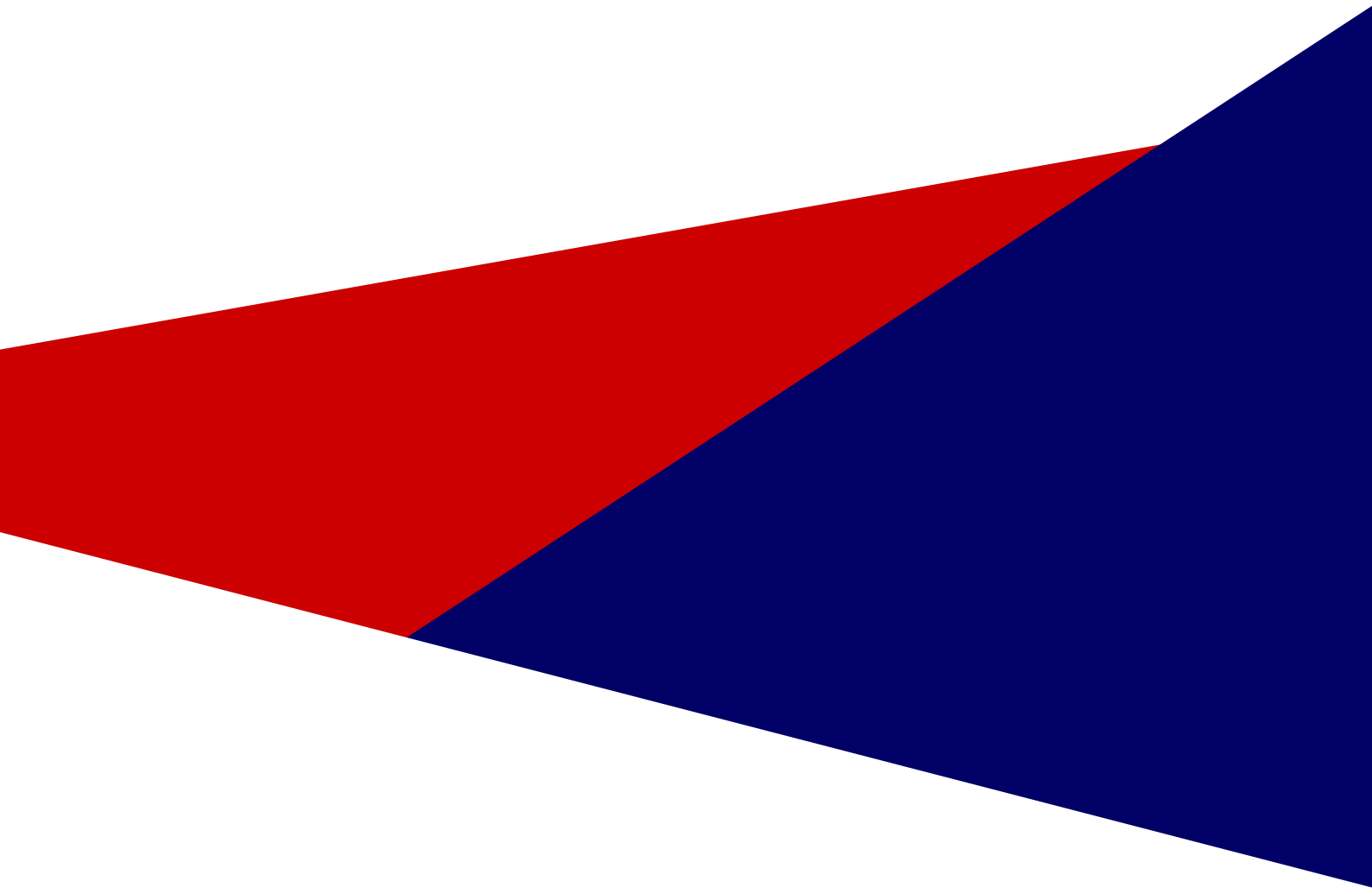




UK Transnational Education in Malaysia

Overview Report

April 2020



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Executive summary

In 2019, QAA undertook a review of UK transnational education (TNE) in Malaysia. The review involved close engagement with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) with the MQA sharing information, data and intelligence on the local operating framework and UK TNE providers, to inform the selection of the sample of arrangements to be reviewed. 12 TNE arrangements were selected with factors including the number of students, programmes, partners, type of TNE arrangement and subject discipline considered. A representative sample across the four UK nations was selected, covering the main types of TNE operating in Malaysia - branch campuses, franchise and validated dual awards. In addition to the reviews, seven case studies led by providers were produced.

Since the review was undertaken, of course, the world has changed considerably as all nations respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to help protect the quality and standards evidenced in Malaysian TNE provision, QAA is developing separate advice for UK providers during the pandemic response period, which will be published on its [COVID-19 support and guidance page](#).

The review identified a number of themes for reflection across the branch campus, franchise, and validated dual awards provision.

In branch campuses, the theme of 'sameness' was reflected - not just in ensuring that the awards offered were equivalent to those in the UK, but also in attempting to develop a student learning style similar to that found in the UK. This was shown in the investment in staff development to support teaching and learning to enable academic staff to become familiar with UK teaching methods. This sameness was also evident in the systems set up for listening and responding to the student voice.

While recognising the sameness, the review identified a range of practices to balance this with flexibility to allow the branch campus to be managed in a different way and lead to devolution to the branch campus as partnerships developed. Best practice showed this devolved authority documented through formal processes.

UK branch campuses also benefitted from the formal cooperation through the establishment of the UK5 group which provides a forum for sharing ideas and good practice and for engaging with the Ministry of Education and the MQA.

The franchise model - the most well-established TNE model in Malaysia - typically has the UK institution taking greater responsibility for the design of the curriculum, the assessment and the quality assurance of the programme delivered by the partner.

