverpool relied heavily on Laureate in the initial set-up phase; it was the university's first substantial offshore venture and there was a lot of learning to do. Had Liverpool's partner been merely a local property developer, the starting period would have been much harder. The joint venture in China was a first and Liverpool was lucky being able to access the combination of Laureate's commercial know-how and experience of doing business in China and the highly respected academic expertise and reputation of XJTLU.

The staffing strategy adopted at XJTLU is the most practical solution, with its combination of a small core of Liverpool staff and a mix of international and Chinese academics. Liverpool would not be able to persuade enough academic staff to move to China (as we will see from the Nottingham Ningbo case study). The only options therefore were to elect for a mix of Chinese and international academic staff. One risk is that XJTLU will end up with too high a proportion of Chinese staff. This is not what the students will expect – even if those Chinese have trained in the West. Students wish to see Western faces and to benefit from Western analytical approaches to learning and teaching. 2011 may be a hard time to achieve a high international proportion if all academic staff are paid on similar scales. However, as standards of living (and salaries) in China rise, this problem may go away.

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See Fielden J (2011)
*Leadership and Management
of International Partnerships.*
Leadership Foundation for
Higher Education, for a fuller
description of how this
medical campus was
developed and managed.

Brief history and description of the activity

The University of Newcastle aims to be a world-class, research-intensive university and, while being 'regionally routed', also describes itself as 'globally ambitious'. The current strategic plan, called Vision 2021, states one of Newcastle's four objectives as being to achieve a 'significant international profile'. A step towards this has been the recent establishment of two overseas campuses.

The first of these is a Newcastle University medical campus (NUMed) in the Iskandar Malaysia development zone in the south of Malaysia opposite Singapore. The campus opens this year but until then two cohorts of students are in Newcastle taking their first two years of a medical MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery).⁴

When it is fully operational, the campus will have an enrolment of 900 medical students who will carry out their clinical training in the hospitals of the State of Johor. NUMed is the anchor tenant in the development and has therefore had significant encouragement from the state-owned landlord and development company; this help has extended to support in negotiating local bureaucratic regulations relating to employment and personnel. At the time of this case study the staff for the campus were about to be recruited, but the policies and employment framework had already been agreed. All locally employed staff will be employed by a Malaysian company established by the university.

The second campus is a joint teaching activity with Ngee Ann Polytechnic in Singapore, which began in 2009 and has students studying two degree programmes in naval architecture and marine and offshore engineering. Newcastle staff collaborate with polytechnic staff in delivering the teaching modules, but all the teaching takes place in Singapore.

Staffing strategy and current staff

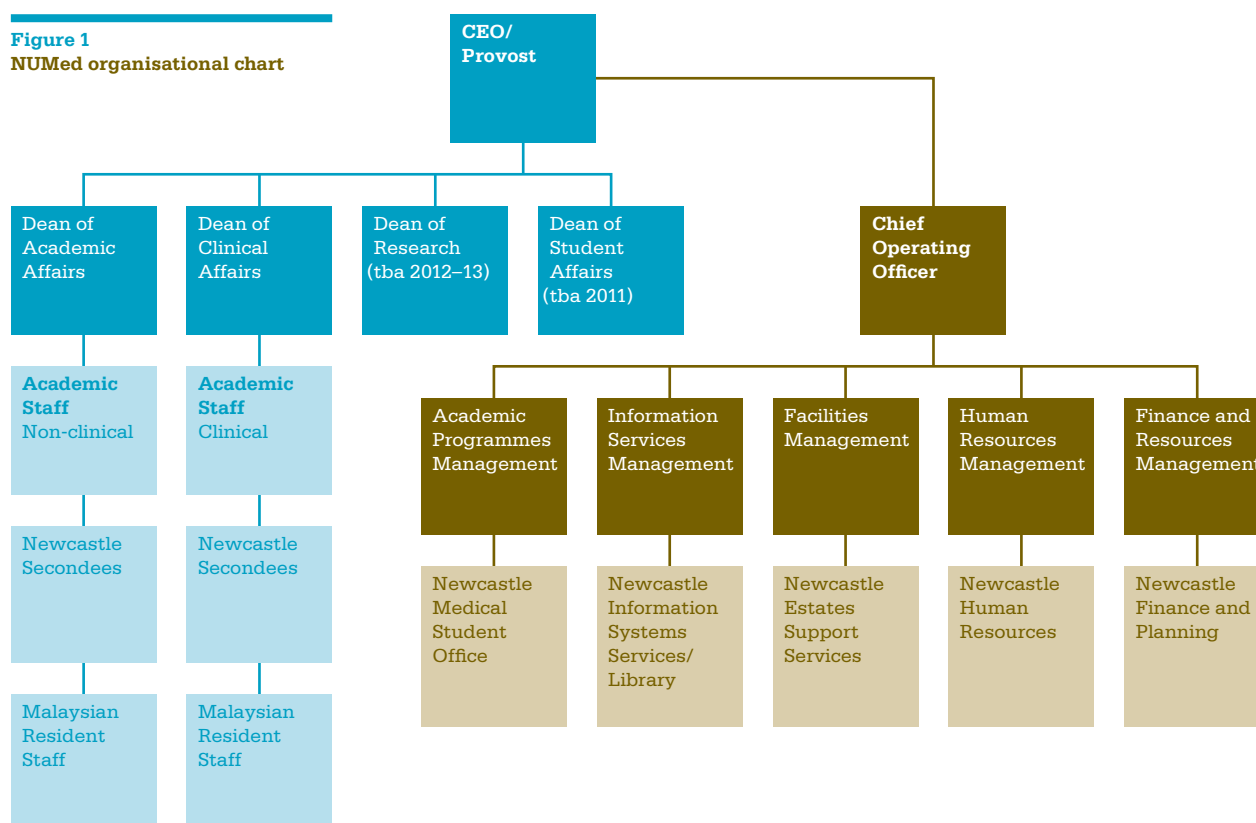
The two activities have very different staffing profiles; since NUMed is a wholly Newcastle campus, it will need a stronger professional input from Newcastle academic staff, if there is to be a similar student experience. However, some Malaysian academic input is essential, because the numbers of resident staff needed could not be provided from Newcastle (even though it is one of the UK's largest medical faculties).

The final full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers outlined in the business case for the project were significant, as shown in the table and the organisation chart overleaf.

Table 1
Breakdown of NUMed staff

Chief executive officer/provost	1 FTE from UK
Chief operating officer	1 FTE from UK
Deans and heads of school	4 FTE from UK
Substantive resident academic staff	57 FTE from Malaysia/UK
Sessional clinical academic staff (remunerated)	40 FTE from Malaysia
Local 'professors of practice' (honorary)	7 FTE from Malaysia
Visiting international faculty	10 FTE from UK
Support staff	30 FTE from Malaysia
Total	150 FTE

Figure 1
NUMed organisational chart



The rationale for the NUMed campus is wholly academic and linked to Newcastle's global reputation. It is not financial. Since the university wishes to contribute to the social and economic development of the State of Johor, which is providing it with the facilities, it is obviously committed to adopting staffing policies that help to build up Malaysian capacity and that will lead ultimately to joint medical research.

In general the university's policy for its offshore work is to start with 'flying faculty' until the local academic capacity is fully developed or permanent staff have been appointed.

Pay, conditions of service and benefits

The university's human resources department has spent considerable time developing two sets of staffing policies for overseas assignments; these cover short-term assignments (from 30 to 183 days) and long-term assignments (from 183 days to five years). The following table summarises policies relating to long-term NUMed staff.

Table 2

NUMed staffing policies

	Newcastle staff	Locally employed staff
Basic salary	Same as in UK	Local scales
Bonus	Salary uplifts in some cases	Yes
13th month pay or annual special sum	No	Yes, up to 2 months' salary at end of year, reviewed annually
Pensions	Same as in UK	National Malaysian scheme
Where paid	From UK payroll	Malaysia
Taxation basis	Tax equalisation scheme so that net pay remains unchanged	Local tax levied
Housing allowance	Yes	No
Car	Yes, leased vehicle, where appropriate	Car allowance, where appropriate
Settling-in allowance	Yes	Under consideration
Private health insurance	Yes	Local scheme
Death and accident insurance	In the pension cover	Yes
Counselling	No	No
Air fares home for self and family of two	Yes, currently up to twice a year	na
International (or UK private) school fees	Not yet agreed but is likely if no suitable international school	No
Employment assistance for partner	Not yet	No
Holiday provision	30 days, plus 8 public holidays and 4 closure days	14 days (increases with length of service) plus 18 public holidays
Time released before departure and on return	At discretion of the head of department	No

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AKEPT is an agency of the Ministry of Higher Education charged with improving the quality of teaching and learning in Malaysian universities.

In order to arrive at the appropriate pay and benefits for local staff Malaysian consultants were used to provide appropriate benchmarks. An unusual feature of Newcastle's policies is its tax equalisation scheme for Newcastle University seconded staff, under which an employee in Malaysia would, if Malaysian tax was higher, have only the UK rate of tax deducted from the salary; conversely, if Malaysian tax was lower than the UK, they would have to pay tax at the UK rate.

The university's policies were in some cases adapted from those of Northumbrian Water, which has a number of overseas operations involving the movement of its staff. One feature of these is an uplift on the basic salary for some countries and some staff. Such an arrangement is quite common in companies with many overseas activities staffed from the UK. The university is still considering whether this uplift should be at a standard rate or should vary by country.

Maintenance of teaching quality

Since the campus aims to deliver medical education to an identical standard to that in Newcastle, staff development will be an important element of the role of the human resources function in NUMed. Both the Malaysian academic and support staff will undertake an extensive induction programme into the way that teaching is carried out and the way that administrative processes operate. The Malaysian support staff will have a dotted line relationship to their opposite numbers in Newcastle and the academic staff will be visited regularly by Newcastle staff. No Malaysian academic appointments will be made without the approval of the faculty in Newcastle and all staff will be expected to have or to undertake a postgraduate certificate in education (or to have participated in the programmes run in Malaysia by organisations such as the Centre for Teaching and Learning at AKEPT in Kuala Lumpur).⁵

Research

Since the campus has yet to be completed and no academic staff from Newcastle are yet on site, the issue of research has not been faced. It is likely that for the first few years after 2011, there will be little opportunity for anything but consultancy work for the Malaysian health sector and the opportunities for research will be limited. However, after 2012 the university plans to offer courses in biomedical science and to run professional development programmes for Malaysian doctors. Thus, national research funding will be more of a possibility, once relationships with the Ministry of Health and the appropriate Malaysian research councils have become firmly established. In view of Newcastle's world-class activities in the biomedical research field, it is likely that there will soon be opportunities to develop partnerships with the leading Malaysian research teams.

