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Research on Current UK-China Transnational Education: From the Perspective of Administrators and Students

A report drafted by the British Council and the China Education Association for International Exchange

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Introduction

Internationalisation has played an important role in the development of China's higher education system for many years. Alongside other forms of international cooperation, such as research collaboration, student mobility and the introduction of overseas teaching resources, another key trend has been the expansion of transnational education (TNE). There has been a rapid expansion of Chinese-foreign joint programmes and institutes over the last two decades, helping to stimulate in-depth collaboration and support the development of both Chinese host universities and their overseas partners in areas such as teaching activities, student management, development of teachers and quality assurance.

Cooperation between China and the UK has been particularly strong in this field. Cooperation with UK partners accounts for more than one fifth of all Chinese-foreign joint programmes and institutes at the bachelor's degree level and above, as well as more than a fifth of the students on these programmes, making the UK China's leading partner country in these terms.

In order to better understand the operation of these TNE partnerships, the British Council (operating as the Cultural and Education Section of the British Embassy in China) and the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) and have worked together to produce this report on China-UK joint programmes and institutes. The report aims to analyse the management mechanisms of joint institutes and joint programmes, to summarise the experiences of both UK and Chinese partners, and to analyse the experience of students studying on these programmes in China. It is hoped that this will help to support the development of both existing TNE partnerships and institutions considering setting up a joint programme or institute.

The report is based on a number of information sources, including a literature review, the annual reports of joint programmes and institutes, a survey of both UK and Chinese administrators, semi-structured interviews with administrators from both partners, and a quantitative survey of the opinions of existing TNE students. Interviews were conducted both by the partners and with support from the Global Institute of Management and Economics at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (GIME-DUFE).

The report is divided into six sections. After the first section introduces the scope of the report, the second provides information and statistics on China-UK joint programmes and institutes, including their development over time and the most popular broad subject areas.

The report then provides information on the management of joint programmes and institutes, based on administrator surveys and interviews. This section covers the administrative structure, management mechanisms and decision-making processes of these partnerships, focusing particularly on the most challenging areas of working with international partners.

Next, the report assesses current student attitudes towards the transnational education programmes they are enrolled in, including overall satisfaction and their perception of specific aspects of the course. This section analyses the difference in attitudes between students on different course formats, and looks at how attitudes towards particular course aspects influence overall satisfaction.

The fifth section of the report consists of four case studies of joint programmes and institutes, including difficulties faced by administrators and the way that these difficulties were overcome. Finally, key suggestions are provided for both new and prospective TNE programmes based on research findings.

Readers should note that although the authors of the report have compiled a large amount of data, some of this information may be incomplete or contain inaccuracies. All analysis is based on the collected data and does not necessarily represent the views of all departments within the education institutions, the British Council or the CEAIE.

I. Scope and Definitions

This research focuses on joint programmes and institutes delivering bachelor's degree courses that have received approval from relevant authorities on the basis of the *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools* and *the Measures for the Implementation of the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools*, as listed on the "Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools" portal (http://www.crs.jsj.edu.cn/index.php/default/index/sort/1008). The research did not cover joint programmes and institutes offering postgraduate courses.

For the purposes of this research, a Chinese-foreign joint programme (中外合作办学项目), also known as a cooperatively run programme, refers to a single programme jointly delivered by Chinese and overseas education institutions in mainland China. Examples include the collaborations between Queen Mary University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. A Chinese-foreign joint institute (中外合作办学机构), also known as a cooperatively run institute, refers to a separate institution that is affiliated to the Chinese partner and granted permission to run a number of courses under the terms of agreements between the two partners. Examples include the Surrey International Institute-DUFE, the NUIST Reading Academy at the Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology, and Glasgow College UESTC at the University of Electronic Science & Technology of China in Chengdu. In particular, this definition of "joint institute" does NOT include Chinese-foreign cooperatively run universities with independent legal entity, such as Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University or the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.

Both joint programmes and joint institutes involve teaching delivered in China by the UK partner institutions, leading to a degree/degrees granted by one or both partners. They differ vastly in scale and take a wide range of forms. The course may or may not also involve a period of study in the UK. The report focuses specifically on China-UK joint programmes and institutes, and does not cover partnerships with institutions from other countries.

Programmes where the UK partner does not provide any teaching in China (for example, a credit transfer agreement or articulation partnership) are not classed as joint programmes. Similarly, any joint provision where the student is not registered on a UK degree programme while in China – for example a pre-sessional foundation course, or a joint diploma programme followed by a degree top-up year in the UK – is not included in the scope of this report.

The length of the programme is often given in the format "X+Y", where X is the number of years spent in China, while Y is the number of years spent in the UK. For example, a 3+1 bachelor's degree programme involves three years of study in China plus one year in the UK, while a 4+0 programme involves four years in China with no UK-based component.

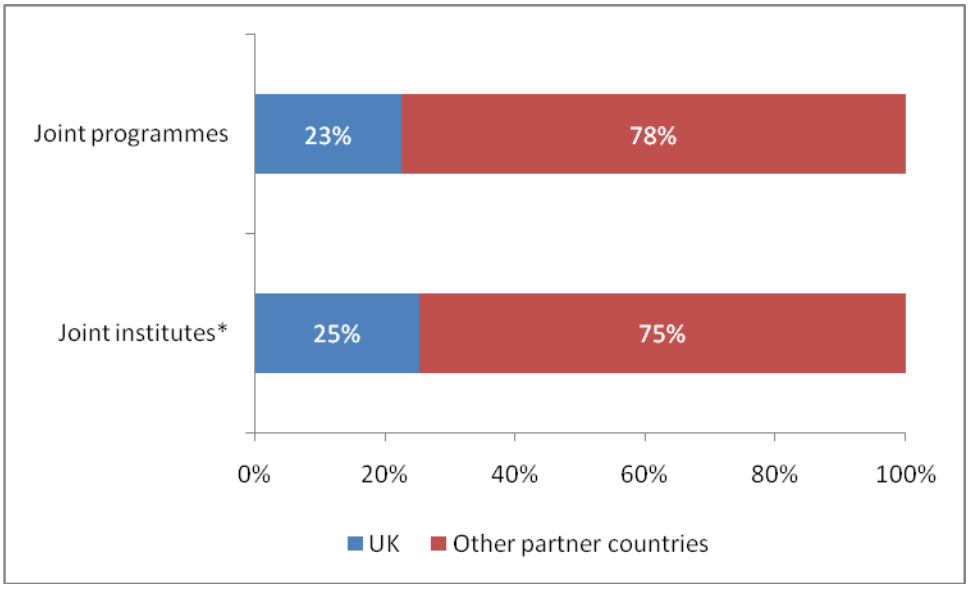
II. Overview

1. Statistics

As of March 2017, 252 joint programmes at the bachelor's degree level and above involving UK partners were operating with approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education, accounting for 23% of all Chinese-foreign joint programmes at this level.

There are also 17 China-UK joint institutes without independent legal entity, accounting for 25% of the national total at this level. For the sake of clarity, this number excludes cooperative universities with their own independent legal entity (such as Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University and the University of Nottingham Ningbo China), which are not covered by this report.

Figure 2-1 UK share of Chinese-foreign joint programmes / institutes

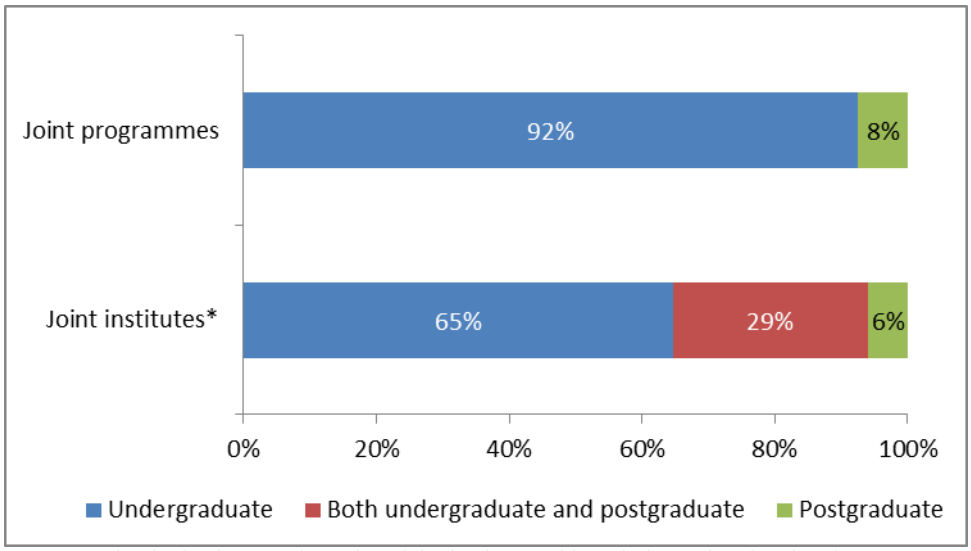


** Joint institutes refer only to joint institutes without independent legal entity.*
Source: Ministry of Education

The large majority of joint programmes involving UK partners are at the undergraduate level. 233 of the 252 programmes are at this level, accounting for 92% of the total.

The UK's share of total Chinese-foreign undergraduate programmes is much larger than the country's share of joint programmes at the postgraduate level. Although the UK accounts for 26% of undergraduate joint programmes, its share of postgraduate joint programmes is only 9%. Five of the 17 joint institutes offer both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, while one – the Nankai University – University of Glasgow Joint Graduate School – delivers only postgraduate courses.

Figure 2-2 Joint programmes/institutes by level of education

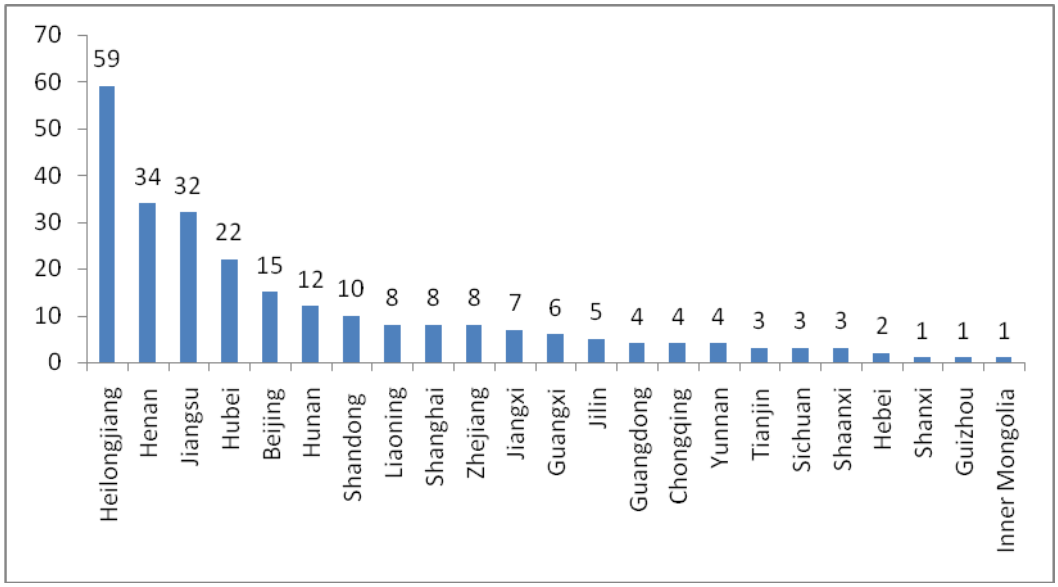


** Joint institutes refer only to joint institutes without independent legal entity.*
Source: Ministry of Education

2. Location

The 252 programmes are spread across 23 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in mainland China. Heilongjiang Province ranks first with 59 programmes, accounting for 23% of the total; Henan Province is second with 34 programmes; and Jiangsu Province is third with 32 programmes. These three provinces account for almost half (47%) of all joint programmes with a UK partner.

Figure 2-3 Joint programmes by provincial-level region



Source: Ministry of Education

The 17 joint institutes are located in 11 provinces and municipalities. Three are in Liaoning; Shanghai, Beijing, Hunan, Jiangsu and Sichuan each have two; and four other provinces each have a single joint institute.

Table 2-1 Summary of joint institutes

Name	Year of initial student intake	Location
Sun Wah International Business School, Liaoning University 辽宁大学新华国际商学院	2003	Shenyang, Liaoning
Surrey International Institute, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics 东北财经大学萨里国际学院	2007	Dalian, Liaoning
Sino-British College, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology 上海理工大学中英国际学院	2012	Shanghai
Shanghai International College of Fashion and Innovation, Donghua University 东华大学上海国际时尚创意学院	2014	Shanghai

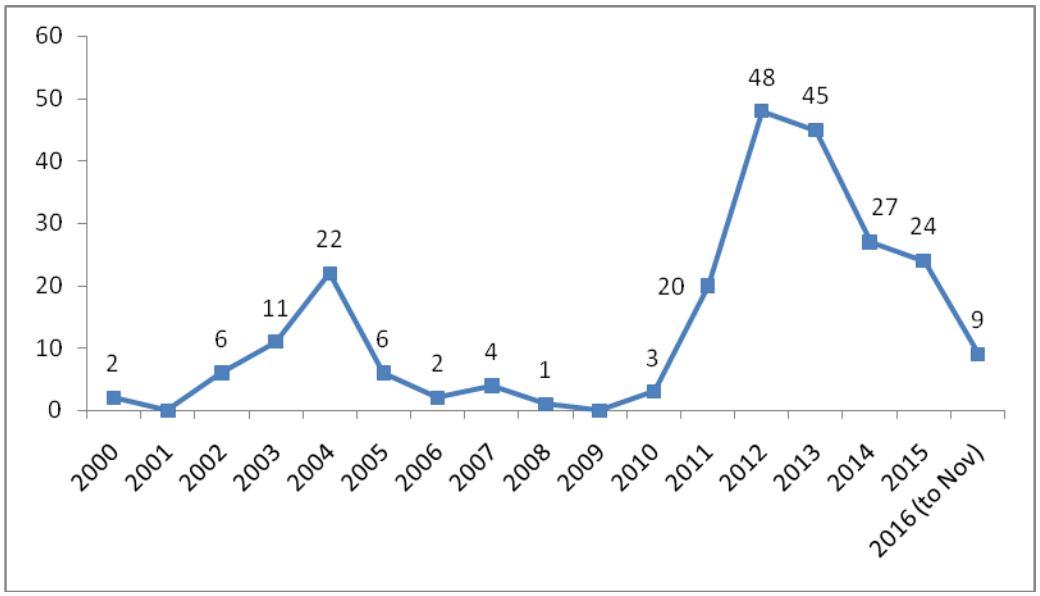
Name	Year of initial student intake	Location
SWJTU-Leeds Joint School 西南交通大学-利兹学院	2014	Chengdu, Sichuan
HBU-UCLan School of Media, Communication and Creative Industries 河北大学中央兰开夏传媒与创意学院	2014	Baoding, Hebei
Bangor College, Central South University of Forestry and Technology 中南林业科技大学班戈学院	2014	Changsha, Hunan
China Medical University – The Queen's University of Belfast Joint College 中国医科大学贝尔法斯特女王大学联合学院	2014	Shenyang, Liaoning
Faculty of International Media, Communication University of China 中国传媒大学国际传媒教育学院	2015	Beijing
NUIST-Reading Academy 南京信息工程大学雷丁学院	2015	Nanjing, Jiangsu
Birmingham Institute of Fashion and Creative Art, Wuhan Textile University 武汉纺织大学伯明翰时尚创意学院	2015	Wuhan, Hubei
Nankai University-University of Glasgow Joint Graduate School 南开大学格拉斯哥大学联合研究生院	2015	Tianjin
Lancaster University College at Beijing Jiaotong University 北京交通大学兰卡斯特大学学院	2016	Beijing
Joint Institute of Nanjing Tech University and the University of Sheffield, Nanjing Tech University 南京工业大学谢菲尔德大学联合学院	2016	Nanjing, Jiangsu
ZJU—UoE Institute, Zhejiang University 浙江大学爱丁堡大学联合学院	2016	Haining, Zhejiang
UoG-UESTC Joint School 电子科技大学格拉斯哥学院	2016	Chengdu, Sichuan
Queen Mary University of London Engineering School, Northwestern Polytechnical University 西北工业大学伦敦玛丽女王大学工程学院	2016	Xi'an, Shaanxi

Source: Ministry of Education

3. Initial student recruitment

Of the 252 programmes, data is available on the year of initial student recruitment for 230 programmes. Among these, two undergraduate programmes in economics and finance, jointly delivered by Shanghai University of Finance and Economics and the University of Southampton, were the first to admit students, in 2000. To date, the busiest years for new joint programmes were 2012 and 2013, while the proportion of programmes which have been recruiting students for more than three years is now 74%.

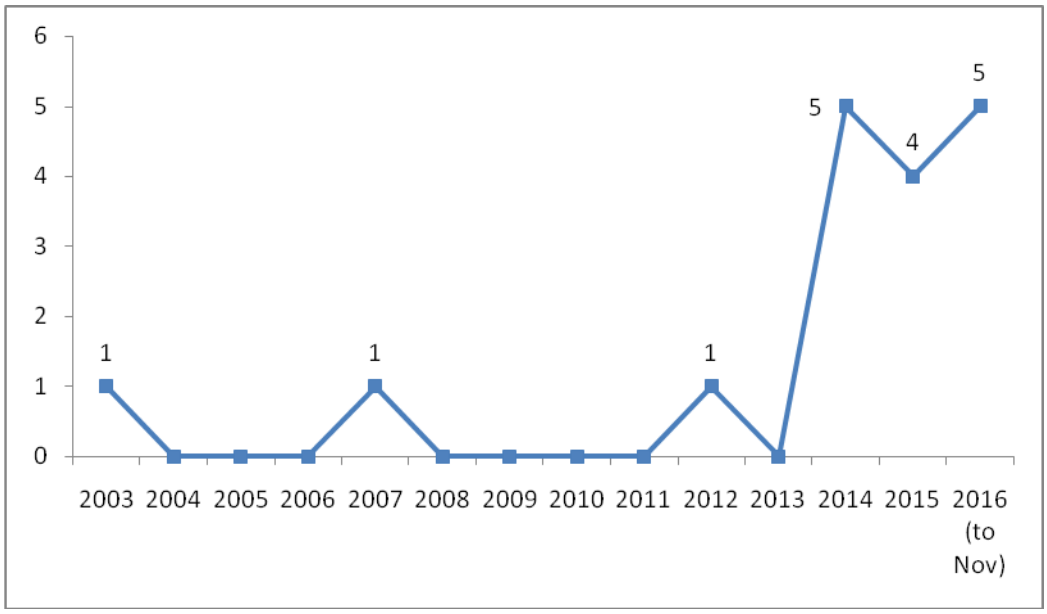
Figure 2-4 Joint programmes by year of initial recruitment



Source: Ministry of Education

Among joint institutes, the first partnership between Chinese and UK institutions was the Sun Wah International Business School at Liaoning University, established in cooperation with De Montfort University in 2003. This was followed in 2008 by the launch of the Surrey International Institute at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics. No further joint institutes were set up until 2014, but the category has expanded significantly since then. Five joint institutes started to recruit students in 2014, followed by four in 2015 and a further five in 2016.