The review indicated that franchised provision shared some features with branch campus provision. Namely, the levels of responsibility evolved as the partnership developed, with the Malaysian partner often given greater responsibility. Similarly, most institutions allowed for the franchised provision to be contextualised to address issues relevant to students in Malaysia. There was also evidence of extensive opportunities for partner-staff development, both informally and formally. However, with regard to systems for hearing the student voice, the review noted that the processes designed for this need strengthening.

Much of the dual award provision developed from franchise arrangements and evolved into dual award arrangements when the Malaysian partner obtained full university status. In Malaysia, an institution is required to end its franchise arrangements when it achieves full university status. Some institutions wishing to continue the partnership, offer dual awards.

Dual awards are popular with students in Malaysia as they are perceived as offering enhanced employability opportunities with both a UK and Malaysian qualification.

Institutions offering dual degrees took different approaches to enhancing staff development at the Malaysian partner. Although there was significant variety in the offering and approach, where effort was made to enhance staff engagement and teaching quality, there was an enhanced sense of identity of the UK partner at the Malaysian institution. As with other provision, more autonomy and collaboration regarding teaching material and assessment existed in partnerships that have evolved and developed.

Student identity tended to be stronger in dual award institutions where mobility or exchange were offered, where there were physical infrastructure developments signposting the partnership, or where students met and interacted with staff from the UK institution.

The challenge for dual award partnership is ensuring that the partner understands and enacts its expectations regarding hearing the student voice. This is also true to a lesser extent of student support and personal tutoring.

While different partnerships adopted different approaches to the relationship, those with more robust quality assurance mechanisms appeared to have closer communication and a more collegiate approach to their relationship. Areas of good practice in quality assurance were the result of intense commitments of time and resources.

Overall, the review found that processes for the management of TNE are generally well-developed, ensuring that standards and quality are equivalent to similar provision developed in the UK. Many local partners also have well-developed quality assurance systems used for both their own awards and those made by non-local degree-awarding bodies.

