



# Audit of overseas provision

**University of Bradford and the  
Institute for Integrated Learning in Management, India**

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## Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between the University of Bradford and the Institute for Integrated Learning in Management, India.

### The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

1 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is a United Kingdom (UK) organisation that seeks to promote public confidence that the quality of provision and the standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded. It provides public information about quality and standards in higher education mainly by publishing reports resulting from a peer review process of audits and reviews. These are conducted by teams, selected and trained by QAA, and comprising academic staff from higher or further education institutions.

2 One of QAA's review activities is to carry out quality audits of collaborative links between UK higher education institutions and their partner organisations in other countries. In 2008-09, QAA conducted audits of selected partnership links between UK higher education institutions and institutions in India. The purpose of these audits was to provide information on the way in which the UK institutions were maintaining academic standards and the quality of education in their partnerships. The reports on the individual audits will be used in the preparation of an overview report on the collaborative arrangements for the management of standards and quality of UK higher education provision in India.

### The audit process for overseas collaborative links

3 In April 2008, QAA invited all UK higher education institutions to provide information on their collaborative partnerships in India. On the basis of the information returned on the nature and scale of the links, QAA selected for audit visits 10 UK institutions with links in India. Each of the selected institutions produced a briefing paper describing the way in which the link operated, and commenting on the effectiveness of the means by which it assured quality and standards. In addition, each institution was asked to make reference to the extent to which the link was representative of its procedures and practice in all its overseas collaborative activity. Institutions were also invited to make reference to the ways in which their arrangements met the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, particularly *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, published by QAA in 2004.

4 In October/November 2008, one of three audit teams visited each of the selected UK institutions to discuss its arrangements in the light of its briefing paper. In January/February 2009, the same team visited the relevant partner organisations in India to gain further insight into the experience of students and staff, and to supplement the view formed by the team from the briefing paper and from the UK visit. During the visits to institutions in India, discussions were conducted with key members of staff and with students. The audit of the University of Bradford (Bradford) was coordinated for QAA by Mr W Naylor, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The audit team comprised Ms Ann Kettle and My Philip Lloyd (auditors), with Mr W Naylor acting as audit secretary. QAA is particularly grateful to the UK institutions and their partners in India for the willing cooperation they provided to the team.

### The context of collaborative provision with partners in India

5 In India, responsibility for higher education resides with the Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resources Development. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the national body responsible for granting recognition to all higher education qualifications; it also regulates the use of university title. Constitutional responsibilities for education are shared between the national parliament and state legislatures. Both can authorise the establishment of universities, public or private, while the national government can

grant 'deemed university' status to an institution on recommendation from UGC. Degree awarding powers are vested in universities, but there are also numerous colleges that offer the degrees of universities to which they are affiliated. Colleges may be categorised as public or private based on their ownership; however, funding arrangements blur the distinction because of the self-financing activities of public institutions and because private institutions may receive government aid. The number of private institutions has grown in recent years and these tend to offer more employment orientated programmes than their public counterparts; some award qualifications through collaboration with foreign institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is one of several bodies established with responsibilities in particular subject areas. The remit of AICTE is broad and includes engineering and technology, business and management, hotel and catering management, architecture and town planning, pharmacy, and applied arts and crafts. AICTE introduced regulations in 2005 under which foreign institutions imparting technical education are required to obtain approval from AICTE for their operations in India. There is currently no legal framework for recognising qualifications awarded by foreign institutions on the basis of programmes delivered entirely in India. The so-called 'Foreign Providers Bill', which would introduce such a framework, has been the subject of parliamentary debate but has yet to reach the statute books.

## **Section 1: The background to the collaborative link**

### **Nature of the link**

6 The partnership between Bradford and the Institute for Integrated Learning in Management Undergraduate Business School (IILM) was established in 1996. The main focus of the partnership is on the delivery by IILM of five degree programmes leading to the award of BSc (Honours) from Bradford. The five programmes are Business and Management Studies; Accounting and Finance; Marketing; International Business and Management; and Human Resource Management. The five are identical to five programmes of the same name developed and delivered by the School of Management at Bradford in terms of programme aims, learning outcomes, structure, curriculum, interim and final award titles, teaching, learning, assessment and progression regulations. There are some minor variations regarding placement years, admissions and student support. All teaching and assessment at IILM is in English.

7 At the time of the audit, two of the programmes, International Business and Management and Human Resource Management, were not running at IILM because the minimum threshold of 20 student enrolments had not been met. The total number of students enrolled at IILM on the other three programmes was just over 400, the majority on Business and Management Studies.

8 IILM was established in 1993 as a postgraduate business school by a charitable trust. The IILM Undergraduate Business School was founded in 1996. At the time of the audit, IILM had five campuses in northern India. Bradford had approved the delivery of the BSc programmes at three campuses in Jaipur, Gurgaon and New Delhi. Recruitment to the programme in Jaipur ceased in 2005-06. The focus of this audit is on the delivery in New Delhi.

9 In 2007, Bradford's Senate endorsed IILM as an Associate Institute of the University. This is intended to stimulate a range of collaborative activities through increased strategic alignment, with shared objectives identified in a five-year action/business plan. Bradford's Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of the School of Management are members of IILM's Board of Governors. The audit team heard that IILM regards the partnership with Bradford as the cornerstone of its undergraduate provision.

