

# A guide to offshore staffing strategies for UK universities

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**Leadership  
Foundation**  
for Higher Education

UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit  
**Research Series/7**  
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## Contents

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### Foreword

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#### 1 Executive summary

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#### 3 Checklist of staff-related issues to consider in offshore operations

- 3 Topics for institutional policymakers
  - 4 Topics for human resource managers
  - 6 Topics for staff members
- 

#### 1 Introduction

- 7 The offshore activities of UK higher education institutions
  - 8 Is there a problem?
  - 9 The aims of this study
- 

#### 2 Staffing strategies

- 11 Introduction
  - 11 Staffing trans-national education delivery in a partner institution
  - 12 Academic staff strategies on a wholly-owned campus
  - 14 Models in the case studies
  - 15 Challenges and pitfalls
- 

#### 3 Pay and benefits packages

- 17 Introduction
  - 17 Home campus staff – short- and long-term
  - 18 Internationally recruited staff
  - 19 Locally employed staff
  - 19 Typical benefits payable
  - 21 Challenges and pitfalls
  - 22 Conclusions
- 

#### 4 Maintenance of quality

- 23 Introduction
  - 23 Maintenance of quality within a relationship with a partner institution
  - 25 Maintenance of quality in a wholly-owned campus
  - 27 Challenges and pitfalls
- 

#### 5 Offering research capacity

- 29 Introduction
  - 29 Strategies to strengthen research
  - 31 Challenges and pitfalls
- 

#### 6 Regulatory and legal employment issues

- 32 Regulatory context
- 33 Experience of the case studies
- 33 Legal issues

---

<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>
35	Staffing strategies
36	Pay and conditions of service
37	The maintenance of quality
37	Offering a research capacity
38	Regulatory and legal issues
38	A final word

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<b>8</b>	<b>Lessons from the literature</b>
39	Overview of policies and practices with regard to internationalisation
40	Codes of practice and guidelines
42	Reports on staffing issues

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45	<b>Bibliography</b>
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**Case studies** – Available to download in pdf format from the UK HE International and Europe Unit website [www.international.ac.uk](http://www.international.ac.uk) and from the Leadership Foundation website [www.lfhe.ac.uk](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk)

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**Case study 1:**  
**Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) in Oman, China and Bangladesh**

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**Case study 2:**  
**University of Liverpool and Xian Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU), China**

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**Case study 3:**  
**University of Newcastle and Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed), Malaysia**

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**Case study 4:**  
**University of Nottingham Ningbo, China**

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**Case study 5:**  
**Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and RMIT International University, Vietnam**

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**Case study 6:**  
**Surrey International Institute (SII) at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE), China**

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**Case study 7:**  
**Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ)**

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**Case study 8:**  
**University College London (UCL) in Australia and Kazakhstan**

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**Case study 9:**  
**University of Wollongong, Dubai (UOWD)**

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UK universities are international organisations with partnerships and collaborations around the world. In recent years the sector has witnessed unprecedented growth in offshore activity from joint programme delivery with overseas partners through to the opening of branch campuses.

This rise in trans-national education (TNE) necessitates a new understanding by staff and students that programmes delivered overseas will provide the same level of quality to that found on home campuses.

A critical factor in the success of TNE is ensuring staff tasked with the management and delivery of programmes are of the highest quality. How do universities recruit and retain the best staff and how do they meet their needs? And what are the benefits and pitfalls of employing local, international or home campus staff? These challenges are the reason behind this study.

TNE is not new to UK universities. The University of London has offered courses through its distance learning model for more than 150 years and the majority of UK institutions are now involved in some form of TNE activity.

What has changed, however, is the increased modes of delivery which now encompass dual and joint degrees, accreditation, validation and, in its most developed format, branch campuses. These various models have allowed international students the opportunity to study for a UK qualification in their own country, and the success of TNE is highlighted in the recent statistics that show there are more international students studying for an award from a UK university overseas than there are international students in the UK.

But with expansion comes risks and responsibilities. Our success in trans-national education is directly linked to the quality of staff recruited to deliver it. This report identifies the main problems that can arise and offers strategies for tackling staffing issues in TNE. It provides useful checklists for institutional policymakers, human resource managers and for academic staff heading overseas. The solutions it offers are based on detailed studies of nine universities, both in the UK and overseas, all of which have extensive experience of TNE activity.

I would like to thank the authors, John Fielden of CHEMS Consulting and Erica Gillard, and acknowledge our partnership with the Leadership Foundation without whose support this report could not have been produced. We are also indebted to the guidance and support from the Steering Group, whose names are listed at the end of this report.

I hope the report will be of practical use and that UK universities will use it to inform their discussions and strategies for recruiting and meeting the needs of staff in trans-national activities.

**Dr Joanna Newman**

**Director**

**UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit**

**Professor Robin Middlehurst**

**Director, Strategy**

**Research and International Leadership Foundation for  
Higher Education**



## Executive summary

- 1 This report looks at the experiences of nine universities in the UK, Australia and the USA in delivering degree programmes offshore and focuses on the staffing issues involved. The case studies have been written by John Fielden and Erica Gillard in the UK, Madeleine Green in the USA and Dennis Murray in Australia.
- 2 Trans-national education is now a big business. In 2009–10 some 408,685 students were studying wholly or mainly overseas for an award from a UK university. This was more than the number of international students in the UK. Whatever the motives for the offshore venture, the risks and problems are the same and obtaining academic staff of the right quality is one of the critical success factors; this is the reason for this study.
- 3 A review of staffing strategies shows that there are often three types of academic staff: those from the home campus – either as ‘flying faculty’ or on secondment for a term; locally recruited and employed staff; and internationally recruited staff. Several of our case-study institutions are having difficulty in persuading their home-based staff to move. As a result, their planned staff mix is much more geared to international recruits than they had expected. This has not proved to be a problem since the quality of such staff can be high.
- 4 One key issue is where the human resource and reward decisions are made. In the case studies, some retained this responsibility on the home campus and some devolved it to the partnership management or an offshore campus executive. In almost all cases, decisions on locally employed academic and support staff were made locally.
- 5 Universities are being influenced by the international marketplace in the terms and conditions that they offer academic staff who agree to serve offshore. The most generous reward packages include an uplift on the home salary, two return flights home for the staff member and family each year, housing and settling-in allowances, private schooling for children, private health insurances and in some cases a car. These terms are frequently offered to international staff as well as to those from the home campus.
- 6 A key issue is how staff can be assisted to deliver degree-level education of the same or consistent quality as on the home campus. In the case studies, this was achieved by the involvement of the home department in selecting staff, in an investment in an induction programme on the home campus (or online), in the appointment of link tutors from the home campus and in extensive monitoring of student performance compared with that at home. Assessments and examinations were often double-marked by staff from the home department. Regular – even daily – communications between the two campuses was important for both academic and professional support staff.

- 7 Creating a research environment offshore is proving to be a problem and is not something that can be achieved quickly. In some cases, the staff appointed at the outset have been on teaching-only contracts so the issue has not arisen; however, for the more mature operations significant efforts are being made to build research capacity. This involves selecting international and local staff with strong research interests, investment in research facilities (that may well be provided by a financial partner), and providing seed money as well as mastering routes to obtaining research funding from national sources. The latter can be a long process.
- 8 The regulatory barriers as regards staffing are not as significant as in some other areas, although the general message is that having a local partner to smooth the way with immigration and visa formalities is essential. There is a similar message concerning legal issues, particularly where staff are employed on contracts that are subject to law outside the UK. There are many anomalies and differences with the UK and those devising the terms and conditions of service need to be aware of them before staff contracts are drafted. Some of the contractual issues have been identified in guidance produced by the UK HE International and Europe Unit and the University and College Union (UCU).
- 9 Getting staff of the right calibre for offshore operations is one of the key elements in protecting a university's reputation for quality in the country concerned. We have shown that the issue is no longer one of exporting staff from the home country, but of tapping global networks and markets for the best people. Managers and human resource specialists are having to acquire the skills and techniques of multi-nationals; if they fail to do so, the risks of reputational damage are high.

## Checklist of staff-related issues to consider in offshore operations

This checklist of questions brings together the findings and key messages from this study in a form that can be used by managers and staff about to embark on offshore activity. It is in three parts:

- 1 for institutional policymakers and managers
- 2 for human resource managers
- 3 for academic staff

**NB** This checklist is principally for those going abroad for an extended period. However, many of the items shown will also apply to short-term visits, although in such cases short-term accommodation, subsistence and *per diem* payments would have to be considered. The checklist will also apply to international appointments, except for those issues relating to work at the home university.

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### 1 Topics for institutional policymakers

- a Is there a strategy setting out how the offshore activity will be staffed in the first five years?
- b Does this include consideration of the short- and long-term use of home campus staff, of locally recruited academic staff and of international staff? Is the mix of such staff expected to change in the five years?
- c Have the implications of this strategy been discussed with the faculties concerned and is there support for it?
- d Have the strategy and its implications been fully discussed and agreed with the overseas academic partner(s)?
- e Do the university's present policies on UK staff mobility overseas need to be reviewed?
- f Are there policy guidelines on pay and benefits for UK staff serving offshore for short- and long-term engagements?
- g Have staffing factors been fully considered in any exit strategy for the offshore activity?
- h Who will take all decisions relating to staffing the activity? The UK management? The joint venture/partner? Or a management board of a self-contained campus? Or a mixture?
- i If the decisions are taken in different places for different types of staff, is there any mechanism for coordination?
- j Is there a policy relating to research while offshore? Will all categories of academic staff be given any undertakings with regard to the prospects of conducting such research?

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## 2 Topics for human resource managers

- a** Does the UK standard academic contract have anything to say about staff working overseas? If mobility overseas is part of the standard contract, will the university accept family reasons for not wanting to go?
- b** Who will develop the contracts for those nationals and international academic staff employed to work offshore? Who will employ them? Will they all be employees or is it better for some to move to a consultancy status?
- c** Has the university access to reliable and up-to-date sources of information on employment legislation and employment issues in the country and state/province concerned? Is the legislation on settling contractual disputes on employment matters understood?
- d** Under which country's laws will the contracts for non-UK staff and long-term UK staff be written (where a choice is possible)? Will a UK employee's statutory rights (for example, relating to unfair dismissal) be protected by the laws of the host country?
- e** Is there a policy on salary uplifts, incentives or allowances for UK staff working overseas for short term and long-term stays? Will any bonuses or '13th month' payments be made?
- f** In what country and in what currency will salaries be paid? Will any adjustments be made with regard to cost of living or exchange fluctuations?
- g** Has a policy on tax liabilities been agreed for those UK staff working overseas for more than 183 days, which takes the liability to local tax into account?
- h** What reporting obligations are there in the country concerned regarding the recruitment and employment of UK, national and international staff? Has the university a competent partner who can advise on the requirements of all the national bureaucracies?
- i** Have guidelines been developed on the following salary-related issues: status with regard to UK pension schemes, liability to UK national insurance and equivalent deductions in the country concerned, allowances for sick leave, compassionate leave and maternity/paternity leave, and the basis for awarding annual increments?