Introduction

QAA's in-country review of TNE has traditionally operated on a country-by-country basis, with a three-year programme of TNE review activity. Each year, a country/region with significant UK TNE provision, or of strategic importance for UK HE, has been identified for review, and a sample of UK TNE arrangements selected for a review or case study. Malaysia was selected as the 2019 destination for TNE review.

This report is associated with the review of UK TNE in Malaysia carried out in 2019. It includes the main lessons learned from reviewing TNE in Malaysia, for the benefit of the whole sector. In producing these reports, and in reviewing UK TNE, QAA seeks to liaise with local regulators and quality assurance agencies, and other UK sector bodies with relevant expertise. QAA has a number of strategic partnerships with counterpart agencies in key countries for UK TNE. These are a source of intelligence and direct access to up-to-date information about local regulatory developments.

We would like to thank our partner agencies in Malaysia, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Education Malaysia), and the British Council in Malaysia, for their invaluable support in developing this report, and throughout the TNE review process.

Background

Malaysia is the second-largest host country/region for UK TNE, and the largest host country if distance-learning and Oxford Brookes' partnership with ACCA are excluded. The last time it was subject to TNE review was in 2010. In addition to looking at the quality of UK TNE in a strategic country for UK higher education, the TNE review in Malaysia has aimed to advance interagency cooperation in quality assurance and develop a shared understanding of key TNE-related challenges and issues with the local partner agency, the MQA.

QAA and the MQA have a long history of cooperation underpinned by a memorandum of understanding, most recently renewed in 2018. Both agencies are committed to working towards establishing a strategic alliance to enhance external quality assurance in both jurisdictions and improve the quality of higher education in the UK and Malaysia. This commitment includes seeking to strengthen cooperation in the quality assurance of UK TNE in Malaysia.

QAA and the MQA engaged closely throughout the TNE review process. The MQA shared valuable information, data and intelligence about the local operating framework and UK TNE providers in Malaysia at critical stages of the review process. This contributed to selecting the sample of TNE arrangements to be looked at, identifying areas of inquiry, and briefing the review team about the Malaysia higher education and quality assurance system. Representatives from the MQA also observed the review visits that took place in Kuala Lumpur and the state of Selangor. This close cooperation between the two agencies contributed significantly to deepening common understanding and strengthening reciprocal trust in each other's higher education and quality assurance systems.

The cooperation between QAA and the MQA in this review can be regarded as an example of good practice in international cooperation as outlined in the Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education (QACHE) Toolkit for quality assurance agencies - *Cooperation in Cross-Border Higher Education*.¹

¹ <https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/QACHE-toolkit.pdf>

The TNE review process

As part of QAA's review of UK TNE in Malaysia, all UK degree-awarding bodies were surveyed to obtain up-to-date information about programmes delivered and student numbers, thus complementing HESA data which does not collect data at partner and programme level. The survey focused on provision delivered on the ground, thus excluding distance-learning. Further details regarding the survey findings can be found in the Malaysia Country Report, accessible to QAA Members only via the [Membership Resources site](#).

On the basis of the survey returns, QAA selected 12 TNE arrangements to be reviewed. The selection took into account a range of factors including the number of students, programmes and partners, the type of TNE arrangements and disciplinary areas of provision. The aim was to select as representative a sample as possible across the four nations of the UK, focusing on the main types of TNE models operating in Malaysia, specifically: branch campus, validated dual awards, franchise and validation. Consideration was also given as to whether QAA had engaged with UK providers in recent TNE reviews in other countries, and whether a provider was already engaging in other QAA review processes, such as the case of Heriot-Watt which, at the time of the TNE review, was preparing for its main institutional review in Scotland (due early in 2020).

On the basis of these considerations, the TNE arrangements in Table 1 were selected for review. In cases where a large range of programmes were delivered, only a sample (also indicated in Table 1) was selected for specific focus. Seven case studies led by providers themselves have also been produced and are included as part of the output of the TNE review exercise (Table 2).