Figure 2-5 Joint institutes by year of initial recruitment



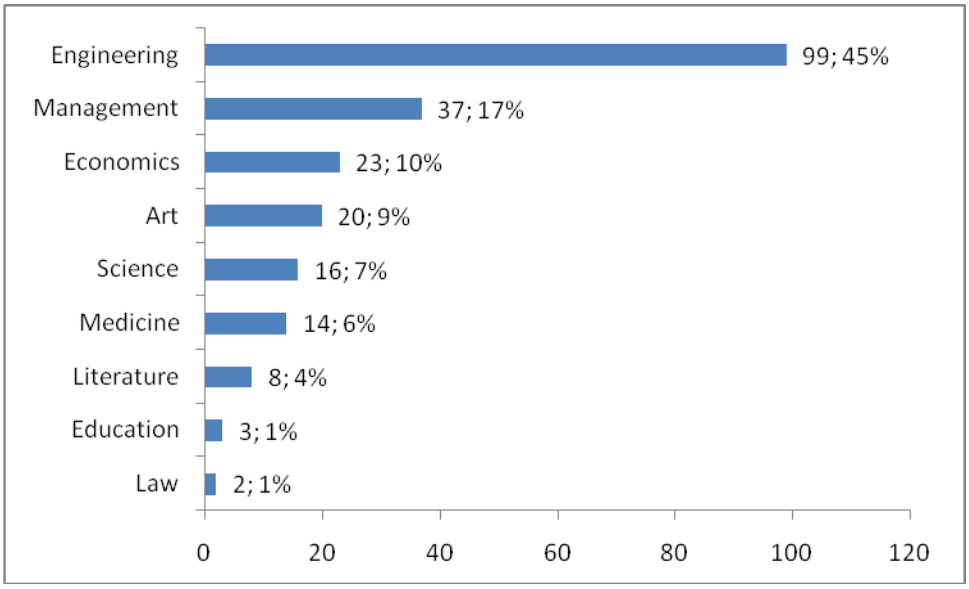
** Joint institutes refer only to joint institutes without independent legal entity.*

Source: Ministry of Education

4. Subjects taught by joint programmes and institutes

Of the 252 joint programmes, detailed subject information is available for 222 programmes across nine disciplines. The most common broad disciplines are engineering, management and economics. Engineering alone accounts for 45% of all these joint programmes, while the top three subject areas account for a combined 72%.

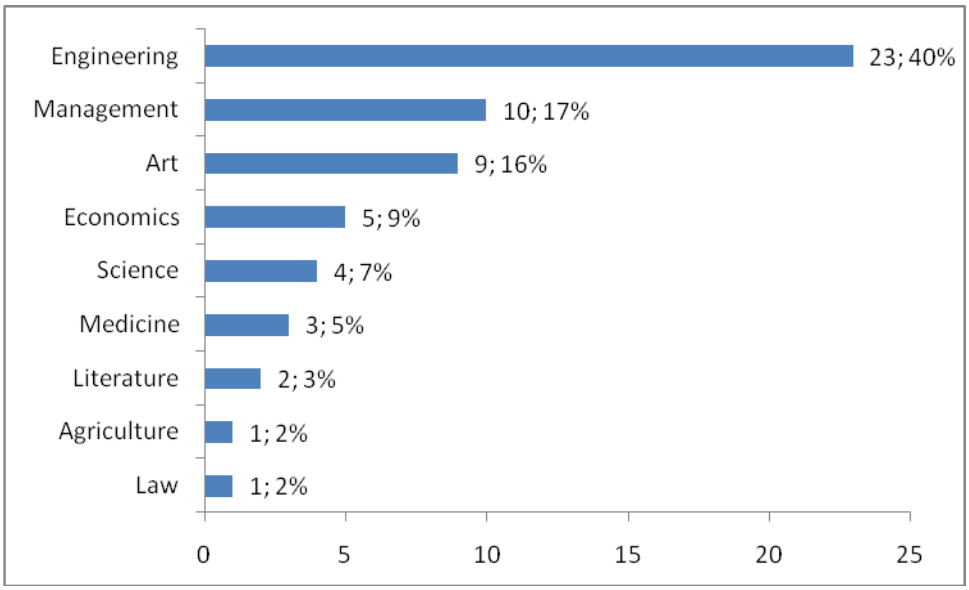
Figure 2-6 Joint programmes by discipline



Source: Ministry of Education

The 17 joint institutes teach a total of 58 programmes across nine disciplines: engineering, management, art, economics, science, medicine, literature, agriculture and law.

Figure 2-7 Programmes at joint institutes by discipline



** Joint institutes refer only to joint institutes without independent legal entity.*

Source: Ministry of Education

III. Management of joint programmes and institutes

1. Research methodology and summary of key findings

Information on TNE management methods was gathered through a series of surveys and in-depth telephone interviews with administrators from joint programmes and institutes, including both respondents employed by the Chinese institution and the UK partner.

Surveys were conducted through an online platform, and contained both closed and open questions. Surveys were sent to undergraduate-level joint programmes and institutes that had been operating for at least two years. There were a total of 95 responses from Chinese joint programme administrators, plus four valid responses from joint institutes. Responses were also received from 12 UK institutions operating joint programmes and a further five operating joint institutes.

Survey and interview findings showed that decisions at both joint programmes and joint institutes are typically made jointly by UK and Chinese partners. It is common for key decisions to be handled by joint committees of senior management staff from the partner universities while day-to-day and urgent decisions are managed by regular or ad-hoc meetings between representatives from each partner. Unilateral decision making by either side is relatively rare, but both sides are likely to think that they do this more than their partner.

When forming partnerships, both Chinese and UK institutions see subject-area expertise as the most important factor, followed by existing cooperation between the two partners. Chinese institutions tend to place more importance on building from previous cooperation compared to their UK counterparts, suggesting that UK institutions interested in establishing TNE programmes should start to build the partnership with less intensive programmes such as student or staff exchanges. Previous TNE experience is less important, but is usually seen as a positive rather than a negative.

Both UK and Chinese institutions tend to see curriculum design and scheduling as the most challenging areas in the relationship with their partner universities. In comparison, the second-most challenging aspect according to UK staff is the recruitment and evaluation of academic staff, while the Chinese side sees provision of UK teaching resources as more of an issue. This suggests that partners on prospective TNE programmes should pay close attention to issues surrounding teaching resources.

Unsurprisingly, UK academic staffs assigned to joint programmes are more likely to be in China on short-term visits, while resident administrators are both less common and, if present, less senior than those at joint institutes. Meanwhile, there does not appear to be a single dominant staffing method for Chinese staff, with joint institutes divided between those where teaching staff are mainly employed by the joint institute itself and those where staff come from other academic departments.

Many joint programmes operate on a similar basis to joint institutes, with a majority of survey respondents saying that their joint programme was organised under an international college as

opposed to being part of another academic department. In almost half of all cases the international college had full responsibility for the joint programme, while in others this was shared with the relevant academic department.

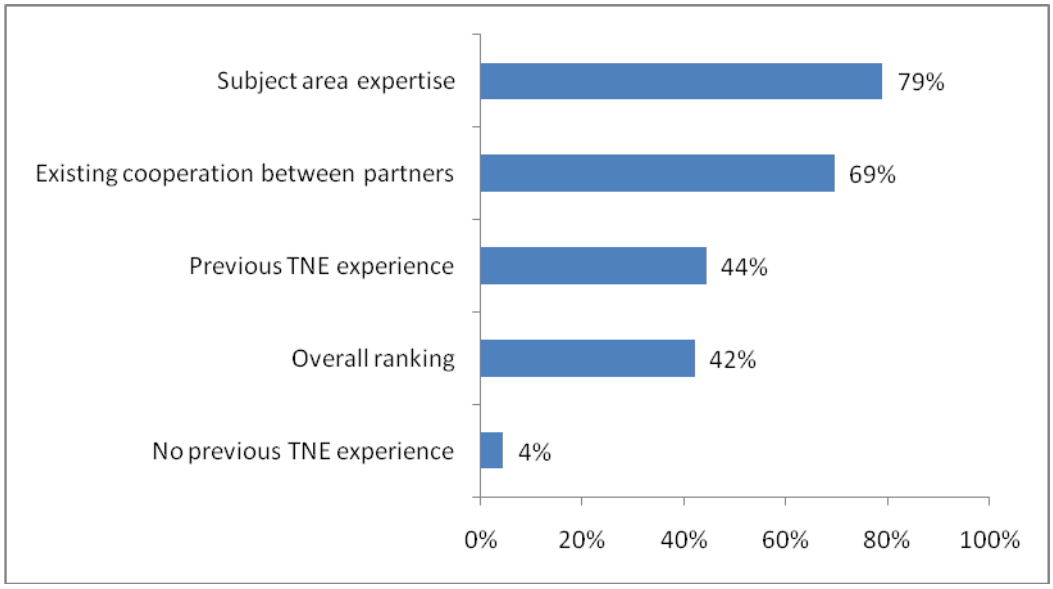
There are both similarities and differences between UK and Chinese administrators' assessments of the positive and negative aspects of their courses. At most institutions, there is general agreement among administrators that the two partners can communicate well and understand each other's interests and concerns/requests, that the programme has strong quality assurance mechanisms and procedures, and that administrators have the capacity to respond to student complaints or conflicts.

However, there are also differences between the two groups. For example, UK administrators were significantly more likely to say that the programme provided support for students after they move to the UK or that assessment is in line with both institutions' standards, but substantially less likely to agree that their programme had significant autonomy compared to other departments of the Chinese institution.

2. Important factors in universities' choice of partner

Responses to the online surveys show that subject area expertise and previous cooperation between the two partners are the most important factors driving Chinese universities' choice of UK partners. A large majority of joint programme administrators and all surveyed joint institute administrators agreed that at least one of these was among their priorities; most respondents listed both.

Figure 2-8 Reasons for choosing UK partners (Chinese administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

Some Chinese TNE administrators commented that their institutions expect their potential partners to have particular strengths or world-class subject quality in the relevant disciplines, and that this is the main basis for cooperation. Others said that their primary goal was to introduce international quality teaching resources or learn from the UK partner's advanced educational philosophy and methods.

It is also unsurprising to see that existing cooperation with the relevant UK partner matters for Chinese institutions. Many joint programmes start from existing cooperation such as student or research exchanges, which lay a solid foundation for building mutual trust and contribute to further cooperation. Meanwhile, few saw a lack of experience in operating joint programmes or institutes in China as a positive factor.

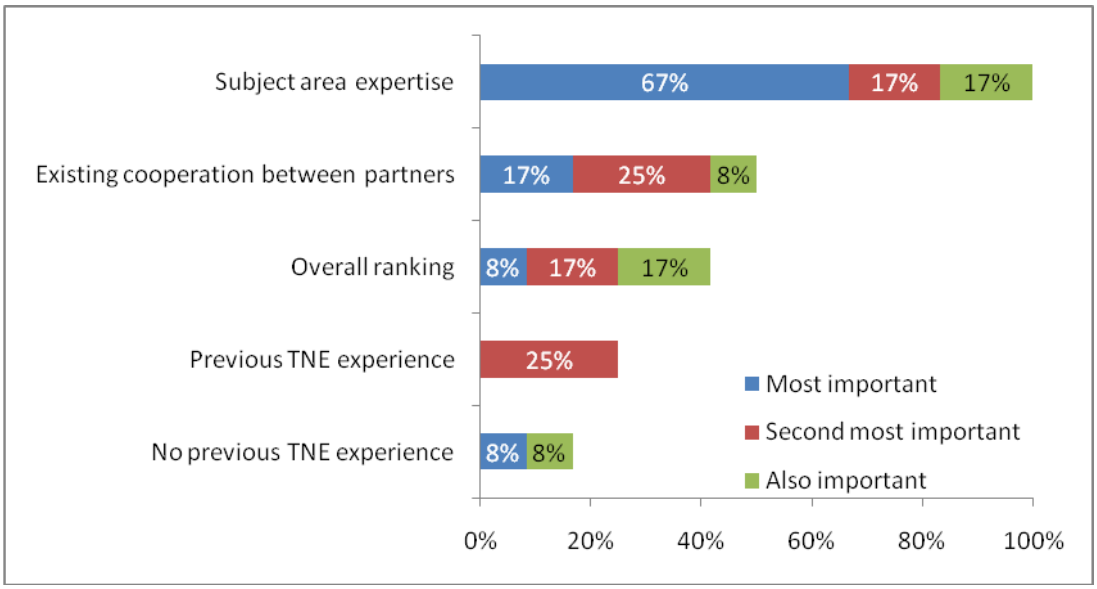
As with the Chinese side, UK universities tend to see their partner's subject strength as the most important factor when establishing a joint programme. All respondents listed this as an important factor, and two thirds described it as the most important factor.

Experience of previous successful cooperation was the second most significant factor for UK joint programme administrators when choosing a Chinese partner, just as it was with their Chinese counterparts. However, while this was a close second among Chinese respondents, this factor was

significantly less likely to be listed by the UK side. As with Chinese administrators, overall academic ranking was similarly seen by UK administrators as the third most important area.

UK joint institutes gave somewhat different answers, with overall ranking most likely to be seen as the key factor, followed by previous successful cooperation. This variation may simply be due to the limited number of joint institute respondents.

Figure 2-9 Reasons for choosing Chinese partners (UK administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from UK institutions)

The overall similarity between the responses given by UK and Chinese joint programme administrators shows that the demands of the two groups are roughly in line, but the Chinese side appears to pay more attention to links from existing cooperation. This suggests that UK institutions aiming for formal TNE programmes should see partnerships such as joint research or academic exchange as a building block towards full TNE programmes.

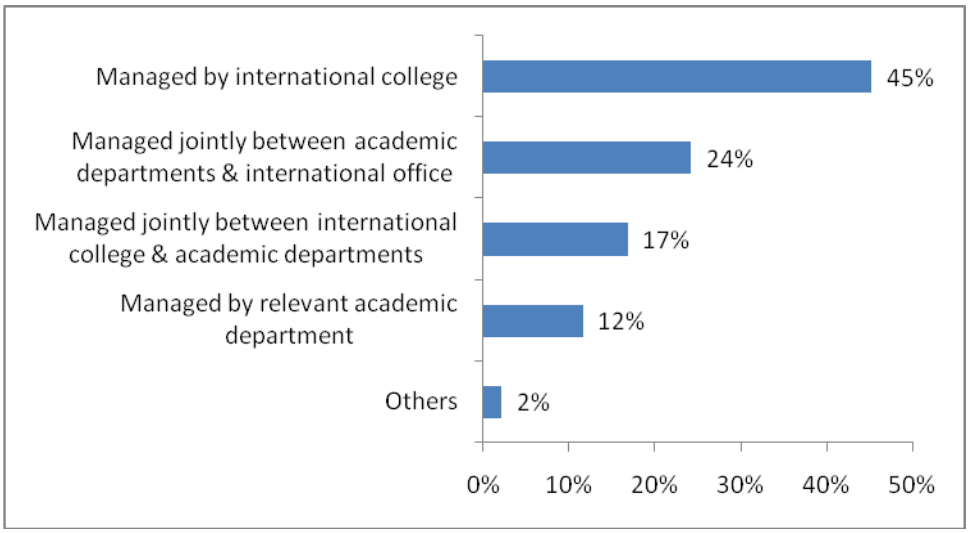
These results also reflect the findings from student surveys, which see education quality as the top selling point of joint programmes.

3. Joint programme administration structure

In spite of the differences between joint institutes and joint programmes, analysis of surveys shows that many joint programmes have adopted similar administration structure to joint institutes by putting these programmes under an "international college" or "school of international education", a separate institution for international education related programmes that is affiliated to the Chinese partner. The majority (62%) of surveyed Chinese joint programme administrators said that their institution used this structure, either as the main body responsible for the joint programme or in cooperation with the relevant academic department (and sometimes also the university's international office).

Even among universities that do not have an international college structure, the university's international office usually plays an important role in managing the joint programme – only 12 per cent of respondents said that the joint programme was run only by the relevant academic department.

Figure 2-10 Joint programme administration structure



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

International colleges often have in place independent administrative staff and student affairs offices, and some have independent teaching and research teams. Some comments in the survey show that international colleges are often set up specifically for joint programmes, although they can also cover other activities such as international foundation year courses.

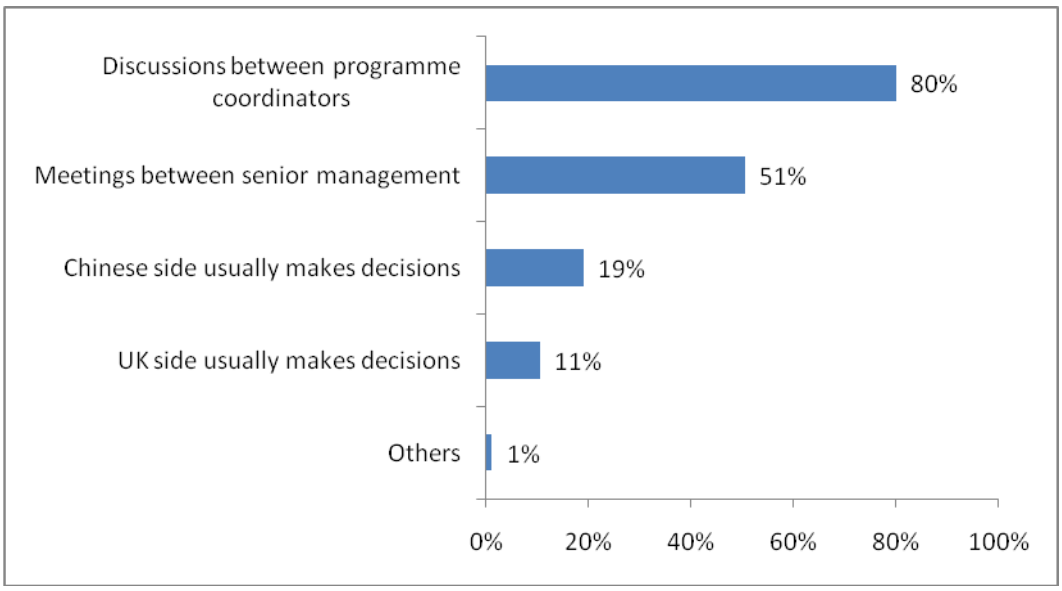
Comments from survey respondents and interviewees give more depth to this finding. In comparison to joint programmes operated by an academic department of the Chinese university, international colleges are relatively independent with greater autonomy, and their staffs have a better understanding of Chinese-foreign education cooperation, which allows more room for innovation. The two sides are able to communicate and manage more efficiently and optimise management models and mechanisms. In addition, they can help to contribute to international characteristics distinctive from other departments within the university and give joint programme students a stronger sense of belonging.

4. Decision-making process

The responses of surveyed Chinese administrators indicate that joint programmes and joint institutes typically make decisions in a similar way. The most commonly cited decision-making channels were regular and irregular consultations between the responsible administrators from the UK and Chinese institutions, followed by meetings between senior university management from both sides. One-sided decision making was much less common among joint programmes, while none of the four joint institute administrators said that this happened.

Another relevant finding is that both joint programmes and institutes tend to have multiple decision-making channels, rather than relying on a single process. The most common single response is that decisions are made in both senior management meetings and through discussion with administrators from each party on the ground. This combination was particularly common among joint institute administrators, with three of the four giving this answer.