**j** Have guidelines been developed on the following benefits that might be applicable for the various categories of staff:

- travel to/from the country for the staff member and family
- travel home on leave for staff member and family
- number of children to which this applies
- school fees for children
- provision of accommodation or an accommodation allowance
- settling-in allowance
- relocation and baggage allowances
- pre-departure health screening or counselling
- medical and accident insurance
- provision of a car or a transport allowance
- local holiday allowances
- access to professional staff development opportunities while offshore
- employment assistance for a partner in the country
- support with renting the staff member's accommodation in the UK to third parties.

**k** Has the department or faculty decided on the following:

- the precise period of employment offshore
- how this would be altered or brought to an end at the request either of the staff member or the university
- what the duties of the staff member are
- what the normal hours of work are in the country concerned
- to whom he or she would report professionally
- how any annual appraisal process would work
- the effect of the absence abroad on the individual's career
- how any ongoing research work or interests would be handled
- who would take over the teaching duties in the UK
- what time would be released before departure to prepare and pack
- what time would be released to attend any country induction or language training programmes
- is the staff member's status and role on return to the UK fully understood and not diminished by the period overseas.

**l** Has the university considered the following other issues and their relevance in the country concerned:

- intellectual property rights
- patents and copyright
- human rights and equality/diversity policies
- civil code restrictions (for example, on the use of alcohol)
- visa and immigration requirements
- the applicability of existing grievance and disciplinary procedures (and appeals), data protection issues in the country?

**m** Has a risk assessment been carried out to ensure that the university has complied with its 'duty of care' to employees working overseas?

**n** Is there an exit strategy from the partnership commitment and an evacuation plan for staff members and their families in the event of civil unrest or a natural disaster.

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### **3 Topics for staff members**

**a** Have you got a contract for your time overseas that covers all the points listed above in 2(i)? Are you aware that your statutory rights under UK employment law might be affected by the laws of the country you are going to?

**b** Have you discussed all the points in 2(k) with your head of department and got satisfactory answers to all the points? If not, have you resolved any issues with the human resources department?

**c** Have you been informed about how the topics in 2(l) are treated in the country where you are going?

**d** Have all the travel arrangements been made by the university to your satisfaction, including vaccinations and travel insurance?

**e** Have you been fully briefed on the differences in culture and learning styles in the institution where you will be working?

1

Becker R (2009) *International Branch Campuses: Markets and Strategies*, OBHE.

2

DIUS (2008a) *Trans-national Education and Higher Education Institutions: Exploring patterns of HE institutional activity*, DIUS Research Report 08 07.

3

Banks M *et al* (2010) *The Changing Fortunes of Australian Trans National Education*, OBHE.

## The offshore activities of UK higher education institutions

### 1.1

The global trend of increased international mobility by students travelling to another country to study is ironically matched by another trend – that of universities opening up offshore campuses – called ‘commercial presence’ by the World Trade Organization (WTO) – or delivering teaching offshore (which the WTO describes as ‘cross-border supply’), both of which have the aim of saving students from having to travel.

For both trends, the growth statistics are impressive: in 2009 the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) reported an increase of 43% in the number of offshore campuses (to a global total of 162 campuses in 51 countries) in only three years since 2006.<sup>1</sup> However, the UK’s share of this was only 13. We need, however, to put these numbers in perspective: 162 campuses is only a tiny fraction of the number of other higher education campuses in the world.

### 1.2

In terms of other teaching delivered offshore the UK’s position is more substantial. A recent survey found that approximately two-thirds of UK higher education institutions had trans-national provision of some kind.<sup>2</sup> The UK remains the most popular destination for students after the USA, with 10% of the international student market choosing to study in the UK, compared to the 19% who chose courses in the USA. Added to these are some 200,800 students registered at a UK higher education institution (HEI) studying overseas, whether at a branch campus, via programmes of ‘flexible, distributed and distance learning’ or through some other form of collaborative provision. Indeed, in 2009–10 some 408,685 students were studying wholly or mainly overseas for the award of a UK HEI. In this report the emphasis is on the staffing issues in two areas of trans-national education (TNE): teaching partnerships with overseas institutions where a UK award will be delivered; and offshore campuses set up by a UK institution. Of the total, 68,450 (16.7%) were studying at institutions within the European Union (EU), while 340,235 (83.3%) were located outside the EU. Though roughly one in five was enrolled on a taught postgraduate programme, more than three-quarters were working towards a first degree qualification.

### 1.3

These figures show that UK institutions have actively embraced the notion of enrolling international students on UK awards in their own country. Anecdotal evidence gathered during institutional visits for this study confirmed that this activity was still increasing in the UK, with countries such as India being targeted by many. In Australia, however, the numbers of offshore higher education enrolments have remained static in the period 2006–08.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.4

The delivery of TNE is not confined to western countries such as the USA, Germany and the UK. The OBHE survey reported that institutions in countries as diverse as Chile, Iran, Lebanon, Mexico, Pakistan and Sri Lanka had all established outposts in other countries. Thus, cross-border delivery is becoming a global phenomenon and in many cases is welcomed and funded by the receiving countries.

4  
Banks, M *et al* (2010) *op cit*  
pp22–26.

5  
An indication of the position is the low number of countries that have made commitments to liberalise trade in educational services under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization.

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## Is there a problem?

- 1.5** Given that the two forms of TNE (commercial presence and cross-border supply) are being universally adopted, one might question their advantages and disadvantages for those who offer them. What are the consequences of this rapidly developing trade in higher education?
- 1.6** From the providers' viewpoint, the advantages are usually related to the basic rationale for the venture. There are various motives:
- Some institutions have financial motives and expect their offshore activities to generate net income that can be remitted home.
  - Others view the activity as reputational, adding to the university's global status and name, and merely expect the activity not to incur a loss; any surpluses would be reinvested in strengthening the activities in the country concerned.
  - A third rationale for some is that offshore delivery of the university's programmes in a less developed institution usually means that some students will flow back to the UK for either their third year of an undergraduate degree or a postgraduate qualification. This is a financial benefit, although it is often offset by the direct costs incurred in servicing the offshore enterprise academically.
  - A fourth reason relates to the growing international competition for recruiting international students to the home campus. Many believe that the UK will find it hard to continue its successful record; already the country's share of the global international student market has fallen slightly, due to the growing number of competitor nations. Faced with this possibility of declining numbers coming to the UK, a strategic response is to offer UK awards overseas directly to students in their own country.
  - Finally, a select few institutions will establish an offshore activity for research purposes with expectations of forming regional research collaborations. A less ambitious version of this motive is when a well-established offshore teaching activity gradually acquires a research capacity able to access research funds in the host country.
- 1.7** We will find examples of each of these motives in the case studies in this report.
- 1.8** Experience of TNE and offshore activity is not always positive. The OBHE report on overseas campuses notes that 11 of them have closed in recent years and suggests that in most cases this resulted from poor due diligence and market research, which led to over-optimistic estimates of student enrolment. Another OBHE report on the Australian experience describes the University of South Australia's decision to withdraw from almost all its offshore delivery, since it is worried by the quality of what is delivered and the overall financial benefit compared with that gained from having international students on campus.<sup>4</sup> In addition some countries have not yet agreed their policies on international providers, which are classified as private sector institutions since they are deemed to have a financial motive. India is the best known example of a country that has hesitated for many years over passing legislation to allow international providers to establish themselves fully.<sup>5</sup>

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**1.9**

By their nature, offshore activities can be hard to manage and can stretch the capacity of the providing institution to maintain the same academic standards and to offer students the same experience as on the home campus. The potential disadvantages and problems that can arise (and which have triggered the production of this report) are:

- The increase in the scale of the activity outgrows the capacity of the home institution to provide sufficient numbers of academic staff, with the relevant teaching experience, who are also willing to travel to the country concerned.
- The consequent need to recruit academic staff from other sources brings with it reputational risks, as well as sending a message to potential students that the offshore activity is not wholly a foreign institution with staff from the home campus. Mission drift, with its consequent problems, can also occur in this process.
- The time and energy required to manage the activity and to negotiate practical and regulatory matters abroad can far outweigh the advantages.

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**The aims of this study**

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**1.10**

The purpose of this report is to examine the issues and problems just described and, with the evidence from case studies from three countries, to illustrate how they are being resolved. There is clearly no standard 'best practice', since the circumstances of each institution and each host country differ. Thus, we simply describe some options that have been adopted by case-study institutions and leave the reader to select those that are appropriate. We do, however, conclude with some messages for those (relatively few) institutions that have yet to embark on offshore ventures. We have also attempted to summarise some of the key questions that should be answered in a checklist at the start of the report.

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**1.11**

The structure of this report is simple. The main report contains analysis by topic of the key issues, such as the staffing strategy, the maintenance of quality and legal considerations. It concludes with a review of the relevant literature and a bibliography. The accompanying annex contains the case studies, all of which have been prepared and published with the full agreement of the institutions.

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**1.12**

Our selection of case studies has not been as easy as we had hoped, since several institutions we approached were reluctant to reveal details of the staffing strategy in their offshore activity; this is seen by some as commercially confidential in an increasingly competitive environment. We deliberately sought to widen the range of studies to include two from Australia and one from the USA. The final list of studies is as follows:

**Table 1**  
**List of case studies**

University	Project/country	Comments
University of Nottingham	Malaysian and Ningbo, China campuses	Two wholly-owned campuses
University of Surrey	Surrey International Institute, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE), China	A joint venture with a Chinese institution delivering Surrey awards
Newcastle University	NUMed, Malaysia	Establishment of a wholly-owned medical school in Johor
University of Liverpool	Xian Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), Suzhou	A partnership with Xian Jiaotong in a new university offering Liverpool awards
Glasgow Caledonian University	Three partnerships: in Oman, China and Bangladesh	Oman is a college, China is a joint degree and Bangladesh will be a college of nursing.
University College London (UCL)	Adelaide, Australia Astana, Kazakhstan	A small research campus in Adelaide and a partnership with the University of Astana.
Texas A&M	Qatar	A wholly-owned campus
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)	Vietnam	A wholly-owned campus in Hanoi
University of Wollongong	Dubai	A wholly owned campus

**1.13** The studies are of institutions which, with one exception, have been operational for some time. This allows us to draw some lessons about staffing based on experience. There is admittedly a bias in the case studies to offshore campuses rather than TNE partnerships, although there are some examples of the latter. This is principally because we wished to describe activities where the strategy and staffing policies were within the control of the UK institution.