10 Bradford's Briefing Paper stated that the five programmes delivered by IILM do not fall within the purview of the AICTE. Nonetheless, IILM has applied both to AICTE and to India's UGC for approval of the partnership. None of the programmes is subject to accreditation by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies in the UK, although successful completion of certain modules gives students exemption from qualifications offered by some accounting and finance bodies.

11 At the time of the audit, students studying at Bradford's overseas partners, including IILM, made up approximately two thirds of the School of Management's student numbers. The School's partner organisations contributed about 90 per cent of Bradford's collaborative student numbers.

12 Since the link was established, Bradford's procedures for managing the academic standards and quality of its collaborative provision have been developed and refined, both in response to the publication and revision of the *Code of practice* and also in the light of Bradford's own experiences, in particular, its experience of working with IILM. Bradford considers the partnership with IILM to be representative of its normal procedures and processes for overseas collaborations.

### **The UK institution's approach to overseas collaborative provision**

13 Bradford's strategic approach to collaborative activities is described in its 2004-09 Corporate Strategy, where one of the targets is to increase student numbers by '...developing partnerships with institutions...within Europe and the broader international community in order to maximise access and progression, and to make programmes available to a wider population'. This element of the Corporate Strategy is amplified and supported by elements of Bradford's strategies for internationalisation, quality enhancement and learning, teaching and assessment.

14 According to the Briefing Paper, Bradford expects its collaborative arrangements to give 'absolute priority' to ensuring the comparability of the learning experience with that at Bradford, the equivalence of academic standards and the proper exercise of the partners' duty of academic care for all students enrolled on the University's courses, while recognising the need to acknowledge cultural and legislative differences between the UK and the partner's country. In undertaking collaborative activities, Bradford, therefore, endeavours to ensure that a clear understanding between the partners exists at the outset; there is clarity about what will be provided and by whom; no compromise is made on academic standards; appropriate quality assurance procedures apply; a proper mechanism exists to review student experiences; a formal written agreement is produced incorporating all arrangements; there are arrangements governing the publicity which the partner may give to the course concerned and to the collaborative agreement itself; provision is made for the renewal and termination of the agreement, in addition to the normal academic procedures for the monitoring and review of courses; the real costs involved are recognised.

15 To support Bradford's commitment to these principles, it has a Collaborative Provision Committee which is responsible for the consideration of initial proposals for new collaborative provision; the evaluation of the intended partner; an assessment of the proposal's alignment with the University's and relevant school's strategic plans; the approval and review of associate institutions; the implementation of advice from collaborative provision audits; and the approval and monitoring of written agreements. The Collaborative Provision Committee reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee, which reports to the Academic Strategy and Performance Committee. The latter is responsible for providing academic direction to the whole University and it reports to both Senate and Council.

16 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor has executive responsibility for strategic planning and external relations; the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, for quality assurance and enhancement. The former chairs the Collaborative Provision Committee, the latter the Learning and Teaching Committee.

17 The School of Management is managed by the Dean who has overall responsibility for its taught provision wherever it is delivered. The Dean is advised by a School Board which reports directly to Senate. There are three associate deans, one of whom is designated the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate) with responsibility for overseeing both home and collaborative undergraduate programmes, which the postholder discharges in part by chairing the School's Undergraduate Programmes Committee. The School does not have a committee

dedicated to collaborative provision, although it is a standing agenda item at both its Undergraduate Programmes Committee and School Board meetings. School activities are guided by its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Plan which, together with the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, are monitored by Learning and Teaching Committee's Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee.

18 The Academic Standards and Support Unit provides support to the various committees and staff with responsibilities for managing the academic standards and quality of Bradford's provision. Each school has a member of the Unit assigned to it to help ensure that Bradford's policy and regulations are implemented consistently. In addition, the Academic Standards Adviser (Collaborative Provision) has a lead role in supporting the management and operation of collaborative activity across the University. This includes reporting regulatory changes to partner institutions and maintenance of Bradford's collaborative provision register, a summary of which is available on the University's website.

19 At the time of the audit, the summary of the collaborative provision register did not record the BSc (Honours) in Human Resource Management, which was introduced to the partnership in 2007, or Bradford's approval of IILM's Gurgaon Campus which occurred in 2006. The audit team encourages Bradford to ensure that the register represents accurately approved programmes and delivery sites.

20 The partnership with IILM was developed, approved and initially managed under arrangements current in 1996, which have since been subject to review and revision. Following discussions with staff and scrutiny of documentation, the audit team concluded that Bradford's approach to overseas collaborative provision, its executive and deliberate structures, and its revised policies and procedures, were robust and effective.

## **Section 2: Arrangements for establishing the link**

### **Selecting and approving the partner organisation**

21 IILM formally sought Bradford's approval to deliver the BSc (Honours) in Business and Management Studies in 1995, following informal discussions and reciprocal visits. Bradford approved the proposal in the absence of dedicated quality assurance procedures for the delivery of provision overseas, and the programme commenced in 1996. The partnership was audited by QAA in 1997. The audit report identified several shortcomings in the approval process which combined the approval of the partner with the approval of the programme. However, the report noted that Bradford had recognised these shortcomings and sought to avoid them in future collaborations by adopting new procedures 'Quality Assurance for Overseas Collaboration and other Off-Site Activities'.

