Research Team from Kingston University: Robin Middlehurst and Steve Woodfield (with Heather Forland) In partnership with – Chems Consulting: John Fielden January 2009

The research team would like to thank the Million+ team for the help and guidance that they have provided for this project, and Dr Heather Forland, Head of International Development at Kingston University, for her advice and guidance throughout the project. The team is very grateful to all universities which subscribe to Million+ for participating in the survey and supplying valuable information for this study; team members are also appreciative of the time and interest extended to the project by the policy makers who were interviewed.
Million+ commissioned this report from Kingston University to address the serious lack of comprehensive information and analysis of the activities of UK universities that have developed a wide variety of international links and collaborative arrangements with overseas partners in terms of teaching, research and knowledge transfer. The research team were also asked to assess the extent to which policy makers were aware and took account of the expertise and opportunities offered by universities with extensive experience of developing and sustaining wide-ranging and comprehensive international partnership agendas.

The report concludes that much of the international partnership activity of these universities has gone unnoticed at sector level and by policy makers in spite of its scope, extent and the value placed upon it by partner institutions and countries. This is a missed opportunity not only for UK higher education and its representative bodies but also for UK plc.
The varied and wide-ranging partnerships of these universities extend across the globe – in developing and developed countries – and many are in priority countries for the UK. For example, the universities surveyed have particular expertise in China, India, the Middle East, Europe and Africa and institutions are using regional offices as ‘hubs’ for further expansion.

These links provide financial and educational benefits to the UK but they also provide benefits that are sought by overseas countries. Within universities, the arrangements provide students with study and volunteering opportunities, offer staff a diverse portfolio of teaching and, importantly, the activities promoted within these partnerships embrace the total business of the university – teaching, research, knowledge transfer and consultancy.

This report sets out clear recommendations and a platform for action for universities, Government and the range of agencies that are involved in key activities such as market intelligence, funding, regulation, information provision, overseas promotion, and developing government to government and intra-regional relationships. In comparison to other countries there is a serious lack of co-ordination in international HE strategy in the UK and there are implications for the presumptions and hierarchies which continue to influence the UK’s HE funding regimes which we would urge Government to recognise.

This report confirms that the international institutional partnerships that have been developed by UK universities make a significant contribution to a UK-wide reputation for innovation and sustainability. They should now promoted strategically by the Department of Innovation Universities and Skills, by Government on a cross-departmental basis, by the higher education sector and by related agencies.

Professor Les Ebdon CBE Chair

Pam Tatlow Chief Executive
Participating Universities

University of Abertay Dundee
Anglia Ruskin University
Bath Spa University
University of Bedfordshire
Birmingham City University
The University of Bolton
Buckinghamshire New University
University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)
Coventry University
University of Derby
University of East London (UEL)
Glasgow Caledonian University
University of Greenwich
Kingston University
Leeds Metropolitan University
London Metropolitan University
London South Bank University (LSBU)
Middlesex University
Napier University
The University of Northampton
Roehampton University
Southampton Solent University
Staffordshire University
University of Sunderland
University of Teesside
Thames Valley University (TVU)
University of the West of Scotland
The University of Wolverhampton

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1a Introducing the research
This report presents the findings of an important project commissioned by Million+ and undertaken between February and December 2008. For the first time, data and information have been systematically collected on the range of international partnerships covering teaching, research and knowledge transfer with which the 28 universities which subscribe to Million+ are engaged. Universities that took part in the research are all ‘post-1992’ universities ranging in size from large universities with more than 25,000 students studying for higher education qualifications to smaller institutions with around 3,000 students. Four of the Universities which took part in the study are located in Scotland and the remaining 24 are in England.

It was already known that these Universities teach more than 70,000 international students on their UK campuses, so the survey undertaken for this study focused particularly on the range and extent of international partnerships, the different types of partnerships in operation and where relevant, the range of delivery modes for trans-national education. In parallel with the survey, desk research sought to identify available hard evidence and insights into how international partnership activity can have a positive impact, educationally and financially, on the UK higher education sector and on partner countries. Given resources and time-scales, the research did not involve direct contact with partner countries, although this is clearly a desirable focus for future studies, nor did it ask Universities in the survey to quantify the impact of their international partnerships. However, examples from the survey help to illuminate the kinds of impact that are intended and achieved.

Universities were also invited to comment on the challenges of operating international partnerships, including internal support and barriers to such partnerships and their experience of external policy constraints and enablers. A small number of interviews with policy makers in government departments and higher education policy agencies provided a parallel insight into how national policies are perceived to support, inhibit or have a neutral effect on the development and sustainability of international partnerships. To provide a comparative perspective on the UK’s policy environment for international institutional partnerships, a brief review of the policy context and incentives in the USA and Australia was also undertaken. The detailed aims and research methods for the research are set out in Appendix 2 of the full report.

Our study reveals that the Universities that took part in the study are engaged in a wide range of partnerships for teaching, knowledge transfer and research in over 70 countries with either potential or actual impact on educational and economic goals in partner countries as well as the UK. This report should be of interest to policy makers and national and international agencies, not least because the findings reveal a lack of knowledge and appreciation of the international contributions of Universities that provided evidence to this study at national levels. These Universities form a significant component of the UK’s higher education sector and demonstrate the richness, enterprise and innovation that the UK can offer to international partners and stakeholders alike.

1b Rationale for the research
UK universities and colleges have engaged in a range of international activities for decades including student and staff exchanges, research collaborations and more recently, a variety of forms of trans-national or cross-border education. Until now, most attention from government and the media has focused on recruiting international students to study in the UK, and the economic...
benefits that international student fees and associated expenditure bring to UK higher education institutions and the UK economy as a whole. This was the focus of the first Prime Minister’s Initiative (PMI, 1999-2005) and remains the first objective of the second Prime Minister’s Initiative (PMI2, 2006-2011).

However, a focus only on recruiting international students ignores higher education institutions’ wider internationalisation agendas that include developing a variety of international links and collaborative arrangements with overseas partners to expand and enhance their core businesses of teaching, research and knowledge transfer. These links can provide financial and educational benefits to UK institutions; they also provide benefits that are sought by overseas countries (whether developed or developing) as contributions to their own economic and educational development. Within universities, these arrangements can provide students with study and volunteering opportunities, can offer staff a diverse portfolio of teaching, research and consultancy, and for institutions as a whole, can offer more secure, sustainable or novel routes for the recruitment of international students and for student mobility overseas.

At policy level, partnerships are increasingly recognised as important vehicles for internationalisation as evidenced by recent initiatives to support bi-lateral teaching and research collaborations between the UK and specific partner countries such as India (through UKIERI) and Russia (through BRIDGE). PMI2 also now includes a new focus on international partnerships which bring mutual benefits. In relation to research, the UK Research Councils (RCUK) have opened offices in Beijing, Washington, and most recently, Delhi, to promote international collaboration in research, and in the field of knowledge transfer, the new Training Gateway provides a portal through which to identify overseas training and development opportunities, many of which require, or would be enhanced by collaborative approaches from UK universities and colleges.

1c Terminology
Within UK universities and colleges, international links and collaborations are developed and maintained at a number of levels: by individual academics, departments and faculties, and at institutional level. In an earlier study, international partnerships were defined at three levels and these descriptors were also used as a starting point for the current research:

**Level One**: relates to institution-wide strategic partnerships, approved by the Academic Board or Senate and the Council or Governing Body. These partnerships are expected to become ‘deep and broad partnerships’ and are monitored and supported by senior managers in the central administrative section of the university since they are perceived to contribute to the institution’s reputation.

**Level Two**: involves School or Faculty partnerships with peer faculties in other parts of the world or with other kinds of partner organisations. These are often funded, sponsored, and managed by the Schools and Faculties, but are typically recorded and monitored centrally where they involve collaborative arrangements and the award of qualifications.

**Level Three**: includes partnerships that are essentially research or teaching arrangements between individuals and groups which may get little or no central support. However, these sets of relationships are often the starting point for partnerships at levels two or one.

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2 Cross-border educational provision covers situations where either the student travels overseas to study, or an education programme is delivered overseas either face to face or at a distance (or a combination). The latter is commonly referred to as transnational education or TNE.

3 UKIERI is the UK-India Education and Research Initiative, and BRIDGE is the British Degrees in Russia Programme.

Section 2
Universities and their international partnerships in a UK context

2a Universities and their international partnerships in a UK context

Two recent research reports commissioned by the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS) provide a picture of overseas’ teaching and research collaborations in which UK higher education institutions are engaged. Both studies received high response rates (82% in relation to teaching collaborations, 77% for research). Although these reports were not intended to provide information about the activities of individual institutions, their findings can help to situate the international institutional partnerships of the universities which subscribe to Million+ within a wider UK context.

In both reports, the researchers found that the type of provision was associated with the type of institution (i.e. pre- or post-1992, which was the categorisation used in these studies). In relation to overseas collaborative provision in teaching (described as trans-national education or TNE in the DIUS’ research) post-1992 institutions are the largest providers of programmes. TNE programmes are those programmes which are award or credit-bearing, or involve validation and franchise arrangements, that are either delivered by UK higher education institutions in other countries, or that are delivered by partners on their behalf. Delivery models include distance learning, blended learning, validation, articulation arrangements, franchising, joint degrees and on-campus provision overseas. Post-1992 institutions provided 63% of the programmes identified by the research team and also have the highest number of students overall. Pre-1992 universities provided 31% of programmes identified, with 6% offered by specialist higher education institutions. Large institutions provide the most TNE and English institutions have the highest number of TNE programmes.

TNE provision is delivered in more than 80 countries around the world by UK institutions with their partners overseas. Most provision is in Malaysia, China, Greece, Singapore and Hong Kong. Undergraduate provision is dominant (55.2%) overall, particularly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and this is offered mainly by post-1992 and specialist institutions (with post-graduate provision more prevalent in pre-1992 universities). Europe is also an important location, and a more frequent location for post-1992 institutions than for pre-1992 institutions (34% and 19.5% respectively).

Provision is concentrated in five main subjects: Business and Administrative Studies, Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Creative Art and Design, Engineering and Subjects Allied to Medicine, with some regional variations. Almost half of all students are in Business and Administrative Studies (43.4%) and post-1992 institutions have the largest number of programmes in this field (44.2% with 49.6% planned for 2007-8). In this subject area, more programmes are likely to be at post-graduate level. Other strong areas amongst post-92 institutions include Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Creative Arts and Design, and Subjects Allied to Medicine.

Partners are critical to developing and sustaining TNE. The DIUS’ research shows some variations in the types of partners typically identified by pre- and post-1992 institutions and specialist higher education institutions. Post-1992 institutions are more likely to have private colleges as partners, while pre-1992 institutions are more likely to choose state or public universities as partners. However, overall, it is likely that the types of partner are largely determined by the regulatory environment and the shape of the local higher education system, particularly the balance between public and private provision in each country and region. Where there is limited local public higher education supply, UK institutions operate in conjunction with

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provides an overall picture of international collaborative research output by country. This shows that the UK’s main research partners are in the USA, Germany, France, Australia, Canada, Japan, China and India.

2b Internationalisation in a wider policy context
The international agendas of UK universities and colleges are influenced by several different, sometimes competing, but often interconnected factors. These include national and regional policies towards higher education, institutions’ own priorities, the perception and reality of other countries’ strategies and the international activities of higher education sectors and institutions’ overseas. We offer a brief analysis of policy-level and institutional factors that appear to have had the most influence on current (and potentially future) approaches to developing international partnerships.

National interests and national policies
A legacy of colonial and trade ties remains visible in universities’ international activities, both in the country and regional origins of international students coming to the UK and in the geographical spread of trans-national education partnerships. Links between trade and internationalisation continue, for example, in the increasing numbers of international students drawn from expanding economies like China (and more recently India), in the growing higher education activity in the oil-rich Gulf states and the parallel growth of trans-national and research partnerships between the UK and these countries. In addition, particularly since the mid-1990s, new dimensions of trade and internationalisation have emerged through the rapid growth of ‘trade in educational services’ which covers a wide spectrum of activity, collaborations and players, including partnerships between private sector organisations and traditional universities for the delivery of trans-national education.

private colleges without degree-awarding powers to extend local provision, although, again, the picture varies by country and region, for example in China, most partnerships are with universities.

For overseas research collaborations, the DIUS’ research reveals that all types of UK higher education institution are engaging in a wide range of international research collaborations. These include those collaborations funded by overseas bodies or by other international organisations, research funded by UK public bodies, postgraduate research where students are located overseas or where supervision is shared with supervisor(s) at overseas partner organisations, and unfunded research where academics and research groups collaborate with overseas’ colleagues. Almost all institutions have a research strategy and two-thirds have an internationalisation strategy which includes research, teaching and other activities, such as knowledge transfer. However, the DIUS research team found that more pre-1992 than post-1992 institutions had a combined internationalisation and research strategy.

The researchers found variations across institutions in types of research collaboration. Pre-1992 universities were more likely to be in receipt of funding from overseas’ public bodies (93%), other international organisations (95%) and UK public bodies (93%) than post-1992 institutions. However, post-1992 institutions also show significant success in gaining funding from these sources: 76%, 65% and 83% respectively. Post-1992 institutions report the highest proportion of post-graduate research where students are located overseas (85%) and of unfunded research where academics collaborate with overseas colleagues (91%). A similar profile is reported for large institutions.

The findings on research collaborations do not provide details of the location, subject focus or scale of collaborative research across UK institutions. However, other recent research provides an overall picture of international collaborative research output by country. This shows that the UK’s main research partners are in the USA, Germany, France, Australia, Canada, Japan, China and India.


National objectives and national policies impact on institutions’ international activities, particularly national funding policies. The UK public funding system, as Elliott⁹ points out, directly and indirectly conditions whether and how a university operates internationally, and this in turn means that management imperatives can shape an institution’s international activities as much (and in some cases more) than educational interests, concerns and objectives. At national level, international student recruitment is financially significant; indeed a recent policy report¹⁰ pointed to a potentially dangerous over-dependence on this income in some institutions. Income from international students also has significant economic value to the UK¹¹, and targets for recruitment have been set nationally. Internationally, the UK’s approach to internationalisation has been characterised, not always favourably, as predominantly ‘economic’. Indeed, at the extreme, some international recruitment activity, including trans-national delivery, is perceived as overtly commercial and even an example of ‘educational imperialism’. Perceptions of Australian policy towards international education are somewhat similar, but in continental Europe and in the USA institutional approaches to international higher education have, to date, been driven mainly by academic rationales that emphasise cooperation rather than competition.

