

Strategic internationalisation and partnerships: an institutional framework for success

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The place of partnerships in the international strategy of UK Higher Education Institutions

- Balancing economic and academic imperatives
- Rationale and importance: critical to supporting the broader context of internationalisation and achieving key objectives: diversity, quality and sustainability
- Wide range of models and approaches
- Challenges: capacity, creativity, sustainability

International strategic partnerships: the institutional perspective

- Driven by and/or supported by national policies and initiatives?
- UK national support for international strategic partnerships in higher education
 - British Council
 - Education UK unit: new joint initiative of two Government departments: BIS (Business, Innovation & Skills) and UKTI (UK Trade and Investment)
 - UK Higher Education International Unit
- Apparent contradictions in government policy

Evaluating strategic partnership opportunities

- Importance of clarity: institutional objectives, priorities, resources and capabilities (know yourself - and your colleagues!)
- Focus on managing risk and assuring quality
- Balancing strategic planning with openness to new and unexpected opportunities (NB government and external objectives may not align with institutional priorities)

The harsh realities: implementing, managing and sustaining partnerships

- Inspiring successes - but also cautionary tales
- Champions and leadership, together with supporters and commitment
- Identifying the “right” partners: understanding each other’s expectations
- Clear focus and direction from the outset - but partnerships will evolve over time

Critical success factors

- Appropriate decision-making structures
- Knowing who is responsible for the relationship at all times, and making arrangements for handovers when necessary (continuity)
- Clear communication channels
- Recognising that a partnership involves a two-(or more!) way relationship
- Regular monitoring and review (quality assurance)
- Managing and meeting expectations
- Clarity about legal and financial arrangements (as appropriate)
- Recognising when a partnership is over