Table 1: TNE provision in Malaysia selected for review

UK degree-awarding body	Malaysian partner	Type of review	Programmes	Students (2017-18)	Type of delivery
University of Lincoln	KDU Penang University College	Review in the UK, 27 September 2019	BA (Hons) Business and Management BSc (Hons) Computer Science (3+0) BA (Hons) Accountancy and Finance (3+0) BA (Hons) Communications and Public Relations (3+0) BSc (Hons) Computer Science (Information Systems) (3+0) BEng (Hons) Automation Engineering (3+0)	151 123 72 46 38 25	Validated dual award
Liverpool John Moores University	YPC International College	Review in the UK, 30 September 2019	BSc (Hons) E-Business Technology and Management (3+0) BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance (3+0) BA (Hons) Business Management (3+0) BSc (Hons) Multimedia Computing (3+0)	197 150 112 105	Franchised and validated delivery
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Malvern International Academy	Review in the UK, 4 October 2019	BA (Hons) Administration (with pathways) (3+0) MBA (1+0)	83 53	Validated delivery
Coventry University	Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TAR UC)	Review visit in Kuala Lumpur, 14 October 2019	BSc Finance (2+0 top-up) BA International Business Management (2+0 top-up) BSc Accounting and Finance (2+0 top-up) BA Business Administration (2+0 top-up) BA International Economics and Trade (2+0 top-up) BA Business and Human Resource Management (2+0 top-up)	240 179 141 41 32 7	Validated dual awards
Aberystwyth University	Brickfields Asia College	Review visit in Kuala Lumpur, 15 October 2019	BSc Business and Management with Law (3+0) LLB Law (2+1/1+2 Top-Up) BSc Accounting and Finance with Law (3+0) BSc Marketing with Law (3+0) BSc Economics with Law (3+0)	38 34 29 16 6	Franchised delivery
Lancaster University	Sunway University	Review visit in Kuala Lumpur, 16 October 2019	BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance (3+0) BSc (Hons) Psychology (3+0) BA (Hons) Communication (3+0) BSc (Hons) Computer Science (3+0) BSc (Hons) Medical Biotechnology (3+0) BA (Hons) Digital Film Production (3+0) MSc Life Sciences (by research) (1+0) MSc Computer Science (by research) (1+0)	1302 416 305 304 130 90 43 13	Validated dual awards

UK degree-awarding body	Malaysian partner	Type of review	Programmes	Students (2017-18)	Type of delivery
University of Nottingham	University of Nottingham Malaysia	Review visit in Kuala Lumpur, 17 October 2019	PhD Biosciences (3+0) BEng (Hons) Chemical Engineering (3+0) Master of Pharmacy (Hons) (2+2) BSc (Hons) in Psychology (3+0) BSc (Hons) Finance, Accounting and Management (3+0) BEng (Hons) Electrical and Electronic Engineering (3+0) BA (Hons) in English with Creative Writing (3+0)	29 80 63 118 335 136 56	Branch campus
Anglia Ruskin University	MAHSA University	Review visit in Kuala Lumpur, 18 October 2019	BSc Physiotherapy (4+0) BSc Biomedical Sciences (4+0) BEng Electrical and Electronics Engineering (4+0) BEng Medical Electronic Engineering (4+0) BEng Mechatronics Engineering (4+0) BEng Electronics and Communications Engineering (4+0)	443 177 76 53 17 9	Validated dual awards
University of Greenwich	SEGi College	Review visit in Kuala Lumpur, 19 October 2019	BA (Hons) Accounting & Finance (KL) (3+0) BA (Hons) Business Management (KL) (3+0) BA (Hons) Accounting & Finance (Penang) (3+0) BSc (Hons) Computing (Penang) (3+0) BA (Hons) Early Years ED (Sarawak) (3+0) BA (Hons) Accounting & Finance (Subang Jaya) (3+0) BA (Hons) Early Years (Subang Jaya) (3+0)	297 383 159 105 23 178 126	Franchised delivery
University of Southampton	University of Southampton Malaysia	Review visit in Johor, 21 October 2019	MEng Mechanical Engineering (2+2) Engineering Foundation Year MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering (2+2) MEng Aeronautics and Astronautics (2+2) PhD in Engineering (2+1)	81 71 57 22 0	Branch campus
Newcastle University	Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia	Review visit in Johor, 22 October 2019	PG Diploma in Medical Education PG Certificate in Medical Education BSc Biomedical Sciences (3+0) Foundation in Biological and Biomedical Sciences	1 14 71 60	Branch campus
University of Reading	University of Reading Malaysia	Review visit in Johor, 23 October 2019	Foundation in Business (2+1/3+0) BSc Quantity Surveying (2+1/3+0) BSc Accounting and Finance (2+1/3+0) BSc Real Estate (2+1/3+0) BSc Psychology (2+1/3+0) BA Management and Business (2+1/3+0) MPharm Pharmacy (2+2) (students transferred to UK from 2019-20)	184 62 57 56 44 27 15	Branch campus