Section 2
Universities and their international partnerships in a UK context

The aspirations and requirements of various policy reports from the 1997 Dearing Report onwards signal that the UK’s national system of higher education cannot be separated from its position and standing internationally...the country must have higher education which, through excellence in its diverse purposes, can justifiably claim to be world class”. Such reports also highlight the need for the core activities of UK institutions to be benchmarked internationally. At the general level of economic and social policies and at the specific level of policies for higher education, national policies give clear signals and targets that influence and direct institutional behaviour on the international stage.

Scientific research has been an international activity for decades and the drive to be part of an international scientific community is embedded in the aspirations of individual academics and the strategic priorities of faculties and institutions. Today, there is also recognition that major global problems such as poverty, climate change and social and health inequalities can best be tackled through international collaborative research. Intense national competition in scientific research is counter-balanced by the global and trans-national dimensions of science and innovation¹³ and the need for partnerships. The UK research councils have signalled a partnership agenda through new offices in Washington, Beijing and Delhi, and the UK is well represented in European collaborative developments such as the European Research Area, European Framework Programmes and European Research Council (ERC).

Accelerating globalisation is cited as a further driver for collaboration (and competition) and institutions are encouraged to engage internationally to achieve policy goals. Some goals are enormously ambitious, extending from contributions to world peace, to solving global problems or enhancing a national brand and identity. The economic drivers most commonly cited in national policy documents from a variety of government departments and agencies include participating in a competitive global economy, growing national and regional economies, the need to build a high-level skills base for the economy and the race to attract global talent at all levels.¹⁵ However, other national rationales for internationalisation...

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¹¹ For a recent estimate of the value of international students to the UK economy, see the reference to Lenton (2007) in chapter 4
are also featured including developing global citizenship, counterbalancing the ideological tensions of globalisation, providing development aid and capacity-building and increasing mutual understanding. Many of these policy goals are reflected in the rationales for and focus of international partnerships among the universities that took part in this study.

International policies and developments: Europe and beyond
The UK’s geographical location and economic and political involvement in the European Union has meant that European policy has played a role in internationalisation. However, in contrast to many other European countries, the agenda of ‘Europeanisation’ has not featured so strongly in the UK. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a growing number of UK institutions developing European strategies, either within or in addition to wider international strategies; and partnerships with a range of continental European countries feature strongly in the international institutional partnerships of the Universities surveyed. Several institutions have also been successful in gaining resources and support for their international activities from European funding schemes.

Two important themes permeate European-level policies and programmes. The first is ‘mobility’, focused initially at policy level on the movement of individuals across national borders. For the past ten years, other forms of mobility have also been developing, including the mobility of projects and services, the mobility of programmes of study across borders and most recently, the mobility of providers and institutions as part of developments in trans-national education. A second theme is ‘co-operation’ across countries and institutions. Co-operation is manifested practically in varied forms: curriculum development projects, discipline-based networks and associations, open and distance-learning across frontiers and in the development of institutional consortia. Conceptually, co-operation symbolises the values of academic collegiality in an international context and is part of ‘traditional’ forms of internationalisation which are concerned with developing mutual benefits from trans-national communications, diplomacy, projects and initiatives.

A sharp divide and an equally sharp debate has developed in international circles from the 1990s onwards about a perceived shift in approaches to internationalisation in some countries, including the UK, Australia and New Zealand. Traditional understandings of international education as a domain for co-operation and development of mutual understanding – which remains a predominant focus in higher education institutions in many countries and regions in the world - has been down-played in the UK at national and institutional levels over the last few decades. Instead, a rhetoric of international education as ‘an export industry’ and a ‘trade in services’ in which the UK must grow its ‘market share’ has become dominant. The first UK Prime Minister’s Initiative (launched in 1999) aimed to increase the numbers of international students coming to the UK with an explicit target of 50,000 more international students. Perhaps in response to international feedback and critique, PMI2 is couched in somewhat different terms, to include core elements such as: ‘creating a more enabling environment for partnerships between the UK and other countries’ and ‘demonstrating a shift in institutional approaches to internationalisation to indicate a move from recruitment to partnerships – and development of collaborative agendas’. Many of the Universities in this study appear to have picked up this message and are clearly seeking a more sustainable and mutually beneficial approach to internationalisation.

Nonetheless, financial return arising from international activities (particularly education services) remains a core concern for UK universities and colleges, including those who gave evidence to this study, since they are prohibited from using national state funding to subsidise their overseas’ activities. For all institutions, achieving an appropriate balance between economic and academic rationales is of increasing importance as internationalisation efforts spread across countries, including countries whose rationales for their international activities are different from the UK.

A recent survey by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE)\(^\text{17}\) indicates that economic rationales are becoming more prevalent in national approaches to international higher education, especially in the Major English Speaking Destination Countries (MESDCs), but also elsewhere. However, these rationales take different forms, and direct revenue generation at institutional (and national levels) is not synonymous with economic rationales linked to national or regional competitiveness. The OBHE study highlighted three approaches to internationalisation:

1. Internationalisation provides a short-term as well as long-term economic contribution to the country and the higher education sector (US and Australia are examples).
2. Internationalisation provides limited immediate financial contribution to the country and institutions, but a perceived long-term contribution to the society as a whole (Denmark and Germany are examples).
3. Internationalisation is actively encouraged as a way of enhancing or creating a knowledge-based society (Singapore, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, China, India and the Dominican Republic are examples) and a work-force capable of operating in an international environment (Canada, UK and other European countries).

Where UK institutions are seeking longer-term, sustainable partnerships, they clearly need to understand the different national policy contexts in which their partners operate. UK national policies seeking similar goals will also need to give attention to the interests and perspectives of other countries; indeed, the tenor and tone of the UK’s national policies are as important in an international context as institutional strategies. Short-term income-generation and longer-term economic and social advantages for the UK need to be in balance, if the first agenda is not to undermine achievement of the second.

Supporting strategic partnerships which deliver mutual benefits across countries and institutions may become increasingly critical for the UK.

Institutional autonomy, mission and diversity in the UK

For several decades, institutional autonomy has enabled individual institutions in the UK to shape their international strategies according to their own missions and aspirations. Financial and academic independence have provided incentives for the development of these strategies and have facilitated a variety of activities, models and approaches to internationalisation, and this study provides an insight into some of this variety. Arguably, competition as well as collaboration, networking and benchmarking between UK institutions has facilitated cross-sector learning and raised the level of the UK’s game in relation to internationalisation. Recent reports, and indeed, international league tables, clearly attest to the success of UK institutions internationally. These advantages are also enjoyed by the USA, whose institutions also perform strongly in all measures of success in international education competitiveness.

\(^{17}\) See Middlehurst, R. & Woodfield, S. (2007). Responding to the International Agenda: implications for institutional strategy. Research Report 05/06 Higher Education Academy, York, HEA.

However, other countries are now focusing more strongly on their internationalisation strategies and at national level, are actively seeking to advance their position. International collaborations are increasingly seen as key to strengthening nations and regions. In a recent survey on internationalisation conducted by the International Association of Universities (IAU)\(^\text{18}\), responses from all six regions (at government and institutional levels) – that is, from Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, and North America – agreed that of the 17 strategies listed, international institutional agreements and networks ranked first. In several countries, there is strong national support and funding for the establishment of international collaborations of different kinds.

As the wider context of internationalisation changes, will institutional autonomy (or more specifically, institutional self-interest) remain as beneficial as in the past as a core driver for internationalisation?

Or might there be more value in promoting and supporting a collaborative approach across UK institutions? The UK higher education sector is widely recognised internationally for its level of quality across the whole system and its diversity in types of programme and the scope and range of its research. Actively marketing this diversity in a targeted way in relation to the specific interests and needs of other countries could be valuable.\(^\text{19}\) The lack of knowledge at national level about the range and depth of institutions’ international activities (and the dearth of data collected in the UK, in contrast, for example, to Australia) is a barrier to such a national strategy at present. In addition, where internationalisation is driven mainly by the efforts, investment and initiative of individual institutions, there is potential both for duplication and fragmentation of effort and impact.

\(^\text{18}\) This approach is being adopted by the International Consortium for Wales and to a lesser extent by EducationUK-Scotland for Scottish institutions.

\(^\text{19}\) The same arguments apply between organisations and sectors. This study has sought to identify cross-sector collaborations and particularly, the level of sector knowledge about these, for example at regional agency level, but without success. We also noted the limited resources devoted to cross-sector collaborations at national level, for example through UKTI. UK higher education could gain significant advantage in relation to research, education or knowledge transfer if the sector’s diverse strengths were marketed (and where relevant delivered) internationally with business and with other education or public sectors.
Section 3
A snapshot of the Universities’ International Partnership Activities

3a A snapshot of the Universities’ International Partnership Activities
Our survey gathered information about institutions’ rationales and strategic objectives for their international partnerships and asked institutions to provide details of their five most successful and innovative institutional-level partnerships. This section offers a sample of the range presented in the full report.

International Strategies and Rationales for Internationalisation
The majority of the Universities surveyed, like most UK universities, have a strategy related to their international education activities, recognising that a strategic approach to international activities is essential in an increasingly competitive global context. Most of the Universities also mention the international or global dimension of their activities in their mission or vision statements. Some Universities that provided evidence have an explicit European strategy (e.g. Kingston and London Metropolitan Universities) or strategies that focus directly on collaborative provision overseas and on international partnerships.

Example
Glasgow Caledonian University’s International Partnerships’ Strategy
The University views trans-national education as a key element of making programmes more affordable and accessible, especially at undergraduate level. The University has a target of increasing the number of students studying overseas from 1,000 to 2,500 by 2010/11. In addition, TNE programmes also provide staff with opportunities to travel, and engage with academics and researchers overseas. The University is seeking to develop advanced-entry access courses and franchise arrangements in partnership with institutions overseas, and it believes that these can provide some short-term financial gain and be appropriate in some circumstances. However, the University does not view such partnerships as the most effective long-term approach to securing an international presence. The University’s key objective is to develop four joint-venture international campuses or University Colleges by 2010/11 in key regions of demand (e.g. areas of high student demand with ability to act as regional hubs – i.e. Oman, India, China and Singapore). Based on experience gained in its international partnerships in Oman and Singapore, the University believes that these ventures will provide access to degree programmes for at least 2,500 international students, foster increased participation in associated international research and commercial partnerships and facilitate engagement in the social and economic development of the country involved.

Universities surveyed have differing rationales for their international activities and partnerships, linked closely to their institutional mission, market positioning, culture and ethos. For some institutions, all international activities form part of a broader ‘internationalisation’ agenda that focuses on developing and co-ordinating a range of international activities. For others, international activities are more narrowly defined. All of these Universities seek to use their international activities to increase their international influence, profile, status and reputation, particularly in a context where international partners judge potential UK partners on their performance in national (and international) league tables. Beyond this, four main rationales for international activities are visible within strategy documents:

Academic rationales: These focus on the contribution of international activities to enhancing academic quality including developing the curriculum, improving pedagogical approaches, articulating globally relevant graduate attributes and outcomes (relevant to employability, citizenship and inter-cultural awareness), enhancing

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20 Institutions received a template which they could use to provide details of their five partnerships. This covered the main aspects of international partnerships including, name of partner, type of partner, country of partner, nature of partnership, year established, numbers of students involved.
students’ academic experience, and improving the cultural sensitivity of campus services. Half of the Universities have embraced an ‘internationalisation at home’ agenda that focuses on ensuring that the academic experience for all students on campus is aligned with the international agenda. This includes developing an appropriate institutional ethos, policies and procedures, internationalising the curriculum and making improvements to campus services.

**Example**

**Leeds Metropolitan University and Internationalisation**

Leeds Metropolitan University has a strong reputation for its innovative international activity. The University has had an internationalisation strategy since 2004 which guides its international activities in six areas: internationalising learning, teaching and research; enhancing the international student experience; developing and fostering international partnerships and alliances; and recruiting international students. It is seeking to internationalise its UK campus and has a mission to develop students’ international opportunities and global perspectives, and to ensure that an international, multi-cultural ethos pervades the university throughout its scholarship, curriculum, student and staff volunteering and community engagement in the UK and overseas. The University has created an International Faculty to steer and support its internationalisation strategy. The University provides opportunities for its staff and students to make a difference through engagement in capacity building, knowledge exchange projects and volunteering, or through research and development programmes. In turn, these projects and experiences enrich the intellectual and international dimensions of the university and enhance the global perspectives of its staff and students.

**Knowledge-based rationales:** Through partnering with international higher education institutions, research institutes and private sector companies, Universities that took part in this study are able to create the critical mass to engage in significant research projects which can help to develop their research reputation and capacity, and the skills and expertise of staff. Some of the Universities (e.g. Bedfordshire, Coventry, Teesside and Greenwich) have received significant amounts of research grants and contract income from outside the UK. (Appendix 3 of the full report provides details of the Universities’ overseas research grants and contract income for 2006-7).

A number of the Universities have significant involvement in the EU Framework Programme, particularly in niche areas of research. The University of Bedfordshire is leading a range of multi-partner projects in fields such as computing and ICT, business and management, and the social sciences. Kingston University is involved in EU Framework programmes focused on engineering, technology and the social sciences, including ‘Mobilising SSH’, a two-year global collaborative research project with a consortium of 13 partners that seeks to mobilise future research collaborations in the social sciences and humanities in the EU, the Newly Independent States (NIS) and China.

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Section 3
A snapshot of the Universities’ International Partnership Activities

London South Bank University is active in the EU Framework Programme and other European-funded projects in the fields of education, engineering, and technology:

Example

London South Bank University’s involvement in the European Union’s Framework VI Programme
The University has 12 contracts funded by the European Union Framework VI Programme for Research, with a value to LSBU of £1.9 million, including:

- A £52,000 two-year project on education called Form-it “Take Part in Research” involving 11 European partners including LSBU
- A £1.6m three-year project on robotics/non-destructive testing called Climbing robot cell for fast and flexible manufacture of large scale structures (CROCELLS) involving 6 European partners including LSBU
- A four-year £53,000 project on Energy efficient Community Stimulation by use and Integration of Local Energy Resources (ECOSTILER) involving 12 European partners including LSBU
- A three-year £160,000 project on Low energy hotels in Southern Europe (LowEHotels) involving 7 European partners including LSBU
- At three-year £211,587 project in the field of surface engineering called Flexible automated processes for PVD coatings in new applications (Flexicoat) involving 10 European partners including LSBU
- A £141,000 two-year project on materials engineering called CONcEPT, focused on the development of a high energy nanofocus computed tomography system for glass reinforced plastic wind turbine blades
- A £67,000 three year project in the field of non-destructive testing called ‘Development of Ultrasonic Guided Wave Inspection Technology for the Condition Monitoring of Offshore Structures’ involving 7 institutions (including LSBU)

Other international partnership projects are funded by the research councils in the UK and overseas, and the business sector, as well as by UK funding schemes such as UKIERI, the England-Africa Programme and PMI2 Connect. There is often a close relationship between research and teaching.