Regulatory issues

The human resources team in Newcastle has found it hard to master Malaysian employment legislation and procedures relating to staff. Although much is set out on the government websites, the reality of obtaining approvals or documentation is frequently more complex and extra steps and barriers often appear. Local help from the development corporation has been very helpful in navigating the bureaucratic and procedural hurdles. The processes are also complicated by having to deal with two ministries (health and higher education) as well as the medical professional body and various arms of the state government of Johor.

Summary: lessons learned

The preparatory work for the opening of the NUMed campus has been extensive and meticulous, with considerable use of professional advisers in both the UK and Malaysia. In the final stages of the construction and preparation, the presence of the CEO and the Chief Operating Officer in Malaysia 18 months before the opening of the campus has proved to be very valuable in ensuring that local technical, political and medical issues are identified early and resolved quickly.

A general message emerging from this long period of preparation is that the bureaucracies of other countries can prove to be very confusing and incomprehensible to foreigners. In mastering them, both patience and local support is essential.

6
University Plan 2007–2010,
page 12.

7
The Wanli Education
Group was responsible for
constructing the campus
infrastructure and continues
to invest in new facilities,
with the city of Ningbo,
as well as providing some
other support (facilities and
senior administrative staff)
to establish the University
of Nottingham Ningbo.
It continues to maintain the
campus, but has no input
into teaching programmes.

Brief history and description of the activity

The University of Nottingham has campuses in Malaysia (established in 2000) and China (opened to students in 2004) that are regarded as integral parts of the university. The university has strong intellectual, educational and research reasons for involvement in Malaysia and China. One of its values is internationalisation, which incorporates 'doing research that addresses global human concerns and social problems', attracting staff and students from around the world as well as having campuses in several countries.⁶

The establishment of the Malaysian and Chinese campuses grew out of existing relationships with Malaysian and Chinese researchers as well as at a leadership level, and coincided with Malaysia positioning itself to attract foreign universities and Chinese policy changes that allowed foreign universities to enter the country.

The University of Nottingham Ningbo was the first Sino-foreign university in China opened with approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education. It is run by the University of Nottingham UK with cooperation from Wanli Education Group and with Zhejiang Wanli University as its educational partner.⁷

In the academic year 2010–11 it reported some 4,800 postgraduate and undergraduate enrolments (with around 4,000 currently on campus) and it employs approximately 350 staff. Its departments are the Centre for English Language Education, the divisions of English studies, international communications, computer science, engineering, international studies, Nottingham University Business School China and a graduate school. There are several research centres and institutes. All teaching is carried out in English and the degrees awarded are University of Nottingham degrees.

The Malaysian campus offers foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in applied psychology, business and management, computer science and information technology, education, cultural studies, international relations, engineering, law, pharmacy, nutrition and plant biotechnology. It currently enrolls some 3,800 students and employs a total of about 400 staff. It is run in collaboration with a commercial organisation, Boustead Holdings Berhad, which provides local operational support and has an additional partner in YTL Corporation.

Staffing strategy and current staff

The China campus employs approximately 350 staff in total. Around ten of these are secondees from Nottingham, approximately 220 academic staff are employed directly in research and teaching-related roles and the remaining staff are in administrative and support roles. In addition, a number of academic staff from the UK campus offer fly-in and distance-learning teaching, and they are directly involved in the assessment of students' work. The Malaysian campus employs approximately 200 academic staff, with the remaining 200 involved in the provision of administrative and support services.

Secondees from Nottingham, although relatively low in number as a proportion of total staff, nonetheless represent the majority of senior positions at the campuses. These 'culture carriers' are important for maintaining strong links with the UK and for transferring the University of Nottingham ethos. The university also encourages interaction between staff members of academic schools across the three country locations with academic units at the international campuses being viewed as part of single global academic schools.

Within the organisational framework established by Nottingham staff, much of the growth in staffing has come from academics appointed directly to work at the university's overseas campuses. The opportunity of working at these locations appears to be an attractive proposition, with over 1,000 applications received in a recent recruitment exercise seeking to appoint 40 new international posts at the China campus.

With English being widely spoken in Malaysia and with many other international universities already operating in the country, it has been possible to make the majority of academic staffing appointments to the Malaysian campus locally. Although many of the academics appointed to the China campus come from outside China, the university has welcomed increasing numbers of Chinese academics to Ningbo. Many of these academics left China to undertake doctorate level studies and to commence their academic careers abroad and are now taking the opportunity to return home. These staff have the benefit of not only being proficient in English and comfortable with UK educational methodologies, but also have no cultural gap with the students.

Pay, conditions of service and benefits

In the early days, contract terms and conditions were agreed on a relatively *ad hoc* basis. However, as the number of people employed increased, the staffing arrangements had to become more standardised.

There are three types of appointees – those seconded from the UK; those appointed on a local contract with international terms and conditions and those appointed on a local contract with local terms and conditions. The type of post determines the terms and conditions, rather than the nationality of the post holder.

Staff seconded from the UK retain their UK salaries and pensions. Those on international terms and conditions have similar benefits to secondees. International salaries are pegged to UK salary scales and are based in sterling. An adjustment is made to a proportion of salaries to take account of fluctuations in exchange rates and appropriate cost of living differences. International benefits include allowances towards accommodation and travel, medical insurance, relocation and schooling. In most cases, benefits such as accommodation and travel are determined by family size rather than by the seniority of the appointment.

The majority of administrative staff are employed on local contracts with local terms and conditions. Salaries are based in local currency and are determined by local market factors.

The package of expatriate terms and conditions provided by the university is designed to assist staff and their accompanying family members to adjust to the challenges of living and working in a different country/culture. In line with many multinational corporations, the university intends to apply a policy of localisation to those receiving expatriate terms and conditions after a period of time. This will involve the removal of the employee's expatriate status and adjustments to the compensation and benefits package.

A well-recognised barrier to international mobility is addressing the needs of dual career families. The University of Nottingham seeks to assist where it can in helping partners who accompany academic staff on an overseas assignment. Occasionally it is possible to accommodate the partner in an appropriate job at the campus.

Maintenance of teaching quality

The qualifications offered are UK qualifications for the UK courses. This is not always straightforward because both China and Malaysia have national compulsory course requirements, such as the need to offer local languages and political/cultural courses. These are offered in addition to the University of Nottingham courses so that the core of the qualification is not altered. While the university wants all students to have the same student experience, this is also inevitably affected by local conditions and culture.

The university senate has ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of all university awards and this includes those programmes delivered at the international campuses. In practice, quality assurance responsibility is devolved to academic schools and those programmes offered in China and Malaysia are quality assured using the relevant school's standard processes, which operate within an overarching framework defined by the university's quality manual. For example, examination questions are reviewed by the designated module convenor (the individual who 'owns' a given module (typically in the school's UK base) and student scripts are seen by external examiners according to standard UK practice.

Quality assurance teams visit China and Malaysia to review the campus as whole and individual academic units are reviewed as part of the university's school review process. There are regular interactions between staff in a school's UK base and staff at the international campuses through the use of email, Skype and video conferences. Quality assurance requirements of Malaysia and China also have to be met and some schools seek international accreditation also (the business schools in Malaysia and China were part of the recently awarded EQUIS accreditation and the engineering courses in Malaysia have been subject to accreditation in Malaysia).

Library licensing agreements for online resources have been extended to the Malaysia and China campuses, thus staff and students have access to materials identical to those held in the University of Nottingham library in the UK.

Regular contact with UK home departments is the norm at every level of the university. For example, apart from daily email and phone contact, the human resources department has, at a minimum, fortnightly video conferences, senior members of the department have visited both China and Malaysia several times and there is a regular programme for other members of staff to visit. Depending on circumstances, an academic on an international contract in China and Malaysia may make one or two visits to Nottingham in a year. Students also have contact both ways, with several UK programmes having placements of students in China and/or Malaysia (and *vice versa*) and several four-year programmes that are begun in Malaysia or China offer their final two years in the UK. There are also exchange opportunities for the university's students across all three campuses with other partner universities worldwide.

Research

The University of Nottingham is a research-active university and wants the same emphasis for all its campuses. To this end, research infrastructures are being developed in both China and Malaysia; each campus has its own research funds and there are small funds to encourage inter-campus research projects (with other universities in both countries).

Because of the global nature of research questions, there are already many research links and joint projects between University of Nottingham UK academics and Malaysian and Chinese universities, including their own campuses in those countries. Funding for research is available from overseas and local sources. Once credentials had been established with the Chinese research councils, for example, Chinese funding has been available and Wanli Education Group, with the support of the City of Ningbo, has helped build a new science and engineering research building (due for completion in 2011). The Malaysia campus has recently opened a dedicated engineering research facility and a biotechnology research facility.

The choice of research areas to be established in Malaysia or China has been strategic, and there have been enough senior people looking for a challenge in their careers for this to be implemented. For example, a centre for sustainable energy technology was established in China to work with established research groups based at the UK campus. The University of Nottingham also wants to develop a model whereby its top UK researchers engage regularly with Malaysian and Chinese colleagues in a variety of research models with different combinations of partners.

Regulatory issues

The University of Nottingham has taken legal advice to ensure that contracts of employment and policies adhere to local employment regulations.

Tax is the responsibility of the individual employee, though the University of Nottingham provides staff with access to tax advice.

Summary: lessons learned

The University of Nottingham's advice is that it is important to have clear and persuasive reasons for the venture (which will often be complicated in a different context), to understand the motivations of the various partners (academic, but also including civic and other levels of government) and to be confident that the university will be able to work with the key people to solve any problems that arise. It is crucial that the joint venture agreement be appropriate from the start and clarity must be sought on every issue that arises during the negotiation period.