**1.14** Our work programme included the following additional activities:

- Discussions with six institutions with offshore activities not included as case studies.
- Meetings or talks to organisations with an interest in the issues, such as the British Council, the UCU and Eversheds LLP.
- An invitation to members of the British Universities International Liaison Association to contribute to a survey, to which several responded.

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## Introduction

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### 2.1

This section analyses the strategies that are adopted for staffing operations offshore. The quality and competence of the academic staff is one of the critical success factors of any overseas venture. The others include: the institution's brand/reputation, the quality of its (and its partner's) facilities and its price in the local marketplace. The strategies will differ significantly, between those needed to operate a regular TNE relationship with an overseas partner and those for an independent campus; they are, therefore, discussed separately. It should be remembered that the supply of academic staff is just one element in an offshore venture and it may not be the biggest marginal cost.

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## Staffing trans-national education delivery in a partner institution

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### 2.2

The key features of TNE staffing when working on a collaborative teaching partnership are that:

- In most cases the staff presence overseas is usually intermittent in the year – hence the widespread use of the term 'flying faculty'. However, the frequency of visits by UK academic staff will vary greatly, depending as it does on the capacity of staff in the partner institution to deliver the UK institution's programme.
- The nature of the role played by UK staff may change over time; from one of trainer/adviser and staff developer in the early days to one of quality assurer or provider of specialist teaching input as the relationship with the partner matures.
- Staff presence rarely exceeds four weeks at one time – although secondments for a semester are known.
- It is hard for some staff to manage their teaching workload at home and unless their department provides cover for this, there is a risk that key staff will refuse to travel regularly.
- The travelling staff will have a variety of roles, such as lecturers, research supervisors, quality reviewers, administrators, learning resource providers and staff developers.

---

### 2.3

The normal strategy is to rely on the academic departments offering the courses to persuade their staff to work overseas when required. In such cases the role of the centre may be limited to:

- Partnership management, as exercised for example by the Centre for International Development at Middlesex University, which liaises on a daily basis with offshore operations.
- Human resource support, which may issue contracts for short-term overseas work (see the University of Newcastle case study) which will say, *inter alia*, what incentives or rewards (if any) are to be offered.
- Undertaking quality assurance checks and overseeing arrangements for any common assessments and examinations for the offshore students.

6

This is elaborated further in Section 5.2.3 of *International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities* (2009), Eversheds LLP for the UK HE International Unit.

7

Helm RM (2008) *Transnational education in China: key challenges, critical issues and strategies for success*, OBHE.

8

See the case study on Webster University in the ACE's *On the Ground Overseas* (October 2008).

## 2.4

There are many reasons why staff are not willing to teach overseas regularly for short periods as 'flying faculty'. Personal factors are the main ones, but another element in the discussions is the terms of the university's academic staff contracts on mobility overseas. If the contract contains a mobility clause, it can give a university the contractual right to require a staff member to teach overseas. If there is no such clause, the university has to request the staff member to move.<sup>6</sup> A growing number of institutions are considering amending their contracts to allow international work to be a regular feature of academic life.

## 2.5

Some institutions are willing to reward staff generously. Robin Helm quotes the case of Stanford University, where faculty are paid 'consultant rates' for teaching in China and two of the case studies do provide incentive sums in addition to their salary.<sup>7</sup> Where even these fail to tempt faculty overseas, other methods of drawing on their experience are used, such as Skype and conference calls, use of their own distance materials or internet-based content and regular interaction by email. In some cases tutorial support can be delegated to PhD students.

## 2.6

It is rare in the UK for international work to be a criterion for promotion. In Australia some, if not most, universities have a third criterion (after excellence in research and in teaching) by which an applicant can demonstrate leadership in an activity of strategic importance to the university, such as internationalisation, or industry or community engagement. Some US institutions, such as Webster University – with six international campuses throughout the world – have incentive schemes, which encourage home campus staff to travel and also 'take international experience into account when considering promotion'.<sup>8</sup>

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### Academic staff strategies on a wholly-owned campus

## 2.7

Where an institution is either the owner or academic operator/manager of an offshore campus, a much wider range of factors apply to the strategy. The strategy will need to cover:

- Decisions on the ideal mix of staff between the three main categories; staff transferred from the main campus, staff recruited locally and staff recruited internationally.
- The terms and conditions of employment for all three categories, if these decisions are taken in the home campus, as opposed to by local management in the country concerned.
- Policies relating to staffing categories and changing needs in the short- and long-term development of the campus, and in particular how research capacity will be developed.

**Table 2**  
**Source of academic staff\***

University	Project/country	Full-time staff originally from the home campus	Locally recruited staff	Internationally recruited staff
University of Nottingham	Ningbo China	10		220 (split not given)
Newcastle University	NUMed, Malaysia (planned figures)	14	104	–
University of Liverpool	XJTLU, Suzhou	10	50	50
UCL	Adelaide, Australia	2	5	4
	Astana, Kazakhstan	5	2	40
Texas A&M	Qatar	16	–	54
RMIT	Vietnam	0	19	156
University of Wollongong	Dubai	0	0	45
<b>Totals</b>		<b>57</b>		<b>749</b>

\*Only for case studies which supplied data

## 2.8

A key issue is the extent to which the home university makes staffing decisions relating to all three categories of employee. Practice varies considerably, depending on the involvement of the local partner institution or, where there is no academic partner, on the home institution's policy. There are several variations, all represented in the case studies:

- No home campus involvement at all in any academic staff decision, since all such issues are handled by the local board, on which the university is represented.
- The local board recruits and selects staff; the recommendations are then passed to the home institution for approval. Terms and conditions are set locally, but approved in the home campus.
- The home institution sets all terms and conditions (after research into the local context) and shares the decision on selecting staff with local campus management.

## Models in the case studies

### 2.9

Seven of the case studies involve the university having an independent overseas campus. In each of these we sought information on where the academic staff came from. In some cases the answers could only be obtained from campus management and their replies are given above in Table 2. In addition there may be some 'flying faculty' visiting the campuses for short periods but data on this is extremely hard to unearth – and is probably not known centrally in institutions.

### 2.10

The common feature is that the staff numbers from the home campus are small, never exceeding 25% of the total. Overall the percentage of home staff in the seven campuses in our sample is about 7% of the total number. Apart from NUMed in Malaysia, the other staff are drawn from both national and international sources. The Malaysian reliance on local staff is explained by the fact that it is a medical school and the staff need to have nationally acceptable qualifications. Staff in Malaysia are also more widely proficient in English.

### 2.11

The reasons for the low proportion of full-time home staff are principally to do with staff attitudes and willingness to travel. Tang and Nollent have interviewed staff at the University of Nottingham concerning the option of their moving to Ningbo.<sup>9</sup> The answers are similar; one of the biggest challenges is getting staff to agree to go to China: 'I have got to think about my publications and my research agenda' and, 'I have not got the time'. Professor Ian Gow summed up the problem when he wrote his controversial article for the Agora Forum for Culture and Education:

*The biggest single problem for any institution setting up a campus in China is continually securing enough high quality staff able to teach in English to the highest levels. Inevitably only a small number of people will be excited about an opportunity to leave their home campus to work in China. Many academic staff do not want to work abroad at all, and some might like an experience working elsewhere but would not go to China for ideological reasons.<sup>10</sup>*

He also explained in the same article that:

*Top research academics who come to China have to carry out much more onerous and time-consuming academic administrative duties than back home, and therefore their research output often suffers. When such stories are fed back to colleagues in the UK it is inevitably off-putting.*

### 2.12

Almost all the first offshore campuses to be established were started on the assumption that the balance of home staff would be higher than it has turned out; the vision for the University of Nottingham Ningbo for example was to draw staff equally from local, international and UK sources, whereas Table 2 shows that the UK proportion is now 4%.

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## Challenges and pitfalls

2.13

Thus, the biggest challenge in terms of staffing is getting enough people from the home campus. This raises the question of why they are necessary.

2.14

At the senior management level there is a clear justification; the senior leader, or at least the academic leader – Provost/Deputy Vice-Chancellor (academic), must be familiar with the personalities, processes and academic standards of the home institution. Where a campus is offering UK awards of the home institution there is a strong argument for its head to be from the UK; Nottingham has insisted on this and has a Vice-President in Malaysia and a CEO in China; it sees them as ‘culture carriers’. In both instances the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Nottingham UK are shown as the leading figures. This same rationale may also apply to staff at the dean level, as the organisational chart for the NUMed campus in Malaysia shows (Figure 1 in the case studies that accompany this report, available for download from [www.international.ac.uk](http://www.international.ac.uk)).

Beyond this, the arguments for having home staff are less obvious and in terms of capability to deliver a quality education there is no reason why suitably experienced Australian, US, Chinese and Malaysian academic staff cannot perform equally well. This is indeed what has been happening in the two large Chinese campuses at Ningbo and Suzhou and in the two Australian campuses in Dubai and Vietnam. An added element is that Chinese academic staff returning to China from the West have been applying for posts, attracted by salaries that are higher than domestic ones and a learning and teaching style with which they have become familiar.

2.15

We visited one UK university, with several campuses overseas, where all decisions on staffing are taken by the university boards that run each campus and where local pay and conditions are the ruling factor in setting salaries and terms of appointment. There is also no expectation that the head of the campus should be from the UK and it is open to international advertisement. The UK human resources staff have no role to play and no UK staff are expected to work on these campuses. This is an extreme example of a devolved environment where the staffing policy could give rise to concerns over the quality of teaching and the student experience. However, the examinations are the same as those in the UK campus and are marked by UK academic staff.

The policy of allowing autonomy on staffing policies to local boards does mean that staff of the university will be rewarded at different rates throughout the world and will receive different conditions of service. This need not be a problem, since it is simply reflecting the different standards of living in the countries concerned. In the commercial world multinationals would not expect to pay the same salaries in every country; however, most of them would have overall manpower planning policies on staff mobility and transfers of professional staff between their subsidiaries. With a totally devolved system this opportunity to plan careers is lost.