22 Since the 1997 QAA audit Bradford has developed considerably its procedures for the management of the academic standards and quality of collaborative provision, including the approval of partners. Approval is now in two stages: partner approval, which is overseen by Collaborative Provision Committee; and programme approval, wherein a Course Approval and Review Team gives detailed consideration to proposals and makes recommendations to the Learning and Teaching Committee. Without the approval of the Collaborative Provision Committee at stage 1, a proposal cannot proceed. In addition, all proposals must be accompanied by a detailed financial costing developed with the support of a University management accountant, based on a standard checklist.

### **Programme approval**

23 The programme approval for IILM was combined with approval of IILM as a partner. Bradford's current procedures separate these two processes. Programme approval follows the same model Bradford uses for its home programmes, with some modifications to reflect the

higher level of risk associated with collaborative provision. Detailed proposals must first be approved by the School Board or its delegated committee, before being referred to a Course Approval and Review Team for detailed scrutiny. The team's scrutiny is informed by a validation visit by two members of staff to the partner site to assess the partners' organisational and quality assurance management structures, and the suitability of learning facilities. A report using a standard template is then submitted to the Academic Standards and Support Unit.

24 The membership of the Course Approval and Review Team includes an external expert from another higher education institution. The 2007 QAA Institutional audit report of Bradford concluded that, '...the lengthy period of appointment for external experts was inconsistent with the notion of externality'. The team for the audit of the link with IILM was informed that Bradford has responded to this concern by reducing the maximum duration of external experts' appointment.

25 As with its home-based provision, Bradford uses different approval routes for its collaborative provision depending on the scale of the proposal and the potential risk. For example, the approval of new modules or an additional venue within an established partnership will normally be negotiated between the Academic Standards and Support Unit's Academic Standards Adviser, the relevant Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate) and the chair of the relevant Course Approval and Review Team. This route was used to approve delivery of the programmes at IILM's Gurgaon Campus in 2006.

26 The partnership has now been extended to the delivery of five BSc Honours programmes by IILM. The BSc Accounting and Finance and the BSc Marketing commenced in September 2003, the BSc International Business and Management in September 2006, and the BSc Human Resource Management in September 2007. International Business and Management and Human Resource Management are currently not running owing to low demand. The approval of the new award titles was overseen by Collaborative Provision Committee, in accordance with Bradford's standard procedures for the addition of new programmes within existing partnerships.

27 The audit team concluded that Bradford's current programme approval procedures for collaborative provision were fit for purpose and aligned with the *Code of practice, Section 2*.

### **Written agreements with the partner organisation**

28 A signed contractual agreement must be in place before a collaborative programme may commence. The Briefing Paper identified the key issues covered in such agreements as the duration of the agreement and provisions for its review, extension or termination; programmes of study to be offered and the awards to be made; publicity about, and recruitment to, the programmes; arrangements for delivery (including mutual responsibility for the provision of learning resources and the appointment and support of staff); the management of quality assurance processes, including reference to the maintenance of academic standards; and financial arrangements.

29 The most recent agreement between Bradford and IILM was signed in September 2005. In addition to the standard issues listed above, it also encompasses applicable law (England and Wales), dispute resolution, opportunities for student completion in the event of termination, graduation arrangements, and the requirement for Bradford's Director of Studies to visit IILM at least three times a year. The term of the agreement is from 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2008, and is subject to review after two years.

30 Bradford's current quality assurance procedures for collaborative provision specify that the agreement should be reviewed at regular intervals, where possible in conjunction with the programme periodic review. In its Briefing Paper Bradford expressed the view that, in its experience, formal biennial contract review was not required unless major changes are proposed or significant unresolved issues identified. Bradford had, therefore, not undertaken formal biennial contract review of the partnership with IILM, and it now considered the five-year Associate Institute Action or Business Plan, along with the written agreement's financial schedules, to be

more up-to-date than the 2005 agreement, although at the time of the visit the latest plan between the partners had not been finalised. In addition, the 2005 contract was not revised to include the two new programmes introduced in 2006 and 2007 - BSc International Business and Management and BSc Human Resource Management respectively - because these were dealt with by separate formal contract extension letters from Bradford.

31 The audit team concluded that Bradford's written agreement with IILM covered all the matters identified in the relevant precept of the *Code of practice, Section 2* and clearly identified the responsibilities of both partners. However, the team also considered that the procedures for contractual agreement review specified in the Quality Assurance Handbook and those for the review of Associate Institute Business Plans undertaken by the Collaborative Provision Committee were potentially confusing. Therefore, for the avoidance of doubt, the team would encourage Bradford to clarify within its Quality Assurance Handbook the arrangements for the review of Associate Institute Business Plans.

### **Section 3: Academic standards and the quality of programmes**

#### **Day-to-day management**

32 The responsibilities of Bradford and IILM staff are specified in the agreement which follows Bradford's Quality Assurance Handbook. Responsibility for the provision of facilities, premises and resources for teaching and learning and the academic delivery of the programmes is delegated to IILM. Bradford retains control of academic content, standards of entry, assessment and student progress.

33 At an operational level, the School of Management is responsible for academic and administrative liaison, monitoring and support to ensure effective delivery of its programmes. The School appoints a Director of Studies to each of its programmes delivered overseas who reports to the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate). The Director of Studies is responsible for curriculum development, programme management, offering advice to students and staff at partner institutions, monitoring learning resources, and identifying any potential problems. The Director of Studies is expected to maintain regular contact with the partner by email and to visit three times each year.