Reciprocity and mutual respect are important principles. UK universities take both a financial and a reputational risk if they are not clear about their motives. The strength of UK universities lies in the intellectual property they bring and quality is a crucial component of any such venture. In the case of the University of Nottingham, as a not-for-profit enterprise (ie a charity), any surpluses are ploughed back into the campuses. There are, however, important indirect benefits, especially in the extension and enrichment of research projects, as well as involvement in important developing countries, with access to excellent students etc.

Clear understanding of the different types of staff and employment contracts, about what is offered and why, should be developed from the start. Notwithstanding this, it is important to be flexible and to understand that what is right at the beginning might not be appropriate for the longer term. It is also important to beware of precedents set early on in the venture, when there are small numbers of staff employed. Different countries have different practices and these should also be considered. For example, in China, there is not as strong a divide between academic and administrative jobs (a young person might take an administrative job in the hope of doing some lecturing).

Good people are crucial to the success of the enterprise. It is worth putting a lot of effort into briefing staff in the pre-departure phase, so that they have as much information and advice as possible on facilities, conditions of service, visas, vaccinations etc. Shared internet spaces and blogs have also helped. Good communication is crucial, both with different players in the country and between campuses. It is important to encourage communication between home and offshore campuses to allow colleagues to get to know each other.

Brief history and description of the activity

The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) was established in 1887 and is one of Australia's original higher education institutions. RMIT is a broad-based university with an applied, practical focus. It has over 70,000 students, 38% of whom are international students located in Melbourne and overseas.

RMIT's association with Vietnam began in 1992, growing in strength through education, business and research links in engineering, information technology, communication, finance and telecommunications.

In 1998, the Vietnamese authorities invited RMIT to establish a fully foreign-owned university in Vietnam, granting a licence in 2000 for the delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate education, training and research. All qualifications offered are locally and internationally recognised RMIT qualifications.

RMIT International University Vietnam is a wholly-controlled entity of RMIT, governed by a board comprising the vice-chancellor, president RMIT Vietnam, an external member of RMIT council and the pro-vice-chancellor international and development. There are two more positions that may be filled. The president RMIT Vietnam reports direct to the vice-chancellor and to the board.

RMIT Vietnam was Vietnam's first fully foreign-owned university, delivering internationally recognised degrees from campuses in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In 2010 it enrolled approximately 6,000 students. To date it has graduated 2,600 students.

RMIT Vietnam has been through three broad stages of development. Originally conceived as a distance education facility using an IT platform to support local tutorials, the university quickly moved to offer a wide range of undergraduate programmes through face-to-face teaching.

Since 2009, the university has undergone major change to position itself to become a broad-based university, undertaking teaching and research. This development resulted from the recognition that the institution was not sustainable in its current form, especially given the development needs of Vietnam and the emerging competition from potential local and international competitors. 'The board recognised that competition was coming and that the earlier model had reached its use by date'.

As a consequence, the university has been broadening, developing and increasing its teaching programmes, has introduced research activity, has put in place the capability to develop regionally-based research projects, new business and government partnerships, and is expanding the number of students and academic staff moving between RMIT Vietnam and RMIT's other teaching sites in the region (in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore), and with RMIT in Melbourne. RMIT Vietnam is now positioned by RMIT to be the university's 'Asian hub'.

Staffing strategy and current staff

The staffing strategy has gradually developed, reflecting and now leading these changes. Locally engaged and internationally recruited staff made up, and still make up, 100% of the staffing complement (see Table 3 opposite). For a considerable time the staffing structure was 'flat', with staff essentially at lecturer level, reporting to a single, senior RMIT academic director. In terms of curriculum, staff focused largely on the 'contextualisation' and delivery of RMIT programmes for Vietnam.

This changed significantly in mid-2009 with the appointment of a president from RMIT University, with a strong academic background. A radical restructuring and reshaping of staffing arrangements followed, with the introduction of senior, high-calibre heads of academic centres and the creation of a range of senior administrative positions. The restructure was designed to attract top-quality staff. A parallel initiative produced an explicit academic career structure, involving tiered levels of teaching and teaching-and-research staff, mirroring RMIT's own structures and standards (the patterns of staffing however, are different in the two locations – see Table 3 opposite).

The mirroring of RMIT was not originally planned but became necessary as understanding grew about the best way to attract, retain and reward quality academic staff for new purposes. As a result, staffing policy, planning and operations link closely with those of RMIT Melbourne, with dotted line reporting between senior staff in Vietnam with senior staff in Melbourne resulting in interesting matrix management. More importantly, there is considerable shared development of staffing strategy, policy and procedures. Reward and support structures for RMIT Vietnam staff are now more extensive but are tailored to the local situation and do not reflect those of RMIT in Australia.

These changes produced some initial apprehension in RMIT Vietnam, but have been welcomed. There is a clear understanding about and appreciation for a more sophisticated appointment and career structure, an environment that expects, values and supports good staff, and the provision of significant support programmes (professional development, research experience support for staff). An important feature of the change was the opening of academic positions to internal competition only in the first round. The staff were able to compete and, provided the new benchmark requirements were met, to be appointed into new roles. In addition, active, international recruitment of senior level staff has now occurred and is continuing.

Table 3
Current academic staff profile and characteristics

Number of locally engaged academic staff	19
Number of internationally recruited academic staff	156
Number of home campus (RMIT) academic staff	0
Total academic staff	175
Countries represented by RMIT Vietnam academic staff	28
Number of academic staff with PhD	20

There is a large international academic workforce: 90% of academic staff are internationally recruited. Most staff are from the USA, Australia, the UK, and Canada, with increasing efforts being made to attract staff from within the region, especially from Singapore and Malaysia.

Work permits for Vietnam are generally for three years, but extensions are generally straightforward. While turnover of staff is higher in English language areas than in higher education, the extent of turnover is thought reasonable and quite manageable: 'There is surprising stability in the academic workforce'.

The nature of emerging competition is diverse and not necessarily an immediate, direct threat as such to RMIT's core activities. The profile and reputation of RMIT Vietnam is high and competition, as it is shaping up, appears to be 'eating around the edges'. There are in fact emerging opportunities for RMIT to expand the size of its operations (especially in Hanoi) and to offer vocational-level courses (RMIT Melbourne is a dual-sector university, with both higher education and vocational education and training programmes) both in Vietnam and through Vietnam, within the region. There are also opportunities to contribute to English language development throughout the region and strengthening the academic workforce of local universities and colleges. All this underscores the current effort to restructure and enhance the level and quality of RMIT academic staff.

Pay, conditions of service and benefits

RMIT Vietnam seeks to offer a competitive package of conditions and benefits to attract and retain good-quality staff (see Table 4). Management freely admits, however, that the university cannot expect to be the most competitive on a global level in these matters due to the constraints of operating an international university funded by revenue generated in local currency (Vietnam Dong) and with limited tax incentives for salary packaging and superannuation. The university also does not recruit international staff on a typical 'expatriate' package, such as one might expect when an organisation sends staff from the home base HQ operation to work in an overseas location. Operating as a Vietnam organisation, international staff are employed as 'impatriates', foreign nationals engaged for fixed-term temporary employment. The strategy for recruitment of high-quality staff therefore cannot depend on remuneration elements and physical terms and conditions alone. Experience suggests other factors are at least as, if not more important.

Table 4
Employment benefits and
conditions – RMIT Vietnam

	Home university academic staff	Locally employed academic staff	International academic staff
Basic salary	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bonus	No	No	No
13th month pay	No	Yes	No
Pension/superannuation	No	No	No
Where paid	Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam
Taxation basis	Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam
Housing allowance	No	No	No
Car	No	No	No
Settling-in allowance	No	No	No
Private health insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Death and accident insurance	No	No	No
Counselling	Yes	Yes	Yes
Air fares home for self	No	No	No
Air fares home for family	No	No	No
International (or Australian private) school fees	No	No	No
Employment assistance for partner	No	No	No
Holiday provision	20 work days per year	20 work days per year	20 work days per year
Time release – before departure and on return	No	No	No
Other	No	No	No

The university puts great store in providing an environment that supports scholarship, learning and research, and as well as providing lifestyle benefits and something of a moral challenge.

Considerable energy is being put into establishing and perpetuating an institutional environment that will appeal to academic staff of a particular type and interest. Internal staff communication and support mechanisms are designed to value, engage and explicitly support staff in their various teaching and research roles and crucially in their longer-term career aspirations. Building staff confidence, morale and satisfaction is an explicit management objective (and challenge).

The Vietnam location is also used as an attractor. It is crucial to ensure a good match between capable academic staff and the context in which they will find themselves living and working.

Vietnam as a country is attractive to a particular type of geographically mobile academic staff. A segment of academic staff, young and not so young, is globally mobile, combining an interest in teaching and in research with a sense of discovery, adventure and, not insignificantly, contributing to the development of underdeveloped countries. 'Vietnam attracts a decent cohort of idealists. In our experience the itinerants who wash up are frequently very committed and very good... Young career academics in particular find the Vietnam "value proposition", including RMIT's international university status attractive'.

In addition, experience has shown that some more senior prospective staff, who have already accomplished much in their career, find the opportunity to put their own stamp on developing something new and intrinsically valuable, very appealing. They believe they can leave their mark more noticeably in such a context than in a more highly developed environment. Consequently, RMIT Vietnam's senior leadership is generally drawn from people with this perspective, rather than those pursuing a personal career agenda, although they are not mutually exclusive by any means.

The unique mix of staff poses some leadership and management challenges. Potential senior staff are interviewed internationally but are brought to Vietnam to familiarise themselves with the context and to meet and discuss matters in depth with management and teaching staff. Psychometric profiling is undertaken as part of the selection process. A similar approach in future is being considered for staff at the less senior levels. Employee relationship matters are relatively standard for a multinational organisation and solutions to many problems are devised and shared between RMIT Australia and Vietnam.

Leadership in this context is a critical issue. Both RMIT Australia and RMIT Vietnam acknowledge that the transition to a broad-based university in Vietnam has required energetic, higher-level leadership and management in Vietnam. Designing and getting the structures and personnel right at the top have been the joint priorities of RMIT Australia and Vietnam. This is seen as the basis for effective change and future institutional positioning.

The unique selling point for RMIT Vietnam in attracting and retaining good-quality academic staff is a satisfaction package across a number of fronts, not physical and salary terms and conditions alone.

