

Review of UK transnational education in China: The University of Surrey and Dongbei University of Finance and Economics

November 2012

Executive summary

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.

Report

Introduction

1 The University of Surrey (Surrey) was established in 1966. It has 21 academic schools, departments and divisions within four faculties: Arts and Human Sciences; Business, Economics and Law; Engineering and Physical Sciences; and Health and Medical Sciences. The University has 15,400 students (2011), including more than 4,000 postgraduates, with a further 2,200 students registered for Surrey awards at associated universities.

2 DUFE originated in Shenyang in 1952 as the Dongbei Institute of Finance and Economics. The Institute moved to Dalian in 1959, being taken over by the Ministry of Finance in 1979 and renamed Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE) in 1985. DUFE has 25 academic schools, departments and institutes with over 20,000 students on undergraduate, master's and PhD programmes, focusing on economics, management, law, arts, and science, and including two key state-sponsored disciplines (industrial economics and public finance) and one key state-supported discipline (quantitative economics). DUFE has 13 exchange programmes with nine universities in six countries.

3 Cooperation between DUFE and Surrey began in 2001, initiated by a DUFE professor who was working at Surrey in the School of Engineering and also through a former graduate of DUFE, who was then working as a Professor in the School of Management. In November 2005, the University of Surrey's Executive Board approved 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. It was noted that the new arrangement was being encouraged by DUFE as being of mutual benefit. Under the proposal, Surrey would also be able to deliver postgraduate programmes and a master's entry programme.

4 The University of Surrey submitted an application to the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2006. Approval by the Ministry of Education was granted in August 2007 and MSc students were recruited to start in September 2007, with undergraduate students not registering on Surrey programmes until September 2009. Surrey's School of Engineering withdrew the MSc programmes and a BSc (Hons) in Computer Science in 2010 to leave two '2+2' BSc (Hons) programmes involving the School of Management under the agreement with DUFE.

5 Surrey operates its collaboration with DUFE through a non-legal entity, the Surrey International Institute, DUFE (SII-DUFE), established in 2006 with DUFE as a joint higher education partner.

6 The '2+2', dual degree programmes offered are BSc (Hons) Business Management and BSc (Hons) Tourism Management. Graduates can receive a degree awarded by the University of Surrey and a separate degree from DUFE. BSc (Hons) students completing the first two years (Foundation and Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) level 4) of their DUFE programme and achieving the required academic (70 per cent) and English language (IELTS 6.5, all components 6.0 minimum) standards can apply to complete their degree (FHEQ levels 5 and 6) in the UK or take the Surrey BSc (Hons) programme in China. Students who do not qualify for the Surrey degree take DUFE degree only. Students on the corresponding BSc (Hons) courses in the UK have the opportunity to spend part of their course at DUFE.

7 There is an intake quota of 450 students per annum at SII-DUFE. In 2011, 879 students were taking the first two years of the DUFE programme in Dalian, with 247 registered for the final two years (FHEQ levels 5 and 6) at Dalian, and 102 students completing their final two years of study at Surrey.

8 Until 2011, teaching at SII-DUFE was delivered by staff either employed by DUFE or by Surrey, with Surrey staff delivering intensive blocks of teaching in years 3 and 4 on a fly-in/fly-out basis, supported by locally employed tutors. Following a review of the collaboration by the Ministry of Education in 2010-11 (CDGDC Review), it was recommended to change the staffing model. The programme is now delivered primarily by Surrey-appointed staff based in Dalian with some visiting academic staff from the Guildford campus. In addition, a further integration of years one/two with years three/four has taken place through a coordinated mapping process and with a view to better prepare students in the first two years for years three and four.

9 The degree programme delivered in China is the same as that validated for students studying at the University of Surrey. It is subject to the University's regulations, external examining arrangements, Board of Examiners and Board of Studies.

10 In the University of Surrey's 2009 Institutional Audit there was one 'desirable' recommendation relating directly to collaborative provision: that the University should 'give further consideration to its approach to the monitoring and review of collaborative provision, particularly with respect to partnership-level quality assurance mechanisms, to enhance effective University oversight'. The review team learned during the visit to DUFE that a more rigorous process of periodic review is being put in place.

