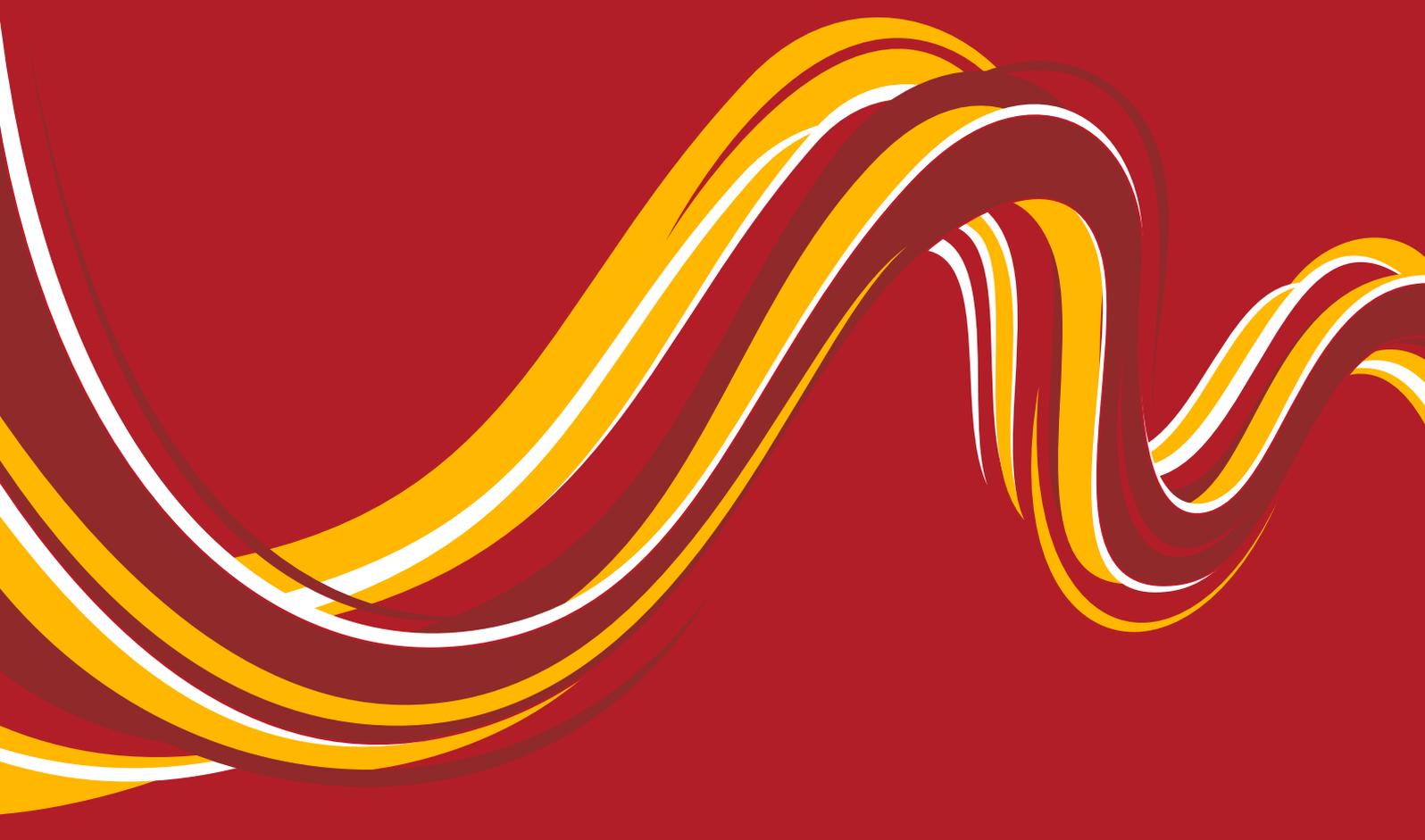




QAA

Review of UK transnational education in China 2012: Overview

May 2013





Map of Mainland China, showing the places included in the review team's itinerary:
Beijing, Dalian, Kunming, Ningbo, Shanghai, Suzhou.

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Introduction

TNE China 2012

1 During 2012, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) carried out a review of UK transnational education (TNE) in mainland China (hereafter China). TNE is defined as the provision of education by one country in another country, and in the present context it refers to the provision of higher education programmes in China that lead to the awards of UK universities or colleges. Data published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that in 2011-12 there were more than 38,000 students studying through UK TNE in China, with an increase of about seven per cent on the previous year.

About QAA

2 QAA has a remit to safeguard standards and to improve the quality of UK higher education, which it carries out within an increasingly diverse UK and international context. It aims to protect the interests of everyone working towards a UK higher education award, regardless of how or where they study, within the UK or overseas. One of QAA's core activities is to conduct institutional reviews of universities and colleges, and to publish the related reports. QAA has also conducted overseas reviews for a number of years, with each one focusing on a particular country. The last time QAA conducted a review in China was in 2006, but more recently it has looked at provision in India (2009), Malaysia (2010) and Singapore (2011).

3 QAA recognises the primary role of UK universities and colleges in maintaining academic standards and quality, and respects their autonomy. It relies on their cooperation in carrying out its work, and in return provides advice and support. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), published by QAA, contains definitive national reference points and practical guidance for higher education providers on maintaining academic standards and improving quality. Of particular relevance to this review is *Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others*.

TNE review process

4 QAA started this review by conducting a survey in May 2011 to collect information from UK universities and colleges about their TNE activity in China. This was followed by desk-based studies of those institutions with significant TNE in China, based on standard information sets provided by each institution. These studies focused on the operation of institutional procedures for managing overseas provision, and the aim was to uncover any issues concerned with academic standards and quality in the context of TNE. The studies were supplemented by visits to a sample of the related institutions in China, giving an opportunity to follow up on identified issues and also to look more directly at the student experience. Visits were undertaken by a team of senior staff from UK universities (that is, by peer review) and by staff from QAA. The visits involved meetings with staff from both the UK and Chinese institutions, and with students. The institutions to be visited were chosen so as to reflect a cross-section of the overall variety of UK TNE in China.

5 To summarise, the TNE China review comprised four key stages:

- analysis of TNE in China, based on data from HESA and the QAA survey
- desk-based studies, utilising information sets provided by universities and colleges
- China visit between 26 November and 7 December 2012

- review findings published as reports and case studies on individual partnerships, together with an overview report.

6 The following links were visited in China, and a separate review report has been published on each one. These are available at:

www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/overseas/Pages/China-2012.aspx.

- University of Central Lancashire
North China University of Technology, Beijing
- Durham University
Fudan University, Shanghai
- University of Greenwich
Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, Kunming
- Harper Adams University
Beijing University of Agriculture
- University of Liverpool
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou
- London Metropolitan University
Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine
- University of Nottingham
University of Nottingham, Ningbo campus
- Queen Mary, University of London
Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications
- University of Reading
Beijing Institute of Technology
- University of Surrey
Surrey International Institute-DUFE (Dongbei University of Finance and Economics), Dalian

7 QAA has also compiled a set of four case studies that deal with different aspects of setting and maintaining academic standards, as listed below. The case studies are based on the information sets provided by the universities concerned. QAA also had discussions with staff at the UK universities and, as relevant, with staff and students at their partner institutions in China.

- **Bridging the academic-professional divide**
Oxford Brookes University
- **Dealing with diverse progression routes**
Staffordshire University
The International College: Global Institute of Software Technology, Suzhou
- **Handling the complexities of a university consortium**
Northern Consortium
Sino-British College, USST (University of Shanghai for Science and Technology)
- **Managing assessment in a foreign language**
University of Wales
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

In addition, QAA has looked back at the partnerships it reviewed in 2006 and prepared a brief synopsis of how they have fared in the period between then and now.

8 Over the period of the review, QAA liaised regularly with relevant organisations in China and made preparatory visits to China in 2010 and 2011, meeting representatives from the following government bodies:

- the Ministry of Education
- China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre (CDGDC)
- Chinese Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE)
- Beijing Municipal Education Commission
- Shanghai Municipal Education Commission
- Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute (SEEI).

QAA would like to thank the British Council in China for facilitating these arrangements.

9 Representatives from CDGDC, QAA's nearest counterpart organisation in China, joined several of the review visits in the capacity of observer. CDGDC is an administrative department directly under the Ministry of Education, and among its responsibilities is to conduct research and to advise on the equivalence between Chinese and foreign degrees. QAA would like to thank CDGDC for its cooperation during the review.

Higher education in China

Overview of the higher education system

10 Students in China gain access to higher education through a national entrance examination (gaokao), normally taken in their last year of secondary school, although there has been no age limit since 2001. There are two levels of undergraduate study: the four-year bachelor's degree and the three-year diploma (dazhuan). Students can upgrade from a diploma to a degree by passing an examination towards the end of their programme and studying for a further two years. A master's degree involves two or three years of study, and a doctoral degree three years.

11 The Chinese higher education sector comprises over 2,000 institutions, known as regular institutions, which recruit students from a national quota for higher education. The recruitment process is hierarchical and sequential: degree-awarding institutions are divided into three tiers and tier 1 recruits first, followed by tier 2, and then tier 3. Selection is based on students' gaokao results, and those with the best results are recruited at tier 1, and so on down the line. Students with the lowest gaokao scores, or whose abilities or interests are more practical than academic, go to dazhuan colleges.

12 The regular institutions may be divided into the following broadly hierarchical groups:

Regular institutions	Focus	Number
Top universities (Project 985)	Research	39
Key universities (Project 211)	Research and teaching	73
Other universities (mainly regional)	Teaching with some research	1,000
Tertiary colleges - non-university	Teaching	133
Tertiary colleges - vocational (dazhuan)	Teaching of applied programmes	1,113
Total		2,358

Table 1: Types of regular institution (source: Chinese Ministry of Education Statistics, 2010)

Note: Project 985 was aimed at creating world-class universities, while Project 211 was aimed at strengthening selected universities. Project 211 includes the 39 Project 985 universities, plus another 73 universities, making 112 in total.

13 Higher education institutions are administered either by central government (111 institutions) or by regional government (1,573). In addition, there are 674 non-state or private (minban) institutions. Originally these were set up for students who did not pass the gaokao, helping to meet a social need and facilitating national self-study programmes, but latterly they have been established as public-private partnerships and run along business lines. Some minban are associate colleges of public universities, sometimes called secondary colleges, and others are upgraded dazhuan colleges. Most recruit locally and tend to take students with lower gaokao results. They also recruit 'off-quota' for adult education or distance-learning programmes.

14 China's economic reforms have provided a basis for its higher education reforms. The underlying strategy has been to encourage market forces, but within a regulatory envelope. The period between 1993 (when the Outline for Education Reform and Development in China was issued) and 2010 (when the Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development, 2010-20, was issued) has been one of continuous reform, which accelerated from 2003 (when the Action Plan for Invigorating Education, 2003-07, was issued). The reforms have guided the expansion of a system of mass higher education and the development of internationally recognised universities, and have established the legal framework within which

the higher education system now operates. This period has also seen the implementation of quality assurance systems, the introduction of market mechanisms, and an increased interest in international cooperation in higher education.

15 The system of policy-making is complex, so what follows is a simplified summary. At national level, the State Council sets out strategic policy objectives, principles and guidelines, while the Ministry of Education interprets these and devises more specific policy measures, therefore adopting a more executive or managerial function. For instance, it decides on the parameters within which higher education institutions may formulate institutional policies and development plans. These parameters include how many students are admitted to individual institutions each year through the national quota system, how much institutions can charge for tuition, and what subject areas may be taught. The Ministry of Education and the provincial and municipal educational authorities regulate education through a licensing system, with three-year diploma programmes requiring provincial or municipal approval, and programmes leading to bachelor's degrees or above requiring approval from the Ministry itself. The Ministry is also responsible for the approval of applications for foreign education provision in China.

Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools

16 On joining the World Trade Organisation in 2001, China stated the extent of its commitment to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Accordingly, foreign institutions may enter the market, but must partner with Chinese institutions to establish what are called Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools (CFCRS). The term CFCRS covers joint-venture institutions, and also projects to run programmes on a joint basis (joint programmes).

17 The current legal and regulatory framework for CFCRS was introduced in 2003 through the issue of the CFCRS regulations, followed in 2004 by measures for implementing the regulations. Programmes that lead to the award of degrees (or certificates) to Chinese citizens are within scope of the CFCRS regulations, which distinguish between programmes that educate Chinese citizens and those that do not. It should be noted that China has made no commitment under GATS to foreign provision of online distance-learning programmes, and these are not mentioned in the regulations.

18 By 2006, China had become dissatisfied with the overall quality of foreign provision, and the Ministry of Education suspended approval of CFCRS. It issued 'opinions' on the operation of CFCRS, pointing to discrepancies between how they were intended to operate (according to the CFCRS regulations) and how they were operating in practice. In 2007, these opinions were followed by the notification of measures to regulate the system. The underlying concerns appeared to be that the foreign higher education institutions involved in CFCRS lacked a strong reputation and that their main motivation was to make profit.

19 Among the measures introduced was the implementation, in 2008, of two web-based information platforms: the 'supervision platform', containing a list of approved CFCRS institutions and programmes, relevant policies and regulations, and guidance for students; and the 'recognition platform', requiring students to give notification that they are registered on their programme in order to ensure recognition of their degree. From December 2011, there has been a requirement that this registration take place within the first month of the programme. Another measure was a pilot evaluation of CFCRS, covering four provinces (Jiangsu, Liaoning, Tianjin and Henan), carried out by CDGDC in 2009.

20 In 2010, the Ministry of Education decided to resume approval of CFCRS, raising the bar such that permission to operate in China will be restricted to high-quality partnerships involving more prestigious foreign institutions. In January 2013, according to the official Chinese news agency Xinhua, there were 775 Chinese-foreign higher education projects.

21 There are three main ways of establishing a CFCRS in China: first, to set up an institution as a joint-venture; second, to set up an institution affiliated to a Chinese university, which operates as a secondary college; and third, to establish a joint programme. Most of the partnerships included in this review have been approved as a CFCRS, but a few have not. Some Chinese institutions offering joint degrees with foreign partners are hesitant to embark on an elaborate application process, particularly if they see the provision in terms of a mutual recognition of credit, rather than as a joint programme leading to the award of a foreign degree, together with a Chinese degree. The absence of approval means that such partnerships are not recorded on the 'supervision platform'.