Table 2: TNE provision in Malaysia selected for case studies

HEI name	Malaysian partner	Topic
Cardiff Metropolitan University	The London School of Commerce, Westminster International College	Teach-out
Staffordshire University	Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology (APIIT) and Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (APU)	Teach-out
University of Sunderland	International Advertising Communication and Technology College	Risk-based approach to collaborative partnership development
University of the West of England	Taylor's University	Dual awards
Heriot-Watt University	Heriot-Watt University Malaysia	Operating a branch campus
University of Hertfordshire	INTI International University and Colleges	Dual awards
University of London Worldwide	Not applicable	The University of London's Recognised Teaching Centre model in Malaysia

Selected UK providers were requested to submit an information set focusing on the documentation of how quality and standards were maintained in the TNE arrangement under consideration. The review team, comprising three peer-reviewers with extensive experience of TNE, conducted a desk-based analysis of this documentation which informed the review or case study visits to the provider. As indicated in the above table, three review visits were carried out in the UK in September and October 2019, the other nine visits took place in Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Johor between 14 and 23 October 2019.

Each review visit was conducted by two peer-reviewers and managed by a QAA quality assurance manager. Review visits took place over one day for each provider, involving meetings with senior management, teaching and administrative staff, and students. Visits followed up issues identified in the desk-based analysis, to better understand how the TNE arrangement works in practice and to look directly at the student experience. The review team made use of video conferencing technology to meet staff and students based at the Malaysia delivery site during visits in the UK, and vice versa in the UK when undertaking visits in Malaysia.

All review visits were undertaken in a spirit of enhancement, with a view to learning lessons that could benefit the partnership under consideration and more generally improve the capacity of the UK higher education sector to engage in high-quality TNE. TNE review visits do not issue any formal judgement of confidence in a degree-awarding body's capacity to safeguard the standards and quality of its overall TNE provision. It would not be possible to generalise in such a way from looking at a single TNE arrangement among the many different kinds that a degree-awarding body might have in different parts of the world. However, review visit reports include recommendations for improvement as well as highlighting positive features.

The reviews reports are available on the [QAA website](#). The case studies are accessible only to QAA International Insight Members in the [Membership Resources site](#).

Thematic reflections on UK TNE in Malaysia

Branch campuses

'Sameness'

All UK branch campuses offer degrees that are equivalent to those offered in the UK, with the same academic standards and the same content with appropriate contextualisation. Franchised programmes also offer this level of 'sameness'.

Branch campuses also attempt to develop a learning style in the student that is similar to the UK. This requires branch campuses to put in place teaching and learning support for staff development so that academic staff (often with only local teaching experience) become familiar with UK teaching methods. All the branch campuses reviewed had extensive academic staff development in place and most resulted in a formal postgraduate certificate qualification. This requires a significant investment by the universities in selecting, training and monitoring academic staff and through providing support networks of UK colleagues.