11 Surrey's vision (Strategic Plan, 2011-17) is to be a leading national and international university. Surrey's international strategy is seen as a 'key component in ensuring that world-class research and teaching secure strategic benefits internationally' and states that Surrey will explore further strategic partnerships in countries where there is high growth, political and economic stability and high demand for UK higher education (HE).

12 SII-DUFE is the first step in Surrey's plans for international expansion. Surrey is evaluating whether this is a possible model to replicate elsewhere. Over the next 10 years, Surrey plans to develop into an international brand with several institutes around the world.

Part A: Set-up and operation

Establishing the link

13 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International Relations) reports to the Vice-Chancellor, and is responsible for Surrey's international strategy, internationalisation of the curriculum and international partnership arrangements.

14 The guiding principle for Surrey's selection of a collaborative partner is its ability to deliver an existing programme. On completion of due diligence enquiries of the proposed partner, the Executive Board gives outline approval for programme development to proceed. The procedures for the selection and approval of partners, including conduct of due diligence, are set out in Surrey's academic standards guidelines and include an examination of the academic and financial status of the institution, a cost/benefit analysis and potential conflicts of interest. A risk assessment is also conducted by the Planning Department and the Quality Support section of Academic Registry.

15 Minutes of the University Planning Committee showed that the proposal in regard to DUFE was given detailed consideration prior to referral to the Executive Board for endorsement. Outline approval by the Executive Board is determined against a range of criteria set out in the academic standards and guidelines, which were clearly aligned with the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (the *Code of practice*), *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* when the partnership with DUFE was established.

16 The Executive Board considered the partnership arrangement with DUFE in November 2005 and endorsed the signing of the agreement in March 2006. In May 2006, Senate noted the arrangements for the partnership and, in October 2007, noted the approval of the arrangement by the Chinese Ministry of Education.

17 From the evidence provided by the University and from meetings with staff, the review team considered that due diligence and outline approval of the partnership with DUFE had been conducted in a thorough and effective manner.

18 The University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC), chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), and its Quality and Standards Sub Committee (QSSC), conduct detailed academic scrutiny of programme proposals during validation.

19 Surrey's collaborative arrangements are formalised in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the partner institution. The academic standards guidelines set a template for agreements, and advice on drafting is provided by the Quality Support section of the Academic Registry. MOA are signed for the University by the Registrar, following completion of all of Surrey's approval procedures; the original MOA with DUFE being signed in March 2006. The document giving approval by the Ministry of Education was dated and sealed in August 2007. A renewal of the agreement ('Amended and Restated Agreement to Establish a Sino-Foreign Cooperative School') was signed in April 2011.

20 For the current partnership, the establishment of SII-DUFE provided a management arrangement that met the requirements of the *People's Republic of China's Regulations on Sino-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools Decree 372*. By taking over existing DUFE premises and facilities to form SII-DUFE, Surrey was able to accelerate approval from the Chinese authorities while keeping set-up costs down.

21 An articulation agreement covering the programmes offered by SII-DUFE and managed under the same arrangements as collaborative partnerships was signed in September 2008, but covers students who started their course of study in DUFE in 2007 and who might then subsequently transfer to Surrey. The agreement is for a maximum of 10 postgraduates and 10 undergraduates from each partner to transfer to the other in any one academic year and at any one level. The agreement is for 20 years but to be reviewed every five years.

Making the link work

22 Deans of faculty, who report to the Vice-Chancellor, have operational responsibility for collaborative provision.

23 The procedures and guidelines for the operation of SII-DUFE are set out in a comprehensive Quality Assurance and Operations Handbook. A Joint Management Group (JMC), which meets annually, makes general policy decisions regarding the running of the University of Surrey and has oversight of quality and standards. The chair of the JMC alternates with the meeting venue between the Chairman of DUFE and the University of Surrey's Vice-Chancellor. An Executive Group is responsible for implementation of policy

and oversees the operation of the University during the academic year, including the monitoring of quality and standards. The Executive Group makes an annual report to the JMC. The JMC appoints the Dean of the SII-DUFE, who is responsible for implementing decisions made by the JMC and the Executive Group. Following a review of SII-DUFE in October 2011 (paragraph 47), a SII-DUFE Learning and Teaching Committee was formed which acts as the key reporting line between the SII-DUFE and Surrey's Boards of Studies.