Analysis of UK TNE in China

22 TNE takes a wide range of forms and can differ vastly in scale. Students may study the whole of their programme in China, or part of their programme in the UK; study could be by online distance learning, or face-to-face teaching; TNE activity may involve a small-scale partnership with a few students on a single programme, or an overseas campus where there are thousands of students on a multiplicity of programmes.

23 As mentioned in paragraph 4, QAA surveyed all UK higher education institutions in order to find out more about the nature and extent of their TNE activity in China. The response rate to the survey was 100 per cent and the data collected related to the academic year 2010-11. For the purposes of the survey, TNE was divided into the following categories:

- A: branch campus
- B: partnership
- C: distance learning through flexible and distributed learning (FDL).

Category B (partnership) was further sub-divided into:

- B1 - students in China follow a programme leading to an award from the UK institution, sometimes completing the whole programme in China, but sometimes transferring to the UK to complete parts of the programme
- B2 - students start by following a programme offered by the partner, but later transfer (under an articulation agreement) to a programme at the UK institution, but with an entitlement to advanced standing on academic grounds.

Thus, under B1 students do not change their programme, although they may change their location of study, whereas under B2 students change both their programme and their location of study.

Category C (FDL) was divided into:

- C1 - students follow a programme of the UK institution without the assistance of any support centre in China
- C2 - students follow a programme of the UK institution with the assistance of a support centre in China that is approved by the UK institution.

24 The survey found 70 UK institutions with provision in China falling into one or more of the above categories. Collectively, these institutions reported 275 distinct relationships with 186 separate Chinese institutions. The total number of students studying in China through UK TNE was recorded by the survey as 33,874. In addition, there were 5,392 students studying in the UK, having transferred from a partner institution in China. Of the many different programmes being offered through UK TNE in China, 42 per cent are in the Business and Finance subject areas, and 19 per cent in Engineering. The survey found most of the TNE to be located geographically in the major urban centres of China's eastern seaboard: Beijing, Shanghai, Ningbo (Zhejiang province),

Suzhou (Jiangsu province), and Guangzhou and Shenzhen (Guangdong province), although there were articulation agreements involving Chinese institutions with a broader geographical spread.

25 The number of these institutions reporting TNE in each category is shown below. A more detailed statistical analysis of UK TNE in China is given in Annex 1.

TNE China	Branch campus	Partnership		Distance-learning (FDL)		Total
Category	A	B1	B2	C1	C2	
UK institutions	1	28	48	21	2	
Students - China	4,415	9,495	-	19,812	152	33,874
Students - UK	355	1,048	3,989	-	-	5,392

Table 2: TNE in China reported in QAA survey

Findings of the review

26 The following sections deal with the main themes arising from the review as a whole. Executive summaries of the review reports and case studies on individual partnerships are given in Annexes 2 and 3, respectively.

Multiplicity of models

27 There is a multiplicity of models for cooperation between Chinese and foreign institutions. China's approach to TNE seems to have been eclectic, with the ground rules fairly lax to start with, but tightened later to encourage some models and discourage others. This means that some partnerships, established during one period, may later have found themselves in a different and less conducive regulatory environment, once Chinese government thinking had moved on. The analysis of the partnerships previously reviewed in 2006 (Annex 4) illustrates how, in several cases, they had to adapt to changes in circumstances, and it identifies two cases where the partnerships were terminated altogether. It is therefore important for UK institutions to keep abreast of developments in the Chinese regulatory environment, and not to delegate this responsibility entirely to the Chinese partner, even though it is the Chinese partner that has the responsibility for making any necessary applications for approval to the Chinese authorities.

28 This is not to suggest that changes on the UK side do not affect partnerships in China. The University of Wales, whose reorganisation has led to the closure of its validation service, is an example of this, where the impact has been far-reaching on a number of partnerships in China. A tightening of the rules for issuing UK visas to students has made it more difficult for students to transfer to the UK, and there was also a period recently during which London Metropolitan University was prevented by the UK authorities from accepting foreign students, although this restriction has since been lifted.

29 The review came across some instances where the partners themselves seem to perceive their partnership differently. For example, the University of Central Lancashire sees its collaboration with the North China University of Technology as a franchise of part of its degree course, whereas the Chinese partner sees it as providing an alternative route to its own degree; and Durham University sees itself as offering an applied doctoral programme, whereas its partner, Fudan University, sees the programme as advanced professional training.

30 QAA's review of TNE in China embraced a wide range of models:

The joint-venture institution - a separate legal entity from the collaborating institutions themselves, though the examples in this review display different characteristics. The University of Nottingham retains direct academic control over operations at its Ningbo campus, whereas Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University is a new, independent institution (the product of a collaboration between Xi'an Jiaotong University and the University of Liverpool), which is accredited by the University of Liverpool to develop and deliver the programmes that lead to its awards.

The 'secondary college' - a separate institution that is affiliated to the Chinese partner. Examples include the Surrey International Institute-DUFE, located in premises provided by Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE); and the Sino-British College, located in premises provided by the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology.

The 'double campus' - students start their programme with the Chinese partner, but then are required to transfer to the UK to complete their programme with the UK partner. Examples include the partnership between Harper Adams University and Beijing University of Agriculture, and the partnership between the University of Central Lancashire and the North

China University of Technology. The collaboration between Staffordshire University and the Global Institute of Software Technology is similar in structure, but in this case the Chinese partner is a dazhuan college, rather than a university.

The 'joint programme' - students generally complete their entire programme with the Chinese partner (although they may have an option to transfer to the UK partner). Such joint programmes vary in terms of both how they are delivered and the extent of involvement of the respective partners. A block-teaching model is often adopted so that the UK partner can teach using 'fly-in fly-out faculty'. Some examples from the review are given below.

- The collaboration between Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, where the programme has been jointly developed by the partners and modules are divided 50:50 for teaching purposes.
- The programme offered by London Metropolitan University and Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, where modules from each institution are mutually recognised by both, and the two institutions teach their own respective modules.
- The collaboration between the University of Reading and Beijing Institute of Technology, where the University of Reading teaches all modules in intensive one-week blocks, while the partner provides teaching support at other times.
- The doctoral programme offered by Durham University in conjunction with Fudan University, where the main academic input is from Durham University, while Fudan University provides pastoral and English language support.
- The collaboration between the University of Wales and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, where all teaching is undertaken by the partner, and is entirely in Chinese (although the programme is based on one developed by Swansea Metropolitan University).

The distance-learning programme - students study programme materials, either alone or with the assistance of a support centre. The main example is the Accounting and Finance programme offered by Oxford Brookes University in conjunction with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). Another example is the master's programme offered by the University of Greenwich, with tutor support from Yunnan University of Finance and Economics.

The advanced professional programme - a postgraduate programme is offered on a part-time basis to managers in employment. Examples include Durham University's Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) and the University of Wales' Master of Business Administration (MBA).

Double degrees

31 China operates a system of degree programme accreditation by the Ministry of Education under which degree-awarding powers attach to specific TNE programmes, rather than to a CFCRS and all its programmes. The CFCRS (institution or programme) is envisaged to involve a partnership between education institutions of a similar type, so in the context of universities both partners would normally be degree-awarding institutions. A common arrangement is where a CFCRS is able to offer a double degree: two separate degrees awarded by the respective partner institutions. Chinese students within the higher education quota are eligible for such a double degree, and both degrees have full recognition in China, provided that students have completed the necessary notification on the 'recognition platform'. 'Off-quota' Chinese students are not eligible to be awarded the Chinese degree, so may only be awarded the degree of the foreign institution.

32 Most of the undergraduate programmes included in this review lead to a double degree. The exceptions are as follows: the degrees offered by the University of Nottingham Ningbo, whose

partner is not a university but a general education provider; the degrees offered by Oxford Brookes University as an adjunct to the professional qualification from ACCA, since there is no other degree-awarding partner involved; and the degrees offered by Staffordshire University, whose partner, as a dazhuan college, is unable to award bachelor's degrees. In the latter case, however, students are eligible for a double award on successful completion of their programme in China (a UK Diploma of Higher Education and the Chinese dazhuan).

33 Even so, collaborations that are not operating under the CRCRS regulations are also offering double degrees. Students who transfer to the UK on the basis of an articulation agreement may obtain a double degree if there is mutual recognition of the parts of the programme studied at each institution. The number of students involved in such programmes appears to be under-reported. In the UK, they are not picked up in statistical returns to HESA until they reach the UK institution, part-way through their programme. In China, the programme will not appear on the 'supervision platform', as it is not approved as a CFCS by the Ministry of Education. This means that some students may spend one or two years studying for a UK degree without actually being registered on that degree, either in the UK or in China.

34 Perhaps inevitably, some programmes leading to a double degree may be operated as two parallel programmes, where each partner concerns itself with its own requirements with little reference to the requirements of the other. Several of the programmes covered in this review displayed this characteristic to some extent, and it was difficult to tell how the UK institution would come to know about any repetition of syllabus content between the two programmes. Conversely, there were double degrees based on a single programme and the same assessed student work, but with academic requirements additional to those required for the award of a single degree by either institution. A case in point is the joint programme offered by Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. In a recent revision of the Quality Code (effective from January 2013), UK institutions will, in future, be expected to make it clear in the degree certificate and/or record of achievement if a programme leads to a double award.

Foreign input to higher education in China

35 In developing its higher education system, China has introduced foreign (Western) models, while still retaining the essential characteristics of its own educational culture and system. As mentioned in paragraph 27, this approach has led to a multiplicity of different models operating side by side. In more recent years, particularly since 2010, the emphasis has shifted towards a wish to import quality rather than quantity.

36 China's ideal appears to be to create partnerships of equals in higher education; the vision stated by Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University perhaps exemplifies this. It envisages itself as a 'research-led international university in China and a Chinese university recognised internationally for its unique features in learning and teaching, research, service to society, and education management'.

37 This ideal translates into the objective of having the Chinese partner more closely involved with its foreign partner in all the academic facets of the project. Accordingly, the joint development of a curriculum by both partners is preferred to the simple utilisation of a curriculum previously developed by the foreign partner. The clearest example of a jointly developed curriculum in this review is the joint programme of Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. Meanwhile, the establishment of a joint research centre at Beijing University of Agriculture, in conjunction with Harper Adams University, in order to study the agri-food supply chain, lays the foundation for a greater joint involvement in curriculum development.

38 One of the aims of Chinese-foreign cooperation in higher education appears to be to extend the skills of graduates beyond those needed to build a large technical knowledge base.

However, the development of these so-called soft skills - which include leadership, problem-solving, team working, communication, innovation, critical thinking and entrepreneurship - also implies a greater adoption in China of Western approaches to teaching and learning.

These approaches are characterised by: independent learning and research projects; academic discussion between students and tutors as peers; analysis and problem-solving through the use of case studies; oral presentations on topics to students and tutors; and the use of personal development planning. The implementation of such approaches is not as easy as stating them as an objective, since they are often at odds with the conventional Chinese approach, which involves heavily timetabled class teaching, a deference of students to their tutors, and an emphasis on knowledge acquisition.

39 The sharing of Western approaches to teaching and learning occurs through partnerships in a number of ways. Many of the UK universities involve themselves directly in the delivery of programmes in China, often through a fly-in fly-out faculty. Staff exchanges between institutions allow experience to be gained on a reciprocal basis and for longer periods: in the case of the University of Nottingham, staff may move between its campuses in China, Malaysia and the UK. UK universities also organise specific staff development programmes or conferences aimed at the staff in their foreign partner institutions. The annual programme, Strengthening International Partnerships, run by the University of Central Lancashire, is an example of a well established staff development event.

40 Where staff of the Chinese partner are involved in delivering a joint programme, the UK partner is often able to influence the selection of suitable staff, with experience of higher education outside of China and fluency in the English language being key criteria. This may in turn influence the staff recruitment policy of the Chinese partner; an increasing percentage of Chinese academic staff have some learning or teaching experience abroad. Most UK universities employ systems for checking the curricula vitae of partner staff nominated to teach on joint programmes. Many UK institutions make available their Postgraduate Certificate for Teaching in Higher Education, although take-up tends to be low unless the programme is delivered locally. CFCRS institutions that recruit their own staff, such as the University of Nottingham Ningbo and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, have implemented their own UK-style programmes, and a similar one is just starting up at the Surrey International Institute-DUFE. Also of interest is that Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University is developing a variant programme, at the request of the provincial education department, tailored to academic staff at other universities in Jiangsu province.

41 The use of a fly-in fly-out faculty, combined with a block-teaching timetable, is the source of some debate. The approach has practical merits from the viewpoint of the UK institution and the deployment of its teaching staff. However, it is less well liked by the students in China, who are faced with perhaps too much opportunity for independent learning between the teaching blocks. It is also not well understood by some parents, who are accustomed to a more regular teaching timetable. This is despite the fact that students are invariably supported by locally employed staff between the periods of intensive teaching. Other disadvantages of short teaching blocks are that there is a lack of continuity of engagement between the UK tutors and their Chinese students, and there is limited opportunity to embed Western learning and teaching practices in any effective way. The length of time that staff stay in China for block-teaching and the frequency of their visits are important factors in how well the system works in practice. The Surrey International Institute-DUFE has recently moved from using fly-in fly-out faculty to using teaching staff based in China, and the Sino-British College is in the process of making a similar move. Nevertheless, the fly-in fly-out faculty may be the only practical option, especially in the early stages of collaboration, or it may continue to be essential in some form if suitable local staff cannot be appointed.

42 Online systems can help to maintain connections between UK staff and the students and staff at the partner institution in China, although these systems may not always be reliable.

However, this is apparently not sufficient: in most meetings with students during QAA's review visit to China, the students expressed their desire to have more face-to-face contact with academic staff from the relevant UK university. Moreover, if regular visits from the UK university to the Chinese partner (either for teaching or administrative purposes) do not take place as planned, there can be adverse implications for communication between the partners, for the implementation of processes, and even for student recruitment.

Teaching and learning in English

43 All but one of the partnerships in this review offer programmes delivered in English, the exception being the MBA programme delivered in Chinese by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, which leads to a University of Wales award. This partnership is the subject of a case study and it illustrates that there are risks to be carefully managed in conducting assessment in a foreign language, as well as resource implications, including the costs of translation and the challenge of finding suitable external examiners. These considerations are well rehearsed in the Quality Code and raise important questions about the capacity of an awarding institution to satisfy itself about the quality of programmes that lead to its awards when these are delivered by partner institutions in languages foreign to the UK institution. However, many institutions in China draw a link between following a degree programme that is taught in English and receiving a British-style education; so, in considering student recruitment, most partnerships regard delivery of a programme in English as a key attraction.