34 During visits the Director of Studies normally meets the Chairman of IILM, teaching and administrative staff and students. In addition, the Director holds formal module review meetings with IILM's Dean (Academic) and module tutors each semester. These meetings are to review the work of the previous semester, provide staff development and report feedback on marking from both module leaders at Bradford and external examiners. After each visit the Director submits a written report to the School's Undergraduate Programmes Committee, identifying potential problems or enhancements which is then reported to the School Board. The audit team read a number of visit reports which confirmed their breadth of coverage and value in supporting the quality management of the link. The team identified the role of the Director of Studies as a positive feature of the partnership.

35 Module leaders in Bradford are responsible for all aspects of the delivery and assessment of their modules, wherever they are delivered. They provide learning, teaching and assessment materials on the University's virtual learning environment which is used extensively by IILM's staff and students. Module leaders maintain regular communication with their counterparts, deal with day-to-day issues by email, and are encouraged to visit partners during which they are often given opportunities to teach. These visits are reciprocated by staff from overseas partners; several of the IILM staff whom the audit team met in India had taught at Bradford during their visits to the UK. Staff at both institutions told the audit team that the close relationship between the partners created the feeling that all staff were working together as a single programme team. The audit team identified the close working relationship between the partners, manifest in particular in the reciprocal visits, as a positive feature of the partnership.

36 Administrative support for the link is provided by the School of Management's Director of Administration, assisted by the Undergraduate Programmes Manager (Collaborative Provision) who oversees the Undergraduate International Programmes Office. An International Programme Administrator within this office is dedicated to the IILM link. They act as the first point of contact for IILM staff and monitor compliance with Bradford's quality assurance procedures.

37 The IILM Director General and Principal is responsible for the Institute's overall management of the provision, supported by the Dean (Academic) who acts as programme leader and the main contact person for Bradford's Director of Studies. The Associate Dean (Student Affairs) monitors student performance, provides support and liaises with the International Programme Administrator at Bradford. In 2007 an additional member of academic staff was appointed to help direct administrative business.

38 Academic and pastoral support for students is primarily IILM's responsibility. Each faculty member acts as mentor for a group of students as they progress through the programme. The Director of Studies regularly meets students during visits to India and further academic support is provided by the School of Management's web-based Effective Learning Service. Both staff and students have online access to Bradford's electronic learning resources, including the School of Management's library. IILM also has its own library and information centre which provides the texts specified on the programme reading lists along with a range of electronic resources.

39 IILM convenes a Staff/Student Liaison Committee based on the model employed at Bradford. The membership includes two student representatives from each stage of study and, from the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year, the Committee meets monthly. The audit team scrutinised Staff/Student Liaison Committee minutes and discussed the Committee with students. This confirmed that the Committee considered a wide variety of issues and that action taken in response to students' concerns was reported. The Committee minutes are widely circulated and copied to the Director of Studies. The Director of Studies also submits the notes of meetings with groups of student to the Undergraduate Programme Committee.

40 IILM adopted Bradford's standard stage evaluation questionnaires and module questionnaires in 2005-06 and 2007-08 respectively. IILM returns completed questionnaires to Bradford for analysis. In 2007-08, Bradford's Annual Monitoring Team (see paragraph 42) reported that it was not possible to determine how students had been involved in the annual review process and that standard student questionnaires had not been returned. Staff at Bradford's School of Management acknowledged the difficulty they had experienced in adhering to University procedures for gathering student feedback. However, the audit team heard from IILM staff and students that evaluation was now happening regularly. IILM also operates its own internal student evaluation process which contributes to staff appraisal.

41 The 2006 QAA Collaborative provision audit of Bradford raised concerns about both the representation of students on collaborative programmes and the difficulties which Bradford acknowledged it had experienced in soliciting feedback from students studying at partner institutions. The audit team concluded that, within the context of the partnership with IILM, the use of the Staff/Student Liaison Committee and student questionnaires meant that these concerns were no longer apparent. Furthermore, the team noted that the student voice was one of the key issues about which Senate sought further clarification during its discussions about Bradford's revised quality assurance procedures in early 2008. The team noted that the online student questionnaires, which Bradford was piloting at the time of the audit, had the potential to further strengthen the feedback arrangements for students following collaborative programmes.

## Arrangements for monitoring and review

### Annual monitoring

42 The Director of Studies prepares an Annual Monitoring Report which is sent to IILM's Dean (Academic) for comment. The final report must be approved by the Dean of the School of Management at Bradford before it is submitted for review by a University Annual Monitoring Team, led by an independent chair. This is in contrast to the annual monitoring of Bradford-based provision, which is devolved to schools, reflecting Bradford's perception of the specific needs and risks associated with collaborative provision.

43 The Annual Monitoring Team holds a review meeting attended for the School of Management by the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate), the Director of Studies and the Undergraduate Programmes Manager (Collaborative Provision). Consideration of several schools' Annual Monitoring Reports at a single meeting allows Bradford to compare provision at a number of partner organisations. The Annual Monitoring Team presents its finding in an overview report which it submits to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

44 The audit team scrutinised the 2006-07 Annual Monitoring Report for the link with IILM. It found that the Report, drawing on evidence from student feedback, admission and progression data and external examiner reports, covered a broad range of areas including good practice, the evaluation of aims and learning outcomes, progress on issues raised in the previous Annual Monitoring Report, an action plan for the forthcoming year (including the response to any periodic review recommendations), and risk assessment (which referred primarily to the constraints on potential growth owing to a lack of formal recognition for the collaboration from the Indian government).