Maintenance of teaching quality

Programmes offered in Vietnam range from academic English and diploma courses to bachelor and postgraduate programmes in four main discipline areas: English language teaching, business, communication and design, and IT/engineering, the latter still being quite embryonic.

Formally, programmes and qualifications remain those of RMIT in Australia. Students are recorded as students of RMIT Australia. While RMIT Australia is strengthening the governance processes of RMIT Vietnam, with implications over the longer term for academic management and independence, RMIT Vietnam is subject to RMIT's academic policies. RMIT Australia at present maintains close, direct involvement with the delivery and assessment of its programmes in Vietnam, including in the setting of assessments. The learning objectives, course and curriculum materials, assessment tasks, and electronic resources are prepared for use in Vietnam by staff of RMIT Australia.

Academic staff employed at RMIT Vietnam work in collaboration with academic staff from RMIT Australia to customise the materials that are prepared in RMIT Australia for offshore delivery and to facilitate the teaching and learning processes at RMIT Vietnam. The teaching model at RMIT Vietnam favours small group interaction, face-to-face discussions and tutorial groups, as well as facilitated online and self-directed learning by students.

Although academic policies and procedures are the same for the Australia and Vietnam campuses, RMIT is conscious of balancing equivalent learning outcomes and appropriateness of learning experiences and outcomes to local conditions in Vietnam. Local input is provided to better internationalise courses. Internationalisation of the curriculum is happening for courses selected for funding from the Learning and Teaching Investment Fund.

Programme annual reviews, as carried out by RMIT Australia, were carried out to monitor the performance of RMIT Vietnam programmes. Moderation is undertaken by sampling assignments and exam papers, dual marking and blind marking by RMIT Australia staff.

In addition, academic programmes offered in RMIT Vietnam are formally recognised in Vietnam by the ministry of education and training. RMIT Vietnam is required to demonstrate to the ministry the equivalence of its standards with those of the Melbourne campus. Ministry representatives visit both the Melbourne and Vietnam campuses as part of their annual review of RMIT operations.

In accordance with RMIT's 'work integrated learning scheme' (WIL), all RMIT Vietnam students have industry placements as part of their course. They have a semester-long preparatory programme, which is well-received by them and appreciated by industry managers who provide industry placements and may then employ them.

Formally, RMIT Vietnam is subject to the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audits of Australian institutions and programmes delivered offshore. AUQA in 2009 reported no concerns about the processes used to ensure comparability of standards and student experience between RMIT Vietnam and RMIT Australia. In fact, AUQA verified examples of RMIT Vietnam bringing advantages to students and staff in Melbourne as well as other RMIT teaching sites in Singapore and Malaysia and formally commended RMIT's characterisation of RMIT Vietnam as a hub in Asia to facilitate two-way mobility between Vietnam and Melbourne and between the other RMIT Asian partners.

The strategic aim – to implement an academic staff band at professorial level and the attempt to much more substantially integrate academic policy and practice – are familiar aspects of a heightened development phase.

Research

Under previous arrangements few RMIT staff had research as part of their contractual responsibilities. Encouraging and supporting staff research is a recognised development need, and a clear part of future positioning (see above). It will need to be phased in over time. Development of an institutional research culture and capability is a key element in achieving the university's desired objective to recruit more highly qualified staff specialists at PhD level. The effort includes expanding on early success in initiating Vietnam-based, industry-related research in niche areas.

Regulatory issues

While timeconsuming, and at times highly frustrating, regulatory issues are not regarded as a significant barrier. Registration arrangements with the Vietnamese Government are well established and although from time to time, new regulatory factors may arise they are never sufficiently troublesome to seriously disrupt operations. Staff visa arrangements are familiar and straightforward. Work permits for Vietnam are generally for three years, but extensions are relatively easily obtained and continuity in employment of staffing is not problematic. The greater risk is around staff travel, insurance, currency exchange, inflation and matters of crisis management, ongoing matters that are outside the local regulatory context for the most part.

Summary: lessons learned

RMIT's extensive experience in delivering its programmes offshore has provided the basis for planning, reflection, correction and development of its offshore presence, including, but particularly in Vietnam, the priority site. Substantial experience of the cultural, legal, pedagogic, business, infrastructure, human resources, quality-assurance and indeed the interpersonal aspects of the project mean that strategic foresight and options for future development are easier for an institution such as RMIT than would be the case for recent or newly-entering offshore players.

Obviously, the calibre of leadership and management, and their continuing renewal, are crucial, in ensuring the disparate elements that go to make up a successful project over time are properly and strategically comprehended and that solutions to emerging challenges are clearly identified, sorted through, prioritised and ultimately applied effectively.

Most recently, the test has been the radical reconceptualising and repositioning of RMIT Vietnam. The factors likely to favour future success include strategic foresight and a clear imagining about future directions; a valuing of staff already in place and an ability to motivate them and in large part to carry them forward successfully through the change process; a clear understanding of the value proposition likely to attract and to sustain high-calibre staff desired for the future; and the capability and commitment to bring resources to bear to bring the vision to fruition.

Brief history and description of the activity

The University of Surrey, Guildford, is one of the UK's leading research universities and is a member of the 1994 Group of institutions. It has over 16,000 students on its campus at Guildford and one substantial offshore presence in China, the Surrey International Institute (SII). This was established in 2006 as an academic joint venture with Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE), one of China's leading universities, which has over 12,500 undergraduate and postgraduate students and is based in Dalian in Liaoning Province of China.

One key feature of the international strategy of the University of Surrey is to focus on building academic networks and partnerships. The wording of the strategy declares one of its three key aims as being, 'to give the university substantial international reach through strategic partnerships with quality institutions'. It has therefore established global partnership agreements with a small group of leading universities throughout the world.⁸

Institutions that have signed global partnership agreements are North Carolina State University (NCSU), Seoul National University (SNU), South Korea, and the University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil. A new, consolidated agreement, establishing a shared management group, has been signed by USP, Surrey and NCSU.

Another kind of partnership within the strategy is the Surrey International Institute which has been developed at a faculty level; the link with DUFE, which is based in the University's Faculty of Management and Law, is one of the most long-established and successful of these faculty-based ventures. From its origins in 2006 it has grown rapidly to a student population of 1,500 who study in campus facilities rented from DUFE. They are taking joint degrees in management at undergraduate and postgraduate levels from DUFE and Surrey. There are plans to expand the programmes to include economics and possibly further cognate disciplines in 2012.

For their first two years all students study at DUFE on a mutually agreed syllabus; thereafter for Years 3 and 4 they either move to the premises of Surrey International Institute on the DUFE campus or can apply to take up a limited number of places (currently 64) in Guildford. For these last two years the programmes are wholly under the auspices of Surrey.

Surrey International Institute is not a legal entity, but is technically a joint venture between the two institutions, with a joint management structure comprising a joint management committee in Dalian, chaired by the chairman of DUFE and a joint executive group in Surrey, chaired three times annually by the pro-vice-chancellor (international relations) from Surrey. The pro-vice-chancellor is also a member of the Dalian joint management committee. The creation of the joint venture required the approval of the Chinese Ministry of Education.

The parties recover their full teaching costs from student fees which vary according to location of study. However, those students who return to Surrey to complete their degrees will be paying the usual international tuition fee. Another key objective is to build up the partnership with DUFE so that in the long term both institutions will be undertaking a wide range of joint activities including joint research.

Staffing strategy and current staff

Surrey International Institute (SII) has three categories of academic staff;

- Category A: about ten Chinese staff from DUFE on the DUFE payroll, who provide part-time teaching for SII and are paid for this from SII funds on an *ad hoc* basis.
- Category B: academic staff recruited by Surrey from the international market and who are appointed on terms and conditions agreed with DUFE and are on the DUFE payroll. There are four staff in this category.
- Category C: there is one full-time staff appointment from Guildford at associate dean level and roughly ten flying faculty from the UK who visit SII once each year for blocks of time to deliver specialist modules. These are usually research-intensive staff at grades, from senior lecturer to professor.

The university has found that it has been able to recruit high-quality staff from the international market; they are frequently Chinese academics who are returning home after a period of teaching and research in Western institutions. As a measure of confidence in its partner the UK-based university is happy for a Chinese dean to undertake annual performance appraisals of the first two categories of SII staff jointly with Surrey (see Table 5).

One challenging aspect of the recruitment of Chinese staff in category B is that Chinese students tend to understand 'international' staff as being non-Chinese. Since they are paying higher fees at SII in return for a Western education, they expect to be taught by Western teachers and do not understand that Chinese staff who have studied and taught in the West for a period of time are effectively now 'international staff'.

One issue highlighted by human resource staff in Guildford is that there is a growing reluctance by academic staff to continue with the block teaching each year. This is despite the provision of a displacement allowance paid to them for the period of their time in China. The two weeks involved are very intensive and the accommodation facilities require further development. This may lead the university to consider other ways of providing this specialist input.

Pay, conditions of service and benefits

The table opposite shows the terms and conditions for staff in category C, where decisions on benefits etc are made by Surrey, and category B where they are made jointly with DUFE.

Category B staff receive an intensive three-week induction programme in Guildford, which has been extended further for two of the staff.

Table 5
SII at DUFE staff pay and
benefits

	C Home university staff (full-time)	B International academic staff
Basic salary	Surrey scales	SII scales agreed with DUFE
Bonus	None	10% per annum and 20% at end of contract
13th month pay	None	None
Pensions	Surrey pension	Chinese scheme as in DUFE
Where paid	UK	China
Taxation basis	UK law	Chinese law
Housing allowance	No	Free accommodation and electricity in university flat
Car	No	No
Settling-in allowance	Furniture storage and shipping	Furniture storage and shipping
Private health insurance	Yes	Yes
Death and accident insurance	Yes	Yes
Counselling	Yes, if required	No
Air fares home for self	Twice per annum	Yes
Air fares home for family	No	No
International (or UK private) school fees	No	No
Employment assistance for partner	No	No
Holiday provision	UK entitlement	Chinese entitlement
Time release – before departure and on return	No	No
Medical checks – before and after	Yes	Yes
Training in the host country's culture	If required	No

Maintenance of teaching quality

The programmes offered at SII are identical to those in Guildford and this allows students to transfer between the two campuses if they wish. This move happens in Years 2 and 3 of the undergraduate programmes and in the last two years 64 Chinese students have taken up the offer. The reciprocal opportunity of two years' study in China is available to UK-based students, who might (when the higher UK fees are applicable) be attracted by being able to take the same courses and obtain the same degree at about one third of the cost in fees.