44 Chinese students' proficiency in English was understandably a prime concern of the partnerships in this review. This was manifest in admissions requirements, language testing, scheduled teaching, and support systems. There was increasing attention being paid to students' English language attainment in the gaokao, particularly among institutions recruiting at tier 1. Also, even though Chinese universities have primary responsibility for student admissions (as required by the Ministry of Education), there was evidence of the UK institution having an involvement in decisions about the English language threshold. Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University tests students' English language skills on entry, and this has revealed considerable variation that is not reflected in their gaokao scores.

45 While English language requirements are invariably expressed in terms of a score on the International English Language Testing Scheme (IELTS), this test seems rarely to be used in practice. Instead, an equivalence is drawn between the required IELTS score and a score on another testing scheme that is used in its place. It is unclear whether this methodology actually yields students with the expected English language proficiency. The review indicated that various different tests were being employed, ranging from the Chinese College Entrance Test to tests devised by the UK institutions themselves.

46 For undergraduate students, scheduled English language teaching is typically concentrated in the first year (or foundation year) of their programme, although teaching and support is generally available in the following years as well. The CFCRS institutions have specialist English language support centres, including trained language-teaching staff with English as their first language. CFCRS programmes operate at a smaller scale than the institutions, but they still often employ qualified native English speakers as English language tutors. Examples include Beijing University of Agriculture (partner of Harper Adams University) and the University of Central Lancashire, which has recently appointed an English language tutor to provide classes at two of its partnerships in Beijing.

47 The trend has been towards providing English tuition in a way that is related more closely to the main subject programme, so that students' facility with technical and subject-specific concepts and terminology can be developed more effectively. There is also a realisation that students

need to acquire an advanced technical vocabulary in Chinese, as well as in English, so that they can operate effectively in both languages. Many of the partnerships covered in this review have taken steps to increase the amount of language tuition, recognising the importance to students' academic attainment of their ability to express themselves confidently in English. This is particularly so for students required to study part of their programme in the UK, where there is not the possibility of back-up explanations in Chinese. At key progression points, such as transfer to the UK, or enrolment on a master's programme, students may be provided with an intensive course to boost English language proficiency.

48 Closely allied to English language tuition are courses designed to develop students' study skills. These cover such topics as plagiarism and referencing conventions. In meetings during the QAA visit to China, students were evidently familiar with the concept of plagiarism and of the importance of avoiding it. However, external examiner reports on some of the programmes included in this review indicate that some students are not able to use standard referencing conventions, even at master's level.

49 The experience of being taught in English should, in itself, help to develop students' English language skills, although, of course, this does rely on having teaching staff whose own English is of a sufficiently high standard. As a general rule, Chinese academic staff who deliver TNE programmes are expected to demonstrate their English language attainment through qualifications or publications, as well as at interview. Recently, however, Harper Adams University has gone further, by introducing explicit criteria for the English language proficiency of its partner's staff.

Setting and maintaining academic standards

50 Most of the programmes offered through the partnerships covered by this review are programmes that have been previously developed and approved by the UK awarding institution, or close variants of them. Hence the process of setting academic standards, through defining learning outcomes and assessment, has been completed previously, and the programme specification has been already approved, with reference to the relevant subject benchmark statement. In terms of the collaboration with a partner, programme approval is therefore mainly concerned with the capacity of the partnership to deliver the programme.

51 There are some exceptions to the above general model, but even where the Chinese institution has a greater involvement in programme development, the UK institution still plays a key role in standard-setting. For instance, Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University may develop programmes and make proposals for their introduction, but these are subject to an approval process at the University of Liverpool; and the University of Nottingham retains a very close involvement in the development of programmes to be delivered at its overseas campuses in China and Malaysia. Another consideration for these institutions is the principle of equivalence between related programmes delivered at different locations, so that students may more easily transfer between them. In the case of the programmes offered by Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, these have been developed jointly by the two institutions and have been subject to the separate approval processes of each; the programmes have also been designed to meet the requirements for professional accreditation by the UK Institution of Engineering and Technology.

52 The UK institutions covered by this review all displayed great attention to detail when approving programmes for overseas delivery. The importance of this can hardly be over-emphasised as these institutions are responsible for making the awards based on the programmes. In a few cases, where approvals were made subject to points being clarified, or to actions being taken later, the unresolved issues sometimes resurfaced subsequently as still requiring attention. The alternative approach of not approving a programme until all outstanding issues have been

satisfactorily dealt with seems to be the better and safer course of action. It also has the advantage of focusing the minds of those involved in programme development such that they understand the need to really 'get it right' before they can progress with introducing a programme.

53 Assessment is the means whereby a student may demonstrate the standard of achievement required for an award. Learning outcomes and their method of assessment will already have been defined in the relevant programme specification, with further detail given in any related module specifications. To conform with these specifications, the outcome of any assessment process for students studying a programme overseas must therefore be closely comparable with the outcome of the process for students in the UK studying the same, or an equivalent, programme leading to an award at the same level. The typical approach to achieving this objective is for the UK institution to apply its assessment regulations to all its awards, wherever and however the related programmes are delivered. Although some variation in the specific content of assignments and examinations may be permitted, the learning outcomes being assessed should be the same, and the mode of assessment should be equivalent. Assignments and examinations not devised by the UK institution itself therefore need to be moderated by the UK institution. Additionally, the marking of students' scripts also needs to be moderated: first through a process of second-marking, and then through being reviewed by an external examiner, at least on a sample basis.

54 In essence, the above paragraph describes the approach to assessment under the UK higher education system that forms the foundation of awards made by UK universities. However, it is not a system used in China, which has its own methods concerning the award of Chinese degrees. The UK approach may also be culturally difficult in China, since it relies on checking, questioning and criticism among academic peers as the basis of moderation and external examining processes. Chinese academics may find this kind of approach unfamiliar, or even unnecessary.

55 UK marking schemes use explicit grading criteria. Markers are expected to justify marking decisions by providing appropriate comments, and to give necessary feedback to students. There was evidence from the review that Chinese academics did not always readily adopt this method: while oral feedback to students was commonplace, written marking and feedback records were not necessarily available, and this made the moderation of assessment more difficult. It is also worth mentioning that moderation processes can be time-consuming and may place an unexpected burden on the resources of the UK institution if the number of students on a given programme grows very quickly, beyond what was originally forecast. The UK institution needs to be able to act swiftly in such circumstances, to ensure that the critical elements of the assessment process do not break down.

56 The prevalence of double degrees brings into sharper focus some of the differences between the UK and Chinese systems, since in such cases students must meet the respective UK and Chinese requirements for the two degrees. Marking systems for student assessment are quite different: at undergraduate level, for example, the Chinese typically use a pass mark of 60 per cent, whereas the UK pass mark would be 40 per cent; the Chinese marking system has a tendency to bunch marks closely together, whereas the UK system encourages use of a broader range of the marking scale; Chinese students are required to pass all individual programme modules, whereas the UK system often allows for some compensation between the marks of different modules to reach a result for the programme as a whole. These differences are most apparent to students, who can see their performance interpreted differently, depending on whether a module is marked according to one system or the other. Some partnerships employ algorithms to convert marks from one system to the other, and sometimes both sets of marks are recorded and issued to students.

57 Assessment is a critical area for maintaining UK academic standards. Therefore, given the tensions that may arise between two well established systems, it is crucial that UK institutions remain vigilant and continually keep a check that those parts of the assessment process being conducted outside their direct control remain within the key parameters of UK requirements. It is risky simply to assume that UK practices can be easily introduced and sustained. Double-campus

arrangements that require students to complete their programme in the UK have some advantage in terms of their ability to match standards between different student groups. Students from overseas join their UK counterparts, so that there is complete parity of experience for this key component of the degree.

58 Annual monitoring of programmes is used by UK universities as a way of maintaining academic standards and bringing about improvements in the quality of programmes. The process gathers together information on the operation of the programme, including external examiner reports, student feedback, and data on student admissions, progression and completion.

59 Again, applying this UK process to the partnerships in China has led to differing results. From the review, these appeared to be partly dependent on the extent of input that the Chinese institution had in programme development and delivery, and also on the extent and frequency of face-to-face contact between the relevant staff of the partner institutions. In general, however, the process seemed to be regarded as more administrative than it would be in the UK, and only in some cases did it create an opportunity for the evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment by academic staff operating at the programme level, and for guiding changes to module content or delivery. Nevertheless, programme monitoring reports (often prepared by a member of staff from the UK institution) were, in accordance with requirements, being sent to the UK institution for review, action and inclusion in higher-level summaries, to be considered through its committee system.

60 While careful attention was invariably paid to the comments of external examiners, it was evident (from annual monitoring reports) that some of the issues raised had recurred over several years. It was not always clear whether this was because the issues were simply time-consuming to resolve, or because the root causes were not being tackled by the partnerships concerned.

61 The individual reports in this review deal comprehensively with UK expectations with regard to setting and maintaining academic standards, while the case studies focus on some particular aspects:

- the use of a subject benchmark statement in designing a degree programme linked to a professional qualification
- the introduction of progression routes, with reference to the national qualifications framework (since one of its purposes is to identify potential progression routes)
- collaboration through a university consortium, comprising several awarding institutions
- the management of assessment in a foreign language.

Importance of the UK brand in China

62 Among Chinese universities there are different motivations for collaboration, with some seeing a CFCRS as part of their strategy for internationalisation and achievement of world-class status, while others are more market-oriented. Invariably, the Chinese institution takes the lead in promoting the programmes, as students apply from within China. In keeping with Chinese norms, the marketing material is aimed more at parents than at students, particularly for undergraduate programmes. This review looked at publicity materials and the systems in place for monitoring their veracity. In some cases, the review found publicity materials that were prone to overstatement, and therefore potentially misleading. This suggests that greater vigilance is required on the part of UK institutions.

63 In China, knowledge of individual UK universities is limited, and many partnerships seek to market their programmes by emphasising that they are offering a UK degree in China, with content and learning style particular to the UK. This means that UK universities have an important responsibility to ensure that all publicity fairly represents the programmes, the institution and the UK higher education brand.

Conclusion

64 QAA's survey of UK TNE in China, which covered all UK higher education institutions, found that 70 of them (over 40 per cent) were engaged in some form of teaching-related activity there in 2010-11. This activity involved almost 34,000 students, and statistics indicate that this number had grown to around 38,000 by the following year.

65 In developing its higher education system, China has introduced a variety of foreign educational models operating side by side, while still retaining the essential characteristics of its own educational culture and system. QAA's review encountered many different forms of UK TNE: students studying the whole of their programme in China, or part of their programme in the UK; study by means of distance learning, or face-to-face teaching; activity involving a small-scale partnership with a few students studying a single programme, or an overseas campus with thousands of students studying a multiplicity of programmes.

66 TNE in China is a regulated activity and the regulations envisage partnerships between institutions of a similar type, so in the context of universities both partners would normally be degree-awarding institutions. Therefore, a common arrangement, especially for undergraduate programmes, is for a partnership to be able to offer a double degree: two separate degrees awarded by the separate partner institutions. The objective is to have the Chinese partner closely involved with its foreign partner in all academic aspects of the degree programme. China's regulatory authorities take a keen interest in the approval and operation of Chinese-foreign educational partnerships, and when approving partnerships the emphasis is now firmly on quality rather than quantity.

67 This overview report is based on an analysis of the survey data; on case studies, which deal with particular aspects of practice in relation to TNE provision; and on individual reviews, which focus on the management of provision by the partnerships concerned. The latter were conducted with reference to the Quality Code, which applies not only to educational provision in the UK, but also to TNE.

68 The conclusions that can be drawn from QAA's review of TNE in China are listed below as a series of key suggestions, or 'top tips' for TNE. Many might seem to be self-evident points, but it is important to make them explicit, since the implications of ignoring them can be quite serious. Most are equally applicable to UK TNE in countries other than China.

- Stay abreast of developments in Chinese regulation of TNE:
 - do not delegate this responsibility entirely to the Chinese partner.
- Ensure that the nature of a partnership is understood clearly on both sides:
 - standard UK terms for describing models may not have an equivalent in China.
- Make realistic forecasts of student numbers and resource requirements:
 - plan for contingencies: either rapid expansion, or under-recruitment.
- Deal with all outstanding issues before approving programmes for overseas delivery:
 - it pays dividends to 'get it right' before a programme is introduced.
- Keep approaches to teaching delivery under review:
 - fly-in fly-out faculty and block timetables are the source of some debate
 - online systems may not be a sufficient substitute for face-to-face teaching.
- Communicate well and visit often:
 - regular visits help keep the implementation of processes on track.