45 The audit team also scrutinised the Annual Monitoring Team's overview report for 2006-07, which took in the Annual Monitoring Report referred to above, along with the reports of other collaborative links. The overview report recorded several instances where the provision under review had failed to comply with Bradford's procedures. In particular, it found that some Annual Monitoring Reports had not been considered by the relevant school committees, but rather had been approved by the Chair's action, and no overview report from the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate) had been submitted. In addition, the Annual Monitoring Team had found it impossible to see how students had been involved in annual monitoring, noted that standard student evaluation questionnaires had not been received, and also had difficulty in determining which of the external examiners' comments applied to the home provision and which referred to collaborative provision. The Team recommended that all these points be rectified in the 2008-09 reports. The Team also commended the School of Management for its effective practice in liaising with IILM and noted that good comparative data for the different delivery sites in India had been provided (although data for the Bradford programme had not).

46 The 2006-07 Annual Monitoring Team overview report was considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee in May 2008. The Committee agreed that most of the problems noted above were university-wide. Indeed, similar weaknesses in the evidence base for Annual Monitoring Reports had been identified the previous year. In consequence, the Committee made several recommendations for action to Senate.

47 The audit team concluded that Bradford's annual monitoring of the link with IILM is generally effective in identifying good practice and items for consideration, comparing the quality and standards of home and collaborative provision, and bringing any potential problems to the attention of the appropriate committees. However, the team also noted that Bradford had identified several procedural failures concerning the evidence base for annual monitoring which appear to be longstanding. The team would, therefore, encourage the University to ensure that its procedures for the annual monitoring of collaborative provision are followed consistently across the institution.

## Programme amendments

48 Programme amendments take two forms: those that apply only to IILM, aimed at tailoring the programme to the Indian context (for example, to respond to differences between India and UK in law, or where the use of Indian examples is likely make the programme relevant to Indian students); and those that are applied to the whole programme, wherever it is delivered. Bradford must approve either form. The audit team heard from IILM staff that the School of Management was very receptive to proposed amendments, for example, in the ordering or location of modules within the overall programme structure.

## Periodic review

49 The periodic review of collaborative programmes (formerly known as Course Continuation Review) is conducted every five years according to Bradford's standard procedures. The most recent review of the School of Management's undergraduate collaborative provision took place in Bradford in September 2005. It encompassed two partnerships and three delivery sites. The review panel included an external expert from another higher education institution in the UK. The evidence base comprised programme and module specifications, learning outcomes, teaching and assessment matrices, critical appraisals, and Annual Monitoring Reports. External examiner reports and student feedback were, however, not provided and partner staff and students were not present or directly involved. Given the very close resemblance between the IILM programmes and those delivered by Bradford, particularly in terms of programme learning outcomes, curricula, structure and assessment, the focus of the review was primarily on the partners' ability to deliver the programmes. The review panel recommended a continuation for five years along with the revalidation of the programmes and their modules. The panel commended the dedication and effort of academic and administrative staff at Bradford and its partners. It also set a number of conditions, including the requirement to submit the external examiner reports and student feedback missing from the documentary evidence base, and recommended items for consideration by each partner.

50 Following the review, the School of Management produced an action plan which was monitored by the School Board. The audit team saw evidence that conditions had been satisfied and signed off by the chair of the Course Approval Review Team and heard that the action plan had been tracked through normal channels. The review schedule for the link does not align with that for home programmes, which were last reviewed in 2004 and are due for their next review in 2009. The team learned, however, that the School is considering including overseas provision at the 2009 event to allow for comparison.

51 The audit team concluded that the 2005 Course Continuation Review complied with Bradford's requirements and was managed effectively. However, in the light of the recommendation in the 2006 Collaborative provision audit report that Bradford should actively explore ways of enabling students studying through collaborative programmes to contribute in person to periodic review events, and the lack of any participation by IILM staff in the 2005 review, the team would encourage Bradford to reflect on the potential benefits of involving staff and students from partner institutions in periodic review.

## Staffing and staff development

52 Bradford approves the appointment of IILM staff to the programme on the basis of IILM's recommendations and supporting information, including curricula vitae. IILM staff told the audit team that newly appointed teaching staff tend not to teach third-year students without experience of teaching first and second years. IILM submits a list of teaching staff before the start of each semester. Bradford's procedures for annual monitoring stipulate that a list of teaching staff at partner institutions be included in the Annual Monitoring Report, alongside their academic qualifications, status or period of appointment and module responsibilities.

53 Both partners provide a wide range of staff development opportunities for both academic and administrative staff at IILM. The Director of Studies and IILM's Dean (Academic) hold review meetings with module tutors (including newly appointed tutors) every semester to discuss issues arising from external examiner reports, feedback from Bradford's module leaders and student evaluation questionnaires, and to provide guidance in learning, teaching and assessment practice. The Director of Studies coordinates this activity and records it in a formal visit report. The Director ensures that each member of teaching staff at IILM receives the appropriate support from their counterparts in Bradford and also arranges visits by subject specialists to IILM about twice a year. In addition, module leaders at Bradford are encouraged to visit IILM for one week blocks in order to teach students and liaise with staff. The School's Learning Support Officer has also recently visited IILM to lead sessions on the School's Effective Learning System and the avoidance of plagiarism. Bradford is considering offering its Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education to all its partners in the near future.