Example

University of the West of Scotland – consortia related to both teaching and research
The Experimental Nuclear Physics Research Group at UWS participates in an ongoing research network which involves nuclear physics laboratories in partner institutions in Italy, Finland, Germany, France, and the USA.

UWS is also one of eight English and Scottish universities that have partnered in the Centre for Russian, Central and Eastern European Studies which is supported by £4.7 million in funding over five years from the Economic and Social Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Scottish Funding Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for England to develop postgraduate training in policy-making and advice, business and the non-governmental sector. Over the 5 years, the centre plans to award 40 taught and research masters degrees and 20 PhD scholarships. It is also funding a one-year postdoctoral fellowship in each institution, with fellows able to spend time in more than one university. The centre has six international partners: Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic; Tartu University in Tartu, Estonia; the Institute of Political Science, Corvinus University, Budapest; Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland; and the Region Research Centre, Ul’yanovsk State University in the Russian Federation.
Many of the research programmes have an applied focus and involve capacity-building activities that are particularly relevant to the mission of the Universities. Several institutions are active in China. The Napier University Business School hosts the EU-China Development and Research Centre which was launched in Beijing in October 2003. Since then, the centre has built up a network of research associates in universities and organisations across China to provide research and consultancy services via an academic network. The University of Northampton Business School hosts a China Centre which encourages collaborative research activity and scholarly exchanges between Britain and China, including consultancy services to local firms (e.g. translation and interpretation services) and capacity building for policing in China.

Universities surveyed also undertake internationally recognised contract research for a range of funders (including some from overseas) in their fields of specialist knowledge and expertise. For example, the University of Abertay participates in an international soil research centre and PhD Programme (STAR - Soil Technology, Architecture, and Research) which involves 5 other international institutions: University of Aarhus and Aalborg University (Denmark), University of Delaware, USA, Saitama University, Japan, and University of California at Davis, USA. The STAR research centre and PhD school includes mutual access to soil sites and data, and short- and long-term visits and exchange of researchers, PhD students, and sharing of measuring equipment. The Centre has funding from the Danish government for collaborative research (Soil-it-is) on climate change and soil processes.

The applied focus of much of the research in the Universities that provided evidence lends itself to international enterprise and knowledge transfer activity, including the exploitation of knowledge and expertise for commercial and developmental purposes. These institutions are involved in a range of enterprise, transfer and capacity-building partnership activities such as:

> Co-development of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training programmes – e.g. curriculum development – typically in subjects such as healthcare, ICT and education.
> Delivery of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training programmes – e.g. training the trainers – typically in fields such as HR, education, or leadership and management.
> Providing expert consultancy services to overseas partner institutions – e.g. quality assurance and accreditation and English-language testing (for example at Roehampton University).

At national level, the newly established Training Gateway provides a register of opportunities for UK universities to promote their CPD training skills in the UK and internationally. Recently, Glasgow Caledonian University and Bucks New University delivered consultancy and CPD overseas after responding to tenders posted through this network.

In many cases, there is a great deal of overlap between enterprise activity and teaching and research, especially when these are combined with capacity-building or knowledge transfer. Indeed, many funding bodies (e.g. the EU) require knowledge transfer to be embedded into research projects.

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22 CPD in particular operates in a grey area since it can cover teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities – for example when a partnership project is funded to research and develop a CPD programme which is then delivered overseas in an attempt to build capacity in the partner institution.
Section 3
A snapshot of the Universities’ International Partnership Activities

Example

The Natural Resources Institute at the University of Greenwich
The University’s Natural Resources Institute (NRI) plays a role in continuing professional development in developing countries, both in the public and private sector in partnership with organisations such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The University’s corporate plan suggests that the NRI will develop further international partnerships through consultancy and delivery of postgraduate programmes.

The NRI has also received funding from the England-Africa Partnership scheme in 2006 for an agriculture-based project with Makerere University in Uganda focused on enhancing the capacity of the Department of Agricultural Extension/Education (DAEE) at Makerere University, to offer modular degree programs for private agricultural advisory service providers. In addition, the NRI has received funding from round 2 of the DELPHE programme in 2007 for a capacity-building project with the University of Zimbabwe focused on research into the effective and sustainable utilisation of traditional wild plant-based foods.

Universities surveyed have been successful in gaining funding from a range of sources for their research, enterprise and knowledge transfer activities including:

> EU project funding – e.g. Framework VI/VII and TEMPUS
> EC funding schemes – e.g. the EC-Asia Link Programme
> UK and overseas Government funded schemes – e.g. DfID DELPHE programme, England Africa Programme, UKIERI, PMI2Connect, and BRIDGE
> Commonwealth Scholarships Commission – which manages funding of around £12m each year of DfID awards and fellowships in developing countries

(See Appendix 4 of the full report for further details about these universities’ involvement in these schemes).

Outside the major funding schemes, some of these institutions have established partnerships which are integrated into, or are an extension of, a multi-level strategic alliance that involves other activities such as teaching, research and student mobility. For example, The University of Wolverhampton has a Centre for International Development and Training (CIDT) which, for the past 35 years, has supported people-centred sustainable development by working in partnership to develop the skills of individuals and institutions through education and training, research, consultancy and programme management. It has worked in close partnership with national governments, donors, agencies, NGOs, institutions and consulting companies in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the South Pacific.

In addition, these Universities are involved in capacity-building activities supported by overseas governments and other organisations. The University of the West of Scotland’s Business School, for example, has undertaken a €1.5m European Commission funded project through its Centre for International Corporate Governance and Accounting (CICGA) to implement International Financial Reporting Standards to entrepreneurial businesses in Azerbaijan. Other examples involve training and education for different sectors: the University of the West of Scotland in Estonia, Teesside in Rwanda, Northampton in the UAE and Southampton Solent in the Philippines:

23 Many of these are managed and co-ordinated by the British Council, although the funding comes from the UK government.
Southampton Solent in the Philippines
The University’s Warsash Maritime Academy (WMA) provides education, training, research and consultancy to the international shipping and off-shore oil industries. Since 2007 it has had an arrangement with the International Maritime Employers’ Committee (IMEC) – an international employer’s organisation – to deliver the Postgraduate Certificate in Maritime Education & Training (PGCertMET) in the Philippines which enrols around 15 students a year. The course is designed for maritime college lecturers who are engaged in delivering professional education and training to cadets and officers for the world’s merchant shipping fleets. Students are sponsored by the International Maritime Training Trust (IMTT). The course is delivered solely by WMA staff and involves WMA staff travelling to Manila for face to face interactive sessions and students travelling to the UK to use specialist equipment. Learning is supported by e-mail tutorial support and on-line discussion groups via Southampton Solent’s VLE.

Social rationales: Universities that took part in the research have a particular social mission, evidenced by their engagement with the widening participation (WP) agenda in the UK. Some Universities view international collaborative provision (delivered overseas or at a distance) as a means of expanding access to students who would not otherwise be able to access UK programmes either for reasons of cost or a need for flexible delivery modes.

Example

University of Central Lancashire’s extension of its WP agenda to overseas students
UCLan’s International Strategy has a basic tenet of seeking to extend study opportunities to a broader student population. Thus, and together with local partner institutions, UCLan works with students who are academically qualified, but who, for various reasons, are unable to pursue a university education within their home country. Key to the success of each partnership is the high level of support that UCLan provides in-country, including the secondment of UCLan academic staff and the provision of English language training. Many students studying via these partnerships do come and study at UCLan’s main campus during their final year, and recent external examiners reports have highlighted the particular success of these students.

In addition, some Universities view their international partnerships as mutually beneficial, not only in economic terms, but in terms of developing educational, management, and research capacity in partner institutions and through sharing areas of specialist expertise via development-focused projects.

Example

The University of the West of Scotland in Malawi
UWS has a long-standing link with the University of Malawi (since 2000) which includes collaborative teaching provision, curriculum development, and a joint project involving the School of Health, Nursing and Midwifery focused on the introduction of a healthcare facility in the remote rural village of Kaponda. It has also participated in a pilot project on Child Health in Malawi funded by the UK government’s Joint Environment and Human Health Programme, partnering researchers from three UWS Schools with statisticians from the University of Strathclyde and soil scientists from University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany.
International partnerships are used to support economic competitiveness, regionally or nationally, through the recruitment of high-quality students, researchers and teachers and through engagement in internationally-rated research projects with international partners. International links and partnerships can also be leveraged to facilitate links between local (UK-based) businesses and international counterparts, thus contributing to economic development both in the UK and overseas.

**Example**

**The University of Wolverhampton’s India Project**

In 2007 the University launched the Wolverhampton India Project that is focused on the Punjab and seeks to foster collaboration in trade, education and sport between the university and local organisations, and Punjab counterparts. In June 2008, the University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Punjab Government which aims to increase educational opportunities and training, particularly in regard to English-language skills for teachers in the region. The University has also signed an MoU with Donba College and the Lovely Professional University in Punjab to provide opportunities for student and staff exchanges, progression and recruitment.

**Management of international partnerships**

The survey provided evidence of specific approaches, policies and procedures used to implement and further develop universities’ international partnership strategies. Most approaches focused on low-risk and financially viable partnerships, although those that involve a physical presence overseas are more ambitious. There is also emphasis on well-planned and managed arrangements, supported by a robust business model. International teaching partnerships frequently require mutual financial benefit for both partners, not least because overseas partners are often private institutions that also seek to make a surplus (even if they are nominally non-profit organisations).
Universities report that they are reviewing and re-defining their strategies in three main ways. The first is by rationalising or consolidating existing partnerships. Another common approach focuses on developing managed partnerships with particular institutions in targeted countries or regions, described as ‘high-value’ or ‘high-quality’ partnerships. These are typically carefully planned and relatively few in number. Some of the Universities’ seek to replicate successful existing models in new countries and in selected cases are seeking to develop joint-venture ‘campus’ models that can act as regional hubs from which to co-ordinate their international activities in a particular country or region. Greenwich is planning to create ‘Overseas Partner Colleges’ to fulfil this role, whilst Glasgow Caledonian is seeking to use its experience in establishing its Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman to develop other regional bases in China, India and Singapore.

A third approach focuses on strengthening long-standing partnerships with trusted overseas’ partner institutions. This may involve offering more programmes or involving more faculties in a collaborative teaching agreement or broadening an initial involvement in student exchange or a progression arrangement to include curriculum development, staff exchange and joint research projects. In other cases, institutional partnerships evolve into international consortia and strategic alliances in which a small group of carefully selected institutions collaborate in a range of different international activities.

Example

The University of Bedfordshire and the China Agricultural University (CAU) (International College Beijing)

Bedfordshire has had a 2+1 articulation agreement with the China Agricultural University (CAU) (International College Beijing) since 1998. This brings around 300 CAU students each year with advanced entry into year 3 of a Bedfordshire degree. Initially, the partnership had the following main aims: to offer overseas students the opportunity to participate in two higher education systems, broadening their educational experience and enhancing their career prospects; to generate additional income for both institutions; and reciprocally to transfer knowledge of contemporary developments in higher education back to the emerging economy of China. By 2006/7 the partnership had provided opportunities for some 1100 Chinese students to graduate in the UK in five BA programmes that included business administration, advertising and marketing, human resource management, computer science and media production. It had also generated significant income for both partner institutions and was short-listed for the Queens Anniversary Prize in March 2006. The partnership has also fostered productive academic and cultural links between students and staff in both institutions and has allowed them to work together on curriculum development (e.g. the University’s Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has begun funding a series of research investigations into how the concept of personal development planning translates for Chinese students), to consider cross cultural diversity and to gain insights into different cultural values, the global economy, environmental issues and the structures of societies. The success of the programme has helped facilitate further links between the two institutions, such as the development of a bespoke MA in Media Management designed specifically to train 150 media specialists from the Municipal Government of Beijing to cover the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, joint research programmes (e.g. EU funded research) and social, political and diplomatic connections.
Section 3
A snapshot of the Universities’ International Partnership Activities

The QAA code of practice and other guidance on the management and governance of overseas collaborative activity (e.g. from the Council of Validating Universities (CVU) or the British Council) has assisted institutions to develop institutional criteria for the selection of partners. Our survey reveals that the Universities that took part in the study typically seek to use five broad criteria when developing international partnerships:

> Practising careful partner selection and due diligence – e.g. only partnering with accredited and experienced partners of similar status, with similar cultures and values, and appropriate institutional profiles.
> Developing effective quality assurance procedures for teaching collaborations – e.g. related to curricula, staffing, pedagogy, student admissions, and assessment and awards.
> Ensuring opportunities for mutual academic benefit – e.g. student and staff mobility, joint research projects, collaborative curriculum development and other academic links.
> Ensuring financial sustainability – e.g. partnerships should be self-financing (or profit-generating), have at least medium-term longevity, and should be cost-efficient.
> Providing socio-economic benefits to partner countries – e.g. widening access at affordable cost to overseas students, educational capacity building, and development assistance.

A number of Universities have created central structures, policies and processes to develop, monitor and evaluate their partnership activity (e.g. Abertay, Birmingham City University, Bedfordshire, and Teesside). Developments include committees that oversee collaborative provision, registers of collaborative provision, named staff that monitor strategic partnerships (typically in the Quality office) and staff in the International office or division that are responsible for developing international partnerships and for managing associated relationships. Good examples include the work of the Dean of the International College at Napier University and the School of Flexible and Partnership Learning at the University of Derby. The University of Bedfordshire has appointed a Director of Transnational Education with responsibility for relationship management in its partnerships.