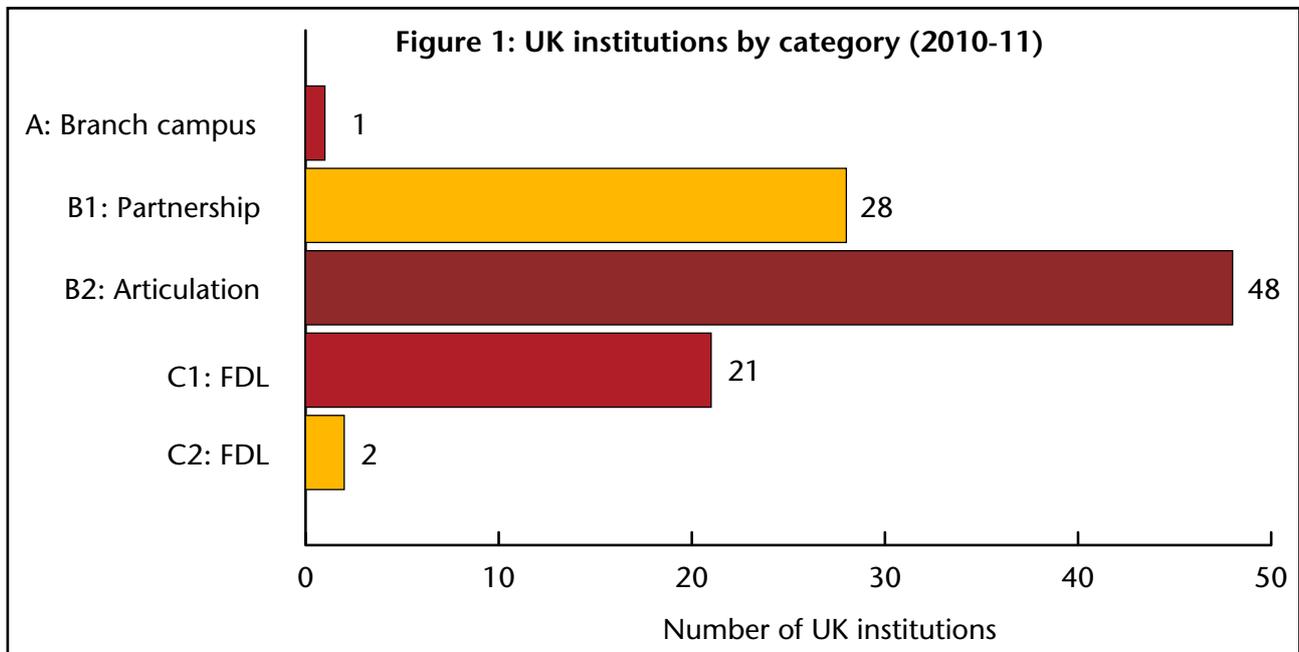
- Pay close attention to English language requirements for admission or progression:
 - ensure that the different testing systems are appropriate and equivalent.
- Do not underestimate the challenges of operating the UK approach to assessment:
 - the prevalence of double awards brings into sharp focus differences between the UK and Chinese systems, both cultural and practical.
- Be on the lookout for recurrent issues identified through monitoring processes:
 - distinguish issues that are time-consuming to resolve from issues where the root causes are not being tackled by the partnership.
- Be vigilant about publicity materials:
 - these can be prone to overstatement and may be misleading.

69 Several of the individual reviews showed that these points were being handled well, with some highlighted as areas of good practice. However, in other cases, the points were mentioned in the context of recommendations for improvement.

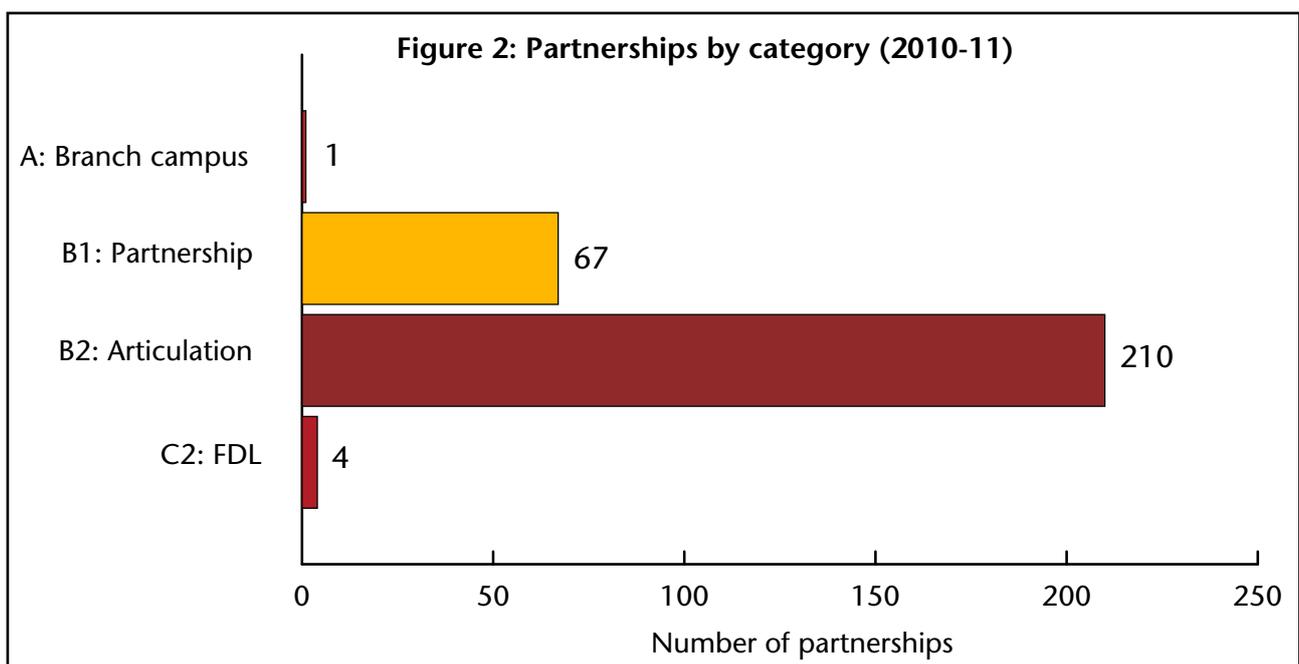
70 There are many opportunities for UK TNE in China. Some partnerships are evidently thriving, while others are finding China a tougher TNE market in which to operate. Knowledge of individual UK universities in China is limited, and many partnerships therefore promote their programmes under the brand of UK higher education: in other words, by offering a UK degree and a UK-style learning experience in China. Taken together, the reports on the TNE China review demonstrate the importance of quality assuring UK overseas provision on a collective basis, with the long-term reputation of UK higher education as the backdrop.

Annex 1: Statistics

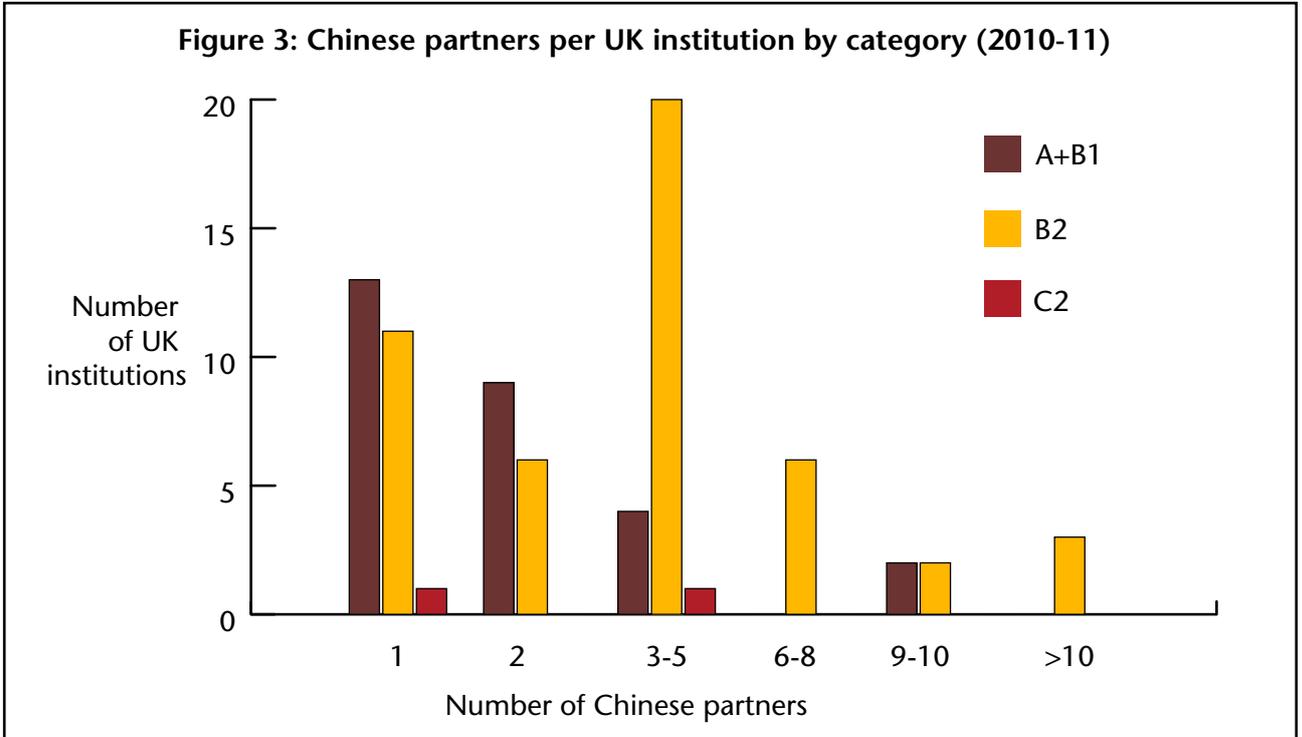
QAA's 2010-11 survey found 70 UK institutions with provision in China falling into one or more of the defined TNE categories (page 6). The number of institutions recording activity in each category is shown in the chart below.



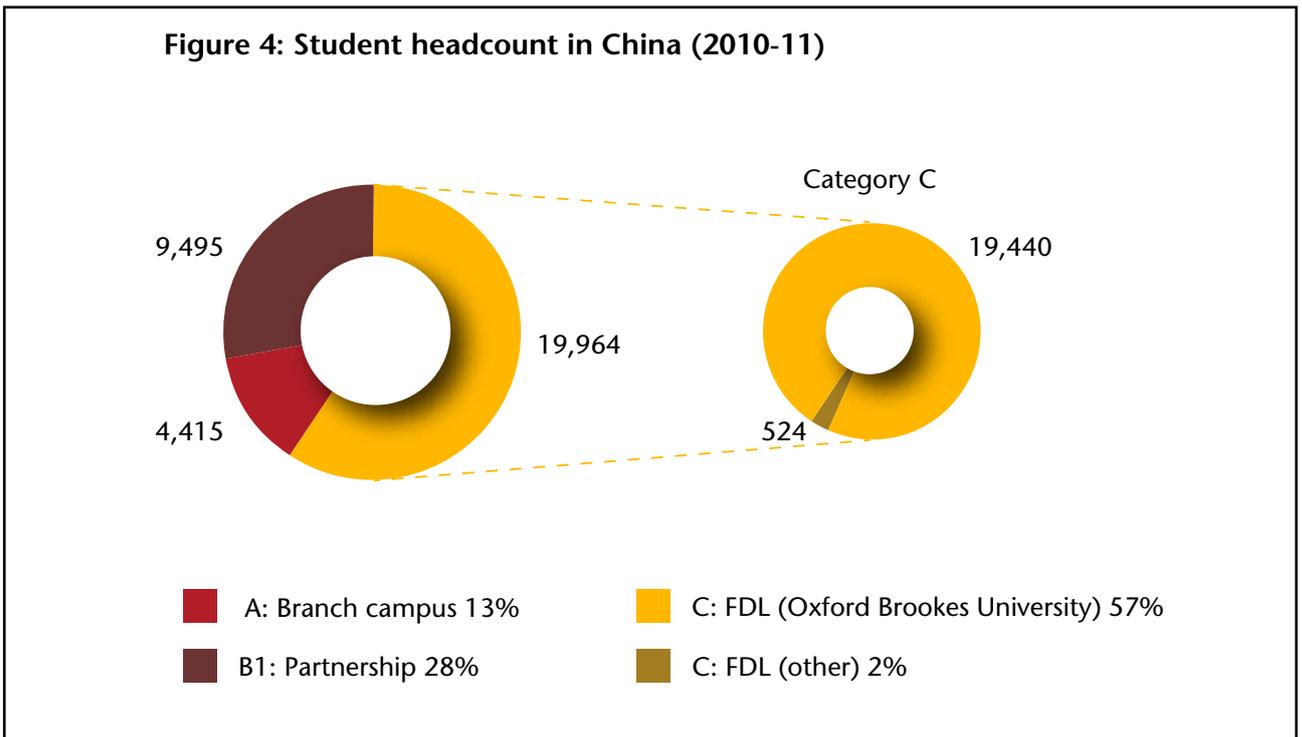
Collectively, the 70 UK institutions reported 275 distinct partnerships with 186 separate Chinese institutions. Note that category C1 (distance learning or FDL without a support centre) does not involve a relationship with a Chinese partner at all, and 10 of the 70 UK institutions have C1 as their only form of TNE in China. This means that, in reality, there were only 60 UK institutions involved in some kind of partnership with a Chinese institution. The number of partnerships falling into each TNE category is shown in the chart below. Note that a few partnerships involve provision falling into more than one TNE category.



Some UK institutions are involved only with a single partner in China, but many have multiple partnerships with different Chinese institutions. Multiple partnerships are particularly common in the B2 category (articulation). An analysis of the number of Chinese partners that UK institutions have in each TNE category is shown in the chart below.

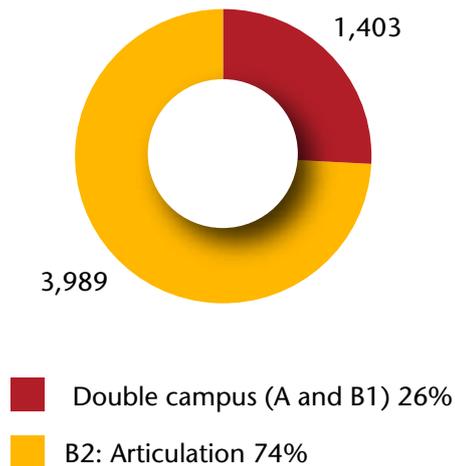


The total number of students studying in China through UK TNE was recorded by the survey as 33,874. The number of students studying under the different categories of TNE is shown in the chart below.



There were also 5,392 students recorded as studying in the UK, after having transferred from a partner institution in China. The number of students studying under the different categories of TNE, and who have transferred to the UK, is shown in the chart below.