54 IILM runs its own compulsory development programme for teaching staff. Senior members of staff visit Bradford regularly and two teaching staff visit for one month each year to participate in teaching and development activities, as part of a rolling programme that will eventually take in the whole teaching team. IILM also sponsors an annual study visit to Bradford normally including two staff and a group of students.

55 The audit team concluded that the staff development activities provided by both partners, in particular the regular reciprocal visits by teaching staff, were indicative of the close working relationship between the partners. The team identified this close relationship as a positive feature of the partnership.

### **Student admissions**

56 Applicants apply directly to IILM. The IILM admissions team considers and processes each application, interviews all candidates and makes selection decisions, sending the entrants' names to the Director of Studies. Bradford then registers the students. Bradford retains the discretion to reject applicants whom it deems to be unsuitable.

57 The written agreement specifies a maximum number of new enrolments which is negotiated annually. In the 2005-06 academic year the threshold was 180 enrolments. Students are enrolled as members of both Bradford and IILM.

58 Following standard University procedures, applications for the accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning are sent to the Director of Studies for consideration by the School of Management. Non-standard applications must also be considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic. Applicants for direct entry through the accreditation of prior learning to stages 2 or 3 must also be considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic. Bradford sets an import limit of 50 per cent academic credit of the balance of the award.

59 First-year students commence about six weeks before beginning of the first semester to allow for an orientation programme and bridging course. This provides a comprehensive induction into the requirements of UK higher education, learning and assessment practices (including guidance on what constitutes, and how to avoid, plagiarism), programme information and support systems. The students whom the audit team met in India praised the value of the induction programme. Second and third-year students commence approximately three weeks before the first semester, again to accommodate a bridging course.

60 The audit team concluded that Bradford's procedures for student admissions were robust and consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 2*, and *Section 10: Admissions to higher education*. This conclusion was supported by evidence of similar performance and achievement of IILM students compared with their counterparts in Bradford.

## Assessment requirements

61 The programmes operate under the University's standard assessment regulations which are mapped against the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*. Assessment arrangements are summarised in the programme specification, and are identical to those for the corresponding programmes delivered at Bradford, notwithstanding the use of Indian examples in answering standard questions (see paragraph 48) which Bradford has approved. At stage 1, all draft coursework assignments and examinations for the home and collaborative programmes are set and approved by academic staff in the School of Management. At stages 2 and 3 the external examiner is also involved in this process. Bradford believes that this approach promotes a consistent student experience across the different delivery sites and allows it to make comparisons across different cohorts. Bradford and IILM operate common procedures for the submission of coursework, approval of extensions and penalising late work. Formal examinations are conducted simultaneously, under the same regulations, using different, but secure, invigilation arrangements.

62 Plagiarism had been recognised as a problem in the 2006-07 Annual Monitoring Reports. Bradford responded by incorporating guidance on the definition of plagiarism and how to avoid it within the IILM student induction, module delivery, the student handbook and workshops delivered by Bradford staff to IILM students and staff. The effectiveness of this response is being monitored by the Undergraduate Programmes Committee through visit reports by the Director of Studies and minutes of the board of examiners. In addition, all student work from IILM is analysed using a proprietary software tool, compared to 10 per cent of work from students at Bradford.

63 Guidance on the completion of coursework is provided by module tutors. First-marking is undertaken by IILM tutors who are guided by detailed marking schemes provided by the module leader. The tutor (or alternatively the mentor) informs the students of the unconfirmed mark and offers oral feedback. Students whom the audit team met in India said that they would value more detailed comments. The team would, therefore, encourage Bradford to consider the introduction of structured written feedback to students following collaborative programmes.

64 Marking is moderated internally and externally. All coursework and examination scripts are sent to Bradford for second consideration (moderation by the review of a sample of first-marked scripts) and not returned to students.

65 To ensure the consistency of academic standards, module leaders compile marking summary sheets with comments on the overall marking process. These are submitted to assessment committees to inform the discussion of each module, sent to IILM to provide feedback to staff, and used by the Director of Studies to inform his overview of the programme and discussions with module tutors during visits to the Institute. An agreed sample of work from stage 2 and stage 3 modules, selected from all delivery sites, is then moderated by the external examiners.

66 The audit team noted that comments from internal and external moderation tended to share the view that the standard of marking at partner institutions was often lower than at Bradford, although this was rectified by the second-marking process.

67 In general, student results at IILM are comparable with those at Bradford. A higher proportion of ordinary degrees are awarded at IILM, but the audit team heard this was due to many students at IILM regarding the ordinary degree as the desired outcome. This trend was noted in the 2005 periodic review report, and was also identified as an issue for the University in the 2006-07 collaborative provision annual monitoring overview report.

