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East Asia Education Insights

Transnational Education in East Asia

Learnings and Reflections
from the Last 25 Years

 Foreword

Daring to Pioneer:

UK Transnational Education in East Asia



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Welcome to the first ever digital publication on UK-East Asia transnational education (TNE). It brings together practitioner perspectives on the development of UK TNE in East Asia and a set of collaboration case studies as well as tips on setting up UK TNE in the region. Within this publication, you will find valuable advice, challenges to conventional views on TNE, the sharing of experience and learning but more critically it demonstrates the UK's commitment to excellence and its pursuit of quality and innovation in TNE with our partners here in East Asia.

East Asia was the very first region to host a UK branch campus and remains one of the most attractive and important markets for UK institutions. East Asia provides the UK's largest group of international full fee-paying students, representing almost 32 per cent of all UK international students. The region provides the lion's share (over 35%) of UK TNE enrolments.

The UK's engagement in education with East Asia goes far beyond student recruitment. Partnerships in TNE, joint research, scholarships, academic and student exchange make the UK-East Asia collaborative environment one of the most vibrant in the world.

Education is held in great esteem by East Asian governments, recognising that a strong educational system is the key to achieving social and economic goals. The demand for a highly skilled workforce remains high, as is the need for a quality education which is a priority for individuals, families and governments alike. In this region where there is an explicit determination to create first-class, top-ranking universities and with all countries placing education reform and development high on their agendas, there are significant partnership and new TNE development opportunities for the UK.

The appeal of East Asia makes it a hotbed for competitor countries looking to increase the impact of their international education. The UK's trusted reputation and its focus on high quality education are its unique propositions to sustain and grow market share in this dynamic, demanding and competitive region. A well-coordinated strategy with commitment to long-term, multi-dimensional partnerships, new programme development and learning options that are relevant to millennial generation students will secure our ongoing position and success in East Asian markets. The ongoing success of UK-East Asia TNE collaborations will depend much on the ability of both parties in understanding the needs of the other, learning from each other and overcoming challenges in the true spirit of collaboration.

The British Council's new **TNE strategy** aims to strengthen the UK's position as partner of choice in the region through a variety of inspirational programmes that bring together existing activities and exciting new ideas. We hope that your TNE and wider education work in this region, supported by the British Council, will continue to flourish. While there is already plenty to celebrate in UK-East Asia TNE collaboration, we think there will be many more reasons to celebrate our education collaborations with the East Asia region in the future.

This publication seeks to highlight the UK's TNE development in East Asia over the last quarter of a century. I hope it proves to be a valuable guide for UK institutions looking to engage with the region, specifically in TNE.

Finally, a very special thanks to all our expert contributors and daring pioneers without whom this publication would not exist. My sincere thanks go to you all for giving your time and your magnanimous support to this new publication.

Editorial Team



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Sonia provides data analysis and coordinates insights for the East Asia region (at the country and regional level), informing UK education institutions and other UK stakeholders of recent economic, education and policy developments in the region. She has 15 years of working experience as an analyst, economist and senior researcher across various organisations in Malaysia and Singapore, including a global financial company, a UK HE institution, the FCDO through the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, and an international organisation for macroeconomic surveillance. Prior to joining the British Council in 2023, Sonia was the senior researcher for the Economic History of Malaya project, where she was a key contributor to the research and publication of the project's comprehensive studies on Malaysia's economic and social transformation over the past 150 years.



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Jazreel first joined the British Council in June 2004 where she led on the UK's largest education marketing and partnership initiatives in mainland China. In 2011 she set up the British Council's Education Intelligence Unit – the first e-marketing platform dedicated to international education research for the industry globally. In 2013, she led the development and launched the UK's flagship outward mobility programme - Generation UK which led to a 104% growth in British students to China. During her tenure, the UK became one of the largest providers of transnational education in China and the first country to initiate a multi-lateral education collaboration platform bringing together institutional partners from UK, China, Sub-Saharan Africa and ASEAN countries on co-funded projects. She was awarded an MBE in 2017 for her services to UK education in China. She was listed as one of the top 50 Voices in the Australia-ASEAN international education sector by The PIE Insider Leadership Digest 2023. Jazreel returned to Malaysia in September 2020 to take up the roles as Director Malaysia and Head of East Asia Insights and Engagement Hub.

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To succeed in the new era of TNE, we must reflect on the lessons of the past

Matt Durnin | NOUS Group

In 2020 we entered a new era in transnational education (TNE). The disruptions of the pandemic underscored the value of on-the-ground presence in overseas markets and widening acceptance of online and hybrid learning have enticed many universities to explore new opportunities. As a consultant specializing in international higher education, I've fielded more requests regarding overseas ventures in the past year than in any of my previous ten working in the industry. But as we embark on a new era of TNE, I wonder: Do we truly understand why our universities pursue it and what they get out of it?

Let's start by acknowledging that TNE has a long if fragmented history, underpinned by a slippery and continually shifting rationale. Early overseas ventures in late-1800s and early 1900s were prodded by colonial or evangelical aims, whereas a resurgence of overseas university activity post-World War II was driven by Cold War ideological competition.

The transnational education landscape we work in today largely took shape in the late 1990s, with globalization laying the ground for a more market-driven approach to higher ed. This era brought a surge in branch campuses, joint degree programmes, and franchise and validation agreements as universities sought to expand international revenue streams and claim their place in the globalisation craze. Universities in at least a couple of anglophone countries got an extra push into TNE from their governments, who were seduced by the idea of weaning the HE sector off government funding while avoiding politically challenging discussions on immigration.

Somewhere in the past decade, the rationale for TNE shifted again, but this time with a more muddled narrative. Some universities began to question the financial viability of TNE ventures, as careful reviews showed that many had failed to meet their financial or student mobility targets. While some pressed ahead with financial rationales (with sporadic success), a new narrative around "international brand building" and "positioning for the future" emerged.

Exactly what our universities have achieved through TNE is fuzzy at best. I've been involved in the establishment of dozens of TNE programmes in some form or another. I've evaluated business cases, regulatory environments, market demand and potential partners across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. But when asked how many successful ventures I've seen providing in-person teaching overseas, I struggle to list more than a handful of unqualified winners. There are three main reasons:

- Financial sustainability has proved elusive for many offshore HE ventures;
- Most TNE partnerships haven't managed to deliver the expected level of student mobility
- The broader brand building and positioning narratives are typically too vague to demonstrate tangible results.

Setting Up Transnational Education

On financial sustainability, the first problem is that tuition fees for TNE tend to be very low compared to those at the home institution, whether due to market demand or government regulation. Interestingly, the lacklustre financial performance of TNE is plainly presented in the statistics used to laud it. The Department for Education estimated that UK TNE was worth around GBP 780 million in 2020, but when you divide that by more than 484,000 students enrolled on UK TNE programmes, you get an average of only around £1,600 per student¹.

This is compounded by a tendency towards sloppy accounting in TNE business cases. Few ventures take a rigorous look at the full delivery, maintenance, quality control and compliance expenses, which eventually subsume the meagre tuition fees.

Many universities understand this but argue that mobility through TNE – i.e., TNE students transferring to the home campus of the university and paying full fees for some portion of the degree – balances the finances. The problem is that the available data suggest that mobility through TNE dwindled even as the number of offshore ventures surged in the last decade².

As to the value of TNE in building a university's global brand, I believe that it can, but I've yet to meet anyone who can convincingly quantify it. Moreover, for TNE to deliver value in brand building requires strong alignment between university strategy and its overseas partnerships. Yet when I examine a university's partnership portfolio, I typically see the opposite: dozens of small, reactive partnerships that deliver only tiny impact. If TNE's value is as a strategic lever, this not consistently evident in the way that universities integrate TNE provision with their broader recruitment and partnership activities.

While the points above should give universities pause in considering new overseas ventures, there's at least one good reason not to abandon TNE: It has been overwhelmingly good for students and for host countries. I've rarely encountered a TNE programme that I thought wasn't delivering high quality education. Moreover, reflecting on the experience of long-standing TNE host countries like Malaysia and China, it's clear that HE systems have benefited from the interactions. These are laudable outcome and there are many developing countries that could benefit from the same approach.

Yet the lessons of the past should teach us that financial sustainability is a prerequisite for lasting impact and that partnerships are not strategic just because they are international. The post-Covid world presents interesting opportunities to rethink how our universities operate overseas. Offshore operations can be an important component in student recruitment and online and hybrid learning could be a game-changer in HE affordability and access. But to take advantage of these trends, we need to start with an honest reflection on why invest in TNE and what they have actually achieved.

1. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/uk-revenue-from-education-related-exports-and-transnational-education-activity#explore-data-and-files>

2. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/he-science/knowledge-centre/transnational-education/tne-routes-uk-he>

Setting up HBU-UCLan School of Media, Communication and Creative Industries

Tim Steele | Former Executive Director, University of Central Lancashire

I was fortunate to work at one of the most pioneering universities in the UK for Transnational Education Partnerships (TNE) within China, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Developing partnerships in the North, South and East of China happened quite quickly, making the University one of the largest providers of UK HE in China. The downside of growing so fast, however, was the need to consolidate and having to accept, under the rules at the time, that it was unlikely any further partnership would be approved.

Fast forward several years to when non-independent joint schools were introduced. Through our Confucius Institute, UCLan was introduced to Hebei University in Baoding, a 4-5hr drive outside of Beijing. An institution relatively new to TNE, Hebei was interested in developing links around the creative industries and keen to develop a non-independent school. We knew at the time, through the Chinese 5-year plan, that creative industries was a key priority as it was for us in the UK. Hebei province had been highlighted to become more important through the development of Jing-Jin-Ji, an economic triangle with Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, and sitting a few miles down the road was talk of the development of the largest free economic zone in China called Xiong An. The opportunity, therefore, seemed significant and unique.

We worked at speed to assess the opportunity and to follow up from our visit with the agreed actions. This approach was key as we went along; it may seem obvious but ensuring a formal follow up and action plan from the senior person was key to maintaining momentum and ensuring that areas of challenge did not get put in the 'too hard to do' pile.

Underpinning everything were the people from both sides who were committed to work in partnership and to do so transparently. It took just over 18 months from our first visit to get approval, led by a small team who were prepared to be in the country on a regular basis to drive it forward, but key was our China team, Hebei Provincial Education department and the British Council who provided the bridge at times when the gulf between us felt too large to cross.

During these times, it was the foundation and experience we had as pioneers of the traditional franchise provision that came into play - PARTNERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP - if you keep working and talking then the answers arrive, yes it takes compromise, yes it takes cultural sensitivity, yes it takes political understanding and most importantly it takes trust.

Trust that the old library will be transformed into the School of Media, Communication and Creative Industries, trust that we will recruit 800 students, trust that we can provide all the foreign teaching staff, trust that we will increase fees in the future, trust that we will build a brand-new building, trust that there will be a two-way exchange, trust that we will develop postgraduate provision.

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The approval process took commitment from all the key stakeholders at both universities. I remember sitting in the committee room in Hebei with the Education Bureau assessors as they went through our application and posed questions to both parties. The British Council team supported us and helped ensure that we understood the various nuanced messages being played back from the assessors. This was a new process for them too, but the key message that was played back to us was our commitment throughout the process, the meetings, the letters, the telephone calls and then on the day itself, the senior teams from both sides being physically there providing their support and commitment. Every stat was known!

Over the years, the pieces of the jigsaw came together, some small and some big. UCLan and Hebei now have a joint school of over 800 students on both UG and PG courses and a huge new state-of-the art dedicated building which was built and opened in 2022. There has been active exchange both in the UK and China supporting the Universities' commitment to creative industries. A big game changer as the project developed has been the accessibility of Hebei - gone are the 4-5-hour car journeys which have been replaced with the 36 min fast train, and in turn, the development of Baoding as the Chinese government's Jing-Jin-Ji and Xiong An development strategies start to kick in. But more importantly, the partnership further cements UCLan's position and reputation in China, which will lead to greater opportunities within China.

It would be wrong of me to make out that this was an easy journey, it was not, and, like anything that is pioneering, it requires dedicated people from both sides to continue to work together to deal with the daily challenges the partnership creates, while seizing the opportunities that the partnership brings for students and staff that would not of existed if we had not taken the decision to work in partnership.

University of Dundee Case Study: Dundee International Institute of Central South University

University of Dundee

Background

Transnational education (TNE) is a key priority for the University of Dundee (UoD) - we greatly recognise and value what TNE can offer both students and HEIs. China has also long been a priority market for UoD - we established our first Joint Education Programme (a 4+1 JEP with Wuhan University in Architecture) in 2013; and our second JEP (a 3+1 JEP with Northeastern University in Biomedical Engineering) in 2018. We were eager to embark on a more ambitious project with a like-minded partner that would enable us to deliver a triple intensity of education, research and engagement to greater effect.

The Right Partner

In partnering with Central South University (CSU) to create our Joint Education Institute – the Dundee International Institute of Central South University (DII CSU) - we have become the only Scottish institution with three Chinese Government-approved Joint Educational Programmes/Institutes (JEP/I) with three Double First Class Universities. Through the DII CSU, UoD in collaboration with CSU delivers English-language honours undergraduate degree programmes in Science and Engineering subjects to 300 students per academic year, although originally, we considered programmes in different disciplines.

In seeking TNE partners who share our vision of triple intensity: i.e., excellence in research, education and engagement, it was clear that Central South University aligned with us on values and vision. They too are committed to high-quality, sustainable and scalable partnerships. Not only that, but CSU is also a world-leading institution – it is a Class A university under China's World-Class Universities Initiative and ranked 101st-150th in 2022 in the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

Partnership Model

In establishing the DII CSU, all decision-making was made against the context of our university strategy. It was critical for us to keep our purpose and core values at the centre of any new initiative. Operationally, this required the consideration of many factors including resource demands, financial implications, assuring Chinese and UK regulatory compliance, risks, delivery arrangements, and so on. We also had to decide on a financial model that worked for both institutions – we have begun with a cost-recovery model.

When thinking about the type of model to employ in the partnership, we were able to draw on our experiences of operating two other JEPs in China. We also benefited from speaking with and visiting other JEIs in China – colleagues across the sector involved in JEIs have been a valuable source of information. Other organisations such as British Council China and UUK also gave us some very helpful advice (and continue to do so). Frequent communication with our partner CSU allowed us to explore all models open to us and eventually agree on the model to suit us both.

Barriers and Considerations

There have been a number of regulatory hurdles that we had to overcome to successfully launch the DII CSU. As with all JEIs we required regulatory approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education for this collaboration. Other regulatory challenges since this have included, but are not limited to, ensuring tax compliance in both China and the UK (both corporate and personal tax for our staff involved in the JEI) and understanding immigration regulations (F vs. Z types of visas, work and residence permit requirements). There are also ongoing MoE regulations (The Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools) for JEIs and so we continue to ensure we comply with those, such as for example, the 'four one-thirds' rule.

Application Process

The application process for the JEI was led by our partner, CSU. The application was first submitted to the Department of Education in the Hunan Provincial Government. Once approved by the Hunan Provincial Government, it was submitted to the MoE for registration. The MoE registered the approved application and issued a "Chinese-Foreign Cooperative Education License". On the UoD side the application entailed providing a lot of paperwork and participating in a viva voce alongside our partner CSU in front of an MoE-convened panel.

Our partnership with CSU actually dates to 2009 when we signed an articulation agreement, but discussion on a JEI began in 2017. In 2018 UoD and CSU formally decided to create the JEI. Our viva in front of the MoE took place in December 2020. CSU submitted the JEI application form in February 2021 and our application to the MoE was approved in May 2021. Due to Covid we delayed our first intake of students by 1 year, and we welcomed our first cohort of students in September 2022.

Measuring Success

There are many ways in which we can measure success of this joint venture. These include:

- Student satisfaction and feedback, exam results, progression rates
- (Eventually) graduate employment rates
- Staff satisfaction and feedback, staff retention rates
- Finances
- The quality of our relationship with our partner
- We also wish to encourage two-way student mobility
- Impact on UoD rankings

In the future as the project develops, we will consider and measure other factors such as:

- Other UoD-CSU teaching partnerships that may develop from the UoD-CSU relationship.
- Research collaborations / joint publications / research income / patents etc emerging from the UoD-CSU relationship.

Challenges

There have been many challenging parts in setting up the JEI. Operating in another country's domestic context has been a particular challenge as it presents issues including effective cross-cultural communication, navigating different regulatory landscapes and so forth.

Of course, there are also vast differences from province to province, so what may work/be possible in one province, is not necessarily recognised in another. There are also different expectations in terms of staff workload, holidays, late timetabling

changes, the teaching day, length of semester and when it is finalised. In addition, when staff are hospitalised differences arise around the provision of personal care. Differing expectations in terms of staff accommodation has also been a pain point.

Many staff who would like to develop research relationships in China need support to comply with research security considerations and others are concerned about the diminution of joint research calls from both governments.

We have learned a lot during our first year of operation of our JEI, however, although it has been a challenging year for the UoD staff based at the DII CSU for extended periods in adjusting to living in China post-COVID, and also for our Dundee-based staff in knowing how best to support them. We recognise the need to have support staff in China, not only for our students but also to support staff working there.

We note that over 100 Dundee staff members are likely to be in country over a typical post COVID year. Not all are linked to DII but all need support to move around and operate effectively with necessary connectivity, accommodation and other services.

Finally, arriving at an agreement on how we were to teach English for academic purposes to students who did not arrive with common (approved) English language capabilities was a challenge. English is taught differently in China and securing the requisite proficiency early in their studies from the incoming cohort has taken much effort. We learned much from other JIs on this matter.

Benefits of JEI

Through operating the JEI there are a lot of advantages for both UoD and CSU in terms of internationalisation; for example, UoD can extend its global reach and deliver a Dundee degree to students who may not otherwise have chosen an international UG education, and we prepare them for working in a globally interconnected world. Our staff working at the DII CSU are also able to benefit from the input and perspectives in both teaching and research from their Chinese colleagues.

A key benefit for CSU is to work side by side with a UK institution and learn about the UK's teaching methods and quality processes. Our ongoing aim is to expand opportunities for exchange and mobility of staff and students. TNE more broadly enhances UoD's global reputation – through operating the DII CSU we can achieve greater awareness of our university. We are also able to progress high-quality research links between CSU and UoD.

Running a JEI is a successful means of contributing to knowledge transfer, capacity building and exchange of ideas. For example, it can lead to staff and student mobility – in the summer of 2023 we hosted a summer school in Dundee for 30 of our DII CSU students to give them an immersive international experience. Later this month we will welcome staff from CSU to Dundee for training. TNE can also foster research links – despite only launching our JEI one year ago, we have already seen joint publications and the beginnings of collaborative research emerge from UoD staff working with CSU colleagues in the DII CSU. Research workshops attended by colleagues from both institutions have also provided staff the opportunity to showcase their research interests and identify collaborators from the other institution.

Through the cooperative running of our JEI, UoD and CSU also benefit from learning more about each other's education systems, teaching and learning methods. This allows both institutions to draw on each other's strengths to deliver excellence in education.

The Development of the Philippines Transnational Education (TNE) Toolkit

Professor Karen Mpamhanga (formerly Karen Smith) | University of Hertfordshire

Steve Outram | Advance HE

Daniel Sheratte | Advance HE

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Lotus Postrado | British Council

TNE programmes in the Philippines have seen a gradual increase since 2015¹ following the lifting of a moratorium on their establishment by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and this opened up opportunities for cross-border education. With the passing of the Transnational Higher Education² Act (Republic Act (RA) 11448) in 2019, the Philippine government has been actively engaging local and international partners in shaping the TNE ecosystem in the country.

Through TNE, the Philippines education sector is able to build capacity and generate social impact, contributing to long-term aims of strengthening the country's global competitiveness, talent development and economic recovery. The British Council has played a key role in the development of TNE, working closely with CHED to support TNE-focused projects such as the Joint Development of Niche Programmes through Philippine-UK Linkages (JDNP) and Access and Competitiveness through Internationalisation of Higher Education (ACT-IHE). This case study, on the development of a Transnational Education Toolkit, grew out of this body of collaborative work, which supports UK-Philippine linkages.

The development of the Toolkit has been undertaken by the UK's Advance HE agency, in close collaboration with the British Council. Its development was carried out in the spirit of collaborative inquiry³, through engagement with a consultation group comprising UK and Philippine colleagues, who provided input into the design and development process by sharing their TNE experiences. This was followed by validation activities with Philippine senior leaders who provided feedback on the content, format and accessibility of the Toolkit⁴. These consultation and validation activities, along with the experiences of the JDNP programme, sought to ensure the Toolkit's relevance and applicability to those engaged in TNE activities in the Philippines.

The resulting Toolkit aims to be accessible and comprehensive, providing general guidance across the whole TNE journey. It is built around a combination of checklists, success playlists, and developmental tools and resources. It invites readers to work through a series of steps, identifying where development is needed

1. British Council [Ilevia, J.] Environment for Transnational Education Partnerships and UK Qualifications: Challenges and Opportunities – The Philippines and the UK, available from: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/b-c_environment_for_tne_partnerships_in_philippines.pdf
2. British Council (2016) Transnational Education in the Philippines: opportunities and challenges, available from: https://www.britishcouncil.ph/sites/default/files/transnational_education_in_the_philippines_opportunities_and_challenges.pdf
3. Heron, J & Reason, P (2001) The Practice of Co-operative Inquiry: Research 'with' rather than 'on' People in Reason, P & Bradbury, H. (eds) Handbook of Action Research: Participatory Inquiry & Practice, London: Sage 179-188. TNHE Act (2019) Philippine Transnational Higher Education Act, available from: <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/08aug/20190828-RA-11448-RRD.pdf>
4. The validation activities were approved by the University of Hertfordshire Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority: protocol numbers: EDU/SF/UH/05572 and aEDU/SF/UH/05572(1).

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within their context, and is designed to be user-friendly, catering to people in different TNE-related roles (e.g., senior managers and leaders, TNE managers, TNE programme leaders, professional services and teaching staff).

Initially, readers complete a checklist comprising over fifty questions, which has been developed to provide a comprehensive overview of TNE and is organised into seven key topics: Internationalisation and TNE; the Nature of TNE in the Philippines; Getting Started; TNE Programme Design, Development, and Delivery; Supporting Students; Supporting Staff; and Future Developments and Opportunities.

Engagement with the checklist helps identify strengths, needs and development priorities. The Toolkit outlines the criteria for success in each topic area, alongside potential challenges and solutions. It also provides an indication of resources which could be helpful to different groups of staff.

The Toolkit contains twenty-five practical tools, and readers are encouraged to engage with the Tools for help and support with their specific development needs. In setting up a TNE programme, for example, there are tools to help an education provider find and evaluate a partner, prepare a TNE Business Canvas and a TNE SWOT analysis, as well as build positive TNE partnerships. Meanwhile, the tools for TNE Management include a programme leader checklist as well as a list of opportunities for joint professional development and for growing and expanding TNE programmes. There are tools related to developing programme sustainability, and tools to ensure high quality student and academic experiences. The Toolkit invites readers to engage with these tools, share with their teams, and develop an action plan to advance identified priorities. The Toolkit concludes with an invitation to develop a Theory of Change model to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

The Toolkit is currently in its finalisation stage, awaiting to be launched. It is envisioned that the Toolkit will facilitate wider TNE adoption and promote shared understandings and consistency across the sector. It will offer practical guidance on TNE which can be used by a range of institutions, regardless of their previous experience of internationalisation or TNE partnerships. It is hoped that the Toolkit will sustain a community of experts on TNE in the Philippines who will continue to champion, support, and grow this form of educational provision in the country.

Building Capacity and Expertise in Transnational Education in the Philippines

Shannon Stowers | International Relations Manager, QAA
Piers Wall | Head of International Membership Services and TNE, QAA

The Philippines introduced the Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) legislation in 2019, and since 2022, QAA has been working with the British Council and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), a Philippine government agency, on a British Council-funded project to build TNHE capacity across government and higher education institutions.

This legislation made it possible for local institutions to provide education services in partnership with foreign universities. Prior to this, there had been no legislative framework for the operation of TNHE in the Philippines, although smaller-scale TNHE partnerships had existed, supported by the British Council and CHED.

The key goal of QAA's project was to support CHED to build expertise in TNHE, which in turn would facilitate the development of TNHE across HEIs. TNHE was not a widely understood area of higher education in the Philippines, so QAA had an important role to play in building capacity and knowledge.

QAA's work with CHED began in June 2022. We delivered initial training, in Manila, to staff from key CHED offices, representatives from local universities and a consultancy team affiliated with CHED and the British Council. In early 2023, QAA delivered an online series of twelve training sessions for CHED staff focused on the fundamental concepts and delivery models of TNHE, future developments, best practice, TNHE-specific leadership skills, and management tools for the effective governance and delivery of partnership projects. This training was an interactive process where QAA identified gaps in participants' knowledge of TNHE and worked to fill these, paying specific attention to the Philippine context. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their approach to TNHE, and consider current policies and obstacles that could be removed to facilitate TNHE's implementation.

These training sessions centred around CHED's six key strategic and operational priorities:

- establishing a TNHE framework
- establishing a monitoring and evaluation framework and process
- quality assurance of TNHE
- TNHE data collection and reporting
- stakeholder involvement
- capacity building of CHED and sector staff

CHED's central role in the strategic oversight of TNHE and the maintenance of quality and standards was clear, but the higher education sector itself needed guidance on how to operationalise TNHE and develop partnerships. Developing a TNHE framework was therefore seen as an effective tool in guiding the sector on key aspects of TNHE, such as credit comparability, credit transfers, recognition of qualifications, and professional licensing. It was also important to support

institutions in building TNHE capacity, which included deepening their understanding of the various stages involved in partnership development from the due diligence process to contracts and approval.

As CHED also plays an important role in TNHE monitoring and evaluation by first supporting providers to align their quality assurance processes and procedures with the TNHE framework, and then also by monitoring compliance and encouraging enhancement. There are areas where this could be advanced further, for example, in establishing networks to share best practice, as well as involving stakeholders from across government, the sector, and industry. Data collection on TNHE at CHED and sector-level would also support the implementation, monitoring, and enhancement of TNHE.

Through these sessions, QAA identified several gaps that needed to be addressed for successful implementation of TNHE. Phase two of this project will support CHED in navigating these gaps by:

- developing a TNE roadmap that shows the stages of development for TNHE in the Philippines in the short, medium, and long term, and clearly outlines the direction of travel for the sector
- mapping the quality assurance requirements of UK TNHE with the current quality assurance of providers in the Philippines
- mapping the **Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Transnational Education Programmes** to UK requirements to understand the various considerations involved in partnerships
- training CHED and providers to define roles and responsibilities relating to TNHE and its quality assurance needs
- carrying out pilot feasibility studies in selected regions to clarify capacity building and resource needs, as well as training programmes to support capacity building of sustainable TNHE
- understanding equivalence of curriculum and programmes with that of main international markets, such as the UK
- piloting accreditation of selected providers
- developing providers' programme enhancement processes to improve graduate employability

Following the six training sessions, QAA has been providing support to universities that have been invited by CHED to develop TNHE relationships with the UK.