SII has recently appointed a senior member of staff at associate dean level with responsibility for ensuring that the quality of provision is in line with standards in Guildford. He will now be further embedding quality enhancement and helping with staff development in DUFE.

Surrey organises regular flows of both academic and administrative staff from SII to Guildford so that they can meet their counterparts in DUFE. In addition, several professional support staff from the University of Surrey (from the registry, finance and human resources) have visited DUFE in order to understand its environment and procedures. One reason for the visit by registry staff was to improve the understanding of SII administrators of the need to provide regular flows of statistics and information in the format required by the University of Surrey. The human resources staff in the University of Surrey have also provided some mentoring support to colleagues in DUFE. In addition, staff from the student support team have visited SII to provide an induction for those students wishing to come to Guildford. As a result of the personal relationships that have now been established, there is regular email contact between the groups of professional staff in the two institutions.

Research

Since the current Category B staff are appointed on teaching-only contracts, any research activity is limited, although the long-term plan is to move to a typical balanced workload between research and teaching. This will require a change to staff employment contracts in due course.

At present SII funds participation of Category B staff in conferences in order to encourage their scholarship and research interests. In the short term the University of Surrey is helping to build up the research capacity of SII staff by funding small projects and linkages with staff at Guildford. Any surpluses arising each year are placed in a development fund from which research projects will be funded in due course. The University of Surrey will also provide funding for joint projects from budgets held by the pro-vice-chancellor (international relations). Another long-term aim is to develop tripartite research collaboration between SII, Seoul National University (a global partner and only an hour's flight from DUFE) and the University of Surrey.

Regulatory issues

One of DUFÉ's responsibilities has been to liaise with the ministry of education on behalf of the joint venture in all matters relating to initial approvals, quality reviews and financial audits. This has been very effective from the University of Surrey's perspective.

Joint ventures always face issues of differences of culture and SII is no exception. For example, China has no legislation relating to disability and it is therefore hard for the University of Surrey to apply the same standards of support as it would in the UK under the Disability and Equality Act legislation. DUFÉ as the landlord is not obliged to alter buildings so as to provide easy access for students with disabilities. As with the other case studies involving operations in China, there are other sensitive areas and all SII staff need to be mindful of cultural norms in this regard when publicly addressing students and in discussions with their Chinese colleagues.

Summary: lessons learned

SII grew from links between DUFÉ and the Faculty of Management and Law at Surrey. This is typical of the way that many international partnerships have developed in the sector. As the venture has matured and grown in scale it has moved to the portfolio of the pro-vice-chancellor (international) in order to be fully integrated into the partnership strategy. However, two challenges still remain:

- How best to ensure the continuing engagement of UK-based academic staff in the venture in order to retain the authentic University of Surrey experience and its attractiveness to Chinese students.
- How best to align the student record procedures between DUFÉ and the University of Surrey, (which could have implications for continuing monitoring of performance and quality assurance) – but this is being remedied by establishing personal contact between the two sets of professional staff.

One important message from this joint venture is that faculty-led partnerships should always be seen within the framework of an institution's corporate and international strategies; this is part of a general national trend towards greater strategic direction over the many disparate international activities that happen within universities. A university executive will need to have robust central mechanisms in place to monitor the performance of such links so that it can identify and then remove any problems or blockages that might cause reputational damage.

Brief history and description of the activity

Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) began with the signing of an agreement in May 2003 between Texas A&M University (TAMU) located in the city of College Station, Texas, USA and the Qatar Foundation to offer TAMU degrees in four engineering disciplines: chemical, electrical, mechanical and petroleum in the city of Doha, Qatar.

The Qatar Foundation was founded in 1995 by the Emir of the State of Qatar. Its mission is to provide educational opportunities for the people of Qatar. Facilities and the operating budget is provided largely by the Qatar Foundation.

TAMUQ is one of six US universities in Doha's Education City, all invited by the Qatar Foundation to establish branch campuses in Doha. Recently, a US community college, a UK university and a French *grande école* have been asked to establish a presence in Education City.

The first TAMUQ students enrolled in September 2003, with an entering class of 29 students and seven faculty members. By the autumn of 2008, there were 336 students and 70 faculty; 128 students were female, and 97 were female Qatari citizens. As of May 2008, TAMUQ had graduated more than 100 students, approximately 60% of whom were Qatari citizens. The target for enrolment is 500 undergraduate students, with 70% Qatari citizens.

TAMUQ was accredited as a branch campus by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 2007 and the degree programmes were accredited by ABET Inc in 2009.

The university in Doha is led by a dean and CEO who is appointed by the chancellor of the TAMU System and reports to the TAMU provost and executive vice-president as well as to the dean of the Dwight Look College of Engineering. It is expected that the dean will be seconded from TAMU. Programme chairs provide leadership at the programmatic level; they report to TAMUQ's associate dean for academic affairs as well as to the heads of their respective departments and colleges in TAMU. A joint advisory board, stipulated in the agreement, and composed of nine high-level members, provides ongoing review and oversight of TAMUQ. Three members are appointed by the Qatar Foundation, three by TAMU, and three are jointly appointed.

Staffing strategy and current staff

All TAMUQ faculty are employees of TAMU and are considered TAMU faculty. Approximately 20% of faculty in Doha are rotating from TAMU; all others are considered international faculty. This figure suggests that relying on home campus faculty seconded to Doha is not a viable long-term strategy and that building a strong international faculty committed to TAMUQ over the long term is essential. All international faculty hired must meet the same criteria as those hired in TAMU.

Interviews are conducted in Doha and Texas; and appointments must be approved by the departments in TAMU. Having a faculty of comparable quality to that of TAMU is of paramount importance to TAMUQ and to the Qatar Foundation.

Attracting and retaining top-notch faculty to Doha in engineering fields, where there is stiff global competition for faculty members, is a continuing challenge. This is particularly true in petroleum engineering. TAMU has taken several steps to address these issues. The compensation package is competitive. Faculty members from TAMU and international faculty members receive a bonus in addition to their basic salary, which is the same as that of faculty in TAMU. They receive a transport allowance, a settling-in allowance, air fares home for themselves and their families, and payment of private school fees for their children.

Contractual and governance issues play a very important role in the ability to attract and retain faculty. Initially, faculty were given the title of 'visiting' assistant professor, associate professor or professor. That title was then changed to 'senior' and in December 2009 'senior' was dropped, bringing titles in line with customary US faculty titles. Of greater concern in attracting and retaining high-quality faculty is the absence of tenure at TAMUQ, which would be an option were the candidates being considered for comparable positions at TAMU or at other US research universities. TAMUQ is attempting to address this issue by implementing a system of three-to-five-year rolling contracts. Although tenure is not common in the Gulf States, it remains to be seen if TAMUQ and other universities can attract and retain world-class faculty without a tenure system.

A second issue in faculty recruitment is research and graduate studies. TAMUQ aims to be as research-intensive as TAMU, and is about to launch graduate programmes. We elaborate on those issues below.

The administrative staff numbered 122 in 2008 and the majority are local hires. Like the faculty, they are employees of TAMU. Local support staff salaries are guided by the policies of the Qatar Foundation and aligned with local practice. They are paid locally rather than from the US-based payroll system. Similarly, certain benefits, such as private health insurance and death and accident insurance, are local schemes.

Maintenance of teaching quality

The benchmark for all quality measures is TAMU.

Data are gathered to compare (by programme):

- the average number of courses taught per semester, per faculty
- average class sizes
- average number of publications per faculty
- average number of conference presentations per faculty
- average number of research proposals prepared by faculty
- average number of research proposals funded per faculty
- average value of sponsored research projects
- average service hours per faculty
- average evaluation per faculty.

The TAMUQ curriculum is substantially equivalent to that of TAMU, as are degree requirements and course syllabi. TAMUQ students have the advantage of being in smaller classes and have greater access to faculty. They also receive tablet personal computers and enjoy more advanced laboratories than those in Texas. Average grades for students by year in each of the programmes are compared. Statistical analysis of these comparisons demonstrate that the grade point averages of TAMUQ and TAMU students are equal.

Faculty members are evaluated annually by the associate dean for academic affairs at TAMUQ and the appropriate department head from TAMU. Ideally, the session takes place in the spring in Doha with all parties. If this is not possible, video conferencing is used. TAMUQ students anonymously evaluate the faculty members at the end of each course. The average course rating for specific courses is compared to the same course in TAMU.

TAMUQ provides faculty development opportunities related to teaching by sponsoring faculty development workshops on topics such as technology, lecture preparation, good practice in teaching. It also sponsors symposia and seminars on research and contemporary issues. All full-time faculty holding one year or longer contracts are eligible to receive a faculty resource allocation to support their instructional and scholarly activities.

Maintaining active relationships between Doha and College Station is a high priority. A number of coordination committees provide input, review, and guidance to TAMUQ. The Qatar coordination committee is chaired by the TAMU provost; its members include senior administrators from TAMU and the dean and CEO of TAMUQ as well as the chair of key committees of the Doha campus. Additionally, the Qatar undergraduate academic committee; the Qatar research and graduate studies committee; and the Qatar finance and administration operations committee coordinate their respective domains with the home campus. TAMU faculty and senior staff visit Doha regularly.

Full-time faculty at both campuses can participate in faculty exchange programmes. In 2008–09, six TAMU faculty visited and taught regular courses in Doha. Beginning in fall 2010, Qatar faculty who do not have joint appointments at TAMU and TAMUQ are eligible to spend a semester at TAMU under the faculty enrichment experience programme. The goal of this programme is to further align the cultures of the two campuses. Student exchanges have brought 12 TAMU students to Doha and five TAMUQ students to Texas.

Research

Research has been an important issue since the inception of TAMUQ. TAMUQ faculty are expected to be active researchers, publish in leading journals, and obtain external support. Faculty have won grants and support from the national priority research programme of the Qatar National Research Foundation (QNRF), The Qatar Science & Technology Park, and from industry. Research awards in place in 2008 totalled approximately US\$50m; about US\$7m were projects funded by industry. Opportunities are also available for undergraduates to participate in research. More than 75 have participated in projects funded by the undergraduate research experience programme of the QNRF.