24 Both Surrey and DUFE have appointed Academic Coordinators who are responsible for maintaining the academic links between institutions, and for articulation between the two parts of the linked programme. The Academic Coordinators report annually to the appropriate Board of Studies and this is timed to coincide with the Annual Programme Review at Surrey.

25 A leading role associated with each of the dual degree programmes has been established. At SII-DUFE, the official title is 'Director of Studies', whereas University of Surrey staff based at SII-DUFE use the term 'Programme Leader' to describe this role. These role holders are responsible for the general oversight of the programme and for academic leadership. Module coordinators are appointed by Surrey and report to the Programme Leader.

26 There is a Board of Studies at Surrey that considers matters arising from the provision taught through SII-DUFE, including admission requirements, academic content, assessment, and teaching and learning facilities, and reports from external examiners. There is a Staff/Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) for the programmes at SII-DUFE, chaired by the Associate Dean (SII-DUFE). The SSLC meets once or twice per semester and reports directly to the next Board of Studies, where remedial action can be promptly pursued. Boards of Examiners meet at Surrey and consider the examinations and assessments on programmes offered both at SII-DUFE and the University of Surrey.

27 Operational arrangements for SII-DUFE, including the management and administration of student admissions and the responsibilities of the respective partners, are outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement and are provided in detail in the SII-DUFE Quality Assurance and Operations Handbook.

Student induction and support, including student handbooks

28 Students who met the review team at SII-DUFE commented positively on the high UK ranking of the two Surrey BSc (Hons) courses, of wanting to complement a Chinese HE experience with a UK HE experience, and of the possibility of completing their degree in the UK. Students had found out about the courses primarily from the university guide published by the Ministry of Education, together with information obtained from the internet and from direct contact with SII-DUFE.

29 Students had applied online through the standard Chinese university application process and had received an information pack prior to arrival at SII-DUFE. A range of information and support services is available to help students settle in at SII-DUFE during the induction week, including assistance provided by older students. Students confirmed that the information provided to them about the course was accurate.

30 The SII-DUFE Students Academic Handbook was found to be helpful and comprehensive and students referred to it as a source of different sorts of information. Students who met the review team felt they belonged primarily to SII-DUFE, perceiving that as SII students they stood out as having exposure to a western learning culture.

31 Students are generally very satisfied with the learning resources available to them, including IT and library facilities, and mentioned in particular the dedicated SII-DUFE Library, the Learning Centre and the Language Lab. Students also have onsite and online access to the DUFE main library. Year one and two students use the DUFE virtual learning environment (VLE), 'SKYPlus', where teaching and learning content can be uploaded and discussion groups hosted. Students also use social media ('QQ') for discussion and feedback with staff. The 'SurreyLearn' VLE platform is available to year three and four students.

32 Dual degree students have a member of the SII-DUFE staff as a personal tutor who can provide advice on personal and academic issues and provide career advice. All students appeared to be aware of the Career Development Office. Workshops are run in years three and four on preparing students for after graduation, including preparing for interviews. Students also commented positively on the support role played by the counselling service at SII-DUFE.

33 On acceptance, students are registered for a double degree, consisting of a four-year programme made up of the first two years studied at DUFE, followed by two years of study on the Surrey Programme (FHEQ levels 5 and 6). All undergraduate applicants to DUFE must pass the university entrance examination (gaokao) and achieve a score set by the Ministry of Education. Although there has not been a specified level of attainment for the English component of the gaokao for entry to year one, the average score of the 2011 intake for the English component was 121, and in 2012 it was 116. English training is compulsory for SII-DUFE students (10 lecture hours per week) and one-to-one sessions with teachers are encouraged.

34 On completion of the two-year DUFE programme, and providing the applicant has met the academic and English language requirements, students can apply for and proceed to the Surrey phase of the degree. The articulation agreement states that students are required to score a minimum of 60 per cent in each module, with an average score of 70 per cent overall. The English language requirement is IELTS 6.5, with a minimum of 6.0 in reading, writing, listening and oral language skills.

35 Surrey produces a number of publications for its students and potential students, including prospectuses, course brochures, a student handbook and information on complaints and appeals.