Example

The University of Derby
The University has established a strong infrastructure to support its collaborative provision overseas (and also in the UK). The School of Flexible and Partnership Learning (FPL) which exists outside the faculty structure – combines academic and administrative functions and handles all initial enquiries related to collaborative provision. It takes a key role (with faculties) in sourcing and developing partnerships. The FPL is expected to work with the PVC (Academic Development) to lead collaborative developments in consultation with the Faculties. The University has also developed clear criteria for the selection and on-going management of collaborative partners for the delivery of University programmes based on strategic fit, academic quality, and financial sustainability. All collaborative partnerships are examined using rigorous cost-benefit analysis to ensure that they are viable and remain profitable.

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20 See case study D in “The Practice of Internationalisation: Managing International Activities in UK Universities”. Research Series 1. UK HE International Unit. 2008
Table 2: Categorisation of Institutions that took part in the study by Number of Non-UK Students Studying Overseas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large-scale</td>
<td>Over 3,000 students studying outside the UK</td>
<td>Bedfordshire, Coventry, UCLan, Derby, UEL, Greenwich, Middlesex, Staffordshire, Sunderland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-scale</td>
<td>500 - 2,000 students studying outside the UK</td>
<td>Abertay, Anglia Ruskin, Bolton, Glasgow Caledonian, Kingston, Leeds Met, London Met, LSBU, Napier, TVU, Teesside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale</td>
<td>Less than 500 students studying outside the UK</td>
<td>Bath Spa, Birmingham City, Bucks New, Northampton, Roehampton, Southampton Solent, West of Scotland, Wolverhampton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estimates based on survey responses

3b Varied forms of International Teaching Partnerships

International partnerships for the delivery of teaching and learning are the most widespread international activity among the Universities and take various forms. They are of significant scale. Based on survey responses, we estimate that over 50,000 non-UK students are studying on HE-level award programmes outside the UK (see Table 2).

There are three main types of overseas delivery, which differ according to the degree of involvement of the partner institutions in the curriculum development and delivery of the programme:

> Where the partner is not involved in delivery or curriculum development.
> Where the partner is involved in the delivery.
> Where the partner is involved in both activities.

In practice, these types tend to blend into one another. The numbers of students enrolled on such programmes varies widely. For example at the top end of the scale, Middlesex University has over 7,500 students studying for a Middlesex degree overseas, whilst other universities only have a few hundred students enrolled overseas.

No partner involvement in delivery or curriculum development

Where these universities seek to retain control over the content and delivery of their programme overseas, the involvement of international partners is limited to providing the teaching infrastructure and some administrative and tutorial support. In such cases the UK partner provides all the teaching and learning materials, either in paper or on-line form, and teaching takes place via supported distance learning or e-learning, or through outreach teaching – the ‘flying-faculty’ approach – where UK staff travel to the partner institution to offer face-to-face short periods of intensive teaching (e.g. Bolton, Glasgow Caledonian, Leeds Met, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton). The flying-faculty approach is used extensively by the University of Bolton, whose staff teach in eight overseas’ partner institutions in addition to the University’s new campus in Ras al Khaimah.

25 (For example, rooms, and audiovisual and library facilities)
Section 3
A snapshot of the Universities’ International Partnership Activities

Example

Bolton branch campus in Ras al Khaimah, UAE
The University of Bolton has established a branch campus in Ras al Khaimah (RAK) Free Trade Zone in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In September 2008 the campus began to enrol students on 14 undergraduate (BA, MSc) and postgraduate (MSc, MBA) programmes in Built Environment, Engineering, Business, Computing/Information Technology and Art and Design. Each programme will recruit a minimum of 10 students. The new institution is a joint venture between the University and Western International College (financed by the Kartha Education Society – a group of educational institutions operating in the Middle East and South Asia). The campus will use a ‘flying faculty’ model – whereby Bolton staff rotate between the UK and two or three-month stints in the UAE – and is described as an ‘enhanced franchise’ model in which the overseas partner receives enhanced training and support from Bolton. Bolton has academic control and programmes will be directly equivalent to those in the UK and will share the same examination boards, quality monitoring process and external verification. All degrees and transcripts will be the same as those provided in the UK, and there are plans for the campus to facilitate student and staff exchanges. The campus infrastructure has been created by an academic infrastructure provider (IFP) with Bolton investing no more than £1.5m. The new campus will charge annual fees of around £4,000 a year. The new initiative is part of plans to develop higher-level skills in the UAE to meet demand for skilled graduates to boost economic development. Plans for a similar branch campus model in Singapore are expected to be announced in 2008.

Example

London South Bank’s distance learning programmes in Africa
In 2007 LSBU received a scholarship award from the UK Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) in order to promote distance learning programmes in Africa. The award supports students on LSBU’s Education for Sustainability distance learning Masters programme which was set up in 1994 through a unique partnership between LSBU and a group of environmental and development NGOs. Many graduates from the course have gone on to leading positions of influence in their own countries. One group of participants, for example, has been sponsored by Oxfam UK to develop groundbreaking education programmes. The Commission agreed to fund 22 scholars, who were selected from over 800 applicants. The students will complete the programme over three years by distance learning. They will also receive a one-week face-to-face workshop at the start of their first and second years. The first workshop was held in October 2007 in South Africa and was made possible by the partnership between LSBU and the North-West University (NWU) in South Africa.

Some of the Universities have substantial expertise and experience (in some cases over a decade or more) in providing distance-based provision overseas, most frequently in Business and Management. The University of Bedfordshire has a successful MBA in distance-learning which combines on-line materials with local tutorial support at centres in India, Poland, Oman, Germany, Switzerland, South Africa and Russia. Other institutions with distance learning expertise include Derby, London Met, London South Bank, Northampton, Staffordshire, UEL, Wolverhampton and Sunderland. In addition, the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission funds Universities to provide distance learning overseas, and Leeds Met, LSBU, Bolton, Staffordshire and Sunderland received awards in 2006 and 2007. Universities that participated in this study received 40% of all distance learning scholarships awarded in 2007.
Partner involvement in both curriculum development and programme delivery

A growing number of Universities are involved in overseas delivery partnerships in which international partners collaborate in both programme or curriculum development and the delivery of a particular programme of study. This is usually called ‘joint provision’ and leads either to a joint award from both institutions or awards from both institutions (‘dual awards’). In such cases there is expected to be significant teaching input and curriculum development from both partners. Joint delivery arrangements are generally supported and funded as part of a multi-dimensional strategic partnership or alliance between the partner institutions or through UK Government or EU supported schemes such as the EC Asia-Link scheme, Erasmus Mundus, the BRIDGE programme in Russia, PMI2 Connect and UKIERI. These schemes have provided important financial support in the form of pump-priming or start-up funding for the development of collaborative programmes and these have benefited a number of these universities.

Partner involvement in programme delivery only

The most common overseas delivery model used by these Universities is where an overseas partner institution is authorised to deliver either all or part of a UK partner’s programme outside the UK. A ‘franchise arrangement’ is where an overseas partner delivers a programme that is also provided in the UK, and a ‘validation arrangement’ is where the programme is only offered at the overseas partner institution. In both cases the UK university uses its quality assurance procedures to ensure that the overseas partner has the capability to deliver the award; in some cases this involves institutional accreditation. In the case of validation agreements, the partner’s course is assessed to ensure that it merits an award of the university that is equivalent in quality and standards to a course of the university at the same level.

Staffordshire University is involved in large-scale franchising activity in Asia, and has 5,000 students studying for its awards overseas, whilst the University of Central Lancashire also has large numbers of students studying overseas on collaborative franchise programmes. Universities such as Coventry, Middlesex and Bedfordshire have large-scale validation agreements with international partners, particularly in the Gulf States.

Example

Middlesex University’s International Partnerships

The University has around 31 full academic partnerships and articulation/progression agreements with a further 62 institutions worldwide. The academic partnerships mainly cover validation and franchise agreement, but there are also partnership related to joint provision. The University has academic partnerships in partnership with institutions in 17 countries: Australia, China, Cyprus, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Subjects covered include business, computing, design, media and health and social care.

26 In some cases (e.g. Erasmus Mundus degrees) more than two institutions are involved in developing and delivering the programme.
between partners; these provide pathways for overseas students to enter a UK university programme either at the beginning or at a specified later point – e.g. year 2, year 3 (typically called ‘advanced standing’). The UK programme can be delivered either in the UK or in the partner country. Such agreements provide the university with a measure of control over the quality of the student intake, but require significant quality assurance arrangements and a high-level of institutional commitment.

Almost all the universities have, or are developing, some kind of articulation arrangement with overseas partner institutions and they are particularly prevalent in partnerships with both public and private sector institutions in Malaysia and China. In some cases, a member institution may have a number of different articulation agreements with the same partner in the same country.

Example

Roehampton University - Erasmus Mundus
Roehampton is one of only 6 UK co-coordinating universities in the EC-funded Erasmus Mundus Programme which enables students and researchers to study in more than one country for joint, dual or MA degrees developed by a partnership of international higher education institutions, supported via development and scholarship funding provided by the EU for 5 years. The University has two Erasmus Mundus partnerships:

1 MA/Mgr in Special Education Needs (SEN) with Fontys University (Tilburg, the Netherlands) and Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic) since 2005. This joint one-year Masters programme is delivered in three countries and looks at the definition of special educational needs, legislation and provision within a European and international context with regard to inclusive education.

2 MA Human Rights Practice with Göteborgs Universitet (Göteborg, Sweden) and Universitetet I Tromsø (Norway). This two-year multiple-degree programme prepares students to work on the protection, promotion and implementation of human rights.

Many of these institutions’ dual award programmes are with European partners. For example Anglia Ruskin University has dual award partnerships in business programmes with partners in Germany, France and the Netherlands. Other Universities with particular expertise in joint awards, in Europe and elsewhere include Kingston, Napier and Staffordshire. In addition, ‘articulation agreements’ formally enable credit transfer and accumulation between partners.

Example

The University of Bedfordshire and Lim Kok Wing University, Malaysia and London
The University of Bedfordshire has an innovative ‘double degree’ credit transfer partnership with Lim Kok Wing University that began recruiting students in September 2008. The partnership allows media studies students to study in three locations: two of LKW’s worldwide network of campuses in Kuala Lumpur and London, and the University of Bedfordshire. The partnership aims to provide students with a ‘global student experience’ by combining the academic expertise of Bedfordshire with LKW’s innovative learning process that focuses on creativity, innovation and globalisation. LKW final-year students transfer credit from two years in KL to study for a year in the UK, one semester in LKW London and the second semester at Bedfordshire. Students will receive one of four BA (Hons) degrees from Bedfordshire in Broadcasting Journalism, Digital Film and Television, Professional Communications, and Sports Journalism. They also receive a LKW degree. There are plans to support the mobility of Bedfordshire students to spend time at LKW’s KL campus.

Mainly due to in-country regulations limiting in-country programme delivery by overseas providers.
All of the Universities – and indeed all UK universities – have a significant number of bi-lateral partnerships with overseas partner universities relating to student and staff mobility. These include exchange agreements where undergraduate (and occasionally postgraduate) students from both partner institutions travel to the overseas partner to study for part of a degree programme in selected subjects (e.g. for a semester or academic year) and study abroad agreements which do not require an exchange of students and may be for a shorter period (e.g. a few weeks). Some institutions, such as Anglia Ruskin University and Staffordshire University, have modular degree programmes which are designed to allow students to take selected modules at overseas partner institutions. Universities surveyed have significant numbers of bi-lateral partnerships for student exchange and study abroad in China, Singapore and Hong Kong. These are often linked to institutional or faculty level partnership agreements that focus on collaborative teaching programmes and collaborative research and which involve other types of academic and cultural links such as joint conferences or scholarships. In some cases, student mobility may be only one activity involved in an institutional network or consortium.

EU Programmes provide a variety of opportunities for student mobility and the Universities are involved in several of these (e.g. the University of Abertay, Dundee and Anglia Ruskin University).

Example

University of Abertay – EU Articulation Scheme
As part of the University’s policy to increase its links with networks of European universities, it has developed an EU Articulation Scheme that provides opportunities for EU citizens who are students of EU universities (EU Erasmus Charter institutions) to spend one academic year at Abertay and the study period is recognised via European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) credits. This Scheme differs from Erasmus in that it does not require an exchange of students between institutions. Depending on their previous studies, EU students can choose to join either the second year (Semester 3 and 4), or third year (Semester 5 and 6), or the fourth year (Semester 7 and 8) of one of Abertay’s undergraduate degree programmes. There are also a very limited number of places available on certain Masters degrees. EU students can gain a double qualification by graduating with both a diploma or degree from the University of Abertay Dundee and a degree from their ‘home’ university.

In addition, many Universities have a significant number of partnerships with institutions in English-speaking countries. Typically these partnerships are part of an institution’s own exchange scheme with institutions in the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The partnerships with US institutions tend to focus more on study abroad than exchange, since US students prefer a shorter period of study away from their home country (e.g. a semester). The EU-US Atlantis scheme also supports partnerships between European and US institutions related to student mobility and curriculum development, and Sunderland University is currently participating in one recently-funded project.

Example

Sunderland’s participation in a project funded by the EU-US Atlantis Scheme
In 2007 the University of Sunderland was one of four UK universities participating in one of 14 projects in the 2007 round of the EU-US cooperation programme for higher education – Atlantis. Sunderland is leading a project called ICACE - International Cooperation in Ambient Computing Education which it is undertaking in partnership with Troy University in the USA. The other partners are FernUniversität in Hagen (Germany), the University of Algarve (Portugal) and San Diego State University and University of Arkansas at Little in the USA. This mobility project is focusing on building multidisciplinary skills into the computing curriculum, fostering understanding of other cultures through exchanges, and directly influencing curriculum development in the partner institutions via workshops.
impact on students and staff. The University intends to build on this, offering additional opportunities in new countries in 2008, but continuing its commitment to those projects which worked well last year and building sustainable relationships in communities where it can make a difference and on projects which have so enhanced the global perspectives of participants. This can now be seen as a real alternative to one semester or one year academic exchange programmes or work placements for students who cannot take such a long time out of their studies or away from the UK.

Larger networks and consortia are of growing interest to some of the Universities that provided evidence to the study. Many such strategic alliances grow out of existing collaborative provision which is extended to include additional teaching programmes, joint research, capacity building and staff and student mobility (e.g. Bedfordshire in China and Oman, Greenwich in Egypt, Napier in China). Other partnerships are created as broad and deep alliances from the outset: Kingston University established a strategic network in 2007 with six partner universities in France, Germany, Lithuania, Spain and Turkey. The network seeks to facilitate opportunities for collaboration in education, culture, research and enterprise.