68 The consideration of student performance and confirmation of marks and awards is a two-stage process. The IILM assessment committee, held at Bradford, determines confirmed module marks. The IILM board of examiners, also sitting in Bradford, then makes progression and award decisions. Separate committees and boards are held for home candidates and those following collaborative programmes, due, the Briefing Paper stated, to practical constraints. However, both

sets of meetings are chaired by the Dean or an Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) and all the results are reviewed through the annual statistical report prepared by the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate), which compares the standard of marking at all delivery sites. This report is widely circulated to the Assessment Committee, the Board of Examiners, Undergraduate Programmes Committee, the School Board, and to the partners. IILM is normally represented on the assessment committee and board of examiners by the Dean (Academic).

69 Decisions on confirmed marks, progression and awards are recorded by Bradford, and made available to IILM through a web portal to the student record system. In November, the annual degree congregation is held in India, usually attended by the Vice-Chancellor and the Dean of the School of Management.

70 The audit team concluded that Bradford's assessment procedures for the partnership are consistent with its responsibilities for the sound management of academic standards.

### **External examining**

71 Bradford's regulations on external examiners for award-bearing taught courses of study and its institutional code of practice on external examining apply equally to home and collaborative provision and are mapped against the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining*. They specify that Bradford is solely responsible for the selection, appointment, support and oversight of external examiners. The School of Management appoints a large team of external examiners, covering both home and collaborative undergraduate programmes. Each module, wherever it is delivered, is moderated by a single external examiner to promote consistency. Some external examiners are appointed only to modules, in which case they are members of an assessment committee but not a board of examiners; others are appointed to moderate programmes as well as modules and are, therefore, members both of an assessment committees and also a board of examiners.

72 External examiners are expected to be fully involved in the review of proposed assessment briefs including those for coursework and formal examinations; the moderation of student work (any sampling being agreed by negotiation); and the assessment decisions at meetings of assessment committees and boards of examiners. They are also required to complete an annual report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, which should address both home and collaborative provision. The Academic Standards and Support Unit submits an annual overview and summary of external examiner reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee which includes a section on collaborative provision.

73 Bradford acknowledged in its Briefing Paper that external examiner reports do not always make the distinction between different collaborative partners clear. This was confirmed by the Annual Monitoring Team's overview report for 2007-08, which recommended that the School of Management's guidance to external examiners about distinguishing between different partners be strengthened. In response, Bradford is in the process of redesigning its external examiner report template, such that it distinguishes more clearly between issues relating to home or collaborative provision.

74 The Director of Studies presents a summary of external examiners' comments to IILM, but neither staff nor students have access to the full reports. External examiners do not visit collaborative partners. The audit team encourages Bradford to consider ways of giving staff and students at IILM full access to external examiner reports.

75 Bradford's regulations specify that an external examiner for a course of study shall normally attend any meeting of boards of examiners which considers awards at the end of the course of study. Where an external examiner for a course of study is unable to attend a meeting of a board of examiners, the chair of the board of examiners shall obtain the concurrence of the external examiner to the Pass list or final classification list before any results are made known to the students. The audit team scrutinised boards of examiners minutes for three academic years,

2005-06 to 2007-08. It found that external examiners had not attended any of the boards and could not see in the board minutes how the chairs had obtained the concurrence of the external examiner in accordance with Bradford's regulations.

76 The audit team noted from assessment committee minutes that external examiners tended not to attend those meetings either. This confirmed the concern identified in Bradford's 2006-07 overview report of collaborative provision about the non-attendance of external examiners at boards of examiners and the low representation of Bradford's academic staff. In consequence, the Academic Policy Committee had recommended to Senate that every effort be made by schools to ensure that all board members are notified of the dates of meetings in good time to enable them to attend. Senate adopted this recommendation in June 2008. Concerns about the absence of external examiners at exam boards also emerged during the University's 2007 QAA Institutional audit report. The report recommended that the University, '...ensure that its policy of external examiner membership of assessment committees is fully implemented, and that external examiners are fully involved in the business of both assessment committees and boards of examiners; and ensure that all external examiners are made aware of the revised report pro forma, which addresses comparability of academic standards'.

77 In its Briefing Paper, Bradford stated its intention to carry out a review of matters relating to its management of external examining. The audit team concluded that this review was timely, given the various concerns outlined above and, in particular, the inconsistency between Bradford's practices and the guidance in precept 4 of the *Code of practice, Section 6: Assessment of students*, regarding the attendance of external examiners at assessment committees or boards of examiners that consider the results of the students they have assessed. The team would, therefore, urge the University to expedite its review of external examining and ensure that the review considers the issues raised in this section.

### **Certificates and transcripts**

78 Graduates from the programmes delivered at IILM receive the same certificate as students on the equivalent programmes at Bradford. Transcripts are issued by the School of Management's International Programmes Office on request. The audit team noted that neither the certificate nor the transcript referred to the partner's name or location. The University attributed this to its confidence that a Bradford degree, wherever it is delivered, is of equal standing in terms of academic achievement. This is, however, inconsistent with the *Code of practice, Section 2* which states that, '...subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any relevant jurisdiction, the certificate and/or transcript should record the name and location of any partner organisation engaged in delivery of the programme of study'. Bradford has undertaken to include the name and location of the partner on transcripts in future, and the team heard from IILM staff that this was now the case. The provision of formal transcripts (including the European Diploma Supplement) is now being rolled out across the University and will be available for students following collaborative programmes within the next two years.