## 2.16

In Section 4 we cover issues regarding the quality of what is being delivered. There is a clear link to the staffing strategy and the risk that an institution that has 90% of its academic staff from outside the home campus may not have developed an institutional culture that can be integrated with the home campus. The position may be worsened where the objective of the activity is largely financial, because if a branch campus is given both autonomy and clear financial targets there is a risk that it may cut corners on quality.

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## Introduction

**3.1** In this section we review the experiences of the case-study institutions in setting and agreeing the basis on which their staff are remunerated. The analysis looks at each of the three categories of staff.

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## Home campus staff – short- and long-term

**3.2** Four of the case studies have provided us with a detailed analysis of the pay and conditions of service that they award those home campus staff who agree to relocate overseas for long terms. The starting point is the basic UK salary and the question of whether an uplift is made to it. The evidence from five case studies varies according to the country and is as follows:

- In Doha there is stiff global competition to get good staff and Texas A&M faculty members receive a bonus in addition to their basic home pay.
- UCL's policy varies in the two countries where it is involved; in Australia all staff are paid on salary scales that are locally competitive and benchmarked against the salaries of the Group of Eight top universities; in Kazakhstan, there is a simple salary uplift of 25% to the UK rate.
- Newcastle pays some of its home staff a salary uplift in Malaysia.
- Nottingham pays its UK staff in China the same as in the UK, but makes adjustments to a proportion of salaries to take account of cost of living and exchange rate differences.
- Glasgow Caledonian University pays incentives on a case-by-case basis, to allow staff to establish themselves overseas.

**3.3** Institutions vary in the way they reward staff who visit offshore for short periods. Glasgow Caledonian University gives all those providing block teaching a salary uplift, while some universities pay nothing extra and rely instead on generous travel and accommodation arrangements while away. Surrey and Texas A&M pay their 'flying faculty' bonuses to encourage them to deliver compressed modules for short periods in China and Qatar, respectively.

**3.4** Other than the financial aspects, the other concerns of 'flying faculty' relate to issues such as:

- the quality of the hotel or university hostel accommodation they will be staying in
- the intensity of the teaching workload during their stay
- the cover that is provided in their absence for their teaching load at home
- the class of air travel where it is a long journey
- the frequency of such visits in a year

11

The significance of 183 days is that it is the six-month tax residence limit for Inland Revenue purposes.

**3.5** One of the issues concerning short visits overseas is that details of them will not be known about centrally in the university, since they tend to be handled at departmental and faculty level. This may result in a wide range of compensation and reward arrangements. Thus, not only will the numbers of 'flying faculty' be unknown, but also the basis on which they travel. Newcastle has decided to limit this risk by formalising its terms and conditions for staff who spend 30–183 days overseas on short-term assignments; as one might expect these are less generous than the terms available to those spending over 183 days.<sup>11</sup>

**3.6** Taxation is another potential area for risk and policies have to be developed to agree whose tax regime is relevant beyond 183 days. Some universities, such as Nottingham, regard tax as the responsibility of the employee, but provide access to expert tax advice. Newcastle has developed an interesting model of tax equalisation for its staff in Malaysia, whereby a home staff member would, if Malaysian tax were higher, have only the UK tax deducted, but if the Malaysian rate were lower, the UK rate would be levied on their salary

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### **Internationally recruited staff**

**3.7** The level of pay and benefits for those staff recruited on the open international market varies according to whether they are recruited to join the staff of the home university or are contracted by the offshore entity. There are three options:

- They are paid the terms agreed by the offshore entity, which are related to local salaries and benefits (UCL in Australia and Kazakhstan, Surrey International Institute in China).
- They receive the same salary as those on the home campus but also get a bonus or uplift (at the same rate as would be paid to home campus staff) (Texas A&M).
- They are paid on terms and conditions decided by the home campus, which take local conditions into account.

**3.8** In general, international staff get the same level of benefits as home campus staff; for example, their travel home arrangements are to their home countries. UCL, Texas A&M and Liverpool make no distinction between the two categories of staff as they will be working together on campus.

**3.9** In those cases where the level of remuneration and benefits is decided by the local partner institution, there is a risk that they will differ from those given to academic staff of the partner institution and cause a problem in morale. In the Surrey International Institute case study, for example, any staff recruited internationally will be appointed on terms agreed with the partner institution DUFE, although they will be on the Surrey payroll. Their pay could well be higher than that of DUFE academic staff who transfer across to the joint venture. In the same way, UCL's international staff in Kazakhstan are paid more than colleagues working for the Nazarbayev University.

**3.10** In an interesting variation, Nottingham intends to apply a policy of localisation to anyone appointed under expatriate terms and conditions but who stays on in the country for a longer period. This will involve the removal of the employee's expatriate status and some adjustments to the compensation and benefits package. Nottingham has reached a situation where their focus is on the type of post required for the offshore campus, rather than the nationality of the post holder.

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### **Locally employed staff**

**3.11** Locally recruited and employed staff will always be appointed on terms that are based on the national competitive market position and will usually receive less than home and international staff, except in countries where the standard of living is comparable, such as Australia.

However, even in this situation there will be anomalies. National insurance contributions and pension schemes will differ, as will local holidays; for example, UCL has extended the holiday entitlement of its Australian staff from the Australian level of 20 days to the UK level of 27 days; while in Kazakhstan UCL has had to allow its UK staff to enjoy the Kazakh norm of 40 days holiday.

**3.12** Obviously, locally employed staff do not receive expatriate benefits, such as housing or living allowances, transport allowance, travel home and assistance with school fees.

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### **Typical benefits payable**

**3.13** Academic staff now operate in a global marketplace and it is not surprising that their terms and conditions of service are beginning to reflect the position of staff in other globally mobile sectors such as the oil industry, consultancy or banking. When Newcastle was developing its policies it turned to a nearby organisation, Northumbrian Water (which has consultancy projects in many countries) for advice on benefits. Glasgow Caledonian University and Nottingham have both sought advice from a consultancy specialising in international employment. Based on the case studies, we can say that the general position as regards the type of benefits considered for home staff when working offshore is reflected in the following table:

**Table 3**  
**Typical benefits paid to home staff working offshore**

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Typical position</b>
Pension	UK staff remain members of home scheme, as well as joining any compulsory national scheme in the host country
Housing allowance or accommodation	Provided to UK and international staff
Furniture allowance	May be offered where no furnished accommodation is available
Relocation and settling-in allowance	Usually provided to UK and international staff
Transport	If the work involves travel, a leased car may be provided (see Newcastle)
Private health insurance	Normally included for staff member and family
Death and accident insurance cover	Normally included, but may be part of pension arrangements
School fees	Usually provided for children at an international school nearby. If one is not available, fees could be paid for private schooling in the home country
Air fares home during stay	Between once and twice a year for staff member and family
Air fares to and from the country	Paid with generous baggage allowance for self and family
Preparatory leave before departure	May be given, depending on academic department or dean

12  
 UCU (2010) *Overseas Working Guide*, UCUHE42/05.

### 3.14

As well as the benefits, there are other topics that academic staff will want to discuss with their head of department/dean or the human resources department. The University and College Union (UCU) has highlighted some of these in its guidance note.<sup>12</sup> The topics raised by them, as well as others that arose in the study, include:

- The general security position in the country and what policies the university has in the event of serious trouble: is there a plan to exit if in danger?
- Whether there are any restrictions on academic freedom in the country concerned and what the policy of the partner institution is on this issue.
- Whether the national legislation on intellectual property (IP) in the event of research and development activity being undertaken would help or hinder the owner of the IP.
- What training or advice will be available on the cultural mores in the country and any different approaches to teaching and learning.
- How appropriate the standards of living and teaching accommodation are and whether laboratory, ICT and library facilities are up to international standards: are the health and safety standards adequate and has the university carried out any risk assessments for staff working in the country?

- what opportunities for employment will be available for a partner of a staff member and what the university will do to help
- the country's policies on gender equality, sexual orientation and diversity and the risk of harassment: does the university recognise its 'duty of care' in this case?
- what the partner institution's policy is on facilitating access for people with disabilities
- whether the home country's provisions for maternity/paternity leave would apply
- whether insurance cover includes professional indemnity for academic staff
- confirmation that staff professional qualifications are recognised by the government and quality assurance agency of the country.

**3.15** The UCU is also of course concerned about staff operating in countries where there are no trade unions (such as Dubai and Singapore) and where the rights of staff to discuss matters with management or obtain information may be curtailed.

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### Challenges and pitfalls

**3.16** The risks and challenges in devising terms and conditions for offshore staff differ according to who is taking the lead. The risk is greater where this role is located in the home campus. The case studies show the importance in such cases of thorough research on the employment conditions and legislation in host countries. In countries such as Kazakhstan, this may involve extensive reliance on partner organisations in the country due to the UK's unfamiliarity with local conditions and the absence of easily accessible guides to legislation in English.

In some countries, the legislative coverage on employment matters that exists in the UK, Australia and the USA may not be replicated and there will be an absence of guidance and no obvious case law. It may be necessary to contact the human resource divisions of other international organisations based in the country to find out what is acceptable and where legislative traps can arise. Thus, where the home university takes the lead in agreeing all the terms and conditions, it will be vital to work closely with a university partner or professional advisers.

**3.17** In those cases where the terms and conditions are initially developed by senior staff in the partner organisation, there is less of a problem and the challenge here is the comparability of what is being offered offshore with the terms and conditions at home.

Will the terms that are devised locally be sufficiently attractive to encourage home campus staff to move? Will they attract the international academics that are required? The obvious risk is that, in order to avoid too great a gulf between pay and conditions awarded locally and those for international appointments, the terms may be pitched too low for the international market.

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## Conclusions

### 3.18

The case studies have shown that fewer home campus staff have agreed to relocate to overseas campuses that had originally been hoped for. This section illustrates that generous terms and conditions are not always enough to overcome this reluctance – even if they approach commercial levels. The response has been to rely much more on international staff, who have often chosen an expatriate life and – in some cases – abandoned hopes of active research careers. For these staff there is an international market and international norms of pay and benefits are emerging, so that their overall cost is not much different from that of home-based staff working overseas.