Types of partners
Many different types of organisation provide suitable partners, depending on the nature of the collaboration and the location of the partnership. The 28 Universities’ international teaching partnerships involve prestigious public and private universities (especially in China, Japan, Hong Kong and Russia), private colleges and educational foundations, professional bodies, research institutes, government departments, and private sector companies. Some private organisations own a number of colleges in a country or region and offer UK programmes in different locations. Examples include Kaplan with Bedfordshire in Singapore and Hong Kong, and Staffordshire with the Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology (APIIT) in Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India, with INTI College in Malaysia and Hong Kong, and with the Systematic Education Group International (SEGi) in Malaysia and India28.
The Dubai campus offers students a range of Bachelor’s degrees in IT, Hospitality and Tourism, Psychology, Media, and Bachelors and Masters in Business and Management.

In other cases, overseas’ campuses or colleges overseas can be designated as accredited providers of the UK university’s programmes for students in a particular country – or a region – when a university or an overseas government is pursuing a strategy of developing regional ‘hubs’ to attract international students (e.g. London Met in Central and Eastern Europe).

In these universities’ capacity-building partnerships in Africa and Asia, partners are usually public sector universities, but can also involve governmental organisations and NGOs.

Location of international partnerships
Universities that took part in the research are involved in collaborative teaching partnerships across the globe, many of which are in the priority countries for the UK. The Universities are heavily involved in countries such as China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Oman and Dubai that are seeking to develop their skills’ base to equip graduates to participate in the global knowledge economy. Governments in these countries view international partnerships as a means of achieving national economic development goals. Some of the Universities also have significant partnerships in Africa and Russia, and others have a range of links with European institutions, although there is evidence from the survey that some European teaching partnerships are being phased out.

Example

Middlesex University and the ‘branch campus’ in the Dubai Knowledge Village
In 2005, Middlesex University opened a ‘branch campus’ in the Dubai Knowledge Village, which it views as an integral part of the University, and subject to the same Quality Assurance procedures – e.g. the same validation and monitoring system, and the same examinations and awards. Students are also able to transfer between campuses.

The Dubai campus offers students a range of Bachelor’s degrees in IT, Hospitality and Tourism, Psychology, Media, and Bachelors and Masters in Business and Management.

In other cases, overseas’ campuses or colleges overseas can be designated as accredited providers of the UK university’s programmes for students in a particular country – or a region – when a university or an overseas government is pursuing a strategy of developing regional ‘hubs’ to attract international students (e.g. London Met in Central and Eastern Europe).

In these universities’ capacity-building partnerships in Africa and Asia, partners are usually public sector universities, but can also involve governmental organisations and NGOs.

Location of international partnerships
Universities that took part in the research are involved in collaborative teaching partnerships across the globe, many of which are in the priority countries for the UK. The Universities are heavily involved in countries such as China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Oman and Dubai that are seeking to develop their skills’ base to equip graduates to participate in the global knowledge economy. Governments in these countries view international partnerships as a means of achieving national economic development goals. Some of the Universities also have significant partnerships in Africa and Russia, and others have a range of links with European institutions, although there is evidence from the survey that some European teaching partnerships are being phased out.

Example

Middlesex University and the ‘branch campus’ in the Dubai Knowledge Village
In 2005, Middlesex University opened a ‘branch campus’ in the Dubai Knowledge Village, which it views as an integral part of the University, and subject to the same Quality Assurance procedures – e.g. the same validation and monitoring system, and the same examinations and awards. Students are also able to transfer between campuses.
Over half of the Universities have some kind of link with Chinese institutions (in addition to long-standing partnerships in Hong Kong) (e.g. Bedfordshire, BCU, Glasgow Caledonian, LSBU, UCLan, UWS and Middlesex). Some of these partnerships are long-standing and facilitate international student recruitment to the UK as well as providing opportunities for staff and student exchange.

Recently there has been an interesting collaborative development between London-based Institutions and partners in China (and in Cuba) related to collaborative provision, two-way capacity-building and student and staff mobility in the field of Chinese Medicine:

**Example**

**Chinese Traditional Medicine – London Metropolitan University, London South Bank University and the University of East London**

London Metropolitan University has a dual award validation arrangement with Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SUTCM) which allows a small number of SUTCM students to study the basis, according to western scientific traditions, of Chinese traditional medicine and, following completion of their course, to proceed to postgraduate study in London. Students successfully completing the programme emerge with dual awards, the Shanghai award in traditional Chinese medicine and the London Metropolitan BSc in Chinese Herbal Medicinal Science. London Metropolitan staff work alongside Chinese colleagues at the partner institution in delivering 8 modules in China to provide the students with those elements in the London award not covered by the Shanghai syllabus. The collaboration involves staff development, with Chinese staff from SUTCM spending extended periods at London Metropolitan in order to improve their knowledge of the London curriculum and their academic English and with London staff making intensive teaching and staff development inputs on visits to Shanghai. The collaboration envisages Chinese staff from the partner institution increasingly taking over delivery of the additional London Metropolitan curriculum in Shanghai. In future it is hoped that some Chinese students will take up the validated opportunity to undertake the final year in London. There are also research projects and agreements between the two institutions. This partnership has allowed London Metropolitan University to develop a new area of research and courses in complementary therapy.

In 2007 LSBU and Hanban, the office of the Chinese Language Council International in China, signed an agreement to establish the Confucius Institute for Traditional Chinese Medicine at LSBU. The institute is the first of its kind in the world to provide tuition in Chinese medicine, culture and language, and opened in September 2008. The initiative is based on a partnership between the Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine (HUCM) and Harbin Normal University. The Centre will allow the Faculty of Health and Social Care to provide a range of educational programmes to help healthcare practitioners in London to gain the competence and capacity they need to deliver alternative therapeutic services to the local population.

In 2008 the UEL School of Health and Bioscience announced a new exchange partnership with Matanzas Faculty of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Cuba which will allow students studying for a BSc (Hons) degree in Acupuncture the opportunity to spend time in Cuba observing how acupuncture is practised within the Cuban national health system. Final year students on the BSc also have the opportunity to receive clinical training in Nanjing, China.

India is another important location for overseas collaborative provision. Fifteen of the Universities are involved in partnerships of various types, including articulation arrangements, franchising, validation, and joint provision. The Indian Government is keen for overseas partnerships...
to be genuinely mutually beneficial, and many partnership agreements also contain commitments for cooperation in areas of joint research, faculty exchanges and curriculum development (such as the Agreement between Bedfordshire and the Nitte Education Trust in Bangalore). UKIERI funding has been particularly important in helping to establish joint delivery and joint provision (e.g. at Greenwich, UCLan, Roehampton and Teesside).

Sixteen Universities described partnerships in Malaysia, mainly involving the franchise and articulation models, although Napier is involved in a PMI2 Connect project which is supporting the development of a joint programme with a Malaysian partner. A significant partner for Universities in Malaysia is SEGi which delivers franchised courses for Abertay, Greenwich, Sunderland and Bolton. ARU, Coventry, UEL and Staffordshire also have many links with Malaysian institutions.

Eleven Universities reported collaborative provision in Singapore, mostly using the franchising or validation models (e.g. Glasgow Caledonian), with some examples of articulation arrangements (e.g. Abertay, Coventry, and Middlesex).

The Middle East is the location for a growing amount of collaborative provision involving these institutions, particularly in Oman, but also in other Gulf States (e.g. Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Ras al-Khaimah). Seven are operating in Oman, three in Dubai (including Middlesex’s branch campus), two in Abu Dhabi and one (Bolton) has recently established a branch campus in Ras al-Khaimah. The majority of provision is either franchised or validated courses, but there are examples of flying faculty and supported distance learning. Other Middle Eastern locations include Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, and Qatar. Derby has had significant distance-based provision with Inter College in Israel, but this partnership is now closing. Many of the partnerships in the Middle East recruit significant numbers of students.

An interesting example of collaborative provision in the Middle East is Kingston’s partnership with two institutions in Iran.

Example

Kingston University and Iranian partners

In 2007 the University signed a partnership agreement with Azad University in Iran to support research links (PhD studentships) and teaching at pre-degree and Bachelors level. Kingston validates the Azad International Foundation Certificate (with pathways in Engineering, Computing, Science and Art and Design on completion). It also franchises the 1st year of a BSc (Hons) in Computer Science to Azad. All franchised/validated programmes are delivered at Azad’s Oxford base in the UK. Azad students on the franchised BSc programme are expected to study for a further two years at Kingston to complete their degree. The first of these students will progress to Kingston in 2008/9. The partnership has also helped recruit two PhD students to Kingston. The University also has an articulation agreement with KN Toosi (in place since 2005) for a MSc in Automotive engineering. The programme recruits between 5 and 15 students each year.

The Universities are involved in international partnerships in thirteen different African countries, most notably Malawi, but also in Botswana, Nigeria, Zambia and Tanzania and to a lesser extent in Uganda, Gambia, Swaziland, Ghana, South Africa, Libya, Ethiopia and Kenya. Collaborative teaching provision is mostly franchise in nature and sometimes includes elements of flying faculty (e.g. Bolton and Derby). Many of these are funded by UK government schemes such as the England Africa Partnerships Schemes or the DfID DelPHI Programme (see Appendix 4 of the full report for more details about these schemes).
The survey also identified partnerships of various types in 27 European countries. The most popular countries for collaborative provision are Greece (13 institutions) and Cyprus (5 institutions) predominantly for franchising and articulation, whilst there are significant numbers of partnerships in Germany (12), France (9), Ireland (5), the Netherlands (7) and Spain (5) covering franchising, articulation and joint provision.

Example

**Leeds Met Africa**
During the last 20 years the University has established a network of partnerships with communities, governments and institutions in Africa, in particular in Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania. In 2006, the umbrella organisation Leeds Met Africa was launched to co-ordinate these activities to provide a vehicle for the University’s continued commitment to seeking sustainable and effective responses to African development priorities. The initiative sought to use the University’s African experience to identify common themes that could benefit similar activities in developing countries, generate additional income, engage staff in the ethical context for the wider internationalisation agenda and enhance the curriculum for all Leeds Met students.

The University’s involvement in Africa has encompassed a wide variety of projects and has sought to be consistent with Millennium Development Goals, many of which have been funded by the DelPHE, and England Africa Partnerships Scheme. Many of these projects have focused on the role of education in the alleviation of poverty, on achieving equal opportunities through gender balance and on enabling students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access study programmes.

In recent years eight of the Universities have developed collaborative provision in Russia, most notably related to the joint development of postgraduate programmes and six member institutions have been supported by the BRIDGE programme to develop mainly business based courses with public sector Russian universities.

The Universities reported involvement in collaborative partnerships in 18 other countries, and partnerships in further countries are under development. Key PMI2 target countries include Pakistan (4 participating institutions), Sri Lanka (5), and Thailand (4). There are a few examples of collaborative partnerships in English-speaking countries (e.g. Australia, Canada and the USA). Three Universities have links in the USA, and London Met is seeking to develop research and teaching collaboration there, following its award of accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Commonwealth countries also feature: Anglia Ruskin, Greenwich and Middlesex have partnerships in Trinidad and Tobago.
Subjects, fields and levels covered by international partnerships

The Universities that gave evidence to this study demonstrated that their teaching partnerships are at all levels: foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate and the main subject focus is professional disciplines such as business and computing, and to a lesser extent engineering. Many of the overseas teaching partnerships in the Middle East focus on Engineering, whilst Business, Management and ICT are most popular in Hong Kong, China, Malaysia and Singapore. Niche areas of expertise are often the main focus.

Example

University of Abertay – Computer Games Technology

The University of Abertay has articulation agreements with partner institutions in Turkey, China and India related to its postgraduate programmes in Computer Games Technology. It has an articulation arrangement related to a two-year master degree at Izmir University of Economics with Abertay’s MSc in Computer Games Technology. This articulation with advanced standing link enables around 40 Turkish students each year to spend their first semester at Izmir, and then travel to Abertay for two semesters to articulate from PGCert to PGDip Level. Students then return to Turkey to complete the final year of their Izmir Masters. Abertay also has similar agreements with Nanchang University and SouthWest University of Technology in China, and Amity University in India under which Chinese and Indian students spend time in Abertay as part of their MSc in Computer Games Technology. The programme allows students to articulate to PG Certificate Level whilst at Abertay, after completing English language modules and relevant preparatory modules in their home country. The Nanchang agreement supports 30 such students each year, whilst the SouthWest and Amity agreement allows 10 students in each institution to follow this route.

Other niche areas include:

> Art and Design (Anglia Ruskin University, Bolton, Northampton, Middlesex, BCU, Derby, Kingston, and UCLan);
> Health and Social Care (Greenwich, Kingston, Middlesex, TVU, Coventry, and Teesside);
> Media Studies (Bedfordshire, Bolton, UCLan, Wolverhampton, UWS, and Kingston);
> Education (ARU, Derby, Kingston, Teesside and Roehampton);
> Science and Technology (UCLan, Napier, UWS, Greenwich, London Met, and LSBU);
> Hospitality and Tourism (Derby, Staffordshire, Sunderland, London Met, TVU, and Napier);
> Social Sciences (Teesside, LSBU, London Met, Roehampton and Kingston).

Research partnerships also focus on particular areas of expertise, often in highly applied fields such as computing technology, human resource management, conservation, and environmental science. These subjects also feature in enterprise and knowledge transfer partnerships. The England Africa Partnerships Scheme and the DelPHE programme cover themes such as health (e.g. UCLan in Tanzania, Malawi and Swaziland), climate change and agriculture (e.g. Coventry in Nigeria), as well other areas such as policing (e.g. Teesside in Rwanda, Northampton in China) and education (e.g. Leeds Met in Malawi and Tanzania). Other topics covered by knowledge transfer partnerships involving the Universities include health sector management, professional development and English language testing (Roehampton).
When Universities develop broader institutional alliances, the intention is to include many different disciplines within the partnership, usually to include as many faculties as possible and incorporating, teaching and capacity-building activities in which different parts of the university may have different areas of expertise.