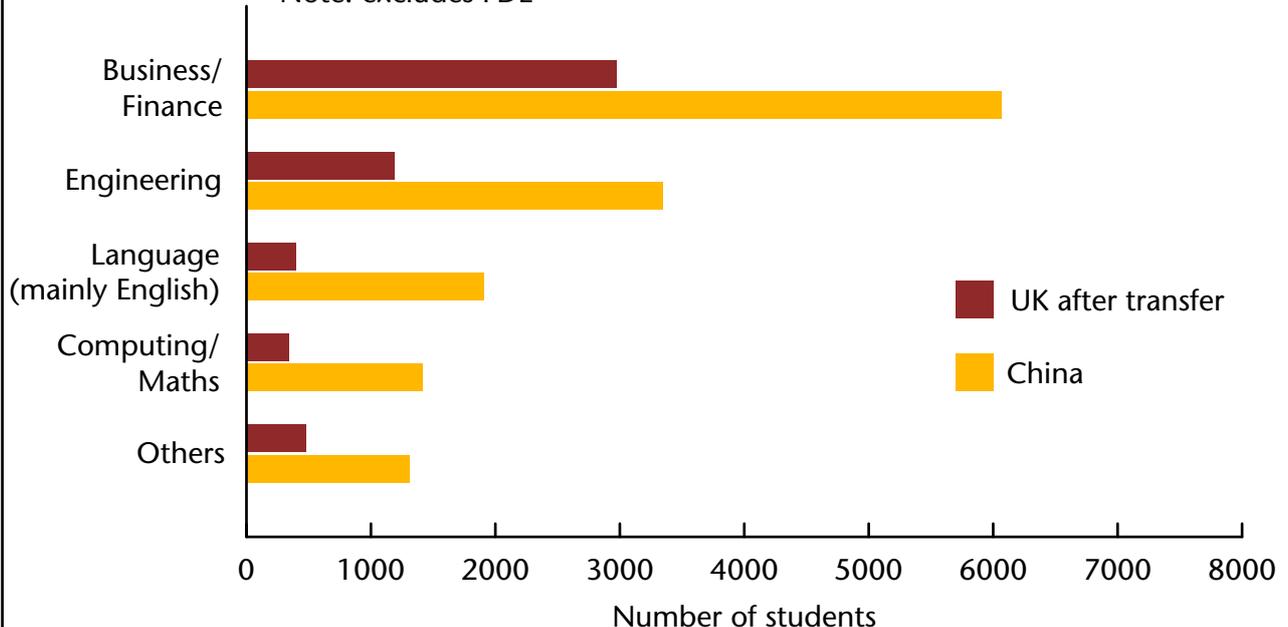
Figure 5: Student headcount in UK (2010-11)



A large proportion of UK TNE in China involves students taking programmes in the Business and Finance subject area; this is followed, some way behind, by Engineering. The analysis is shown in the chart below. For the sake of clarity, this chart excludes FDL, since the BSc (Hons) Applied Accounting programme offered by Oxford Brookes University has such a large number of students (19,440) that it would dominate the numbers.

Figure 6: Top subject areas in terms of student headcount (2010-11)

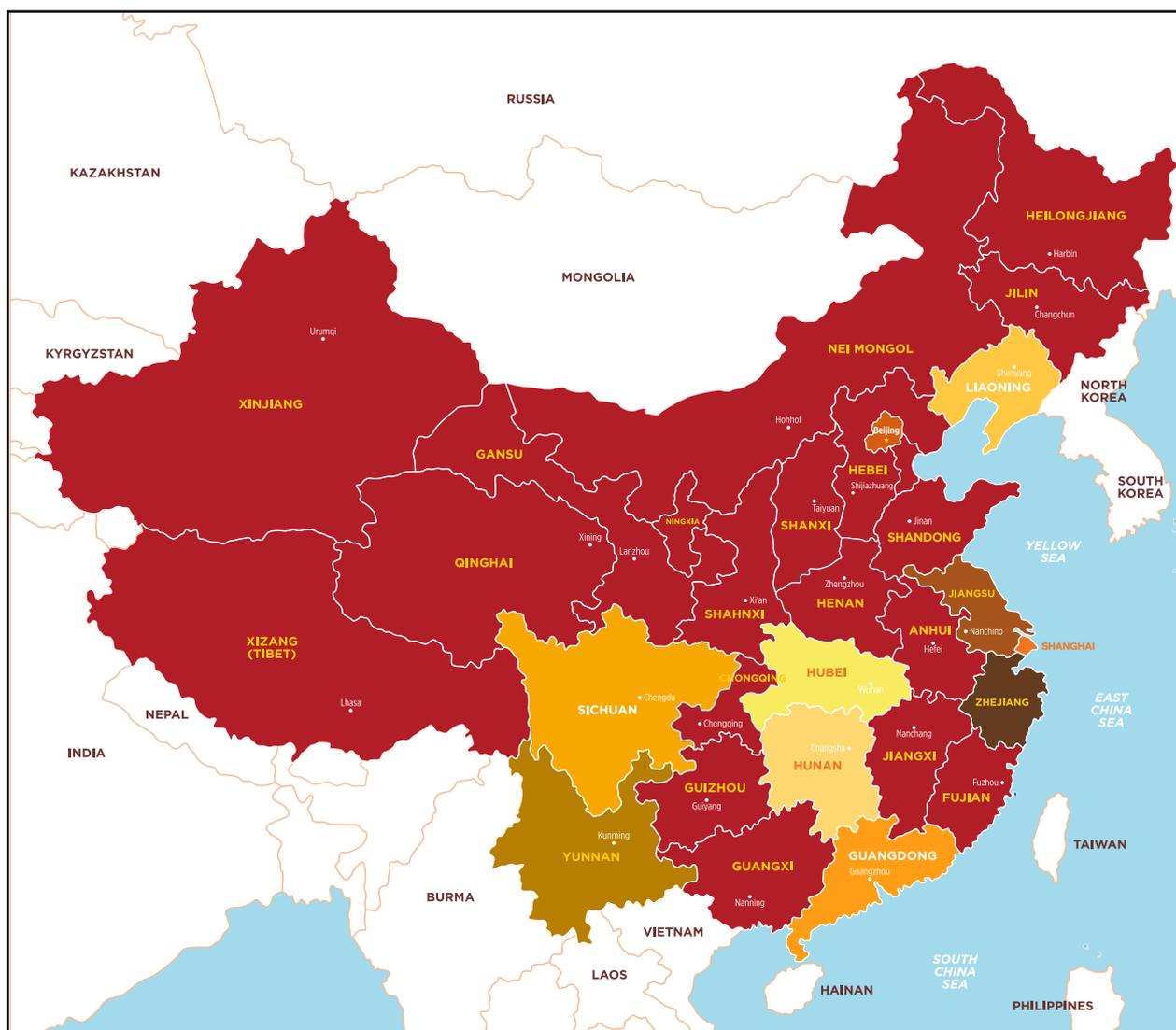
Note: excludes FDL



Most of the TNE is located geographically in the major urban centres of China's eastern seaboard: Beijing, Shanghai, Ningbo (Zhejiang province), Suzhou (Jiangsu province), and Guangzhou and Shenzhen (Guangdong province). This is shown in the chart below.

Figure 7: Student headcount in Mainland China by geographical area (2010-11)

Note: excludes FDL

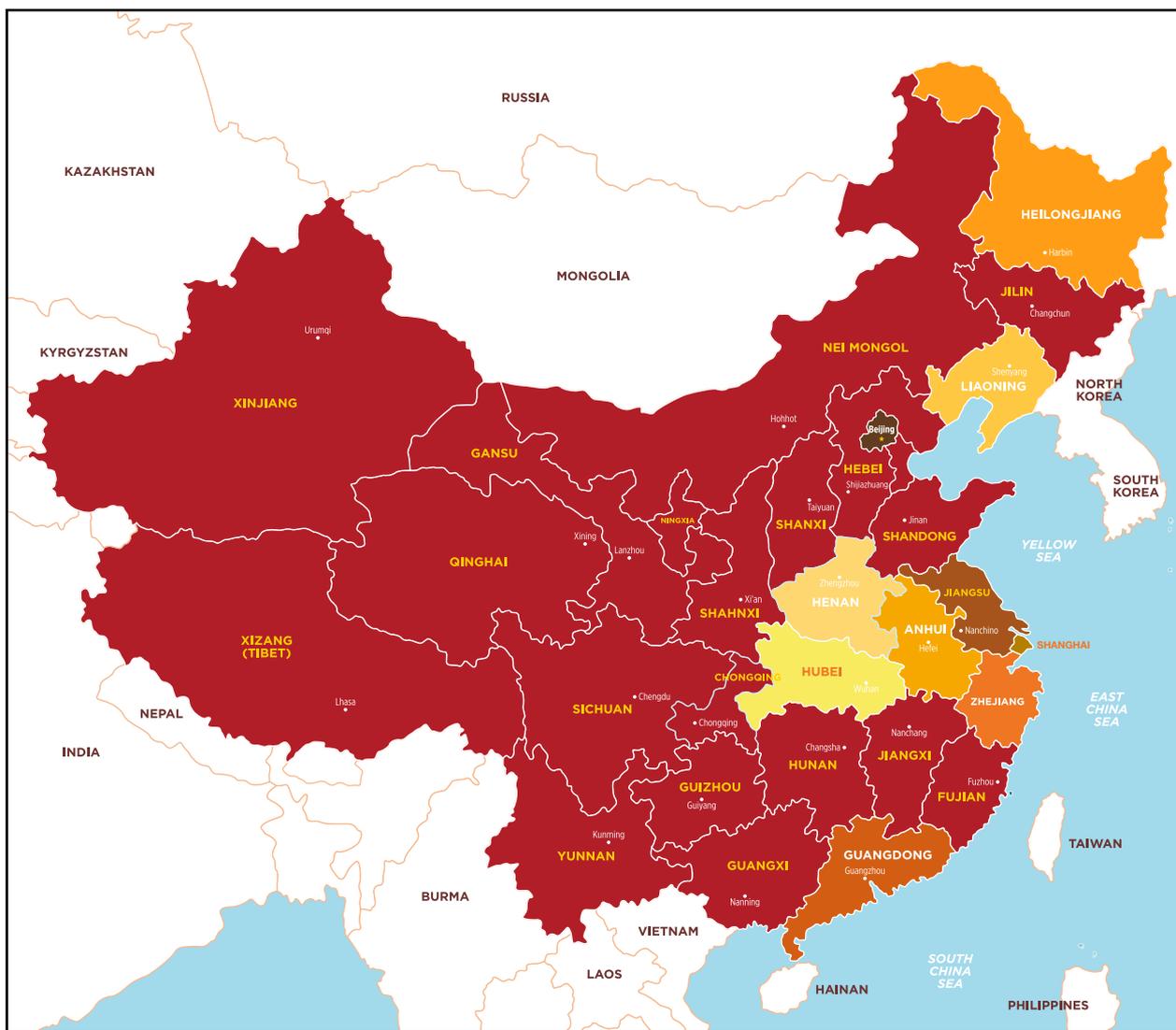


Number of students:

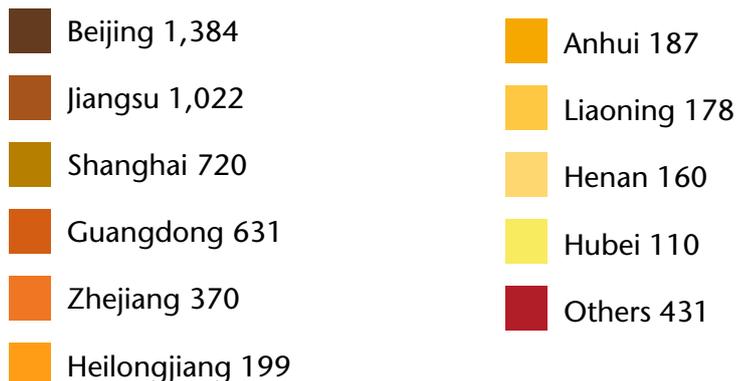
 Zhejiang 4,456	 Sichuan 427
 Jiangsu 3,094	 Liaoning 252
 Beijing 2,455	 Hunan 182
 Shanghai 1,547	 Hubei 110
 Guangdong 989	 Others 75
 Yunnan 475	

Articulation agreements involve Chinese institutions from a broader geographical spread, and this is indicated in the chart below, which shows the number of students who have transferred to the UK from various institutions in China. Many of these have transferred on the basis of an articulation agreement with the UK institution, but also included are those students in category A or B1 whose programme requires a period of study in the UK.

Figure 8: Student headcount in UK by geographical area before transfer (2010-11)



Number of students:



Analysis by TNE category

The table below lists the UK institutions with TNE in China, and indicates the type(s) of TNE each one has, according to the survey categories.

University	A	B1	B2	C1	C2
University of Aberdeen			✓	✓	
Bangor University			✓		
University of Bath			✓	✓	
Bath Spa University			✓		
University of Bedfordshire			✓		
Birmingham City University			✓		
University of Bolton		✓	✓		
University of Bradford			✓	✓	
University of Central Lancashire		✓	✓		
City University			✓		
University of Cumbria			✓		
University of Derby			✓	✓	
University of Dundee			✓		
Durham University		✓		✓	
University of East London				✓	
University of Edinburgh				✓	
Edinburgh Napier University			✓		
University of Essex			✓		
University of Glamorgan			✓		
Goldsmiths, University of London		✓			
University of Greenwich		✓	✓		
Harper Adams University		✓			
Herriot-Watt University		✓	✓	✓	
University of Huddersfield		✓			
University of Hull			✓		
Institute of Education, University of London				✓	
University of Keele			✓		
University of Kent			✓		
University of Lancaster		✓	✓		
University of Leeds		✓	✓		
Leeds Metropolitan University		✓			
University of Leicester			✓	✓	
University of Lincoln			✓		
University of Liverpool		✓	✓		
Liverpool John Moores University		✓	✓		
London Metropolitan University		✓	✓		

University	A	B1	B2	C1	C2
London Southbank University		✓	✓		
London University International				✓	
University of Manchester					✓
Middlesex University		✓	✓		
University of Newcastle			✓		
University of Northumbria				✓	
University of Nottingham	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Nottingham Trent University		✓	✓		
Open University				✓	
University of Oxford				✓	
Oxford Brookes University				✓	
University of Plymouth			✓		
University of Portsmouth			✓		
Queen Mary, University of London		✓			
Queen's University Belfast		✓	✓		
University of Reading		✓	✓		
Robert Gordon University			✓	✓	
Royal Holloway, University of London			✓		
University of Sheffield			✓		
Sheffield Hallam University			✓		
University of Southampton			✓		
Staffordshire University		✓	✓		
University of Stirling			✓	✓	
University of Strathclyde		✓	✓		
University of Sunderland				✓	
University of Surrey		✓			
University of Ulster			✓	✓	
University of Wales		✓			
University of Wales, Newport		✓			✓
University of Warwick		✓			
University of the West of England			✓		
University of Westminster			✓		
University of Wolverhampton		✓			
University of York				✓	

Table 3: UK institutions with TNE in China

The main features of UK TNE in China, according to each category, are described briefly below.