36 During their second year of study at DUFE, SII students complete an application form, which is then forwarded to the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law for data entry online. Students who have expressed an interest in undertaking the dual degree are invited to meet with tutors to talk about the dual programme option. Students can elect to study their Surrey degree at SII-DUFE or in the UK. Students following the UK pathway join the Surrey induction for international students before joining the home-based programmes. Students who met the review team commented that the information provided about going to the UK was helpful.

37 Students who do not meet the qualifying standard continue on the DUFE programme and gain their degree from DUFE only. The latest review by the University of Surrey (2011; paragraph 68) does not indicate any ongoing problems with the admissions process, other than those associated with the concerns about English language.

38 SII-DUFE is responsible for the management of fees; student induction; the issue of programme handbooks; provision of a library; and technical support, including systems for receiving and dispatching student assessed work. The maintenance of student records is also the responsibility of SII-DUFE, but the definitive student records are held at Surrey.

39 The University of Surrey provides comprehensive guidelines on the communication expected between staff and students at programme level, including programme handbooks, induction, the role of directors of study and module leaders, and guidelines on student feedback. Responsibility for producing programme handbooks lies with the Director of Studies.

40 Handbooks are provided in hard copy at induction and in electronic copy via SurreyLearn. Excerpts of regulations are included in the handbooks and links are provided via SurreyLearn to the full online versions. Programme handbooks should be issued to students in the week before commencing the programme or in the induction week; they should be regularly updated and are recommended to be part of the review process.

41 The Dean of the SII, together with the SII-DUFE Academic Coordinators in the faculty, are responsible for organising the induction of students on the linked programmes. When students join the Surrey programme in Guildford, the Academic Coordinators in the faculty ensure that students join the international students' induction run by the University of Surrey.

42 A Staff/Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) at SII-DUFE provides an opportunity for the further exchange of information. The meetings are intended to take place each semester. Minutes are submitted to the Director of Studies at Surrey, and Academic Coordinators report to the Board of Studies at the first available opportunity. The minutes of the SSLC demonstrate that the Committee is meeting at least once a semester. The Committee Secretary is required by the Committee Terms of Reference to give feedback to students within two weeks of the meeting.

43 Issues raised by students have included: staff teaching in English and the impact of different accents on their ability to learn, the English writing sessions not being adequate to prepare students for essay writing, confusion about the nature of the 'Advanced English' course which is in fact 'Academic English'. The students who met the review team mentioned that some accents could be more difficult to understand but also mentioned the willingness of staff to adjust their teaching styles, for example by speaking more slowly when teaching students in year one. Overall, students had no particular problems with being taught in English. Students commented favourably on English language support, with support extending beyond the compulsory English module, in particular that provided by the English Language Support Centre at SII-DUFE.

44 An issue raised by students has been the comparability of the Chinese marking scale and the Surrey marking criteria. Students have expressed concerns that the Surrey staff appeared not to understand the grades used in China, and that there is therefore the potential for them not to be awarding achievement appropriately. However, the review team was advised that the University of Surrey staff did understand the intricacies of the two marking systems, but were using the Surrey scales only. It was anticipated that the new teaching arrangements for the '2+2' programme (paragraph 8) should help to alleviate such concerns, and the review team was assured by staff that there was no actual discrepancy of marks between Surrey and SII-DUFE.

Administration of assessment/examinations

45 Assessment of collaborative provision operates according to Surrey's academic regulations. Programme specifications are provided for each programme and are the same specifications as those used for the programme taught at Surrey. The programme specifications provide outline assessment details, which are then developed and elaborated

at module level. Assessment for the Surrey part of the award is designed, set and assessed by academic staff from Surrey, and the setting of examination papers is the responsibility of the appropriate Surrey Board of Examiners, which includes external examiners.

46 The Dean of SII-DUFE is responsible locally for the administration of examination and assessment arrangements. The University of Surrey and SII-DUFE operate different semester times and timelines: therefore, separate exams are written, agreed by the Surrey counterpart, subject to external examiner's review, and then administered asynchronously. The Assessment and Awards section of the Academic Registry at Surrey is responsible for the printing and secure despatch of papers to the Dean of SII-DUFE.