**Funding for international partnerships**

International partnerships involving the 28 Universities are funded from a variety of sources including the Universities themselves, partner organisations, overseas governments, NGOs, companies, and national competitive funding schemes such as PMI2 Connect, UKIERI or the England Africa Partnership Scheme. The Universities surveyed have had significant success in these UK and EU funded schemes which support international partnership activity, particularly involving collaborative delivery, student mobility and capacity building.

PMI2 Connect and UKIERI funding is focused on supporting international partnerships that encourage joint research, collaborative programme delivery and student mobility. Kingston, Middlesex, Roehampton, Greenwich and Teesside are currently involved in PMI2 Connect-funded research partnerships in Japan in various subject areas, whilst five Universities have received PMI2 Connect funding for collaborative programme delivery projects with partners in Pakistan, Malaysia and Vietnam. UCLan, Coventry, Roehampton, Southampton Solent, Greenwich and Teesside universities have received UKIERI funding to support collaborative delivery programmes with Indian partner institutions in areas such as business, CPD, education, and the social sciences.

The EC-Asia Link Programme supports regional and multinational networking between HEIs in Europe and developing countries in Asia. Greenwich, Wolverhampton, Bedfordshire, Birmingham City, and Abertay received funding from this scheme from 2002 to 2005.

The majority of teaching partnerships are designed ultimately to be self-financing (usually from student fees), but may require start-up funding from the UK institution, or from international partners or overseas governments (e.g. Bolton has collaborative provision in Africa supported by the Malawian and Zambian governments). In some cases new partnerships are cross-subsidised from other successful partnerships (e.g. Bedfordshire has used funds generated from its partnership in Oman to support new partnerships).

Research partnerships that involve project work generally require funding to support staff and infrastructure costs, data collection and travel and subsistence, which means that they generally receive grant funding of some kind – from governmental bodies, charities and research councils (UK-based or international). Some Universities (e.g. Greenwich, Teesside, Bedfordshire and UWS) receive over 40% of their research grants and contract income from overseas sources, and much of this comes from EU governmental funds (see Appendix 3 of the full report for more details).

Knowledge transfer and enterprise partnership do not always require funding, but may receive some support from UK institutions, international partners or funding schemes, or may form part of a broader strategic partnership where mutual capacity-building runs alongside other international activities.

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Since this project was completed the England Africa Partnerships Scheme has been re-created as the Education Partnerships in Africa (EPA) scheme (2008-11). In addition, the PMI2 Connect programme has recently expanded to include a new International Strategic Partnerships in Research and Education (INSPIRE) scheme focused on academic and research partnerships between the UK and a selection of countries in Central South Asia, and funding for research cooperation between UK HEIs and partner organisations in selected Gulf states - Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain.
3c Institutional barriers and enablers related to international partnerships
The majority of responses referred to internal barriers and enablers linked to establishing and developing international teaching partnerships (those at national-level are discussed below). While international partnerships are of different kinds and are approached in different ways depending on mission and institutional culture, two trends are discernible. Firstly, while most partnerships are initiated and managed at faculty level, institution-level co-ordination and support is becoming increasingly important. Secondly, it appears from responses that Universities’ are becoming more cautious in relation to international partnership activity, perhaps because of regulatory requirements such as the QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision or because of a greater level of awareness of risk arising from strengthened risk management systems within institutions.

The mix of barriers and enablers identified by respondents provide some ‘lessons of experience’ on the management of international partnerships:

> The need for international partnership activities to fit with institutional mission and institutional strategy for international education. This relates to partner selection and due diligence where it is important that potential partners have a similar status or reputation related to their teaching and research profile, share the same values and are financially secure.
> The importance of effective leadership and co-ordination of international activities at both institutional and faculty levels. Institutional and faculty champions can help to drive forward the international agenda, help to ensure connectivity and consistency of approach across institutions and ensure that new overseas partnerships can benefit from institutional knowledge gained from previous experience.
> The necessity of effective financial modelling and business planning that is potentially transferable to other partnerships. This should take into account the true costs of engaging in each partnership, and build-in the resource implications of project management, start-up funding, realistic levels of fee income, travel and staff time.
> The importance of ongoing relationship management for each partnership. This should focus on closely clarifying the relevant terminology, articulating and sharing mutual goals and responsibilities, monitoring the relationship, and regular engagement on the partnership’s future development and sustainability.
> The need to develop flexible quality assurance procedures that have the capability to adapt quickly to different market contexts, modes of operation and delivery mechanisms. There was a perception that private providers are often able to be more flexible and responsive to market demand, particularly in in-demand subjects such as computing and business.
> The need to resource quality assurance departments to enable them comprehensively to monitor the quality of overseas teaching provision – particularly related to consistency and standards in marketing, admissions, integrating student-centred learning, student support and assessment.
> The importance of faculty engagement in international partnerships. Faculty are key to initiating partnerships and ensuring the success of overseas partnership activity, particularly related to recruitment, course development, teaching and assessment.
Section 4
Economic and educational benefits to the UK arising from Institutions’ international partnerships

4a Economic and educational benefits to the UK arising from Institutions’ international partnerships

Our research sought available evidence on the economic and educational benefits of the Universities’ international partnership activities, starting with their impact in the UK on the region or city in which the University is located, on academic staff, the curriculum and on the University overall. Little direct or quantifiable evidence was uncovered, except in relation to the impact of international students in the UK.

Impact on the city or region

In terms of economic impact, the most up to date figures (2003-04) for the value to the UK of incoming international students show that tuition fee income is £2.1 billion and that the associated expenditure of overseas students in the UK is estimated at £2.6bn.  This latter figure makes no allowance for expenditure by students’ families coming to the UK. The significance of these estimates of income earned from international students is that all of it trickles through into expenditure in the city or region where the university is based. The international students’ expenditure of £2.6bn goes directly to businesses or landlords, while the £2.1bn received by the university eventually trickles into the local economy through salaries and the purchase of utilities or consumables. Many universities have undertaken studies of their economic impact on the community and these all show that a sum at least equivalent to the total university budget is put into the local economy. 33 On the basis of Lenton’s figures, and assuming that students at the institutions surveyed generate the same average income as all the others, we can say that the international (non EU) student activities in Universities that took part in this study contribute about £660m in total to their cities or regions. 33

There are other impacts on the city or region in the UK that should be noted:

> Universities’ overseas partnerships are being used as the basis for building collaborative networks with businesses in the partner city and the Regional Development Agency is often involved in working with the University. 34
> Inward investment in the region is facilitated by the Universities working with the RDAs to offer skills training so as to guarantee foreign companies a supply of suitably qualified labour. According to discussions with the UKTI fears about the quality of the UK workforce are common among inward investors. We did not discover details about the Universities surveyed playing this role, but the opportunity exists.
> Universities and city councils are sharing the cost of outward missions in order to tempt in foreign investors. In almost all such cases the university is the lead player because of its knowledge of the country and the markets concerned.
> Where the multi-cultural and international nature of the student population is in some cases different from the ethnic mix of the host city, the university sometimes acts to encourage local people to join in the multi-cultural activities on campus. 35
> The university’s experience and contacts overseas can help local small businesses enter local markets. Coventry, Wolverhampton and Staffordshire Universities and the UKTI are working to set up a network of “Soft Landing Zones”. Under this scheme in various countries facilities such as desk space, meeting rooms, internet access and translation are located next to universities’ science parks and the British High Commission in each country offers support.

32 See the ESRC and the Funding Councils project run from Strathclyde that is co-ordinating a number of economic impact studies of universities on their regions at: http://ewds.strath.ac.uk/Default.aspx?alias=ewds.strath.ac.uk/impact
33 This calculation simply takes Lenton’s estimate for 2003-04 that 215,650 international students contributed £2.7bn to their local economies and pro rates it for the 70,000 international students at Million+ universities.
34 An example of this is the collaboration between the University of Northampton and the Northampton Borough Council and the Northamptonshire Police in China.
35 Fielden, J (2007). Global Horizons for UK Universities. CIHE.
50,000 TNE students enrolled at the Universities that we have calculated from our survey responses suggests that these enrolments should be worth in excess of £47m to these institutions (at 2003-4 rates), assuming a proportionate spread of programme types.

We have not been able to calculate the income from the research or enterprise partnerships of the Universities that took part in the study, but Lenton estimates that the value to the UK of all international research grants and contracts and other earned income was £542m in 2003-04.

Impact on academic staff
The engagement of academic staff is crucial to the success and sustainability of international partnerships and such engagement can bring academic, economic and commercial benefits. Based on a range of sources, including our survey, the potential benefits of international partnership activities for staff include:

- Developing an understanding of other cultures and other ways of learning and teaching that come from working alongside colleagues in partner institutions and overseas.
- A chance to build on research strengths to create new research and consultancy opportunities with appropriate international partners. Partnerships tend to develop from undergraduate teaching and scholarship in the first instance to ones with post graduate programmes, PhD exchanges and ultimately collaborative research.
- The ability to improve interactions with international students at home and provide them with a learning experience that starts with a better understanding of their home environment.
- The potential (in many institutions) to earn a salary supplement or accumulate savings, if resident overseas.

Example

**Coventry University, Staffordshire University, and the University of Wolverhampton – Soft Landing Zones (SLZ)**

Coventry University Enterprises Ltd (CUE) in partnership with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) has launched the ‘Soft Landing Zones’ (SLZ) programme which provides in-country support for UK organisations setting up operations overseas (e.g. starting a second office abroad, establishing international joint ventures or partnerships, research and development opportunities and outsourcing agreements with companies). The aim is to establish a wide network of Soft Landing Zone offices, based in or located adjacent to universities’ science parks, and build direct links to key university personnel. Facilities such as desk space, meeting rooms, internet access, language translation, access to university research facilities and legal and accountancy support are available to SLZ members and SLZ offices are closely tied to the British High Commission and British Embassy in each country. The University of Wolverhampton and Staffordshire University are both working with SLZ to market their science parks overseas and key offices have been established in university science parks across 14 countries, including China, India, Malaysia, Brazil, Poland, Sweden and Mexico. Additional offices are currently being developed in Turkey, South Africa and Australia.

Lenton also estimates the financial return from various forms of trans-national education, based on a small-scale British Council survey of 208,000 foreign students: “the income returned to the UK from twinning arrangements/joint programmes/franchises in 2003-04 was in the region of £500 per student, the income from programmes on overseas campuses in the region of £2,706 per student and the income from distance learning in the region of £2,040 per student”. The estimate of
Where the overseas activity has a developmental focus, the academics concerned may be driven by altruistic as well as academic motives. Leeds Metropolitan University has reported the “transformational effect” that a short period of international volunteering has on most students and staff that take part. This is certainly true also of some of the more significant projects that the Universities are involved with in Africa under the English Africa Programme or with the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission. Thus, international development work and volunteering benefits both parties – the outgoing academic or student and the recipients.

Impact on the curriculum
Internationalising the curriculum is a key element in most internationalisation strategies; it is directly assisted by a university’s international partnership activities. The process of reviewing the transfer of a UK syllabus into partner institutions quickly illustrates differences in learning styles and student expectations. This feeds back into the task of reviewing the UK curriculum so that it is sensitive to international students’ perceptions as well as illustrative of more than purely European perspectives. A further benefit is that international partnerships can allow the introduction into the UK of totally new programmes that have been developed jointly with an overseas partner. Both London Met and London South Bank Universities (LSBU) have found that their Chinese partnerships have enabled them to offer new UK programmes in Chinese Medicine. In LSBU’s case this is within the umbrella of a Confucius Institute for Traditional Chinese Medicine, Culture and Language. The local Chinese population are able to benefit directly from the University’s transnational education activity, and the resulting course is the first of its kind outside China.

Impact on home students
The principal impact of international partnerships on home students is the effect of working in a multicultural campus and of having the opportunity to socialise and get to know students from other environments. This is frequently stated as one of the core objectives of Universities’ internationalisation strategies; Coventry, for example, has set itself the following aims in this area: “internationalisation of the University should enrich the educational and professional experience of students and staff by introducing them to the languages, cultures and intellectual traditions of other nations”.

International partnerships also offer opportunities for study abroad and for work placements for domestic students and there is evidence that it has some impact on students’ employability. When selecting new staff, many employers said that they valued a period of study abroad and also the ability to speak a foreign language. Several of the Universities provide financial assistance to students wishing to study overseas, particularly in China.

Impact on the university overall
Universities as a whole derive significant benefits from their international activities. Until recently this statement would have been interpreted principally in financial terms, but it now has a much wider meaning, since the academic and cultural benefits from genuine partnership activities are becoming more widely recognised. However, in many institutions the chief focus of senior management is still on income from overseas activities such as international student recruitment. This needs to change if the wider benefits of partnership activity are to be realised within the university. One University described this “as giving something back” and has provided one of its overseas regional offices with significant sums of money to

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Section 4
Economic and educational benefits to the UK arising from Institutions’ international partnerships

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36 Quoted in Fielden J (2007) op cit. p. 18
37 The findings of an i-graduate survey of employers published by CIHE in September 2008 in Global Horizons and the roles of employers.
be spent on local developmental or knowledge transfer activities. The rhetoric of the PMI2 initiative supports this change of emphasis towards collaboration and partnership and argues that the UK’s prime objective is to be the preferred partner country of choice for overseas institutions.

One long term benefit from the flows of international students to the UK that is often cited but never quantified is the cultural and economic goodwill towards the UK engendered in the students participating in overseas study. The recent Million+ report on the creative industries summarised it as follows: “mutually beneficial relationships are developed between students, institutions, business and governments in these students’ countries of origin resulting in long term influence and continuing benefit to the UK economy in terms of employment of personnel and purchase of technologies.”

The development of a small number of strategic international partnerships is a key component of many internationalisation strategies, including those of Universities that took part in the study. These can have a significant impact within an institution. At Leeds Met for example, the grouping of all the University’s partnership activities in Africa under a “Leeds Met Africa” banner, sent positive signals to donors and governments about the university’s commitment and interest in helping Africa’s development. Donor funding for a university’s development projects overseas also brings positive recognition to what might have remained internal research interests. Thus, the Tabeisa partnership project in Ghana and South Africa, run by the Universities of Greenwich and Coventry, has achieved a high profile position through the success of its programmes for training small entrepreneurs in both countries.