Category A: branch campus

The single branch campus recorded by the survey is the University of Nottingham, Ningbo campus. In 2010-11 there were 4,415 students, with about 60 per cent studying programmes in Business, 25 per cent studying programmes in Language, Communications or International Studies, and 15 per cent studying programmes in Engineering or Science. In all, there are more than 40 different programmes on offer and 90 per cent of the students are undergraduates. Some students also transfer from Ningbo to the University of Nottingham's UK campus; the survey recorded 355 such students.

Category B1: partnership

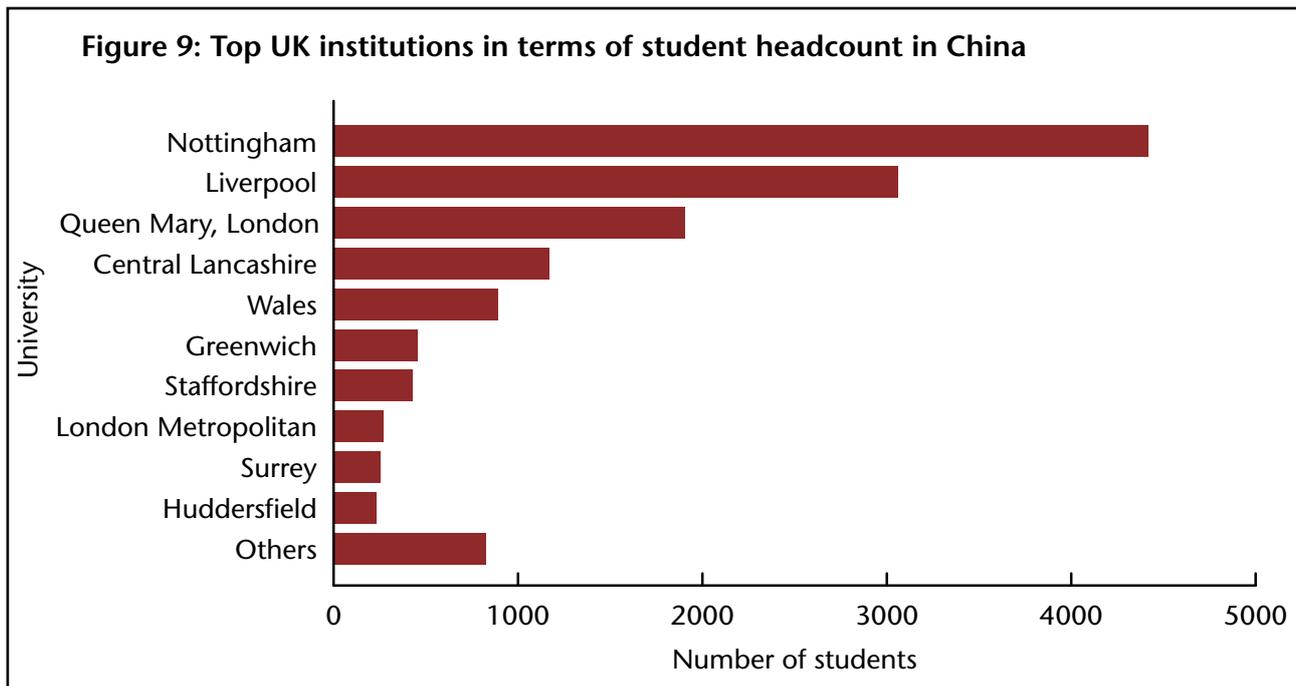
There are 28 UK institutions involved in 67 separate partnerships with Chinese institutions, according to the 2010-11 survey. These vary greatly in size when measured in terms of the student numbers involved, but in total the survey recorded 9,495 students studying in China on programmes offered by these partnerships. The scale of some UK institutions' activity is relatively small and 17 institutions have fewer than 100 students each, often spread across more than one partnership. These 17 institutions account for only 528 students (six per cent) of the total in this survey category. At the other end of the scale, there are institutions with several hundred, or even several thousand students. These include the University of Liverpool (3,060 students); Queen Mary, University of London (1,907 students); the University of Central Lancashire (1,171 students); the University of Wales (892 students); the University of Greenwich (457 students); Staffordshire University (428 students); London Metropolitan University (268); the University of Surrey (252); and the University of Huddersfield (232). These nine institutions account for 8,667 students (91 per cent) of the total in this survey category.

The large majority of UK institutions have either a single partnership with one Chinese institution (11 institutions) or just two separate partnerships with two different Chinese institutions (nine institutions). Several have partnerships with a rather larger number of institutions: for instance, the University of Central Lancashire has 10 different partners in this category, while the University of Wales has nine.

A few of the partnerships share some of the characteristics of category A (branch campus), in that they are institutional partnerships from which an entity has been created that is distinct from the individual partners involved. The partnerships identified in this sub-category are: Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), Suzhou (3,059 students); the Surrey International Institute-DUFE, Dalian (252 students); and the Sino-British College, Shanghai (300 students on full degree programmes). It should be noted that these institutions are expanding as they become more established; XJTLU now has well over 5,000 students.

Many of the category B1 partnerships offer programmes that either require, or give an option for, students to study part of the programme in the UK (double-campus arrangement). Thus, within this category, the survey recorded a total of 1,048 students studying in the UK.

The top UK institutions in categories A and B1, based on their headcount of students studying in China, are shown in the chart below.



Category B2: articulation

There are 48 UK institutions with 210 separate articulation agreements with Chinese institutions, according to the 2010-11 survey. A significant number of these (23 UK institutions) have articulation agreements as their only form of TNE activity in China. While 11 UK institutions have an agreement with only one Chinese institution, most have multiple agreements with several different Chinese institutions. The following universities recorded 10 or more such relationships in the survey: the University of Portsmouth (18); the University of Dundee (17); the University of Greenwich (11); the University of Central Lancashire (10); and the University of Strathclyde (10).

By their nature, articulation agreements do not entail students in China registering their intention to transfer to a UK institution later in their studies. The UK institutions have therefore not recorded any student numbers in China within this survey category, but have recorded the numbers of students studying in the UK who have transferred on the basis of the various articulation agreements in place. In total, the survey recorded 3,989 students studying in the UK having transferred in this way. In terms of student numbers, the main beneficiaries of articulation agreements are the University of Liverpool (696 students, all from XJTLU), Birmingham City University (283 students), the University of Greenwich (283 students), the University of Bedfordshire (243 students), and Bangor University (241 students).

This review did not focus on articulation agreements, since the primary purpose of the visit to China was to look at the institutions where Chinese students were known to be studying for UK awards. Moreover, students studying in the UK that have transferred on the basis of an articulation agreement are covered by other QAA review processes that focus on the UK institution itself.

Category C: distance learning through flexible and distributed learning (FDL)

There are 23 UK institutions offering programmes to students in China through FDL, according to the 2010-11 survey. All except two institutions offer these programmes without the assistance of a support centre in China. The total number of students recorded is 19,964. This figure is dominated by one institution and one particular programme: the BSc Applied Accounting offered by Oxford Brookes University in conjunction with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), which has 19,440 students (case study on page 38). Once this programme is excluded, the

remaining number of FDL students is quite small: just 524 spread across all 23 institutions, with the majority (82 per cent) being postgraduates. Many institutions have fewer than five students, but the more significant players are London University International (144 students), the University of Manchester (122 students), the University of Leicester (48 students), and Herriot-Watt University (43 students).

Annex 2: Executive summaries

University of Central Lancashire and the North China University of Technology

The partnership between the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the North China University of Technology (NCUT), established in 2005, is one of three similar partnerships that UCLan has in China, delivering courses in the electronics subject area. For management purposes, UCLan often deals with these partnerships as a group. The arrangement with NCUT is distinctive in that it leads to a double award: a degree from NCUT and a degree from UCLan.

UCLan has a long-standing partnership model (2+1 model), in which the first two years of a UCLan degree course are delivered by the partner, based on a franchise agreement, with students then transferring to the UK for the final year of the course, which is delivered by UCLan in Preston. In the case of the double degree at NCUT, there is an additional year that precedes the 2+1 to give a 1+2+1 variant of the basic UCLan model. This first year meets various requirements for the Chinese degree and allows students to receive English language tuition, with support from UCLan.

Under UCLan's model, the curriculum delivered by a partner is based closely on the equivalent course delivered by UCLan in the UK. The setting of academic standards is therefore a product of the mainstream UK course approval process. Students from overseas also join their UK-based counterparts for the final year of the course, meaning that there is complete parity of experience for this key component of the degree. UCLan also endeavours to have the same external examiner dealing with the courses delivered overseas as deals with the course delivered in the UK. This is the case for the electronics partnership group and is important in bringing a consistent approach to academic standards for the years of the course delivered in China.

Use of a standard model by UCLan means that requirements and procedures are well understood by the staff and committees responsible for carrying them out. UCLan is also diligent in its recording of process through its reporting structures and committee minutes. Considerable responsibility for making a partnership link work is placed on the relevant UCLan academic school through a requirement for regular routine overseas visits by course leaders. Module leaders are also required to communicate regularly with those at overseas partners delivering the same curriculum.

In the case of the partnership with NCUT, for various reasons, the presence of UCLan staff in China was insufficient during an important two-year period. It was at this time that the partners should have been developing a clear understanding and appreciation of one another's approach and requirements, especially as this partnership involved a double award. Even now, it is clear that the partners each view the arrangement in a different way: UCLan as a franchise of part of its degree course (according to its standard model) and NCUT as providing an alternative route to its own degree. Moreover, the treatment by UCLan of the NCUT course as one of a group of three may have militated against its dealing with issues specific to NCUT and mainly associated with the double degree.

It is clear from documentation that issues that were raised fairly early on as needing resolution are still on the 'to do' list and included in the annual action plans. Part of this will no doubt be the result of the inherent difficulty in bringing together from the UK and China different systems and outlooks related to higher education. Nevertheless, this review does point to a problem that UCLan has in making sure that specific action is undertaken at the right level of the organisation and with an appropriate degree of urgency, even though the issues and intended actions have been recorded in detail.

Durham University and Fudan University

This is a relationship between two well established universities, both within the top 100 in the world rankings (QS): Durham University (Durham), which is a research intensive university and member of the Russell Group, and Fudan University (Fudan), which is a member of the elite C9 League of Chinese universities.

The relationship is centred around the award of a doctoral programme in Business Administration (DBA) offered by the Durham University Business School. The strategic rationale for the Durham-Fudan DBA was to support the School in the internationalisation and diversification of its portfolio of post-experience business and management education, and strengthen the School's research collaborations in East Asia. Durham has adopted a conservative approach to the development of the partnership with Fudan. With the revised DBA programme, Durham and Fudan are now in a stronger position to increase collaboration in both teaching and research, building on the creation of a joint Centre for Finance Research launched at Fudan in 2010. The relationship is seen by both parties to be mutually beneficial in helping to raise their respective profiles in China and Europe.

The collaborative partnership between Durham and Fudan provides students, who for reasons of work or other constraints cannot study or travel regularly to the UK, with the opportunity to pursue a leading DBA programme that mirrors the DBA programme at Durham. Although student mobility can be constrained by employment, domestic and visa issues, the Business School is investing in developing multimedia equipment to enhance communication between students and faculty. There is a strong sense of a cohort community and mutual support network among the students.

The Durham DBA programme at Fudan has yet to be approved by the Ministry of Education in China; appropriate documentation generated by Durham with input from Fudan has been submitted to the Ministry in March 2013.

University of Greenwich and Yunnan University of Finance and Economics

The partnership between the University of Greenwich (Greenwich) and Yunnan University of Finance and Economics (YUFE) was established in 2003. Through its collaboration with YUFE, Greenwich delivers two of its distance-learning programmes: the MSc Project Management and the MSc Real Estate. Both are approved as Chinese-UK cooperation programmes by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Clear written agreements between the partners are in place, based on a form of model agreement devised by Greenwich.

The MSc programmes are delivered through a collaborative model that combines distance learning with tutor support from YUFE, which is designated by Greenwich as a learner-support centre. Since the programmes delivered at YUFE are Greenwich programmes, the process of setting academic standards through defining learning outcomes and assessment, leading to an approved programme specification, is undertaken by Greenwich using its mainstream approval and review processes.

Greenwich provides the main study tools for each course and, at the beginning of each semester, runs a four-day study school at YUFE to introduce courses, course materials, online resources and assessment requirements. YUFE provides tutor support through weekly classes, using tutors drawn from its own staff and local professionals. The programmes are also delivered at two other support centres, including Greenwich itself, but YUFE is the most significant in terms of student numbers, with over 400 students.

Information for students - provided through separate, but complementary, handbooks prepared by the two institutions - is of a high standard, but some of the material from YUFE for prospective students could be seen as misleading through not making clear that the mode of study is distance learning - an essential characteristic of the programme.

A programme committee, which includes student representatives, oversees the local operation of the partnership. These representatives are the main source of student feedback and Greenwich has not introduced the more systematic mechanisms for collecting and evaluating feedback that it uses in the UK and elsewhere.

The assessment regime for the programmes involves students producing a dissertation, and when the partnership arrangements were first proposed in 2003 it was under the assumption that students would undertake the dissertation and receive the related supervision in the UK. However, before the programmes were finally approved for delivery at YUFE this was changed, such that transfer to the UK became optional, although so far no student has taken up the option. Student performance in the dissertation has been an issue throughout the operation of the programmes at YUFE and various remedial measures have been implemented. While failure rates are significantly lower than they were a few years ago, the underlying factors affecting students' performance in the dissertation may not yet have been fully understood.

Greenwich and YUFE hope to strengthen their partnership through joint research activity, and see staff exchange visits as the first stage in this development.

Harper Adams University and Beijing University of Agriculture

The partnership between Harper Adams University (Harper Adams) and Beijing University of Agriculture (BUA) is founded on shared academic interests and the commitment of both institutions to international outreach and to the enhancement of cultural exchange between China and the UK. It is centred on the joint delivery of bachelor's degree courses in Food Science and Retail Management, and International Business. Each of these leads to a 'double degree': an award from Harper Adams and an award from BUA. The courses are approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education as a Chinese-foreign cooperation programme.

Both universities have extensive expertise in agri-food science and strong links with the wider agri-food sector. Their involvement in this area extends beyond the purely academic sphere to embrace applied research and programmes for continuing professional development. This expertise and the industry contacts that have been developed provide the two institutions with the means to enrich the student learning experience. In this regard, the establishment of the Agri-food Supply Chain and Business Management Research Centre, with its potential to enhance learning and teaching, highlights the emphasis placed by both institutions on developing the links between research and teaching. The partners have a similar strategic approach to internationalisation, and their work to promote student cultural exchange - securing industrial sponsorship through financial support of two-way student exchange - underlines their long-term commitment to collaboration.