In spite of this seemingly healthy level of research, there are obstacles to TAMUQ's fully realising its aspirations to develop a world-class research programme comparable to TAMU's. Although discussions began in 2006, it took until late 2010 for TAMUQ and the Qatar Foundation to reach an agreement on research and graduate programmes. Until then, the Qatar Foundation had not provided funding for equipment for research laboratories or for support of a research infrastructure required to sustain successful research programmes. Additionally, the 2003 agreement specified that graduate programmes would be offered two years after the entering class arrived, which would have been 2005. The recent agreement will result in the launch of graduate programmes in fall 2011 and the development of a research infrastructure.

Regulatory issues

Branch campuses established at the behest of the host government or organisations, such as the Qatar Foundation, experience a different regulatory framework from others. Quality assurance is built into the agreement, including obtaining accreditation from the relevant US accreditors, oversight by the joint advisory board, and the periodic evaluation by an external group of academics. The latter activity was carried out in 2010. Visas and compliance with local laws do not seem to pose any special problems for TAMUQ.

Summary: lessons learned

TAMU's goal in setting up TAMUQ was to duplicate as faithfully as possible in Doha the four engineering programmes offered in TAMU. TAMUQ leadership has made a remarkable effort to accomplish this goal and has scrupulously monitored the progress in doing so. It has also made valiant efforts to meet the agreed-upon target of 70% Qatari students in the face of considerable challenges, notably a limited pool of qualified students. (The current proportion of Qataris stands at 51%). Overall the performance of TAMUQ students is comparable to that of students at TAMU.

Matching the quality of the home campus also entails hiring and retaining a comparable faculty including in the research arena. There are many positive aspects of TAMUQ to attract high-quality faculty: competitive compensation, a 4.8:1 student:faculty ratio, and access to research funding. But it remains to be seen, now that the agreement between TAMU and the Qatar Foundation on research and graduate programmes has been executed, whether TAMUQ can indeed become a research powerhouse equivalent to the best of US institutions. Lack of a tenure system could be a continuing obstacle, as well as the short supply of world-class engineering faculty, especially in petroleum engineering. If the research profile of TAMUQ is indeed a different one from that of TAMU, the faculty evaluation criteria will need to be adapted accordingly.

Because the Qatar Foundation supports and funds the entire operation of TAMUQ, some of the lessons learned from the TAMUQ experience are not applicable to other branch campuses. Many branch campuses do not have the same research aspirations of TAMUQ, (or the high costs associated with engineering research) and if they did, funding would be an even more daunting issue.

A strength of TAMUQ that can be replicated elsewhere is the strong ties between College Station and Doha. Faculty seconded from College Station, Doha faculty visiting Texas, close ties with the home departments in matter of hiring, evaluation and curriculum, and integration with the TAMU library keep TAMUQ closely connected to, and identified with, the mother campus. And all around the campus it is evident that students can be an 'Aggie' in TAMU or in the desert of Doha.⁹ 'Aggie' student traditions such as Aggie rings, Aggie yells, Run for the Ring, and Gig'em Week are all promoted on both campuses.

Brief history and description of the activity

University College London (UCL) is a world-class university that regularly appears in the top echelons of the international league tables. It has two offshore activities that have led it to develop a series of policies for staff based offshore.

One of these in Adelaide, South Australia (the genesis and management of which has been fully described in a recent Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) publication) has involved the establishment of a small research campus at the invitation of the Government of South Australia. This is now operational, having enrolled its first cohort of MSc students early in 2010. The campus is called UCL School of Energy and Resources Australia (UCL SERAus) and provides a specialist masters programmes in energy and resources, a PhD programme and short CPD programmes, aimed at the energy industry in the region. An active research programme is envisaged – funded partly by the Government of South Australia, industry sponsors (such as Santos Ltd) and, in due course, national research councils. SERAus has a small staff of 11 drawn from the UK and from international advertising.

The second overseas operation in Kazakhstan is very different, since its first stage involves the provision of foundation programmes for 500 students a year in the Centre for Preparatory Studies (CPS) of Nazarbayev University, a new university in Astana. The university has the personal backing of the President of Kazakhstan, after whom it is named, and aims to become the leading world-class university in Central Asia. A former deputy vice-chancellor from the University of Cambridge is advising the university leadership on achieving this aim.

After their initial foundation year, successful Nazarbayev University students who gain UCL's University Preparatory Certificate (UPC) will progress to three-year programmes in the university. In the first stage of UCL's involvement in 2010, 40 staff were recruited internationally by UCL to work under contract to the university in the Centre for Preparatory Studies alongside five academic staff seconded from UCL.

A second stage of UCL's work for Nazarbayev University involves a consultancy project to establish the School of Engineering and Technology, which will be operational in September 2011.

Staffing strategy and current staff

UCL's strategies for staffing these two activities have been driven by their very different profiles at either end of the academic spectrum – one being a foundation programme and the other being a postgraduate and research institution. Thus, the mix of academic and support staff has varied as the table shows:

Table 6
Staff composition, UCL in
Australia and Kazakhstan

	UCL staff	Local staff	Internationally recruited staff	Total
UCL SERAus	2	5	4	10
CPS, Astana	5	2	40	47

In the case of SERAus, the academic teaching will be enhanced by a number of UCL academic staff in various departments providing short-term specialist inputs.

The scale of the Astana Centre for Preparatory Studies' (CPS) commitment has made international recruitment inevitable, as the equivalent department in UCL cannot provide more than a few managerial staff to oversee the operations.

Pay, conditions of service and benefits

The appendix to this study provides full details of the terms and conditions that have been agreed for UCL staff in the two countries. This section summarises the key points.

In UCL SERAus, staff are appointed on Australian contracts. Only people on short-term secondments (less than a year) or on visits would retain their UK conditions of employment. They would also have flights paid and receive subsistence and per diem allowances. The same salary scales apply to everyone working at UCL SERAus and these are benchmarked against the top eight universities in Australia.

Conditions of service are similar to those that would be found in any other Australian university, as all contracts must be compliant with the Fair Work Act 2009. There are some enhanced adjustments to prevent staff seconded from the UK from being disadvantaged (for example the annual South Australian public holiday allowance is higher than UK, so Australian closure leave is lower so that overall it is consistent with the situation in the UK). Staff are not treated as expatriates who would get a housing allowance or provision of a car and are paid in Australian dollars (although this is through the UCL payroll to a local bureau).

There are, however, differences from any other Australian university because of the nature of UCL SERAus. UK staff get airfares for themselves and their families at the start and end of their contracts and a relocation allowance to cover other costs, such as transport of their personal effects to Australia. UCL has to maintain UK staff members' national insurance contributions for 52 weeks (this also applies to Kazakhstan). UK staff members retain their UK pension, but UCL is also required to pay a minimum of 9% into a Guaranteed Australian Pension scheme, which they could retain at the end of their contracts.

Conversely, local and international staff have the choice of subscribing to the UK Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) (the requirement to pay into the Australian pension scheme in addition applies to all who take up the USS scheme, not just UK staff). Staff seconded from UCL London or recruited from outside Australia are able to reduce their Australian income tax by having a 'living away from home allowance' structured in to their package, subject to legal restrictions. They are, however, advised to take professional advice about this and their pension options. As UCL employees, they have access to all UCL resources and this includes various forms of counselling, either online or by phone.

In Kazakhstan, staff at the Kazakhstan CPS are employed by UCL but they are seconded to Nazarbayev University for the term of their contract. At CPS, everyone from the UK or recruited internationally are on fixed-term (three- or five-year) contracts. Their base salaries are paid on UCL salary ranges in the UK. Staff also get a 25% salary supplement, benchmarked against other international employers in the area, but also aimed at attracting and retaining staff of high quality.

Locally recruited staff are also employed on UCL pay ranges in the UK, but they do not receive a supplement. These ranges are, however, higher than those of staff employed direct by Nazarbayev University. Salaries are paid in local currency.

UK and international staff working in Kazakhstan get free family accommodation on campus. Relocation and transport of personal effects is paid; there is also a settling-in allowance. In addition to flights at the beginning and end of contracts, staff and their dependants are allowed one return flight to the UK per annum. Staff are eligible to join the UK Universities Superannuation Scheme. Medical insurance is provided in Kazakhstan; if treatment is required outside Kazakhstan, this will be covered for the staff member and dependents by UCL.

Induction programmes and cultural awareness training are offered for both countries (one week for Australia and three weeks on UCL and life in Kazakhstan for CPS). Partners of staff could attend these if they wish, but are not expressly helped with finding employment in either Australia or Kazakhstan.

Maintenance of teaching quality

The international strategy of UCL has been driven by academic goals. In the case of these two initiatives, these included whether the partner proposed the creation of centres of excellence that were compatible with UCL strengths and would further UCL interests, whether the overall rationale would reflect UCL core principles, (whether there were acceptable levels of academic freedom and appropriate governance structures etc). There has to be a long-term research dimension in proposed partnerships.

Academic staff in Australia have to go through the same initial teaching certification processes as UK staff; but they may be required to take other UK courses. Kazakhstan staff receive the same induction as they would in the UK. Given the geographical separation, staff do not have access to the same staff development opportunities as UK staff would have; however, training courses are contracted in to meet specific needs, such as media training.

In the case of UCL SERAus, while the MSc offered is unique to Adelaide, all academic regulatory requirements, including admission criteria, assessment and quality-assurance are those of UCL in London, noting that quality assurance requirements at national and federal levels of Australia also have to be met. The school is established as a department in UCL's Faculty of Engineering Sciences.

Staff and students in both Australia and CPS Kazakhstan have access to all the online teaching and learning materials and library resources operated by UCL in the UK.

Time differences require compromises for video conferences between London and the two projects, with UK colleagues coming in early in the day and Australian colleagues staying late. Human resources support in the application of policies and procedures also has to be adapted to each country's circumstances. Normally human resources experts would attend a disciplinary hearing in London, for example, but this is not practical when overseas. As much support as possible is provided by video link.