47 The most recent review by the University of Surrey (2011) indicates that there is improvement with regard to feedback on assessed work but that the process would benefit from further formalisation. The issue of the scheduling of assessments has been resolved according to the review panel's assessment of progress. The students who met the review team made positive comments on the quality and availability of feedback on their work.

48 The review team heard that students ask lecturers directly about feedback during classes or during office hours. Year one and two students mostly use electronic communication and observed that teachers generally responded quickly to their emails. Year three and four students at SII-DUFE also used discussion boards on SurreyLearn to obtain feedback. Lectures provide general and module-specific assessment criteria, and previous examination papers are made available online and are found to be useful. Students reported that assessed work was returned to them promptly and that the feedback provided was helpful. Students had a general awareness of penalties for the late submission of coursework and that this information was provided at the induction to the course, in the course handbook and at the start of each module. Advice on avoiding plagiarism is provided in the handbook and during lectures.

49 Students complete module evaluation questionnaires at the end of each semester and are encouraged to talk directly to lecturers, to their tutors or to the Associate Dean (SII).

50 The review team was provided with a number of examples illustrating that the student voice was both heard and acted upon. Student representatives feed information discussed at the Learning and Teaching Committee back to students, and perceive themselves as being links between students and staff. A similar process takes place at the SSLCs. Both committees are seen by students to have efficient feedback procedures.

51 Boards of Examiners are held in accordance with Surrey's academic regulations at the Guilford campus. Minutes of the Board of Examiners indicate that there is specific consideration of issues related to SII-DUFE. In particular, the Board requested improvements in data that have enabled greater discrimination of statistical data as it relates to the SII-DUFE provision. Data provided to the review team during the visit showed a substantial improvement in student achievement in 2011-12.

52 The establishment of SII-DUFE to manage Surrey's work with DUFE has not been without difficulties and there has been considerable change since 2007. The establishment of the partnership took place over a two-year period and since then Surrey has undertaken four reviews of the arrangements (paragraphs 63-71).

Part B: Quality assurance

Academic standards and the quality of programmes

53 The University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) is responsible to Senate for the quality assurance of collaborative provision leading to awards of the University. ULTC does this through its Quality and Standards Sub-Committee (QSSC), which is responsible for programme approval and review, annual monitoring, faculty visits, and external examining. The Quality Support section (Academic Registry) maintains quality assurance guidelines, including for collaborative provision, and is responsible for the maintenance of the Register of Collaborative Links.

54 The policies and procedures for the monitoring and review of collaborative programmes are essentially those required for on-campus provision.

55 The programmes at SII-DUFE were already taught at Surrey and the approval process focused on the quality of the student learning experience and the operational arrangements. The articulation agreement clearly states which parts of the courses offered by DUFE and Surrey contribute to the dual awards, but this is not evident in the programme specifications as these are generic documents and not specific to the delivery of the awards under this arrangement. Requirements for dual awards are available in the SII-DUFE student handbook.

56 The most recent QAA Institutional Audit (2009) found that the University of Surrey's framework for managing standards and the quality of learning opportunities was effective, although it was recommended that the University articulate more clearly the role of faculties. The arrangements for collaborative programme approval and review were found to be robust and fit for purpose. The audit team recommended, however, that the procedures for the monitoring and review of collaborative delivery, particularly with regard to partnership-level quality assurance, should be considered with a view to enhancing University oversight.

57 From the review of the documentation provided and discussions during the visit to SII-DUFE, the review team considered that the University had subjected the collaborative arrangements with DUFE to a rigorous level of review over the last four years.

58 The SII-DUFE Quality Assurance and Operations Handbook stipulates that, in order to ensure the DUFE curriculum matches and articulates with that of the Surrey programme the two parties will consult over the design and delivery of the DUFE programme. The review team noted, however, that the programme handbook for 2010-11 provided a programme outline for the Surrey phase only.

59 Surrey provides clear and comprehensive guidelines for course validation and review panels. These guidelines have a separate section on the approval of collaborative provision and are aligned with the framework of the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

60 Monitoring and evaluation of SII-DUFE programmes is by module evaluation questionnaires, with a summary of student responses produced each semester for consideration by the Board of Studies as part of annual programme reviews. In addition, a SSLC is convened each semester, the minutes of which are forwarded to the Director of Studies and issues addressed in the annual programme review. The minutes of Boards of Studies demonstrate that there is some consideration of the module evaluations but this is generally limited to issues of process. More detailed consideration is given in the annual programme review report. The team was advised that this includes consideration of poor

module performance and remedial action and responses where necessary (normally where returns indicate a score under 3.5).