Course management arrangements work well, and are based on the broadly parallel structures on either side of the partnership required by the formal agreement. These arrangements, combined with strong liaison between staff on both sides of the partnership, provide a secure framework for the jointly delivered courses in terms of operations, quality assurance and longer-term strategy. Links between the partners operate efficiently at both institutional and programme level and are maintained through well established formal mechanisms - most notably annual partnership review meetings, course committees and assessment boards - and also through informal communication channels and reciprocal staff visits. Harper Adams' overriding commitment to maintaining the academic standard of its awards is reflected in the rigour and attention to detail applied in the operation of the annual course monitoring process.

Teaching is resourced by carefully selected BUA academic staff, with good English language skills, combined with teaching support from Harper Adams staff. Students can draw on general academic and personal support available from a variety of individuals and there are thorough student induction arrangements at key stages of the course. Harper Adams has formulated plans, yet to be implemented systematically, to extend the use of electronic resources to enhance student learning at BUA. The student feedback systems in place enable issues to be raised and facilitate effective student input to course evaluation, operation and development.

As Harper Adams seeks to extend its outreach in China through the development of partnerships with selected Chinese universities, its collaboration with BUA provides a useful model, which Harper Adams has already used as a reference point in a recent agreement with another university in China. While building on its experience of the collaboration with BUA to broaden its partnership activity in China, Harper Adams is also continuing to strengthen and deepen its links with BUA. The student cultural exchange initiative, plans to introduce joint master's programmes, and continuing engagement with joint research clearly demonstrate Harper Adams' active and forward-looking approach to this collaboration.

University of Liverpool and Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) is the product of a collaboration between Xi'an Jiaotong University and the University of Liverpool (Liverpool) and was established in 2006 as a new independent university. Under a partnership agreement with Liverpool, XJTLU is accredited to develop and deliver programmes that involve the award of a Liverpool degree. In most cases, students on undergraduate programmes are eligible for a double degree - an award from Liverpool and an award from XJTLU. The method of collaboration employed by Liverpool has allowed it to find a secure pathway through the complex regulatory environment in China. By working through institutions that understand the rules and procedures, Liverpool has been able to ensure that XJTLU students receiving its awards can be confident that these are recognised by the relevant Chinese authorities.

XJTLU aims to blend the strengths of the Chinese and UK higher education systems. It has been conceived as a partnership of equals such that neither side can dominate or undermine the other in practice, but within this scheme, XJTLU has adopted many characteristics of the UK higher education system. Its longer-term vision is to become a 'research-led international university in China and a Chinese university recognised internationally for its unique features in learning and teaching, research, service to society, and education management'.

A core characteristic of most UK awards is that they are studied, taught and assessed in English. Except for some elements of the foundation year, all the XJTLU programmes are delivered in English, and have been from the outset. XJTLU is aware that the English language skills of students vary considerably on entry. Recent improvements in English language teaching and support have focused on closer integration of the Language Centre with the academic departments and on more subject-related teaching in English during the foundation year. The Language Centre is well staffed and provides support to students throughout their courses, with clear methods in place for measuring their progress.

Assessment, grading, moderation and the effective use of external examiners are areas where UK provision is likely to encounter tensions with the well established approaches used in China. Even a new institution like XJTLU, with no history of its own practices to contend with, has experienced difficulty in making these activities work smoothly. This demonstrates the risk in assuming that UK practices can be easily introduced and sustained. However, these issues are not being avoided: they have been firmly and explicitly dealt with in external examiner reports, and the responses of XJTLU are equally clearly articulated. The key obstacle is less that the staff are applying established indigenous methods - after all, XJTLU is a new institution; rather, it is the high proportion of newly appointed staff involved in assessment who are unfamiliar with the methods and procedures. An institutional action plan for assessment is being developed by XJTLU, although its implementation is an area Liverpool will be monitoring closely.

Against a background of rapid expansion, there is increasing awareness at Liverpool that it needs to rethink its current arrangements for the oversight of the accreditation of XJTLU in order to take account of the size of the institution and the scale of its activities. Within six years, the number of students studying for Liverpool degrees at XJTLU has reached 5,800, plus a further 1,600 studying at Liverpool, following transfer from XJTLU. These numbers are expected to rise to almost 10,000 and 2,000 respectively by 2014-15. However, under any changed methodology, Liverpool will need to be sure that XJTLU's internal quality assurance processes are firmly embedded in that institution, and that they can be relied upon to provide a strong foundation for Liverpool's ongoing accreditation of XJTLU.

London Metropolitan University and Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine

London Metropolitan University's (LondonMet) approach to partnership has developed over time and reflects a long-standing tradition within the institution of engagement with others, both in the UK and further afield. LondonMet is currently embarking on an evaluation of its collaborative portfolio and intends to expand off-campus provision through the development of a small number of new partnerships in targeted regions, and through increasing provision with existing partners in Europe and Asia.

LondonMet's partnership with the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SUTCM) dates back to March 2002 and delivers degree pathways leading to either the BSc Herbal Medicinal Science (LondonMet award), or a double award combining this LondonMet award with SUTCM's BSc Chinese Medicinal Science. These pathways link to a level 6 'top-up' award, which leads to the BSc (Hons) Herbal Medicinal Science award, completed either at LondonMet or SUTCM. The provision offered through the link is currently approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education until December 2017.

The programme delivered under this collaboration draws particular strength from the partners' shared understanding of the benefits of combining traditional Chinese medicine with modern Western medical knowledge and techniques. The effective exploitation of the parties' respective areas of expertise, and the development of curricula that seek to fuse these elements into an integrated whole, give rise to a student learning experience regarded by both institutions as unique.

The programme operates under leadership that is firmly committed to quality and future success. However, this positive feature brings with it a degree of over-reliance on the work of individuals, requiring LondonMet to consider succession planning, mitigation of the risks of excessive individual workloads, and the need for greater clarity about formal quality processes, with more extensive involvement from the wider teaching team.

University of Nottingham, Ningbo Campus

The Ningbo Campus of the University of Nottingham (UNNC) is not strictly collaboration in the terms defined by the current Quality Code, but aims to be a fully integrated campus of the main University of Nottingham. The campus provides a UK-style education, in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, systems, language and resources. The stated institutional intention is to provide its students with the 'Nottingham experience' in China. As an integral part of the University of Nottingham, the academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience at UNNC are equivalent to those of the home university.

UNNC has achieved its stated intention to provide the 'Nottingham experience' in China in less than eight years. Students at UNNC receive as fully a British education as is possible to provide in China. Together with the Malaysian campus, the University of Nottingham has created a tri-campus university that offers unique opportunities for student exchange and transnational education. This also presents unique opportunities for the development and sharing of innovative practice.

The educational experience qualifies UNNC first degree graduates to go on to postgraduate training in Chinese universities (subject to the usual kaoyan postgraduate degree entrance examination), though many go on to postgraduate study at overseas universities. Student transfer numbers into and out of the campuses remain unbalanced, with students from Nottingham tending to be more reluctant to seize the opportunities offered by the international campuses.

While UNNC may not have the same opportunities for exchange of knowledge and expertise with the single Chinese university of a conventional partnership arrangement, UNNC enjoys fruitful relationships with Chinese institutions and Ningbo city itself has benefitted from the import of expert foreign resource, and long-term relationships are being formed between the University and the local community.

Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications

There have been collaborative research and student exchanges between Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL) and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) since 2000. The spark for the development of the current joint programme was lit in 2003, when the Chinese Ministry of Education actively encouraged Chinese universities to undertake international cooperation. As a result of the advice sought by BUPT from the Ministry, a non-legal entity was established and the first joint undergraduate degree programmes were approved in June 2004. There are now three programmes running that build on the shared expertise in Computing, Engineering and Internet Technology.

The three current joint programmes are dual-award programmes, jointly developed and taught by both institutions. All three aim to equip students with the ability to thrive in the globalised world of ICT engineering, by combining the best aspects of a Chinese and a British education. Students are registered with both institutions and the programmes are delivered jointly: 50 per cent by QMUL staff and 50 per cent by BUPT. All programmes are delivered in Beijing, although students have the option of transferring to London for year four. On graduation, students receive two degrees, from BUPT and the University of London, and two certificates and transcripts. The degrees are awarded to meet the standard criteria of both institutions.

China is QMUL's main area of international activity and the partnership with BUPT accounts for most of the Chinese students at QMUL. There are more students on the Chinese joint programmes than there are on the corresponding programmes in London. There are plans to roll out the joint programme model to other subjects and other Chinese partners. There have also been discussions about moving to research degrees, although the Chinese Ministry of Education's concern about the risk of losing intellectual property while students conduct research in the UK needs to be addressed.

There are numerous positive features identified in this partnership, including the cohesive commitment of the teaching team from both institutions and their strong leadership; the Personal Development Programme for students, which nurtures a number of transferable skills; and the new virtual learning environment, which contains large amounts of practical information as well as learning materials and the provision of 'Test Bed' summer projects for the most capable students. The University is advised to make sure that its degree certificates fully record the details of the partnership and the location of studies.

University of Reading and Beijing Institute of Technology

The University of Reading (the University) has a long tradition of research, education and training at a local, national and international level. The University is developing region-based internationalisation strategies and is currently active in China, the Middle East and Africa. Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT), founded in 1940, offers courses spanning science, engineering and the humanities. It has received preferential state support and its teaching quality has been rated 'excellent' by the Chinese Ministry of Education.

The partnership between the University of Reading and Beijing Institute of Technology arose out of discussions in 2002 between the (current) Director of the Informatics Research Centre within Henley Business School at the University of Reading and the (then) Head of BIT's School of Economics and Management. The partnership, established in 2006, involves a jointly delivered MSc programme in Informatics, originally located within the University's School of Systems Engineering and now located within Henley Business School (formerly the School of Management). The partners have recently agreed to establish a new collaborative programme, the BA (Hons) Accounting, and there are plans for a small core of University academic staff to be based at BIT. Initially, cautious minimum student recruitment targets were set for the MSc programme, based on discussions with potential students and representatives from industry. These targets were subsequently scaled back and a clear marketing plan developed to address a perceived lack of identified market for the programme.

Teaching is delivered in English by University of Reading staff and conducted entirely at BIT in intensive one-week blocks (one per module). Pre-intensive and post-intensive-phase support is provided by BIT academic staff. Originally, it was intended that students would visit the University for up to six months for dissertation supervision, but few have taken up the opportunity because of visa difficulties in the UK and employment commitments in Beijing.

Since its inception, the programme offered under this collaboration has faced significant challenges arising from changes to the location of the management of partnership links at the University. Most recently, the introduction of Henley Business School's new academic structure requires the formal framework for managing, monitoring and reviewing the MSc programme to be kept under review. Amid these challenges and their impact upon the effectiveness of formal monitoring processes over recent years, liaison between staff at an informal level has remained strong.

The MSc Informatics provides the benefits of a demanding learning environment that requires student engagement with UK learning styles, with an emphasis on independent learning. For the University and BIT, the partnership link maintains at its core shared and continuing research interests, and, despite the challenges, the partners' confidence in the strength of their relationship is affirmed by the recent extension of the collaboration to undergraduate provision.

University of Surrey and Dongbei University of Finance and Economics

The partnership between the University of Surrey (Surrey) and Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE) began in 2001, and in 2005 developed into a proposal to develop a satellite operation at DUFE to deliver the second part of a '2+2' undergraduate programme involving the Schools of Management and Engineering. The proposal originally allowed for Surrey to deliver postgraduate programmes and a master's entry programme. Approval by China's Ministry of Education was granted in August 2007 and MSc students were recruited to start in September 2007, with undergraduate students registering on Surrey programmes from September 2009. More recently, the University of Surrey has scaled back the provision to contain it within the School of Management and focus on two remaining '2+2' BSc (Hons) programmes: the '2+2' dual degree programmes of BSc (Hons) Business Management and BSc (Hons) Tourism Management. Students who do not qualify for the Surrey degree take the DUFE degree only. Students on the corresponding BSc (Hons) courses in the UK have the opportunity to spend part of their course at DUFE.

Surrey operates its collaboration with DUFE through a non-legal entity known as the Surrey International Institute-DUFE (SII-DUFE). This was established in 2007 with DUFE as a Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run school.

The establishment and maintenance of the collaborative arrangements between Surrey and DUFE have been carefully and attentively managed. The use of a non-legal entity, in the form of the SII-DUFE, to manage Surrey's work with DUFE has not been without challenges. The establishment of the partnership took place over a two-year period and since that time Surrey has undertaken several reviews of the arrangements and made changes to the delivery of the programmes. Overall, there is robust oversight of this partnership arrangement by the University of Surrey's Executive and its senior deliberative committees in order to assure standards.

Areas identified for further consideration by the University of Surrey include: a review of programme specifications for the dual awards so that they provide details of the delivery of the programmes, and, in recognition that Surrey is already taking steps to instigate a more rigorous periodic review process for its programmes, further clarification of institutional policies and procedures for the regular review of partnership arrangements, so that they take explicit and detailed account of collaborative programmes.

There were several positive features identified in the operation of the partnership, which include: rigorous due diligence procedures; the diligent and attentive oversight of the collaborative arrangements by the University of Surrey Executive; the positive impact on the student experience of utilising Surrey staff based at SII-DUFE to deliver the programmes; the approach taken to enhance the development of students' proficiency in the English language; and the clear and well organised articulation process for DUFE students to undertake study at Surrey.

Annex 3: Case studies

Case study 1: Bridging the academic-professional divide

Oxford Brookes University and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

In 2001, Oxford Brookes University (Oxford Brookes) and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) established a strategic partnership to develop a degree programme that would meet both academic and professional body standards. In developing the degree, Oxford Brookes mapped the structure, content and learning outcomes of the ACCA qualification against those of modular undergraduate awards in accounting, using as reference points *The framework for higher education qualification in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the subject benchmark statement for Accounting, both developed by QAA. The resultant programme, the BSc (Hons) Applied Accounting, is offered by distance learning.