Alongside staff development, there was clear evidence of well-developed mechanisms for listening and responding to the student voice at an institutional level. Student representatives at course, school and faculty-level, engage not only with other students but have formal roles on committees involved in programme review and course evaluation, as would be expected in the UK. This contrasts with the more top-down approach to teaching and student representation seen in the other types of TNE. These representation structures are effective in part because of the distinctive style of learning adopted by the students.

Devolution

Branch campuses are under the control of the UK university and only offer its programmes. They therefore share the same strategic objectives and have a joint strategic plan and are branded with the name of the UK university.

In Malaysia, branch campuses may be owned and branded by the UK university but are subject to the laws of Malaysia and the oversight of the Ministry and the MQA. They are competing with other private universities, some of which operate explicitly for profit, and in an environment where quality varies significantly and is related to the fee structure.

Therefore, this TNE review does not need to address how strategic and operational differences between the UK university and the partner are addressed. The review focused more on how effective the common processes are at monitoring the activities in Malaysia and ensuring that standards and quality meet UK expectations.

When branch campuses are first set up, there is an assumption in the UK university that the branch campus will operate in the same way as the UK campus. Decision-making and operational control is largely retained by UK staff and UK-based committees and follows processes developed for UK-only activities. As the branch campus becomes larger and confidence grows, more and more responsibility and authority is devolved to the branch campus. At the same time, processes need to be adapted to allow flexibility. If this devolution takes place too quickly then there is a risk to quality and standards as new staff at the branch campus may not be aware of (or follow) the institutional processes. However, if not enough responsibility is devolved or if processes are not adapted, the branch campus will not have the flexibility to address local issues. This can stifle development and growth at the branch campus and restrict the benefits to the home university of having a branch campus.

Thus, the challenge is not in ensuring that everything is the same at the overseas campus as it is in the UK campus, but in having sufficient flexibility to allow the overseas campus to be different in a managed way and in providing the resources to manage this difference effectively.

The review team saw a range of practices as universities manage this diversity and move from 'closely controlled' to 'flexibility'. The best practices are where the devolved authority is documented through formal documents such as the constitution and through documents such as the Statements of Responsibility of the University of Nottingham.

The five UK branch campuses have benefited from formal cooperation between them through the establishment of the UK5 group. This group meets regularly and provides a forum for sharing ideas and good practice, and for engaging with the Ministry of Education, other Ministries and the MQA. The group has been successful in resolving issues around the compulsory local subjects, recognition of credit, student visas and other matters.

Franchised provision

The franchise model is the most well-established TNE model in Malaysia, with UK universities having used this model since the mid-1990s. There are currently 37 UK universities franchising programmes to 55 Malaysian higher education providers, a mixture of private universities, private colleges and government bodies.

The curriculum and assessment of a franchised programme are typically designed by the UK university, and are essentially the same as for the programme with the same title delivered in the UK. This reduces the risk that the course will not be of sufficient quality. Students are registered with the UK university but are taught by the Malaysian higher education provider.²

Most UK partnerships in Malaysia were originally developed on the basis of a franchise arrangement, with some of those developing into dual award arrangements as private colleges have gained their own degree awarding powers. Many of these private university colleges owe their achievement of degree awarding powers to their established relationships with UK universities, and through their gradually increasing responsibilities for the management of the quality and standards of franchised provision.

In terms of quality assurance arrangements, franchise arrangements differ from dual award arrangements in that the UK university typically takes a greater responsibility for the quality assurance of the provision delivered by the partner. As a partnership evolves and trust between the two institutions develops, the Malaysian partner is often given greater responsibility.

UK universities also differ in terms of the degree of variation between the parent and child programmes. Some require the timing of delivery of the franchised provision to be synchronised with the delivery of the same programme in the UK, with identical assessments being required at all sites, whereas others allow the partner to control both the timing of delivery and the development of assessments. Most institutions allow for franchised provision to be contextualised to address the issues relevant for students in Malaysia.