Example

Coventry University and the University of Greenwich – Tabeisa partnership
Coventry and the University of Greenwich are involved in the Tabeisa partnership (http://www.tabeisa.ac.uk) with four universities in South African and one Ghanaian university: Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Walter Sisulu University for Science and Technology; Durban University of Technology; Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa; and the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. The partnership received funding via Round 1 of the England Africa Programme (EAP) in 2006 for the project ‘Design4Life Africa’ which sought to assist institutions in Ghana and South Africa to help reduce poverty by creating partnerships between designers and producers to support ethical fashion and textile design and production. The project is based on a successful model in Ghana in which designers in Ghana and the UK produced traditional Ghanaian textile and dress designs to create a fashion range to be made by Ghanaian fair trade groups. Tabeisa expects to have created over 12,000 jobs in Africa by 2009.

4b Educational benefits to other countries and regions
We also sought evidence of the impact of universities’ overseas’ activities on partner countries, but this has not been widely studied or reported upon. The only (as yet unpublished) evaluations relate to the impact of the activities of the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission (CSC) on their recipient countries. Our survey reveals that Universities that took part in this study contribute significantly to these projects.
Section 4
Economic and educational benefits to the UK arising from Institutions’ international partnerships

In the absence of formal, published studies we offer six specific examples of potential benefits to those countries where Universities have developed international partnerships:

> Contribution to national higher education policy goals. Many countries aspire to increasing their age participation ratio in tertiary education but simply cannot afford to do so from State funds. A reliance on providers from the domestic private sector and international universities is becoming an accepted way of meeting the gap between massive demand and a limited supply (especially in Asia and the Middle East). Thus, participating Universities are helping countries to achieve their goals for an educated population able to contribute to the development of a knowledge economy. Completion of a UK course provides students with a very marketable qualification which adds to their employability and salary potential. A drawback is that degrees offered by overseas universities are expensive and do not contribute to any national goals for increasing equitable access to higher education. Only the rich middle classes can afford to pay UK international student fees.

> Delivery of UK programmes at less cost than in the UK. Where the 28 Universities’ programmes are delivered entirely off-shore, or are on a 3+0 partnership basis, UK institutions are less open to charges of ‘profiteering’ through high tuition fees or encouraging the brain drain. This allows the parents and students to obtain a UK award at far less cost than by studying in the UK. Even though this is usually more costly for them than studying with a wholly domestic provider, a larger number of students will have obtained a quality-assured education leading to an internationally-recognised qualification.

> Provision of staff development and resources in partner institutions. When these Universities enter into partnerships with developing country institutions they are usually involved in extensive staff development activities that strengthen the capacity of the partners’ staff to deliver the UK programme. In most cases this leaves the partner with the capability to use the UK materials in other courses or programmes. UCLan, for example, is particularly focused on mutually beneficial partnership activity, and other institutions such as Coventry and Bedfordshire are keen to increase partner institutions’ capacity to deliver their programmes ‘autonomously’. In the CSC’s Distance Learning Scholarship scheme, for example, there is an explicit requirement that the UK institution will hand over its own distance learning materials to the local partner and train staff in using them. These materials can be used locally for other university programmes.

> Capacity building and contribution to the achievement of Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). Most of the development projects have goals related to the MDGs and the strengthening of national capacity to tackle the problems of poverty. In some projects the achievements are immediately quantifiable; the Tabeisa programme, for example, claims that it will have created over 12,000 jobs in Africa by 2009. In Africa, the Universities have apparently been slow starters, since a sector survey of partnerships by the ACU for the Africa Commission reported that only 27% of respondents came from the post 1992 sector. However our survey suggests a substantial increase in collaborative activity with African institutions.

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41 Recent research by i-graduate to be published in September 2008 reports that “international alumni who have studied in the UK and returned home are substantially more likely to indicate that their salary is “well above average” or “above average”.

Mutually beneficial research collaboration. Collaborations in teaching can and do grow into research collaborations. In the first instance there is a capacity-building element as the UK partner helps the acquisition or further development of research skills and expertise, but this grows into longer term collaboration as in the case of the partnership between Bedfordshire and the China Agricultural University.

Direct contributions to the profitability or effectiveness of foreign corporations or public services. Our survey identified many instances where Universities that provided evidence to this study provide Continuing Professional Development to public and private organisations overseas. Although the connection between CPD and financial outcomes is never clear, the need for continual upgrading of people skills is universally accepted as a fundamental part of most economic strategies. The Universities are meeting this need as well as creating professional networks that might have other more tangible benefits in the longer term.

Example

University of the West of Scotland and Sub-One Technology Inc.
An example of an overseas commercial contract is the £6m research contract between The Thin Film Centre (TFC) at UWS and California based Sub-One Technology Inc. focused on investigating the performance and application of an ultra-smooth, hard, diamond-like carbon film that can be applied to the internal surfaces of a range of components in many industries, including oil and gas.

While on balance, the net impact of UK institutions’ activity on their overseas host countries is likely to be positive, there is no quantifiable evidence to prove this point and it is important to consider and to offset any negative impacts by encouraging mutually beneficial international partnerships.

This benefit has been calculated by the Higher Education Policy Institute as approximately £1bn. HEPI Report no 32. July 2007. The economic costs and benefits of international students.
Section 5
Barriers and enablers for successful international partnerships: institutional perspectives on national policies

5a Barriers and enablers for successful international partnerships: institutional perspectives on national policies
The actions and output from UK Government and policy agencies can act both as barriers and as enablers for international partnership activity at institutional level.

The ‘enablers’ that have been welcomed by institutions include:

- Policy commitment and financial support for international education in the Prime Ministers’ Initiatives, including pump-priming funding from schemes such as UKIERI, PMI2Connect, BRIDGE and the England-Africa Partnerships Scheme (EAP).
- Advice and guidance on the market conditions and regulatory context for partnership activity in key countries (but there is a recognition that more relevant, targeted and up-to-date guidance is needed given the volatility of the international environment).
- Lobbying on behalf of UK higher education and its institutions to overseas’ governments and provision of access routes to these governments and overseas’ agencies (although there was also an expressed need for more effective and informed influencing strategies to safeguard these institutions’ interests overseas).
- The UK’s reputation for quality and the work at policy level to sustain this. However, concerns were also voiced about the influence and potential impact of league tables and the need for policy agencies to counter often misleading or partial knowledge of UK universities’ (and in this case, participating Universities) quality, expertise and international contributions.

Some Universities also expressed a desire for more guidance on developing and quality assuring international partnerships, particularly related to the contractual arrangements for joint and dual degrees. Institutions would also welcome more resources for developing and sustaining international partnerships, recognising both the increasing costs involved (particularly those imposed by UK policies such as new visa regulations) and the strategic importance of these international partnerships for the recruitment of students and the wider benefits they bring.

5b Insights and conclusions from policy interviews on barriers and enablers at national level
It is clear that knowledge about the international partnerships of the Universities surveyed is limited at policy agency and governmental levels (see Appendix 5 of the full report for details of the policy agencies interviewed). Only interviewees from one government department (UKTI) appeared to know about the international partnerships of some of the Universities and these were institutions that were both prominent in their international activities and drew on the support available at national level from UKTI. More seriously, government departments in particular, but even some higher education policy agencies, appear to have a ‘skewed’ or partial image of the UK HE sector. In having incomplete, inaccurate or insufficient knowledge, they are unlikely to be in a position either to promote or inform overseas partners about what the UK can offer.

Given this lack of knowledge about the international partnerships (and international activities more broadly) of these Universities, there is a missed opportunity at national level (particularly evident in England) to promote the diverse strengths of different UK universities and colleges to international ‘markets’, countries and regions. The Russell Group has far higher visibility at policy level inside and outside the UK than these Universities do (with a small number of exceptions).
Policy agencies reported that international consortia of institutions (such as WUN) aided visibility of UK universities in international arenas, and offered more visible access routes to individual universities’ international (and national) activities. The Universities which participated in the study could also develop (or promote existing) consortia in which they are engaged.

There appears to be no consistent or coherent agenda for internationalisation between government departments and individual institutions, the sector as a whole and sector groups. This prevents a clear and well-informed message being given to overseas’ interests about the diversity of the sector (despite the rhetoric). There is also evidence of some potential conflicts between individual institutional goals and those of different government departments. However, there appears to be more coherence in Scotland than England. This contrasts with the co-ordinated approach to international education that is in place in Australia, where a single agency (Australia Education International) acts as the co-ordinating body for all international education activity. Although Australia has a much smaller HE sector, there are many lessons that can be learned from its approach (see Appendix 6 of the full report).

There are substantial opportunities for collaborative work and services at system level internationally (for example, re-building tertiary systems in fragile states, developing QA systems, building new universities) and opportunities with businesses (such as in-country work-force training). Universities that provided evidence to this study already have expertise in some of these areas and could be well-placed to respond, but they would also need to collaborate with a range of partners, including relevant policy agencies. However, the mechanisms to deliver these projects require increased levels of co-ordination beyond individual Universities, and this would require resources, for the pump-priming stages at least.

Other countries’ perceptions of the quality of UK universities in their international partnership activities are critical to the internationalisation strategies of all HEIs. Several of these institutions have a strong and growing international profile; they have the potential to add-value to the UK’s reputation. It is of course also important to note that any lack of attention to quality by individual institutions in their overseas’ work (whether they subscribe to Million+ or not) can create reputational damage for all UK institutions.

Both institutions and policy agencies recognise that the current amounts of funding available to support the development and sustainability of international partnerships is small. However, there is a difference of view between government departments and institutions as to the value, need and level of funding support that may be required to support international partnership activity. A key question asked at government department level was “what would the return on investment to the UK tax-payer be?”

There appears to be broad consensus among most of the higher education policy agencies interviewed and at institutional level (but not in all relevant government departments) on the importance of scholarships for study abroad (for UK and overseas’ students). It was suggested that UK students in the 28 Universities might be particularly deserving of such assistance and were likely to have the most difficulties in undertaking overseas’ placements for study or work.
6 Comparisons with the USA and Australia

Higher education institutions in the USA and Australia, like those in the UK, are heavily engaged in international student recruitment activities and partnerships with overseas institutions. They are major competitors to the UK both in terms of inward international student recruitment and recruitment to programmes delivered overseas – although each of the three countries has strengths in particular overseas markets and in particular overseas partnership approaches.

Our analysis (see Appendix 6 of the full report) shows that Australia and the USA pursue very different approaches to international education at both federal and institutional levels. It also demonstrates that the UK HE sector should monitor developments related to international partnership activity in these countries with interest, particularly in Australia which is leading the way in research and information provision in this area.

Australia has a federal-level international strategy, and has adopted a highly co-ordinated approach to international education. This is largely driven by the heavy reliance of Australian HEIs on the income generated from international students, and the need to maintain a highly-skilled workforce. One government agency (Australia Education International) has responsibility for the regulation, promotion and collection of data related to international higher education. The Australian government is keen to protect the Australian higher education ‘brand’ and its reputation in the international higher education market, particularly related to its international teaching partnerships ‘offshore’ which are extensive and long-standing. The Australian HE sector has agreed a Transnational Quality Strategy which focuses on providing information to stakeholders and protecting and promoting the quality of Australian higher education overseas. There is systematic data collection at federal-level related to overseas teaching provision and all institutional-level audits cover overseas programmes. The Australian government also promotes (and financially supports) other types of academic partnerships, related to student mobility and curriculum development and joint research – for example the OS-HELP income-contingent loan scheme for Australian students wishing to study abroad and the Science Linkages programme which funds international collaborations in scientific subjects. Australian HEIs themselves also take international education very seriously, and most have clearly designated leadership responsibility for international development (e.g. a Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for international affairs).

In contrast, there is no federal level international education strategy in the USA, and international education activities are largely driven by institutions. Federal involvement in international education is limited to support for relatively small-scale scholarship schemes (e.g. the new Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation), capacity building projects in developing countries, selected research linkages (via the National Science Foundation) and some funding for overseas partnerships that are focused on student and faculty mobility, and collaborative delivery in selected countries (Russia, the EU and Brazil). These initiatives are motivated by foreign policy goals (e.g. developing mutual understanding, changing perceptions of the US) and the drive to promote social cohesion between the USA’s many different cultural communities through expanding overseas experience. Despite the USA’s role as a significant recruiter of overseas students, there is limited evidence (as yet) of an economic motivation for international activities either at federal level or at institutional level. International student income has not been as crucial in the US, it seems, as in either the UK or...
Australia, and the main reasons for maintaining overseas student numbers are academic, particularly the need to maintain numbers of research students in key subjects (e.g. Science and Engineering). Historically, most overseas partnerships have been driven by institutions’ academic priorities (research and student and faculty mobility), although the numbers of pure teaching partnerships and US branch campuses appear to be increasing as some institutions seek to develop alternative income streams in new markets – and financial drivers may become more prominent as the current recession bites more deeply.

As in the UK, there is evidence that higher education institutions in Australia and the USA are increasing their overseas teaching collaboration activities. Australia has a small HE sector compared to the UK and the USA, but it recruits significant numbers of students both on and off-shore. Since it lacks the historical reputation for educational quality enjoyed by the UK and the USA, it has developed its own reputation for innovation in international education at both the policy and the institutional levels – in terms of marketing and branding, regulation, quality assurance and information provision – which has helped it to maintain its position as a major international recruiter, particularly in East Asia. The USA still appears to be a ‘sleeping giant’ both in terms of international student recruitment and the extent of programmes delivered overseas, but despite the limited support at federal or state level, there are signs that more US institutions are taking overseas’ teaching provision more seriously, particularly in China, India and the Middle East. The American Council on Education (ACE) and NAFSA (The Association for International Education) have begun to publish reports on international partnerships which will be of interest to UK institutions.
Conclusions concerning the Universities’ international institutional partnerships

The 28 Universities surveyed are very active in a range of international institutional partnerships that have educational as well as economic benefits for the UK and partner countries. These Universities:

> Participate in inter- and multi-national research projects with highly-regarded education and business-sector organisations, often in applied fields that directly address global issues and problems.

> Have significant numbers of well-established and mutually beneficial teaching partnerships involving both professional and technical disciplines (including STEM subjects) and which enrol large (and growing) numbers of students – sometimes in multiple locations in one country. We estimate that there are over 50,000 students studying for qualifications at HE level outside the UK with these Universities.

> Engage in entrepreneurial and knowledge transfer activities in areas such as CPD, support for business and the development of science parks overseas.

> Partner with institutions in developing countries based on research capacity-building, CPD and development assistance.

> Have developed worldwide partnerships that facilitate student and faculty mobility and exchange, and which enable UK students to gain vital overseas experience.