Figure 2-4 Main decision-making channels (Chinese administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

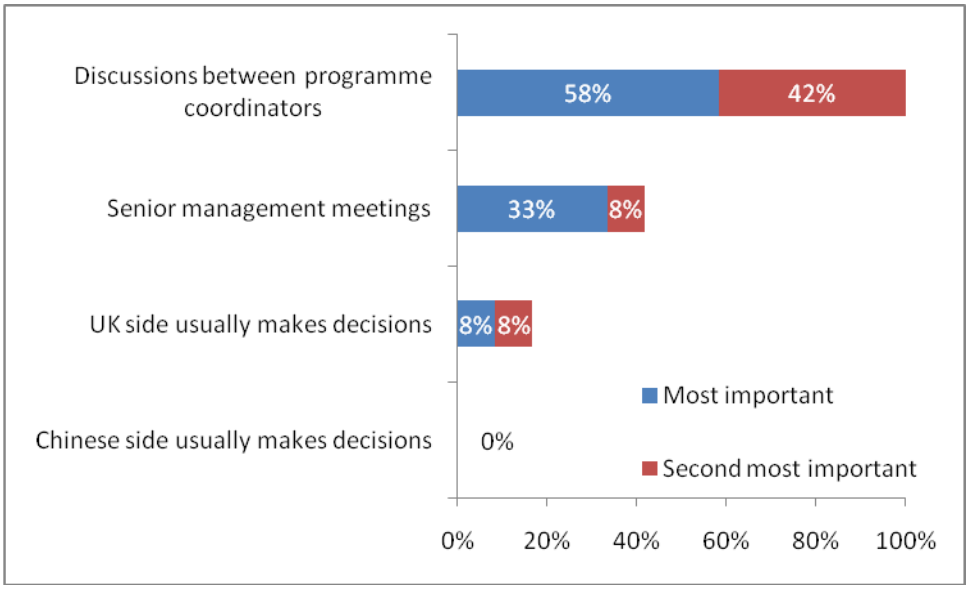
As with Chinese respondents, UK TNE administrators saw meetings and discussions between programme coordinators from both parties as the main way of making key decisions on the TNE programme. UK administrators from all respondents operating joint programmes, and three of the five joint institutes, said that this was one of their major decision-making channels.

The second most common method, again by a large margin, was scheduled meetings between the senior management of both institutions. This was again in line with the finding from Chinese administrative staff. In comparison, very few UK respondents said that decisions were made mainly by either the UK or Chinese institution.

When asked about the relative importance of the different channels, respondents that had listed both programme coordinators and joint senior management committees tended to say that the latter were more important. This suggests that an institution with active senior management

involvement will tend to pass most important decisions up to this level, even if programme coordinators are empowered to make some decisions.

Figure 2-5 Main decision-making channels (UK administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from UK institutions)

Although respondents from both Chinese and UK administration teams agreed that decisions were mainly taken jointly, it is notable that Chinese joint programme administrators were more likely to say that the Chinese side was the main decision-maker, while UK institutions' staff were more likely to say that the UK side was dominant. This suggests that both sides may have an exaggerated impression of their own power.

According to comments made in interviews and in open-ended survey questions, high-level meetings of joint senior management committees tend to be the highest decision-making organisations. Meetings of this committee are more likely to cover macro-level issues such as cooperation model, development orientation, strategic positioning, financial management, senior staff selection, employment and course structures, rather than specific issues and practices. In addition, these high-level meetings are usually held only once or twice a year, meaning that they are less suited to addressing unexpected or urgent problems or immediate practical issues.

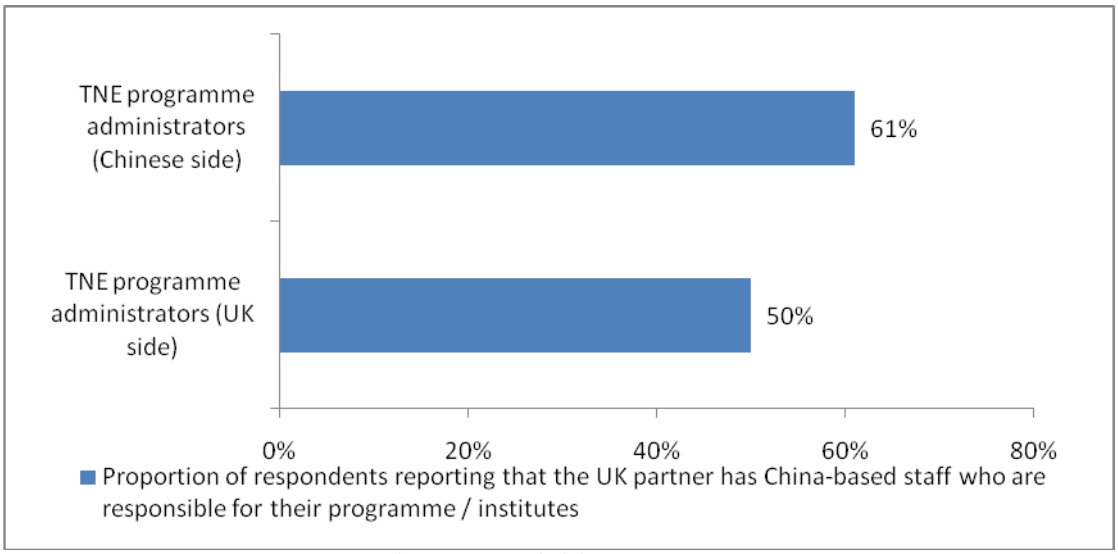
In contrast, consultations between school and subject directors from Chinese and UK universities are more frequent and focus more on pragmatic decision-making, efficient communication and mutual consultation. Regular meetings can help to deal with routine issues, review and assess progress and implement strategies, while ad-hoc meetings can supplement this by focusing on specific issues as well as building trust and understanding between UK and Chinese staff.

5. UK institutions' China-based representatives

UK universities' China-based coordinators for joint programmes and institutes are responsible for communicating with Chinese partners, making routine decisions and participating in the running of the joint programme or institution. In comparison with administrators based mainly in the UK, they have a greater familiarity with the issues the programme is facing as well as a better knowledge of the partner Chinese university, which can help to both improve the quality of the joint programme or institute and guarantee the interests of the UK partner.

Among Chinese administrators at joint programmes, 61% said their institute had permanent UK administrative staff. Meanwhile in the UK administrator survey, joint programmes were evenly divided between those that did and did not have China-based staff responsible for the programme.

Figure 2-7 UK institutions having China-based staff responsible for their joint programme / institute



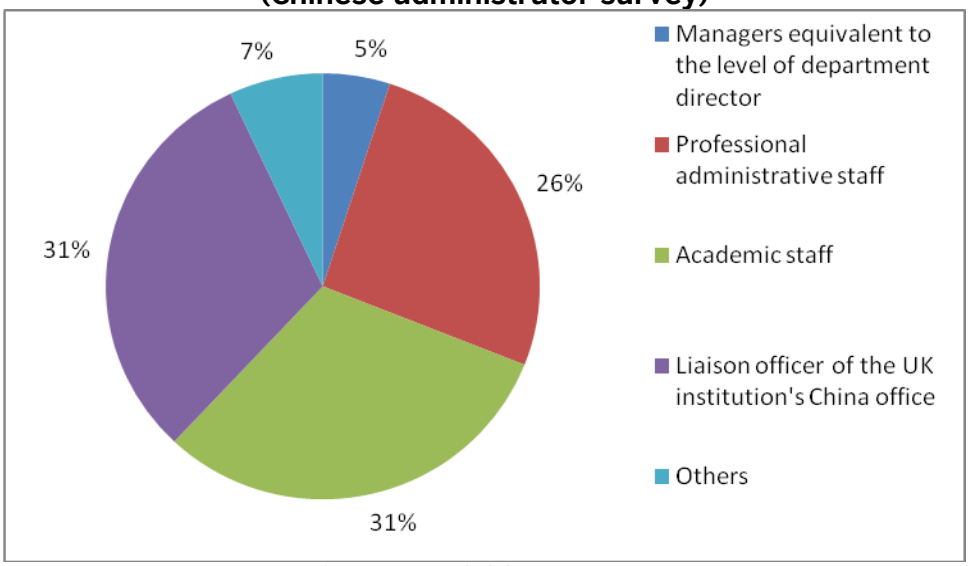
Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from UK and Chinese institutions)

All surveyed UK joint institute administrators said that they had a China-based staff member who was responsible for their institute, while three of the four Chinese joint institute administrators said the same thing. The higher proportion at joint institutes versus joint programmes may be because the larger number of students and staff and more complicated composition of teaching staff make these institutes harder to manage remotely. In contrast, joint programmes tend to have simpler management structures and fewer issues in need of frequent communication, which could make them easier to resolve through other channels such as video calls and regular meetings. In addition, costs of permanent UK managers are relatively high, making them less affordable for some joint programmes who must improve effectiveness of management through other means.

There are clear differences in the type of China-based UK managers reported at joint institutes and joint programmes. Two of the three Chinese administrators whose joint institutes had permanent UK management staff, and two of the five UK respondents, said that this manager was at the head-of-department level. The remaining respondents said that the person in charge of their joint institute from the UK side was a member of their academic teaching staff.

In contrast to joint institutes, permanent UK staffs at joint programmes seem to be less senior. According to Chinese administrators, a substantial proportion of these managers are from the UK institution's China liaison office rather than the home campus. Even among those sent from the home campus, responsible staffs at joint programmes tend to be less senior, with only 5 per cent being at the head-of-department level with decision-making authority.

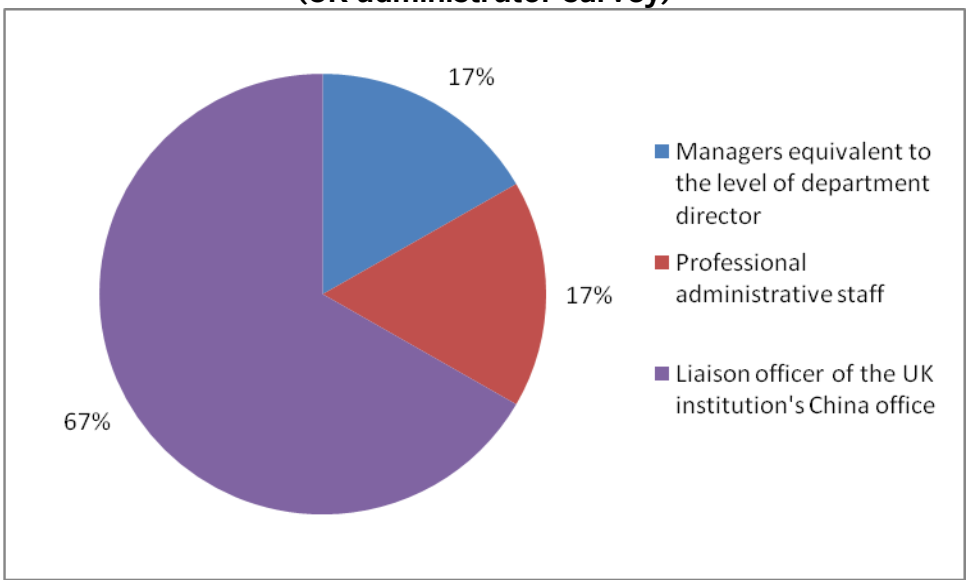
Figure 2-6 Type of China-based UK institution staff responsible for joint programmes (Chinese administrator survey)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

The UK administrator survey revealed an even larger proportion of joint programmes run by officers from the institution's China liaison office. Two thirds of survey respondents gave this answer.

Figure 2-7 Type of China-based UK institution staff responsible for joint programmes (UK administrator survey)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from UK institutions)

The large proportion of senior managers and other dedicated administrative staff at joint institutes shows that UK universities pay close attention to their management, but the findings for joint programmes indicate a lower level of importance placed on these by the home campus.

In particular, liaison officers generally tend to be more responsible for marketing and lack experience in areas such as educational resource management and discipline development. They are therefore less able to provide assistance in education quality, student experience and development of teachers; furthermore, in some cases these administrators come from third-party Chinese organisations rather than the UK University itself.

One notable difference between UK and Chinese administrators' responses to this question was that UK administrators – especially at joint programmes – were significantly less likely to say that the staff member responsible for their joint programme was an academic. In contrast, this was the single most common response among Chinese joint programme administrators. This may suggest that the Chinese partner often sees UK academics as having more administrative authority than is actually the case.

6. Academic staff composition of TNE programmes and institutes

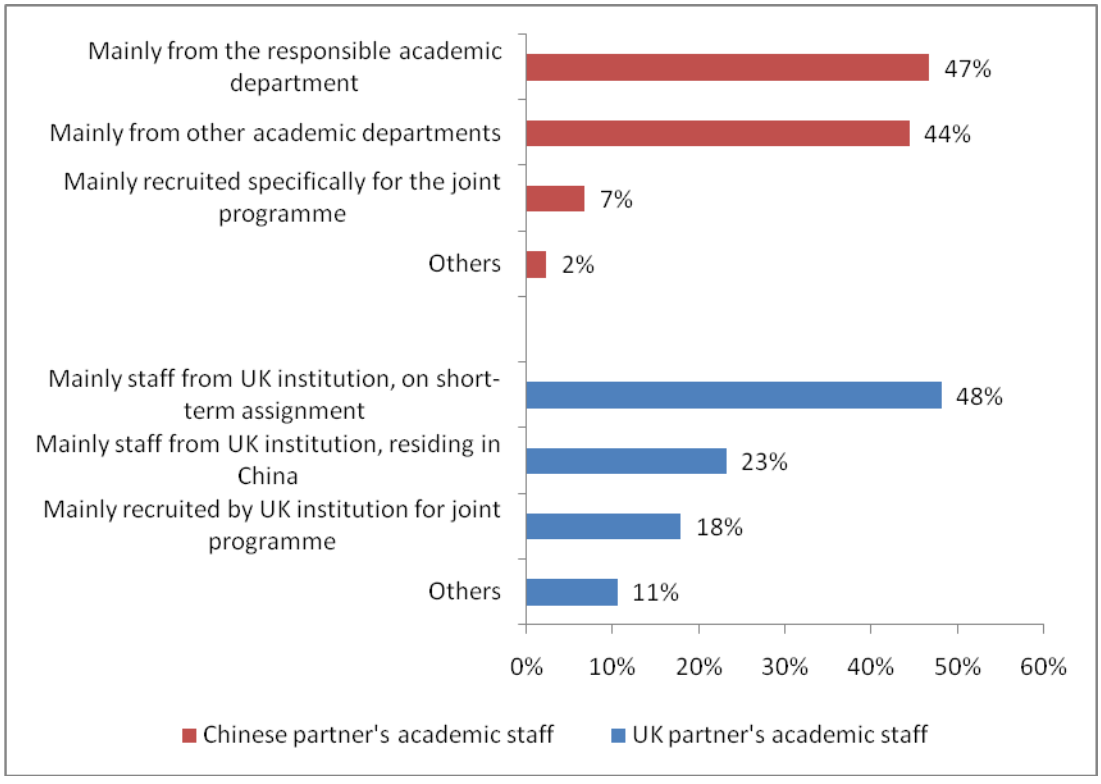
All surveyed Chinese joint institute administrators said that the bulk of their Chinese staff were either directly employed by the joint institute or that their main responsibility was in the joint institute, with none saying that staff from other academic departments made up the bulk of staff.

Meanwhile, in joint programmes, there is a roughly even split between those that mainly rely on staff from the relevant academic department responsible for the joint programme or from other academic departments of the Chinese university. This may be related to programmes where "the relevant department" is the international college, which may not have its own teaching staff.

As only 7% of administrators say Chinese teaching staff were mostly recruited specifically for the joint programme, this suggests that most Chinese teaching staff are likely to work on other courses as well as the joint programme itself. At the same time, administrator survey findings suggest that joint programmes place relatively less attention on management of teaching staff, which may reduce the amount of time academics spend focused on education internationalisation and communication with their UK counterparts.

There are analogous differences between the types of UK staff at joint institutes compared to joint programmes. Joint institutes tend to employ UK teaching staff on a long-term basis, either sent from the UK partner university or recruited specifically for the joint institute, although short-term "flying faculty" do also exist. In contrast, UK staffs working on joint programmes are more likely to be on short-term trips to China rather than based in the country full-time.

Figure 2-12 Staff composition at joint programmes (Chinese administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

This shows that UK teachers on joint programmes generally are in China to deliver intensive courses, which puts pressure on the time they are able to spend communicating with students and with Chinese faculty. This was mentioned as a major issue in many student questionnaires (see Section IV), as it can make it difficult for students to go deeper or expand their learning. This came out as one of the most important challenges in operation and management put forward by joint programme administrators in questionnaires and interviews.

The number and proportion of UK teaching staff is an important measure of the quality of a joint programme or institute. Teaching staff on long-term assignment from the UK partner universities can bring their experience in teaching methods, teaching materials, evaluation systems and teacher management to institutions; this can help to support and raise the level of domestic academic staff. By comparison, in spite of their academic qualifications and international horizons, most teachers who are independently recruited by the UK partner for the purposes of the joint institute did not deliver education in the home university, which means that these staffs are less able to introduce UK teaching expertise. Meanwhile, despite their expertise, flying faculties are also less able to provide a positive learning experience as the time they spend in China is limited.

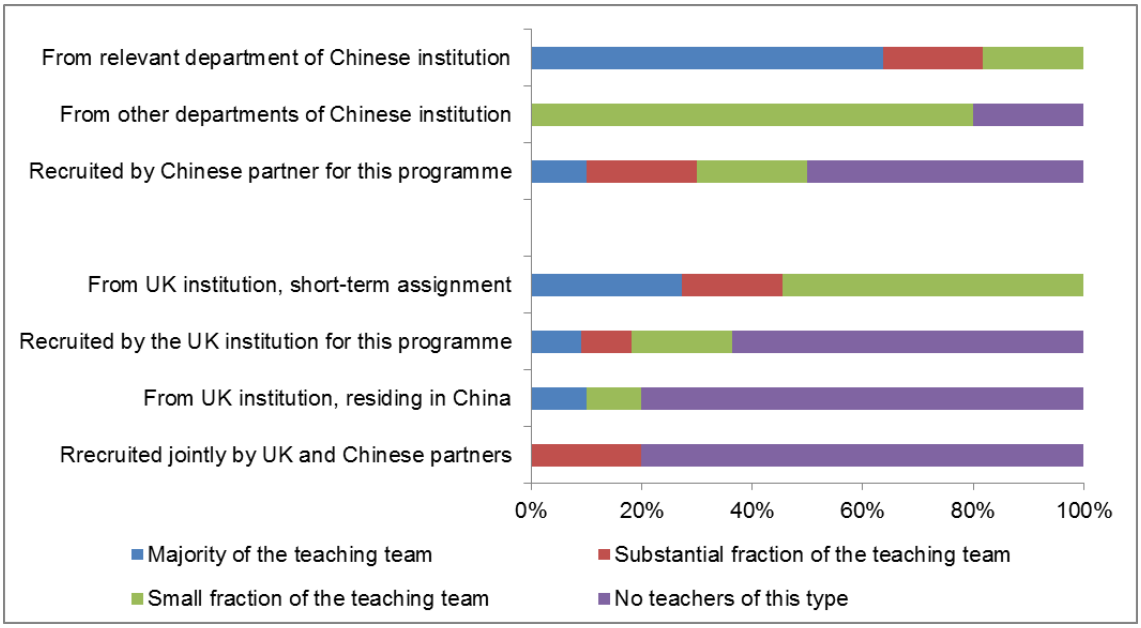
Despite these negative aspects of the flying faculty model, the relatively small number of students in joint programmes makes it difficult to achieve balance of costs and benefits for permanent China-based staff. One positive finding is that some joint programmes have adopted Internet technologies and online teaching and communication to increase real-time interaction between UK teachers and students. In this way, UK academic staff can closely supervise and guide students even while they are in the UK, which could help to compensate for the limited time they spend in China. However, it should be noted that the Chinese government does not currently recognise credits granted for distance and online courses, so these methods can only be used as a supplement to face-to-face teaching.

Results from the UK administrator survey gave similar overall findings. The most popular staffing model appeared to be a combination of existing Chinese and UK staff from the respective institutions, with the UK staff being on long-term assignment in China; only two of the five joint institutes said that staff on short-term assignment in China made up a substantial proportion of their teaching force, while another two used no flying faculty at all. Another finding here was the variety of different staffing models in each institute, with short-term, long-term assigned and specifically hired UK staff coexisting in the same joint institutes.

