



**Press release – 7 April 2011**

**Launch of definitive guide for staffing universities' overseas ventures**

A guide published today by the UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education provides an invaluable tool for UK universities in recruiting high quality staff involved in transnational education (TNE).

*A Guide to Offshore Staffing Strategies for UK Universities*, authored by John Fielden of CHEMS Consulting with Erica Gillard, looks at the challenges arising in delivering high quality programmes offshore which match those offered at home. It draws on the experiences of nine universities, both in the UK and overseas, all of which have extensive experience delivering TNE.

A critical success factor in TNE is ensuring staff employed offshore are committed to the venture and motivated to delivery of programmes. How do universities recruit and retain the best staff and how do they meet their professional and personal needs? And what are the benefits and pitfalls of employing local, international or home campus staff? The report provides useful checklists for institutional policy-makers, human resource managers and for academic staff heading overseas.

Following the sharp rise in offshore activity by UK universities, the sector is now a world leader in delivering TNE, allowing international students to study for a UK degree in their home country or region. The success of this activity is reflected in recent statistics showing that there are now more international students studying for an award from a UK university overseas than there are international students in the UK.

**Some of the main findings of the report include:**

- Regardless of type for offshore ventures, the risks and problems are the same and obtaining academic staff of the right quality is one of the critical success factors. Getting this right protects a university's reputation.
- Several case studies reported difficulties persuading home-based staff to move overseas with family commitments at home and leaving behind research work as key decision factors. There are typically three types of TNE staff: locally recruited, internationally recruited and 'flying faculty' from the home campus.
- The regulatory barriers to 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.
- Universities are influenced by the international market place in the terms and conditions they offer academic staff who agree to work overseas.
- Support for overseas staff, particularly those recruited internationally and those from the home campus is critical to retention and success. Providing a generous allowance package should be matched with support in programme delivery and assessment. Help with integration into and understanding of the host culture is particularly important for staff recruited from the home campus.
- Creating a research environment takes time to establish and is not something that can be achieved quickly. This involves selection of staff with strong research interests, investment in research facilities, providing seed money and mastering the routes to obtaining research funding from national sources. The latter can be a long process.
- Managers and human resource specialists need to acquire the skills and techniques that multi-nationals use; if they fail to do so, the risks of reputational damage are high.

Dr Joanna Newman, Director, UK HE International and Europe Unit believes this guide will be the definitive 'how to' for universities in overseas ventures. She said, "This guide not only highlights the challenges of staffing offshore ventures, but provides helpful and practical steps to avoid potential problem areas. TNE is a big part of most UK universities' international activities, and all the guides the International and Europe Unit has published so far encourage and support them in this work."

Professor Robin Middlehurst, Director, Strategy, Research and International at the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education said, "This report follows the recent publication of our research on international partnerships. Together these publications form a valuable resource to achieving the most from partnerships with HEIs in other parts of the world, and the critical element of how to support staff in overseas ventures."

~Ends~

### Notes to Editor

1. The report will be launched at a Breakfast Briefing event at Woburn House, London on Thursday 07 April 2011.
2. *A Guide to Offshore Staffing Strategies for UK Universities* is available to download from the UK HE International Unit website: [www.international.ac.uk](http://www.international.ac.uk) and the Leadership Foundation website: [www.lfhe.ac.uk/research](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/research)
3. For further information contact Elizabeth Farnell, Communications and Public Affairs Officer, UK HE International and Europe Unit Unit:  
020 7419 5609 [elizabeth.farnell@international.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.farnell@international.ac.uk)
4. The UK HE International and Europe Unit is a central intelligence and policy coordination unit on higher education, internationalisation and European policy for UK higher education institutions. For more information visit [www.international.ac.uk](http://www.international.ac.uk) and [www.europeunit.ac.uk](http://www.europeunit.ac.uk)
5. Launched in March 2004, to serve the diverse leadership development needs of the management of the UK's universities and higher education colleges, the Leadership Foundation provides a dedicated service of support and advice on leadership, governance and management. For more information visit [www.lfhe.ac.uk](http://www.lfhe.ac.uk)