² This definition should not be confused with the UK regulators and funding councils' use of the term franchise, whereby universities enter into a formal contractual relationship (also known as a 'franchise') with other higher education providers, which does not refer at all to any equivalent programme being delivered by the UK university.

The review team observed some trends across the range of UK universities that franchise their provision in Malaysia.

UK universities were providing extensive opportunities for partner staff development, both informally from working collaboratively with partner staff, and more formally by partner staff accessing the university's training opportunities (for instance, through the delivery of postgraduate certificate courses in Learning and Teaching in higher education). This development enhanced the quality of student learning opportunities at the partner.

Many UK universities did not have adequate systems in place to hear the student voice and needed to strengthen their processes for module and programme feedback and listening to the student representation structure. One example of good practice is where external examiners are given the opportunity to hear students' views.

Dual award provision

The TNE review highlighted an interesting observation that many dual award partnerships had begun life through franchise arrangements and had evolved into dual award arrangements as the Malaysian partner obtained an enhanced standing in the Malaysian higher education landscape. This had normally occurred through promotion of the Malaysian institution from college to university college or from university college to full university status. The transition from franchise to dual awards was a consequence of the requirement for an institution to end its franchise arrangements when it achieved full university status. Other factors influencing the transition included the fact that partners wished to continue to develop the relationship in which they had already invested and a sense that offering dual awards brought benefits to both partners.

Dual awards remain popular in the Malaysian higher education landscape with many students articulating to the review team that they chose a dual award pathway because of the perceived enhanced employability opportunities that would be available with both a UK and Malaysian degree. This is despite the fact that, as the UK programme is not usually registered on the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR), there is the potential risk that the UK programme may not be recognised for public sector employment within Malaysia. In a number of cases, the prospect of the UK degree opening up opportunities for employment outside of Malaysia was mentioned as a reason for students choosing the programme. Therefore, it is likely that dual award programmes in Malaysia will remain popular from the students' perspective.

The MQA, as the quality assurance agency, made a public statement in 2018 in relation to institutions offering dual awards.³ Core to this message was that it is beholden upon institutions to ensure that students are clear on the nature of the awards offered, their conferment and also that institutions should inform students how to communicate the two awards to potential users of the qualifications, distinguishing them from two separate degrees earned through conventional means. While the review team did not explore this latter requirement explicitly during the visit, it was not evident from written evidence provided (for example, student handbooks) that students were being instructed on how to communicate a dual award to potential employers.

³ www.mqa.gov.my/pv4/document/publicstatement/Public%20Statement%20MQA%20Bil.32018.pdf

Staff and student experience

There was significant variety in the approaches taken by UK institutions offering dual awards towards enhancing staff development and training at the Malaysian partner. These ranged from requirements for formal training through to little or no requirement; planned staff exchange visits which included training through to periodic ad hoc staff visits; and a variety of levels of engagement between academic staff at each partner. While each different approach to staff engagement and development presented its own benefits and risks, it was clear that those partnerships where effort was made to enhance staff engagement and teaching quality at the Malaysian partner, led to an enhanced sense of identity of the UK partner at the Malaysian institution.

Levels of staff autonomy varied between dual award partners. In almost all cases, the UK institution provided the core teaching material which was permitted some level of contextualisation by staff delivering the material at the Malaysian institution. Assessments tended to be more tightly controlled by the UK institution, with more autonomy and collaboration evident in those partnerships that had evolved and developed over a period of time.

Student identity and experience for those studying on UK degrees via dual awards were different from those studying on branch campuses where the UK institutional identity and brand is often very evident. For those institutions offering dual awards, students more strongly identified with the UK institution if they had undertaken some form of mobility or exchange or where there were physical infrastructure developments that signposted the partnership (for example, branded spaces and lounges). Students also identified more strongly with the UK institution when they met and interacted with staff from the UK institution.