Among joint programme administrators, one contrast between Chinese and UK respondents was on the origin of the programme's Chinese teaching staff. UK respondents were noticeably more likely to say that the Chinese partner's staffs were recruited specifically for the joint programme and significantly less likely to say that they came from departments other than the one mainly responsible for the joint programme, in comparison to their Chinese counterparts.

In summary, the most common teaching format for the UK partner was clearly to send academics to China on a short-term assignment. Meanwhile, around a third said that they recruited China-based teaching staff specifically for the joint programme, while one in five said they sent existing UK staff to live in China and teach on the programme. All of these respondents had a combination of China-based staff and flying faculty.

Figure 2-13 Staff composition at joint programmes (UK administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from UK institutions)

7. Teacher management mechanisms in joint institutes

Joint institutes have a larger number of full-time teaching staff than joint programmes, and enjoy more autonomy in management of teachers. In addition, field interviews show that there tend to be more problems in this area at joint institutes compared to joint programmes. As a result, this report has conducted a more detailed investigation into teacher management mechanisms at joint institutes in particular.

There seems to be relatively little consistency between different joint institutes in how this management is handled. Of the four surveyed institutes, two have established their own internal HR departments while the other two rely on the university's overall HR department in conjunction with other academic departments.

According to the perceptions of Chinese administrators, teaching staff from the UK partner report to the UK University's representative in China in cases where such a representative exists. However, this finding was not entirely backed up by surveyed UK administrators, many of whom said that the international office was the sole or main body responsible. Only two said that their staff reported to their China-based representative, and in one of these cases the responsibility was shared with the relevant department the academics belonged to at the home institution.

The differences between UK and Chinese administrators' responses on this question may reflect a lack of knowledge of their counterparts' internal management structures. However, another explanation may be that it simply reflects a limited number of survey respondents from joint institutes.

It can be seen from the above information that due to diversity of teachers and particularity of foreign teachers, teacher management systems in joint institutes are complicated and very variable. Chinese and UK teaching staff are subject to different departments, and there may be misunderstandings from each side about the other's management mechanisms. In some cases there are different management structures for different kinds of UK and Chinese staff – for example, teachers independently recruited by institutions may be managed by personnel departments of institutions while teachers recruited by Chinese partner universities may be managed by personnel departments of Chinese universities and those sent from the UK are managed by permanent representatives of the UK partner. These complicated structures might cause difficulty in collaboration and communication, as well as making it hard to create mutually agreed teacher assessment and evaluation systems.

8. Most challenging issues in communication between Chinese and UK administrators

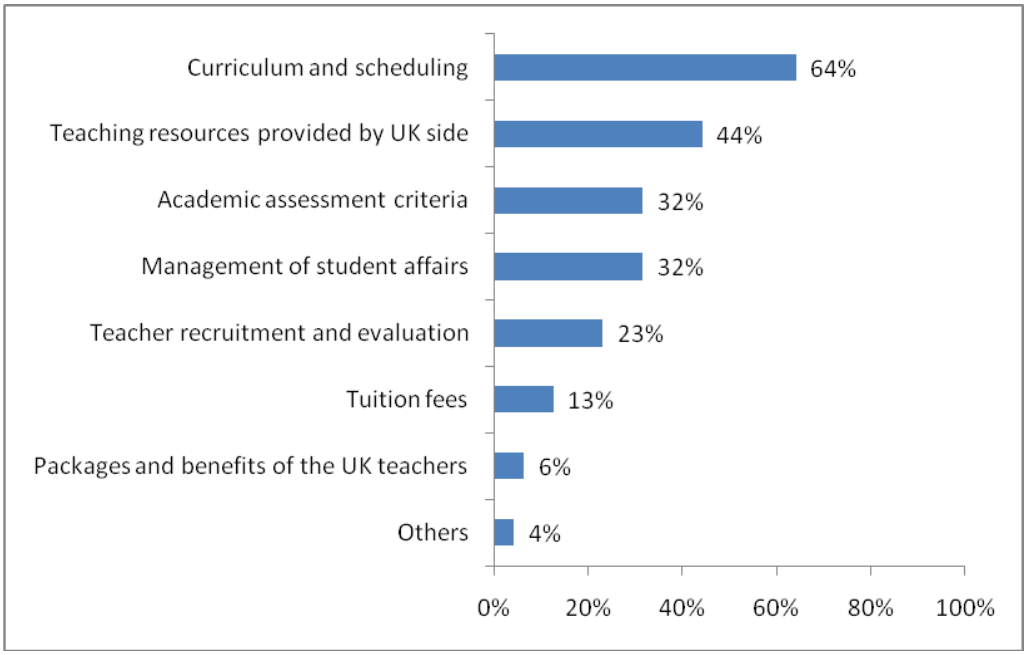
Analysis of surveys shows that there are both similarities and differences in the issues seen as challenging by Chinese administrators of joint programmes and joint institutes respectively.

The challenges cited by administrators of both joint programmes and joint institutes include provision of UK teaching resources, curriculum and programme scheduling and evaluation of student achievement, which are core issues affecting the quality of education and sustainability of the programmes and institutes. Interviews with TNE administrators also support this finding, with most administrators prominently mentioning issues relating to the integration of the curriculum and teaching ideas and models of Chinese and UK universities, as well as accreditation of UK academics.

Teaching resources are also particularly important. Some TNE administrators discussed the importance of network resources being updated in a timely manner, while others focused more on textbook contents. This was particularly likely to be mentioned by joint institute administrators, with three of the four survey respondents mentioning teaching resources or the amount of time UK academics spent in China as an issue. Another issue mentioned in interviews was a lack of integration between the UK and Chinese parts of the curriculum and teaching models.

Issues brought up when discussing evaluation standards generally related to the differences between the standards in place at the UK and Chinese partner universities, particularly in terms of principles and objectives rather than detailed issues like score boundaries. Interviewees considered it important that Chinese partners are involved in assessing and implementing evaluation systems, rather than having the UK University's standards imposed on them.

Figure 2-9 Main challenges faced in joint programmes (Chinese administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

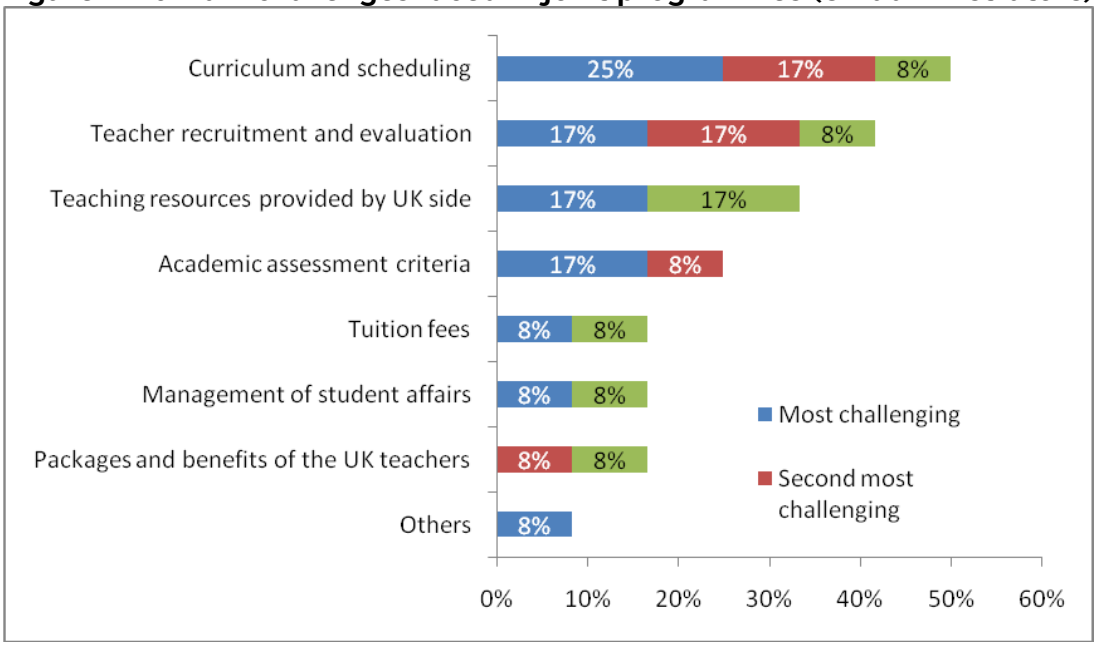
One noticeable difference between the two types of TNE partnership was that joint programme administrators placed much greater importance on detailed issues like curriculum and scheduling,

which were not mentioned by joint institute administrators. This may be because of joint programmes' higher reliance on flying faculty and staff of the parent Chinese institution in, which can cause scheduling difficulties.

Based on the UK administrator survey, the main difficulties UK TNE administrators see when administering joint programmes is curriculum design and scheduling. Both UK and Chinese administrators agree that this is the most significant challenge, with 50 per cent of UK programme administrators and three of the five joint institute administrators seeing this as an important issue. Furthermore, a quarter of programme administrators see this as the most difficult single issue to reach agreement on with their Chinese counterparts.

In comparison, the second most challenging aspect according to UK staff is the recruitment and evaluation of academic staff, while the Chinese side sees the UK side's provision of teaching resources as more of an issue. This may be because each side focuses more on the resources to be provided by their counterpart rather than themselves. Nevertheless, both sides see both aspects as challenging to reach agreement on.

Figure 2-10 Main challenges faced in joint programmes (UK administrators)



Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

When asked to elaborate on the challenges they faced, UK programme administrators were particularly likely to bring up communication as an area where they sometimes faced difficulties. One administrator mentioned that there were occasionally times when each side would make an assumption about the programme which turned out to be different, while another mentioned that personnel changes brought particular difficulties in communication. This is also closely related to cultural differences and education methods between the two partners; the previously-mentioned different assumptions could well be due to different education methods between the two sides.

Communication and culture can also cause challenges from a student perspective. English proficiency is sometimes a major challenge, with one UK administrator saying that "ideas and concepts are often lost in translation."

Another factor brought up by interviewees from both joint programmes and joint institutes was scheduling difficulties, particularly fitting the short but intensive periods taught by UK flying faculty into the wider schedule of both the students and the UK academics.

Differences in academic requirements between the UK and Chinese universities were also mentioned as challenging, along with different assessment expectations.

9. Chinese administrators' evaluation of management mechanisms

Through interviews and questionnaire surveys, feedback has been collected from 200 Chinese administrators of joint institutes and programmes on policy, communication, quality, culture and teaching. It is hoped that their experiences will be a valuable resource when understanding best practices and potential pitfalls in TNE administration.

Overall, administrators had positive opinions on the management of joint programmes and institutes. They pointed to friendly cooperative relations and effective communication between UK and Chinese administrators, as well as effective management mechanisms. However, the investigation also indicates that some problems may exist in the autonomy of joint programmes and institutes, external finance auditing, interaction of Chinese and UK teaching staff, and coordination with various stakeholders, as described below. As a result, management systems of joint programmes and institutes should deal better with these issues.

When asked about a number of aspects related to joint programme management, the aspects that received the most positive feedback were related to communication and exchanges between Chinese administrators and overseas staff, and ability to provide student support and address student complaints.

In addition, joint programmes receive positive feedback from Chinese administrators on the effectiveness of decision-making processes and regulations, and criteria for setting learning outcomes.

Results related to evaluation and assessment – whether internally or from third-party bodies such as the QAA – were mixed. A large proportion of respondents "totally agreed" that effective systems were in place, but the total number who either agreed or totally agreed was less impressive and – in particular in the case of QAA assessment – there was a noticeable proportion of respondents choosing "disagree" or "totally disagree."

Questions that received the least positive responses were whether domestic institutions provided strong autonomy to the joint programme; whether there was effective communication between Chinese and overseas teaching staff, and whether the programme had external financial audits. However, even in these cases, at least a third of TNE administrators said they totally agreed, while two thirds or more agreed at least somewhat.

It should be noted that feedback is not always in line with student feedback, as discussed in Section IV. In particular, there is a stark difference between TNE administrators' perception of their student support systems and students' own attitudes towards these systems.

Table 2-2 Chinese joint programme administrators' agreement with statements on programme management

Statement	Totally / Mostly agree (combined %)
Administrators from the Chinese institution can communicate effectively with their UK counterparts or the foreign teachers involved in the programme.	51% / 39% (89%)
The administration team has the capacity to offer students professional guidance on their academic performance, mental health, international exchange opportunities and career planning.	48% / 42% (91%)
The programme receives quality evaluations or accreditations by UK quality assurance organisations or international professional organisations (e.g. QAA).	45% / 27% (73%)
The administration team has the capacity to effectively handle complaints from students, as well as conflicts among students.	44% / 46% (91%)
The programme provides monitoring, support and services for students who study in the UK as part of the programme in terms of their study and life (e.g. regular contacts, academic performance reporting system and communication with the UK partnering institutes).	43% / 40% (83%)
The UK institution assesses the programme regularly.	43% / 41% (84%)
Dedicated internal evaluations and procedures are in place for your programme (e.g. programme-specific student assessment and peer review).	41% / 36% (77%)
Dedicated systems and regulations are in place for the programme to stipulate and regulate roles, rights and responsibilities of related parties.	40% / 45% (85%)
The decision-making process effectively reflects and consolidates the stakeholders' requests (i.e. the interests and needs of both Chinese and UK administrators, teachers from both sides, and students).	40% / 49% (89%)
Assessment of students' academic performance is consistent with the partnering institutes' respective criteria.	40% / 45% (85%)
The programme has established a set of robust criteria and procedures for teacher recruitment.	39% / 39% (78%)
Administrators from the two partner institutions can understand each other's interests and concerns/requests.	38% / 27% (65%)
An effective mechanism (e.g. regular teaching research meetings, joint teaching research office) is in place to facilitate communication between teachers from the two partnering institutes.	35% / 49% (84%)
The programme has introduced external auditing to its finance management.	35% / 39% (74%)
Programme administrators are entrusted with more autonomy by the Chinese partner institution in comparison to other teaching departments and courses at that institution.	28% / 43% (72%)
Cultural differences have a significant impact on the way administrators from the two partner institutions communicate with each other.	22% / 24% (46%)

Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from Chinese institutions)

Responses from the four joint institute respondents revealed a fairly similar pattern. Joint institute administrators had positive attitudes towards the decision-making process, student support, and communication between administrators on both sides. They were less positive about the autonomy of their joint institute and the communication between Chinese and UK teaching staff.

A difference from the joint programme respondents that all four joint institute administrators said that they had received assessment from QAA; it is not clear whether this is a genuine difference or just random variation due to the small number of respondents.

10. UK administrators' evaluation of management mechanisms

As with their Chinese counterparts, UK administrators of joint programmes were asked to what extent they agreed with a number of statements on the management of their joint programmes. Administrators were in general positive about most aspects of the programme, but responses varied by particular aspect as shown in the chart below and in some areas were somewhat different to the opinions expressed by Chinese administrators.

The statements that garnered the most agreement, with 11 of the 12 respondents rating them as "true" or "very true", were that the programme provides monitoring, support and services for students who study in the UK and that administrators from the two partner institutions can understand each other's interests and concerns/requests. Among these, the former also has the largest proportion of administrators rating it as very true. However, there was a substantial difference between UK and Chinese administrators here – although two thirds of UK administrators strongly agreed that the programme provides support for students after they move to the UK, only 42 per cent of Chinese administrators expressed the same strength of opinion. This may be due to a lack of feedback to the Chinese institution after students move on to study in the UK.

A further five points also attracted strong agreement, with 10 of the 12 UK administrators rating the following five statements as true or very true: Administrators from the two partners can communicate effectively with their counterparts; assessment of the students' academic performance is consistent with the standards of the respective partner institutions; internal evaluations and procedures are in place for the programme; guidance is available for students in various areas; and the administration team has the capacity to effectively handle student complaints and conflicts.

Again, there are some differences between Chinese and UK joint programme administrators here. Chinese administrators are much less likely to agree that assessment is in line with both institutions' standards, suggesting that assessment follows the UK institution's standards more closely than those of the Chinese university. On the other hand, although UK administrators are likely to rate the statement on effective communication as "true", they are significantly less likely than their Chinese counterparts to rate it as "very true."

Some other statements also showed strong differences between UK and Chinese administrators. UK respondents were more likely to say that their institution conducts regular evaluations of the delivery of their programme, compared to Chinese administrator's perceptions of UK institutions' evaluations. On the other hand, Chinese administrators were far more likely than their UK counterparts to agree that the programme's finances were externally audited, or that the programme administrators were entrusted with more authority than those in other departments. In the latter case, this is likely because UK administrators are less aware of the situation in other departments of the Chinese university.

Table 2-3 UK joint programme administrators' agreement with statements on programme management

Statement	"very true" / "true" (Combined %)
The programme provides monitoring, support and services for students who study in the UK as part of the programme in terms of their study and life (e.g. regular contacts, academic performance reporting system and communication with the UK partnering institutes).	67% / 25% (92%)
The programme receives quality evaluations or accreditations by UK quality assurance organisations or international professional organisations (e.g. QAA).	58% / 17% (75%)
Your institution (UK side) conducts regular evaluations of the delivery of the programme.	58% / 17% (75%)
Assessment of students' academic performance is consistent with the partnering institutes' respective criteria.	58% / 25% (83%)
The administration team has the capacity to offer students professional guidance on their academic performance, mental health, international exchange opportunities and career planning.	50% / 33% (83%)
The administration team has the capacity to effectively handle complaints from students, as well as conflicts among students.	50% / 33% (83%)
Dedicated internal evaluations and procedures are in place for your programme (e.g. programme-specific student assessment and peer review).	50% / 33% (83%)
Administrators from the two partner institutions can understand each other's interests and concerns/requests.	42% / 50% (92%)
The decision-making process effectively reflects and consolidates the stakeholders' requests (i.e. the interests and needs of both Chinese and UK administrators, teachers from both sides, and students).	33% / 33% (67%)
Dedicated systems and regulations are in place for the programme to stipulate and regulate roles, rights and responsibilities of related parties.	33% / 42% (75%)
The programme has established a set of robust criteria and procedures for teacher recruitment.	33% / 17% (50%)
An effective mechanism (e.g. regular teaching research meetings, joint teaching research office) is in place to facilitate communication between teachers from the two partnering institutes.	33% / 25% (58%)
Administrators from the Chinese institution can communicate effectively with their UK counterparts or the foreign teachers involved in the programme.	25% / 58% (83%)
The programme has introduced external auditing to its finance management.	25% / 25% (50%)
Cultural differences have a significant impact on the way administrators from the two partner institutions communicate with each other.	17% / 25% (42%)
Programme administrators are entrusted with more autonomy by the Chinese partner institution in comparison to other teaching departments and courses at that institution.	8% / 33% (42%)

Source: TNE administrator survey
(Base: Joint programme administrators from UK institutions)

Among administrators of joint institutes, there is strong agreement that the decision-making process effectively reflects and consolidates all stakeholders' views, with three of the five respondents describing this as "very true," while one more describes it as "true." This is rather more positive than Chinese administrators' opinions on the same subject, where only 40 per cent of administrators viewed the given statement as "very true." However, this may be simply due to the limited sample size of joint institute (as opposed to programme) administrators.
Agreement in many other areas is also a relatively positive sign, such as on the support available for students going to the UK, the ability to hold constructive discussions between the two partners, and guidelines for handling issues in cooperation. Of the five joint institutes who responded, four administrators said they receive quality evaluations by UK quality assurance organisations such as the QAA.