The cross-government political motivation and commitment to develop TNHE in the Philippines has been integral to its success. Efforts from CHED, the British Council, and QAA have contributed towards strategic capacity building in TNHE across government and the sector – armed with this growing knowledge, expertise, and strategic approach, the Philippines has the potential to grow a successful and enduring TNHE environment across the country.

QAA would like to acknowledge the excellent work of colleagues Chris Bland, Kevin Kendall, and Tess Winther on this project, and thank the British Council and CHED for their collaboration and support.

Quality Assurance of Transnational Education

– The Vietnam Experience

Hoang Van Anh | Head of Education, British Council Viet Nam
Eduardo Ramos | Director of International & Professional Services, QAA

UK and Vietnam TNE collaboration

In 2023, the UK and Vietnam celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations, making this a timely opportunity to evaluate the future potential of UK TNE in Vietnam and also the supportive role played by the British Council and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

In 2020, the UK and Vietnam renewed their Strategic Partnership¹, which outlined both countries' commitment to enhancing ties in higher education, particularly in the field of high-quality transnational education (TNE). This commitment to educational collaboration and increasing UK TNE is mirrored in the UK's International Education Strategy², where Vietnam is a priority country.

Vietnam's economy has become substantially more open in recent decades and the country has experienced notable economic growth and poverty reduction³. The government's main aim is to transition Vietnam from a lower-middle-income economy to an upper-middle-income country by 2030. With about 45% of the national population under the age of 30, expansion of higher education to sustain national growth is a priority.

One of the ways to meet the need for high-quality education is through TNE. Since the late 1990s, the Vietnamese government has seen TNE as a way of building international linkages in the higher education sector. This has been fostered through favourable legislation granting recognition to TNE awards⁴ and to hybrid or blended degrees which are partly delivered online⁵.

As a result, TNE enrolments in Vietnam have increased by an average of 11% annually in the last five years (2015-21), albeit from a small base. 7,125 UK TNE students were studying in Vietnam in 2021-22, making it the 10th largest host country for UK TNE in Asia. This was a growth of 39.7% from 2020-21. Roughly 90% of UK TNE in Vietnam is delivered in person, compared with a global average of 72%⁶.

QAA has been working with the British Council on a project focusing on comparative review of quality assurance systems in Vietnam and the UK, analysing gaps in the areas of cross border recognition and accreditation.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-vietnam-strategic-partnership-forging-ahead-for-another-10-years>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-education-strategy-2023-update/international-education-strategy-2023-progress-update>
3. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/vietnam/overview>
4. <https://english.luatvietnam.vn/circular-no-13-2021-tt-bgd-dt-dated-april-15-2021-of-the-ministry-of-education-and-training-defining-the-conditions-order-procedures-and-competence-201398-doc1.html>
5. <https://english.luatvietnam.vn/circular-no-38-2020-tt-bgd-dt-dated-october-06-2020-of-the-ministry-of-education-and-training-on-providing-regulations-on-joint-training-with-foreign-reign-192147-doc1.html>
6. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Vietnam Higher Education for International Integration (“the Project”) project includes benchmarking and analysing internal quality assurance practices in a range of higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as accreditation practices in centres of education, followed by public seminars to disseminate findings and a training workshop for Vietnamese higher education leaders.

The Project is aimed at strengthening both internal (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) systems in Vietnam and establishing UK-Vietnam higher education partnerships that enable the development of standards for IQA in HE and facilitate capacity building for policy makers, HE leaders and heads of QA at Vietnamese universities. Furthermore, the project supports Vietnam’s recognition of programme accreditation by UK professional / accreditation bodies which will promote programme articulation.

It is expected that this project will foster growth in TNE partnerships between UK and Vietnamese HEIs, as both sides ride the wave of positive incentives set out by both governments. It will lead to enhanced expertise in internationally agreed frameworks for quality assurance, and the progressive establishment of practices that build mutual trust between HEIs on both sides.

Complementing this project is the British Council’s Going Global Partnerships programme. This programme will support the implementation of a two-year Work Plan (2023-2024) between the British Council and the Vietnam Quality Management Agency (VQA)⁷. The Work Plan sets out key goals in the development of an effective system of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education, in line with the requirements of education reforms and aligned with the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework, with the additional aim of moving higher education institutions towards increased autonomy⁸.

In addition, QAA will conduct a comprehensive programme of evaluation and enhancement of UK TNE through the QE-TNE Scheme⁹ in 2023-24. A team of QAA quality specialists will develop a series of engagement activities leading to outputs country guides, webinars, case studies and thematic analysis with the goal of building mutual trust and enhancing best practices in transnational higher education co-operation. Some of these outputs will be made available publicly.

In this 50th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the UK and Vietnam, and after 30 years of the British Council’s operation in Vietnam, the strategic relationship between the UK and Vietnam looks stronger than ever. Vietnam’s ambition for the provision of high-quality education for its young population creates a valuable opportunity for the UK to share its expertise for mutual benefit. The British Council and QAA are well-placed at the forefront of education quality enhancement activities and will continue working to propel this strategic partnership with Vietnam to greater heights going forward.

7. VQA is under the Ministry of Education and Training in Vietnam.

8. At strategic level, the Work Plan supports the implementation of the newly released Decision 78 on enhancing quality assurance and accreditation in higher education in Vietnam over the period 2022-2030.

9. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education/quality-evaluation-and-enhancement-of-uk-tne>

Expanding Horizons: A Journey of Transnational Education in Southeast Asia

- Establishing a Dual Master's degree Programme in Islamic Studies and the Globalised Muslim World: Bridging Jakarta and Edinburgh

Siti Sarah Muwahidah | University of Edinburgh

Tom Lea | University of Edinburgh

Introduction

Establishing a successful Transnational Education (TNE) programme is a complex process, requiring a well-thought-out strategy, strong partnerships, and a deep understanding of the academic, regulatory, and cultural landscapes of partner institutions. This essay explores the University of Edinburgh's (UoE) journey in developing and delivering a dual degree programme with the Islamic Studies faculty of the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII) in Jakarta. Multi-institutional grants, including a Going Global Partnership (GGP) fund from British Council Indonesia, allowed our universities to embark on two years of ground-laying activities including scholar and student visits, joint teaching sessions, and curriculum planning workshops.

Project Rationale

Our dual degree programme brings together the UIII's MA in Islamic Studies with the UoE's MSc in the Globalised Muslim World (delivered by the UoE's Alwaleed Centre). Our programme in Edinburgh adopts a 'decentred' approach to Islam, broadening student exposure to the contemporary Muslim world beyond the Middle East. Our partnership with UIII allows us to unite the expertise of both institutions in the field of Islamic studies and strengthen Southeast Asian perspectives and experiences in our teaching. It offers a well-rounded education for students that combines rich Islamic intellectual heritage with contemporary global insights underpinned by interdisciplinary methodologies. Our programme seeks to make knowledge transfer more equitable by providing a platform for re-education and mutual learning among our students and scholars.

Establishing our Partnership

Identifying the right partner was a critical step in establishing our TNE programme. The UoE's Alwaleed Centre leveraged its pre-established professional and interpersonal relationships and networks across Indonesia, which made it easier to align interests and goals. The Alwaleed Centre's Fellow, Dr Sarah Muwahidah, was key to this process. As an Indonesian national with a deep understanding of the Indonesian HE sector and broader cultures, Dr Muwahidah enabled the Centre to broker key relationships and establish communication channels quickly and effectively.

An important consideration for our dual degree was a shared language for teaching and learning. UIIU and UoE teach their courses mainly in English, ensuring a seamless educational experience for our students. Selecting the right TNE model was also crucial, and our decision to deliver a *dual* degree rather than a *joint* degree programme was significant. Driven by the first-hand experience of the senior scholars in setting up TNE projects, we decided to avoid the bureaucratic obstacles of fully combining two different programmes under one joint degree.

Although a dual degree was simpler to establish, we nonetheless faced a number of hurdles. For example, the rigidity of Edinburgh's academic calendar made it hard to align start dates and the different admission criteria of our institutions posed certain challenges. These obstacles were addressed by adopting a tiered admission procedure that allowed room for student capacity building and growth across their first year of study in Jakarta. Spending the first year at UIII also provided a broader inclusivity by allowing students to enhance their language test scores in order to meet Edinburgh's English proficiency requirements. We were fortunate that UIII was very accommodating; their flexibility was essential to the success of the programme. From our end, we offered early admission screening and supplemental activities.

Process, Timeline and Benchmarking Success

The process of establishing our TNE programme began in January 2022. Thanks to British Council's GGP funding, we were able to organise workshops on policy, quality assurance and curriculum development as well as organise visiting studentships and extended visits from key scholars between UIII and Edinburgh. Building relationships, trust, and a sense of teamwork were prioritized over merely formulating policies and procedures. The extended (8-10 weeks) visits of key scholars between our institutions were key to this process. They helped us form strong relationships which, in turn, helped to dissolve the boundaries between our two teams and institutions. It also meant that both teams were willing to go the extra mile to ensure the project's success.

We also took note of the UIII students' feedback as they spent a semester auditing courses and working on research projects at UoE. Their perspectives were crucial in helping us design more thoughtful programme structures, timelines, and supplemental activities for future students.

The early success of our TNE programme, which commenced in September 2023, is measurable in various ways. One such indicator has been the recent award of a generous financial commitment by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in the form of scholarships for up to twenty (20) students per year over the next five (5) years. This major investment shows the Indonesian government's confidence in the programme's value. Over the medium term, the indicators of success will include student admission and graduation numbers as well as student feedback. Long-term success will be assessed through alumni achievements academically and professionally. These metrics capture the programme's impact on individual students, the Islamic studies field and the broader community.

Such TNE programmes also contribute significantly to the wider internationalisation agenda of partner universities. In this case, Edinburgh's historic focus on Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies was expanded to include Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. This strategic partnership therefore enhances the diversity of the classroom, bringing together students from various backgrounds and fostering broader global perspectives. For the newly established UIII, our collaborative dual Master's degree will help cement their international credibility, commitment, and ambition as an Indonesian National Strategic Project (NSP) to become a global centre of excellence for Islamic education.

02

Operating and Managing Transnational Education

- Management of TNE - Potential Success or Probable Failure
- Developing Robust Assessment in Joint Clinical Sciences Programme
- Operating Creative Programmes in Transnational Education
- Case study of University of London and Singapore Institute of Management
- Navigating Transnational Education Partnership Operations

Transnational Education: Potential Success or Probable Failure?

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Mr Sam Jackson-Royle | Director of Global Engagement Bangor University / Prifysgol Bangor

Introduction

The collaborative delivery of education through Transnational Education (TNE) should be a positive experience for both partners and, crucially should benefit the students of both partners through the adoption and development of best practices. In addition, TNE can result in financial arrangements that benefit both partners and provide an international educational experience at a relatively reduced cost for students and their families compared to studying full time in one of the major global destinations for higher education.

The challenge is that this positive outcome is not the default outcome, which instead is more characterised by poor student outcomes and satisfaction, high costs of delivery and low returns for partners, or in some cases, even financial losses and other delivery risks.

The question addressed here, is what can help to differentiate between potential success and probable failure, especially for institutions or individuals with limited previous experience of building and delivering TNE partnerships? This paper benefits from the shared experience of its authors who have engaged in TNE partnerships across a range of contrasting UK institutions working with an equally diverse group of TNE partners, models and geographical locations.

Every TNE partnership is different so there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach; universities need to take the time required to understand the opportunity and how the partners can work together. Fundamentally, effective governance and good management are often the factors that differentiate between success and failure.

This, however, does not reduce the need for a high-quality educational product and excellent student experience. Instead, we argue that unless there is good governance and management of the partnership, even the best educational product is likely to fail to achieve its potential or fail to deliver against the expectations of either partner, or crucially, fail to deliver against the expectations of students.

So, if management matters, but there is no one-size fits-all solution, how can institutions build a partnership, and associated governance and management systems, that set the TNE partnership up to be successful?

The remainder of this case study shares an approach used by the authors to enhance existing and develop new TNE partnerships and other global activities at Bangor University in the United Kingdom. For simplicity, they have developed the 6C’s Framework to support the development and delivery of TNE. We stress that this is only a framing to highlight what we feel are the most important steps, but that the framework is not comprehensive and must not be treated as a linear process. It works best as a guide supported by self-reflection and learning, remembering that there will never be a standard approach and universities will need to adapt as each

partnership develops and grows.

The 6C Framework

The Framework suggests that the start of every successful TNE partnership needs to be a CONVERSATION between the partners. Some of the most successful partnerships build upon pre-existing academic links and activities. When potential partners start to discuss TNE, they need to explore areas of common interest, their desired and necessary outcomes, and associated expectations, as well as what they might bring to a potential partnership. This helps to create a shared understanding of the opportunity, and this is often the point where partners agree to jointly develop a relationship. Many partners decide this is a time to develop and sign a Memorandum of Understanding to capture their shared understanding and mutual aspirations. This is also the point where the hard work of design begins!

CO-DESIGN is the second of the 6Cs. Successful TNE partnerships require both partners to be engaged and involved in the design of the partnership. Without this approach, the view of one partner will likely dominate and there will be potential for misunderstanding and confusion. Many in such situations will naturally feel that their needs will take precedence; however, the goal of a successful partnership is to design something mutually beneficial for both partners. Engaging in a pro-active co-design process will help ensure this happens. The authors highlight that it can start as simply as the localisation of one existing element of a programme to ensure that it is suitable for the local market.

As the conversations and process of co-design progress they build the third of the 6Cs. Partners need to develop CLARITY of their expectations and requirements, along with what they will be expected to contribute through specific roles and responsibilities. This clarity helps to build effective governance and management systems that we feel are the most important enabler of success in TNE partnerships. This can cover contractual arrangements, academic and business plans, professional development opportunities for staff, interactions with regulators, academic regulation or any other operational needs.

Without clarity, there is the risk of overlap, misunderstanding or even failure to deliver critical functions and responsibilities. Without clarity, there is an enhanced risk of an additional and undesirable term of conflict developing between partners.

COMMUNICATION is the priority, and it represents a key enabler of success for the duration of all partnerships. It is important to focus on ensuring that there are appropriate methods to deliver effective and purposeful communication that enables delivery. As such, there is a direct link between approaches to communication with partners and the clarity of roles and responsibilities mentioned previously.

TNE is a collaborative delivery, which therefore requires the 5th enabler, COLLABORATION. The delivery of TNE requires institutions and individuals to collaborate in ways that can span institutions and locations, that links academic and professional service teams, and often works across cultures, language, and time-zones. One potentially helpful rule of thumb is that if partners can collaborate effectively during the design of a partnership, it is likely they can also collaborate effectively during implementation. Conversely, if partners struggle to work effectively during the process of building a partnership, they are likely to struggle to deliver the TNE once the partnership is launched. This highlights why it is so important to commit to co-designing the TNE partnership.

Culture is the last of the six C's. Understanding and embracing the differences in local and institutional culture between the partners is a crucial step in building effective partnerships and the collaborative delivery of education. It influences the way we teach, the way students learn and the way that partners communicate, make

Operating and Managing Transnational Education

decisions and influence change. Culture will also influence how the partnership should be managed and governed.

Having experienced TNE from a range of perspectives and with a range of partners from a UK institutional perspective there is always one additional C that is crucial and that is CONTINGENCY through lived experience. In engaging internationally, we must expect the unexpected and so a need to plan for the unexpected is something that all institutions should include when engaging in TNE conversations anywhere in the world.

Developing Robust Assessment in Joint Clinical Sciences Programme: Reflection and Challenges

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Dr Mike Routledge | University of Leicester
Dr Shameq Sayeed | University of Leicester

Introduction

The Joint Education Programme (JEP) BSc Clinical Sciences, adapted from the pre-clinical phase of the MBChB Degree, is delivered to University of Leicester (UoL) and Chongqing Medical University (CQMU) student cohorts. The UoL cohort will graduate with a single BSc degree but CQMU students will graduate with a dual award: the CQMU Clinical Medicine degree and UoL BSc Clinical Sciences with an additional preliminary “Year A” that focuses on English language. Introducing this JEP has not been without challenges, and here we reflect on the practical changes made in assessments since 2021/22.

Format of exams

Assessment of the JEP was originally intended to be closely similar to the pre-clinical MBChB exams (with minor changes to reflect JEP-specific material). The cumulative nature of the MBChB exams aims to assess students’ ability to scaffold key units from basic sciences learnt previously to organ systems-based units, integrating basic science with clinical knowledge. This is challenging enough for UK medical students but there were additional difficulties for Chinese students studying in a second language, in a non-English speaking environment and being taught remotely (during the COVID restrictions).

The first set of exams returned disappointing results, with the distribution of results shifted to the left in comparison with UK students. A plausible factor contributing to this was staff’s unrealistic expectation of the language attainment at the end of year A. Consequently, changes were made to shift towards more traditional BSc-modular assessments with a change in the style of questions from long clinical-cases to more succinct clinical science questions. This change has yielded positive outcomes, and in particular, improvements in overall exam scores and student feedback.

The changes made have aligned the assessment to one more typical of a course classified as a science degree rather than a medical degree. Whilst this has led to improved results, there is an argument that something has been lost by moving away from assessments that are designed to guide students more towards critical thinking rather than rote learning¹. Pragmatically, there needs to be a balance between an assessment that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and achieve higher pass rates, with one that integrates all of learning but may be difficult for students who are learning in a second language.

The assessment continues to be under development, with coursework introduced instead of an exam for the public health unit which is better suited to demonstrate successful integration of knowledge with clinical scenarios. Further development in

1. O’Mahony, J. (2014) Enhancing student learning and teaching development in transnational education, The Higher Education Academy, York

areas such as anatomy or histology, where a more practical exam format would be suitable, such as the use of prosections and spot-tests, is underway.

Creation of written paper

When the exam format was first changed, the new question style was implemented largely by the assessment team with input from specialist teachers. Since then, training workshops on question writing and development of question banks by the teaching team have improved the process, with members of CQMU faculty being encouraged to contribute to question setting and marking. A particularly valuable step in exam preparation is question paper review by specialist and non-specialist team members, in order to check both content and, critically, clarity of questions for Chinese students.

Invigilation Process

To reduce the risk of academic misconduct and ensure students are well supported throughout the assessment period, our Assessment Lead has led invigilation workshops to ensure a consistency of this process for both UoL and CQMU based cohorts.

As the CQMU campus is closed during the summer, resit exams are conducted online with students taking the exams in their own homes. Various changes have been made in order to make the invigilation process more robust. However, despite bilingual guidance, students have struggled with ensuring that their camera-positioning and room environments are exam-ready. Given the logistical challenges and greater possibility of academic misconduct in online assessment, we are also exploring alternative onsite resit exam arrangements through local exam centres.

Challenges and reflections of post-exams processes

There is the added complexity to scheduling assessment dates in order to accommodate the Clinical Sciences teaching, Clinical Medicine teaching and the differing public holiday dates for both countries, whilst ensuring that both cohorts sit the same paper at the same time. This also has an impact on the timing of the Exam Panel and Board meetings, which in turn affects the timing of decisions determining students' progression into the next year, particularly those who have the option of studying in the UK in their final year of the BSc Clinical Sciences.

Conclusion

Close and student-centred collaboration between academic and professional services staff in both institutions is clearly essential to successful assessment in a transnational programme. Ensuring clear communication of institutional regulations and processes such as mitigating circumstances, appeals and progression is likewise crucial. This must all be regularly reviewed and improved through robust governance structures.

Operating Creative Programmes in Transnational Education

Professor Sion L Hughes | Academic Head of Hebei University-University of Central Lancashire School of Media, Communication and Creative Industries, Baoding China

Background

This is a thriving Creative Industries partnership which was set up between the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) and Hebei University (HBU) in 2014. It offers 6 UCLan validated degrees together with an International Foundation Year which can be studied over 4 years entirely on campus in China. The Joint School also offers 2 UCLan validated MA programmes which are studied over 3 years. The degree titles are as follows:

BA (Hons) Animation
BA (Hons) Advertising
BA (Hons) Film making
BA (Hons) Graphic Design
BA (Hons) Interior Design
BA (Hons) Media and TV Production

MA Interior Design
MA Music Industry Management and Promotion

827 students are currently enrolled at the Joint School, which has a full-time staff compliment of 63; of which 20 are employed directly by UCLan. By agreement, UCLan staff are responsible for providing 1/3rd of the teaching.

The Joint School deploys a practice-based teaching, learning and assessment model which is founded on practical, creative problem-solving through the use of materials and the use of professional equipment, which include cameras, lighting, edit suites, high end computers and bespoke computer software and other subject specific technologies. The Joint School operates within a purposed designed-and-built building located on the new campus, on the outskirts of the city of Baoding. It includes fit-for-purpose studios, workshops and other professional level spaces.

Key success factors

Covid-19 significantly impacted the way teaching was delivered within the partnership with technology-enhanced learning clearly taking significant steps forward during the pandemic. The UCLan team was off campus from January 2020 until March 2023 when teaching staff started getting back. Up until now we still have only 75% of our team back on campus.

Delivering teaching and supporting material online was the only way of sustaining this partnership, and although China has since adopted a policy of discouraging online teaching since the pandemic, the skills and capabilities of staff and students gained during this period have been extremely valuable going forward, particularly to access source-supporting materials and research. Technology-assisted communications for meetings etc, between our university which is based in the UK, and China; has also improved.

Maintaining good communication with our partner, Hebei University, is vital and happens most effectively within shared spaces. As a priority we quickly established shared office spaces for Chinese and foreign staff when we returned to the Joint School after our 3-year absence due to the pandemic.

The UK university provides an annual schedule of professional development and training which Chinese staff are expected to attend. Most of this happens face-to-face on campus in China. Chinese staff are encouraged to submit applications for professional recognition to AdvanceHE and access their training material. The teaching here is based on team-based delivery and we ensure that there is a shared programme of events, both professional as well as social.

In general, these factors have contributed to the continued success of the partnership:

- Ensuring good support for English language at different levels and purposes
- Retaining experienced staff who are familiar with working and living in China
- Helping Chinese staff to deliver feedback effectively to students
- Recruiting an effective and multi-skilled operations manager to handle all non-academic issues
- Good ICT integration and systems support from the parent university in the UK

Main operating challenges

One of the main challenges of delivering this model successfully is being practice-based in a culture where learning has been primarily and traditionally didactic, teacher-led and mostly structured around delivering theory. For example, there is a lack of expert technical staff to support practical, hands-on education. This could pose Health and Safety issues at the prospect of students working with sophisticated equipment and technology without adequate supervision and guidance. As China's visa regulations make it difficult to bring in UK nationals to fill these roles, the solution we have developed was to train up recent Chinese graduates to carry out support and technical tasks. However, the situation is still not optimal due to a lack of relevant experience. Other challenges have to do with the organization of space and the provision of quality infrastructure, as well as navigating what the standard MOE model of delivering (teaching) 1/3rd of the programme, really means.

Covid had posed further challenges and complications, particular in scheduling, as our foreign staff team was distributed across 9 different countries and 7 different time zones, and students who were sent home during stricter lockdown periods encountered inaccessibility issues due to internet connectivity. Having an able Partnership Liaison Manager who was pro-active in troubleshooting and solving problems where and when they occurred was key to ensuring that the organisation and scheduling was in place.

The ambiguity of the Chinese Ministry of Education's regulations has also created some difficulty when designing programmes. For example, it is not clear whether the 1/3rd requirement of teaching delivery by the foreign partner is limited to in-class face-to-face contact or whether it includes study support and tutorials; how this applies when more than one member of staff is working with a class; or how skills based demonstrations by technical staff are counted.

Post-Covid, the ability to recruit suitably qualified local staff for art and design remains a challenge. The need to have at least an MA, which is the minimum qualification for universities in China, is challenging in a sector which has traditionally recruited industry professionals and practitioners who do not necessarily have higher level academic qualifications (MA's and PhD's) but extremely

experienced. Meanwhile, the joint institute's location in Baoding makes it difficult to attract foreign staff, as the city does not have a large expatriate community and lacks amenities such as international schools. There are also age restrictions in Hebei Province on visas for foreigners over 60 years of age.

In resolving day-to-day issues, our experience is that the best results are achieved through open door policies which allow for maximum access and a problem-solving approach. Our partnership tries to lead by example and establish good standards – also adopting a circular and constant problem-solving culture. It is challenging but worthwhile to encourage UK staff in particular to accept cultural differences and change. Good, thorough and well delivered induction for new staff, which focuses on cultural differences and nuances in China is considered to be particularly effective here.

Evaluating the effectiveness, success and impact of TNE

Tangible evidence that students 'get it' in a cross-cultural sense comes in the student output. At best, work produced by students on our programmes shows evidence of ability to locate individual practice from their own culture then transforming it as new and innovative content for an international audience. This is clearly evident in the upper quartile of student outputs which is 'Sino-British' and distinctive.

The profile of our practice-based teaching, learning & assessment approach on campus is also being noticed by other schools on campus at HBU, particularly in the context of it being able to deliver clear evidence of creative thinking and innovative cross-disciplinary problem solving. We are increasingly seeing tangible evidence of genuine cross-cultural fusion within our student outputs, and believe that we are producing resourceful, globally aware graduates who can adapt their skills, anticipate sector change and are both creative and highly digitally capable. They are also fluent in both English and Mandarin Chinese, which means that they have the capability to speak to 76% of the world's population.

Our next step will be to 'reverse engineer' the partnership in order to serve UK's requirement to prepare students who are able to work in a less 'western-centric' and global economy within the mid 21st century period. This will mean designing and validating provision and content for UK students to study in China for extended periods.

Quality and standards mechanisms

This is essentially no different to any franchise/outreach or other off site delivery arrangement at home in the UK. The same requirements apply. We are gradually moving from a structure where all the teaching was carried out by 'consultant' staff who were specifically recruited for China, to a more mixed economy model where key staff (Course Leaders) have a permanent university contract, and a job description which requires their services both on campus in the UK as well as in China. We will also continue to employ consultant staff but in more bespoke roles with more short-term commitments in China. Flying faculty staff will also be deployed. This will be supported by some online delivery and support. Having permanent tenured UCLan staff out in China makes for better understanding of quality and standards requirements across the partnership.

A case study of University of London and Singapore Institute of Management

Mike Winter | Director International Affairs University of London

Rationale

Singapore is a long-established market for UK transnational education (TNE), but when the University of London (UoL) began its relationship with the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) in 1986 this was the only initiative of its kind. SIM, which started as a not-for-profit membership institution in 1964, was looking to further build its role as a leading private-sector alternative for Singaporean school-leavers and lifelong learners alike. With this, SIM sought to provide the opportunity to study for prestigious international degrees while in Singapore; and the University of London was seeking a credible partner to widen access within Singapore and the region to its range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

How the relationship works in practice

Students enrol at both UoL and SIM. UoL provides access to a content-rich virtual learning environment (VLE) that delivers not only the UoL curriculum but also a range of supplementary learning materials, wellbeing resources, careers and employability content, and opportunities for peer interactions. SIM provides tuition in face-to-face classes, in a large modern campus supporting an optimal student experience. Exams are set by UoL and sat locally in a third-party facility operating to UoL standards. Successful graduates gain a University of London degree.