61 Each Board of Studies undertakes an annual review of its programmes, including collaborative provision, with a report and action plan for follow-up by the Board of Studies and, where appropriate, the Board of Examiners. The annual review report for 2009-10 noted a progression rate from DUFE to Surrey of 95 per cent. Two issues related specifically to SII-DUFE programmes were the lack of sufficient learning resources, which was addressed by supplying additional texts; and a concern raised by the external examiner on the difference in attainment on some modules between SII-DUFE students and those based at Surrey, due to differences in the moderation process, which has also been addressed. The follow-up review in October 2011 recommended that SII-DUFE should produce its own review, and a report for 2010-11 was submitted to the Board of Studies and the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

Programme Review

62 Surrey programmes are normally subject to periodic review every five years although a shorter interval may be necessary, depending on the original validation or previous review. Periodic review is seen as a process of revalidation ensuring that existing programmes of study continue to be relevant, current, meet their stated aims and objectives/learning outcomes, and are adequately resourced. The procedures and processes for review ordinarily follow those for validations. The academic standards guidelines provide templates for the review process, which involves a panel member external to the University.

63 The programmes scrutinised in this visit were reviewed in March 2009 as part of the periodic review in the School of Management, Faculty of Management and Law. The review encompassed nine programmes, including those involving SII-DUFE. The programmes were all approved for five years. The review presented a generally positive view of the quality and standards of the programmes but made no specific mention of any collaborative aspect.

64 In addition to the 2009 periodic review, Surrey has conducted a number of quality assurance visits and reviews specific to the SII-DUFE programmes. A Comprehensive Review visit took place in November 2008, prior to the first cohort of undergraduate students starting the SII-DUFE programmes in September 2009. The review covered quality assurance, learning and teaching, finance, and marketing, and resulted in a number of recommendations, including placing a senior member of the University of Surrey's academic staff at DUFE on an extended basis to support the Dean of SII-DUFE.

65 In 2009, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International Relations) and the Registrar visited DUFE, leading to 33 recommendations, including on the appointment, training and review of staff, student feedback, assessment, and resources. An action plan was produced by SII-DUFE in January 2010 and most recommendations have now been implemented. The review team saw a report on progress with action points made to the ULTC in October 2012, and a SII-DUFE Action List 2012-13, with actions assignment to named members of staff.

66 A follow-up visit by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Support) took place in June 2010 at the request of the Vice-Chancellor, to evaluate implementation of the 2009 recommendations. A visit report to the Executive Board and SII-DUFE Executive Group in November 2010 made 11 recommendations.

67 A separate visit to SII-DUFE by the Head and Deputy Head of English Language took place in June 2010 to review English teaching; the resulting recommendations were

approved by the Executive Board in November 2010. This visit reflected concerns about the standard of English language provision. In particular, issues were identified concerning the low level of English on entry to the first level of the programme in DUFE. There was also concern about the lack of linkage between English language and subject teaching. During the visit, the QAA review team saw evidence of a much improved language provision, including the English Language Support Centre and the English Language Club.

68 The most recent University of Surrey review of SII-DUFE was in October 2011. This was a desk-based review approved by the ULTC and chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs). The review panel reviewed self-evaluation and other documentation and held meetings with key staff involved in the collaboration. This review resulted in 14 recommendations on operational issues, with a target date of March 2012 for completion. A visit to SII-DUFE by Surrey staff in March 2012 found that most of the recommendations had been met or were being addressed. Recommendations relating to staff development and integration are currently being considered by the SII-DUFE Learning and Teaching Committee, which was itself created following review recommendations. The review team heard that recommendations and courses of action were discussed at staff meetings at SII-DUFE, which are held every two weeks and attended by all teaching staff. A Staff Forum, open to all staff, is also held every one to two months.

69 The review team heard that since the 2011 review, committees and communication were working much better, with close collaboration between the Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching). The Associate Dean (SII), Faculty of Business, Management and Law has a key role in overseeing the quality and standards of the programme.