In a few areas, less than half of the UK joint institute administrators agreed with the relevant statement. In particular, only two of the five respondents agreed that there were clear guidelines and regular monitoring/feedback on areas such as course content and teaching delivery; that Chinese administrators have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities; that students' unions and similar bodies are effective; that the administration team can respond to opposition to its decisions effectively; and that the joint institute has an independently operated finance management system. In the latter four cases, none of the five respondents described the given statement as "very true." In each of these cases, the proportion of Chinese administrators describing the statement as "very true" was over 40 per cent, which may reflect a genuine difference of opinion, although again the very limited sample size may mean that this is simply due to random variation.

11. Recommendations and best practices from UK TNE administrator interviews and survey responses

Clear and effective communication was the factor most mentioned by UK TNE administrators as their recommendation for best practices. Many administrators covering both joint programmes and joint institutes commented that this was key to their success. Communication should be maintained regularly between the two partners, with regular in-person meetings – several respondents commented that email alone is not enough. As well as communication between the UK and Chinese sides, a joint institute administrator also commented that frequent communication between the home institution and staff at the joint institute in China is also important. One administrator mentioned that they had separate subgroups for operational and academic issues.

On a related note, several UK TNE administrators also discussed the importance of building relations with a Chinese institution before starting cooperation, or of working with a Chinese university that the UK institution has existing cooperation with, such as student or academic exchanges. One respondent said that visits by UK undergraduates to the Chinese institution were particularly helpful. This may be because this shows the university is committed to two-way internationalisation rather than simply attracting international students.

The importance of language teaching was also mentioned prominently by many administrators, and it is important that universities invest in English language capacity building and provide additional language support for students who need it. This is unsurprising given that students' language ability was mentioned as an important challenge for programmes. The final factor mentioned by a significant number of respondents was quality control, with inspections of teaching quality and great importance placed on academic quality.

Adoption of UK-style norms in several areas was also mentioned as a best practice by some administrators, including UK-style assessment methods and pastoral support. One university mentioned that they support 12-week visits to the UK by Chinese staff in order to familiarise them with UK academic culture. On the other hand, UK academic staffs "need to recognise the difference in learning cultures" and adapt their teaching style for Chinese students.

Stakeholder engagement is also seen as important, and it is important that the programme receives support from academics as well as administrative staff. This is also reflected by one joint programme's negative experience – the administrator mentioned that their academic staff had "not been as engaged as they should have in terms of supporting the collaboration", leading to a negative impact on the programme. Meanwhile, effective administrative and support staff are also seen as extremely valuable.

Multiple administrators at joint institutes mentioned that empowerment of independent decision making at these institutes is important, and that problems can be caused by a lack of autonomy from the parent universities.

Other best practices mentioned by respondents included increased use of technology such as Blackboard, which is perhaps especially valuable at joint programmes as UK staff are often only present in person for a relatively short period; a curriculum which genuinely draws on both UK and Chinese expertise; and systematically agreed documentation such as an operational handbook.

Aside from student recruitment, administrators commented that this educational collaboration brought many other benefits to their home institution. This included international experience for both teaching and support staff, a strong familiarity with the Chinese market and deeper knowledge of operating in China, and an increase of the institution's profile in China. Another benefit is greater familiarity with the way the host institution operates, as one administrator commented that UK universities can "look at what others are doing and consider such options for themselves".

IV. Current Student Attitudes towards Joint Programmes and Institutes

1. Summary of Key Findings

Overall, a large majority of students on joint programmes are satisfied with the quality of their course, while only a small number are dissatisfied. However, this proportion is slightly lower than the equivalent proportion of overseas students in the UK.

The difference is largely driven by student satisfaction with the international elements of their course. 90 per cent of students who are satisfied with their course's international aspects say that they are satisfied overall, but only a minority (41 per cent) of students who are unsatisfied with these aspects are happy with the course as a whole.

In turn, the main factor driving satisfaction with the course's international elements is the extent of the overseas component of the course, with students whose courses included time in the UK rating this much more positively.

When asked about various factors of their course, students were the most likely to agree that academic staff were good at explaining things and were experts in their subject areas. They were also very likely to agree that they had sufficient resources and that assessment and marking were fair.

In contrast, students were much less likely to say that they had received sufficient advice and personalised support on their studies. The proportion of students agreeing with this statement was below 60 per cent, even though 90 per cent of administrators believed that their institution was able to provide this support. This may suggest that some administrators have an overly optimistic view of this aspect of their joint programmes.

Students were also less likely to agree that they had access to the UK University's online learning resources; this particularly applied to students on courses taught mainly in Chinese. Students were also relatively less likely to say that parts of the course taught by Chinese staff were well-integrated with those taught by UK teaching staff.

Aside from the international elements of the course, other factors having a particularly strong effect on student satisfaction include perception of staff expertise and whether students feel that the course is well-run. In both cases, students who are happy with this aspect of the course are more than twice as likely to be satisfied with the course as a whole compared to those who are neutral or express negative opinions. Among students who are dissatisfied with course organisation, this is often because of disorganised or poorly communicated arrangements regarding intensive teaching periods by UK staff.

While the largest difference between students on different course types is in their opinion of the course's internationalisation, there are other differences between students whose programmes mostly use English and those taught mainly in Chinese. Students that are mostly or entirely taught in English are substantially more likely to say they have access to the UK university's online

learning resources, and are also much more likely to agree that the course is intellectually stimulating, that academic staff are good at making the subject interesting, and that they are satisfied with the international elements of their course. Meanwhile, students taught in Chinese are much more likely than other students to agree that their university's facilities and services are adequate for their needs

On most questions, students taught in a balanced mix of both languages fall between English- and Chinese-taught students, but there are some questions where these students have the highest degree of satisfaction. In particular, those whose courses use the two languages roughly equally are the most likely to see their courses as relevant to both Chinese and UK contexts and agree that their language modules prepare them well.

2. Survey Background and Respondent Profile

Key Findings:

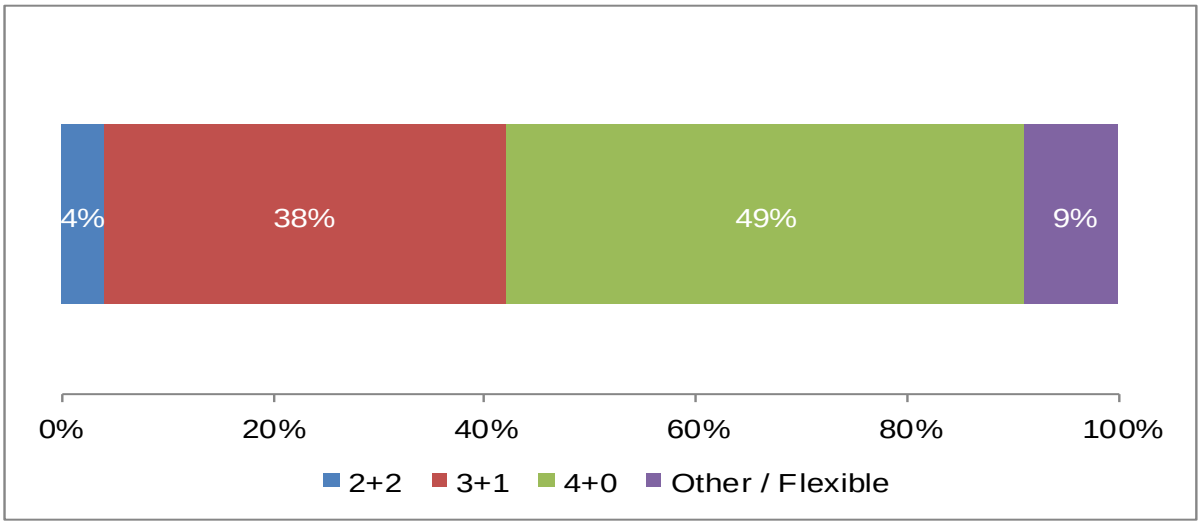
- Respondents were mainly studying courses entirely in China (49%) or "3+1" courses (38%).
- A substantial majority were in the third year of their course.

Student questionnaires were distributed to undergraduates participating in joint programmes in China, primarily to students in the 3rd and 4th year of their course. Surveys were in online form and were distributed via the Chinese institutions operating these joint programmes. After discarding questionnaires that appeared not to have been filled in seriously[1] there were a total of 609 valid responses.

Almost all students (99%) were Chinese citizens. Although a small minority was UK citizens, these respondents mainly answered the bilingual survey in Chinese, suggesting that even UK citizens on these programmes mostly come from a Chinese background. No students said they were from a country other than China or the UK.

The largest group of respondents was on courses where they would study in the Chinese institution for the whole four years of their course ("4+0"); this group made up almost half of total respondents. Most of the remainder were on courses that involved three years of study in China followed by one in the UK ("3+1"), while only a small minority were on "2+2" courses.

Figure 4-1: Course formats followed by surveyed students



Source: TNE student survey

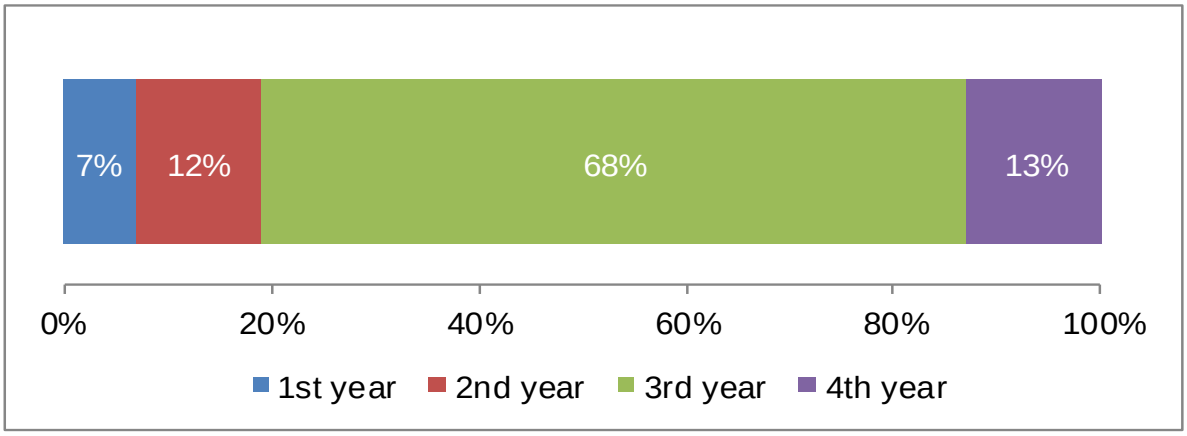
The 9 per cent of students following "other" course formats were mainly studying on flexible programmes where students could choose from two or more options. The most common choice

[1]The questionnaire included a total of 18 questions where students were asked to rate their agreement with specific statements on a 5-point scale ("completely agree" to "completely disagree"). Students that gave the same answer to at least 17 of these 18 statements were assumed to have not read the questions and their replies were discarded. These students also had a significantly shorter average survey completion time.

was between a 4+0 or 3+1 course format, with students having the option to complete the final year of their course in either China or the UK. Some other students were on courses where they could choose to complete their final two years in China or in the UK.

In comparison with the overall distribution of course formats, 4+0 and 3+1 courses were overrepresented while courses allowing students to study for two years in the UK were severely underrepresented. This is a result of most surveyed students being in the third year of their course, by which point these students will have already left China for the UK. Around two thirds of respondents were in the third year of their course, with roughly equal numbers in the second and fourth year but fewer students in the first year of their course.

Figure 4-2: Surveyed students by year of course



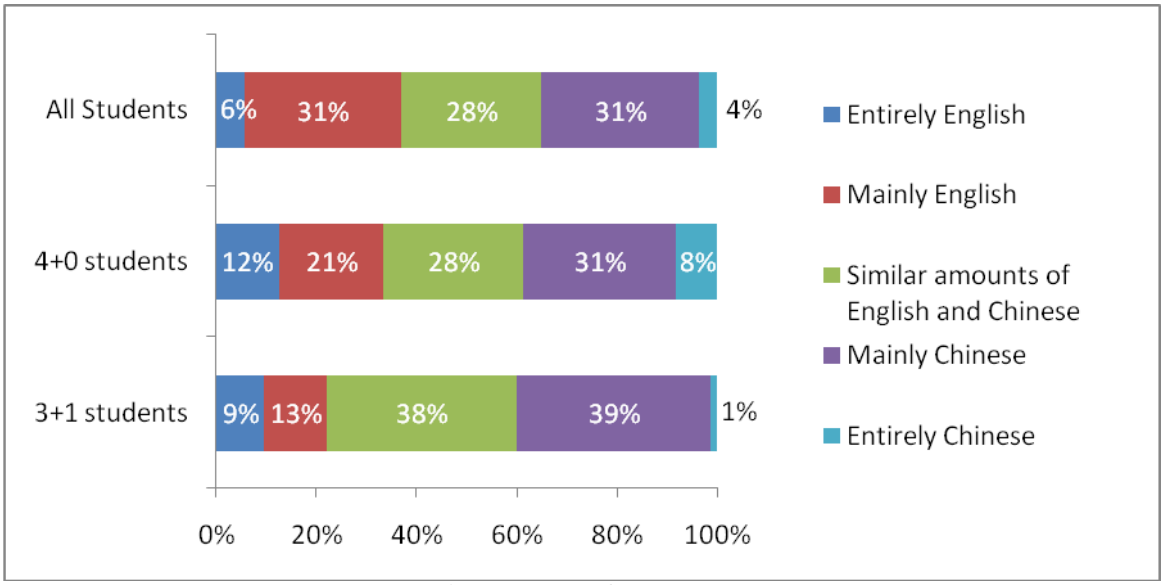
Source: TNE student survey

The proportion of students studying programmes related to business and management was higher than the share of programmes in this field. Overall, 33 per cent of students were in this field (including 19 per cent studying programmes in business and/or management plus 14 per cent studying finance and/or accounting), compared to only 17 per cent of joint programmes. In comparison, engineering-related fields were under-represented, accounting for only 32 per cent of students compared to 45 per cent of joint programmes.

There was significant variation in teaching languages across different joint programmes. Overall, 37 per cent of students reported that their core modules were taught mostly or entirely in English, while 35 per cent reported that they were taught mostly or entirely in Chinese. The remaining 28 per cent said that there was a similar amount of English and Chinese content.

Surprisingly, students on 3+1 courses reported the lowest amount of English-taught content, and were only two thirds as likely as students on 4+0 courses to say that their core modules were mostly or entirely in English. Meanwhile, 4+0 students were more likely than average both to study entirely in English and to study entirely in Chinese.

Figure 4-3: Teaching language by course type



Source: TNE student survey

When asked specifically about teaching staff from the Chinese partner, a significant majority of students (59%) reported that these staff used Chinese as their main teaching language, with more than a quarter (27%) saying that classes from Chinese staff were entirely in Chinese.

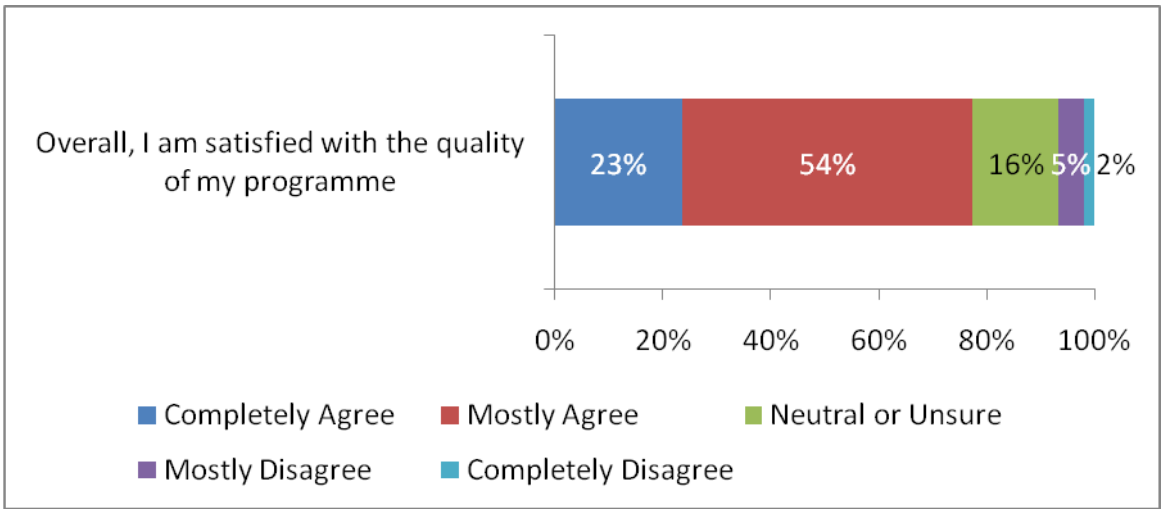
3. Overall satisfaction with joint programmes

Key Findings:

- Overall, joint programmes have a high rate of satisfaction. 77 per cent of students agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of their course, while only seven per cent disagreed.
- Students on courses with a UK study component are significantly more satisfied, but there is not a consistent trend based on teaching language

Overall, 77 per cent of students on joint programmes agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of their course, while seven per cent said they disagreed with this statement.

Figure 4-4: Overall satisfaction of students on joint programmes



Source: TNE student survey

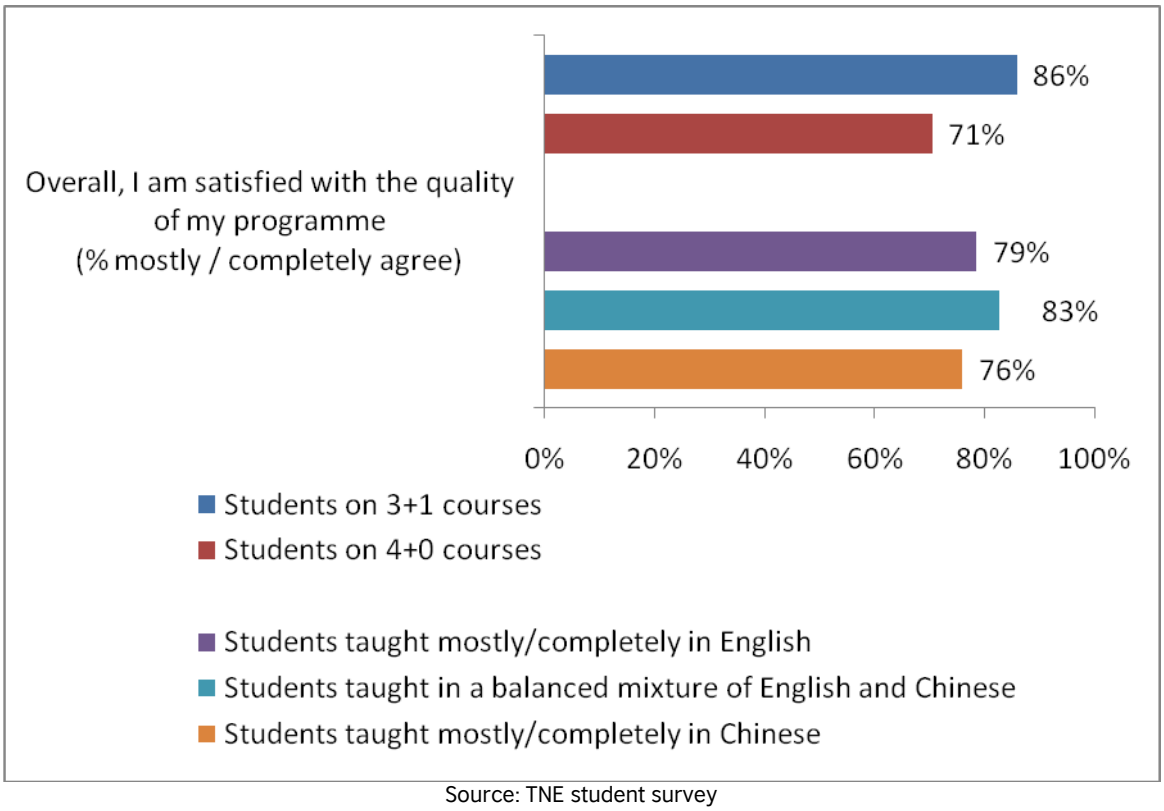
While this represents a large majority of survey respondents, agreement with this statement is somewhat lower than the level seen among students in the UK. According to the 2016 National Student Survey, 85 per cent of students in the UK agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of their course, and according to the most recent available data the rate of satisfaction among international students studying in the UK is similar to that of domestic students.