In terms of scale, provision has grown from 40 students in 1986 to over 5,000 today; and from one undergraduate programme to some 40 programmes, both undergraduate and postgraduate. In all, there have been nearly 40,000 UoL graduates since the start of the partnership.

To mark 30 years of engagement in 2016, UoL and SIM signed an MOU that led to the establishment of a joint Regional Centre, to help develop provision not only in Singapore but across the ASEAN region.

Drivers of success

- Shared philosophy and values; and consistent trust and openness between the institutions.
- Being responsive to the demands and needs of the local economy; in doing so, it is noteworthy that SIM has grown in step with Singapore's rapid development.
- Rigorous academic quality, and continued relevance and currency of the programmes.
- Strong and comprehensive institutional quality assurance framework and procedures are in place for both the awarding body and local institution.
- SIM's sustained commitment to delivering high standards in respect of its teaching, and also student support and administration. UoL graduates at SIM are regular 'toppers' – students that score the best marks worldwide in an exam; and significant numbers of first-class degrees that currently represent some 15% of our graduating cohorts.

- Joint commitment to continuously improving the student experience. Effective mechanisms are in place to seek, consider and act on student feedback.
- Closer ties and continuously improved communication, underpinned by regular visits and online engagement.
- SIM has always ensured that resources are optimally deployed for sustainable growth and development, in particular investment in continual improvements to quality in its academic provision, services and infrastructure.

Key perspectives:

For SIM

- Reputation-building through nearly four decades of providing quality British higher education to students in Singapore.
- Bridging courses have been set up to strengthen the mathematical and economics foundation of diploma holders, enhancing access to the programmes and improving student outcomes.
- SIM diplomas were created to meet the manpower needs of the nation as well as to articulate into UoL degree programmes.
- Extension of buildings and facilities for the students.
- Teaching and learning support for SIM faculty from UoL federation members including LSE, UCL and Goldsmiths.
- Cohorts of students attend the LSE Summer School and many go on to study masters degrees at UoL federation members including the LSE, UCL, SOAS and others. Since 2016, UoL supported by SIM has invested in talent by providing full-fee masters scholarships for the most high-performing students.
- An annual UoL-SIM Public Lecture is staged at SIM, fielding world-renowned scholars from the UoL Federation.

For Singapore

- Diverse learning opportunities and alternative upgrading pathways for many individuals to fulfil their aspirations.
- Preparing students to be informed and active contributors in societal development.
- Capacity building – help to broaden the range and quality of courses to students.
- Building Singapore’s role as a regional education hub, with students at SIM recruited from 19 countries.
- Meeting national and regional skills needs: the latest graduate outcomes research shows that 98% of UoL graduates at SIM are economically active.

Conclusion

SIM remains UoL’s single largest Recognised Teaching Centre globally by a considerable margin, and the will on both sides to invest in the relationship has been sustained over 37 years. SIM describes it as “a satisfying and rewarding partnership, which is growing stronger.”

Navigating Transnational Education Partnership Operations

Coventry University

Navigating international partnerships, such as those between UK and Hong Kong (HK) institutions, demands a nuanced approach. Understanding cultural differences and maintaining clear communication is crucial. While embracing Western influences, HK retains distinct customs and operational norms. Overcoming challenges like time differences and local regulations, including the requirements of the regulatory body Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAVQ), necessitates collaborative efforts and strategic guidance.

Coventry University's partnership with Vocational Training Council's (VTC) School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE) and School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) in Hong Kong is characterised by a commitment to excellence in transnational education (TNE). The university has developed a strong understanding of accreditation requirements in a highly regulated market, ensuring that programme delivery at partner institutions align seamlessly with its own curriculum.

Both partners offer final year 'top-up' courses equivalent to Coventry's level 6 curriculum, recognised by HKCAVQ at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework Level 5. These franchise top-up programmes are designed for Higher Diploma students to achieve a UK degree qualification, with local accreditation as an assurance of the programme's commitment to high quality. When evaluating internal quality assurance processes, consideration is given to our partners and how these requirements impact the delivery of the program at our partner institutions. Once the internal quality assurance evaluation is complete, our partners are notified of any changes to the curriculum and given substantial notice to make the necessary changes.

Coventry University actively engages with SHAPE and SCOPE in developing and shaping the programme in terms of planning out timeframes, roadmaps and operational calendars to prepare for expected activities over the academic year. This proactive approach fosters transparent communication and well-defined expectations, enabling collaborative resolution of potential operational challenges. Regular and transparent dialogue cultivates trust and openness, allowing us to address foreseeable issues effectively and adapt to changes. This approach further strengthens the collaborative partnership.

We're also actively engaging with our vocational education provider, SHAPE, through flying faculty, tailoring our support to ensure we meet the same standards as in the UK programme. Notably, this practice fosters a collaborative approach and provides the institution and students with a stronger connection to the UK campus and academics. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we demonstrated our commitment to academic engagement by utilising technology and adhered to the requirements of the local government to deliver online teaching for an interim period.

Operating and Managing Transnational Education

Developing the working documents for each intake is crucial for SCOPE and SHAPE. We value the importance of quality training through innovative tools and e-resources and ensure compliance and alignment with our regulations. We exchange best practices for staff development, which includes professional development activities, providing webinars to keep partners up to date, and taking a collaborative approach to mitigate risks and quality concerns in keeping in line with local ministry requirements.

In addition to upholding the teaching standards of the programs, both SHAPE and SCOPE actively engage in end-of-programme feedback questionnaires and employment surveys to assess the programmes' relevance for students as they pursue careers in their respective fields. These surveys allow graduates an opportunity to offer feedback on potential course improvements and their alignment with the industry they are preparing to enter. This critical data provides us with valuable market data and enables us to track the ongoing workforce needs in these fields, offering insight into the required skills development. In complement with our regional policy advisors' expertise and local industry knowledge, this activity is used extensively in the development of new courses and benefits the entire development cycle, from conception to delivery to quality review.

Ensuring education institutions operate efficiently and adhere to quality assurance is complex and challenging. Transnational education campuses add further complexity due to the necessity to adhere to two very different sets of regulations, made more challenging by the remote nature of the partnerships. Through a highly collaborative approach, with a deep level of trust and compliance, Coventry University is able to achieve consistent quality standards aligned to local requirements, ensuring that the educational experience in the partner campus mirrors that of the UK campus. Our partnerships with SHAPE and SCOPE in Hong Kong reflect our holistic and dynamic approach to transnational education, prioritising quality, collaboration and adaptability. This approach not only ensures successful outcomes for our students but also the long-term viability of these strategic partnerships.

03

Growing and Expanding Transnational Education

- Growing Together - The Lancaster Sunway Story
- Growing and Expanding Transnational Education Programme - A Case Study from XJTLU
- Reflections on the evolution of UK branch campuses in Malaysia
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Growing Together: The Lancaster - Sunway Story

Lancaster University

Building a successful global partnership is not an easy or a quick project. Key ingredients include a joint vision, clear purpose, shared values and a genuine, enduring commitment to collaboration on an equal footing. These are the components that underpin the successful transnational partnership developed between the UK's Lancaster University and Sunway University in Malaysia.

Established in 2006, the partnership between Lancaster University and Sunway was built on a vision of providing the highest quality international education built on a foundation of excellent teaching and learning, set within an innovative urban environment, Sunway City, Kuala Lumpur, to enable a vibrant and sustainable student experience. Since the initial cohort of 21 students, the partnership now has more than 6,700 students enrolled, and figures from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) confirm its status as the largest UK-Malaysia transnational education partnership.

To reach this successful position has required a consistent focus on the educational quality of our students and the outcomes and opportunities they can access both during and after their studies. Bringing our academics from both Lancaster and Sunway in Partnership Management Group has ensured quality is monitored, challenges are resolved and innovation is nurtured. Here we explore new portfolio ideas, alternative approaches to assessment and moderation, and fresh pedagogical ideas. We keep connected strategically through our Strategic Partnership Forum, where we can both monitor progress and extend our ambition into new areas as we continue to develop, grow and mature organisationally.

This partnership maturity allowed us to respond positively when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, presenting significant obstacles to a geographically distant partnership. What we found was our strategic alignment and clear structures and working practices developed since 2006 were robust and amenable to this challenge. With travel completely curtailed, we adapted to deliver teaching wholly online and improvised solutions so that engagement activities could take place remotely and still offer worthwhile experiences and connections to students. Having our own senior Academic Dean seconded to work at Sunway also helped ensure that the partnership continued to function in a collaborative and responsive mode.

We also learned a great deal from the pandemic about the potential of digital education. While physical mobility between the UK and Malaysia remains strongly encouraged, undergraduate students can also take part in our online Global Research Conference, an online event bringing together undergraduate students from Lancaster's global partners at Sunway as well as in China, Ghana and Germany to showcase and celebrate research they have conducted – whether as part of a dissertation, internship, placement, or coursework. Designed exclusively for final-year students working in any discipline, the conference provides a valuable

Growing and Expanding Transnational Education

opportunity to present research to an international audience of peers and academics, leading to improved learning outcomes. We have recently launched a sister Sustainability conference, which brings together students from across our partnership network. Last year more than 230 students took part in either a physical or digital mobility programme.

We are now maturing our research collaboration to include joint academic appointments, a mutually funded *Future Cities Research Institute*, co-organised conferences and joint publications. To further enable shared research, Lancaster University has recently established a Global Advancement Fund, providing significant investment to further enhance strategic partnerships and deepen collaborations. Benefits for the Sunway-Lancaster partnership include the launch of two new international projects - the Art Beats digital media festival in collaboration with Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in Indonesia, and the Global Classroom Media project bringing international students together as part of a jointly-delivered, credit-bearing Media Studies module with participation again from across the Lancaster partner-campus network - Sunway as well as in China, Ghana and Germany.

While we have met many challenges along the way, our commitment to listening, learning and collaborating equally, has set the tone for a partnership that has exceeded initial expectations and continues to offer exciting new possibilities and the potential for more growth in terms of student numbers, mobility, research and engagement.

Growing and Expanding Transnational Education Programmes

Professor Stuart Perrin | Chief Officer for Ecology, Xi'an Jiaotong - Liverpool University

This case study focuses on Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), the largest TNE institution in China. The university was established in 2006 following an agreement between the two founding partners (Xi'an Jiaotong University in China, and the University of Liverpool), made possible by China's 2003 Regulation on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools, which allowed for Chinese-foreign cooperation in the administration and organization of a variety of Schools, including full joint venture universities.

The main motivations for the development of XJTLU were the opportunities granted under three strategic goals of the Ministry of Education's National Plan (2010) for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development - achieving educational modernisation, forming a learning society, and transforming China into a country with competitive human resources. These three national goals provided the university, in partnership with the University of Liverpool, a framework to work with in formulating a series of 5-year plans that outline the growth of student numbers, both locally and internationally; set out the development of an attractive suite of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes; and start to develop PhD programmes that meet the priorities of both institution as well as those of the country and region

The UK Quality Assurance Agency, in a review of UK TNE within China (2013) noted that XJTLU followed processes typical of the UK, and commended the English language support that was offered to all students. Whilst acknowledging the quality of provision, it did also comment on the need to continue to ensure that quality assurance processes were embedded in the institution's practices.

The Covid-19 pandemic raised significant challenges and opportunities for the university, affecting staff, students and university-wide systems as travel restrictions, lockdowns and health risks disrupted operations and normal modes of delivery.

To overcome the risks and take on the challenges, XJTLU seized the opportunities that the pandemic presented to adopt a flexible, resilient and collaborative approach that would be responsive to the changing needs and preferences of learners, partners and regulators in our particular context. Two examples of the university's key strategies during this time are outlined below:

- **Leveraging digital technologies and platforms to enhance the accessibility, quality and relevance of TNE programmes, while ensuring that they are aligned with local academic standards, cultural norms and expectations of learners.** Within the university, it was clear that existing digital course offerings and online platforms did not do enough to meet the needs of students. XJTLU therefore developed the Learning Mall, to act as an innovation and entrepreneurial research and development hub which would aim to

integrate both offline resources (e.g., learning and teaching activities occurring face-to-face in a physical space) with the online resources developed by the University, and external stakeholders. This is now a technology platform at the very core of the university's education ecosystem, providing hybrid TNE opportunities that are accessible to staff and students at both the University of Liverpool and XJTLU, as well as to other external clients.

- **Strengthening partnerships and networks with local businesses, governments and other stakeholders to co-create and co-deliver TNE programmes that are responsive to local labour market needs, skills gaps and development priorities.** The university has developed a new education philosophy - Syntegrative Education - aimed at developing students with international perspectives and attainments, discipline-specific knowledge, management skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset. The academic portfolio has been diversified to include industry-themed schools which offer degree programmes co-developed with industry partners, based on artificial intelligence and disruptive technologies.

Both of these initiatives, as well as others, offer immense opportunity to the University of Liverpool. They provide students within the UK the potential to study in degree programmes and environments that they would not otherwise experience at home.

The developments at XJTLU have prompted staff at the University of Liverpool to rethink how course offerings at their university could change, with the UK institution seeking guidance from the "branch" on how to develop more innovative entrepreneurial programmes. The hybrid nature of the Learning Mall means that UK students can access those resources as easily as those based in China.

Whilst there have been risks and challenges to the new initiatives, their development (and success) was made possible because of the support and branding/reputation of the UK institution. At the same time, they have also highlighted the changing relationship between the home and branch universities as the branch develops its own localized identity, attains a critical mass, and becomes recognizable in its own right.

Reflections on the evolution of UK branch campuses in Malaysia

Dr Vicky Lewis | Vicky Lewis Consulting

Over the last decade, the UK's five international campuses have become well embedded within the Malaysian higher education ecosystem. Relationships have strengthened and institutional positioning has evolved to respond to Malaysian national priorities.

The most mature of the UK's campuses is University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM). Its first intake was in 2000 and its current campus opened in 2005. It is also the largest UK campus in Malaysia, with nearly 5,300 enrolments in 2021/22.

Between 2010 and 2015, Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed), University of Southampton Malaysia (UoSM), Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) and University of Reading Malaysia (UoRM) all opened their doors.

UNM and HWUM (the second largest campus) are both based in Klang Valley, the urban conurbation around Kuala Lumpur. The other three, smaller campuses are located in the southern state of Johor, which is linked to Singapore by causeway.

A study of UK campuses in Malaysia undertaken in 2015¹ found that key stakeholders at both the home campus and the Malaysian campus tended to use metaphors of family relationships and space travel to describe the relationship between them. They spoke of parent-child relationships, headstrong teenagers, motherships and satellites.

At the outset, some institutions worked hard/took great pains to position their Malaysian campus as one among a global network of campuses. With others, there was a sense of subsidiarity. Although there was much talk of making a positive contribution to the host country, the home campus tended to be a dominant point of reference in those early days. Over the years, all the campuses have matured, though they have done so in different ways.

This has coincided with the roll-out of Malaysia's Education Blueprint (2015-2025), a government roadmap to transform the sector.

UK campuses in Malaysia are at the forefront of contributing to the blueprint's key national priorities for higher education, particularly in boosting graduate employability, through skills like digital literacy and English proficiency; encouraging postgraduate and lifelong learning (aligned with employer needs); attracting students from the ASEAN region and beyond in fulfilling Malaysia's potential as an international education hub; and establishing international partnerships for research excellence. These are all part of the broader government ambition for Malaysia to transition to a high-income economy, one with a vibrant services sector and a strong reputation for high digital connectivity.

1. Lewis, V. (2018). Collaborating Across Organisational Cultures: Lessons from a Study of International Branch Campuses in Exporting Transnational Education (eds. Tsiligiris, V. and Lawton, W.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Elsewhere, a 2023 British Council report² on **preparing students for the jobs of the future in East Asia** identifies five industry sectors where demand in Malaysia for high-skilled workers is expected to grow the fastest. This and **other reports**³ highlight the need to enhance industry involvement in higher education programmes to address the graduate skills gap as identified by employers. The following gives just a few examples of some of the positive partnerships formed by UK campuses in Malaysia in support of these priorities:

- The University of Nottingham Malaysia recently renewed and expanded a Memorandum of Understanding with The National Tech Association of Malaysia to further develop industry-academia collaboration as part of efforts to enhance Malaysia's technology ecosystem. This is a broad partnership, encompassing curriculum design, talent programmes, innovation and knowledge exchange. It directly supports Malaysia's rising digital economy.
- In 2019, a multi-varsity team of researchers, led by an academic from the University of Southampton Malaysia and including colleagues from University of Malaya and Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, secured a prestigious Global Challenge innovation award from The Institution of Engineering and Technology. In response to the widespread dumping of plastic waste by other countries in Malaysia, they developed a dissolvable food block to replace single-use plastic.
- Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia has, from the outset, worked closely with the Royal College of Physicians with the shared aim of improving access to medical education in Iskandar Malaysia and the wider region. In October 2023, NUMed's biomedical science team's community outreach project to promote microbial awareness among school children won a grant from the Malaysian Society of Microbiology.
- In October 2023, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between University of Reading Malaysia and the Inns of Court Malaysia (ICM). This marked the launch of the annual Reading-ICM Distinguished Law Talk Series, in which a high-profile panel discussion on 'Navigating ESG (environmental, social, and governance) in the Legal Realm', moderated by the Judge of the High Court of Malaya, was held.
- The Provost and CEO of Heriot-Watt University Malaysia is currently Chair of the Vice-Chancellors' Council for Private Universities. The Council is a collegial platform, think tank and action group of the leaders of private universities in Malaysia, both homegrown and international, and is committed to making a positive difference in the world through education. In June 2023, HWUM hosted a roundtable of Ministry representatives and other senior stakeholders on the topic of international students. Practical recommendations were developed for both policymakers and institutions to enhance Malaysia's brand at the international stage.

These examples show how UK branch campuses have grown in their positioning – by putting their roots down in their chosen localities and building productive, mutually beneficial relationships, they have become more fully integrated into the Malaysian higher education system and are increasingly able to make a powerful contribution towards national priorities and policy-making.

2. East Asia Education Insights (2023). Preparing students for the jobs of the future in East Asia. British Council.

3. See: Lim, M. A. et al. (2022). Graduate Employability in ASEAN - The Contribution of Student Mobility. SHARE Project.

Transnational Education and Education Hubs in the Asian context, and beyond

Dr. Fabrizio Trifiró | ECCTIS

Background

Transnational Education (TNE) has emerged over the past 20 years or so as a critical aspect of higher education internationalisation, demonstrating its potential to help meet skills and training needs in countries where demand might outstrip supply, as well as widening access to quality international education to students who might not be able or willing to travel internationally.

In this period, the international education community has seen a significant growth in TNE across the board, in terms of number and types of education providers offering TNE, models of TNE operations and delivery, number of students studying on TNE programmes, and number of countries involved in TNE provision either as a receiving or sending country. Growth in TNE is now an explicit target for an increasing number of international education providers and ministries of education.

In connection with this growth, dedicated 'education hubs' have emerged, and are continuing to emerge, in different regions of the world, aimed at attracting the services of quality foreign education providers and helping to meet the growing demand for quality international education 'closer to home'. Education hubs can indeed play an increasingly strategic role going forward in an international context where the trend toward the regionalisation or 'de-globalisation' of international student mobility is becoming a possibility.

South-East and East Asia have traditionally been the main recipients of TNE. Although there is no central international repository of data for TNE, if we look at the UK, arguably the largest exporter of TNE, latest data made available by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) shows that about 35% of total UK TNE is in this region. In fact, the vast majority of this TNE (about 92%) is hosted in just four locations China, Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong SAR (which represent the first, second, fourth and seventh largest host locations for UK TNE respectively), with Vietnam recording one of the largest growths in TNE over the period 2020-22 (40%) just after India (43%).

Dedicated education hubs have played, and we can expect them to continue to play, an important role in this region with new developments taking place. The two most established education hubs in the region are EduCity Iskandar in Malaysia and Incheon Global Campus in South Korea. Recently we have seen also the development of a new dedicated hub in China, with the establishment of the Hainan International Education Innovation Pilot Zone.

All these hubs, with their different models of operating, have been involved over the past couple of years in conversations about forming an international association of education hubs aimed at sharing experiences, challenges and solutions for growth and exploring possible areas of cooperation. In the following, I will outline some of the key features of these hubs, and some of the initiatives under discussion which

could be pursued by the international association of education hubs.

EduCity Iskandar, Malaysia

Conceived as a catalytic development driven by Iskandar Investment Berhad (IIB)¹, EduCity Iskandar is the first fully integrated International Education Hub in Asia. Established in 2011, it offers a host of shared services that include student facilities, serviced accommodation complexes, recreation and sports facilities as well as social and co-working spaces. Set in 305 acres of area within Iskandar Puteri, Johor, Malaysia, it is intended to act as a feeder of talents to support Iskandar Malaysia's various economic activities through the development of an international centre of excellence capable of attracting high quality international education institutions.

EduCity currently is home to more than 4,000 students from Malaysia and neighbouring countries and it hosts four international higher education institutions - Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia and University of Reading Malaysia (UK), Netherlands Maritime University College (Netherlands), and Kolej MDIS Malaysia (Singapore) as well as the local Raffles University. It also hosts three international schools and a training centre, and it has recently set up two education institutions of its own, EduCity Academy and EduCity International College. The latter is set to offer pathway routes to international higher education qualifications.

Incheon Global Campus, South Korea

Incheon Global Campus (IGC) is a national project by the Korean government and Incheon Metropolitan City with the aim of bringing innovation to the education system of Korea and nurturing the next generation of global leaders. It opened in 2012 in a 73-acre area in Songdo International city, with the plan of hosting 10 international universities and about 10,000 students within 20 years of operation. IGC currently hosts five international universities - Stony Brook University (USA), the Fashion Institute of Technology (USA), George Mason University Korea (USA), Ghent University Global Campus (Belgium), The University of Utah (USA), and one international research centre, Stanford Research Center (USA). It provides a shared network of facilities and human resources to its hosted institutions, facilitating cultural exchange through a wide range of community spaces, and interaction with home campuses around the world. All IGC students are expected to spend one year at the home campus to complete their degrees.

Hainan International Education Innovation Pilot Zone, China

The Hainan Lingshui Li'an International Education Innovation Pilot Zone is an education hub recently established on the Li'an Peninsula in Lingshui Li Autonomous County in the southeast of Hainan Island, China. Currently extending over 206 acres, with a total planned area of 1,436 acres, its main purpose is to create a platform for cooperation between Chinese and foreign universities, provide innovative international educational services, and attract foreign universities to manage local educational institutions. Significantly, it is the only location in mainland China where foreign universities are not required to partner with local institutions but can set up fully owned operations.

As of October 2023, China's Ministry of Education had approved eight TNE partnerships in the zone, with overseas or non-mainland partners including the University of Alberta (Canada); the City University of Macau; Abertay University (UK); Coventry University (UK); Middlesex University (UK); Queen Mary University of London (UK); the University of Glasgow (UK); and Michigan State University (USA). Media reports have also discussed cooperation agreements with several other overseas HEIs including the Fachhochschule Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences (Germany), the Stockholm School of Economics (Sweden), the Ecole Hoteliere de

1. Iskandar Investment Berhad (IIB) is a catalyst of change and a key player in Iskandar Malaysia's transformation into a regional metropolis of international standing, focusing on the development of Iskandar Puteri in the education, creative, tourism and leisure sectors as well as the health and wellness sector.

Lausanne (Switzerland), and Rutgers University and Rice University (USA).

The International Association of Education Hubs

These education hubs, with the addition of Uniciti Education Hub in Mauritius, have come together over the past two years to consider the development of a platform through which they would be able to share their experiences and lessons learned, explore shared solutions to common challenges, and consider ways in which they can support each other's growth. Initiatives considered include facilitating partnerships between international providers operating in the hubs; fostering inter-hub mobility of students, academics, and education provision; supporting innovative research and engagement with local industry; and organising joint events and activities.

This is an interesting development that has significant potential to strengthen the role of international education hubs as providers of quality TNE, and catalyse the internationalisation of local and regional education systems. This platform could also be used to share insights and advice to countries that are considering developing their own educational hubs. Vietnam is one such country which is seriously considering developing a dedicated hub to support the rising demand for TNE in the country, and that has expressed interest to learn from the experience of other countries. An international association could act as a centre for comparative research into the different approaches to establishing and operating education hubs as well as catalyse innovation in TNE delivery and internationalisation.

Growing and Expanding Transnational Education Programmes _An Institutional -Wide Approach

David Pilsbury

It is not difficult for a university to begin its TNE journey; every University has TNE enthusiasts who are driven by the desire to widen participation on a global basis, enhance student experience through co-creation, build out a wider collaborative foundation from research links and a multitude of other reasons.

The challenge is to develop TNE as part of a sophisticated and strategic global engagement strategy, where the rationale and benefits are understood and embraced by more than just the enthusiasts and early adopters - to move it from being a marginal activity to become a central pillar that can scale and be sustained over time to deliver the academic, operational and financial benefits that can be accrued.

Strategic Clarity

It is essential that the strategic purposes of TNE are clear and well understood and that there is a well-articulated plan that shows how the people, processes and necessary structures fit together into the wider international plans of the University. This may sound too simple to require stating, but evidence shows that this is often not done; clearly articulating the who, why, what and how across not just the senior leadership team but across the University – as TNE, whilst done – “*over there*” – impacts almost every dimension of a University “*over here*”.

The Right People and Processes

The fact that the development and delivery of TNE is a much more diffuse affair than overseas recruitment means that those serious about it have to create the architecture to properly manage and monitor it. Many institutions are now copying the model I developed at Coventry of a central Academic Partnerships Unit (APU) that takes responsibility for ensuring that the many professional services actors across the university from Registry to the Library are engaged and supported in delivery by a robust platform that supports sustainable and scalable activity. These staff work in partnership with TNE champions in faculties for whom TNE is a clear area of responsibility and is well described in their job description.

In Coventry, we had a cadre of Associate Deans (International) whose primary focus was enabling TNE and Internationalisation at the home country, recognising the intimate links between these two activities, rather than with overseas recruitment. These individuals were able to articulate centrally – when the APU and academic enthusiasts met regularly in Collaborative Partnership Delivery (CPD) – the case for a particular partnership. They also engaged and enthused colleagues in the academe and engaged them in a structured and coherent process of prioritisation, pursuit and purposeful development of an informed business case and, if agreed, implementation of an approved business plan.

Crucial in this process is that from the very beginning, an experienced and expert senior member of the University would meet with the proposed partners – often

tough decisions needed to be made and those were best done at the beginning. The continuation of this clear-eyed approach allows for a process by which risks can be coherent and consistently established with viable real-world exit strategies if things don't go as planned.

Value Proposition and Core Values

Whilst the right pan and people are essential, the proposition also has to be right. A strategic approach to developing TNE needs to prioritise the following:

- Grow new enrolments with existing partners through a market intelligence-led process
- Prioritise specific country markets with good potential for partnerships;
- Enhance the offer in delivery modes to include distance learning and mixed-mode options
- Develop a deeper understanding of the regulatory and legal environment for operating in the prioritised countries;
- Increase awareness of the overseas domestic student market, the role of TNE within this market and the operations of potential partner institutions;
- Understand the local market: student affordability, acceptable fee levels, potential revenues and market trends;
- Build synergies with other activities in the country, including transfer/articulation programmes, research and CPD etc;
- Support brand building in target countries more widely

This may sound like an extensive, and expensive, list of activities for something that has historically brought small, marginal, returns. The key is to prosecute these not as short term, isolated, activities but as part of a wider, richer, coherent initiative to truly understand the opportunity for engagement across a multiplicity of activities in key territories. There is a need to understand that engagements are sustained overtime – because of the importance of academic relationships which are at the heart of a TNE partnership, this is not an activity that can be simply turned on and off like a tap.