70 The Chinese Ministry of Education conducted its own audit of the collaboration in 2010-11. The review team heard from senior staff that the collaborative partnership had been awarded top honours for foreign collaboration in Liaoning, Tianjin, Jiangsu and Henan Provinces.

71 The number and nature of the reviews between 2009 and 2012 demonstrates that the collaborative arrangement with DUFE is being monitored and managed at the highest level of the University of Surrey. The University's Executive and key deliberative committees are well informed about progress and issues and there is sound evidence that the University has secure oversight of the collaborative partnership with DUFE. What is less evident from the evidence provided is the degree to which this intense level of scrutiny and oversight reflects the University's usual approach to monitoring and reviewing collaborative arrangements.

Staffing and staff development

72 The approval processes used for programmes delivered in collaboration are those used for standard validation of home delivery. They include a requirement to consider the appropriateness of staff in terms of qualification, experience and number. In the original arrangement there were three categories of staff employed in the delivery of the SII-DUFE programme: Chinese nationals employed by DUFE; international staff appointed and employed by the University of Surrey and based in DUFE to teach solely on the SII-DUFE programme; and members of University staff who delivered modules at SII-DUFE in addition to teaching commitments in the UK. Visiting staff provided visit reports on returning to the UK for the attention of the Academic Coordinator in their faculty.

73 From July 2011, all new academic staff delivering the SII-DUFE programme are employed by Surrey as members of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Law, using identical appointment criteria as lecturer and tutor appointments in the UK.

74 The articulation agreement makes it clear that each party is responsible for its own quality assurance procedures as they relate to the delivery of their own awards. The reviews conducted by Surrey set out staff development as a key expectation. An induction programme held in the UK is referred to in the Comprehensive Review and is reported as being well received but in need of reinforcement. It was also suggested that there might be an annual review of competency. The 2010 review noted that SII-DUFE staff and DUFE staff were very keen to receive staff development opportunities.

75 The 2011 review report indicated remaining issues associated with staff development. The Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) at SII-DUFE has not been able to attend UK-based staff development due to a high workload and the 2011 review did not identify any substantive staff-development had taken place at SII-DUFE in the previous year. The March 2012 follow-up visit by the University of Surrey indicates that staff development actions are still outstanding, although they have been raised at the new SII-DUFE Learning and Teaching Committee at their inaugural meeting. The review team learned that a summer school had been run through SurreyLearn in summer 2012 and a Graduate Certificate in teaching and learning will be delivered from January 2013 on SurreyLearn, with the same timescale as the programme offered in the UK. Staff seen by the review team were aware of this programme and also referred to the availability of administrative skills training for programme leaders.

Assessments and examinations

76 Arrangements for external examining are identical to those in place for standard Surrey programmes. The regulations for external examiners and Boards of Examiners are set out in the University Regulations. In the case of the University of Surrey and SII-DUFE programmes, the same external examiners examine the work of all students whether they have undertaken the programme on the University's UK campus or in Dalian, enabling the examiners to consider consistency in standards.

77 External examiners are seen as key to Surrey's maintenance of standards and management of quality. They report annually to Surrey. Samples of examination scripts from SII-DUFE are sent to Surrey electronically for scrutiny by external examiners. Examiners can request that all scripts are supplied. The most recent report for the BSc (Hons) Tourism Management raises no issues specific to the collaborative delivery and affirms standards as at least comparable with other institutions and in many instances considers them to be higher. One external examiner for the BSc (Hons) Business Management raised no issues pertinent to the SII-DUFE provision. Another highlighted an issue in one module where there was inconsistency of feedback and some difference in marking between two internal markers from SII-DUFE. The external suggested that this could be improved by more consistent implementation of marking criteria.

78 External examiners' reports are considered and addressed by Boards of Studies through the annual review process. There is a clear process articulated and implemented for the consideration of external examiners' reports by Boards of Studies. The review team heard from staff that issues raised by external examiners were addressed through the normal internal procedures and committee structures at Surrey and SII-DUFE.