## **Section 4: Information**

### **Student information (oversight by UK institution)**

79 On registration students are issued with IILM and Bradford identity cards, instructions for accessing the two partners' intranets and email addresses, a student information handbook (which provides both University and local information relevant to study at IILM) and module handbooks (which are identical to those for Bradford-based students). They also undertake the bridging and orientation course described above. IILM's website includes information on the arrangement with the School of Management and contact details for Bradford staff, including the Director of Studies.

80 The student information handbook for 2008-11 provides an overview of course structure, staff contacts, teaching and assessment methods, attendance requirements, the student-staff coordination committee, advice on how to avoid plagiarism, and student/learning support systems. It does not include information on Bradford's academic appeals and complaints processes, but the audit team learned that the next edition will. The team learned from staff in the School of Management that IILM students are not issued with a Bradford handbook, although much student information is available through the virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE has dedicated sites for each module to ensure equivalence of learning material wherever the programmes are delivered, and includes a section dedicated to IILM's own delivery which provides material that is only relevant in India. Students whom the team met at IILM regarded all of the information provided by Bradford and IILM as accurate and complete.

81 According to Bradford's standard regulations, student appeals are dealt with in the first instance by the Director of Studies and a newly constituted appeals committee at IILM. Complaints and disciplinary matters are initially the responsibility of the IILM Associate Dean (Student Affairs). If further arbitration is required, cases are referred to the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Undergraduate). The Briefing Paper stated that there had been no such cases to date.

### **Publicity and marketing**

82 The written agreement specifies that IILM may not produce publicity relating to approved courses without Bradford's prior agreement, although such agreement shall not be unreasonably withheld. The School of Management's Marketing Manager, acting under delegated authority from the Dean, is responsible for monitoring and approving the IILM prospectus and those sections of its website relating to Bradford's programmes. The Collaborative Provision Officer also checks periodically that Bradford is not being misrepresented in advertising material issued by its partners, and the Director of Studies is required to monitor and, where appropriate, advise on publicity materials.

## **Section 5: Student progression to the UK**

83 Students have the opportunity to attend Bradford for one semester, although only a small number do so due to cost. However, many do take the opportunity provided by scholarships or the shorter accompanied visits sponsored by both partners to visit. The Director of Studies acts as personal tutor for all IILM students studying at Bradford.

### **Conclusion**

84 In considering the partnership, the audit team identified the following positive features:

- the role of the Director of Studies (paragraph 34)
- the close working relationship between the partners (paragraphs 35, 55).

85 The audit team also identified the following points for consideration by the University as the partnership develops:

- ensure that the online summary of the collaborative provision register represents accurately the approved programmes and delivery sites (paragraph 19)
- clarify within its Quality Assurance Handbook the arrangements for the review of Associate Institute Business Plans (paragraph 31)
- ensure that its procedures for the annual monitoring of collaborative provision are followed consistently across the institution (paragraph 47)

- reflect on the potential benefits of involving staff and students from partner institutions in periodic review (paragraph 51)
- consider the introduction of structured written feedback to students following collaborative programmes (paragraph 63)
- consider ways of giving staff and students at IILM full access to external examiner reports (paragraph 74)
- expedite its review of external examining and ensure that the review considers all the issues raised in the External examining section of this report (paragraph 77).

86 The audit team considers that, in general, Bradford's management of its responsibilities for the academic standards and quality of the programmes delivered at IILM was sound and consistent with the reference points set out in the Academic Infrastructure. Those areas where Bradford's engagement with *Code of practice*, published by QAA; could be strengthened are identified in the report.

87 The Briefing Paper, which was jointly developed by both partners, guided the audit team to a clear understanding of the origins and current management of the partnership. The team concurred with those areas for enhancement identified by the University. As an example of its policies and procedures for collaborative provision, the team's findings confirm a finding of confidence in Bradford's management of the academic standards and quality of its collaborative provision.

## **Appendix A**

### **Update statement from the University of Bradford regarding the partnership with the Institute for Integrated Learning in Management**

The University's collaborative provision register is being updated and its structure reviewed.

The University is developing its approach to the management of contracts and is moving towards a position where contracts, including financial schedules, are reviewed annually.

In relation to IILM, the evidence base and procedures for annual monitoring were dealt with in the 2007/8 round of annual monitoring, and neither of them was raised by the Annual Monitoring Team considering the report. The University's Learning and Teaching Committee continues to review progress across the institution and to take steps to improve the quality of both evidence and procedures.

The School of Management's undergraduate home-based and collaborative provision will be reviewed together in 2009/10; joint review is to be recommended across the University in revised institutional guidance effective from 2009/10.

In a significant development, proposals are under consideration to make the University's PGC Higher Education Practice available as a distance learning programme, with the support and development of staff at partner institutions particularly in mind.

The School of Management has introduced a requirement for the provision of structured, written feedback to students following collaborative programmes. The effectiveness of this development will be kept under review at School and institution level through annual monitoring and will inform wider University work on the enhancement of feedback on assessment.

## Appendix B

### Current student numbers, Institute for Integrated Learning in Management

At 26 May 2009

Award Title	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Total
BSc Accounting and Finance	3	15	28	46
BSc Business and Management Studies	280	119	118	517
BSc Human Resource Management	0	0	0	0
BSc International Business and Management	0	1	2	3
BSc Marketing	1	7	10	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>584</b>

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