Notwithstanding the point above, there is relatively little overlap for most universities in the countries from where they recruit, with whom they do research and where they do TNE – other than China – overlaps there are and synergies are there to be crystallised. For example, Coventry has pretty much exited Malaysia as a recruitment market due to its low ranking, however, as the ranking slowly improved the intelligence gained from TNE activities allowed us to build a substantial recruitment pipeline. Similarly, large scale recruitment from SSA gave real insight into where we were able to build substantial TNE engagement in the region. In China, we were allowed to generate significant synergies across recruitment, research, TNE, as well as reach out to industry with commensurately significant academic, operational and financial returns through building a coherent platform over almost 15 years with the excellent support of the British Council.

Apart from China, the country with really exciting potential was Indonesia which was the first market we approached without any significant historic activity on which to build. Here were sought out Indonesian expertise across the University, established a task and finish group dedicated to effective market entry and implemented a plan for coherent development of an integrated market development initiative involving parallel development of recruitment, research, reach out to industry and TNE. Large scale in-country TNE was always the greater prize, but enthusiasm along the way was sustained by opening an office to provide insight and show commitment as well to engage with the diplomatic and public policy community that was active in trying to harness higher education to support the social and economic development of this dynamic young country and provide a value proposition, one that has made Coventry the largest recruiter of self-funded students. Indeed to this day, Coventry still has a close relationship with Universitas Indonesia and Ciputra Universities.

Students and stakeholders increasingly value authenticity and integrity and so it is important that the TNE that institutions undertake reflect the core values that have underpinned their success in the UK.

Further, we know that many students choose TNE because they cannot afford the time and/or money to study in the UK but there are also market constraints that need to be addressed:

1. Restricted access of specific social, cultural or ethnic groups to the country's regular HE system
2. Shortage of places in local HEIs (government and private)
3. Top-up degree award programmes e.g. for Higher diploma students
4. Private providers in the country do not have Degree Awarding Powers
5. Enhanced employability – students seek study opportunities that bring them closer to the world of work

In mapping out institutional priorities, universities need to take into account that overall, wealthier developing countries tend to have a greater interest in UK TNE - the weighted average number of UK TNE students per million student-age population is low in countries with low average per-capita incomes. If UK fees are high and universities are looking at securing significant revenue per head then that will require a focus on specific countries and particular types of institutions where this approach is viable.

There is a strong positive correlation between secondary enrolment rate and UK TNE enrolment at the higher education level, although there is still a great deal of variation between individual countries. Countries in which these rates are climbing quickly are therefore a significant opportunity – but again, institutions need to be clear what is the value added they bring.

We know that many students chose UK HE because they see it as the gold standard; the role of agencies that evidence quality on a global basis is important alongside national and global rankings, including the TEF, and universities need to take this into account when developing the value proposition. As everywhere, in TNE, brand is a crucial driver of interest – but do not assume your UK brand translates well overseas – the TNE world is remarkable in that lowly ranked UK players can have significant brand resonance through years of operation on the ground, building relationships and profile. “Big brands” cannot simply be played into a market with the expectation that enrolments will follow.

An increasingly important part of the value proposition will be multi-site and multi-mode delivery. The TNE ecosystem should be a central part of delivering outward mobility and overseas work experience for students and so there is a natural synergy here. It also links to the growth of online learning.

Key to the value proposition for students is to offer the best of UK education delivered locally in a way that reflects the indigenous context and, in its most well developed form, to take the best of the UK and local educational approach and deliver something that is uniquely relevant but globally applicable – our success at this is shown by our ability to successfully deliver programmes of this sort in a wide variety of markets.

Growing and expanding transnational education programmes within a UK-China joint education institute

Professor Daguo Li | NUIST Reading Academy, University of Reading
Vice-Dean | NUIST Reading Academy, University of Reading

Introduction

The University of Reading (UoR) jointly established the NUIST Reading Academy (the Academy) with Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology (NUIST) in 2015. Initially six undergraduate (UG) programmes were approved by China's Ministry of Education (MoE) with a quota of 300 students each year. Building on the earlier successes of the Academy, two more UG programmes were added in 2020, with an increased annual UG quota of 380. As a further development, two postgraduate (PG) programmes have recently been introduced to the Academy, raising the level of provision and making it both a UG and PG Academy. Currently the Academy has an annual quota of 460, with a total quota of 1680 students across the four years for the UG and two years for the PG programmes.

A number of schools or colleges from the two universities are involved with the Academy, making it one of largest and most diverse UK-China joint education institutes (JEIs) in China. Based on data of the 1,072 graduates of the Academy since its establishment, they perform strongly against the same academic standards as UK-based students.

The application process for expansion

The decision to expand the provision of TNE programmes required both an institutional internal approval process and an MoE application and approval process. At the UoR, it involved internal approval of the expanded programme by the University Programme Board before an application could be submitted to the MoE through the Chinese partner. Existing resources and relevant expertise at both institutions were considered, as well as how the programme would fit in the overall profile and priority of the joint Academy, as discussed and agreed by the two partners.

Risks and challenges to expansion

Whilst such a development expanded the portfolio of programmes in the Academy, it was also accompanied by risks and challenges, with one of the main ones being financial risk. Our current financial model is heavily reliant on student transfers to the UoR for part of their programme, whether it is a UG or PG programme. The MoE rule that programmes must offer a 4+0 option for the UG course or 2+0 for postgraduates (meaning students do not have to spend time in the UK to be awarded the UK degree) means that we do not have control over the transfer rate. Things were further complicated by the global pandemic which led to difficulties in international travel and raised health and safety concerns amongst students and parents. The negative impact on articulating to the UK has lingered and is likely to continue to be felt in the foreseeable future. It is also worth pointing out two other factors that add to financial challenges - one being the relative small quota for each programme, and the other the middling level of fees in the Province where the Academy is located, as compared with that of other UK-China JEIs elsewhere in

China. An additional risk pertains to quality assurance (QA), particularly with the expansion to PG programmes, as our original design was for all students to spend a period of time in the UK with a number of taught modules delivered by the UoR.

Institutional infrastructure and support systems to support such expansion

Such expansion necessarily increased the complexity of the operation, but it also created opportunities for strengthening the institutional infrastructure and support systems accordingly to keep pace. For example, we have created three new key roles in recent years: The Academic Director of Teaching and Learning (ADTL), with specific responsibility for academic quality and student experience; the Student Progression Manager, to promote student transfer to the UoR; and the Programme Manager, to manage the operational processes and strengthen the relationship between the Academy team and the University's Student Support Centres. These roles help to create synergy and to streamline the support system for the Academy, particularly around assessment processes and systems. These measures have already shown positive results.

Opportunities and mobility to UK

The UoR welcomes and encourages student mobility to the UK, both for the Academy students, as part of the design, and for students from the wider NUIST. Short student mobility programmes are already beginning to return to the UoR campus post pandemic. We hope that, with the support of our partner university NUIST, and the infrastructure we have put in place to strengthen communication and exposure to the UoR, a stronger sense of belonging to a global university will be developed, which will help to push mobility to the UK.

Case Study of Edinburgh Napier University and Guangxi University of Science and Technology

Edinburgh Napier University

Introduction

Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) has three campuses across Edinburgh hosting five schools and around 15,550 students on campus.

The University enjoys a long history of engagement with China and was one of the first UK universities to have opened an office in China in 1999. The University currently has four joint education programmes that are fully approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education as well as over twenty articulation and study abroad partners in China.

ENU-GXUST Joint Education Programme

In 2015, Edinburgh Napier University and Guangxi University of Science and Technology (GXUST) received approval from the Ministry of Education (MoE) to launch a Joint Education Programme (JEP), dual awards in BEng (Hons) Mechanical Engineering delivered entirely in China with inputs from both institutions. This programme was the first mechanical engineering JEP in Southwest China, which has now been successfully running for seven years.

Two-way mobility of students and academics

Both universities are committed to expanding the partnership beyond the delivery of teaching, such as staff training, visiting scholars and joint research activities. A successful strand of activity has been student mobility; in 2017 and 2018, over 60 Mechanical Engineering students studying in Edinburgh participated in the exchange programme to Liuzhou, met with their counterparts at GXUST, visited local industry and experienced Chinese culture and hospitality.

Additional visits have been undertaken through winter schools in 2019 and 2020, enabling students in China to visit Edinburgh and benefit from an enhanced international experience. Besides, ENU welcomed several visiting scholars from GXUST each year to conduct academic research in Edinburgh, which provided a great opportunity for staff from GXUST to advance their career and a platform for research collaborations between the two universities. Additionally, 109 academic staff from GXUST participated in the ENU postgraduate module of Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (International) through continuing professional development and lifelong learning.

Research collaborations

The partnership has also facilitated research collaborations through joint research activities and bids for funding. For instance, ENU and GXUST won the British Council Research Education Development call for funding '*Adapting to Industry 4.0 Oriented International Education and Research Collaboration*' in 2020, and won further British Council funding to organise workshops on '*Integration and re-engineering of Architectural Heritage in Guangxi, Inner Mongolia minority regions in China with UK*

Modern bio-based Construction Technology in 2022. Consequently, the world's first bamboo-timber composite gridshell construction was built in Liuzhou in June 2023 through this project. Additionally, since 2020, ENU and GXUST have been operating a Joint Supervision PhD programme with 6 young academic staff at GXUST participating.

New multilateral partnerships

Another innovative project involves developing multilateral partnerships with two other universities, using the Edinburgh Napier-GXUST collaboration as its foundation. A 3-party collaborative Master's Degree programme involving Edinburgh Napier, GXUST and Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Switzerland is currently at the proposal stage

Opportunities for expansion

The partners' ambition is to launch a Joint Educational Institute (JEI) in Liuzhou to deliver an additional three programmes in Engineering and Design on top of the existing Mechanical Engineering programme. The existing partnership has brought a great number of spin-off benefits to the institution, and we anticipate that the JEI would bring additional value and success to the partnership.

Crucially, this partnership aligns with the strategic objectives of both partners and the priorities of the local environment. Guangxi is one of the priority regions for China's development. Mechanical Engineering graduates have an important role to play in supporting the development of those opportunities in a wide variety of industries. The development of this partnership, and its annex activities, are tied to the economic development of the region and GXUST's mission. The programme also contributes towards Edinburgh Napier University's key aim of internationalising our work and increasing opportunities for staff and student mobility globally.

In January 2023, the partnership between ENU and GXUST won the 2023 China-Scotland Business Awards – Education Partnership of the Year, a significant achievement and recognition of the expansion of our TNE partnership beyond teaching collaborations.

04

Progressing Beyond Teaching Collaborations

- The Joint Teaching and Learning Centre of QMUL-BUPT
- Progressive Partnerships in TNE
- Industry Collaborations in TNE

The Joint Teaching and Learning Centre A case study of progressing beyond teaching collaborations in Transnational Education

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The Transnational Education (TNE) partnership between Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT) was established in 2004, marking a groundbreaking collaboration in the field of Telecommunications Engineering. This pioneering partnership leveraged the collective strengths of both institutions, each renowned for their commitment to delivering high-quality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education.

In the dynamic landscape of STEM higher education, the QMUL-BUPT TNE initiative has continually confronted new challenges and opportunities. The need for a more formalized structure became evident to ensure the sustained operation of existing collaborations and to explore new, value-added initiatives. In response to this vision, the QMUL-BUPT Joint Teaching and Learning Centre (JTLC) was launched in 2020. The centre's primary objective was to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in teaching and learning.

The JTLC has set ambitious objectives that encompass the development of outstanding pedagogical research, the advocacy of scholarship activities, and the recognition of excellence in teaching and learning. The centre's ongoing efforts are geared toward further enhancing the quality of education and ultimately benefiting students on a global scale.

To facilitate its operations, the JTLC established a committee led by a Director and comprised of members from both QMUL and BUPT. Senior Advisors from the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, along with experts from Queen Mary Academy, have been integral in evaluating and guiding the centre's work. Funds are accessible to facilitate the start of new projects, support the ongoing development of existing initiatives and demonstrate the impact on the broader TNE programme at large.

Over the past few years, the JTLC has evolved into a dynamic platform that champions excellence in teaching and learning, particularly within the context of TNE. The annual winter workshops for all QMUL UK-China TNE programs have become a recurring event that encourages the sharing of best practices, open discussions on challenges, and exploration of collaborative opportunities with QMUL. The annual international conference held during the summer season has blossomed into the flagship event of the sector, attracting participants worldwide.

The JTLC has established a number of focused working groups and has kickstarted several funded projects. These projects are well aligned with the educational priorities of the QMUL-BUPT TNE programme and play a pivotal role in shaping and advancing the education within the programme. The outcomes are regularly published on the official JTLC website and shared through platforms like LinkedIn for wider dissemination. Moreover, members of the centre are active participants at

Progressing Beyond Teaching Collaborations

external conferences and events, including the UK-China Joint Institute Alliance (JIA) and Advance HE's annual conferences.

The JTLC's has elevated QMUL-BUPT TNE's reputation and visibility, both domestically and internationally. The pedagogical research outcomes and innovative solutions produced by the centre have the potential to be widely adopted by other TNE higher education institutions and have long-term impact on the future of TNE teaching and learning.

The events and activities organised by the JTLC are inclusive and welcome participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including industry representatives, government bodies, and professional organisations from both the UK and China. Engaging with these stakeholders has fostered constructive dialogues and meaningful discussions pertaining to the future of higher education. These discussions encompass topics such as human development, employability, the measurement of educational excellence, and the preservation of academic standards in the continuously evolving educational landscape.

The success of JTLC, which extends its horizons beyond conventional teaching collaborations in TNE, hinges on a variety of key factors. Among these, clear objectives, effective leadership and mission alignment form the foundation. It is worth emphasising that a well-structured career progression path for staff development and a sense of a community play pivotal roles in motivating staff members.

However, despite the many successes, the JTLC is also facing challenges. The journey of pedagogical research is often laborious and time-consuming, and staff members find it challenging to allocate sufficient time for teaching innovation. Balancing the demands of teaching, research, and academic commitments presents an ongoing challenge. The needs, expectations, and scientific mindset of these dedicated educators must be carefully considered and accommodated within the broader vision of the JTLC.

In conclusion, the QMUL-BUPT Joint Teaching and Learning Centre (JTLC) stands as a shining example of how transnational education partnerships can flourish with a solid foundation and a commitment to continuous improvement. The centre's impressive efforts in promoting high-quality STEM education, pedagogical research, and scholarship activities have not only enhanced the reputation of QMUL-BUPT TNE but also have the potential to shape the future of STEM higher education nationally and internationally.

Progressive Partnerships in Transnational Education - From Teaching to Research

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| Biomedical Sciences: Edinburgh Medical School,
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, The University of Edinburgh

Welburn, S.C and Ke, Y

| Zhejiang University - University of Edinburgh Institute, International Campus Zhejiang University

Introduction

In 2016 Zhejiang University (ZJU) and The University of Edinburgh (UoE) established the Zhejiang University-University of Edinburgh Institute (ZJE) for education, research, and entrepreneurship in Biomedical Sciences. ZJE brings together over 80 core research active academic staff to foster collaboration across major biomedical research themes in state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities at Zhejiang University's new International Campus in Haining, China. ZJE is UoE's largest overseas educational and research partnership, in China and globally¹.

Given both universities' commitment to research-led education, the provision of undergraduate and postgraduate TNE is the foundation for deeper engagement, through people exchange, joint research engagement and entrepreneurship. ZJE began with co-development of a new, research-led four-year 4:0 dual award BSc in Integrative Biomedical Science in 2016, a National first class UG programme in China and China's first joint undergraduate degree programme in Biomedical Sciences. In 2018, this was followed by the launch of a second BSc programme in Biomedical Informatics, intended to tap into the pool of exceptional, mathematically and computationally literate students in China and internationally. A dual award China Scholarship Council (CSC) - funded PhD programme in Biomedical Sciences was also launched in 2018.

In 2021, the partnership broke new boundaries when the Chinese Ministry of Education uniquely approved UoE-only MSc and PhD postgraduate programmes delivered at ZJE. These UoE-only PG awards offer a novel route into PG education in China for both Chinese domestic and international students wanting to study in China, particularly where award from an external partner opens new opportunities for the student. These PG programmes offer the opportunity for deeper engagement in TNE, attracting students from a large market in China and offer a direct pathway for eligible TNE UG students to directly enter PG study with UoE, in China.

Our shared vision is for transformative research-led TNE supporting students to be future leaders. At capacity, ZJE will host 600 Chinese national and international undergraduate students undertaking the UG programmes; 300 Chinese national and international Biomedical Science MSc and PhDs within the national enrolment programmes (Zhejiang MSc and Dual Award PhD programmes) and 250 postgraduate students (50 MSc and 50 PhD students/year) enrolled on the UoE-only degree programmes.

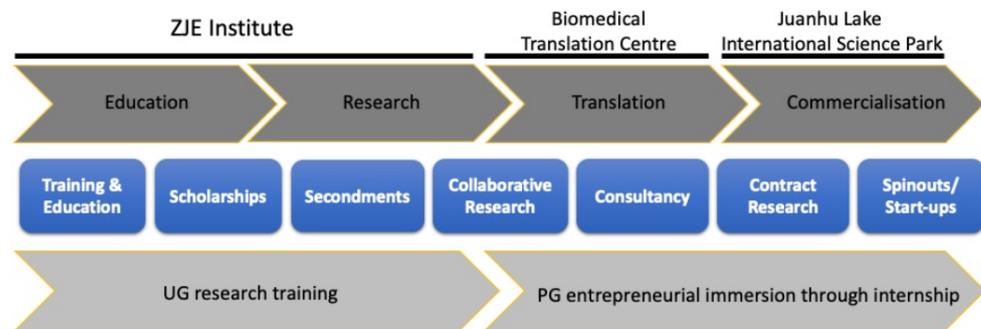
The partnership, unique for both partners, combines our complementary strengths and shared interests, integrating educational pedagogies with an innovative model for sustainable co-development and co-delivery of collaborative research-led

1. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/biomedical-sciences/news/archives/2017/1bn-chinese-biomedical-campus-opens>

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teaching at an international level. Students are taught by active researchers and the strong research base at ZJE embeds students in a research environment to experience and practice science at the bench. This unique approach to delivery of research-led education has had significant impacts on educational pedagogy at both institutions.

A high-quality, high-fee model for TNE provision, supports a high international staff-to-student ratio and a curriculum reflecting the full breadth of biomedical sciences. Staff (academic and professional support) benefit from a broad international perspective and engagement in education, research, and best practice. Programmes are delivered by way of a three-part collaboration including new-hire faculty from Edinburgh Medical School (supported by vocational PhD-teaching fellows); new-hire international faculty based at ZJE, Zhejiang University International Campus, and drawing existing staff from School of Basic Medical Science at ZJU main campus.



Research-led biomedical education to commercialisation ecosystem – a 10-year vision

The partnership facilitates a creative global research agenda between two world-leading universities. A shared responsibility for our undergraduate and postgraduate students between both universities underpins, promotes, and supports research engagement between Zhejiang University and the University of Edinburgh, manifested in joint supervision, publication, and awards. Our 10,000 m² research facility situated on an international campus in Haining provides a hub for emerging multi-disciplinary and cross-institutional research activities targeted to the major emerging societal and health needs of both UK and China, for example, diabetes and anti-microbial resistance (AMR) as highlighted in the WHO Diabetes report and O'Neill Commission reports.

The funding landscape in China for scientific discovery and innovation is rich; academics can benefit from numerous Talent schemes and apply for research funding through National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and other China and UK research agencies to support staff exchange, basic research, translational and international co-operation programmes. Hospitals in China are active in promoting research and ZJE has an ambitious partnership with the Second Affiliated Hospital of Zhejiang University bridging the gap between bench and bedside. Joint research activity has been strengthened, particularly around major shared health challenges, e.g., Diabetes; Cancer, Ageing, AMR and Emerging Infectious Diseases and new interdisciplinary translational projects are evolving, e.g., sensors for point-of-care diagnostics; novel biomaterials for surgical application.

ZJE is situated on Zhejiang International Campus in Haining in Zhejiang province, and a large 'City Deal' is enabling ZJE to bridge the education/research gap to translation and commercialisation. Co-development of a Biomedical and Health

Translation Research Centre, adjacent to ZJE, with Juanhu Lake International Science Park aims to accelerate the integrated pipeline of tertiary education, research and commercialisation, delivering novel human capacity, new technologies and solutions that feed into healthcare innovation and drug discovery that are a priority for the development plans of Haining City, Zhejiang Province and the wider Yangtze River Delta region²



In addition, the IC setting offers opportunities for interdisciplinary and translational research with other international partners, including Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Imperial College, Zhejiang International Business School. Zhejiang and Haining business parks and Scottish Development International engage in bi-lateral exchange visits supporting innovation and business development.

In conclusion, ZJE aims to have a major impact on delivery of the next generation of biomedical scientists, in China and globally. Our universities bring distinct and complementary strengths, and our partnership has created new opportunities for research, entrepreneurship, and enterprise, in association with the wider technology park, in China, reaching back into the University of Edinburgh. We wanted to create a transformational partnership to deliver teaching and research and societal impact; to improve the quality of research-led teaching and develop research activity at Zhejiang and Edinburgh Universities; and critically, to engage in activities that would be difficult to do alone. Lessons learned are that our TNE ventures must be led by scholarship (teaching and research) and underpinned by sustainable investment and a robust business plan. Building high-level engagement with research and enterprise communities in UK and China has consolidated the partnership, bringing commitment and investment from these communities for sustainability and growth.

2. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05265-z>

Industry Collaborations

The Practice and Achievement of Nanjing University of Science & Technology and Coventry University's programme

Coventry University

At Coventry University we are proud of our long-standing collaboration with Nanjing University of Science & Technology (NJUST) in P.R. China, and our jointly delivered undergraduate degree programme in Industry Design (henceforth abbreviated as NCIDP).

2023 was a year of celebration for NJUST as they marked the 70th anniversary of their founding and the 10 year partnership of the joint undergraduate degree programme with Coventry. Together, our collaboration has not only provided high-quality teaching and student experience in China but has also helped establish engagement with industry which goes well beyond our collaborative teaching.

At the heart of Coventry University is student experience. Collaborations like the one with NJUST help to support students and create better futures, providing students in China with the skills needed to go out into the world of work and be successful. Transnational education (TNE) and cooperation can broaden access to educational resources, improve quality, cultivate more international talents and promote cultural exchange and integration.

The leading reason for establishing the NCIDP was the growth of the Chinese automotive industry in the first decade of the 21st century, which created a significant demand for skilled employees in the automotive design field. China's automotive industry brings with it numerous opportunities and it is essential that a high-quality TNE programme aligns with the macro policies and industrial development trends of the countries where both partners are located.

The teaching and assessment methods for the programme have, therefore, been developed to support the industry skills needs by benchmarking the course content and assessment tasks with industry practice and live industry briefs. Students at NJUST have not only taken part in industry visits but have also been encouraged to enter national and international competitions. These events required them to pitch themselves against their international peers, reference workplace requirements and engage in industry-focused research.

In doing so, students develop self-confidence, independent learning strategies, creative and innovative skills and self-management. When NJUST students move to the UK to complete their final year of study, they bring with them these skills and experiences, and we are proud to further their education through working with industry experts and the university's state-of-the-art facilities.

The partnership assumes a triangular relationship between universities, students and enterprises. While universities are the birthplace of design innovation and the cradle of talents, enterprises can provide a platform for the transformation of education and research achievements. Examples of the type of engagements that take place through cooperation with local industries include:

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- Students' participation in professional design competitions organized by Chinese car manufacturers. These competitions provide creative input for the enterprise as well as student internship opportunities. NCIDP students have won over ten awards in competitions organized by automotive companies such as Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation (SAIC), Guangzhou Automobile Group Motor Company (GAC), First Automobile Works (FAW), as well as automotive sector media outlet Car Design News (CDN).
- Driving teaching activities through enterprise cooperation projects, which strengthen students' professional abilities while also assisting in enterprise design innovation. Some enterprises, such as car manufacturers GAC and Geely, are now official partners of the programme.
- Inviting professional designers to participate in teaching and assessments - This creates opportunities for students to communicate face-to-face with experts in the field.
- Students' participation in professional activities with companies and organisations outside the automotive sector – for example, a student's role in the design proposition of the popular Chinese movie Wandering Earth 2. This can help students to gain useful career development opportunities.

We are delighted that NJUST students have been the recipient of several awards in competitions organised by members of the Chinese automotive industry. Their continued recognition is vital in improving the status of the joint undergraduate degree programme. Since its launch, the programme has led to several official partnerships with local enterprises while opening the door to progressing beyond our teaching collaboration.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with NJUST and furthering our reach as a global education group.

05

Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences

- Ensuring a High - Quality Student and Academic Experience At A Branch Campus of a UK University
- Building the foundation for the development of a scientific skills course across borders
- Considering accessibility in transnational education
- Ensuring high quality student experience and partnership in TNE - A Case Study from University of Leeds
- Enhancing Transnational Education Experience - A Case Study from Lancaster University
- Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences - A Case Study from University Nottingham Malaysia
- Evaluating the student experience across TNE campuses globally
- Pedagogical Support for UK - China Joint Education Programme
- Programme for International Partnership
- Reflections from Teaching in a Flying Faculty Model
- Towards Equitable Student Experience

Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) – Ensuring a High-Quality Student and Academic Experience at a branch campus of a UK University

Prof Chris Baldwin

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Previously CEO and Provost NUMed (2015 – 2023)

Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) Sdn Bhd was established in 2009 and currently delivers 2 undergraduate programmes. Firstly, a 5 year Medicine (MBBS) programme fully taught in Malaysia that is unique in that it is fully accredited by both the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and the General Medical Council (UK) and, secondly, a 2+1 BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences programme. It also offers a Foundation in Science programme with students from the Foundation programme being eligible (if they meet appropriate entrance criteria) for both the MBBS and BMS programmes at NUMed and a range of undergraduate programmes, including MBBS, Dentistry and Pharmacy, in the UK. All awards are made by Newcastle University with the undergraduate programmes delivered at NUMed being managed through the appropriate School in the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), Newcastle, UK whilst the Foundation programme is managed at NUMed and reports directly to FMS Education Committee.

As a branch campus of Newcastle University, NUMed aspires to offer a student experience of the very highest quality although it must be noted at the outset that it will never be exactly the same experience as that offered on the home campus. This experience will encompass many areas of student life including academic achievement, personal growth and a sense of belonging giving students the best possible environment to reach, both academically and personally, their full potential.

There are two main areas to consider when ensuring a high quality and equitable student experience at a branch campus. The first relates to ensuring that the home University ethos and values are embedded into all aspects of University life at the branch campus and the second relates to the academic experience of our students by ensuring full academic equivalence between the programmes of study offered at both campuses.