Research

UCL SERAus was developed after an approach from the State of South Australia whose extensive natural resources, mining industry and management of water resources were compatible with UCL's research interests. Because of this UCL SERAus has its own research mission related to regional priorities. Academic staff require a partner in the relevant country to get access to either UK or Australian research council funds. However, bureaucratic issues have still to be resolved to enable UCL to access Australian Research Council funds.

In the case of CPS Kazakhstan, one reason for the decision to go ahead with the Kazakhstan project was that UCL already had a core of staff with research projects and interests in that part of Asia. Therefore, when the engineering faculty is established after September 2011, academic staff will in due course be working on developing emerging research areas, such as energy, instrumentation and life sciences that are compatible with UCL London's research interests.

Regulatory issues

Good legal advice has been crucial. While UK considerations might have informed the basic staff contract, staff in Australia are appointed under Australian laws of employment. In Kazakhstan, the contracts are based on the normal UCL contracts, but they have been revised where necessary to comply with Kazakhstan employment law and have also been translated into Russian, as is required in Kazakhstan. In any dispute, the English version of a contract will take precedence.

UCL SERAus meets the quality assurance requirements of Australia and the UK, but this involved lengthy discussions in the early days between the state and the federal bodies.

Summary: lessons learned

UCL has only recently established these ventures, so planning issues are still foremost in thinking. The clear advice from those involved is that the amount of pre-planning required should never be underestimated. In order to initiate the venture and to employ people, details of the employment contracts need to be available early on and these have to be correct for the long term and compliant with any legal requirements. Most legal advisers are not necessarily familiar with higher education and might recommend only minimum requirements. UCL's own study of overseas laws was, therefore, essential.

It is important to manage the negotiations in establishing the venture; they need to be strongly led, with good direction provided and clear parameters. For both Australia and Kazakhstan, UCL had a project team lead by a vice-provost, with specialist teams within that. Cross-team meetings between support departments in UCL were required in order to be consistent across areas and to promote understanding between team members. Risks need to be identified and managed, and internal governance structures established to ensure appropriate reporting and support.

Appendix

Pay and benefits for UCL staff in Australia and Kazakhstan

	Home university	Locally employed	International academic staff
Basic salary – Australia	All people employed are on Australian salary scales, paid in A\$. Only short-term visitors from the UK continue to be paid in the UK, although they also get appropriate travel allowances		
Basic salary – Kazakhstan	UCL base salary scales. 25% salary supplement. Local currency (seconded to CPS)	Local scales	UCL base salary scales. 25% salary supplement. Local currency (seconded to CPS)
Bonus – Australia	No, although there is an annual leave loading on the statutory Australian leave (20 days) in line with Australian legislation. After 10 years' service an additional 13 weeks' paid long leave is earned		
Bonus – Kazakhstan	No	No	No
13th month pay – Australia and Kazakhstan	na	na	na
Pensions – Australia	Retain UK Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) but must also pay into an Australian Guaranteed Pension scheme (UCL have an agreement with UniSuper). The current employer contribution rate is 9% of salary	Australian pension, through UniSuper (17%) but also have option of USS. If they choose USS then UCL must also pay into the Australian Guaranteed Pension Scheme	
Pensions – Kazakhstan	All staff, including Kazakhstan nationals, eligible to join USS		
Where paid – Australia	In Australia in A\$ by local bureau via UCL London payroll		
Where paid – Kazakhstan	In Kazakhstan, in local currency, converted from sterling at the current National Bank of Kazakhstan exchange rate		
Taxation basis – Australia	Australia. Package can be structured in order to take advantage of living away from home allowance, unless status changed to permanent resident. UK national insurance contributions maintained for 52 weeks. Otherwise pay Australian tax. No Australian national insurance	Australia. Pay Australian tax. No Australian national insurance	Australia. Package can be structured in order to take advantage of living away from home allowance, unless status changed to permanent resident. Otherwise pay Australian tax. No Australian national insurance
Taxation basis – Kazakhstan	National insurance contributions maintained for 52 weeks. Taxed in Kazakhstan on production of evidence to HMRC of non-residence in UK for at least one tax year	Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan (taking into consideration taxation rules of country of origin)

	Home university	Locally employed	International academic staff
Housing allowance – Australia	Own expense. For appointments or long-term secondments of 1–3 years an accommodation allowance of up to A\$350 per week may, when appropriate, be payable for up to 2 months For short term secondees (under 1 year), who are not eligible for relocation costs, an accommodation allowance will be paid For the first 2 weeks, travel and subsistence rates will apply. Thereafter an accommodation allowance of up to A\$350 per week will be payable	Own expense	Own expense. For appointments or secondments of 1–3 years an accommodation allowance of up to A\$350 per week may, when appropriate, be payable for up to 2 months
Housing allowance – Kazakhstan	Free family accommodation on campus	Own expense	Free family accommodation on campus
Car – Australia and Kazakhstan	No	No	No
Settling-in allowance – Australia	Relocation costs and supplement (A\$18,000). House loans available for home purchase	The A\$18,000 relocation supplement is intended to cover any additional initial expenditure whilst moving between Australian states	Relocation costs and supplement (A\$18,000) payable. House loans available for home purchase
Settling-in allowance – Kazakhstan	Yes. Personal effects transported to Kazakhstan and back at the end of the contract in addition to a lump sum settling-in allowance	na	Yes. Personal effects transported to Kazakhstan and back at the end of the contract in addition to a lump sum settling-in allowance
Private health insurance – Australia	Health insurance for employee and family moving to Australia. (Now needs confirming as part of immigration)		
Private health insurance – Kazakhstan	Arranged through university, but access outside of Kazakhstan if required		
Death and accident insurance – Australia	In pension scheme		
Death and accident insurance – Kazakhstan	In pension scheme		
Counselling – Australia and Kazakhstan	Access to UCL resources 24 hours a day – online and by phone		
Air fares home for self – Australia	At start and end of contract	No	At start and end of contract
Air fares home for self – Kazakhstan	At start and end of contract, plus one return flight home per annum	na	At start and end of contract, plus one return flight home per annum

	Home university	Locally employed	International academic staff
Air fares home for family – Australia	At start and end of contract	No	At start and end of contract
Air fares home for family – Kazakhstan	At start and end of contract, plus one return flight home per annum	na	At start and end of contract, plus one return flight home per annum
International (or UK private) school fees – Australia and Kazakhstan	No	No	No
Employment assistance for partner – Australia and Kazakhstan	Not expressly. Partner can come to induction	No	Not expressly. Partner can come to induction
Holiday provision – Australia	Australian statutory 20 days, but increased to 27 days to be consistent with UK conditions. A long-service leave of 13 weeks is accrued after 10 years (South Australia Long Service Leave Act). This is in addition to national holidays (average 10 per annum, but variable year to year dependent on day of the week they fall)		
Holiday provision – Kazakhstan	Teaching staff entitled to 40 working days per annum (in line with Kazakhstan employment law) in addition to national holidays, non-teaching staff 27 days		
Time release – before departure and on return – Australia and Kazakhstan	na	na	na

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ITC is a for-profit company wholly owned by the university. It is governed by an eight-member board, all members of which are appointed by university council. Members include the vice-chancellor, six other non-executive members (two of whom are currently members of council) and the vice-principal (international), who is also the chief executive of ITC.

Brief history and description of the activity

The University of Wollongong originated in 1951 as a division of the then New South Wales University of Technology in Wollongong and in 1975 the University of Wollongong was incorporated by the New South Wales Parliament as an independent institution of higher learning. The University of Wollongong now has over 26,000 students, just over 30% of whom are international, spread across three campuses and five access centres.

In 1993 the university, through a wholly-owned commercial entity, Illawarra Technology Corporation Limited (ITC)¹⁰, established a campus in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The operation, which began as a small English language teaching facility in rented premises opposite Al Mulla Plaza, subsequently developed a presence as a college of the university on Jumeirah Road.

Following its move in 2003 to a purpose-built campus located in Knowledge Village (an education precinct and part of Dubai's free-trade zone), a short distance from the heart of the Dubai city, University of Wollongong Dubai (UOWD) incorporated as an independent university in 2004.

UOWD is currently the largest private/foreign provider of higher education in the UAE in terms of student numbers. It has enjoyed sustained growth in enrolments through periods of considerable change and development and has a strong reputation throughout the UAE as an institution in high standing.

More than 3,500 students from approximately 100 countries, including more than 60 students from Australia, are currently enrolled in a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across UOWD's three faculties – business and management; finance and accounting; and computer science and engineering. 48% of students are postgraduates. Women make up 44% of the student cohort.

Legally constituted in the UAE as a university in its own right and being located in a free-trade zone, UOWD is not obliged to abide by normal Emirati rules and regulations for institutional registration or programme accreditation. However, the university began the process of registration before its relocation to Knowledge Village and deemed it worth continuing – both in order to provide confidence to the Emirati population of its quality, and also as a risk management strategy should it ever need to relocate outside a free-trade zone. This has had significant implications for its operation (see below).

Staffing strategy and current staff

Broadly, staffing strategy and the approach to staffing and human resources matters at UOWD parallel those at the University of Wollongong. There is a deliberate attempt to apply an 'Australian ethos' and approach, so that the academic cultures in Wollongong and Dubai are not 'vinegar and oil'.

Staff are actively recruited internationally from a wide source – in the UK, Asia, Australia and elsewhere. The majority come from countries other than Australia. The diversity of staff nationalities (30 countries), while numerically probably no greater than at the university in Australia, is much more evenly balanced. Maintaining a diverse international staff profile is both a consequence of the realities of recruitment as well as, more positively, a factor in student recruitment, retention and satisfaction.

Research is expected of the vast majority of academic staff and building up the research capability at UOWD is a critical aspect of staff recruitment (and retention). It is also a formal part of the registration requirements imposed on UOWD by the Dubai Ministry for Education and Scientific Research. To be appointed, staff are required to have a PhD or equivalent.