However, our studies show that institutions have found some very good people available in this market who more than deserve parity of pay and benefits with their home campus counterparts. When Nottingham University advertised for 40 posts at its China campus, for example, it received more than 1,000 applications and was able to appoint high quality staff.

13

Surprisingly, recent research commissioned by the British Council in the Far East found that student perception of quality was primarily based on the facilities provided, especially library and e-library access, rather than the academic content of their experience. However, this research focused on students in private universities with which UK institutions had partnerships and the student view could well have been influenced by the generally high standards of facilities in the state-funded sector; they would expect to see at least the same in an institution for which they were paying higher fees. [www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-research-tne-student-decision-making.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-research-tne-student-decision-making.htm)

#### 4.1

### Introduction

This section analyses the strategies that are adopted for maintaining quality in offshore campuses. The quality of the teaching and learning experience offered to students is likely to be the most crucial yardstick by which universities offering TNE will be judged. One interviewee remarked that the strength of UK universities lay in the intellectual property they brought to TNE; this is consequently what they will want to protect.<sup>13</sup> Having said that, the approach taken to ensuring the quality of the qualifications will differ according to:

- the motives for entering TNE: a university with a primary motive of making money from the venture or securing a steady stream of students to the home university might approach quality differently from a university that sees its offshore campus as an integral part of the home campus
- whether the qualifications are awarded by the home university or by the foreign partner and, in that case, whether the home university franchises its courses or plays an accrediting role
- whether the intention is for students to get an identical experience to home-based students, as far as is possible, or a comparative or consistent experience.

#### 4.2

While many of the requirements will overlap, the strategies needed to run a TNE relationship with an overseas partner will often differ from those needed for a wholly-owned offshore campus. They are discussed separately because of this. Both categories will, however, have to meet the requirements of national quality assurance bodies, both in the home country (if the qualification is offered by the home university) and in the country where it is offered.

#### 4.3

The absence of a national quality assurance framework can make operations in that country very difficult for a university wanting to offer TNE.

### Maintenance of quality within a relationship with a partner institution

#### 4.4

Models for this relationship range from:

- a collaborative project with a partner to develop qualifications and curricula that are appropriate to local conditions
- the franchising of courses abroad, which are accredited by the home university
- the development of all elements of the programme and materials by the local partner from the start or over a period of time, with the home university playing an accrediting role.

14

The University of Wollongong Dubai (UOWD) was established in 1993 by a commercial entity of the University of Wollongong. In 2004, it became an independent university in a free-trade zone of Dubai. Initially, students received degrees from the University of Wollongong. Now they receive UOWD degrees, but approximately 70% take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the UAE Commission of Academic Accreditation to trade them in for an internationally-recognised University of Wollongong degree.

15

UOWD was not obliged to do this as it is located in a free-trade zone.

4.5

In all the above cases, the home university might play a more active role in the beginning of the project, but withdraw gradually. Several of the universities interviewed had an expectation that they would help to establish programmes in an initial phase, but that the local partner would take these over in a three- to five-year period. The incentive is often that students flow to the home university because of the partnerships. The University of Bedfordshire, for example, estimates that of the 1,900 international students it enrolls each year, some 300 result from international partnerships. Similarly, in the partnership with DUFE, the University of Surrey receives over 30 Chinese students a year for years three and four of its course.

4.6

These arrangements generally have a mixture of quality assurance practices, with many similarities (especially in the early phases) to those described in the next section. Some develop the qualifications in the country of origin and then ensure that local staff adhere to certain quality requirements, usually through training or mentoring and regular audit visits. Some provide contact people, such as 'link tutors', who maintain regular contact (four or five visits per annum) and deal directly with module tutors in the country concerned. Some provide academic staff in the initial phases to establish the programmes. Others rely on visits and marking coursework directly or external examination of student assessments.

Several have student exchange arrangements, which act as an incentive to maintain the quality of entering students. In all these cases, it is important that the academic staff concerned feel a sense of ownership of the quality of the programmes because this will ensure that the practices are embedded in the university.

4.7

There tends to be less contact about quality issues in administrative areas than in wholly-owned campuses, because human resources and other matters are usually run by the partner in the country concerned. However, close liaison is often needed between the professional support staff where courses are delivered jointly or have a dual award, as the example of the University of Surrey's link with DUFE shows. In this collaboration, the registry, human resource and finance staff are in regular contact with their counterparts.

4.8

The University of Wollongong Dubai (UOWD) provides a unique example in this category. It is in fact difficult to categorise, but provides several examples of good practice.<sup>14</sup> Despite its independent status, UOWD chose to seek accreditation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.<sup>15</sup> It also chose to retain strong links with the University of Wollongong, and through this link is also audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). Programme changes are approved by the UOWD governance structures as well as by the University of Wollongong.

Despite the complexity of its two parallel streams of quality assurance, the AUQA attested in 2006 that the governance arrangements were sufficient to ensure that UOWD educational activities were consistent with University of Wollongong policies. In fact, the University of Wollongong and UOWD both assert that their quality assurance policies and practices and comparable teaching cultures have been strengthened on each of the campuses by these arrangements. Thus, although UOWD could be categorised as a partner institution with the University of Wollongong, it sometimes has stronger ties with its university of origin than some of the examples in the next section.

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### Maintenance of quality in a wholly-owned campus

**4.9** In this model, the offshore campus is regarded as an integral part of the university. The approach is likely to vary according to whether the intention is for the students to get an 'identical' experience as far as possible, or whether students are intended to get a comparable or consistent experience. In some cases, the university advertises that its qualifications are the same anywhere in the world and thus will use the same curricula, usually developed in the home university. Students then expect to study a programme originating from the country of origin. In other cases, programmes might be developed in the home country, but tailored to local needs, so that students get a 'consistent/comparable' experience, as in the case of Glasgow Caledonian University.

**4.10** Universities wanting students to get an identical experience recognise that the context in which qualifications are offered will still affect the student experience (such as whether the culture of the country embraces student unions or not) as well as the qualifications themselves. For example, students studying in China or Malaysia are required to study compulsory national courses on languages or political/cultural subjects that students in the UK are not required to study. The University of Nottingham handles this issue by making these courses additional to the curricula of its degrees, thus students studying in China or Malaysia meet the requirements both of the Senate of the University of Nottingham and the national curriculum requirements of their respective countries. In Vietnam, regulations say that foreign institutions entering the country must offer courses in Ho Chi Minh theory, but RMIT International University Vietnam was able to obtain exemption from this requirement.

**4.11** Universities attempting to give students an identical or comparable experience tend to link their offshore qualifications very strongly to the home department and to senate and other policies and procedures. In these cases, the role of the academic staff concerned at both ends becomes key. Qualifications are monitored from the home department, often by a single course convenor; there are regular visits to the offshore campus by link tutors especially, but also by other academic staff; the quality assurance policies and procedures of the home university have to be adhered to and are monitored in the normal way by senate committees. A good example of this type of arrangement is that of Texas A&M at Qatar.

Texas A&M at Qatar establishes benchmark comparisons for the academic programmes, including average class sizes and grades as well as benchmarks relating to the academic staff such as average number of publications, average evaluations etc. In a similar situation, in addition to other regular quality assurance requirements, Nottingham has the same external examiners monitor exam questions and scripts in the UK and abroad. In many cases, the examinations are identical to those held in the home campus in order to confirm that the course has identical standards and expectations.

**4.12** The quality assurance requirements are often reinforced if there is an expectation that students will complete the senior years of a qualification or enter postgraduate studies in the home campus. They will have to meet the required admission criteria and have an expectation of success, and there is thus an incentive for the quality of those students to be consistent with those of the home campus. At the University of Surrey, staff from student support services visit China to provide an induction to those Chinese students travelling to the UK for the third and fourth year of their course.

**4.13** When there is a strong link with the home department, academic staffing matters are usually equally interconnected. In these cases, the home department often participates in all academic appointments, or at least approves them. Academic staff from the home campus visit the offshore site regularly, including for quality assurance purposes, staff evaluations and joint research. Visits in the other direction also occur regularly.

Some universities, such as UOWD, provide compulsory teaching and learning programmes for academic staff to instill comparable teaching cultures. Attempts are made to provide the same opportunities for staff development and induction (sometimes in the home country). There is usually access to the main campus's library resources and other services (subject only to the licensing and copyright limitations that some publishers might impose), which also helps to maintain similar standards of quality.

**4.14** Apart from visits to the different campuses, most universities have extensive and regular contact in other ways too, through video-conferencing, telephone and Skype calls. These are sometimes formalised in coordinating committees on various issues. This applies not only to academic programme matters, but also to other elements of university administration, such as human resources management.

**4.15** In the normal way, accreditation is also often provided from outside the university in addition to their internal assurance systems. For example, University of Nottingham's business schools in China and Malaysia both received European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation and Texas A&M University at Qatar was accredited as a branch campus by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 2007 and the degree programmes were accredited by Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET Inc) in 2009.

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## Challenges and pitfalls

- 4.16** The role of a validating partner is not always an easy one. There needs to be collaboration on key issues such as the training of staff and maintenance of quality. At the same time, however, the home-based partner has a particular role in validation and the relationship cannot become too close because of that monitoring function. Similarly, if the intention is that the home partner will withdraw slowly, there is a potential danger that the university might find itself a partner to appointments, practices or qualifications with which it is no longer comfortable.
- 4.17** Some advice from an institution in a validating position is that a staffing and partnership strategy should be developed from the outset, with clear parameters for each partner's role in all phases of the relationship. The home-based partner could usefully provide mentoring and staff development support, but, because this requires commitment of time and resources, this should be agreed early on by both partners. Even if in a validating role, help on staff recruitment, teaching and development of research profile would be useful as would help with resourcing, especially of library and equipment. It is equally important to have clarity about exit strategies to avoid some of the dangers mentioned in the previous paragraph.
- 4.18** Advice from Glasgow Caledonian University was that, even in a joint venture, it is important to have an input or even control over the appointment of the academic leader or principal.
- 4.19** Wollongong planned the integration of a strong quality assurance regime at UOWD from the outset, which also helped to strengthen quality assurance at the home campus in Australia.
- 4.20** Universities who regard the offshore campus as an integral part of their university generally have a combination of staff seconded from the home campus, international and local appointments. Because of this mix, there is a potential area of tension in maintaining quality and attention is usually given to ensuring that all academic staff promote the ethos of the home university.
- 4.21** Universities in this situation try to address the challenge in several ways. Some universities, such as Nottingham, second staff from the UK to key leadership positions in order to ensure that their ethos and policies are embedded in the institution. They call these people 'culture carriers'. Although numbers of University of Nottingham UK staff seconded were particularly high in the early years of establishing their offshore campuses, the strategy of seconding UK staff to leadership positions has continued and they believe that this strategy has been successful.
- 4.22** In cases where strong links between the home and foreign campuses are desired, it is important that the home department takes ownership of the offshore programme from the start and that academic staff on both campuses buy into this.