One challenge for UK institutions offering dual awards is ensuring that its expectations around student representation and hearing the student voice are understood and enacted by the Malaysian partner. This is often associated with a difference in culture where the two institutions approach student engagement in different ways and depths. The same applies, but to a lesser degree, in the area of student support and personal tutoring.

Communication and partnership

The review team noted that different partnerships exhibited different approaches to the relationship, perhaps as a result of having evolved over different lengths of time, having key staff as ambassadors for the partnership or possibly through having an enabling governance environment. While all partnerships reviewed claimed to have excellent communication between the dual award partners, those with more robust quality assurance mechanisms seemed to be in closer communication and with a more relaxed and collegiate approach to their relationship.

Dual award partnerships are, by nature, intensive to manage, given the competing needs of two separate awarding bodies which are operating in different regulatory frameworks, while based on essentially very similar learning materials and assessments. Areas of good practice observed by the review team in terms of quality assurance often meant even more intensive demands on time and resources.

Conclusions

The country report and this TNE review show that Malaysia has a long history of higher education provision offered by overseas providers. TNE developed to meet a rising higher education demand as the government, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, sought to increase higher education participation while at the same time aiming to support the development of local higher education through capacity building and knowledge transfer.

UK degree-awarding bodies are the main providers of TNE in Malaysia, with over 50% of all non-local programmes leading to a UK degree. Malaysia is the second-largest host country for UK TNE, although over the past few years there has been a decrease in TNE student numbers due to consolidation of the existing offer in the context of an increasingly competitive market, a developing local higher education sector and changes in local regulations.

UK TNE is offered in Malaysia through a variety of models, including distance-learning, which was outside the scope of QAA 2019 TNE review. The vast majority of TNE provision takes the form of franchise or validation partnerships with local providers, either with or without their own degree awarding powers. Over the years, as local partners have developed and gained their own Malaysian degree awarding powers, a number of franchise partnerships have had to either wind down or change to validated dual awards, since the MoE does not allow local degree-awarding bodies to deliver franchised programmes. There are also five UK branch campuses of different sizes and at different stages of development.

Overall, the TNE review exercise found that UK TNE provision offered in Malaysia is generally both relevant to the local market and employment needs and meets the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Processes for the management of TNE in Malaysia are generally well developed, ensuring that standards and quality are equivalent to similar provision delivered in the UK. Many of the local partners also have well-developed quality assurance systems used for both their own awards and those made by non-local degree-awarding bodies.

The TNE review in Malaysia also sought to explore innovative ways to cooperate with QAA's local partner agency, the MQA. QAA and the MQA have a well-established strategic partnership. Both agencies are committed to developing cross-border cooperation in the quality assurance of TNE, with a view to lessening any unnecessary regulatory burden and enhancing the efficiency of quality assurance processes. This commitment is expressed in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies, as well as participation in multilateral initiatives such as the Quality Beyond Boundaries Group.⁴

QAA and the MQA cooperated closely throughout the TNE review process, sharing data, information and intelligence on UK TNE provision delivered locally; and MQA representatives joined a number of TNE review visits in the capacity of observers. Such close cooperation allowed both agencies to deepen reciprocal understanding and to strengthen reciprocal trust in each other's quality assurance systems, although there are inherent limits to the extent to which reciprocal recognition of quality assurance decisions can be achieved. Malaysian legislation requires all higher education provision to be

⁴ The Quality Beyond Boundaries Group (QBBG) is a network of quality assurance agencies in some of the main sending and receiving countries TNE formed to address the quality assurance challenges and seize the opportunities associated with the growth of TNE. The vision of QBBG is to develop a trusting alliance of international quality assurance agencies committed to a collaborative and innovative future for transnational quality assurance. QBBG members have committed to achieve this vision by creating a platform to share information and best practices and work together to improve quality assurance systems for cross border higher education.

accredited by the MQA in order to be placed in the MQR. Self-accrediting institutions are also strongly advised to continue to register their programmes with the MQA.

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