Firstly, instillation of the home campus values is best carried out by seconding a small, but significant, number of staff from the home institution, both academic and professional services, into senior roles when first setting up the campus. These seconded staff should work full time in country, and not be flying Faculty, as this shows a dedication and buy-in to the project as a whole by these staff to both local colleagues and the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) etc. As time goes on these staff may move on to other roles or posts and in-country staff, who will now be fully immersed in both the ethos of the home University and UK Higher Education in general, may be considered equally alongside colleagues from the home University for these senior posts.

The majority of staff employed at a branch campus will be local hires and it is important that everyone 'buys' into and understands the values of the home University, which may be very different from where they have worked before, from the start. This means that staff at the branch campus will need to be coached and trained in both the learning, teaching and research cultures of the parent

Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences

organisation as well as the day-to-day processes and procedures that enable the institution to run efficiently. This can be achieved by running professional development sessions for staff at the branch campus, led by colleagues from the home campus, either virtually or in person. It is equally important that local hires, both academic and professional services, are given opportunities to travel to the home campus for training. This allows staff from the branch campus to build stronger personal relationships with colleagues in the UK, to see how systems work and thus help them understand why they have been put in place and also build confidence in local hires in that they are treated as equals with colleagues at the home campus. In addition to this, it is equally important to train colleagues in the home institution about local regulatory requirements in Malaysia from bodies such as the MQA and local professional body accreditation processes (e.g. the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC)) so that they can understand the challenges that staff at the branch campus may face when working with these agencies.

Further to this, it is critical that colleagues working at branch campuses are consulted on any changes that may affect the way that they deliver or manage the programmes of study offered or any other changes that may affect how they work. To ensure this, joint meetings across campuses must be scheduled appropriately allowing staff to attend such meetings within normal working hours where possible. This can be hard with the 7 or 8 hour time differences between Malaysia and the UK (British Summer Time and Greenwich Mean Time) and may mean a significant change in culture at the home campus but it is achievable with strong support from senior management on both campuses. As a research intensive University, it is also important to encourage and provide opportunities for branch campus staff to feel part of the home University research culture. It is therefore also important to schedule cross campus research meetings appropriately and ensure that research meetings and seminars are offered as live online (or recorded) alternatives to in-person meetings, allowing colleagues to feel included and part of 'One' University.

To enable appropriate succession planning for senior roles it is also crucial that branch campus staff are given opportunities to be members of Faculty and University committees (at the parent institution) so that they can develop a deeper understanding of how the University works, its culture and they can also be seen to be contributing effectively to the management of the University by senior colleagues at the home campus. The skills learnt in these committees, the insight into how the University works and personal connections built with senior UK staff will give colleagues both the skills and confidence to apply for more senior posts at the branch campus (and potentially home campus) as time goes by.

Secondly, to ensure academic excellence, it is essential that colleagues maintain full academic equivalence across the campuses. This can only be achieved by ensuring that there is consistency across the curriculum across both campuses. This can be accomplished by holding regular joint boards of studies and joint course development meetings which must include input from colleagues from both campuses. Further to this, examinations should be common with all colleagues being encouraged to set questions (so that staff from both campuses have ownership of the assessment), to carry out cross campus marking and moderation, and to consider all students anonymously at common exam boards (so they are treated equitably wherever they may be based). In addition, all Personal Extenuating Circumstances claims and appeals should be dealt with in the same manner to ensure fairness and consistency for all students.

Further to this all, IT infrastructure, including any learning and teaching software and library resources, must be the same across both campuses giving all students the same opportunities to succeed.

There must also be very clear student feedback and evaluation mechanisms, embedded into the programme, whereby students can comment on the content and

Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences

delivery of the programme of study, the day to day running of the programme and the infrastructure of the campus etc. This feedback may be very locally specific or more general and relate to the programme as a whole and thus appropriate mechanisms to capture and address this feedback should be in place on both campuses. It is also essential that the feedback loop is closed and that there are processes in place whereby actions taken, or not taken as the case may be, are reported back in a timely manner to all students across both campuses.

To ensure equity of experience we must also aim to give the same, or as similar as possible, support and opportunities for our students at the branch campus as we do at the home campus.

Support-wise, we must give our students the same tutoring and mentoring support across both campuses. This may sometimes be easier at a branch campus, with the smaller numbers of students and the more 'intimate' surroundings of a branch campus but it must be ensured that local staff are trained appropriately so that they give the same advice and support that students will receive at the home campus or can advise appropriately where to go to if they need further help with anything from study skills development to mental health advice. It is, therefore, essential to have well signposted processes, for both staff and students, detailing how students can access support within the University and externally if required. Most, if not all, UK Universities provide independent counselling support to their students and where possible this should be offered at the branch campus. I would also suggest that branch campuses should have mechanisms in place whereby students can be referred to a psychiatrist or psychologist for further professional help and support if required.

Finally, students should be encouraged to run sports and social events and set up a range of societies as part of a Students Union or Student Association which should be affiliated to the home University Student Union. Just as in the UK this Students Union, or Student Association, should be an independent elected body of students who will represent students at the branch campus with respect to their interests and welfare and also provide a platform for students to voice their opinions or raise their concerns with the Senior Management of the branch campus or home campus if appropriate. It is once again essential that strong links are developed with the student body at the home campus so that students at the branch campus feel a sense of being part of the wider student community.

In conclusion, there are, therefore, a number of ways of ensuring a high-quality student and academic experience at a branch campus but it needs the constant buy in, and support of, all staff and students at both campuses to ensure that it is maintained in the long-term.

Building the foundation for the development of a scientific skills course across borders.

Dr Kim Hayer, Dr Yanan Guo, Prof Zeng Tu, Dr Shameq Sayeed
| University of Leicester

Context

Our BSc Clinical Sciences (BSc Clin Sci) Joint Education Programme (JEP) between University of Leicester (UoL) and Chongqing Medical University (CQMU) includes a bespoke first year unit where scientific research, writing and methodology are introduced¹ ie *Introduction to Scientific Method, Literature and Scientific Writing 1* (ItSM1), to then be built upon in subsequent years.

Best Practice

From inception of the course, it is best practice to put oneself in the position of a teacher, employer and student, in order to develop a holistic view on what the requirements for the “skills” unit should be, both from a teaching and learning perspective. How best will students learn? *How best should we teach content?* As the content of the course would be new to all incoming students (UoL and CQMU), it was key that we actively taught students how to develop these competencies in the most supportive way.

How did we achieve this?

The students are taught through active demonstration, with the added support of step-to-step guidance in their workbooks, and all aligned with their assessment.

The students then apply the knowledge we are demonstrating in tasks and/or the lab report. Hence, it is all active rather than passive learning for the students, which means they are learning by doing and so better retaining the information² for use in later modules. As English is not the first language for CQMU students, more support and accessibility are required to facilitate their learning. Working together with CQMU teachers, the Chinese translation of certain keywords are added into the lecture slides. Bilingual translations of lab protocols and guidance to assessments are also made available to the students. This practice has been implemented as a form of scaffolding across the units delivered by UoL in CQMU.

Successes

It was integral to understand if the course could logistically run in CQMU and whether they had the teachers and equipment to carry out the labs as designed. This was achieved through regular communication and joint planning.

ItSM1 is now running for the third year, and all the content, online resources and support provisions are matched in both UoL and CQMU, ensuring an equitable learning experience across borders. It has been awarded the status of “first-class course” (selected by the CQMU Educational Commission as an innovative imported

1. Biological Science students are required to undertake lab work and develop scientific skills. Jerde, C.L. (2004). Preparing undergraduates for professional writing evidence supporting the benefits of scientific writing within the biology curriculum. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 33 (7): 33-36.

course).

The average grade has been ~>70% and students have provided positive, constructive feedback on the course.

Lessons Learned and Challenges

Students wanted the assessment to be introduced early on, and we now introduce it in Session 1 and teach all sessions in preparation for it.

What was unique about ItSM1 was that it was the first unit that offered an element of coursework. This not only was a suitable and authentic way to assess learning but also offers diversity of assessment. This led the way for more coursework to be developed in other JEP units, and this is still being explored further.

ItSM1 set the foundation for building ItSM2, both laying the foundation for final year modules. Working together, all colleagues across these units were able to achieve vertical alignment so students develop more enhanced skills as their years progress.

There are of course challenges for any JEP, and this is often around the expectations and commitments required from all teachers involved. Thus, year on year, we try to aim for co-working as much as possible. This is an ongoing process and journey.

We taught remotely for the first two years, and now we are currently on-site delivering the course, learning and transitioning all the time, all with the student experience at the heart of what we do.

During CQMU remote teaching, engagement was a challenge, however, labs were always on-site and students shared their pictures from their lab outputs in our Virtual Learning Environment. We could then discuss their results in real-time during the consolidation lab lectures.

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Considering accessibility in transnational education

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Accessibility in education has traditionally related to adjustments needed for those with learning differences or physical impairment. However, accessible education is recognised as the design and delivery of learning resources in a teaching style developed to meet the needs of all students of varying abilities and learning preferences¹.

Curriculum design and course delivery is underpinned by pedagogical theories of learning but there are challenges for the transnational dual award in clinical medicine with clinical sciences degree. The biggest challenge is copious amounts of new medical and scientific language in both Chinese and English. Although there is preparation in the English Language year for learning and making sense of English words through identifying prefix and suffix, it has been extremely difficult to prepare the students for the content and use of specific medical and scientific terminologies.

The following strategies have been implemented to reduce the risk of temporary disability in learning due to the language requirements of the course:

Resources adapted to include mandarin for key concepts. The incorporation of some mandarin on slides and in workbooks ensures correct translations and supports links between prior knowledge in mandarin and development of scientific and medical knowledge in English. Lectures have a reduced pace of speech and colloquialisms are avoided. Where content is complex, staff give summary lectures in mandarin with English text available, provide captions and transcripts with recordings, and allow students to ask questions as needed. Text on slides and in workbooks are edited to reduce unnecessary complexities in language or sentence structure and written content is replaced or supported by pictures and diagrams where appropriate. It is essential to scaffold sessions and identify whether difficulties in understanding are due to the complexity of the content or difficulties with the language, and then to provide support as indicated².

The Virtual Learning Environment is systematically arranged such that all units have the same layout with resources stored in the same folder system and documents clearly named and labelled. This reduces difficulties in accessing resources due to language barriers coupled with the burden of navigating technology when students are already facing time pressures.

Curriculum alignment is prioritised to ensure students learn key medical and scientific terms in mandarin first, to build on prior knowledge and build up a schema

1. Nilson, Linda B. (2010) *Teaching at Its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors* (3rd ed.) John Wiley and Sons.
2. van de Pol, J., Volman, M., Oort, F. et al. The effects of scaffolding in the classroom: support contingency and student independent working time in relation to student achievement, task effort and appreciation of support. *Instr Sci* 43, 615–641 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11251-015-9351-z>

of learning before switching to English. The progress, confidence and performance of students in group works and on assessment in units that built on prior knowledge was better than when new scientific terms and medical language were introduced in English first. This continues as an ongoing project to ensure learners can identify patterns and integrate information into existing mental frameworks for retention and retrieval on assessment³.

Introduction of scientific language in the first year has been co-developed with the English Language Team to help students recognise and learn clinical sciences content in a new language. This is supported by teaching of teacher sessions, where staff from both settings collaborate to build confidence in teaching unfamiliar scientific and medical content as a foreign language with strategies to monitor ongoing understanding throughout sessions.

Group work sessions encourage the development of students as MKOs⁴, to enhance individual's learning⁵. Monitoring appropriate application and understanding of the learning material can be challenging when students are applying concepts in a foreign language. This is made more challenging when students lack confidence in sharing ideas and supporting each other in English, as well as when misconceptions arise. Tutors work closely to ensure the effectiveness of group work by introducing interactive tasks with opportunities for students to discuss and explain ideas and write out answers in English, which feeds into the development of skills necessary for assessment.

Assessments are adapted to ensure they assess knowledge acquisition and not the ability to speed read in English. Evidence suggests reading in a foreign language is normally 30% slower than in one's first language, hence clinical stems were reduced in length and detail to support understanding. Modular rather than end of year exams to support performance and identify students in need of support has proven beneficial with additional reading time added. Assessment is evolving to include additional coursework and alternative assessment styles. A formalised revision and support programme has been introduced to proactively support students with revision skills and learning strategies. This includes helping students to secure and recall knowledge in English and use the Intended Learning Outcomes to learn and revise effectively.

Ongoing review, via student feedback and semi structured interviews with staff, continue to inform the wider team of best practices in delivering content. Collaborative working supports teachers to create and provide an accessible curriculum to ensure a high-quality student and academic experience, providing the best outcomes for students studying the transnational dual award in clinical medicine with clinical sciences degree.

3. Heath, P. (2014). Insights from Piaget. Retrieved from: <http://www.education.com/reference/article/insights- piaget/>

4. More Knowledgeable Others

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6. Canning, John. "Disability and Residence Abroad". Southampton, 2004. Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Guide to Good Practice. 7 October 2008. <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/2241>

Ensuring high quality student experience and partnership in TNE

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Zhao Duo | Vice-Dean, SWJTU-Leeds Joint School, Southwest Jiaotong University

Background

The SWJTU-Leeds Joint School was established in 2014 between the Faculty of Engineering (now Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences) at the University of Leeds and Southwest Jiaotong University (SWJTU). The Joint School offers five dual UG programmes: BEng Civil Engineering with Transport, BSc Computer Science, BEng Electronic and Electrical Engineering, BEng Materials Science and Engineering, and BEng Mechanical Engineering. The rationale for developing the current portfolio was based on the strength of both universities in engineering disciplines. Both universities have over 100 years of history and are internationally recognised for their engineering research and student education.

All programmes offered in the Joint School are delivered in English and are identical in almost all aspects to those offered at the University of Leeds. All the programme learning outcomes are the same as in the equivalent programmes in Leeds and all the module Learning Outcomes are the same as in the equivalent modules in Leeds. However, students also study an initial Year 1 that focuses on study skills in English language, academic literacy, core mathematics, physics, chemistry and scientific problem-solving skills to prepare them to undertake their degree level programmes in English and to support their future academic development. Furthermore, students are required to take several 'general' SWJTU modules that are necessary for graduation from SWJTU (the dual degree means that the requirements of both universities must be met in order to graduate).

Student Support

Ensuring high quality student experience is our priority. Therefore, we make sure that our students are supported by a combination of academic and pastoral care mechanisms available at the University of Leeds and SWJTU. Similar to Leeds-based students, Chengdu-based students are assigned a personal tutor. All students at the Joint School are assigned an academic member of staff as their personal tutor when they join the School. Students meet their personal tutors at least three times a year and are encouraged to contact them more often if additional advice is required.

In addition to personal tutorials, Joint School students in Years 2-4 have regular group tutorials. Group tutorials mimic the group tutorial systems established at Leeds. Each Joint School programme has adopted a slightly different approach to these tutorials. However, we believe group tutorials help to develop a good group dynamic for the students who work together on a range of activities. It also means the students meet regularly with someone who can feedback any problems / queries about their course. In addition to the Leeds personal tutorial system, all students at the Joint School are allocated a 'Fudaoyuan' who can advise students on personal and practical matters related to the life on SWJTU campus. Fudaoyuans are recruited by SWJTU and provide advice on party affairs, attendance monitoring, extracurricular activities, scholarships, career plans, internship opportunities, mitigating circumstances, accommodation and other general queries.

Student Feedback Mechanism

It is also worth mentioning that following Leeds' key value of working in partnership with students, the Joint School actively puts a lot of effort into building a good working relationships with students. Student feedback is a key part of the student experience, and we encourage student involvement at every stage of their study. An active and responsive Student-Staff Partnership Forum (SSPF) is the primary mechanism for in-session feedback which is seen to drive and support a culture that makes use of a range of feedback mechanisms. We also encourage students to speak directly to any member of staff or their course representatives. The SSPF is an essential channel for students to make their views known. It brings together students and staff and meets four times a year to receive feedback, consider student concerns and identify any changes that can be made. Each Joint School Programme elects Course Reps from across the cohorts, who will gather student views and represent students at the SSPF. The Leeds University Student Union (LUU) and the Student Education Service at Leeds support students in the election process and provide essential training before the first SSPF. Emphasis is put on the Reps and the SSPF being key to making sure student voice is heard and any issues are dealt with quickly.

We are also very proud of our Course Reps being involved in providing input into the development of the Joint School's Action Plans. A facilitated event is jointly run by the Student Education Support team in Leeds and School Reps, and held in Semester 2 each year, to collect feedback and support the drafting of the Action Plan. This is then confirmed and followed up via the relevant Programme Committees.

The Joint School also recruits School Reps who represent the Joint School at the Faculty Taught Student Education Committee at Leeds. School Reps also represent the view of students to the Joint School management team. For example, 'Dean's Time' is held every Thursday morning to hear students' voice on a regular basis. Also, Dean's Lunch and Party Secretary's Afternoon Tea are organised at least twice a month to provide additional opportunity for students to share their views with the senior management of the Joint School.

School-Student Partnership

We believe that the partnership approach explained above has been successful at creating a strong cohort dynamic and in empowering students to seek help in resolving various issues that inevitably occur in each programme. We also use informal mechanisms for collecting student feedback across the programmes. Students can raise issues at any time during the semester, that are either module specific or general with their programme. If students are not comfortable doing this, they are encouraged to go to their Reps to raise the issue on their behalf. We reinforce to students that the Joint School management team are there to support them and we want students to be able to bring issues to Reps anonymously where necessary. We put a lot of emphasis on developing a collaborative culture and show that we want students to work in partnership with us, which means that raising any issues/problems or things that go well with us is always welcomed.

Perhaps the best evidence of the strong partnership working and of high levels of student engagement was the success of the Joint School in the University of Leeds Partnership Awards in 2020. The Joint School received the highest number of nominations from any school at Leeds that year, many staff and students were nominated in a wide range of categories and the Joint School was awarded the 2020 School of the Year in recognition of this high level of engagement.

Enhancing Transnational Education Experience: A Case Study of Lancaster University's Collaboration with Beijing Jiaotong University

Lancaster University

Background

Transnational education has witnessed an evolution where students not only learn from renowned institutions but also actively participate in the generation of knowledge. Lancaster University (LU) and Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) have developed a strategic partnership based at BJTU International Campus in Weihai, Shandong Province. This case study explores how the strategic partnership between LU and BJTU has approached the objective of research-led teaching, with an Undergraduate Research Conference at its heart.

The annual Undergraduate Research Conference is a celebration of student-led inquiry and innovation, which links students from all LU international campuses and partner institutions in a virtual environment. Having initiated as an in-person event on the main campus in the UK, it was forced into virtual space by the covid pandemic but in so doing, opened the possibility for engagement across the globe. It is therefore a vehicle for fostering a culture of research within transnational education and is open to undergraduate students throughout the Lancaster partnership working in any discipline. The conference provides a valuable opportunity for students to present their research to an international audience by producing a poster presentation and giving an optional research talk. There are also several conference organization roles for students from developing the programme, liaising with keynote speakers, acting as chair or raconteur. In order to enable students to perform these roles competently, a wide range of skills and subject workshops are provided in the run-up to the event.

Research-led Teaching

One of the key aspects of this collaboration is the emphasis on research-led teaching. Lancaster University has a rich tradition of integrating cutting-edge research into its pedagogical approach, and this commitment extends to its partnership with BJTU. Similarly, the BJTU 2020 Curriculum update encourages students to engage in innovation projects, which provide students with placements in research teams. LU's programs are designed to ensure students benefit from research-based learning, both to impart knowledge and cultivate critical thinking skills.

Transplanting a research-led curriculum into a TNE setting, however, faces a number of challenges. First, established UK modules are embedded within a mature ecosystem comprising facilities, equipment, technical support and stakeholder networks (e.g. industry partners). Trying to recreate such modules is difficult when campus facilities are evolving and local networks are less developed. Second, some of the signature pedagogies to enable hands-on practical applications, such as fieldwork, can be challenging to set up when UK faculty are unfamiliar with the area and lack established connections. Third, the additional requirements of the Chinese degree create a heavy workload burden for students that can stifle enthusiasm and make students risk-averse. Nevertheless, many examples of research-led teaching

Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences

have been introduced, encouraging students to explore topics from various angles, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In order to further enhance the student experience, research activities are embedded throughout undergraduate degree programs. The curriculum is crafted to include practical research components, enabling students to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios. This integration of research activities fosters a sense of academic curiosity. Research skills are scaffolded through the curriculum and students are encouraged to pursue independent research projects, fostering a culture of inquiry. The opportunity to participate in the Undergraduate Research Conference is the culmination of the student's academic journey. However, care is needed to ensure that there is equitable student experience. There is a tendency for the brightest and most enthusiastic students in a Chinese university to be hand-picked for innovation projects and consequently receive far greater attention and support from faculty than a typical student. UK systems, by contrast, tend to emphasise limits on supervision hours as a means of ensuring that all students have a similar level of support. This is clearly a work in progress given the cultural differences between two systems designed to cultivate proteges and provide a level playing field, respectively.

The strategic partnership between Lancaster University and Beijing Jiaotong University serves as an example of the potential of transnational education to promote research-led teaching. By embedding research activities throughout undergraduate degree programs, and nurturing research skills through events like the UG Conference, the two partner universities are providing the means for a transformative educational experience, where students are empowered to shape the world through knowledge and innovation. Coupled with an emphasis on employability and entrepreneurship, research-led teaching is designed to equip students to be ready for solving real world problems. In the context of TNE, for the majority of graduates, progress into postgraduate studies (either overseas or, increasingly, staying in China) and it is hoped that the curriculum design provides a strong foundation to thrive at postgraduate level.

Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences: A Case Study of the University of Nottingham Malaysia

Professor Sarah Metcalfe | Provost and CEO University of Nottingham Malaysia

Background

The University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM) was established in 2000. It was the first overseas campus of any UK university and regarded as a pioneer. UNM was followed, in 2004, by a second campus in China, the University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC). UNM is the largest of the UK full branch campuses (FBCs) operating in Malaysia with more than 4200 students and 700 staff. Our approach to ensuring high quality experiences for both our staff and students is set out in 'The University of Nottingham Malaysia Strategic Plan 2022-26', which is firmly rooted in People and Partnerships. This strategic blueprint was crafted over a year, engaging both staff and students to ensure ownership by the university community as a whole. Below, an outline of the approaches.

Attracting and Retaining Academic Talent

- To draw, retain, and motivate talented Malaysian and international academics, UNM concentrates on:
- Comprehensive benefits packages: The institution has devised flexible benefits packages to attract and retain academics.
- Recognition of research contributions: UNM emphasises its academics' unique contributions and encourages research aligned to the local and regional context, instilling a sense of purpose and impact.
- Recognition of effective and innovative teaching: UNM has instituted a teaching and curriculum promotion pathway to recognise staff demonstrating leadership in education, encompassing curriculum design, delivery and assessment.
- Professional development opportunities: A central fund accessible to staff provides opportunities for professional development through workshops, conferences, professional accreditations, or two-way mobility arrangements with the UK campus, to enrich academic teaching and research skills. This is complemented by a mentoring programme and internal peer review, offering a platform for confidential feedback.
- Exploring non-academic expertise: In some instances, UNM seeks out expertise from outside traditional academia, targeting expert practitioners seeking a career change.

UNM remains dedicated to supporting the well-being of its staff, regardless of ethnicity or job level. The institution offers comprehensive and confidential Employee Assistance and Staff Hardship Programmes. UNM advocates a healthy work-life balance through flexible work arrangements.

A Sense of Belonging and Representation

In 2022, UNM implemented a new governance structure to align with the University's strategy. Each Executive Committee now includes representation from both academic and professional staff, as well as the student body, ensuring a diverse array of voices. This variety of perspectives, experiences and expertise informs

crucial decisions and new initiatives.

UNM's Values are inclusivity, fairness, openness, respect, and ambition. During the strategy's design phase, these values underwent comprehensive discussion among staff and students to ensure their meaningful interpretation within the Malaysian context. These values are deeply ingrained in all major decisions, promotion evaluations, and reward and recognition frameworks.

Quality Teaching and Assessment

UNM's degree programmes meet the quality standards of both the UK and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). UNM has self-accrediting status under MQA in recognition of the quality of its QA processes. A number of key programmes, including those in business, engineering, pharmacy and psychology, are accredited by relevant professional bodies.

UNM places great value on student feedback and conducts regular surveys to gather insights into all aspects of the learning experience. These surveys are valuable tools for identifying areas requiring improvement and for building upon successful initiatives.

Fostering a Positive Student Experience

UNM is committed to enriching the student experience, including offering students exchange opportunities with the UK and China campuses. We aim to expand these opportunities, creating two-way exchange programmes with other countries, providing students with a global perspective. We actively support students with learning disabilities and student wellbeing more generally.

Beyond the classroom, UNM offers a distinctive residential experience on a purpose build campus. Students can opt for on-campus accommodation or live nearby. They can participate in over 85 clubs and societies catering to diverse interests, from dance and debate to chess and cricket. With over 25 food and beverage outlets on campus and a comprehensive sports centre featuring playing fields, basketball and badminton courts, a gym, and a swimming pool, UNM students have a vibrant campus life.

UNM aims to create a sense of belonging and facilitate growth outside the classroom, allocating funding to support student-run projects in areas such as environmental sustainability, local community engagement and entrepreneurial start-ups.

Building Strong Partnerships

Partnerships are integral to UNM's objectives, spanning research, education, curriculum development, internships, student projects, practitioner guest lectures, knowledge exchange, and school advisory boards. These partnerships encompass alumni, local and regional industries, NGOs, government bodies and the community. UNM has established a central Partnerships Hub to nurture mutually beneficial collaborations, with a focus on supporting high-quality staff and student experiences.

In conclusion, the University of Nottingham Malaysia's approach is rooted in its commitment to people and partnerships. By attracting, retaining, and motivating academic talent, fostering a sense of belonging, ensuring quality teaching, and prioritising the student experience, UNM thrives as a foreign branch campus, fostering a vibrant academic community in Malaysia.

Evaluating the student experience across TNE campuses globally

Guy Perring | I-Graduate

I believe the student experience should be a key part of all university strategies. Having said that, it can be problematic to ensure an excellent student experience even across a single campus, and it gets even more challenging when institutions have a network of global campuses.

Our student barometer that runs annually measures the student experience across a large number of TNE campuses. The latest data for 2022 to 2023 captures the responses of 10,710 TNE students across 10 campuses in five countries - namely Dubai, Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius and China - comprising 43 nationalities. In addition, we have over 65,000 students in our global database who are studying at 'normal' campuses so capturing the experience globally brings us some fascinating insights into the transnational student experience in comparison with the student experience in more traditional campuses.

Why study at a branch campus?

We asked the question, "How important were the following factors when deciding where to study?" Unsurprisingly, the reasons are not dissimilar to those in the broader data set. The top five reasons were given as: i) career impact (98%), ii) institutional reputation (97%), iii) specific course title (96%), iv) personal safety (96%) and v) earning potential (96%) with the percentages representing the share of students who saw this factor as being either important or very important.