#### 4.23

Many of the universities say that they struggle to find sufficient numbers of quality academic staff to appoint to offshore positions, as we saw in Section 2. They tackle this in many ways, including through offering attractive salaries and benefits. International appointees have to be suitable for appointment to any of their campuses and at least one of the universities said that they had been pleasantly surprised by the quality of people who applied and that they should have embarked on this practice earlier than they had. With regard to academic applicants from the country concerned, most universities insist that they are fluent in English and au fait with their form of education. Many of these appointees have in any case been awarded postgraduate qualifications outside their country of origin and have started their academic careers there. UOWD asserted that a university with a good reputation for quality is likely to attract quality academic staff.

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## Introduction

**5.1** This section looks at the strategies for supporting research capacities for staff. The type of university involved in TNE as well as the original motivation for establishing an offshore campus generally shapes the approach to enabling and developing a research profile and opportunities for academic staff offshore.

**5.2** Some universities who establish themselves offshore have no intention of developing research capacity in academic staff of the offshore campus, since they focus mainly on teaching and their contracts are drafted on this basis. A research-strong university, on the other hand, is more likely to emphasise the need for research in the offshore campus. Even some universities with a strong research record, however, have a tacit or overt acceptance that academic staff appointed abroad are more likely to have teaching rather than research strengths and are left to their own devices to find research funds if they wish. In addition experience has shown that it takes time for a foreign institution or partnership to establish the necessary credibility with national providers of research funds. Thus, any early ambitions to have an inward flow of research funds may be hard to achieve.

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## Strategies to strengthen research

**5.3** Some research-based universities, such as UCL insist that there be a long-term research dimension in any proposed international partnership. Academic staff at Texas A&M at Qatar are expected to be active researchers (and are evaluated on publications and grants awarded). The University of Wollongong Dubai (UOWD) was established with the intention of becoming a research university. Research is expected of all academic staff, three-quarters of whom have PhD degrees and expect to continue their research careers. The British University in Dubai, which was not one of the case-study institutions, was also established with the explicit aim of being a postgraduate university with staff expected to spend 40% of their time on research.

**5.4** Universities with existing research strengths emphasise that offshore campuses are important for them because of the global nature of research questions. They believe further that involvement in important developing countries also gives them a strategic advantage.

**5.5** UOWD is one of the more developed examples with regard to research, partly because it has had over 15 years of operations. Academic staff are recruited and promoted on the basis of their research records. There is an active research committee, chaired by the UOWD president, which has a broad remit of promoting and developing research and researchers and policies and infrastructure to support this.

- 5.6** Despite some areas of strength, most of the case-study universities are in the early phases of developing research opportunities and profiles and the provision of support to researchers. Some are doing this by strengthening existing links established by individual researchers. Some actively try to support contact between key researchers and the establishment of cross-country research groups. Others are analysing which areas are likely to provide the greatest benefits to the campuses concerned based on existing strengths and compatibilities in the two countries and areas of interest. Senior researchers looking for new challenges are then recruited to establish contact.
- 5.7** Sometimes the support for research activity takes the form of helping to upgrade the qualifications of local academic staff when they register for masters or PhD programmes, usually with the home university. These arrangements may also include scholarships or reduced fees to undertake postgraduate studies. Most of the universities try to increase exchange possibilities for staff and students, which also helps to strengthen research. Staff development opportunities are usually available and these sometimes include a specific focus on developing research skills.
- 5.8** One issue to be faced is funding for research. Most of the universities have had to make funding available from internal sources to start the process or to seed particular types of initiatives. This support is sometimes generous. For example, all academic staff holding a contract of a year or longer at Texas A&M at Qatar are eligible to receive support for their instructional and scholarly activities and opportunities are made available for even undergraduate students to participate in research.
- 5.9** Some of the offshore campuses were established at the invitation of a government wanting to develop research strengths generally or in particular areas. An example is the invitation to UCL by the Government of South Australia to establish a presence in Adelaide. In this case, the UCL School of Energy and Resources Australia will have access to research funding from several sources, including the Government of South Australia, their industrial sponsor Santos Ltd and, in due course, the national research council (when bureaucratic issues are resolved). The University of Nottingham Ningbo campus has also received funding from various sources, including the city of Ningbo, which has helped to build a new science and engineering research building.
- 5.10** An official invitation or support from government usually eases the path of the university, although support from senior national government officials does not always flow down to the state level of government, as NUMed has found in Malaysia and UCL in Australia.

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## Challenges and pitfalls

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### 5.11

In most cases, progress in developing research activity has been slow. Researchers generally require a partner in the relevant country to get access to either the home country or the other country's research council funds and have sometimes been trapped in a no-man's land, where they cannot gain access to research council funds via the home university because they are not based there and where funding from the research council in the foreign country is also not available. This might change slowly, however, with an increasing trend by funders to support collaborative research with other countries.

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### 5.12

Even where a government has sought the involvement of a university and where funding has sometimes been made available by central or local government, researchers still have to negotiate complicated bureaucratic pathways in order to access funding held by research councils. Several people spoke about the slow development of trust, especially in countries without much experience with foreign universities. Texas A&M at Qatar has developed a healthy level of research, yet found that agreements about research and graduate programmes were slow to conclude. UOWD has also developed a strong research ethos, but Wollongong describes it as 'an overnight success that took 17 years', which should be a caution about the time required to develop a research profile locally.

### Regulatory context

- 6.1** The regulatory environment of the country where a foreign institution has a campus or TNE operations will regard that institution as a private provider (and one interested in profit) and, if there is relevant legislation (such as a Private Universities Act) affecting such institutions, the university will be bound by it.
- 6.2** In general, legislation of this kind has little to say about staffing. However, there are examples in some countries:
- In order to allay concerns about the standards in private universities, some governments, such as Nigeria, have passed regulations saying that a certain percentage of the academic staff must have a doctoral qualification. Almost all countries are interested in the numbers and qualifications of academic staff in foreign or private institutions.
  - In one country the law specifies that the university president must be a national of the country and stipulates that university staff can only be promoted with the approval of a government committee.
  - The procedures for establishing a new university can be tortuous and very specific on inputs such as the numbers and qualifications of staff. Again, although these are usually designed to curb weak domestic providers, they are usually applicable to incoming state-funded institutions.
  - Some countries expect private universities to be undertaking research from 'day one', although this is more honoured in the breach, as it is clearly unrealistic.
  - It is common for statistics on staff and student numbers to be required by the national ministry of education.
- 6.3** On the positive side, where governments wish to encourage high-quality private providers there may be incentives that incoming institutions can access. Where there is a favourable climate, it is not unusual for visa and residence regulations to have concessions for academic staff and students. In one country grants are available to assist in the training and staff development of academic staff.
- 6.4** Finally, of course, the national quality assurance agency will want to be involved in a decision to establish a campus or joint venture and in the licensing of each programme being offered; our case studies report that their demands can be very labour intensive. One pro-vice-chancellor, seeking to establish a campus in India, has had to make four visits to the quality assurance agency at state level. Where professional education is involved (as in the University of Newcastle project in Malaysia) this involvement is likely to be compounded by the role of the professional bodies concerned in both countries.
- 6.5** It is clear that the intricacies of establishing a new campus or a joint venture in another country make it a hugely complex and time-consuming process, although the elements of regulation that relate to staffing are not the most substantial.

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## Experience of the case studies

### 6.6

The bulk of our case-study projects involve a partner in country and as a result they have not experienced any special regulatory problems:

- All three China projects have an academic partner institution and two have commercial partners as well. Their assistance has been invaluable.
- Where a government invites a university into a country (as in the two UCL projects, Texas A&M and RMIT), the expectation is that bureaucratic matters will be simplified all down the line. This is not always the case and on staffing, immigration and employment matters the remit of the minister of education may not be particularly influential. This leaves a lot of room for potential help needed from the local partner.

### 6.7

Despite the local support available there is always a need for independent research or support from local lawyers or employment experts. UCL, for example, has had to draw on external advice on both its Australian and Kazakh projects. There have also been small complications such as the requirement to translate employment contracts into Russian in Kazakhstan.

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## Legal issues

### 6.8

The guide produced by Eversheds LLP has a substantial chapter on staffing issues, which covers all the key areas where legal problems might arise for staff who remain employees of the UK university.<sup>16</sup> This includes two categories of staff, those working as 'flying faculty' on a short-term basis and those from the home university working at the offshore campus for a longer period of time. There should be relatively few issues of territorial jurisdiction for 'flying faculty' staff, whose brief and generally sporadic periods abroad will ensure that they remain employed as UK staff.

### 6.9

For the latter category of staff, those who remain employed by the home institution but work on the offshore campus permanently or for a significant time period, a key point for consideration at an early stage should be the territorial scope of the employment contract. Will it be governed by the law of the UK, where the employing institution is based, or by the law of the 'host' country? And will the employee's statutory rights, for example to claim unfair dismissal in the UK, be preserved? Any contract of employment should state which country's laws apply in the event of a dispute, as parties are generally free to choose, subject to the Rome Convention, if it is binding in the relevant country. Where the Rome Convention applies, mandatory rules apply automatically. These are the statutory minimum employment standards in the 'host' country. A clear understanding of which country's law is applicable is advisable from the outset. The UK governing body may need to be alerted in advance to those cases where UK staff are subject to another country's laws.

- 6.10** Some additional legal issues to consider in relation to this category of employee include the following:
- A country's legislation and civil codes generally apply to everyone working in the country. By way of example, in the UAE, there is zero tolerance for drugs and alcohol and any unmarried couple living together runs the risk of prosecution, imprisonment and/or a fine and deportation.
  - An employer university should undertake risk assessments before sending their employees overseas to work to ensure that they comply with their duty of care.

**6.11** Where UK staff become employees of the offshore institution it will also be essential to consider the issues raised above regarding territorial jurisdiction. The situation may be further complicated if the employing institution is partly or wholly owned by a foreign corporation.