Language subtleties and cultural differences mean that it is difficult to compare these numbers, and it is not possible to definitively say that students taking UK degree courses in China are less satisfied than those in the UK. However, combined with other survey findings, there does appear to be a satisfaction gap.

The main driver of this gap appears to be related to the level of internationalisation of the course, with some students feeling that their course was not sufficiently international. In turn, there is a large gap in attitudes towards this aspect of the course between students on programmes with and without an overseas study component.

This drives a large overall satisfaction gap between the different course types – satisfaction among students on 3+1 courses is similar to that among students in the UK, but there is a gap of 14 percentage points between these students and those on courses that do not involve study in the UK. However, there does not appear to be a large gap between courses where students study in different languages.

Figure 4-5: Overall satisfaction by course type and teaching language



Source: TNE student survey

Students' overall attitudes towards their courses can also be judged with a second question, measuring how likely students would be to recommend their course to others. In contrast to relatively high satisfaction rates, only 63 per cent of students said that they would recommend their programme, while 10 per cent disagreed.

Among students who were satisfied with the course quality but still would not recommend the course to others, the most common negative aspect was high fees. A significant number also saw English as a problem or had otherwise struggled with the material. Some of these students suggested that their programme could be improved by having more classes to teach English or more opportunities to communicate in English.

Students who had registered on 3+1 or flexible courses but then stayed in China for the final year of their course were particularly likely to say they would not recommend their programme to others, even though 80 per cent of this group said that they were satisfied with the course quality.

The extent to which different factors affect students' overall satisfaction with joint programmes is discussed in Section 4.8 of this report.

4. Perceptions of teaching quality

Key Findings:

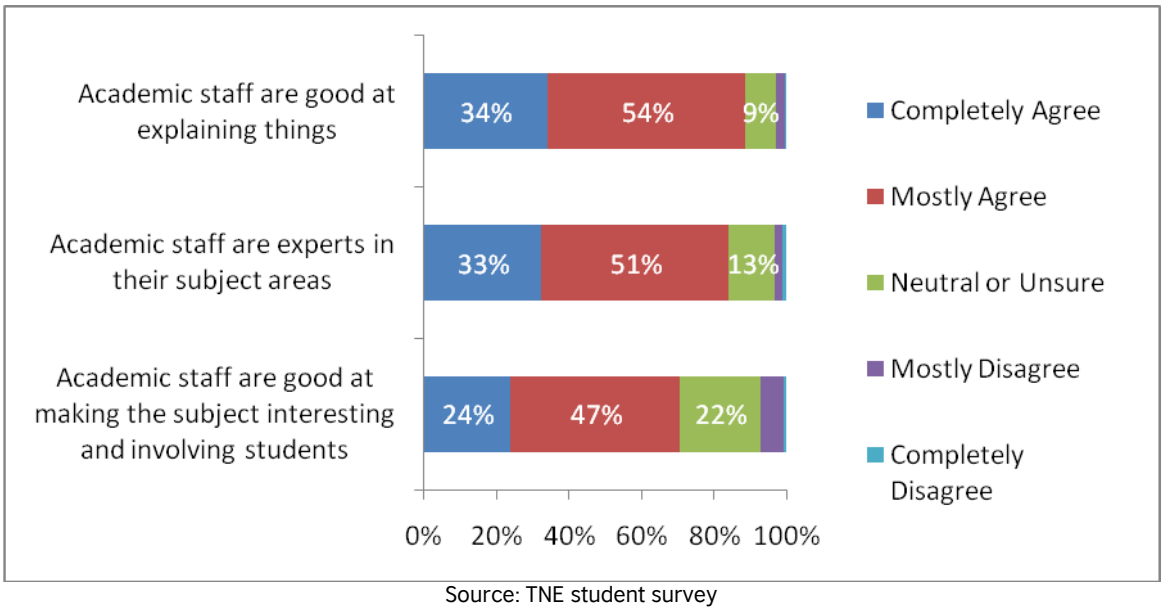
- Students were generally positive about teaching quality
- Students taught mainly in English tended to be more positive, and were significantly more likely to say that teachers are good at making the subject interesting and involving students

Students on joint programmes had positive attitudes towards most aspects of the course that relate to teaching quality. In particular, 89 per cent of students completely or mostly agree that "academic staff are good at explaining things," while 84 per cent agree that academic staff are experts in their subject areas.

These two metrics received the highest agreement of any of the questions in the survey, as well as the lowest level of disagreement at 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

However, students are less likely to agree that their lecturers are good at "making the subject interesting and involving students." Although a majority of students (71 per cent) either completely or mostly agreed with this statement, this is significantly lower than other questions in this section, suggesting that more can be done in this area.

Figure 4-6: Satisfaction with factors related to teaching quality



Source: TNE student survey

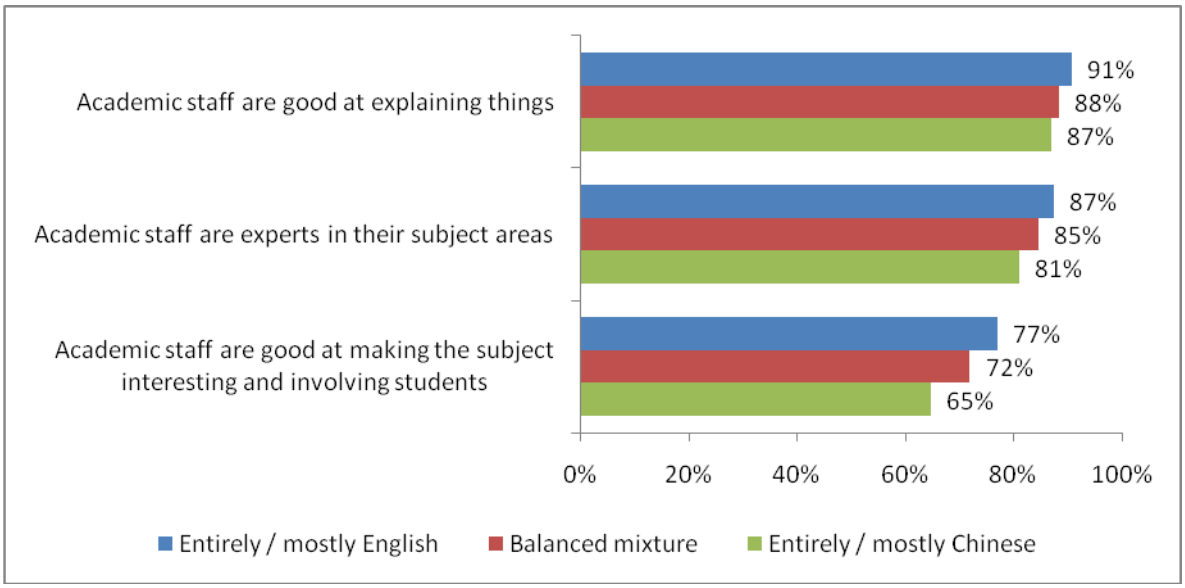
The first of these statements, "academic staffs are good at explaining things," is also found in the UK's National Student Survey. The proportion of full-time non-EU students in the UK definitely or mostly agreeing with this statement was 90 per cent in 2013. This suggests that there is a similar level of satisfaction with teaching quality in both groups, although as discussed above the two figures are not directly comparable.

Comparing students by teaching language, there was relatively little difference in perceptions of whether academic staffs are experts in their subject areas or whether they are good at explaining things. Although students taught mostly or entirely in English gave slightly more positive answers in each case, this difference was not statistically significant after correcting for multiple comparisons.

However, there was a highly significant difference in the proportion of students agreeing that academic staff make the subject interesting and involve students. Students taught in English were substantially more likely to agree with this statement, while those taught entirely or mostly in Chinese were the least likely.

This finding is somewhat surprising given the language gap. It may be due to the higher level of English ability among students following mostly-English courses; this could mean that they are more able to engage with UK teaching staff.

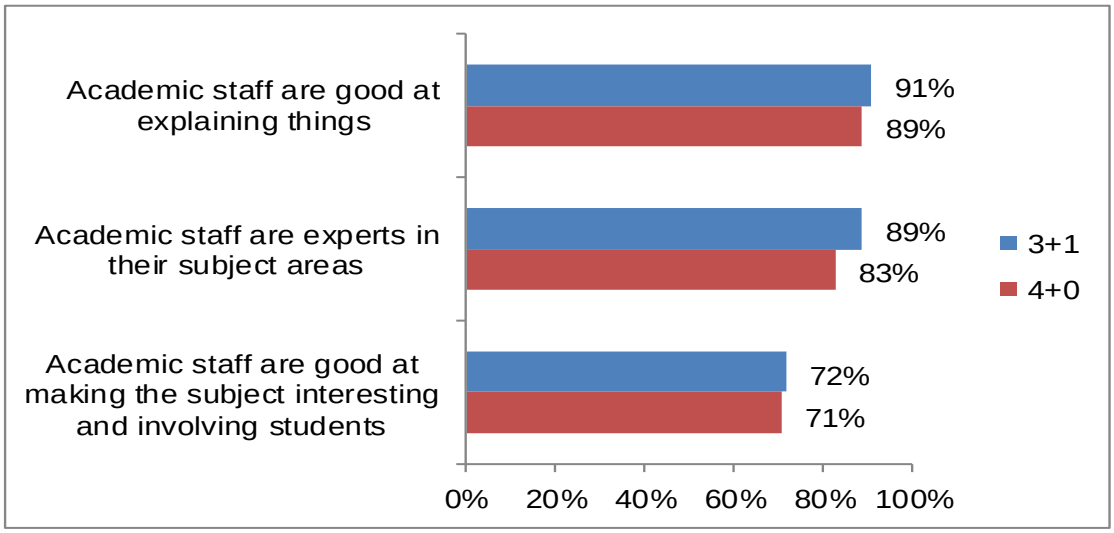
Figure 4-7: Satisfaction with factors related to teaching quality, by teaching language



Source: TNE student survey

Students following 3+1 programmes were also somewhat more likely to say that their academic staffs were experts in their subject areas. However, course format made relatively little difference to the proportion of students who saw their teachers as good at either explaining things or making the subject interesting.

Figure 4-8: Satisfaction with factors related to teaching quality, by course format



Source: TNE student survey

The strong overall satisfaction with teaching quality is reinforced by the large number of students who commented in open questions that this was one of the top advantages of their joint programme. The volume of comments related to teaching quality or staff expertise made this the most popular single advantage. These comments were mainly directed specifically towards overseas teaching staff, although some did also praise teachers from the local partner.

However, although most students are satisfied with teaching quality, students who disagree with this assessment feel very strongly about this issue. Students who feel that their overseas teaching staffs are sub-par see this as a very important issue, and teaching quality is one of the most important complaints among unsatisfied students.

Students are particularly likely to bring this up as a problem in the context of overseas teaching staff. It is unclear whether this is due to a real difference in expertise or teaching ability, communication difficulties, or simply to higher expectations for overseas academics compared with those from the Chinese institution. Nevertheless, the number of unsatisfied students in this area was very low, and comments here were very general and did not point to any specific common issues.

A related issue brought up by a number of students is the low amount of contact time with UK teaching staff, or a lack of opportunities to engage with them. This was one of the most common negative comments about joint programmes, while increasing the number of overseas teaching staff or the time they spend in China was a common suggestion.

This issue appears because it is common for joint programmes to rely on UK teaching staffs who are only in China on a short-term basis. As illustrated in Section 3.6, these staffs make up the largest proportion of UK teaching staff in 27 per cent of surveyed joint institutes and 48 per cent of surveyed joint programmes outside of these institutes. However, students' comments suggest that some of these students may not have been aware of this when they started their joint programme, and therefore institutions could do more to make sure that students have a clear picture of what to expect.

5. Perceptions of other aspects of course quality

Key Findings:

- Satisfaction in these areas was relatively high, but lower than that regarding teaching staff
- English-taught students were again more positive, as well as those on courses with an overseas study component

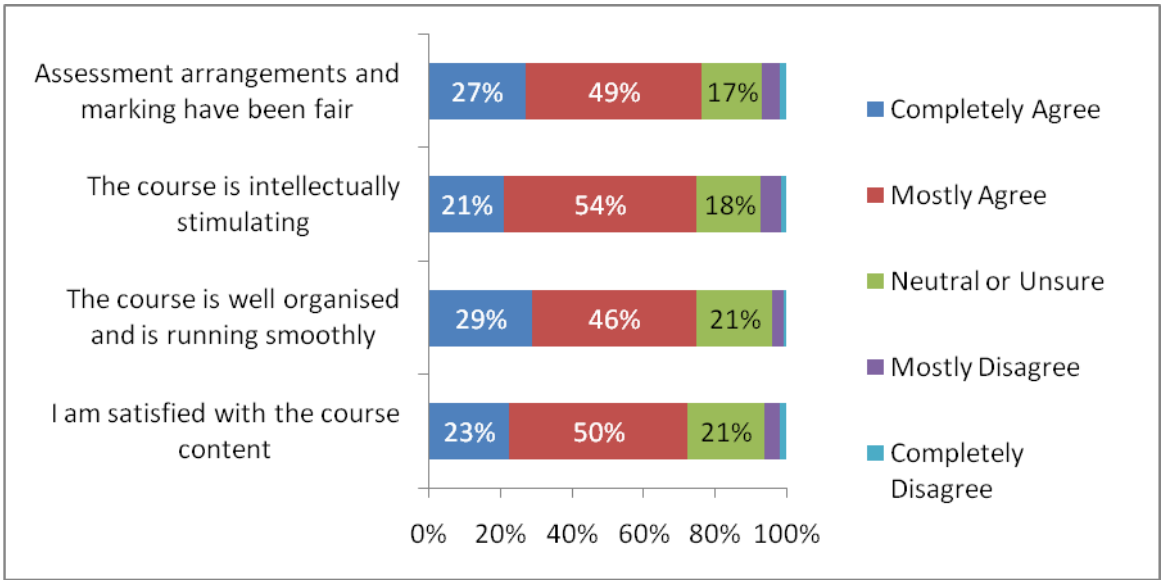
Perceptions of other aspects of the course were also mainly positive. The most positive impression here was of assessment and marking – 76 per cent of students mostly or completely agreed that assessment arrangements and marking were fair, with slightly below 6 per cent disagreeing.

The proportion of students agreeing with this statement is similar to the proportion of non-EU students in the UK agreeing with a similar statement in the UK's National Student Survey, which stood at 75 per cent in 2013. It also reflects the large majority (84 per cent) of Chinese joint programme administrators who agreed that student assessment was consistent with the partnering institutes' respective criteria.

Two other aspects of course quality, while still rated relatively highly, received lower agreement from Chinese joint programme students than from non-EU students taking courses in the UK. Only 75 per cent of surveyed students agreed that their course was well organised and running smoothly, while the same number mostly or completely agreed that their course was intellectually stimulating. The equivalent figures from non-EU students participating in the UK's National Student Survey in 2013 were 82 and 83 per cent respectively. Although language subtleties and cultural differences between the two groups could definitely have an effect on these questionnaire results, this does still suggest that institutions should devote more attention to these factors.

The final question in this section was related to joint programme students' satisfaction with their course content. 72 per cent of students mostly or completely agreed that they were satisfied with this aspect of the course. This is slightly lower than the 77 per cent of students that said they were satisfied with their course overall, although only 6 per cent of students actually disagreed with this statement. A handful of students commented that their course did not cover their subject in sufficient depth, but at the same time, others said that there were too many classes or they found the course more difficult than expected.

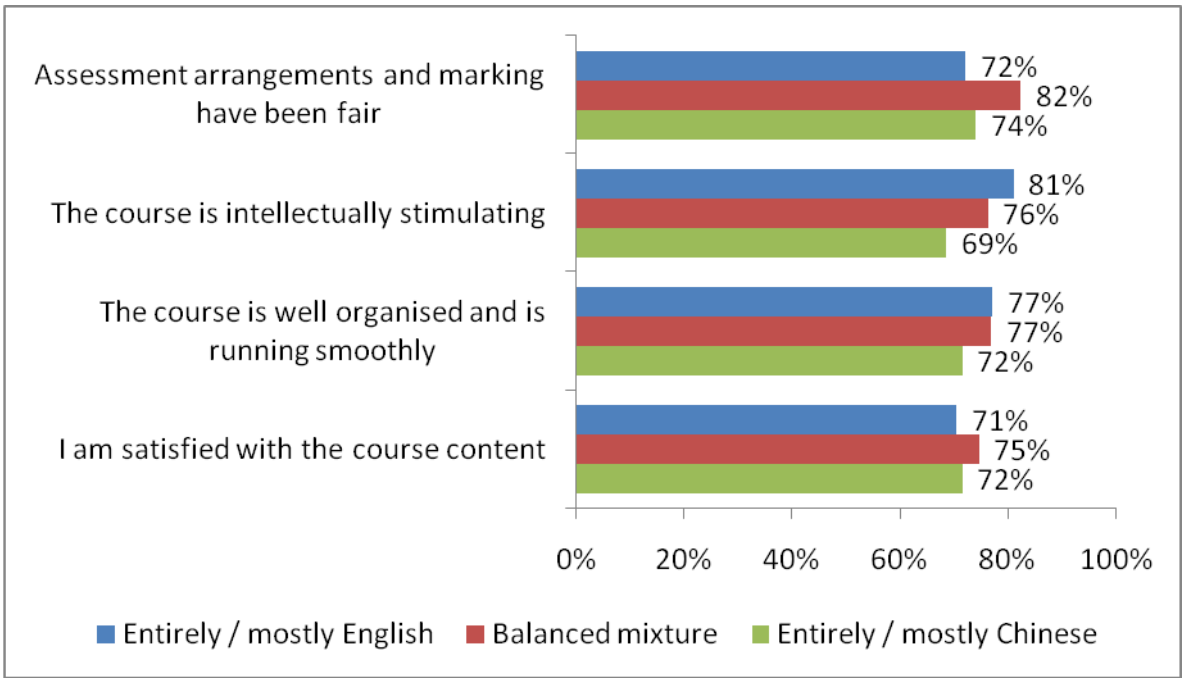
Figure 4-9: Satisfaction with other aspects of course quality



Source: TNE student survey

Teaching language had a strong effect on whether students felt that the course was intellectually stimulating. 81 per cent of students taught mostly or entirely in English agreed with this statement, compared to 69 per cent of those taught mainly or entirely in Chinese.