The admissions requirements for the ACCA qualification are identical to those for the degree, so students registering with ACCA are automatically registered with Oxford Brookes, unless they choose to opt out at the time of initial registration. There are approximately 285,000 registered students worldwide and over 19,000 in China alone. In order to obtain the ACCA qualification, students are required to pass nine 'fundamentals' papers, based on a syllabus developed by ACCA and assessed jointly by ACCA and Oxford Brookes, plus an online (self-assessed) professional ethics module. In order to obtain the Applied Accounting degree, students must additionally achieve a pass in a project, incorporating research and analysis, which is designed and assessed solely by Oxford Brookes.

For the fundamentals papers, ACCA makes a number of learning resources available to support students. These include examination syllabus and study guides, examination papers and model answers, and a range of approved study texts, technical articles and micro-websites. Support is also available from ACCA learning providers in the form of face-to-face tuition, distance learning or blended learning (which combines elements of online and face-to-face tuition). Similarly, for the project, Oxford Brookes makes a number of learning resources available to support students, including an information pack, approved study texts and web resources. Students are required to identify a project mentor, who may be an ACCA member, an ACCA learning provider or an employer; all mentors have to be approved by Oxford Brookes.

One of the key issues facing Oxford Brookes in some countries is achieving recognition for the Applied Accounting degree. In some parts of the world, professional accountancy bodies are unwilling to recognise accounting degrees from other countries as the basis of exemption from part of their national Accountancy qualifications. In other countries, concerns about content, or about delivery by distance learning supplemented with optional tuition, are impeding recognition, as is the case in China. Achievement of wider recognition for the qualification is central to Oxford Brookes' future plans, and it is seen as key to increasing the progression rate in China from the professional qualification to the degree, which is lower than normal.

Case study 2: Dealing with diverse progression routes

Staffordshire University and the International College of the Global Institute of Software Technology

Staffordshire University (Staffordshire), through its partnership with the International College of the Global Institute of Software Technology (International College-GIST), is offering a practical education up to degree level in China that is linked with industry and delivered in English. As a private provincial-level tertiary college, GIST delivers diploma (dazhuan) courses for Chinese students, but is seeking to build its capacity to deliver degree courses. These were planned to be introduced gradually as the first student cohorts progressed. The case study focuses on how Staffordshire has responded to the requirements and aspirations of its partner, as well as to relevant regulations in China.

Established in 2009, the collaboration is based on a franchise agreement under which the International College-GIST, using its own staff, is approved to deliver Staffordshire undergraduate courses in Computing and Business. These are offered to diploma level to Chinese students, who must then transfer to Staffordshire for their final year in order to obtain a degree. Alternatively, they may qualify for a double diploma (an award from each institution) on successful completion of their studies in China. International students, however, have the option of studying to degree level at the International College-GIST, or of transferring to Staffordshire for their final year. The International College-GIST also offers the Staffordshire International Foundation Programme, again delivered by its own staff, and this is a common mode of entry to the undergraduate courses. The partnership is therefore able to offer to students a coherent progression route from foundation programme, through diploma, to degree, with exit awards at key stages.

So far, actual student numbers have lagged well behind forecast and this has led to the implementation of a number of measures. These have included introducing intakes each semester and extending recruitment to students from other colleges, who may bypass the International Foundation Programme, provided they have appropriate entry qualifications for the courses and English language proficiency to the required level. From September 2012, there has also been direct entry to the final year of the Business course, enabling students to 'top up' a diploma qualification obtained outside China to a Staffordshire degree. As a result, the final year of the degree has come on stream a year earlier than originally expected and before the first student cohort admitted to the Business courses has completed the diploma. This means that the time which could have been devoted to preparation and staff development at the International College-GIST - before starting to deliver the final year - has been curtailed. Staffordshire's input to staff development in the Computing area is now focused on the management and supervision of the final-year project.

The above measures are resulting in a move away from a relatively low-risk collaborative model, under which Staffordshire effectively retained direct control of the final year of its courses and the standard of its degrees, to one where the less experienced partner is taking an active role in delivering even the highest level of these courses rather more quickly than first envisaged. Meanwhile, however, Staffordshire has recently opened a university centre at the International College-GIST, providing a base for its own staff there. This would help Staffordshire to keep on track the steady approach that it initially adopted in building up GIST's capacity to introduce a range of bachelor's degrees at the International College. It would also support any future application from GIST for government approval to offer degrees in China.

Case study 3: Handling the complexities of a university consortium

The Northern Consortium and the Sino-British College

The Sino-British College (SBC) of the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (USST) was created in 2006, and is the only higher education institution in China involving a partnership between a Chinese university and a foreign university consortium. This comprises nine of the member universities of the Northern Consortium in the UK (Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan, Liverpool John Moores, Manchester Metropolitan, Salford, Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam). The focus of the case study is on how operating in a consortium can help both to assure academic standards and to reduce financial and reputational risk, and on how an arrangement that combines the characteristics of collaboration and competition can work to the benefit of students.

The degree courses offered by SBC commence with a two-year preparatory or 'pathway' programme focusing on either Business or Engineering, developed by the Northern Consortium. On completion of their pathway programme, students may take up an option to continue their studies in the UK, choosing one from a wide range of degree courses in the relevant subject field offered by the nine universities. Alternatively, they may continue their degree studies at the SBC, through a narrower range of courses currently offered by three of the participating UK universities (Huddersfield, Liverpool John Moores and Leeds Metropolitan). Chinese students recruited through the national quota system can obtain a double award - a degree from one of the UK universities and a separate degree from USST - by meeting certain extra requirements.

There are advantages for the member universities in competing for students under the umbrella or collaborative framework of the Northern Consortium. It plays a key role in providing an administrative and quality assurance infrastructure. There is safety in numbers, as financial risk is spread across the members of the Consortium, who also have a joint and several interest in maintaining its good reputation. SBC is a not-for-profit organisation, so there is no commercial imperative to be met. Students benefit from the increased choice offered by the various degree routes and delivery methods, as well as from exposure to the UK approach to independent learning. The delivery of courses in China, whether by UK university staff on a 'fly-in fly-out' basis, or by SBC staff, offers development opportunities for staff through their involvement in curriculum development.

Yet, almost inevitably, as SBC grows in maturity, tensions have developed between its own aspirations and the separate interests of the participating universities of the Northern Consortium. As it implements its own structures and processes, SBC is pressing its case for greater independence in operational matters. Although the UK universities are tending to make greater use of SBC staff for in-country delivery of their courses, they are being suitably cautious about withdrawing their own staff, particularly those delivering the final year. They also remain directly involved in devising assessment and moderating marking. Similarly with quality assurance processes, where SBC would welcome greater harmonisation, the universities recognise that there may be high-level common ground but see it as inevitable that there will be differences in the detail of their respective requirements. Against this backdrop, the Northern Consortium is seeking to promote closer ties between the universities, for example by considering common arrangements for approving courses. Meanwhile, SBC is dealing with the complexities of its relationship with a consortium, and pushing the member universities to make better use of it as a resource in common.

Case study 4: Managing assessment in a foreign language

The University of Wales and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

The partnership between the University of Wales (the University) and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) was established in 2010, enabling SASS to introduce a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme, which is taught and assessed in Chinese and leads to a University of Wales award. There are about 100 students on the programme, and the first cohort is expected to graduate in May 2013. The case study focuses on how the University applies its academic standards through assessment; in particular, how it manages assessment in a foreign language (Chinese).

The University of Wales was established as a federal university awarding degrees taught by member universities in Wales. Its collaborative model has been to offer a centralised validation service for its collaborative centres, supported by participant universities in Wales. However, the federation has recently been disbanded, so the University is now in the process of closing its courses, or transferring responsibility for them to other universities. The SASS MBA programme will therefore be terminated once the current contract ends.

The University's procedures include requirements for the delivery of courses in a foreign language. Accordingly, the University has appointed a moderator to oversee the standards and quality of the programme at SASS. As the moderator does not speak or write Chinese, the moderator's visits to SASS are facilitated by the University's authorised representative in China, a Hong Kong-based agency, which provides translation and helps to explain differences in pedagogical approaches between China and the UK.

For programmes delivered at overseas collaborative centres, the University's normal practice is to appoint both a UK-based and a locally based external examiner, both of whom are fluent in the language of delivery. For the SASS MBA, one external examiner has been appointed from a UK university and the other from a Hong Kong university (who has also studied and taught within UK higher education); both speak and write Chinese. The UK external examiner fulfils the University's requirement to report whether standards of assessment are appropriate for the level of the qualification and are comparable to those of similar programmes in the UK. The external examiners receive copies of students' scripts in the original Chinese, together with an English translation. Working as a team, the examiners fulfil the University's reporting requirements concerning the assessment process. Examination boards are held at SASS and are conducted in Chinese, with translation provided by the University's representative. Minutes are taken by SASS administrative staff and are deposited with the University.

The University of Wales recognises the risks involved in conducting assessment in a foreign language, but it believes that the risks can be managed through the mechanisms described. The University is also aware of the resource implications, the challenge of finding suitable external examiners, and the necessity to employ more complex operational processes, all of which place a strain on the level of control that the University is able to exercise. Such considerations put at risk the longer-term sustainability of programmes involving assessment in a foreign language. For these reasons, among others, the University has decided that, once it has seen existing collaborations through to termination, it will no longer work in languages other than English or Welsh.

Annex 4: Summary - What happened to the partnerships reviewed in 2006?

QAA undertook its last review of UK TNE in China in 2006, when it looked specifically at 10 partnerships between institutions in the UK and institutions in China. Alongside its 2012 review of UK TNE in China, QAA looked again at these partnerships, in order to highlight the key developments during the intervening six years. There have been no individual reviews of these links in 2012, with one exception: the partnership between Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications, which is therefore also the subject of a separate review report. The current analysis, based on information provided by the relevant UK institutions, seeks to explain how and why their partnerships have changed.

While some partnerships have continued largely unchanged, in some cases developing new educational provision, others have gone through significant change, or have ceased all or part of their provision. The key driver behind these developments has been the need to sustain student recruitment and adapt the educational offering to meet student demand. Successful partnerships have been able to develop new provision and add to student intake. Other partnerships, faced with a decline in student enrolment or progression to the UK, have had to review their offering or business model in order to remain sustainable. In a number of cases, the partnership has been terminated because it was no longer viable. In some instances, changes have been made in response to the evolving educational policy and regulatory environment in China, in particular from 2006, with the tightening by the Ministry of Education of regulations surrounding Chinese-foreign cooperatively-run schools (CFCRS). The term CFCRS covers jointly run programmes, as well as jointly run institutions.

The analysis provided by the accompanying QAA report, *What happened to the partnerships reviewed in 2006?*, divides the partnerships into four groups:

Collaborations that have ceased

- University of Abertay Dundee and Nanchang University
- City University, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, and the Bank of China

Collaborations that have changed - by changing educational provision

- Middlesex University and the Research Institute of Tsinghua University, Shenzhen
- Northumbria University and Zhengzhou University

Collaborations that have changed - by adding progression routes

- University of Bedfordshire and the International College of China Agricultural University
- University of Bolton and Shanghai University
- Queen's University Belfast and Shenzhen University
- University of Wales, Newport and Hainan University Overseas Education Centre

Collaborations that have continued

- Leeds Metropolitan University and Zhejiang University of Technology
- Queen Mary, University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications

The histories of these partnerships also illustrate the kinds of challenges and opportunities that arise in developing and sustaining TNE.

Glossary

Academic Infrastructure The core guidance developed and maintained by QAA in partnership with the UK higher education community and used by QAA and higher education providers until 2011-12 for quality assurance of UK higher education. It has since been replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Quality Code**).

accreditation of prior learning (APL) The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past (perhaps as the result of a previous course, self-directed study, or active experience), which is taken into account when admitting a student to a programme of study.

articulation arrangement A process whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent part or year of a programme of a degree-awarding body. Arrangements, which are subject to formal agreements between the parties, normally involve credit accumulation and transfer schemes. Read more in the glossary of *Chapter B10: managing higher education provision with others* of the Quality Code.

C9 League A group of nine major research universities in China, established in 2009.

CET The College English Test, a national 'English as a foreign language test' in China.

CFCRS Initialism for Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools, denoting cooperation between foreign and Chinese educational institutions in order to establish educational institutions or educational programmes. The activities of CFCRS are governed by regulations introduced in 2003.

Code of practice A core element of the **Academic Infrastructure** (now superseded by the **Quality Code**).

collaborative provision or **collaborative arrangement** A term used to describe how institutions work together to provide higher education, including learning opportunities, student support, and assessment, resulting in a qualification from one or more awarding institutions.

comprehensive university A university in China that typically offers a full rather than a specialised curriculum, which includes a wide range of disciplines such as liberal arts, social sciences, science, technical and industrial studies.

dazhuan A three-year tertiary education diploma in China

due diligence Enquiries relating to the governance, ethos, status, capacity, reputation and general suitability of a potential delivery organisation or support provider to satisfy the requirements of a degree-awarding body for an arrangement to deliver learning opportunities.

flying faculty An arrangement whereby a programme is delivered by visiting staff from the UK institution. Support for students may be provided by local staff. Also known as 'fly-in fly-out faculty'.

gaokao National higher education entrance examination in China.

IELTS International English Language Testing System, an international standardised English test.

kaoyan Postgraduate degree entrance examination in China.

post-experience education A postgraduate programme that typically requires students, as a condition of entry, to have substantial and appropriate graduate-level work experience, in addition to an undergraduate degree; a programme of this nature is designed to draw on students' experience and practice.

pre-experience education A postgraduate programme that typically does not explicitly require students to have work experience, and is designed to be equally accessible to recent graduates and those who have some relevant experience.

Project 211 A Chinese government programme, initiated in 1995, that is aimed at strengthening institutions of higher education and key disciplinary areas as a national priority for the twenty-first century. The '21' and '1' within 211 refer to the 'twenty-first' century and 'one' hundred universities, respectively. To be included in the programme, universities had to meet scientific and technical standards and offer advanced degree programmes. It includes the Project 985 universities.

Project 985 A project to promote the development of world-class universities in China, which was initiated in May 1998 and named after the date: year '98', month '5'. Much of its funding is devoted to academic exchanges whereby Chinese academics participate in conferences abroad and foreign lecturers visit China. It includes the **C9 League** universities.

QS World University Rankings Annual university rankings published by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

TOEFL Test Of English as a Foreign Language, an English test by the Educational Testing Service.

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