**6.12** In an earlier section we noted the distinction between those institutions that devolved all decisions on local and international staffing to the national level and those which decided them in the home institution – even though the legal employer might be the overseas corporation or legal entity. Those universities that have allowed the offshore staffing policies of an offshore campus to be wholly decided by an independent board (which is usually chaired by a member of the home university's executive) have probably agreed that both their international staff and their locally employed staff should be employed on local terms and conditions. In such cases the university should, for its own protection, get a full understanding of the national employment regulations and conditions of service of those staff working for them and consider the applicable law for determining contractual disputes.

**6.13** The most complex position is where an offshore activity involves home staff on short term visits, home staff moving offshore on long contracts, international staff recruited on contracts and local staff on local contracts. Four sets of considerations will need to be borne in mind and, as the case study from UCL suggests,

*...the amount of pre-planning required should never be under-estimated. 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.*

Legal and contractual matters relating to staff cannot be left to the last minute.

**6.14** Another legal point that emerged from some case studies is the difference between federal and state legislation. For example the UCL and Newcastle projects are subject to laws set by the jurisdictions of South Australia and Johor respectively as well as the national legislation.

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### Staffing strategies

- 7.1** Although our case studies have covered the experiences of three exporting countries in ten different receiving countries, the conclusions are remarkably similar. This is so even when the activity has been underway for differing lengths of time.
- 7.2** Most of our cases have begun with two expectations: that the venture will be profitable; and that a significant number of people from the home campus will agree to be involved. Our studies have shown that both these can be over-optimistic.
- In terms of finance, most of the ventures studied will at best have generated a small surplus, which for local political and exchange control reasons is usually retained and ploughed back into the enterprise. Thus, Nottingham, Liverpool, Surrey, UCL and Newcastle state the objectives of their activities as being to further their reputation or in UCL's case to develop research partnerships in other continents. Our UK case-study sample was however biased to Russell Group institutions and there will be others who expect to generate and receive income from large-scale teaching activities offshore.
- 7.3** We identified a distinction between universities' academic objectives. Is it to deliver an identical experience to that in the home campus or is it to provide one that is comparable and consistent? In the latter case, the content of the curriculum would be adapted to local circumstances and there would, as a result, be some risk that standards might not be the same, unless the course development routines of the home campus were followed to the letter and the end product was submitted to faculty board and senate for approval. If the content is identical, the university could be subject to charges of an insensitive (or Western-orientated) attitude in an environment and culture which is very different. There are varying views on this; one institution we visited (that was not one of the case studies) was proud of the fact that students in three continents sat the same examinations at the same time in order to gain the same degree.
- 7.4** In terms of staffing, the numbers in Table 2 of Section 2 tell the story. There are very few staff from the home campus and, if there are, they are in the senior management positions. Most ventures have to rely on international and locally employed staff to deliver their programmes. This has not proved to be a problem in terms of the quality of staff that can be attracted after international advertising, nor is it a problem in countries such as Malaysia, where academic staff are generally proficient in English. The China campuses have found also that many of the international staff positions are now taken up by Chinese academics returning home after a period of study overseas. This latter picture is of course specific to China, but we cannot yet say that the same is true of Malaysia, Vietnam or the Gulf, where the international element of the academic staff population is drawn from the major English-speaking countries.

**7.5** The story is the same when we look at 'flying faculty' from the home campus – those academic staff who agree to visit the offshore activity for blocks of time in which they are usually expected to teach compressed modules of their specialist subject. In research-intensive institutions it is becoming increasingly difficult to persuade them to go, even for two-week periods and even when well rewarded. The demands of their research at home and the pressures of the heavy teaching workload in a foreign country are given as the reasons for their reluctance.

**7.6** Where there is an offshore campus, decisions on staffing are sometimes passed over to the local management and it is their choice whether to recruit local or international staff and how to remunerate them. As an extreme example of this we visited an institution, which was not one of the case studies, where the university executive and human resources division had no information at all on the numbers or pay and conditions of staff on their overseas campuses. However, a more common situation is for the policies to be set jointly and for candidates for senior positions to be interviewed on the campus by local management and in the home country by senior university staff and the faculty concerned. In Texas A&M at Qatar all staff appointments have to be approved by the relevant head of department at home.

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### **Pay and conditions of service**

**7.7** 'Flying faculty' are given some reward in almost all cases for their work overseas and in research-intensive institutions the levels of reward tend to be higher than in teaching-intensive ones. Much may depend on whether, as in Glasgow Caledonian University, there is an expectation that academic staff will all work overseas at some time in their career (and this is a criterion for promotion). The benefits may also include the provision of super-economy or business class air fares and all accommodation and living costs.

**7.8** Home-based faculty who agree to locate overseas for longer periods usually receive an uplift on their home salary, but there are cases where they are paid on local scales agreed with the partner. The level of uplift takes local costs of living into account as well as acting as an incentive.

**7.9** Internationally recruited staff on overseas campuses are paid at various levels, which usually depend on the policies of the management of the offshore activity; these can be locally competitive, at the same level as the home-based faculty, or at a rate fixed entirely by the home campus.

**7.10** The scale of benefits for relocating home campus staff and international staff are coming into line with those paid to expatriates of all kinds overseas. Our case studies give examples of the type of benefit and the level, in some cases, which will often reflect the cost of living and the employment market in the country concerned. Thus, benefits paid in the Gulf States will tend to be more generous than elsewhere.

**7.11** One of the emerging major areas of difference is the attention given to detailed briefing of staff before they take up an overseas post. Section 3 identifies a long list of topics where staff may want assurance and this covers the university's policies on risk and a number of matters of employment law.

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## The maintenance of quality

**7.12** The quality of offshore provision is an extremely sensitive issue and, particularly where large-scale TNE is concerned, it has become the concern of governments – as in Australia in recent years. The reputation of both the country and the institution suffer if students are found to be gaining a foreign qualification without the same degree of rigour that would be applied on the home campus.

**7.13** Our case-study institutions were all very well aware of the risks and had established a number of procedures that focused on the importance of recruiting the best staff, giving them a comprehensive induction and then developing rigorous systems for quality control of what is delivered, as well as monitoring all assessments and examinations.

**7.14** The case studies identified a number of sound practices for ensuring that quality was maintained:

- extensive induction programmes for international or locally employed staff
- use of online tutorial packages for academic training and staff development
- the appointment of link tutors from the home faculty who visited up to four times a year
- use of common benchmarks for student performance on the home and offshore campus
- regular, if not daily, communications between academic and professional support staff on both sides.

These mechanisms were buttressed and driven by what Nottingham University calls 'culture carriers', who were the senior management staff seconded to offshore campuses. In Wollongong's Dubai campus the committee approving all academic promotions is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Operations) from the home campus.

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## Offering a research capacity

**7.15** Only three of our nine case studies (Nottingham, Wollongong and Texas A&M) could be said to be offering staff a career that had room for research. Partly this is due to the stage of development, since it was generally accepted that in the initial years teaching was the first priority – one institution had formalised this with teaching-only contracts. Partly it is due to the nature of the institutions with whom the home institution had partnered.

**7.16** There are three fundamentals if a research capacity is to be established: the presence of research-intensive staff; facilities which lend themselves to research; and the availability of funding. The first requirement is the hardest, since, as we have seen, academic researchers on the home campus are unhappy at leaving their home base to try to re-establish a research career elsewhere. Thus, some institutions are attempting to encourage home-based researchers to travel to the offshore campus in order to develop personal connections with staff on the ground and fuel interest in collaborative research projects. Some say they will promote this with central funding.

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**7.17** The second requirement has happened at Texas A&M, at Nottingham and is underway at Suzhou with Liverpool. Research buildings have been provided by the local financial backers, be they the government or the development corporation.

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**7.18** The final element that is now needed is external funding and the messages from the case studies are that achieving this is a slow business, as it requires the campus to gain enough academic respectability to be regarded as worthy (or even capable) of carrying research in the country. UCL has not yet achieved access to national funds in Adelaide, even though it was specifically targeted as a world-class institution by the Government of South Australia. The experience of Texas A&M is instructive; it has taken four years for the Qatar Foundation to agree to the development of graduate programmes and a research infrastructure; this was even though refers to Texas A&M University Qatar (TAMUQ) was seen as a research-intensive institution with academic staff with a strong research ethos. However, the funding delay has not stopped the university from gaining over US\$50m funding from other research donors.

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### **Regulatory and legal issues**

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**7.19** There are often regulatory barriers to be overcome in establishing a joint venture or offshore campus. In all our examples this was the case, but all have had the benefit of support from their local partner, be it a government, a private corporation or a national university. Without this the process would have been impenetrable and potentially full of difficult cultural blockages. However, even with this help, the message is that establishing a new venture can be a hugely time-consuming exercise. The advice from one experienced hand was 'patience is essential. Allow enough time and then double it!' However, one positive aspect is that staff matters are not the most significant feature of most regulatory frameworks.

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**7.20** The legal issues involved in working offshore have, as regards staff who are employees of the UK university, been comprehensively covered by the Evershed's guide. It does not however cover international or locally employed staff for the simple reason that most of them are likely to be on non-UK contracts, which are not usually subject to UK law.

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### **A final word**

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**7.21** Getting staff of the right calibre for offshore operations is one of the key elements in protecting a university's reputation for quality in the country concerned. We have shown that the issue is no longer one of exporting staff from the home country, but of tapping global network and markets for the best people. Manager and human resource specialists are having to acquire the skills and techniques of multinationals; if they fail to do so, the risks of reputational damage are high.

17

Kinser K and Green MF (2009) *The Power of Partnerships: A Transatlantic Dialogue*. ACE. p.iv.

18

IDP Education Pty Ltd (IDP) was established by Australian universities in 1969 and has nearly 40 years' experience in international education. It has international links for example with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate and The British Council to form IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Australia.

19

Fielden J (2007) *Global Horizons for UK Universities*. The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

20

DIUS (2008a). *Trans-national Education and Higher Education Institutions: Exploring Patterns of HE Institutional Activity*. Prepared by the Centre for Research and Evaluation and Centre for Education and Inclusion Research, Sheffield Hallam University. DIUS Research Report 08 07.

## Overview of policies and practices with regard to internationalisation

### 8.1

The debate about offshore activities by universities has been vigorous over the last decade or so and there are any number of academic and policy papers analysing the importance of trans-national education and internationalisation, the challenges and problem areas, strategies and goals. In this section we sift through these and summarise those that are most relevant to the issue of staffing these overseas ventures.