Certificates and transcripts

79 The Assessment and Awards section of the University of Surrey Registry is responsible for issuing a transcript and preparing an award certificate to each student who successfully completes the programme. The transcripts and certificates are of the same design and content whether the award is undertaken in Surrey or SII-DUFE. Transcripts

include a detailed list of modules undertaken on the Surrey phase of the programme together with the credits awarded, including their level. The reverse of the transcript includes an explanation for the interpretation of the transcript information. Neither certificates nor transcripts currently make reference to the country of study or the partner institution.

80 While this practice may be consistent with existing Ministry of Education requirements, it should be noted (as explained in a recent revision of the Quality Code) that in the interests of transparency, institutions will, in future, be expected to make clear in the certificate or transcript whether a course leads to a single award or to a double (or multiple) award.

Part C: Information

81 Responsibility for the accuracy of the undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses and the recruitment and publicity material published on the University of Surrey's website resides with the Marketing and Communications Department. For collaborative programmes, the checking of accuracy and completeness rests with faculties.

82 SII-DUFE is responsible for the management of marketing and publicity activity within China, including the maintenance of its website. Use of logos or coats of arms of either party requires the agreement in writing of the other. The text of brochures and other literature, including the website, has to be submitted for approval by both parties. The formal agreement also expects both parties, Surrey and DUFE, to assist SII-DUFE in its marketing and publicity activity.

83 The review team learned that SII-DUFE is developing a new marketing approach to enhance internal marketing to DUFE students. They are also looking to develop a brochure and events aimed at families.

84 The QAA Institutional Audit in 2009 confirmed that Surrey had suitably robust procedures for assuring the accuracy of all published information, including that produced by collaborative partners. Guidance is provided for the content of student handbooks for programmes delivered on-campus and at associated institutions.

85 The student handbook is produced by Surrey and mirrors the one provided for Surrey students studying in the UK, with necessary variances suitable to the DUFE context. Surrey is now appointing an interpreter to double-check that the Chinese translation of Surrey documentation is correct.

86 Students who met the review team commented that the information supplied, including that in handbooks, was useful and accurate.

Conclusion

87 Students were very positive about their experience and would recommend their course to others. The students commented in particular on the good learning atmosphere and learning resources, and the exposure to international education, including the opportunity to go abroad for further education. They also cited as positive features the good communication between students and staff; the rigorous, professional approach to teaching; the enhanced competitiveness for postgraduate studies at SII-DUFE; the strong campus culture; and a clear sense of belonging to SII-DUFE.

88 Staff who met the review team also commented very positively on the strengths of the collaboration and on recent developments, including closer integration between years one/two and three/four. They regarded the programme as succeeding in 'taking good students and making them excellent'.

89 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 its challenges. The establishment of the partnership took place over a two-year period and since then Surrey has undertaken four reviews of the arrangements. There is no doubt that the University Executive and the senior deliberative committees have managed the oversight of this arrangement effectively and the academic standards of the awards made by Surrey have been assured.

Positive features

The review team identified as positive features of the partnership:

- the rigorous due diligence procedures that ensured that a wide range of relevant University departments were engaged in the approval of the partnership (paragraphs 14-17)
- the diligent and attentive oversight of the collaborative arrangements by the University Executive and the senior deliberative committees (paragraphs 63-71)
- the new model for delivery of the programme using Surrey staff based at SII-DUFE; resulting in a less intensive approach, with teaching spread more evenly over each semester and improved scheduling of assignments, a greater cohesiveness of teaching staff, and improved contact between students and staff through regular consultation hours and the introduction of a personal tutor system (paragraphs 8, 32, 44, 68, 73)
- the approach taken to enhance the development of students' proficiency in English language (paragraphs 33, 43, 67)
- the clear and well organised articulation process for DUFE students to undertake study at Surrey (paragraphs 32, 36, 41).

Recommendations

The review team recommends that the University of Surrey should:

- review the programme specifications for the Surrey/SII-DUFE dual awards to provide details of the delivery of the programmes (paragraph 55)
- further clarify institutional policies and procedures for the regular review of partnership arrangements to take explicit and detailed account of collaborative programmes (paragraph 63).

In relation to the second recommendation, the review team affirms the University's instigation of a more rigorous periodic review process that more explicitly considers collaborative delivery where programmes are run concurrently at the University (paragraph 10).

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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