

Ensuring the quality of our offshore provision

John Fielden
Director CHEMS Consulting

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Why is the issue important?

- The substantial growth in offshore activities and numbers of students [both TNE and campuses].
- A history of failed ventures by some competitor institutions.
- Growing evidence that UK staff are becoming less keen to teach overseas regularly.
- Consequent reliance on other staff.
- Reputational risks of poor quality.



Options for academic staffing

- Request UK staff to work overseas as:
 - Short term “flying faculty” – teaching only.
 - Longer term secondments to campuses, JVs or partnerships.
 - Research collaborators, supervisors.
 - Staff developers, QA, admin support etc to partners.
- Use locally employed academic staff.
- Recruit academic staff internationally.



Findings from staffing study (2011)

- Only 8% of staff in the case studies are from the home campus. They are usually at senior management levels (“culture carriers”)
- Reliance on internationally recruited staff.
- Staff quality is not seen as an issue by recruiters.
- Some HEIs leave HR and staff policies to local Board, some decide them at home.

University	Project/country	Full-time staff originally from the home campus	Locally recruited staff	Internationally recruited staff
University of Nottingham	Ningbo China	10	220 staff (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	35
Totals		57	739	

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Maintaining Quality

Policies will vary according to:

- Structure of the operation (franchise, validation, stand alone, collaborative).
- Whose award?
- Maturity and staff quality of the partner
- Is student experience to be identical or “comparable”?
- National QA regime





Case study. Texas A&M U Qatar

- All staff are employed by TAM; 20% rotate from home campus; remainder are international (but have no tenure).
- TAMUQ Quality has to match home campus.
- Curriculum, syllabi and degree equivalents are identical.
- Student GPA's expected to be same as at TAM.
- All staff are expected to be research active and research outputs are measured (and compared).
- Academic staff assessed by TAM HoD and evaluated by students (and compared).



Promoting quality - 1

- Have a jointly agreed quality strategy with your local partner and emphasise it from the start.
- Decide whether local standards will be identical or “comparable” to the UK.
- Agree any curriculum changes needed for local cultural or regulatory reasons.
- Plan for staff development and regular mentoring support for international and partner’s staff.
- Provide cultural awareness training for UK faculty.
- Plan to offer regular support from UK faculty offices, educational development staff and the library/ICT networks.



Promoting quality - 2

- Maintain a UK faculty role in local staff appointments.
- Have “link tutors” visiting regularly (5 times pa?) from the UK faculty for each course.
- In between visits link tutors liaise with local module tutors
- Operate double marking or spot testing of local marking.
- Maintain regular Skype/email contact with partner staff – by both UK academic and administrative staff.
- Develop internal QA processes that link with two external QA streams - QAA and the national QA requirements.
- Take the local QA seriously (remember DMU in South Africa).

Malaysian Qualifications Agency's standards

- Code of Practice for Institutional Audit covers:
 - Educational goals and learning outcomes
 - Curriculum design and delivery
 - Assessment of students
 - Student selection and support services
 - Academic staff
 - Educational resources
 - Programme monitoring and review
 - Leadership, governance and administration
 - Continual quality improvement.

Teaching informed by research?

- Need to manage student/gov't expectations - some staff contracts may be T only, particularly international staff.
- Very hard to offer mixed T/R careers at first.
- If aim is to support national R, acquiring a reputation and tapping local R funds takes time. Partner support is vital.[It took TAMUQ 5 years to get local research funds]
- Essential to link closely to home campus researchers – provide seed funding?



Some messages

1. Have an agreed quality strategy with local partner and plan for 5 years at least.
2. Decide where HR policies on people are to be made.
3. Agree regular liaison and reporting with UK faculty.
4. Develop a joint strategy for meeting QAA and overseas external QA policies.
5. Be realistic about offshore R potential.