One noticeable difference was in "work opportunities" where 69% of students studying at branch campuses said it was important or very important to them when deciding where to study, compared to 77% of those studying at UK 'parent' campuses globally. In addition, 70% of TNE students ranked "opportunities for further study" as important or very important, compared to 80% in the global database.

I think the reasons are clear why this is the case as many campuses are located in jurisdictions where work opportunities are actually few or indeed illegal for international students. With regards to opportunities for further study, it is often the case that TNE students will use their undergraduate studies as a stepping stone to an overseas campus before moving on to further study in another location.

Student satisfaction

The overall satisfaction is very similar for students across the TNE campuses (89%) and traditional campuses (90%). However the percentage of respondents from TNE campuses who would recommend their institution to others looking to apply was lower than those from traditional campuses – 69% against 74%. This may reflect a preference still for the home campus over the branch campuses with the branch campus being second choice and/or the perception (whether true or not) that the experience at a home campus is somehow better.

Parent involvement

56% of TNE students said that their family helped in their decision, whilst only 44% of global students said likewise. This could be in part a reflection of the nationalities represented across TNE campuses and the trend that, for the vast majority of these students, their parents are heavily involved in paying their fees.

Sense of belonging

There are some concerns that students do not have the same sense of belonging in a TNE campus than if enrolled at the home campus. Based on our data, however, 84% in both sets of students said they felt a sense of belonging, indicating that the sense of belonging on TNE campuses is as high as on traditional campuses. It is probable that the sense of belonging is far more problematic in TNE partnerships where the delivery partner is a different institution from the awarding partner. Clearly, these kinds of partnerships account for the largest proportion of UK TNE students (such as franchising, validation etc.) by far. In these cases, there is likely to be confusion over where a student's sense of belonging lies – whether with the awarding institution or the delivering institution. A closer look at our dataset could shed more insight and give a real sense of these divided loyalties.

Case Study

Our work with Nottingham and Newcastle has given us some great insights into the student experience at their branch campuses, with Nottingham Ningbo being a recent case study.

At Nottingham Ningbo (China), the stated key goal is “to unlock the potential of every student through delivering internationally - context, research - oriented and exceptional campus experience.” What this means in practice is that the university uses the student voice to inform strategic decision making across the university. Over the past decade, the student voice has been used as a barometer, providing valuable insights and enabling the university to benchmark its performance with that of counterpart universities in the UK and Malaysia as well as that of other universities in Asia.

At the global level, Nottingham Ningbo aims to be a borderless university so it is very important to capture the student voice especially amid the changing international context and emerging technologies that have disrupted traditional teaching and learning. In addition, comparison of the student experience across the three Nottingham campuses – in the UK, China and Malaysia - provides rich comparative insights into the university's performance in providing excellent student experience as well as the quality assurance aspect of that provision.

Nobody would argue that it is highly improbable for the student experience to be identical at both the branch campus and home campus, given such different operating contexts, but it is vital that they should be comparable. It is imperative that any UK institution with branch campuses should strive to achieve high student satisfaction at whichever campus the student decides to study.

Comments from Students**Nottingham Malaysia (UNM)**

- UNM provides an international experience and offers globally recognized British degree (Foundation in Science, Sri Lankan)
- Great International community, lovely campus (Postgraduate, Egyptian)
- Overall, UNM is pretty good. It offers students a high class education and a UK degree. Location wise, the area is peaceful and the weather is nice. (Postgraduate, Pakistan)
- We are getting a degree from a member of the Russell Group, at a relatively affordable price when compared to the UK. Also, the facilities and the services here at UNM are great! (Postgraduate, Sri Lankan)

Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences

Nottingham Ningbo (UNNC)

- The facilities at UNNC are wonderful, the gym equipment, and the Library. The diversified cultural atmosphere at UNNC is an awesome experience. The "No run, no bun" campus run, a variety of academic resources for self study, helpful teachers, all sorts of activities. The School invest heavily on sports and study, which made the tuition fee all worthwhile (Business student, China)
- UNNC provides the same (vis-à-vis the campus in the UK) curriculum alongside facilities and services that support not only locals but international students' university experience and study experience to maximize opportunities and possibilities. (Humanities student, Indonesia)
- The EdD program is a solid program. I learned so much from the professors and doctors. As a matter of fact, I am currently attempting to persuade a couple of colleagues to join the programme. (Postgraduate student in Humanities, Hong Kong)

NuMed

- I love that I get a degree from such a reputable university as NUMed while getting a global experience that will help me become a better doctor in the future (Medicine student, Canadian)
- I would recommend NUMed to my family or friends because the programme provided by NUMed have the same standard to the MBBS course provided by Newcastle University in UK. Hence, I think it will open up wider choices for my further career development. Besides, the case-based approach introduced in the MBBS programme helps me to gain a deeper understanding on the topics taught. (Medicine student, Malaysian)

Pedagogical Support for a UK-China Joint Educational Programme: Reflection and Challenges

**Dr Tieng Toh, Claire Lidstone, Dr Lucy Taylor,
Li Min, Wang Yu, Dr Shameq Sayeed, Yanan Guo**

| University of Leicester - Chongqing Medical University Joint Education Programme

Introduction

Good pedagogical support ensures that the quality of learning is on par with the expected quality standards of a transnational educational (TNE) programme¹. The Joint Educational Programme (JEP) BSc Clinical Sciences between the University of Leicester (UoL) and Chongqing Medical University (CQMU) matches assessments despite differences in teaching experiences between the two student cohorts. This article reflects on the challenges in providing pedagogical support to the JEP since its launch in 2021/22.

Challenges in the Structure of Pedagogical Support

Based on in-class observation, students on the JEP seem more likely than those in the UK to ask for help directly from the teacher as they are not aware of online and other available services from the central university. This is further compounded by students feeling overwhelmed from learning in a foreign language, and experiencing different teaching styles and learning expectations, as well as by challenges faced by staff in co-creating a new transnational team and teaching remotely (specifically during COVID)

A pedagogical support service with designated staff and VLE support page was created and an information sheet circulated to all UoL and CQMU staff. Initially, one-to-one meetings were offered to students resitting a modular exam and those with specific learning needs. In addition to this reactive approach, we developed proactive online drop-in workshop sessions. Through these services, student engagement has improved. Coordinated targeted support for students with a primary point of contact, with added enhancements through the use of handbooks and online platforms, are valuable inputs especially in the early years of a programme².

Challenges in the Underlying Learning Styles

Delivery of the BSc Clinical Sciences emphasises deep and meaning-directed learning, in line with the works of Entwistle and Vermunt³. While Wang, T. and Moore (2007)⁴ indicate that there is no single Chinese learning style, there is, according to Pyvis (2011)⁵, a widespread but uninformed misconception that Confucian pedagogy is about rote learning, when Chinese pedagogy also uses “questioning, argument and analogy to encourage the development of independent thought” (Pyvis, 2011).

On-campus collaboration and discussions with JEP academic staff, initially limited

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4. Wang, T. and Moore, L. (2007) 'Exploring Learning Style Preferences of Chinese Postgraduate Students in Australian Transnational Programs', *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 3(2), pp. 31-41.
5. Pyvis, D. (2011) 'The need for context-sensitive measures of educational quality in transnational higher education', *Teaching in higher education*, 16(6), pp. 733-744.

due to COVID-restrictions, are developing a deeper understanding of students' learning styles. Following developments in pedagogical research, there is limited guidance for assessing and developing learning styles for academic success in transnational education. The JEP recognises that the lack of assessment success does not mean a lack of effort or engagement, and combining learning preferences can instead be beneficial.

Challenges of the Dual Award Scheme

The CQMU cohort have an intensive workload to achieve a dual award in two languages. Studies suggest learning in a second language can add to the perception of greater workload⁶ with students who perceive their learning as more intensive prioritising memorisation for recall rather than trying to understand the content⁷. This is in conflict with how the BSc course is delivered and could lead to reduced engagement and perceived difficulties.

One study has also found that TNE programmes have lower admission requirements than a domestic programme in the same subject at the host university, which may add to the challenges, as students recruited may have lower learning competencies or expectations and possibly lower motivation which may impact their learning behaviour⁸.

In mitigating these challenges, formal questionnaires and informal discussions with teachers and personal tutors are used to explore and understand students' motivation as well as to ensure their ability to adapt to new teaching methods and receive appropriate support.

Challenges of Culture Differences

Pedagogical support sessions were initially poorly attended by students who had been referred to it or those who had failed in their exams. Preliminary enquiry reveals language barriers as the major contributing factor to this behaviour. However, studies suggest a strong association of failure with shame in Chinese students, with implications for intrinsic motivation, self-esteem and perception of position in the social group⁹. There is an expectation to display oneself in a favourable manner which may explain poor engagement with support systems that are perceived as humiliating by society¹⁰. Adapting the support to drop-in sessions for all students has led to increased engagement with positive results as it is recognised that early engagement has a significant impact on students' academic adaptation and long-term retention¹¹.

Conclusion

It is surprising that JEPs do not have as high - or higher - entry requirements than single award programmes and many of the challenges will likely continue. Prospective and new students must be well informed and supported with English language and learning expectations to be successful. Work to align the curriculum content, delivery and assessment of both degree courses continues as an ongoing collaboration. In addition, efforts continue to be made to reduce the workload for students and to encourage engagement with pedagogical support services that are continuously upgraded to address the complexity and uniqueness of the challenges TNE students face in learning and cultural differences.

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7. Entwistle, N.(J. (1983) Understanding student learning. London: Croom Helm.
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Programme for International Partnership

Dr Lucy Taylor, Melissa Barwell, Ayesha Roked, Lixuan Dong, Dr Joanne Opie
| University of Leicester-Chongqing Medical University Joint Education Programme

Introduction

The University of Leicester (UoL) UK and Chongqing Medical University (CQMU) China established a Joint Educational Partnership (JEP) in 2019. Chinese students study towards a dual award: BSc Clinical Sciences (UoL) and BSc Clinical Medicine (CQMU), with the option of spending one year in the UK alongside the UoL BSc Clinical Sciences cohort¹. This reflective article explores the evolution of the Programme for International Partnership (PIP), a student-led society that emerged as a response to the challenges and opportunities presented by this transnational education (TNE) programme.

Development of the PIP

PIP evolved from a collaborative online learning (COIL) programme, which is an opportunity for students from different universities to complete online group tasks². Initially, COIL was an assessed component of the JEP programme. However, the known complexities of evaluating online contributions and logistical hurdles, which are amplified in the Chinese context³, hindered its success. A blog sharing day-to-day experiences of COVID-19 lockdowns proved more effective in fostering collaboration. Students expressed their preference for an informal approach and encouraged staff members to provide guidance in overcoming logistical challenges whilst enabling authentic collaboration.

The transition from a COIL programme to a student society marked a pivotal transformation. The platform soon saw students from the UK and China jointly organising online and in-person events for peer learning, cultural and social celebrations. The society's evolution reflects the unique opportunities of TNE in the holistic development of students, preparing them to thrive in an ever-evolving global workforce. This reflective account contributes to the growing body of evidence in support of COIL-related projects in TNE programmes.

Student Motivation

The success of PIP largely depended on student motivation, which in turn, in line with Bureau et al.'s (2022)⁴ meta-analysis of factors influencing student motivation, was driven by a sense of autonomy. Whilst students recognised the importance of forging a shared identity as TNE classmates, they perceived the assessed COIL

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project as removing their autonomy, thus reducing the authenticity of the engagement.

In PIP, the students strategically balanced between formality and informality in the tone and nature of interactions. Backed by their intrinsic motivation and shared interests, and complemented by the integration of structured academic activities, which further encouraged students to initiate social communication and meetings, authentic collaborative learning experiences have resulted, such as the example of a UK student participating in a Chinese science innovation group competition.

Logistics

Coordinating activities across time zones and timetables presented significant challenges to the programme and it was the student-led nature of the society that enabled inclusive planning and scheduling. This adaptability has been instrumental in enhancing engagement and the student experience.

Nevertheless, successfully managing the logistics of a formal university society proved to be a demanding endeavour which at times felt unrewarding, especially when expectations and reality were misaligned. Students reported that shifting their perspective towards valuing the quality of engagement over attendance figures enriched their experience. While this may highlight the advantage that assessed COIL projects have in ensuring wider cohort engagement, a centralised university society has the opportunity to include non-TNE students studying in partner universities, creating a diverse community despite the smaller numbers.

Communication

Zhao and Reilly's (2021)⁵ review of communication platforms used by international students, identified that no platform is considered superior to face-to-face interactions. Similarly, we experienced challenges in finding a platform that catered to Chinese and UK students equally. Variations in available apps and online services in China required innovative solutions and compromise. The use of Microsoft Teams for meetings somewhat helped bridge the geographical divide.

Overcoming language barriers was a pivotal aspect of PIP and is a recognised benefit of COIL projects⁶. Within the PIP, students developed communication strategies to bridge linguistic divides. Chinese students were motivated to take up the opportunity to build up their English language proficiency. These collective efforts strengthened communication skills and relationships by fostering a sense of camaraderie and understanding. Meanwhile, CQMU students arriving in the UK has been another enabler of interactions between students, and the hope now is to facilitate our UK partner students to study abroad in UoL-CQMU.

Cultural Humility

Another benefit of COIL is its fostering of cultural humility⁷. Both COIL and PIP provide a platform for exploring cultures including celebrations, holidays, humour, values, norms, hobbies and interests. This experience has created an environment where students have become more comfortable interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds, reflecting the realities of working in a globalised world. Students report an enhanced ability to approach differences with humility and respect since participating in PIP.

5. Zhao, X., & Reilly, P. (2021). Breaking down barriers? ICTs, international students and intercultural communication within UK Higher Education institutions. In C. a. B. Brassier-Rodrigues, P. (Ed.), *Internationalisation at home: A collection of pedagogical approaches to develop students' intercultural competences*. (pp. 157-178). Peter Lang. <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/179912/>

6. Anderson, A. M., & Or, J. (2023). Fostering Intercultural Effectiveness and Cultural Humility in Adult Learners Through Collaborative Online International Learning. *Adult Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10451595231182447>

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Ensuring High Quality Student and Academic Experiences

Conclusion

In the transition from a faculty-led COIL project to a student-led society, students overcame geographic, technological, and political hurdles. They developed inter-cultural communication skills, embraced diversity, and nurtured cultural humility. By building connections and fostering understanding, our students are becoming global citizens, underscoring the potential of TNE in equipping students to thrive in the global workforce. Student-staff collaboration continues to work towards balancing student autonomy, preserving their intrinsic motivation, with increasing participation. This may enable the benefits of TNE to be experienced more widely across both partner universities.

Reflections from teaching in a flying faculty model

Dr. Alyson Lewi | Cardiff University
Dr. Rebecca Georgis | University of Exeter

This article provides a brief insight into our experiences as UK lecturers¹ teaching on a flying faculty model in mainland China between 2016-2019. This model involved flying to China for 3-weeks at a time to teach modules relating to early childhood education and care. Our reflections contribute to the theme of 'Ensuring high quality experiences for students and academics'. We conclude with considerations which are particularly relevant for those new to flying faculty provision.

Alyson's reflections:

Working as a fly-in-fly-out lecturer has made me think more holistically and creatively about module design and delivery, mainly because I did not have the luxury of working with students over a term or semester, and I did not have access to the same learning resources or student support services as I did for my UK based students. On reflection, I was more perceptive of taking the students on an intense 3-week journey starting with building positive relationships, establishing a safe, stimulating learning environment to embedding assessment expectations into daily lessons and placing more focus on 'assessment as learning'. Often, it felt like there was no time for pedagogical error, such as:

- talking too fast,
- not pausing enough for students to process information,
- not using enough visuals to explain concepts,
- introducing new words and concepts too soon in the 3-week journey,
- overloading lessons with too much content, and
- making assumptions that students will know how to work in groups and be comfortable with various pedagogical approaches used in UK HE classrooms.

Therefore, every minute was crucial in ensuring the students were able to achieve the module learning outcomes and realistically succeed – I do not think I've ever experienced anything so intense from a pedagogical perspective in my 20-year teaching career. Despite the intensity, and continual championing of support for students from both institutions, teaching on a flying faculty programme has been one of the major highlights of my career. Listening to students and understanding what it was like from their perspective was an extremely important part of ensuring a high-quality experience and learning that some students felt lost in knowing what to do next for the assessment, and feeling left behind when we returned to the UK, was upsetting to hear. I would like to thank the students for persevering with the flying faculty model and helping me refine my practice and become what I feel is a better educator for teaching on UK-based programmes.

Rebecca's reflections:

Teaching on a flying faculty programme requires a flexible mindset, openness to

1. These experiences are not based on work at our current institutions.

explore new pedagogical practices, a creative approach to planning for learning, and a willingness to act as an advocate for and with students to ensure high quality student experiences.

One of the biggest challenges for me as a flying academic was finding accessible and relevant resources such as readings and videos which were at an appropriate level of English and could be accessed in China. Practicing from an inclusive standpoint, I would often pair students with varying levels of English so they could support each other during small group activities and encourage participation. I would also offer supplementary readings and tasks for those who wanted to challenge themselves further and integrate English language learning with curriculum knowledge.

Working on an early childhood education programme, also required us to navigate cross-cultural conceptualizations about how children and babies grow and learn. I had to reflect on my own Western assumptions and provide opportunities for students to reflect on theirs. This can be challenging but also one of the most enriching aspects of TNE programmes. It can be transformative for both learners and lecturers, not only in terms of the assumptions we hold about our subject knowledge, but also in terms of learner and lecturer expectations. Thinking back, I can say that my experience teaching on the flying faculty programme has made me more reflective and responsive as an educator and I continue to apply this to my current teaching.

Considerations for working towards high quality experiences for students and academics in a flying faculty model

For high-quality experiences for students and academics, we need appropriate and context-specific supports in place given that flying faculty models vary and change over time. Therefore, it is important to work in partnership, engage with all players from both institutions, where possible, and be willing to negotiate working practices along the way.

To support academic staff working overseas, institutions should consider the following:

- Before programme delivery commences, have agreements in place between both institutions about module credits and contact time, study skills support and timetabling arrangements so students are not overwhelmed during the intense 3-week delivery.
- Recognise that generous planning and preparation time is needed for staff before travel to prepare for the trip such as finding and developing appropriate resources.
- Similarly, provide time when staff are back in the UK to ease into teaching and other responsibilities.
- Allocate time and support for travel arrangements, getting visas, obtaining local currency, and providing methods of payment for living abroad.
- Provide orientation for new staff on what to expect when teaching on a flying faculty model, how to plan when teaching overseas and for supporting English language learners, and what to anticipate when living abroad for weeks at a time.
- Think more holistically about pastoral care for staff before, during and after their travel (health and safety, mental health and wellbeing supports).
- Consider an introductory online session for students so that staff can introduce themselves to the students, set up expectations and get to know each other prior to delivery. Provide translation if needed for first year students.
- Be prepared that students may approach staff with questions about studying in the UK and plan opportunities for them to ask questions in a safe space and get advice (e.g., writing a personal statement, living costs).

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In addition to the above, it would be useful for new lecturers to:

- Talk to other colleagues in their institution with expertise such as TEFL/TESOL to talk through your ideas of how best to support students.
- Reflect on all their previous lived experiences and what they bring to the role to navigate the new context.
- Give themselves the time to get it right and listen to the students to understand what the experience is like for them.

To conclude, it is important to have the right support and resources (e.g., library, wellbeing, virtual learning environments) in place throughout the life of the programme in order to sustain high quality and equitable experiences for students and academics.

Towards equitable student experience

Aneta Hayes, David Hazelgrove
| Keele University

Context to the partnership

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Keele established, in 2017, an undergraduate double-degree programme with Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). The delivery model was built on students studying 2 years at the partner university in China and then transferring to Keele University for their Year 3/Level 5 studies, before returning to complete their final year. From the start, the partnership was built around the principle of ensuring an equitable student experience and our objective was to establish an equal sense of belonging to the Keele community for BFSU students who remained in China as those who travelled to Keele.

How did we work towards equitable student experience?

We applied the mutuality approach to partnership in the design of the programme more broadly. Our collaboration was structured around four key pillars of equity, solidarity with the partner, autonomy and equal participation in the construction of the curriculum. This has meant that both Keele and the partner were systematically and deeply engaged in the planning process of the governance structures of the partnership and that a lot of time was invested in communication to build relationships, trust and understanding of each other's contexts. Autonomy was at the forefront of building the curriculum, with mutual respect for the norms, beliefs and values of both partners, and the rejection of the idea that one university was helping to fix the deficits of the other. Instead, a strengths-based approach was taken, where full and equal participation from staff and students at both universities was sustained throughout the partnership via the pedagogical and governance approaches summarised below.

Pedagogical approaches: Foregrounding autonomy and inviting equal participation in the construction of the curriculum – collaborative curriculum creation was encouraged through on-going communication between module tutors at Keele and BFSU which was very constructive in combining academic rigour with an understanding of the flexibility required in delivering the module to a different set of students, studying in different pedagogical and socio-political contexts. For instance, in cases where the original textbook was not available in China or more generally to be inclusive of the specific contextual factors surrounding students learning, academics at BFSU adapted the module guides and teaching materials, which were then sent to Keele module leaders for feedback and approval.

Communication amongst module leaders has generally been very constructive and to further foreground the importance of mutual autonomy, meetings, continuous dialogue between staff and 'training sessions' were held to better understand each other's values and norms regarding the context of teaching, as well as pedagogical approaches that draw on students' strengths as equal partners in the curriculum.

Furthermore, students were invited to contribute to curriculum building and delivery through forums such as Student-Staff Voice Committees (SSVC). SSVC

involves meetings between the programme team, usually the programme director, and student representatives from each year of the programme to talk about programme-wide issues. The meetings in the context of this partnership have enabled us to rebalance how much and when to deliver the material to better build students' sense of belonging through the curriculum. In addition, 'academic advising sessions' were also held regularly and offered spaces where programme teams, in discussion with students, became aware of any imbalances in the curriculum.

Finally, a joint programme office on BSFU's premises was set up and put into operation before the first cohort joined the programme, where tutors and administrative staff involved in the partnership worked to support the students on a daily basis. This has proven to be effective for the day-to-day operation of the programme, in particular the delivery and communication of frontline teaching and learning activities. The office has also offered other student enhancement activities, such as opportunities to join internship programmes at various organizations, which were highly relevant to the outcomes of the programme.

Governance approaches: Collaborative engagement in the planning and governance of the partnership – this was ensured through a joint committee structure consisting of Keele and partner university colleagues. There are two joint committees, working in the spirit of collaborative engagement in aspects of programme planning and governance. These include the Joint Management Committee which provides a forum for strategic planning and coordination of the partnership, and a Joint Board of Studies, which brings programme and professional services teams together to oversee the coordination of the programme and student experience. The feedback from the joint committees has continuously commended the partnership in areas of teaching and learning and assessment, in particular, how the partnership worked effectively to ensure an outstanding student experience, especially during the contingency period connected with the global pandemic.

Specifically, during the pandemic, the pedagogical and governance approaches described above allowed us to sustain the principles of autonomy, equity, solidarity, and strengths-based participation under pandemic conditions. We did not cease our efforts to integrate students into the Keele community, even though they were not physically on campus.

Beyond the structures described above, which continued throughout the pandemic, students were encouraged to collaborate and share their experiences with their peers. We provided core cultural and language-based activities, coordinated by Keele's Language Centre and established a Chinese Corner – a weekly meeting in the University's Language and Intercultural Network at Keele space where students from BSFU could meet other Keele students and exchange their academic and epistemic values. In parallel, Keele University worked with BSFU to facilitate integration between the two groups of students through joint lectures and collaborative group work at a distance. It was a challenge to coordinate shared lectures across time zone differences. Social rather than academic connections played the greater role, which reminded us of the importance of the mutuality approach in TNE partnerships.

06

Maintaining Brand Identity From a Distance

- Maintaining and Building Brand Identity _Views From A Branch Campus
- Jiangsu University Cranfield Tech Futures Graduate Institute Reflections on Brand Positioning
- Maintaining (and Evolvement) of Brand Identity
- Building Global Presence

Maintaining and Building Brand Identity _ Views From A Branch Campus

Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi

| Provost and CEO, Heriot-Watt University, Malaysia

Transnational education (TNE) has become integral to the educational landscape. TNE entails educational programmes or courses being provided in one nation by an institution situated in another nation. As a result, it broadens the availability of high-quality education for students all around the world and promotes cross-cultural awareness, enhancing the diversity of the global academic environment.

TNE contributes significantly to the economies of both host and home countries, raising and supporting workforce development, research collaboration, and the globalisation of higher education. However, there is a much bigger conversation around brand identity that Universities need to have.

Over the years, education has evolved to have no geographical boundaries, making it crucial for institutions to establish a strong, cohesive, and adaptable brand identity. But is it possible for campuses in different countries to continue being on-brand while also honouring their local environments?

While maintaining brand identity throughout campuses brings unique challenges for educational institutions, I would like to view the brand identity not merely through the prism of marketing and branding, but rather through the lens of delivery of the social and educational mission of the university.

As campuses in different locations have access to different opportunities, playing an active role in shaping the brand identity of the university is an exciting and empowering exercise. For example, at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, we pioneered the purpose-driven education pedagogy where every staff and student start their journey with the university by going through a structured programme to articulate their sense of purpose and develop self-directed plans to mobilise that purpose into making a positive impact on the world. This work was motivated by the mission of the university to future-proof its students and develop the talent needed to create a world that is sustainable, equitable, and enjoyable. The purpose-driven education pedagogy was very well received by all stakeholders including students, employers, and policymakers and has grown to become an essential part of the brand identity of Heriot-Watt. Plans now are afoot to take this to all other campuses.

Being able to contribute towards the creation of the identity of the university and influencing its ethos and brand, regardless of location, is a sign of maturity and confidence that creates a sense of ownership and empowerment at all locations.

This, of course, comes with its challenges and requires strong systems and processes as well as the building of mutual and continuous communication. Universities need to understand that while cohesiveness is essential, local elements cannot be ignored hence a delicate balance is necessary in keeping the same identity at the core of everything while being true to the place where they are set

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up. The incorporation of local architecture (for physical campuses) and local sensitivities as well as the use of language that is consistent with a strong appreciation for culture, are ways that the brand showcases itself to the public, reflecting the importance for the brand to holistically keep in line with the ethos of the university. Moreover, brand identity must transcend physical campuses and be equally resonant in the digital realm, ensuring that students perceive a consistent and reputable educational entity, whether they are studying in-person or online.

Transnational education institutions should uphold the uniformity of the brand identity by ensuring that the University's values, goals and mission shine through every aspect of the brand. Uniformity in branding, curriculum, and communication is crucial for nurturing trust and establishing credibility, whether in a physical or virtual learning setting.

In today's digital era, online presence increasingly plays a significant role in brand identity maintenance and evolution, especially from a distance. Institutions must therefore create a seamless, engaging, and user-friendly online experience that reflects their established brand while embracing the unique aspects of online education. This requires investing in cutting-edge e-learning technologies, creating interactive digital platforms, and providing comprehensive support services for online students.

Engaging stakeholders, including students, alumni, faculty, and staff, is vital in preserving and strengthening an institution's brand identity. These key participants should be encouraged to offer feedback, share their experiences, and participate in brand evolution. Their insights can provide valuable perspectives on how the institution can adapt to changing circumstances and continue to provide world-class education.