Figure 4-10: Satisfaction with other aspects of course quality, by teaching language

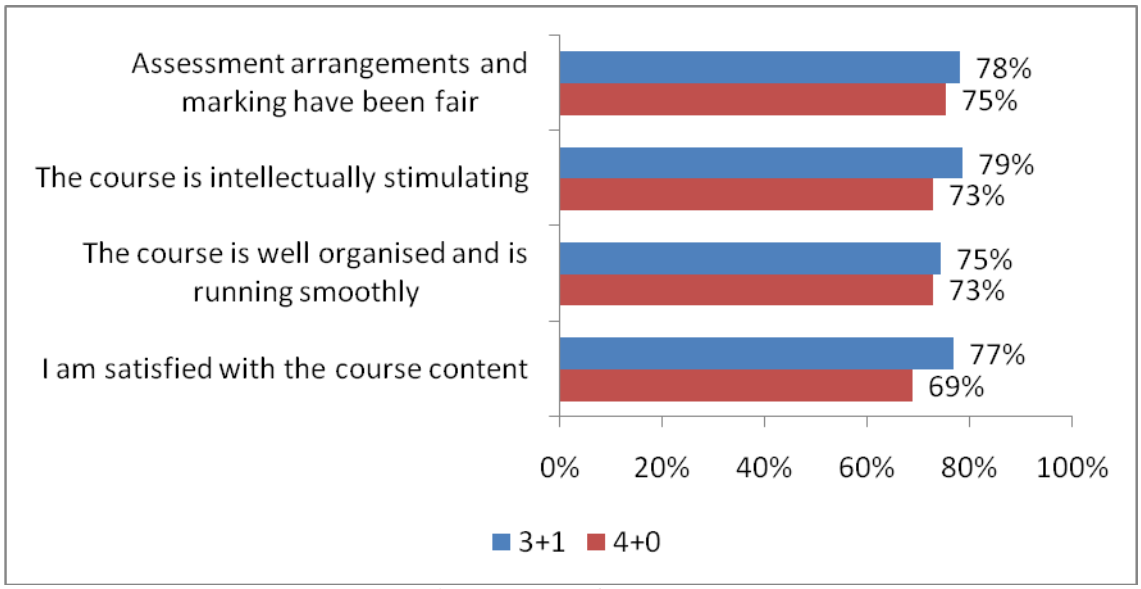


Source: TNE student survey

Comparing students on 3+1 programmes to those on 4+0 programmes, the 3+1 students again seem more satisfied across the board, but the largest difference can be seen in the level of

satisfaction with course content. 77 per cent of 3+1 students say they are satisfied with this aspect of the course, while only 69 per cent of 4+0 students say the same.

Figure 4-11: Satisfaction with other aspects of course quality, by course format



Source: TNE student survey

One reason behind the relatively lower assessment of course organisation is likely to be communication issues between the two partners. As discussed in Section III, many administrators feel that UK and Chinese institutions do not have a good understanding of their partners' demands or that their programme does not have effective systems in place for communication between UK and Chinese teaching staff.

Scheduling issues were a major issue for students, particularly in institutions where teaching from overseas academics was arranged in short intensive periods. A fairly common complaint was that arrangements for these periods were not communicated to students in advance, or that scheduling during this period was badly arranged.

Another distinctive feature of joint programmes, the overseas segment of the course, also caused some problems for a few students. These again seemed to be mostly related to communication, as students said that arrangements or requirements for overseas study were unclear. One student also commented that their university's administrative staff lacked knowledge about the joint programme.

The survey did not reveal any consistent shortcomings regarding course content, and there was no strong trend among students' comments on this subject. A number of students described either the course or examinations as being too hard, but there were also survey respondents who said the opposite. Some commented that there were too few modules related to their core subject, but others said that they had too many classes. Some students, particularly on 4+0 courses, did comment that the course was not as international as they had expected; this issue is discussed further in Section 4.7.

6. Perceptions of resources and academic support

Key Findings:

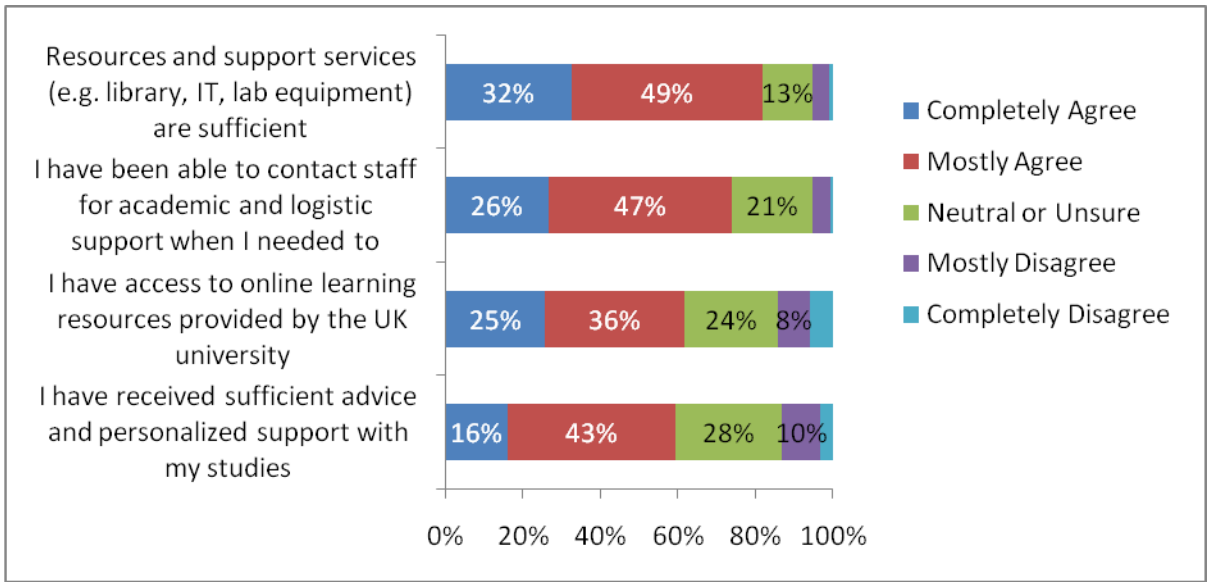
- Students are relatively likely to say that they have sufficient resources and support services, but much less likely to have access to UK online learning resources or to have received advice and support from staff
- In particular, students' perceptions of whether they could receive advice and support from staff did not match with administrators' views on this support
- Students on English-taught courses were less likely to say that resources and support services were sufficient

Students were asked four questions relating to resources and academic support: whether the available support resources and services met their needs, whether they were able to contact staff for support, whether they received personalised advice and support, and whether they had access to UK online learning resources.

Responses to the first two of these questions were positive, with over 80 per cent of students saying that resources and support services such as library or computing resources were adequate, while 73 per cent said that they could contact staff when they needed to.

However, the other two questions in this section had the lowest agreement rates in the whole survey. Only 59 per cent of students mostly or completely agreed that they had received personalised advice and support related to their studies, while 61 per cent mostly or completely agreed that they had access to UK online learning resources. Meanwhile, the number of respondents mostly or completely disagreeing with these statements was 13 and 14 per cent respectively.

Figure 4-12: Student perceptions of resources and academic support



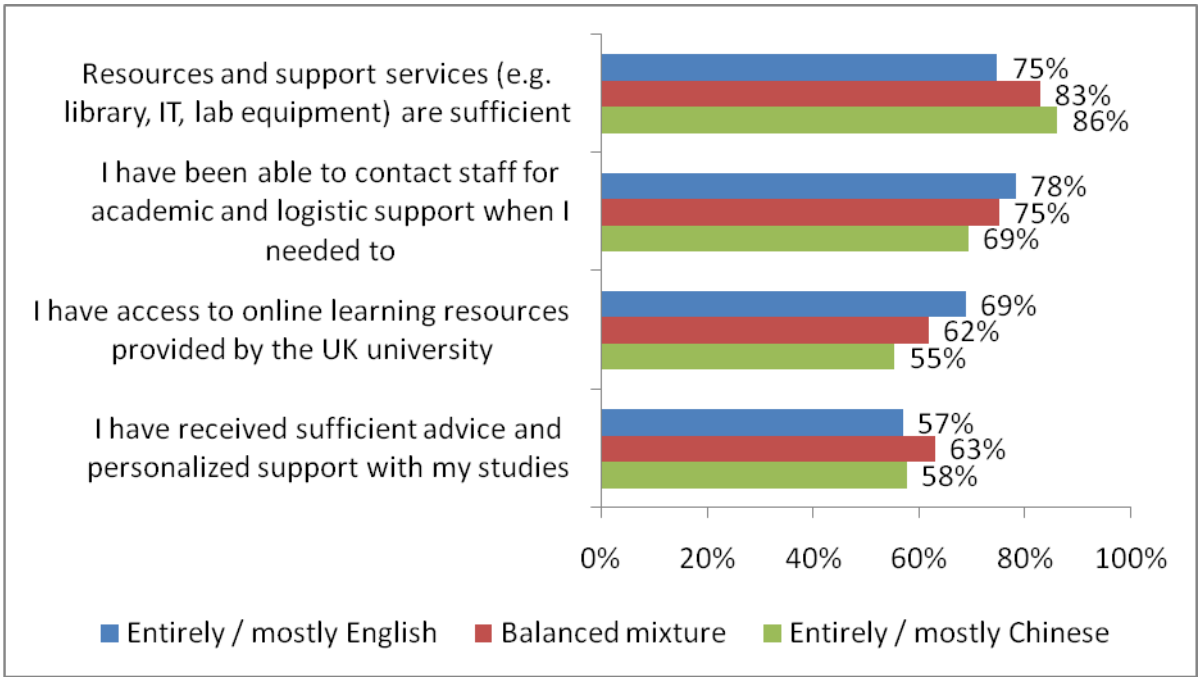
Source: TNE student survey

The proportion of students saying that they received personal support with their studies is far lower than the proportion who said they were able to contact staff if they needed help with their studies or life. It also stands out as far lower than the number of students agreeing with a similar statement in the UK's National Student Survey – 77 per cent of full-time non-EU students in the UK agreed that they had "received sufficient support and advice with their studies," 18 percentage points higher than the figure from the current survey. Despite cultural differences and slightly different wording on the two surveys, this stands out as a significant gap. The proportion who said that they were able to contact staff is also much lower for students on joint programmes (87 per cent in the UK compared to 73 per cent in China).

Furthermore, there is a wide gap between programme administrators' assessment of this issue and students' own perceptions. 90 per cent of administrators believed that they had "the capacity to offer students professional guidance on their academic performance, mental health, international exchange opportunities and career planning," but less than 60 per cent of students said that they had received this support. This difference between student and administrator perceptions may suggest that some administrators have an overly positive view of this aspect of their joint programmes.

Some of these indicators have a significant difference between English-taught and Chinese-taught courses. In contrast to most other aspects of the course, students taught in Chinese were much more satisfied with the available resources and support services at their institution. On the other hand, those taught in English were much more likely to have access to UK online learning resources. In all cases, students following programmes with a balanced mix of English and Chinese teaching fall between these two groups.

Figure 4-13: Perceptions of resources and academic support, by teaching language



Source: TNE student survey

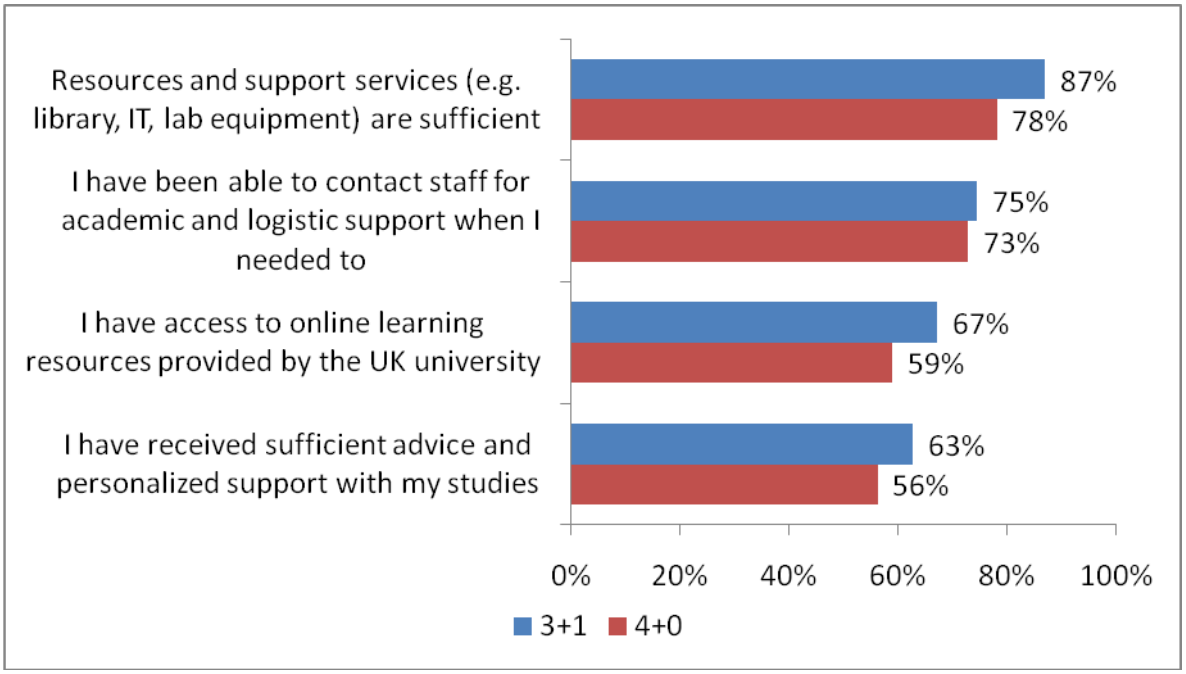
Chinese-taught programmes' advantage in resources and support services are likely due to the better availability of relevant materials for Chinese-taught courses, while English-taught

programmes may rely on content such as textbooks which are more difficult to find in China. The large difference between programme types shows that universities offering English-taught programmes should pay closer attention to this issue.

Similarly, the better availability of online learning materials provided by the UK University for Programmes that are mainly taught in English is unsurprising, as there may be less relevant material or it may be less accessible to students whose primary studying language is Chinese.

Course format also affects some of these factors. Students on 3+1 courses were more likely to say that they had adequate resources and support services, as well as being more likely to say that they had access to UK online learning resources. In the latter case this is likely because 3+1 courses are more closely integrated with UK-based programmes, but the difference in access to other resources and support services is more surprising.

Figure 4-14: Perceptions of resources and academic support, by course format



Source: TNE student survey

One particular area mentioned by several students was difficulty in contacting UK-based academics. This is related to the relatively low amount of time spent in China by academics on many programmes, and language is also an issue here, but some students' comments go beyond this. One respondent commented that "it's hard to contact UK faculty, and hard to communicate with them. UK modules are almost like self-study." Others were less direct in their criticism, but still felt that it was hard to contact UK academic staff.

The higher proportion of students taught mainly in English who say they are able to contact staff for support reinforces the suspicion that much of the problem is related to the difficulty in contacting UK academic staff. However, the difference in students that have actually received this support is not significant between the different language groups.

It is possible that there are already available channels fort contacting and communicating with UK staff that some students are unaware of. However, even if this is the case, at least some joint programmes need to do more to make students aware of such channels.

The relatively low proportion of students who access the UK partner's online learning materials is also worth noting, particularly among those taught mainly in Chinese or in a balanced mixture of the two languages. It is unclear whether this material is actually unavailable, or whether the problem is related more to a lack of awareness, but in either case joint programme providers should consider reviewing this area.

7. Perceptions of the international aspect of the course

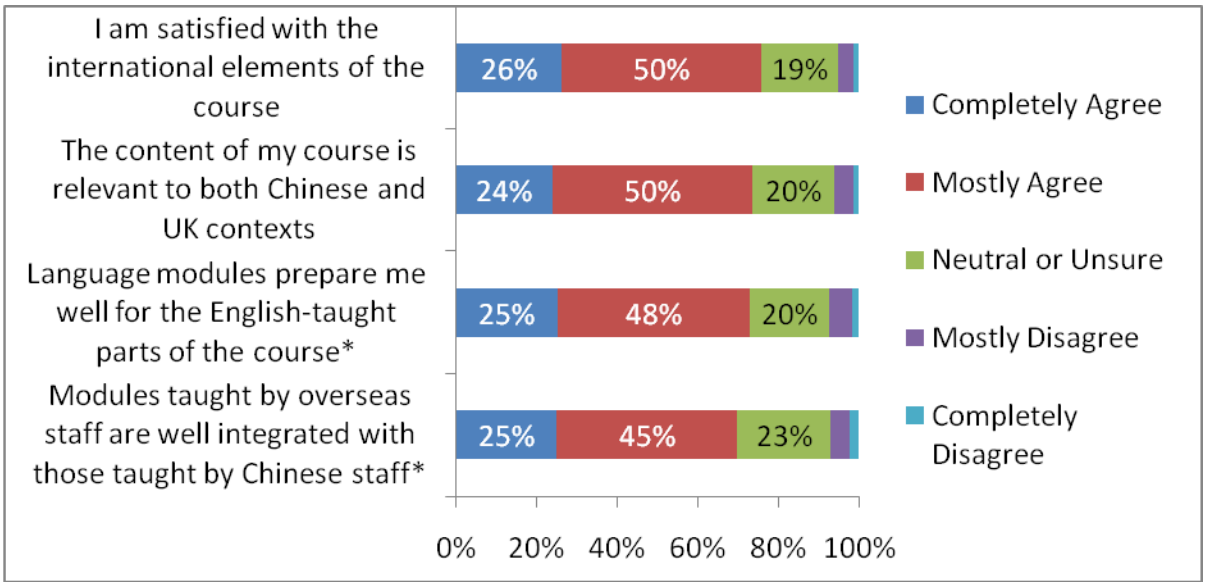
Key Findings:

- Students are relatively positive about the international elements of the course, with 76 per cent satisfied and only 5 per cent saying they are not satisfied.
- Students taught mostly or entirely in Chinese were less satisfied by all aspects of their course's internationalisation, compared to those taught in English or in a balanced mixture of the two languages
- Students on 3+1 courses were significantly more likely to be satisfied with this area than those on 4+0 courses

On the whole, perceptions of the international element of their course seem to be fairly positive. When asked about this directly, over three quarters of student respondents agreed that they were satisfied with this aspect, although 5 per cent expressed disagreement. However, as discussed later in this section, answers to this question varied significantly depending on course characteristics.

Attitudes were also relatively positive towards other aspects of internationalisation. Almost three quarters agreed that the course was relevant to both UK and Chinese contexts. There was slightly less agreement on the matter of integration between the parts of the course taught by UK and Chinese staff; although 70 per cent of students agreed that these were well-integrated, there were another 7 per cent who disagreed.

Figure 4-15: Perceptions of the course's international aspect

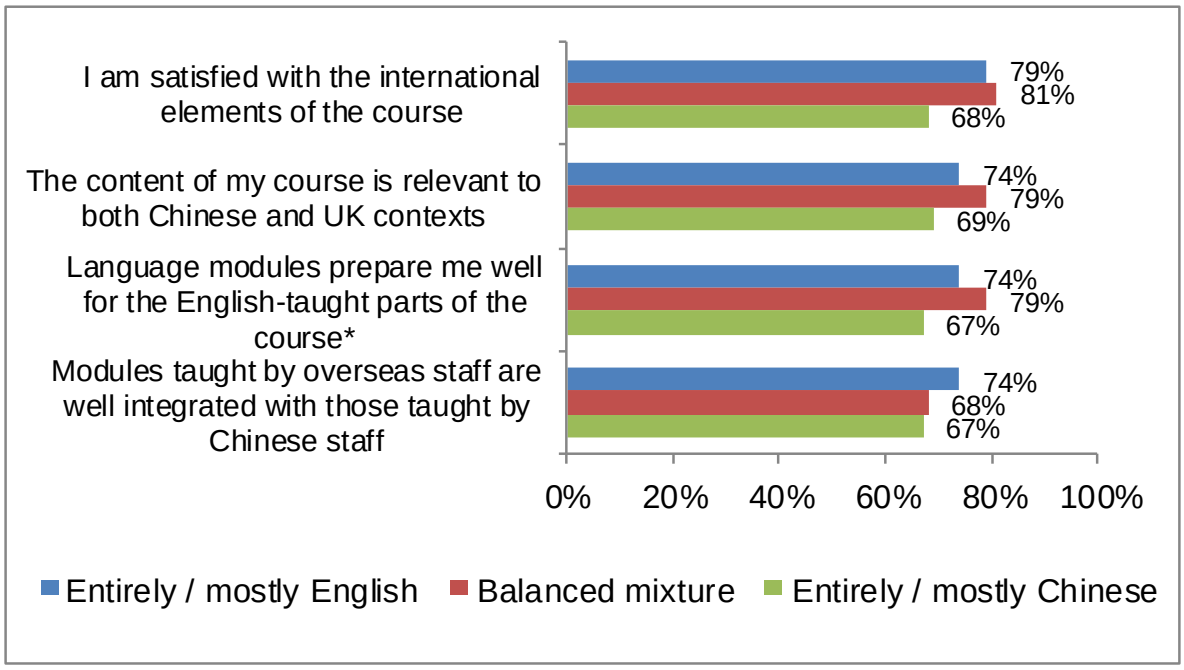


** Analysis of questions on whether "language modules prepare me well for the English-taught parts of the course" and "modules taught by overseas staff are well integrated with those taught by Chinese staff" exclude responses from students who said their course was taught entirely in Chinese*
Source: TNE student survey

This was unsurprisingly one of the areas with the largest differences based on teaching language. It is clear that students taught mainly or entirely in Chinese are substantially less satisfied with the course's level of internationalisation.