Due to lack of a comprehensive and systematic data collection process, both within universities and at sector level, much of the international partnership activity undertaken by Universities that provided evidence to this study goes unnoticed and unsung at sector and policy level. This represents a serious missed opportunity for institutions themselves, their representative bodies and UK plc, particularly when compared with the systematic national level data collection that is undertaken in Australia on international teaching partnerships.

International partnerships are developed and sustained with institutions in developing and developed countries, across the globe. Many of the countries involved are defined as priority countries for the UK in terms of trade, foreign policy, and overseas’ development. There are also a number of examples of the Universities using their regional offices to build a regional hub for further expansion in China, India, the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe.

Universities that participated in this research have engaged with a range of different partner organisations in their international partnerships, from highly-regarded research universities to small private colleges. These partnerships provide them with a wide range of experience and expertise in how to develop and manage successful partnerships with all types of partner. These Universities are also clearly the UK institutional partners of choice where they have visible and accessible expertise and reputations to match.

Teaching partnerships

The creation of international teaching partnerships is a growing feature of these Universities’ internationalisation strategies, representing a development from an original focus on the recruitment of individual international students. Such partnerships are likely to become an increasingly important mechanism to ensure the continued flow of international students to UK institutions, particularly at postgraduate level.

The Universities studied and which subscribe to the university think-tank Million+ now have substantial experience in international teaching partnerships, in many cases, built over more than a decade. In the late 1980s and 1990s, some overseas’ teaching activities were labelled as ‘risky’ and there are documented examples of when such a label was appropriate. Since then, institutions, assisted by the work of the QAA, have learnt from their experiences and there is clear evidence from our survey that many institutions have reviewed their international strategies and partnerships and have actively sought to put in place strengthened management structures and quality assurance procedures, aligned with their wider institutional strategy and mission. This is likely to be beneficial for the partnerships, but will also enhance the reputation of these institutions in the international arena.

Innovative and successful partnerships should
be widely celebrated within and outside the UK, and the lessons from success more widely shared and promulgated. It is important to find the right balance between guidance and regulation that helps to manage risk and protect institutions’ and the UK’s reputation, and ‘over-zealous regulation’ that prevents enterprise and innovation in international partnerships. Australian international education policies and strategies are also seeking to address similar concerns.

The kinds of successful and sustainable international partnership models that these Universities have developed could be regarded as examples of good practice in teaching partnerships include distance learning, supported franchises, and twinning arrangements. It is worth noting that Universities that participated in this research received 40% of all the distance-learning scholarships awarded in 2007 by the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission.

Research partnerships
These Universities are also currently successful in generating multi-partner research funding from the EU, overseas government agencies and organisations, notably in niche areas of research expertise. Indeed, five Universities received up to 40% of their research grant and contract income from overseas’ sources, with significant sums coming from the EU. It will be important for these Universities to benefit from the increased UK Government funding for research to support both the necessary research infrastructure to enable them to continue to engage in these research partnerships and to sustain the level of quality required.

We make the observation that the combined effect of successful teaching and research partnerships overseas is likely not only to raise the profile of these Universities overseas, but also to assist in maintaining international student recruitment to the UK. These partnerships also contribute to the visibility and reputation of the UK sector as a whole.

Although Government funding schemes which support international partnerships related to teaching, research and capacity-building are welcomed by the Universities, the amount of funding is often small, the competitive bidding process is time-intensive, and most partnerships are only viable if they are self-financing. Not all partnership activities make a surplus from the start as in some cases it can take time for partnerships to become sustainable. In addition, many of the funding schemes appear tailored towards research-focused institutions (especially research opportunities).

Our survey revealed that many of the international partnerships have a clear developmental trajectory, building over time (when successful) from initial teaching links involving the delivery of programmes to broader partnerships that facilitate student and faculty exchange and joint research activity. Such partnerships can bring mutual benefits to the partners. In addition, broad and deep partnerships based on student, faculty and programme mobility, and joint curriculum development are likely to become crucial for maintaining and enhancing research capability and staff development, in both directions.

Despite the widespread rhetoric about competition between UK Institutions, Universities that provided evidence are also in some cases, collaborating in international partnerships and sharing expertise. Collaboration can, of course, enable institutions to participate in projects that they would not otherwise have the capacity to undertake.

There is evidence (although not always formalised) of the positive benefits that international students bring to the region and community in which these Universities are situated, to the academic staff involved, to the curriculum which all students benefit from and to the university itself. Because of their close links with their communities, Universities studied are particularly well placed to develop collaborative partnerships overseas that can bring commercial as well as academic benefits. Our findings have shown that some cities, regions and local companies are being helped by the Universities to do business overseas. Our calculations have also shown that the inflow of international students to the 28 Universities is bringing at least £0.6bn to their local communities.
Section 8
Policy issues that affect all UK higher education institutions

8 Policy issues that affect all UK higher education institutions

A major finding from our survey and our interviews relates to the absence of regular information on international partnerships. The UK (and both UUK itself and the International Unit) need systematic and up-to-date information about universities’ international partnerships (and indeed, wider internationalisation activities) if they are to provide appropriate support to promote universities’ own international efforts and those that are of particular benefit to UK plc. UUK and the British Council also need such information in order to respond to requests for information, contacts or services arising from Ministers in the UK or from governments, agencies or other sources overseas.

The absence of readily available information about the sector means that access routes to people and expertise in UK universities (for international clients) are reportedly slow, diverse and not transparent, even when the university sector and its structures and the International Offices and Officers are well known to key policy agencies. Information about teaching, knowledge transfer and research partnerships is not held in one place and overview knowledge is not accessible at either national or institutional levels.

Furthermore, not all policy agencies and departments share key information that is collected from institutions and this does not assist the sector in achieving as much international visibility and cohesion – with diversity – as would be feasible if such data and information was shared. A clear example is the British Council’s annual survey of all International Officers that collects information about international partnerships and activities – cross-referenced to information collected from in-country and regional offices. This is collected for the Council’s benefit, but is not shared; this information would be invaluable to support the UK’s international agenda and profile if made available more widely.

It was reported that there is a lack of understanding in overseas’ Embassies and some overseas’ offices (among agencies whose job it is to promote universities and their international potential) about what universities can offer. Again, this could be remedied by better information.

In order to identify reputable and reliable partners, UK universities need to gain wide and deep knowledge of their potential partners’ activities within the UK and across other countries. The UK part of this information gap can be solved, but there is a need to track partners’ links and relationships beyond the UK.

The UK may either need a single information portal or point of access that is useful for national and external audiences, (whether governments, businesses, students or other potential partners and clients for UK HEIs) or clearer access routes to information held by sector group agencies that serve as entry routes to members and their particular specialisms. We accept that at institutional level, there are also anxieties about sharing what is often seen as competitive information and this fear has prevented such an initiative in the past. In addition the creation of a national data base of this kind would have immediate costs. However we think the need and justification are sufficiently great to justify expenditure on a feasibility study, which we recommend.

The new visa system and the new formal relationships with the UK Border Agency could fundamentally change the UK market for overseas’ undergraduate and post-graduate students, and this may have a wider impact on international partnerships. It will, however, facilitate the collection of data and information on incoming students. There are also uncertainties about the implications arising from this system for the recruitment of international staff and for mobile researchers. If there were to be negative impacts, this would not only be a cost to institutions but also to the UK.

There appears to be a lack of coherence between government departments and their policies with regard to the international agenda, whether seen from an institutional perspective or a UK plc perspective (although this is less
so in Scotland). This is despite the rhetoric on the importance of international partnerships and international markets to the UK, and the existence of internationalisation strategies at policy level. There is also conflict between the policies of one Whitehall department and another at international level (e.g. DIUS, DfID, Home Office) and this has a consequence for institution’s own international strategies. Universities have to relate to more than one government department (or part of a department in the case of DIUS) in relation to different parts of their international strategies and international partnerships (i.e. for teaching, research, and enterprise or KT).

In addition some responsibilities are split in relation to students: DIUS (JIU) has interests in recruiting international students, while UKTI has an interest in these students as potential graduate recruits for businesses. The British Council’s role and international agendas are also not always transparent or well-aligned with other key government departments. Furthermore, the Council can be in competition with institutions in the delivery of a range of educational services (however, we also collected evidence of university- British Council collaboration in the delivery of such services). Other countries such as Australia and Germany manage to present a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to their international policies.

UK policy agencies, particularly those with an overseas’ presence, gather information about overseas’ perceptions of UK universities, their international activities and the actions and behaviours of their representatives. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the setting of financial targets for international student recruitment can act as drivers of behaviour that have a potentially detrimental and longer term effect on the UK’s reputation and ultimately, the sustainability of its international partnerships. Perceptions from other countries were reported as being (in some cases) far from positive in relation to some international student recruitment practices. Beyond the QAA, it is not entirely clear how such messages are channelled so that institutions, the sector and its agencies are made aware of these perceptions on a regular basis so that action can be taken to address them. It is also important to recognise that current policy signals and rhetoric about the financial benefits to UK institutions, the sector and economy from international students also have the potential to fuel negative overseas’ perceptions of the UK if not balanced by information and publicity about the range of other contributions made by institutions’ international partnerships. Such promotional activities should form a clear part of the marketing strategy of the UK within PMI2.

A related observation was also reported, namely, that internationalisation approaches both at HEI and national level often appear to be insensitive to, or unaware of, the policy priorities of other countries. This reveals a possible tension that is reported in the wider literature between the divergent interests of nations, students and institutions in their goals for international activities. Students’ goals in seeking professional and vocational qualifications to increase their international marketability may be more closely aligned with the strategies of universities that offer international programmes which are closely attuned to market-demand (and employability). However, these goals may not always fit with the capacity-building, nation-building and human resource development aims of overseas’ countries. UK universities need to be sensitive to these tensions, and policies at national level should also be crafted in ways that balance the goals of competitiveness and economic return to the UK with wider social and political goals that bring mutual benefits to partner countries.

If such balances are not achieved, the longer-term sustainability of a number of international activities in HEIs, including international partnerships, may be undermined. These institutions’ international strategies and international partnership activities offer many examples of how mutual benefits can be achieved and sustained over time; such collaborations appear to be building a sound platform for longer-term competitive advantage.

9 Recommendations
We list our recommendations in terms of the two main audiences for this report: government departments and policy agencies, and UK higher education institutions:

For government and policy agencies, we recommend that:

> Million+ is added to the list of key agencies that are consulted and considered in relation to the international dimensions of universities’ core activities: teaching, research and knowledge transfer.
> Those government departments that are responsible for funding or channelling funds to the British Council to promote UK higher education’s international partnerships should ensure that the full strength of the UK system is adequately and appropriately represented in policy arenas.
> Information collected at national and international level relating to international partnerships by policy agencies such as the British Council should be shared for the wider benefit of institutions and the higher education sector.
> Relevant departments consider funding a feasibility study (that could be undertaken by UUK or the HE International Unit) to create a database to profile the UK’s international partnership activities, similar to the information collected by Universities’ Australia in regular surveys, and in the AusLIST on-line database.
> Government departments consider treating international partnerships as a special policy area where co-ordination between agencies would be valuable.

For UK higher education institutions, we recommend that they:

> Make positive attempts to meet with and engage with policy makers to highlight the achievements and contributions arising from successful international partnerships.
> Bring to the attention of the Science policy makers in particular, the specific strengths and research achievements of all UK HEIs, including the research income, outputs and varieties of impact arising from international partnership activities.
> Help relevant members of staff to network with colleagues in other HE institutions as a means of developing international collaborations and consortia.
> Share country specific information with each other since there is more to be gained than lost in competitive advantage from doing so.
> Work together – either in mission groups, or across the UK HE sector – to identify exchange and publicise the lessons learned and good practice arising from successful and sustainable international partnerships.
> Provide regularly updated information and data on international partnership activities to relevant sector agencies.
> Seek to involve the civic and business community in international links and international partnership activities.
> Continue to strengthen the integrated management structures that are being developed to support the implementation of internationalisation strategies of which international partnerships are a key part.
> Ensure that institutional representatives regularly engage with and inform international representatives of policy agencies (e.g. British Council offices, overseas Embassies and UKTI representatives) about the particular capabilities and strengths of the institution in international partnership activities.
Glossary of acronyms

APIIT  Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology
ARU   Anglia Ruskin University
AUQA  Australian Universities Quality Agency
BCU   Birmingham City University
BRIDGE British degrees in Russia, a partnership programme.
COMETT Community Programme for Education and Training for Technology
CPD   Continuing Professional Development
CSC   Commonwealth Scholarship Commission
CVU   Council of Validating Universities
DAAD  Deutsche Akademische Austausch Dienst (Academic Exchange Service)
DELPHE Development Partnerships in Higher Education
DfID  Department for International Development
DIUS  Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills
ERASMUS European Co-operative Programme for Higher Education
ERC   European Research Council
FEC   Further Education College
GATS  General Agreement on Trade in Services
GCU   Glasgow Caledonian University
GUNI  Global University Network for Innovation
HEFCE Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEPI  Higher Education Policy Institute
IAU   International Association of Universities
IU    The HE International Unit
KT    Knowledge Transfer
LEONARDO European training for the UK
LKW   Lim Kok Wing University
LSBU  London South Bank University
MDG   Millennium Development Goal
MESDC Major English Speaking Destination Country
MoC   Memorandum of Contract
MoU   Memorandum of Understanding
NGO   Non Governmental Organisation
OS-HELP Australian loan scheme helping students to study abroad
PMI   Prime Minister’s Initiative
PVC   Pro Vice-Chancellor
QAA   Quality Assurance Agency
RAE   Research Assessment Exercise
RCUK  Research Councils UK
RDA   Regional Development Agency
SEGI  Systematic Education Group International
SIU   Norwegian Centre for International Co-operation in Higher Education
SLZ   Soft Landing Zones programme
SOCRATES An EU programme until 2006, replaced by the Lifelong Learning Programme
STEM  Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine
TEMPUS Trans European Mobility Scheme for University Studies
TNE   Trans-National Education
TVET UK Technical and Vocational Education and Training UK
TVU   Thames Valley University
UAE   United Arab Emirates
UCE   University of Central England
UEL   University of East London
UKIERI UK-India Education and Research Initiative
UKTI  UK Trade and Industry
UWS   University of West of Scotland
VLE   Virtual Learning Environment
WP    Widening Participation
WUN   World University Network