Attracting suitable staff has been and remains a challenge and UOWD has had to cast its net widely. The unique selling points for the university are considered to be:

- UOWD is a recognised, comprehensive university. It is broadening into new areas (social sciences, creative arts, educational leadership, engineering) providing a richer academic environment for all staff.
- UOWD is perceived as a regional hub with a strong brand, and attractive for staff wanting to live and work in the region.
- Research is expected, and a career path for researchers is evident.
- Emergent researchers are welcomed, supported and developed.
- Teaching and research collaboration with staff at the University of Wollongong is promoted and actively supported.
- University of Wollongong staff look at UOWD 'with fondness'. There is a strong sense of collegiality between staff at UOWD and University of Wollongong (UOW).
- Induction and staff professional development opportunities are comprehensive.
- Academic quality assurance arrangements are extensive and supportive of continuing improvement.
- Conditions and benefits are attractive (salary and other benefits are not taxable).
- The Emirates is multicultural and westernised, with good education facilities, including for family of UOWD staff.
- Dubai is very 'liveable'.

Many staff joining UOWD are new career academics who are frequently transient, using employment at UOWD as a stepping stone to elsewhere. While there is a degree of staff 'churn', partly caused by recruitment by competitor institutions in Dubai – 'a symptom of our success' – there is also considerable staff stability over a reasonable period.

Table 7
Profile of UOWD academic staff
(full time – faculty staff only)

Number of locally engaged staff	0
Number of internationally recruited staff	45
Number of home campus (UOW) staff	0
Total staff	45
Countries represented by UOWD staff	30
Number of staff with a PhD	35

Table 8
UOWD employment
benefits and conditions
for international
academic staff (faculty only)

Basic salary	Yes
Bonus	No
13th month pay	No
Pension/superannuation	Yes (pension)
Where paid	Dubai
Taxation basis	No tax required
Housing allowance	Contribution to living allowance which includes housing allowance
Car	No
Settling-in allowance	Yes (for staff recruited from overseas)
Private health insurance	Yes
Death and accident insurance	Yes (life insurance)
Counselling	Yes
Air fares home for self	Yes
Air fares home for family	Yes for assistant professor and above
International school fees	Yes for assistant professor and above
Employment assistance for partner	No
Holiday provision	Yes
Time release – before departure and on return	No
Other	na

Maintenance of teaching quality

All UOWD degree programmes are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and are also audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

UOWD has its own board of trustees, which is the legal governing body. The board comprises four Emirati citizens and four University of Wollongong representatives. Included is the University of Wollongong vice-chancellor – who chairs the board – and the president of UOWD.

UOWD has its own academic board which reports to the board of trustees. This is chaired by the president of UOWD. The University of Wollongong deputy vice-chancellor (international) sits on the board, thereby helping to ensure consistency with University of Wollongong policy.

The academic board for UOWD advises the board of trustees on academic matters. The academic board has responsibility for endorsing new degrees and programmes and approving changes to current programmes. All programmes endorsed by the academic board are referred to the board of trustees for final approval. The academic board is also responsible for the maintenance of academic quality assurance, including in the areas of teaching and learning, curricula, assessment and the supervision of examinations. The academic board is chaired by the president of UOWD. The academic board has two key committees, the education committee and the research committee.

The actual governance arrangements for UOWD are more complex than this structure suggests. The board of trustees is the ultimate authority, but in practice it often acts in an advisory capacity on non-academic matters. Most major financial decisions are made by ITC. Indeed, there are several governance layers between UOWD, as an activity of the University of Wollongong, and the University of Wollongong council. However, as the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) attested in 2006, the governance arrangements are sufficient to give University of Wollongong the capability of ensuring that UOWD educational activities are consistent with University of Wollongong policies.

Prior to entering the free-trade zone (see above) UOWD fell within the jurisdiction of the UAE Commission of Academic Accreditation. UOWD started the process of having its programmes recognised by the Commission of Academic Accreditation. Upon entering Knowledge Village this became unnecessary. However, UOWD management took the decision to complete Commission of Academic Accreditation validation for its programmes, so that UOWD would be more attractive to Emirati prospective students. This decision was in direct contrast to the requirements of Knowledge Village which desires its tenants to be, and operate as, satellite campuses of international universities.

UOWD's formal schema for programme development, amendments and approvals are based upon the concept of UOWD as a standalone university. In practice, however, changes to academic programmes in Dubai have received approval through both University of Wollongong and UOWD governance structures.

Initially, UOWD students received University of Wollongong degrees. However, the Commission of Academic Accreditation required that, as part of the conditions of accreditation all UOWD students were to receive UOWD degrees. Students may now 'trade in' their UOWD degree for an internationally recognised University of Wollongong degree. Approximately 70% do so.

Initially, quality assurance at UOWD involved much more direct intervention by University of Wollongong than currently applies. Formal quality-assurance systems are now 'comprehensive, data-driven and multi-tiered' and provide a 'good handle' on the quality of teaching at UOWD. In 2006 for example, AUQA, while mindful that UOWD has its own strategic plan, used comparability with University of Wollongong standards in Australia as the appropriate benchmark for audit purposes. It concluded that

...in general terms the quality of programmes offered at Dubai is comparable to that of the programmes offered at Wollongong. There are systems in place for the retrospective quality assurance of subjects and courses. These are judged effective, given that the relationship between University of Wollongong and UOWD is both mature and permanent.

The calibre of staff is comparable to that at University of Wollongong. Staff at UOWD are fully engaged in the academic affairs of the campus. Promotions are campus based and the promotion committee is chaired by the pro-vice-chancellor (operations) from the University of Wollongong, thereby helping to maintain comparable standards.

A compulsory university learning and teaching programme (operated also at UOW) instills a comparable teaching culture to that at University of Wollongong. There are substantial and regular links between staff of UOWD and University of Wollongong. While staff contact hours at UOWD are higher than in Australia, the Commission of Academic Accreditation imposes limits on class sizes. Outcomes of students are matched with those in Wollongong, chiefly by sampling and grade distributions. Student entrance standards for UOWD are the same as those for University of Wollongong. Moderation of students' assessed work is conducted at Wollongong, retrospectively as part of subject reviews.

The University of Wollongong project for the enhancement of learning and teaching (PELT) is an additional programme available at UOWD, targeting undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as staff, and indicating the emphasis by UOWD on teaching and learning.

Finally, UOWD has established an Office of Institutional Effectiveness, reporting directly to the president, which acts as a further quality assurance mechanism. Amongst other things, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness participates in and supports regular programme evaluation and assists in the design, implementation and evaluation of UOWD programmes. It also undertakes analysis of student admissions, enrolments, retention and student progress and benchmarks UOWD performance, including with University of Wollongong.

In 2006 AUQA concluded 'in general, UOWD must be considered a successful venture. It has grown to be a credible university campus, and its level of independence is perhaps unique. In most respects, the standards at UOWD are comparable to those at UOW'. AUQA went on to formally, 'commend the University of Wollongong for establishing a successful and mature campus in Dubai which provides higher education programmes and a learning environment equivalent to that at its home campus in Wollongong'.

Research

UOWD Strategic Plan 2004–2007 has as the second of its seven goals: 'Promote excellence in research and research training programs.' The university currently offers research programmes across a range of disciplines at PhD and DBA levels.

The rapid economic and infrastructure development of the Emirates over the past 20 years and the country's strategic priority to 'move from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy' – with key national priorities having been articulated in health, education, sustainable development, security, and economic sustainability and growth – are seen by UOWD as key opportunities, which UOWD and UOW together are well-placed to seize. 'This is because of our UOW's research strengths in relevant areas and because of the local reputation of UOWD' (President of UOWD July 2010).

UOWDs broad research strategy is four-fold:

- act as a 'broker' to identify and facilitate research opportunities for UOW staff in the UAE and broader region
- directly collaborate with UOW researchers on joint projects, based in the UAE
- seek sources of UAE funding to support UAE-based collaborative research
- co-supervise with UOW staff doctoral students based at UOWD.

There is an active research committee, chaired by the UOWD president, which undertakes a number of activities towards fulfilling the research aims of the university, including the provision of research support and training for UOWD staff, formulating and implementing research plans, developing policies, procedures and guidelines, fostering existing and emerging research strengths, and creating a suitable infrastructure to support high quality research projects and initiatives. The committee is also responsible for promoting research partnerships with the government and the private sector in the Gulf region.

Research activities at UOWD span a range of disciplines, predominantly in fields of business and information technology. Other research disciplines include education, environmental science and the social sciences.

Considerable importance is placed on academic research by:

- creating a supporting environment which allows each faculty to pursue their academic interests
- emphasising the academic areas of strengths in which the university can gain a reputation for excellence.

The aim is to underpin research performance by a variety of factors: a researcher base built up via recruitment and development; a flexible and responsive research management environment that encourages a multidisciplinary approach to research; and the capacity and flexibility to develop strong partnerships with industry.

Over three-quarters of UOWD academic staff have PhDs and are therefore active or expected to be active in research. Recently, staff have been successful in attracting research funding from the newly established national research scheme in Dubai, as well as from a number of private research schemes. While not at the level achieved by the local national universities, UOWD's competitive research presence is more than creditable and is likely to grow.

Regulatory issues

The legal infrastructure, while different in character and maturity, and while resulting in some uncertainties from time to time (in terms of accreditation, labour laws and the like), is not onerous in principle and especially in application. The university has been able to successfully negotiate and manage almost all legal and regulatory issues.

Regulatory risk is ongoing, but has not been particularly problematic and regulatory matters are 'not on the radar as significant issues'.

The global financial crisis has posed some challenges in terms of the reputation of Dubai and the economic context in which the university and its staff have had to operate. The situation has stabilised.

Summary: lessons learned

The University of Wollongong describes UOWD as 'an overnight success that took 17 years'. Both institutions share a sense of having 'grown organically' in partnership. The original ethos of UOW and the associated quality-assurance processes were from the outset of the Dubai project and remain today strong and formative.

A strong quality assurance regime at the home university was translated to the Dubai site right from the outset and strengthened both on the home campus in Australia and continually extended to the emerging UOWD. It was part of the original planning and continued to be integral to the presence of the University of Wollongong in the United Arab Emirates. Resources and efforts were not skimmed in ensuring adequate quality assurance. Support 'through the good and the bad times was never questioned'.

This investment paid off, not only in terms of the quality of student outcomes but in terms of staff satisfaction and institutional reputation. This platform serves UOWD well, including in terms of attracting additional quality staff, as UOWD contemplates its next phase of development – expansion to other sites within the Emirates outside Dubai, deeper links with local and regional applied research and consulting with government and with private enterprise, and expansion of student numbers.

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