### 8.2

At the level of leadership, the 11th meeting of US, Canadian and European higher education leaders, held in June 2008 in Canada, was about partnerships. The report of the meeting argues that "going it alone" may not be useful as a dominant strategy' and that, in the current environment, institutions increasingly recognise the importance of partnerships with each other, whether in their home countries or abroad as well as with other bodies. Through several case studies, the report considers key issues as well as factors for successful partnerships.<sup>17</sup>

### 8.3

As more countries and universities have become involved in trans-national education, more practical matters have been examined. There are large numbers of papers on issues faced by students and how they might be supported academically and personally in their learning and adjustment to foreign countries. The consequence of a more diverse student body has led to tapping into research on conceptions and approaches to learning (an area of research in its own right), including specialities within this topic, such as electronic support for study. Broader questions about internationalisation have led to investigations about, for example, how curricula might support this focus as well as how home students might get greater exposure to the world, including through study abroad modules.

### 8.4

A good source of a broad range of publications on many or more of the topics above over the last decade or so is the IDP Database of Research on International Education.<sup>18</sup>

### 8.5

In the UK, the Council for Industry and Higher Education report of 2007 is a useful study of UK universities and their attempts to internationalise their institutions.<sup>19</sup> It explores strategies to:

- internationalise staff, students and curricula
- make changes to the domestic student experience
- forge links with community groups and international volunteering as well as international teaching and research partnerships.

The experiences of other countries are used as examples and benchmarks.

### 8.6

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has published two important baseline research reports. The first is an extensive outline of the extent and pattern of provision of trans-national education.<sup>20</sup> It categorises the data in various ways, including the type and size of institutions involved, models of provision, and provision by academic programme, level, subject etc. In these ways, the report provides extensive information on what is happening across UK institutions, where and how.

21  
DIUS (2008b). *International Research Collaboration in UK Higher Education Institutions*. Prepared by the Centre for Education and Inclusion Research and Centre for Research and Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University. DIUS Research Report 08 08.

22  
Adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee at its second meeting, Riga, 6 June 2001.

23  
UNESCO and OECD (2005) *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*, Paris: UNESCO and OECD.

24  
Government of Alberta. Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology (2009). *International education framework*. p18.

25  
Department of Education, Science and Training, Australia (2007) *National code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students* (National Code 2007)

26  
QAA (2010) *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education. Section 2: Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (Including e-learning)*. Gloucester: QAA, p28.

27  
OBHE (2006) *Models and Types: Guidelines for Good Practice in Transnational Education*. The OBHE guideline originated from a study conducted for the Swinburne University of Technology in Australia: Connelly S and Garton J (2005) *A strategic approach to QA for transnational education programs*, Swinburne University of Technology.

**8.7** The second DIUS report provides extensive information about international research collaboration.<sup>21</sup> It also provides information about strategic approaches of UK universities and their operational structures and processes in international research collaboration. At the time, it was reported that almost all the higher education institutions had a research strategy; two-thirds had an internationalisation strategy, but less than half had a combined strategy.

**8.8** In this study our specific focus is on staffing offshore activities and the key strategic and operational issues institutional leaders and managers need to consider. There is certainly relevant literature on the topic, but seldom at the practical and operational levels. The next section considers literature that could guide operational decisions.

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### Codes of practice and guidelines

**8.9** Starting at a high level of principle, there are several policy frameworks that are useful and relevant for the stage when a university is conceptualising and planning a trans-national project that will comply with international guidelines. These include UNESCO's *Revised Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*<sup>22</sup>, UNESCO and OECD *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*<sup>23</sup> and a framework for collaboration developed for the Government of Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology.<sup>24</sup>

**8.10** An Australian draft national code of practice<sup>25</sup> is at a similar level, but includes a standard (number 13) on staff capabilities. This standard requires that staff should be suitably qualified or experienced in relation to the functions they perform for overseas students, whether this involves recruitment, delivery of education, or client services. The outcomes listed cover processes for recruitment, induction, performance assessment and ongoing development of the staff concerned.

**8.11** In the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)<sup>26</sup> and the OBHE<sup>27</sup> have both published guidelines on good practice. The QAA code of practice on collaborative provision is meant to ensure that awarding institutions take responsibility for the qualifications awarded for collaborative or flexible and distributed learning and that students registered with them anywhere in the world receive equivalent experiences. The only reference to staff is that the staff involved must have appropriate skills and receive appropriate staff development and training.

The OBHE document proposes three strategic principles in trans-national education planning and quality assurance, *viz* that a university's international student recruitment strategy for its home campus should be complementary with its TNE activities; that there should be a focus on priority countries; and that a key role must be played by a central international office. It is intended to help leaders follow strategic guidelines and to develop a map for procedures.

28  
*International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities* (2009), Eversheds LLP for the UK HE International Unit.

29  
See for example ACE's *International Partnerships: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities* (July 2008) and *On the Ground Overseas: US Degree Programs and Branch Campuses Abroad* (October 2008).

30  
Ziguras C (2007) *Good Practice in Transnational Education: A Guide for New Zealand Providers*, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Prepared for Education New Zealand Trust.

31  
IEAA (2008) *Good Practice in Offshore Delivery: a guide for Australian Providers*.

32  
Woodhouse D and Stella A (2008). *Borderless Higher Education 'Down Under': Quality Assurance of Australian Cross-Border Initiatives*, OBHE.

**8.12** The OBHE guidelines comply with those of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA 2005) as well as with the Australian Vice-Chancellors Provision of education to international students: code of practice and guidelines for Australian universities (AVCC 2005) (the original project was funded by the Australian Federal Department of Education, Science and Training).

**8.13** At a more specific level, Eversheds LLP, for the UK HE International and Europe Unit, has produced a legal guide for UK universities, as well as country profiles and briefings that can be used to provide information prior to starting an offshore venture.<sup>28</sup> The legal guide devotes a long chapter to staff issues arising when UK institutions send staff abroad. The issues covered include forms of employment contract and what the contract should cover, remuneration, tax and pensions, the laws that are applicable to such contracts, statutory employment rights, secondment agreements and matters relating to an employer's duty of care when staff are overseas.

**8.14** There have been many studies of good practice and operational issues in international partnerships, particularly those published by the American Council on Education (ACE), since the USA is by far the largest source country. The ACE study *On the ground overseas* concludes with ten case studies of institutions that operate outside their country of origin.<sup>29</sup> Each profile includes discussion on staffing arrangements, curricula, links to the home campus etc.

**8.15** There is a good practice guide for New Zealand providers that covers support for teaching staff, but also a broader range of practical considerations including how to select a partner, how to ensure equivalence in curricula and quality assurance matters.<sup>30</sup>

**8.16** In Australia, which also has long experience in this area, the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) has produced a guide to good practice in offshore activities that briefly discusses staffing arrangements.<sup>31</sup> OBHE has published another useful publication on the quality assurance of cross-border initiatives of Australian universities.<sup>32</sup> As a matter of principle, courses and programmes delivered within Australia and those delivered trans-nationally, are required to be equivalent. The two authors of the OBHE report (the Executive and Audit Directors of the Australian Universities Quality Agency) explain the AUQA's procedural frameworks for auditing the quality of trans-national education. Usefully, however, they also discuss the results of six years of audits. This acts as a good practice guide and as a source of advice for other universities.

33

Smith L (2009) 'Sinking in the sand? Academic work in an offshore campus of an Australian university' *Higher Education Research and Development*. volume 28, number 5, pp467–479.

34

<http://f2.washington.edu/fm/globalsupport/>

35

UCU (2010) *Overseas Working Guide*, UCUHE42/05.

36

NTEU Policy and Research Unit (2004) *Working offshore: guide for Australian university staff working overseas*.

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## Reports on staffing issues

8.17

There are some studies of aspects of work overseas such as one by Smith who describes two alternative scenarios for academic staff: either 'sinking in the sand', because they are not familiar with local customs and seek to make the campus a remote outpost of their own institution or 'blooming in the desert', because they learn and adapt after they have enjoyed effective induction and staff development.<sup>33</sup>

8.18

However, none of this literature has looked in depth at how managers administer complex staffing issues across at least two countries and the strategies they adopted. Some of the publications discussed next come closer to what is sought.

8.19

The University of Washington in Seattle has a very useful website on Global Operations Support.<sup>34</sup> It is specific to the USA and to the University of Washington, but provides lists of considerations for topics, such as global operations (which includes headings and discussion for establishing legal status, export controls, field advances, hiring abroad, intellectual property, international relocation and purchasing abroad), global health, safety and security, global travel insurance, etc.

Each of the topics has further links – sometimes to actual policy or procedures at the University of Washington, or to presentations on the topic or to other useful information. The website would be very useful to managers wanting to see exactly how another university has implemented policy in this area.

8.20

There are at least two trade union guides for members working overseas that also provide very practical information. For example, the UK University and College Union (UCU) advises its members to get an appropriate contract, to check on travel and other rights and what is covered in their insurance.<sup>35</sup> In 2004 the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) of Australia produced a guide for Australian university staff working overseas.<sup>36</sup> It provided advice of an industrial, professional and practical nature, including the nature of contracts, workload issues, intellectual property rights, and travel and accommodation arrangements. The guide formed one part of a major three-phase NTEU research project into the delivery and regulation of offshore programmes offered by Australian universities. (The three phases consisted of a general survey, secondly, case studies of twelve universities, and thirdly, the guide.) It grew from concern about industrial and professional issues associated with involvement in offshore programmes. Issues covered included modes of delivery, Australian staff responsibilities, risks and professional issues.

**8.21**

There are also some useful case studies, for example one published by the OBHE looking at trans-national education provision in China.<sup>37</sup> It provides an overview of issues to be addressed in China by using three case studies – CIBT School of Business and Technology Corporation (Canada), Missouri State University (USA), and the Stanford Center for Professional Development (USA). With regard to staffing, the document summarises how the institutions managed to secure sufficient quality staff to teach in English at the required levels, especially since they found that the number of people able and willing to spend significant time in China was limited. This was because practical and career considerations, including family and current research projects, made a secondment of six months or longer difficult, even for those who found the idea of living in China attractive. Strategies included staff from the home institution starting the programme, then passing it on to locally employed staff, but maintaining constant contact through video conferencing and email. Strategies also included training staff in China to appropriate levels. Practices to ensure the appropriate level of staff included ensuring that review and hiring procedures were the same at all campuses.

**8.22**

Despite the range of literature available on offshore activities and partnerships, there is a paucity of information on the staffing questions that are at the heart of this study.



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