Maintaining and evolving brand identity in transnational education from a distance is a complex but essential and rewarding endeavour. It is crucial to prioritise long-term objectives over short-term benefits, primarily because it takes time for a brand to build credibility. Institutions can uphold their brand identity by ensuring consistency, adapting to local contexts, embracing online education, engaging stakeholders, and remaining responsive to evolving market dynamics, providing students with a reliable and forward-looking educational experience, whether they are learning in-person or remotely.

Jiangsu University Cranfield Tech Futures Graduate Institute - Reflections on Brand Positioning

Professor Simon Pollard

| Pro-Vice-Chancellor, International, Cranfield University

Background

The 'Jiangsu University Cranfield Tech Futures Graduate Institute' is a collaboration between Cranfield University (UK) and Jiangsu University (JSU), codified by China's Ministry of Education (MoE) as a Sino-UK 'Joint Institute'. The institute's scope speaks to the global green economy in the fields of water, energy and environmental engineering, together with the technologies that support a transition towards a lower carbon future. As of September 2023, the joint institute has some 300 students registered across its MSc and PhD programmes. Its objectives are to:

- equip postgraduate scholars in the practical and international dimensions of engineering, as these relate to supporting sustainable technology futures;
- develop cohorts of practical engineers and technologists trained at MSc and PhD levels who are able to design, select, commission and manage technology transitions in their specialist fields;
- support industry, government and other employers by supplying highly employable postgraduates conversant in the language of business, ready to contribute to the needs of global, regional and local employers; and
- provide its scholars with the skills and competencies required of a modern workforce; able to work creatively in teams; to communicate their contributions with confidence; and to learn independently with their peers throughout their lives so as to deepen their contribution to society; and to foster a spirit of collective endeavour on key global challenges through engineering contributions to issues such as the ongoing mechanization of agriculture, technologies for addressing global climate change and the transition to lower carbon energy supplies.

Provision

The Joint Institute is approved to deliver 4 MSc courses in Engineering Management, Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Agricultural Engineering, as these topics relate to the green economy. The MoE also approved three linked PhD programmes in the fields of energy systems and thermal processes; materials for energy systems; environmental engineering; and environmental management.

Rationale

Collaborative discussions between both institutions began in 2017 on the back of established 'point to point' relations and historic staff exchanges. Jiangsu University has an impressive history of international provision and sought a joint institute to formalise its collaboration with the UK. Cranfield University had been keen to promote its sustainability offer globally, having brought together the core of its offer within its School of Water, Energy and Environment in 2014, together with a portfolio of technology and management contributions to sustainability positioned across the university. The joint institute was seen as a vehicle to secure greater traction for

Maintaining Brand Identity From a Distance

Cranfield in East Asia and an opportunity to create a market presence in engineering for the green economy at a time when intergovernmental collaboration on climate change and technologies to support a transition to a low carbon future was building, a collaboration that continues to this day.

Discussions began around a suite of postgraduate courses in an area of public good that also spoke to the international UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A close dialogue on clean tech and green finance was also developing between the UK and China at the time, and this was deemed a timely collaboration to pursue. Following a lengthy consultation, substantive due diligence, scrutiny processes at both institutions and parallel negotiations over a 3-year period, these objectives came together in an agreed scope and format for the joint institute. The institute has joint branding, and is located on Jiangsu University's campus in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. Curriculum development speaks to a shared global issue and lends from both Sino and Western philosophies of approach.

Reflections on brand positioning

Establishment of the joint institute has provided Cranfield University with a strong brand presence in the province and has strengthened the internationalisation strategy of Jiangsu University. Wider stakeholder support has been critical to upholding the original rationale, the spirit of collaboration and a tightly-defined scope. In the wider context, Cranfield and JSU engage in consortia that support the joint institute and that allow both universities to appraise their relationship alongside others' experiences of transnational education (TNE) in China. Cranfield is a member of the UK-Jiangsu 20+20 World Class Universities Consortium¹ and of the International University Consortium on Agricultural Engineering² (IUCAE).

By virtue of the institute being established, Cranfield has also become a member of the UK-China Joint Institute Alliance³, supported by both Governments, which exchanges experiences on governance, practicalities and promotes the value of joint institutes. Through exceptional academic leadership and professional services support in both institutions, the institute delivered the first two years of its programmes online, during COVID, and has now returned to face-to-face provision, with an expected student body of over 300 students by 2023/24.

Notwithstanding the physical presence at Jiangsu University, which provides a firm identity for students, operational issues shared by many joint institutes such as pre- and in-session English language provision, cultural awareness on both sides and connections into the wider industry and government ecosystem might, arguably, be facilitated through a shared regional education hub, for example. This would be of benefit to institutions without branch campuses.

To address some of these issues for this joint institute, wider collaboration has made provision, within its scope, for the delivery of technical seminars for students and industry and for student internships at Cranfield's campus in the UK as part of their studies. Cooperation with the student body and development of the student experience is still building. The feedback received to date has been good as viewed through the Senate review of the joint institute. Participation in the QA-TNE scheme in 2023/24⁴ will provide additional insight into the extent and reception of student enhancements since inception of the joint institute.

Overall, the establishment of a joint institute has led to a higher awareness of the Cranfield brand and capability in China. It has opened up opportunities for Cranfield

¹ <https://ukjs2020.com/>

² https://iucae.ujs.edu.cn/eng/About_Us.htm

³ <https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/programmes/education/higher/TNE>

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education/quality-evaluation-and-enhancement-of-uk-tne>

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to engage where there are clearly defined and shared priorities on global challenges, and where there is complementary expertise in higher education between UK and China. It has reinforced the positioning of both institutes as centres of higher education excellence in the green economy and enabled both partners to contribute to shared resources and expertise to address some of the SDG challenges.

Maintaining (and the evolvment of) brand identity from a distance

Professor Stuart Perrin

| Chief Officer for Ecology, Xi'an Jiaotong - Liverpool University

One of the challenges that transnational education (TNE) providers face is how to balance the need for local relevance and global consistency. Whilst a TNE branch campus may be expected to offer the same quality and standards as the 'main' UK campus, maintaining a consistent brand identity in TNE can be difficult due to the diversity of expectations, preferences and needs of the local market and audience.

Deciding whether to adopt a more localised or a more globalised approach to branding, or a hybrid of both, has implications for the curriculum, the staff, the students and the stakeholders of the branch campus.

One of the main attractions of Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) as a branch campus of the University of Liverpool is the opportunity for students to experience both Chinese and British cultures and education systems. Students can choose to study in Suzhou, China, or transfer to Liverpool, UK, after completing two years of their degree at undergraduate level. Students in the University of Liverpool also have the opportunity to study in China through a number of student mobility schemes, but specifically the "Year in China" (YiC) programme. This provides students the possibility to learn from different perspectives, broaden their horizons, and enhance their employability in the global market. They can also benefit from the high-quality teaching and research standards of both universities, as well as the international recognition and accreditation of their degrees.

By taking a hybrid localized approach, as XJTLU has chosen to do, a curriculum can be developed to meet local needs, which increases the potential for student recruitment. XJTLU has developed an education philosophy that chimes with Chinese government priorities and initiatives in developing entrepreneurial education programmes and a dedicated entrepreneurial college. The curriculum has been developed in consultation with local industry to ensure that students are prepared for future work opportunities in a disrupted world, predominantly in China.

To help this to happen, approaches to learning and teaching have changed compared to those based on expectations for Liverpool, with XJTLU's curriculum taking on a much more project-based and problem-based approach. Local innovations also include a staff profile based more strongly on local needs, with a higher concentration of local industry experts to add to the student learning experience. In following a more localised approach, XJTLU is able to adapt to the specific cultural and educational expectations of the host country, in this case Jiangsu Province and China, and provide more entrepreneurial education, which increases relevance and responsiveness and brings differentiation from competitors, both local and international.

1. These experiences are not based on work at our current institutions.

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However, it is also important to recognize the value that the home institution, the University of Liverpool, brings to enable this localization to take place. This is especially true with regard to reputation, with Liverpool having a long history as a provider of quality programmes, as well as the value of the Liverpool degree, UK quality assurance, and staff development schemes. Whilst programmes are designed to meet local market needs, they are still developed and approved through the University of Liverpool's quality assurance processes. This "badge of quality" provides students and potential employees with the confidence that despite the differences in programmes and delivery, there is a recognizable level of quality being achieved. It also provides Liverpool-based students the confidence to experience studying abroad in XJTLU and China. In addition, XJTLU has been recognized by AdvanceHE, with all new staff expected to complete the university's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education, with increasing numbers of staff attaining Fellowship or Senior Fellowship through AdvanceHE. The number of Principal Fellows within mainland China is very small, but two of them are employed within the university.

Having a globalised approach in areas where the UK and Liverpool have a deserved global reputation helps to leverage the prestige and recognition of the UK and the University of Liverpool, which ensures alignment and coherence, and promotes a sense of belonging and identity among the two institutions.

Adopting a hybrid or balanced approach to brand identity that combines elements of both localisation and globalisation creates, therefore, a distinctive yet consistent brand identity that reflects both the University of Liverpool's core values and XJTLU's unique features. The main selling point of XJTLU varies depending on students' motivations, aspirations and preferences. This can range from cost and time savings, to the flexibility that articulation routes offer, to the potential to study on innovative entrepreneurial degrees, to the possibility to study in programmes with the UK quality assurance badge that may enhance employability.

What is clear is that within TNE, the success and "branding" of one of the two partners, provides growth and opportunity for the other; like any successful partnership, differences are celebrated whilst familiarity is comforting.

Building Global Presence

Coventry University

Introduction

Transnational Education (TNE) collaborations represent a paradigm shift in the higher education landscape. In this age of globalisation, the once distinct boundaries of traditional education have dissolved, giving rise to institutions that defy geographic constraints. TNE collaborations, such as the one between Coventry University and PSB Academy, are beacons of opportunity, transcending borders and championing international collaboration. They are the future of global education, providing students with the skills needed to excel in an increasingly interconnected world, while offering them an opportunity to study closer to home.

A robust brand identity is vital to achieving this, serving as the basis for the trust, credibility and recognition that distinguishes Coventry University's collaboration with PSB Academy and instils confidence in its students, faculties and stakeholders. This identity attracts diverse students, fosters belonging and ensures success in education's competitive landscape. The challenge is how to strike the perfect balance between the two institutions and their distinct countries and cultures.

Striking the Perfect Balance

When establishing a TNE partnership, it is vital to take into consideration factors such as the two institutions' overarching objectives, the diverse learning needs of all students and the intricate tapestry of the host country's culture. There are strengths to be found within each organisation's approach, and the art lies in establishing an appropriate equilibrium.

It was essential to forge a distinctive brand identity for the collaboration between Coventry University and PSB Academy that reflected our commitment to global education. Our approach highlights the unique programme offerings, specialised courses and local relevance that define our educational offer. It enhances the reputation of the partnership and opens its doors to a diverse and global student body, enriching the educational experience for all.

However, as we aim for distinction, we are also mindful of our roots. Maintaining a steadfast connection with our UK home campus is a testament to the credibility and stature of Coventry University as a global brand. Coventry University's collaboration with PSB Academy represents an extension of the Coventry family that enables the two organisations to share invaluable resources, harness faculty expertise and fuel joint initiatives, especially in research and other scholarly pursuits.

Together, we have crafted a brand identity that is representative of local values and context while preserving an unbreakable link to Coventry University in the UK. This synergy enables us to leverage the strengths and heritage of our parent institution while expertly catering to the unique aspirations of our collaborative endeavours.

Our marketing strategies go beyond conventional promotional efforts and instead

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focus on crafting a narrative that resonates with prospective students. It involves creating a distinct identity that reflects the academic excellence, global reputation and unique offerings of Coventry University while embracing Singapore's local context.

We also understand the power of accreditation from UK and local bodies, demonstrating our dedication to international standards while respecting local nuances. From faculty exchanges that bridge continents and cultivate shared pedagogical excellence to curriculum alignment that upholds the high academic standards expected at our UK home campus, we are committed to delivering a world-class education experience. Coventry University's collaboration with PSB Academy in Singapore celebrates diversity and promotes cross-cultural understanding, fostering an inclusive environment in which to study, work and develop.

Ultimately, our approach hinges on a comprehensive grasp of the local educational landscape, an acute awareness of student preferences and the clear articulation of our strategic objectives. Within the dynamic tapestry of global education, the collaboration between Coventry University and PSB Academy shows both distinctiveness and global synergy and exemplifies the transformative potential of transnational education.

Summary

To maintain our global presence while meeting the different needs of our local communities, we must constantly adapt and innovate. We expect that our collaboration with PSB Academy will keep pace with the dynamic global educational landscape and together we will lead by example, shaping the sector for the better.

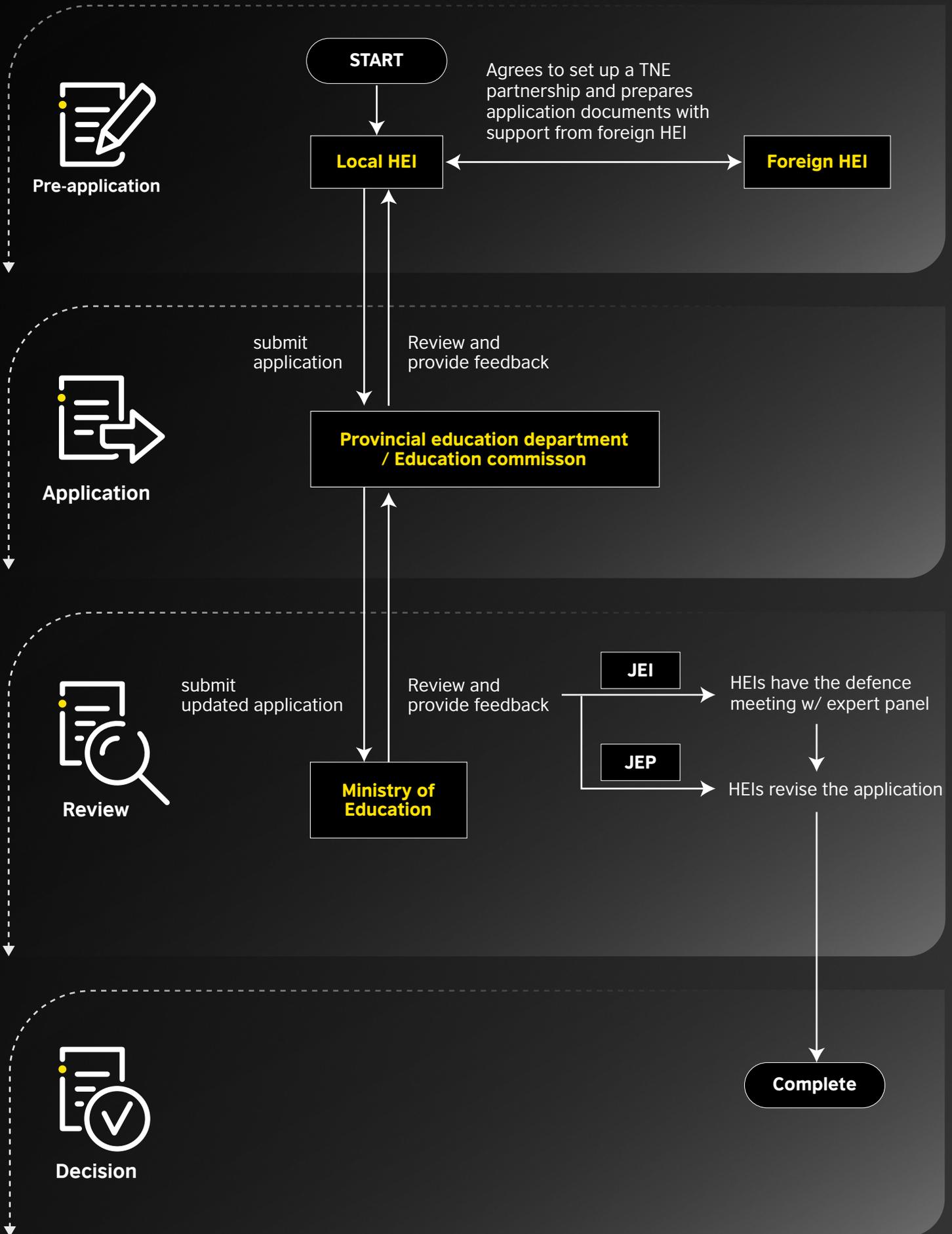
As we continue to tread the path of global-local fusion, the collaboration between Coventry University and PSB Academy demonstrates how an institution can harmoniously merge its UK identity with Singapore's unique cultural and educational landscape. Our journey is a testament to the enduring power of strategic partnerships and together we are shaping the future of global education.

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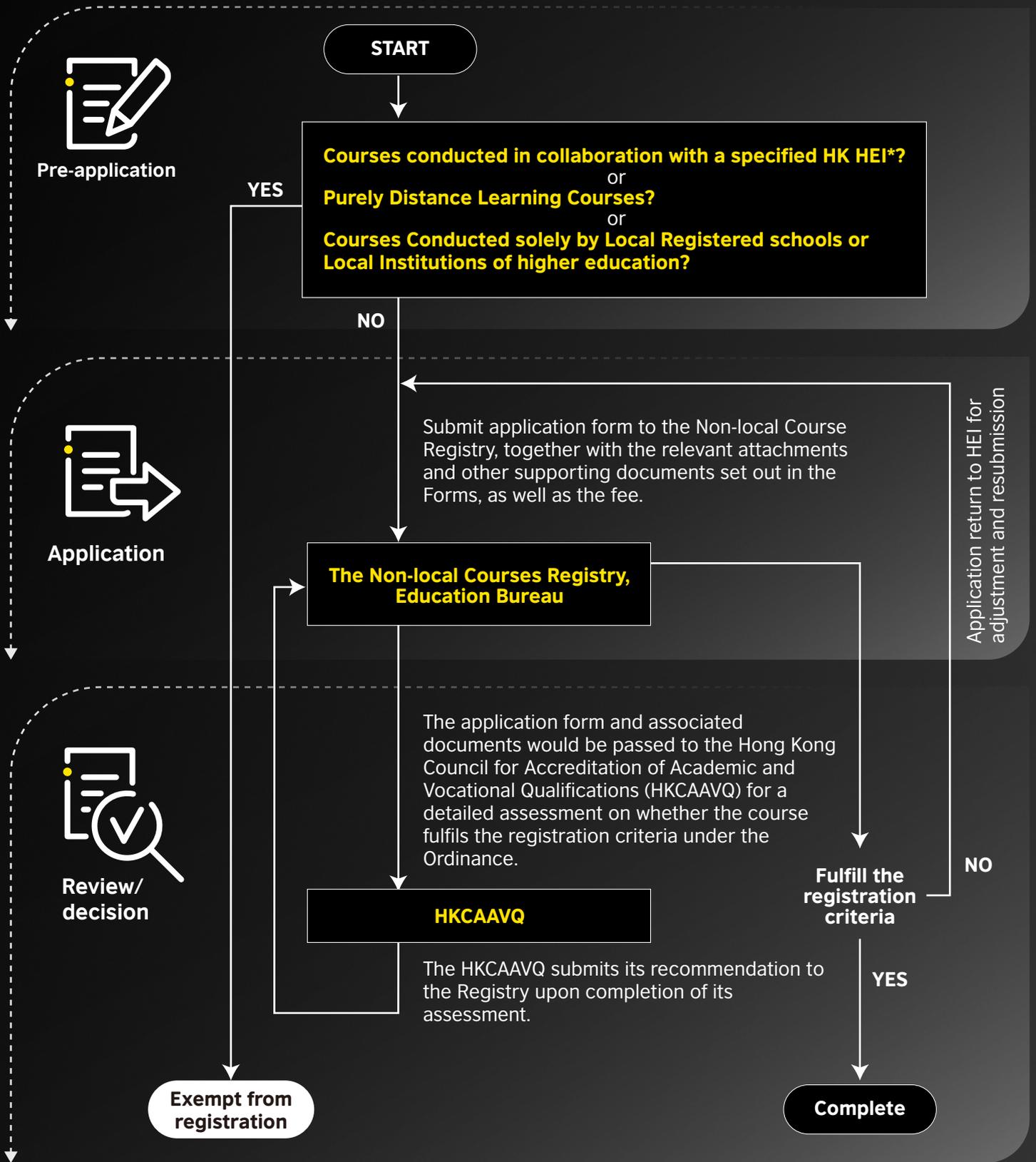
Guide to setting up Transnational Education

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- Thailand
- Vietnam

China



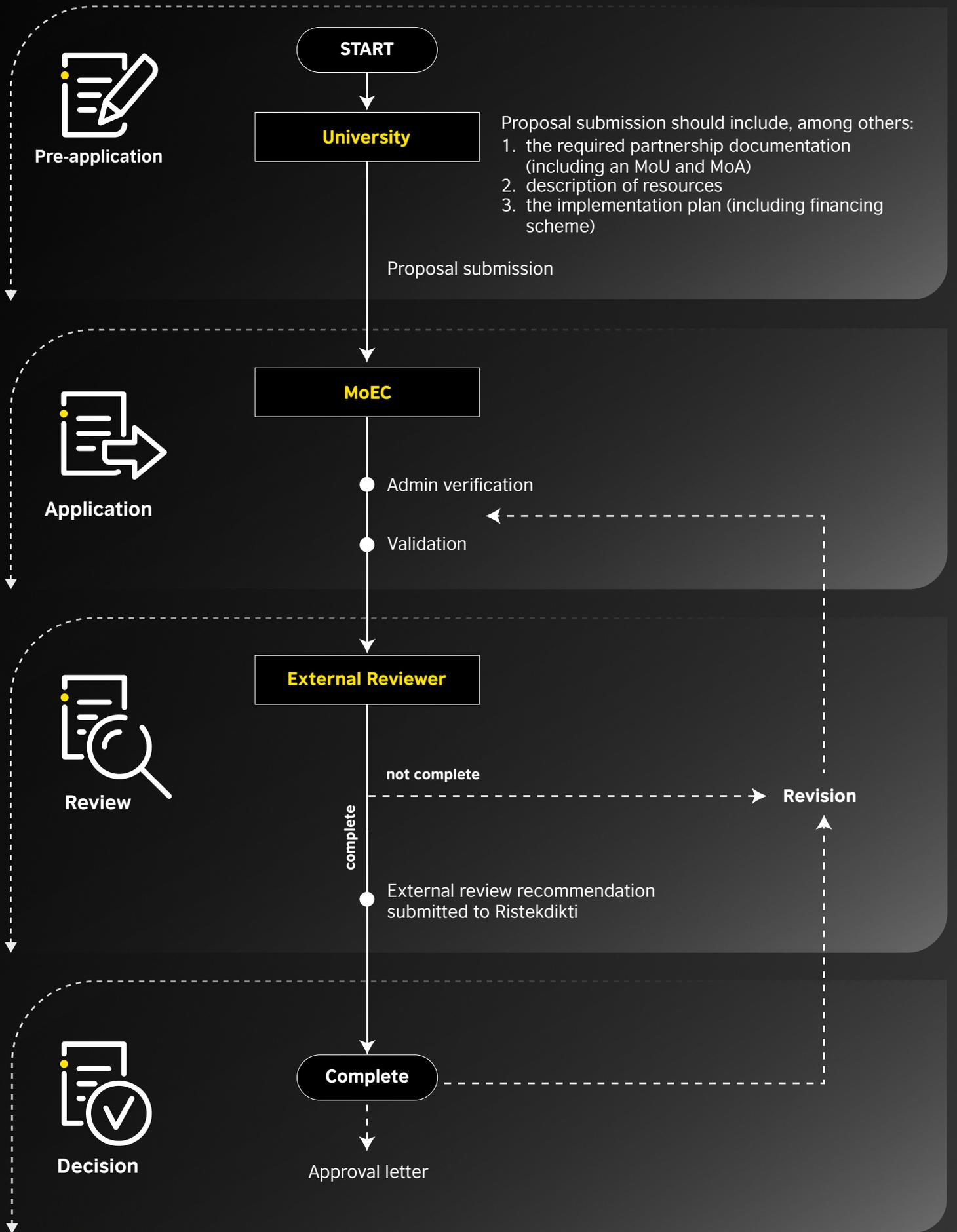
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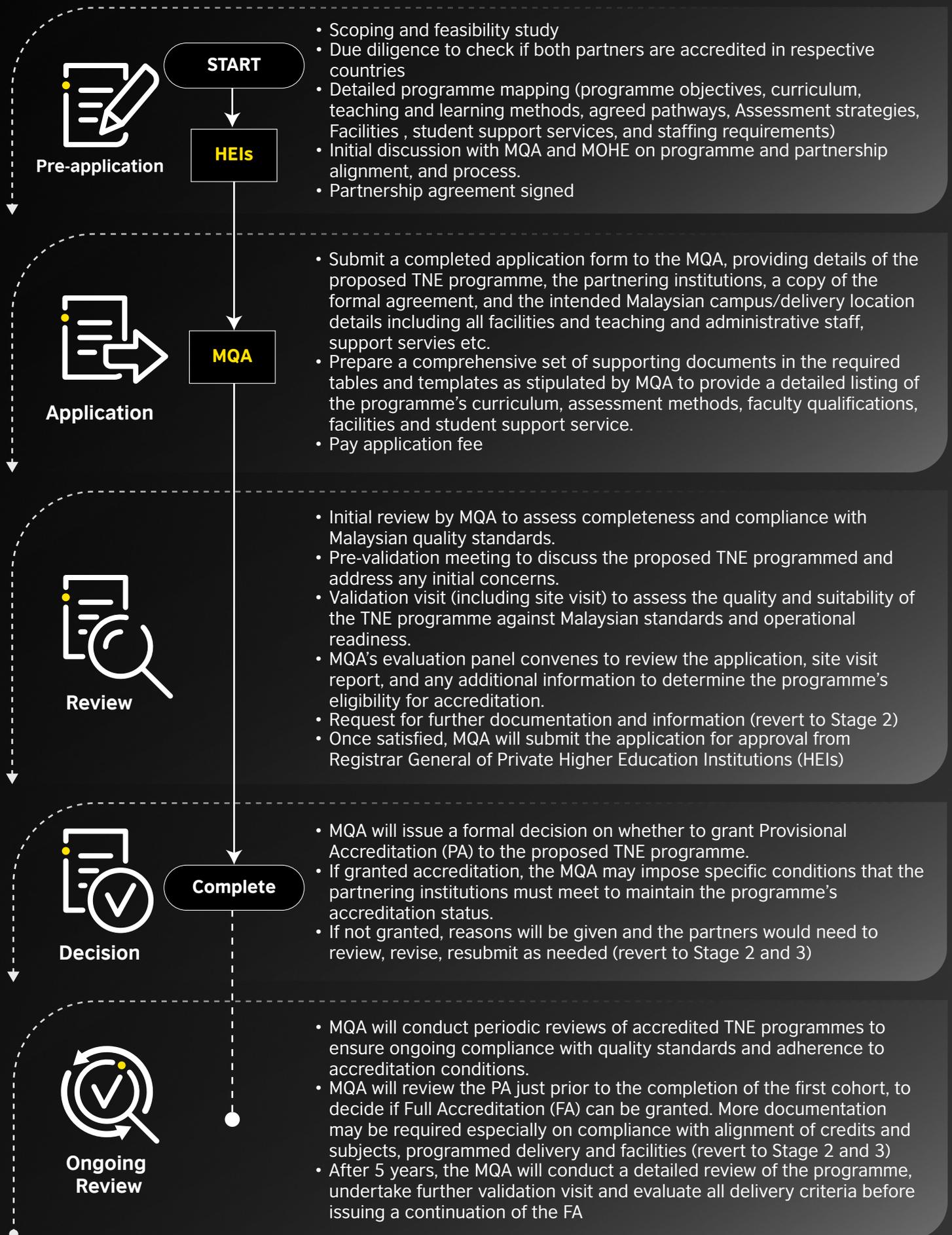
*** Specified HK HEIs :**

- City University of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Baptist University
- Hong Kong Metropolitan University
- Hong Kong Shue Yan University
- Lingnan University
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- The Education University of Hong Kong
- The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts
- The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- The University of Hong Kong

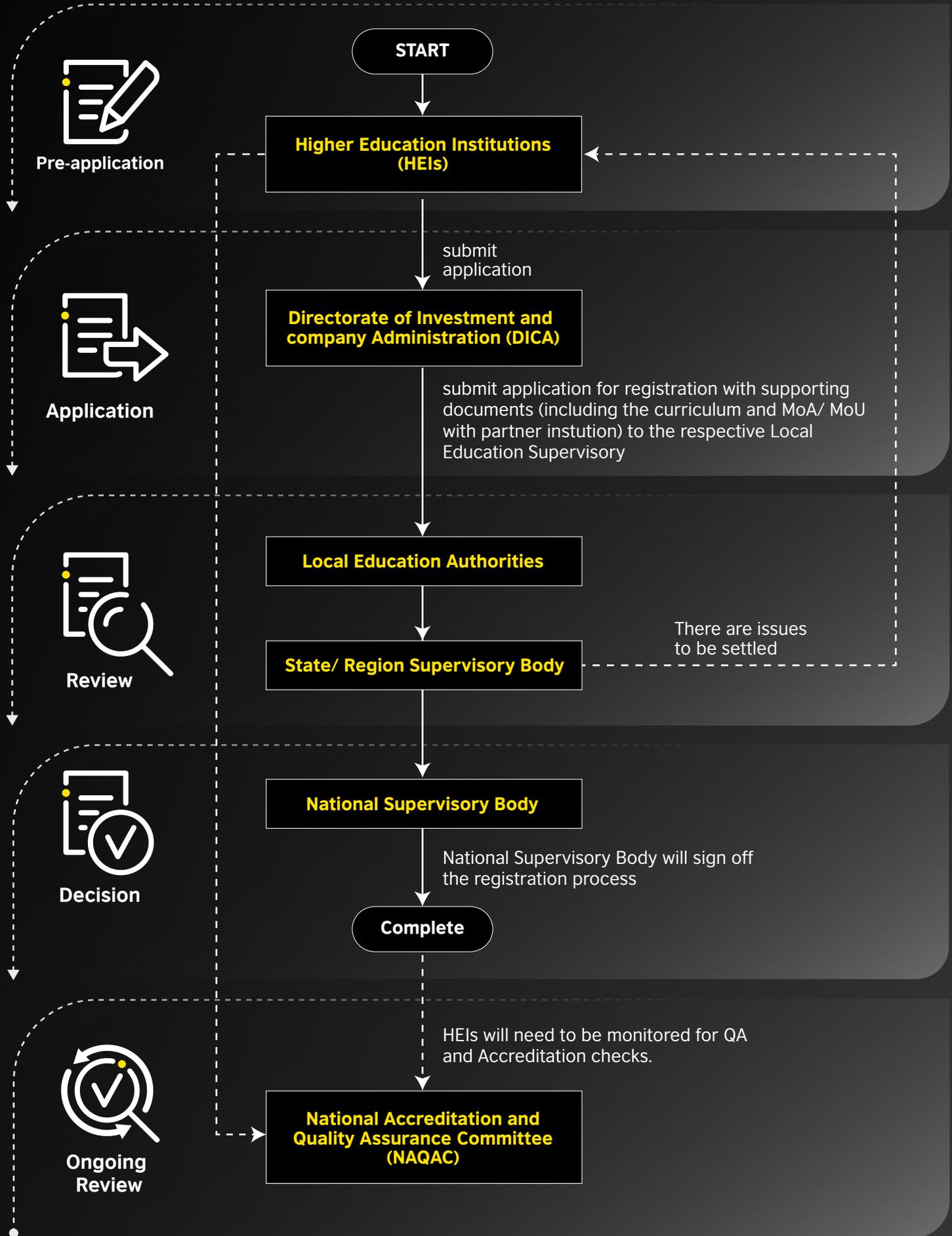
Indonesia



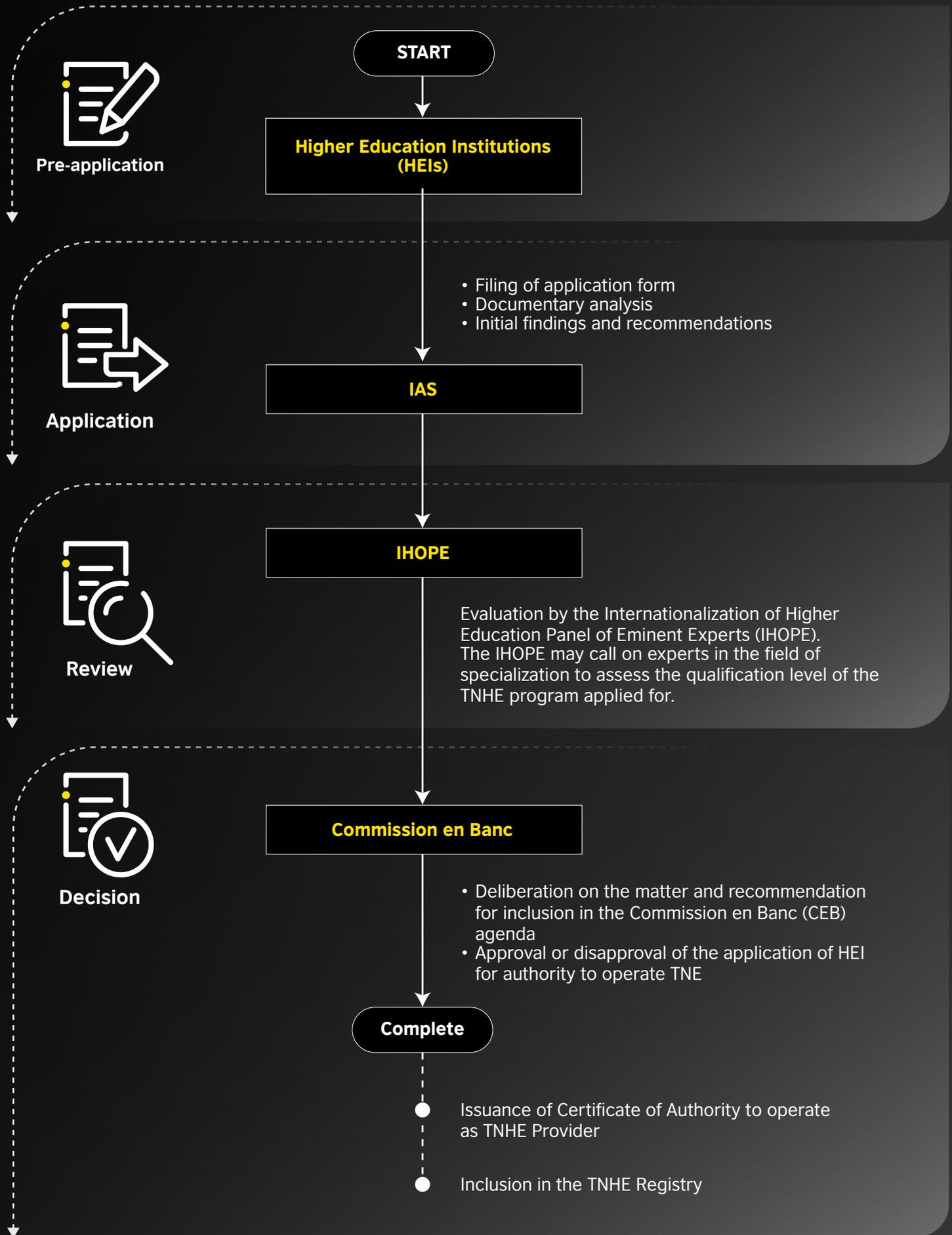
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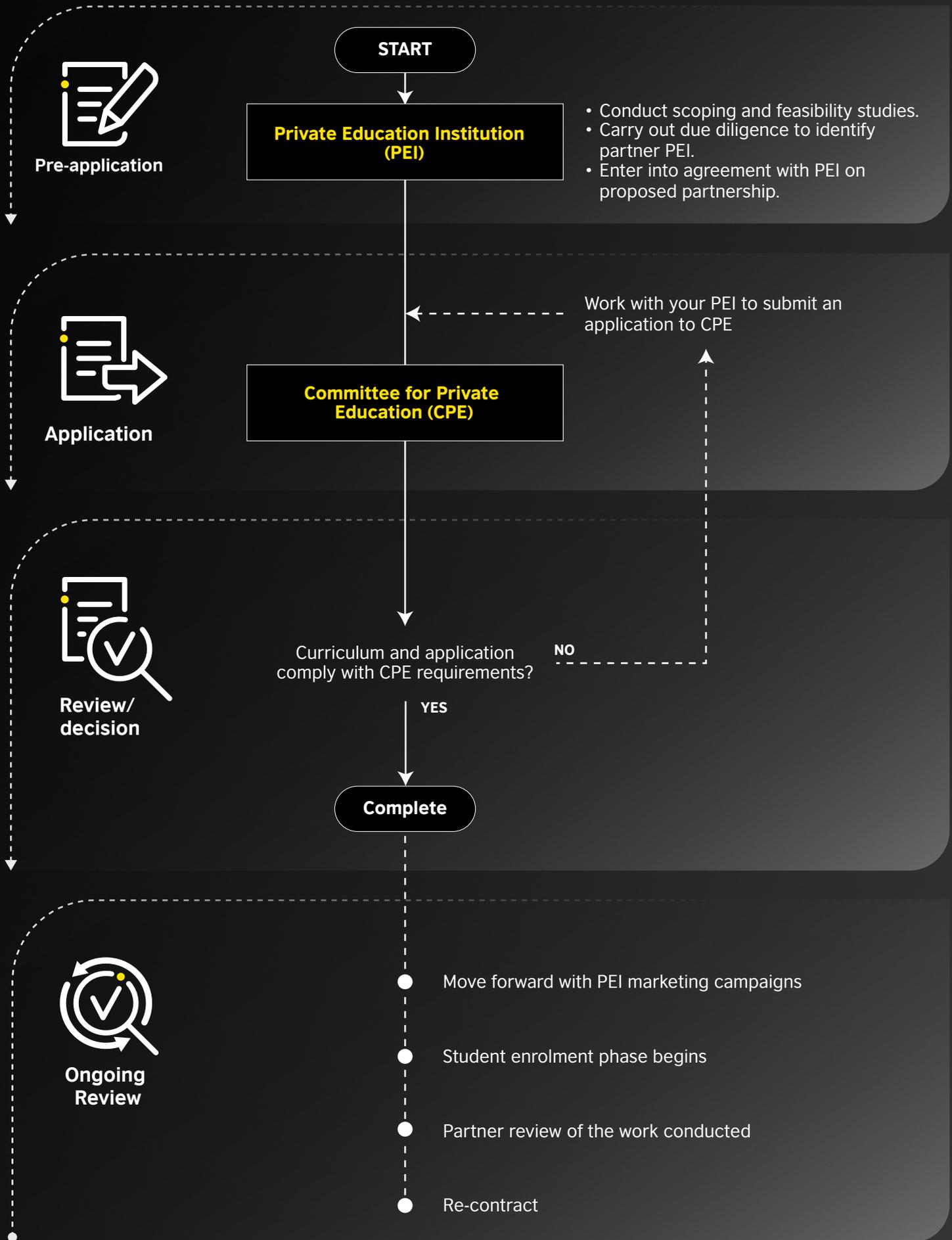
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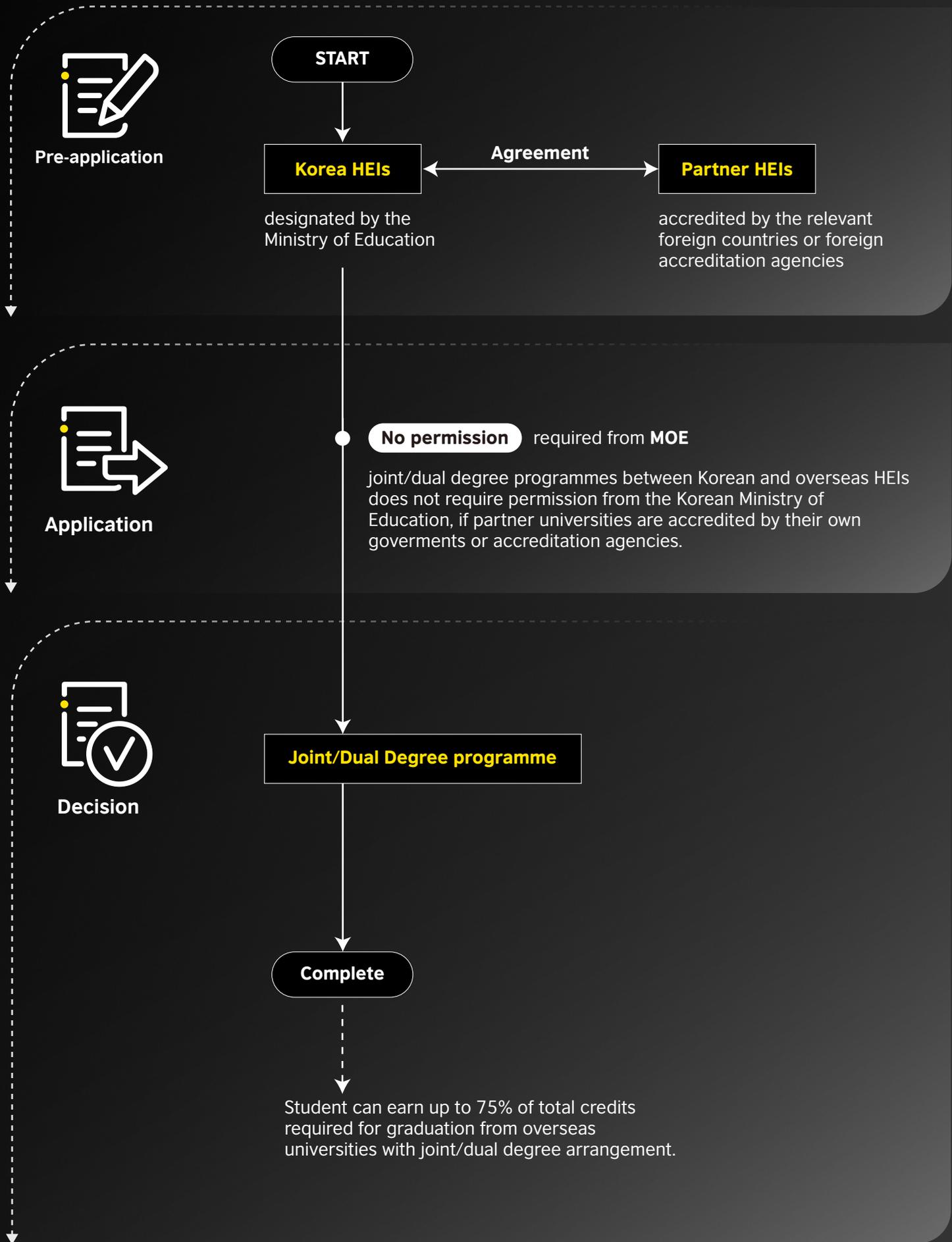
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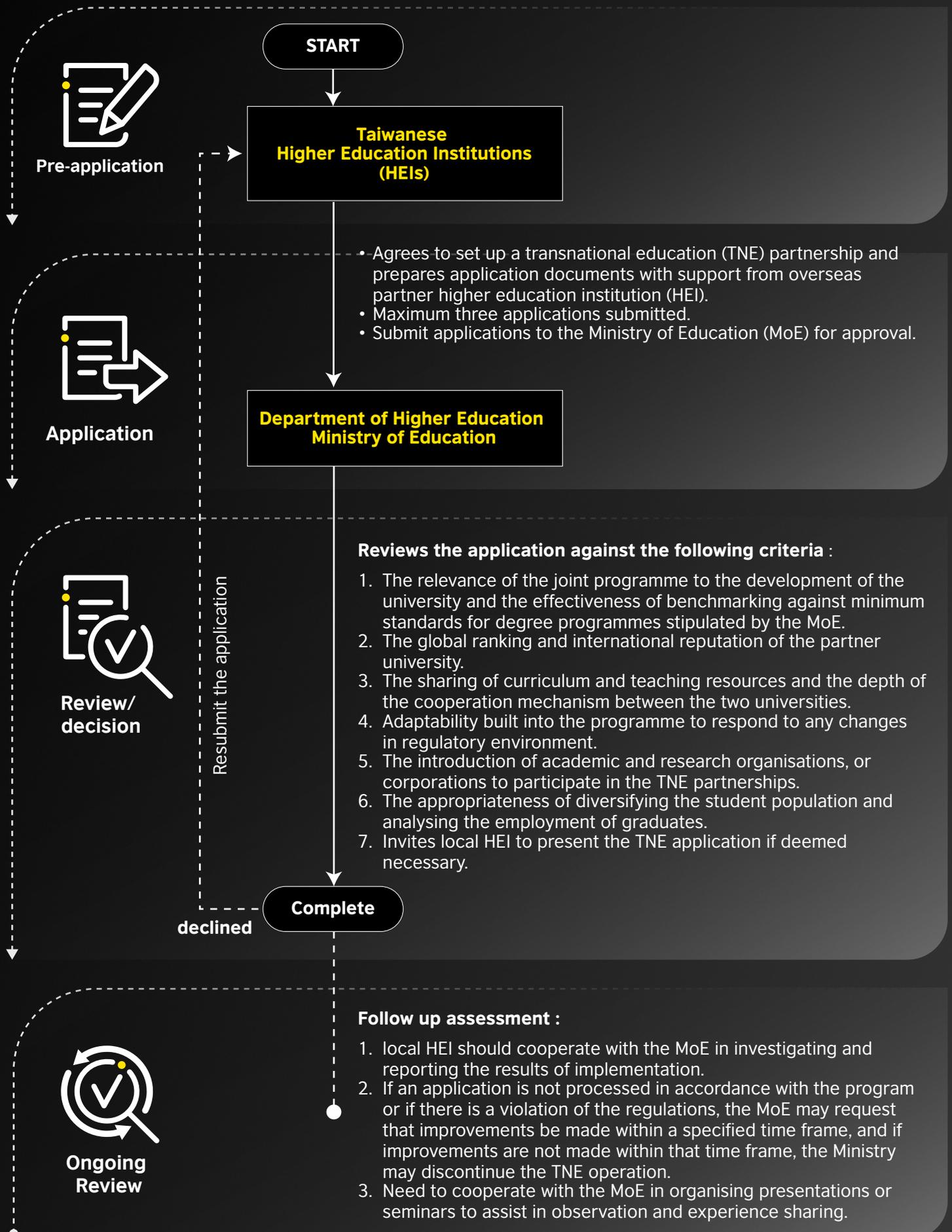
Singapore



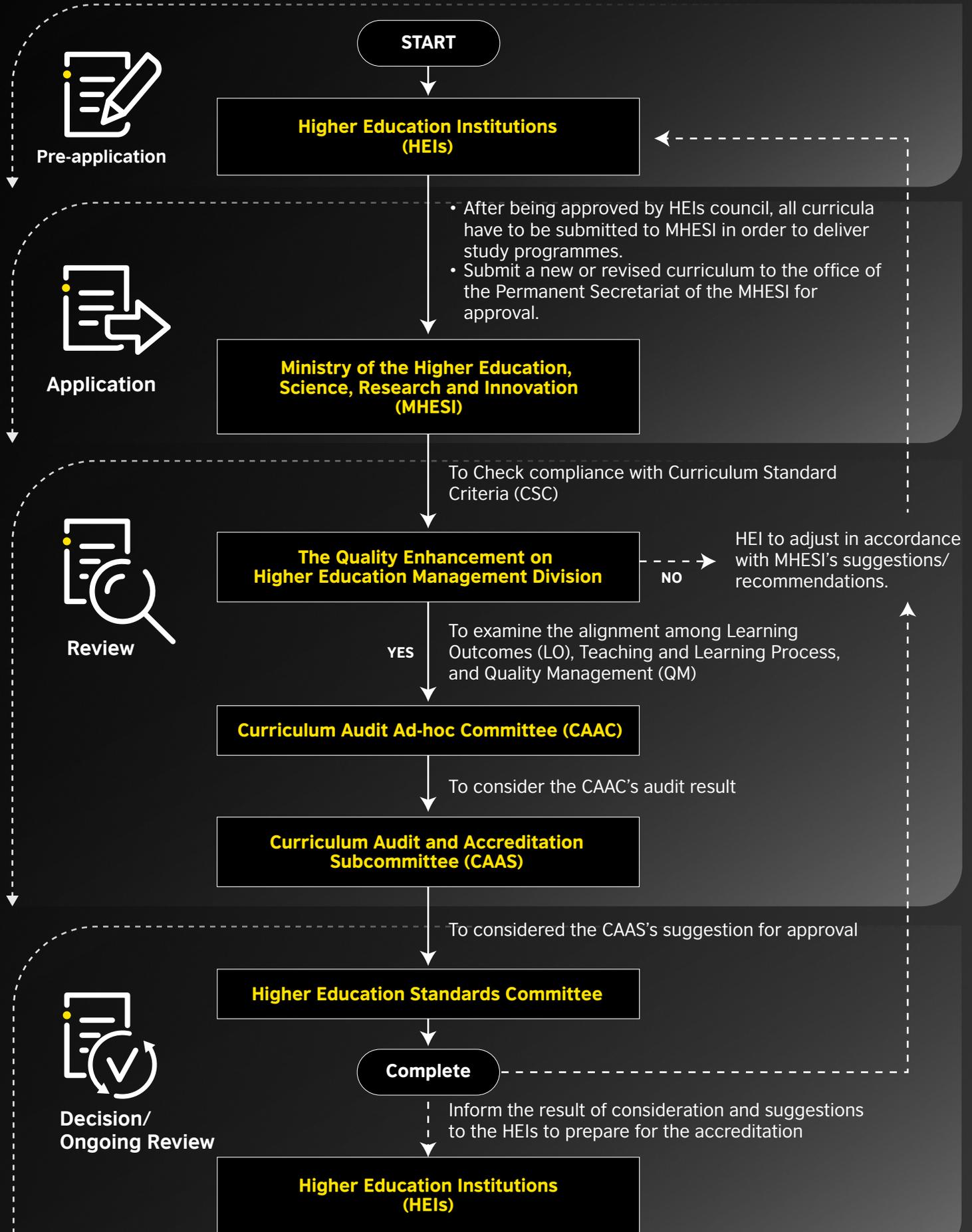
South Korea



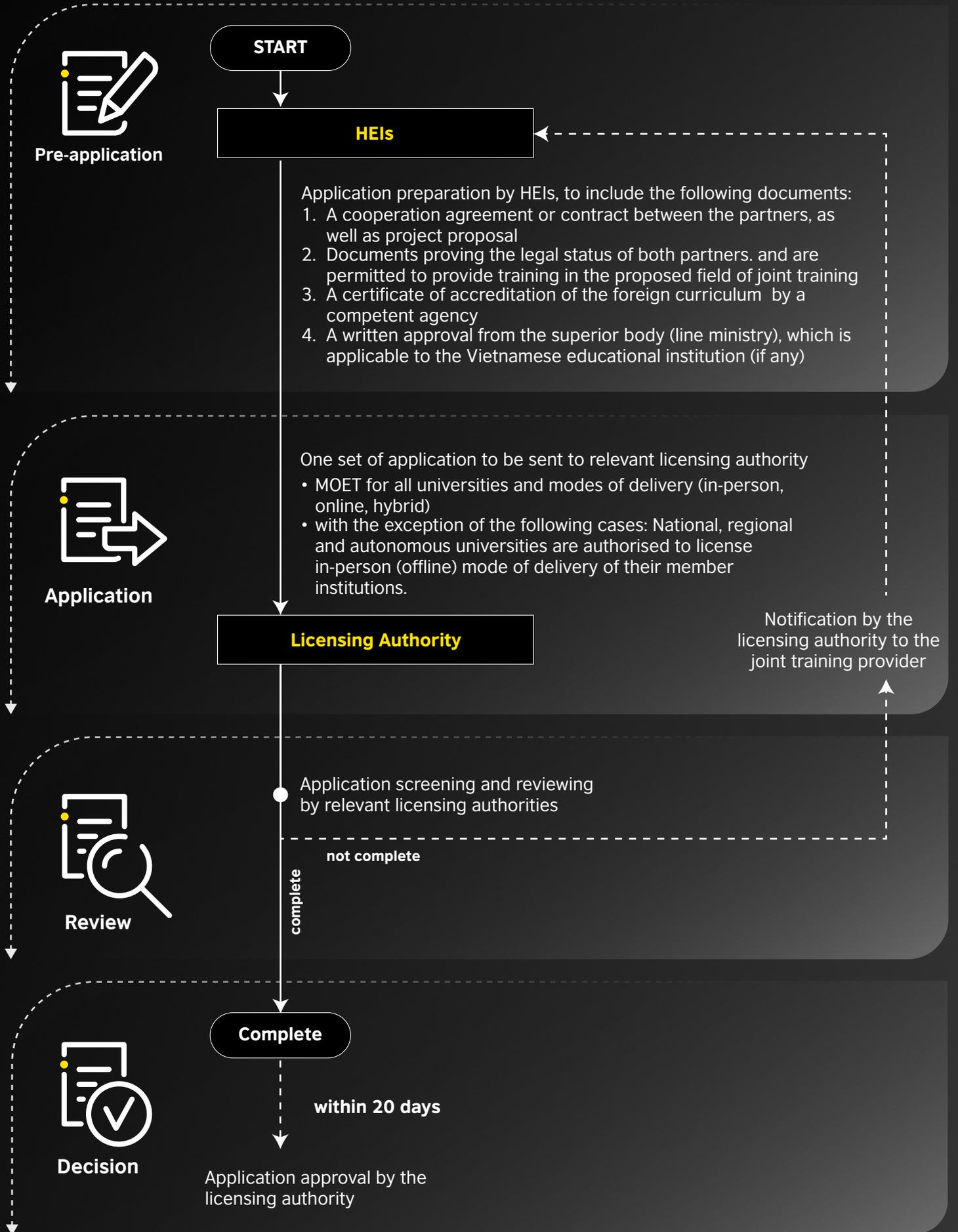
Taiwan



Thailand



Vietnam





*Questions
or
Comments?*

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