However, it is not always the case that courses with more English have higher satisfaction. If anything, satisfaction across most aspects of internationalisation appeared to be slightly higher among students whose course used a balanced mixture of English and Chinese, although this difference was not statistically significant. The exception here is in integration between parts of the course taught by UK and Chinese academic staff, where students taught primarily in English were notably more satisfied.

Figure 4-16: Perceptions of the course's international aspect, by teaching language



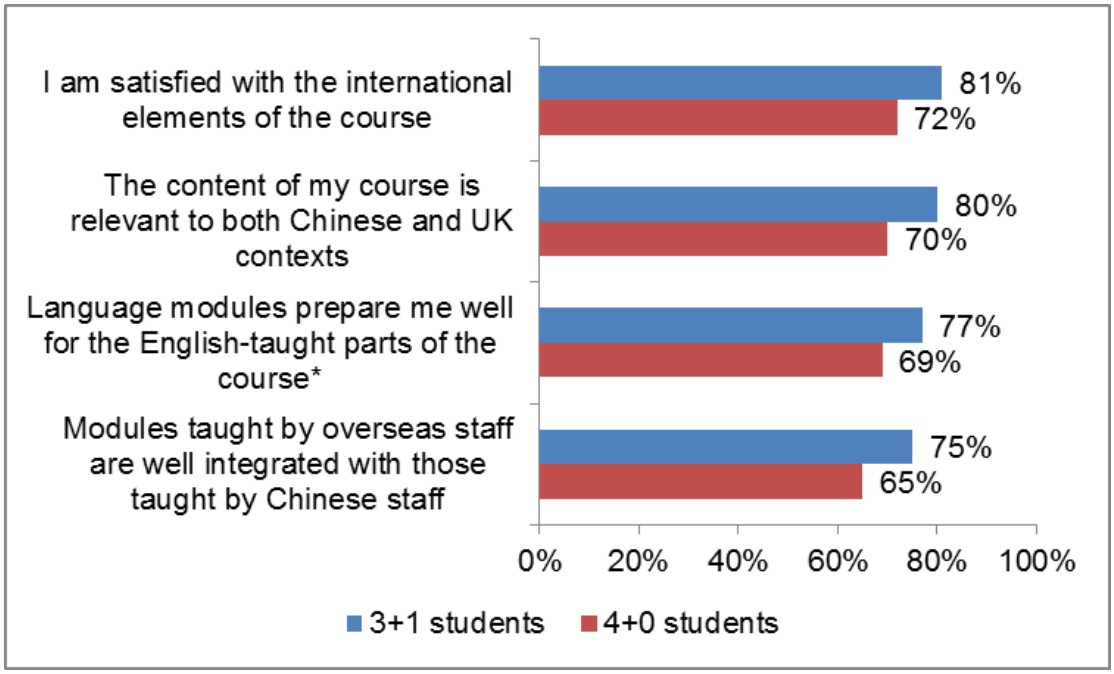
** Analysis of questions on whether "language modules prepare me well for the English-taught parts of the course" and "modules taught by overseas staff are well integrated with those taught by Chinese staff" exclude responses from students who said their course was taught entirely in Chinese*

Source: TNE student survey

There were also some substantial differences between students on 3+1 and 4+0 courses. Students following 3+1 programmes had more positive attitudes towards all aspects of internationalisation. There was a difference of 10 percentage points in the proportion that said they were satisfied with their course's internationalisation as a whole, and similar differences in other specific aspects. These differences are reduced, but do not disappear, if teaching language is controlled for.

One slightly surprising finding here is that students on 3+1 courses were more likely to say that their course was relevant to both the Chinese and UK contexts. This may be related to comments from several students on 4+0 courses that they felt their course was less international than expected, and wished for a deeper connection to the UK. However, other students also commented that UK content was less relevant to their future employment in China.

Figure 4-17: Perceptions of the course's international aspect, by course format



** Analysis of questions on whether "language modules prepare me well for the English-taught parts of the course" and "modules taught by overseas staff are well integrated with those taught by Chinese staff" exclude responses from students who said their course was taught entirely in Chinese*
Source: TNE student survey

Given the unique international aspects of joint programmes, it is no surprise that these aspects feature among both the course's main advantages and its main disadvantages. English-medium classes received particularly mixed opinions. They were the second most commonly cited advantage of joint programmes, with students appreciating their positive effect on English ability and their future careers, but many other students – and even some of the same students – also saw them as making it more difficult to understand the course content.

Insufficient or inadequate language modules were also a common complaint, although students generally did not give enough details to suggest specific solutions. As shown above, students whose content modules were taught mainly in English tended to be more likely than their counterparts with more Chinese-taught modules to say that they had enough language classes.

One possible explanation is higher initial language requirements for entrants to courses taught in English, which may mean that more language training is required for Chinese-taught courses.
As might be expected, students on 2+2 and 3+1 programmes were in general very positive about the opportunity to go abroad as part of their course. However, some students on 4+0 programmes that did not involve study abroad also praised their courses as giving good preparation for overseas study. These students generally intended to go abroad to study a Master's degree after completing their current course.

As shown in the chart above, students on 4+0 programmes were less likely to be satisfied with their course's international aspects. This appears to be particularly true for students studying courses without obvious "international" content, such as engineering. Some of these students expressed a wish for a greater connection with the UK, such as short-term study abroad opportunities or exchange programmes.

8. Impact of students' perceptions of various factors on overall course satisfaction

The factors described in previous sections vary in terms of their effect on students' overall satisfaction with their course. The strongest predictor of student satisfaction is the student's opinion on their course's international aspects. Among students that were happy with this part of the course, 90 per cent said that they were satisfied overall, while the corresponding figure among those that were not satisfied with their course's degree of internationalisation was only 41 per cent.

Other internationalisation-related factors were also very important to student satisfaction. The factor with the second-largest effect on overall satisfaction was whether students felt their course's language modules prepared them well for the English-taught parts of the course, while the question of whether their course was relevant to both the Chinese and UK contexts was also among the top five factors.

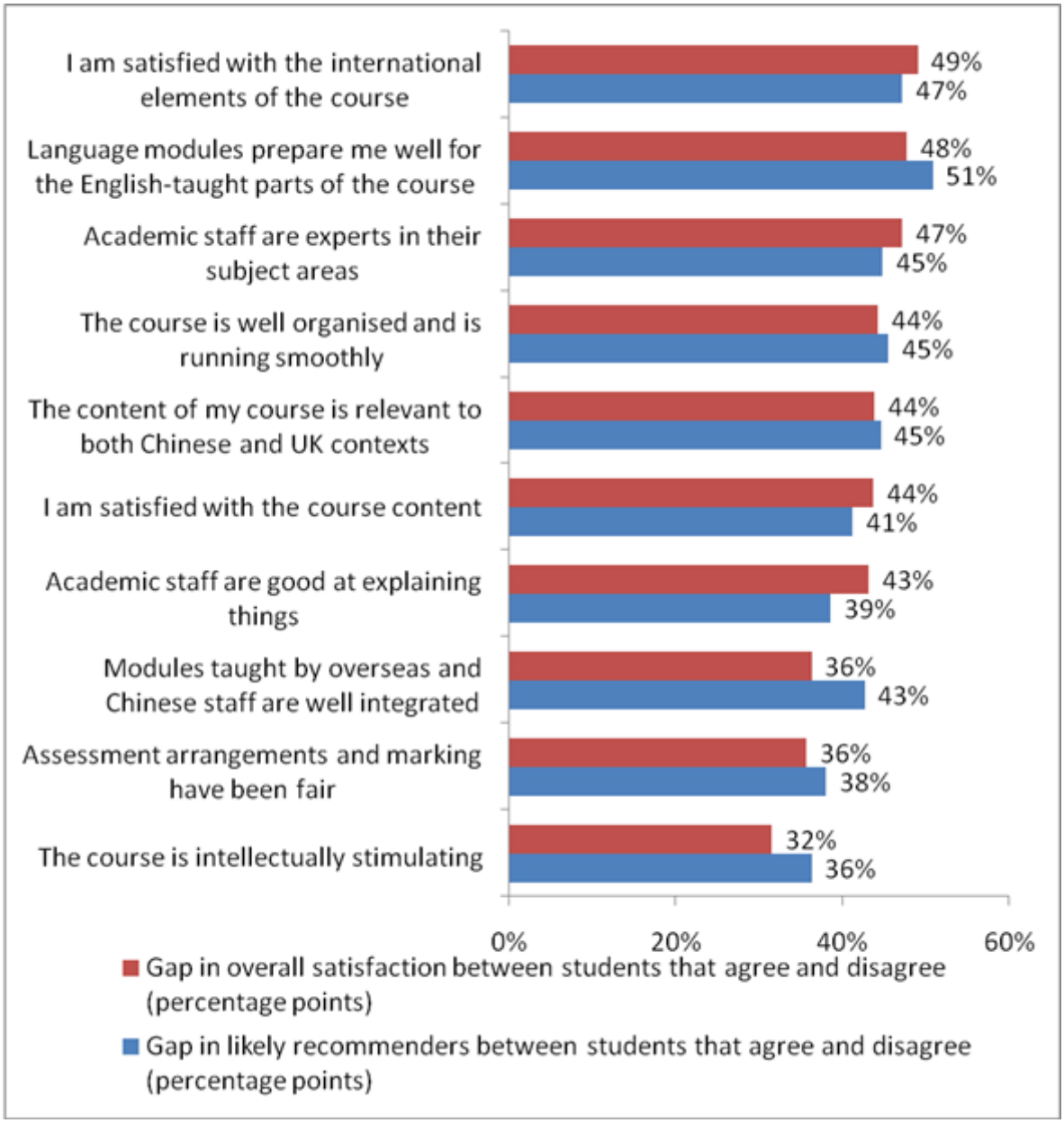
The perceived expertise of academic teaching staff also had a very strong effect on students' overall satisfaction with their course. Students with a neutral or negative view on this factor were the least likely to be satisfied with the course as a whole, as well as the least likely to recommend their course to potential students.

Another key factor was students' perception of course organisation. Students that thought their course was well organised and running smoothly were twice as likely to say they were satisfied with their course on the whole, and two-and-a-half times as likely to recommend it to others.

In general, the same factors that influence students' overall satisfaction also have the strongest effect on whether they would recommend their course to others. However, there are some minor differences. The top factor in terms of course recommendations is whether the course's language modules were sufficient, while factors such as the integration between modules taught by overseas and local faculty and whether the course is seen as intellectually stimulating are also relatively more important here.

The chart below shows a comparison between students who gave a positive answer ("completely agree" or "mostly agree") regarding a factor compared with those who gave a neutral or negative answer. The satisfaction gap refers to the difference in the proportion of students who said they were satisfied with the course quality between these two groups, while the recommendation gap refers to the difference in the proportion of students who said they would recommend the course to others.

Figure 4-18: Top 10 factors affecting overall course satisfaction and likelihood of recommending the course to others



Source: TNE student survey

These findings are again backed up by students' comments in open questions. When asked about the main advantages of their course, the most common single topic covered was the expertise of teaching faculty – for example, one student listed "excellent overseas teachers and Chinese returnees," while another said that "high-quality overseas teachers in core modules" were one of the top advantages.

The second most common positive aspect cited was the teaching language of the course. Many students commented that this had helped them improve their English ability, particularly their spoken English. Another typical response was that of the student who said that "bilingual teaching is a great help for future employment, especially in working with UK companies."

Meanwhile, many other students had positive things to say about other international aspects of the course – for example, “classes with international teachers can broaden our horizons and help us better understand the differences between Chinese and overseas education.” Naturally the dual/UK degree and overseas study aspect of the course was also a big advantage for students on 2+2 and 3+1 programmes, while some of those on 4+0 programmes also commented that their course would help them progress to an overseas Master’s programme in the future.

However, these aspects also feature prominently in students’ assessment of their course’s disadvantages. Aside from high tuition fees, language difficulties were the most commonly mentioned negative aspect of the course. Sometimes students put this down to their own personal difficulties – one student commented that “because of language difficulties, I find it difficult to follow the course content,” but this student described themselves as satisfied with the course as a whole. However, in other cases students are dissatisfied with either the standard of their language modules or see the language barrier as a major obstacle to their studies. As discussed in Section 4.7, students on courses taught mainly in Chinese were more likely to say their language modules were inadequate, which might suggest that institutions should pay more attention to language training for this course type.

International elements also played a strong role in many students’ responses when asked about negative aspects of the course. Some had difficulty getting used to the UK teaching style, while a noticeable minority of respondents mentioned a relative lack of class time with UK teaching staff – for example, one student said that “there aren’t enough modules taught by overseas staff, and they spend too little time in China.”

Some of these students’ comments imply that they had originally expected more contact with UK teaching staff. As the amount of teaching from UK academics is a defined part of the programme, this might suggest that institutions’ promotional material could do more to ensure that students entering the programme have a clear and accurate picture of what to expect.

Another issue related to internationalisation was commonly noted by students on 4+0 programmes. Some of these students saw their courses as less international than they had expected, particularly given the lack of opportunity to travel abroad. One such student commented that “there isn't really much communication with the UK University – there aren't really any opportunities to go abroad, and the level of international cooperation is limited.” This is also reflected in the lower satisfaction of 4+0 students with the international aspect of their course, as described in Section 4.7.

A third and final negative aspect related to internationalisation is a lack of communication with UK teaching staff noted by some students. As described in Section 4.6, this is mainly related to the relative lack of time spent in China or the language barrier, but a few students go beyond this and say that their UK teaching staff are hard to contact or difficult to approach.

Another top five factor influencing course satisfaction is course organisation, and this too attracted several comments when students were asked to describe negative aspects of their course. This particularly concentrated on arrangements for intensive teaching from overseas academics.

9. Student Suggestions

Many students gave suggestions of how their courses could be improved. Most of these were related to the negative aspects of the course identified above.

The most common suggestions were related to increasing contact time with overseas teaching staff, whether through increasing the number of these staff or increasing the time they spent in China. This suggestion should also be seen in the context of other student comments about difficulty contacting UK staff and the relatively lower level of satisfaction with student support compared to other aspects of the course, which suggest that communicating with UK staff when they are not in China is a significant problem on many courses.

Another common suggestion is to build a greater connection with the UK. This is especially true for students on 4+0 courses and those studying subjects such as engineering which have less directly UK-related content. Specific suggestions include more exchange and short-term overseas study opportunities, as well as working more closely with students in the UK.

Aside from these issues, most other suggestions were related to problems identified by students as described in the previous section. For example, those that complained of poor organisation suggested related improvements such as better communication. Students that expressed negative opinions about the expertise or teaching ability of teaching staff almost always said that this problem should be remedied, although few gave specific details or suggestions.

A number of students requested more language classes, but there was less consensus on core modules or other types of class – some students requested more content while others said the volume of classes should be reduced. Several students suggested that overseas teaching staff should pay more attention towards speaking clearly or should be chosen on the basis of not having a strong accent.

Finally, a significant number of students suggested reducing tuition fees or providing more scholarships. This is likely not a realistic suggestion for most programmes but does show that finances are an important factor in students' minds.

V. Case Studies

1. Challenges faced by the "1+N" management model: the Sino-British College, USST

The Sino-British College (SBC), University of Shanghai for Science and Technology was established in 2006. As a typical example of the "1+N" model, University of Shanghai for Science and Technology (USST) simultaneously signed cooperation agreements with nine university members of the Northern Consortium UK (NCUK), i.e. the University of Bradford, University of Huddersfield, University of Leeds, Leeds Beckett University, Liverpool John Moores University, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Salford, the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University.

Another major feature of the Sino-British College is that it has a separate campus outside the host university. The teaching and living area is located in a group of historical German buildings on Fuxing Zhong Road in Xuhui District.

SBC has a comprehensive and well-organised management system. At the top of the system, there is a joint senior management committee at the university level. The members of the committee include the president, a vice president, the vice president for undergraduate teaching and the head of the Office of Teaching Affairs of USST; a representative of NCUK; and representatives of three partner universities.

Internally, a senior administrative management committee has been established within SBC to make major decisions. The specific duties of the committee include: to discuss and decide on all academic, administrative, personnel and financial related daily affairs; to discuss and adopt policies, rules and systems relevant to student management; to discuss the opinions and suggestions of the academic and administrative departments of SBC and the committee; to make plans for SBC's future teaching and campus operation and development; and to implement relevant decisions made by SBC's joint senior management committee.

Meanwhile, there is an Office of the Principal at SBC, which presides over the overall work of the administrative management committee, and is responsible for the management of the daily affairs within SBC.

Independent campus operation and the "1+N" model are both a huge advantage for SBC and the biggest obstacle faced by it in management. In order to strengthen the connection with USST, the Personnel Department, the Financial Department and the Office of Teaching Affairs have respectively assigned three full-time managers to be responsible for the communication and coordination between SBC and the administrative system of USST. At the SBC level, the Vice President for External Affairs acts as the Principal and presides over all the affairs of SBC.

In order to enhance communication with a number of UK partners, SBC has especially set up the Department for Public Relations and External Affairs. The main duties of this department are to elevate SBC's overall institutional image, enhance its social recognition and improve its reputation through effective communication and interactions with external institutions, USST and NCUK's nine

UK member universities. Meanwhile, the Department for Public Relations and External Affairs is also responsible for strengthening internal communication between teachers and students at SBC, issuing regular electronic newsletters and promoting campus activities.

Another challenge faced by SBC is course linking and quality management. In order to reduce costs and simplify procedures, SBC has designed platform course resources recognised by all nine UK partners, as opposed to establishing separate teaching and appraisal systems for each partner. Students may apply for degrees from any of the partner universities based on their own academic results by completing relevant academic tasks. Although the appraisal standards set by different universities are different, they are based on the same teaching process, and this method has greatly reduced the costs.

2. Transition from a joint programme into a joint institute: NUIST Reading Academy

NUIST Reading Academy is a joint institute at the Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology (NUIST), in cooperation with the University of Reading. Reading Academy is a typical joint institute that developed from a joint programme into a joint institute. During the transition process, the managers made a number of innovations and developed the institute's own distinctive characteristics.

One such innovation was the NUIST management board's decision to delegate decision making and management powers to the academy itself. As a consequence, Reading Academy enjoys great autonomy in personnel, financial and administrative affairs.

The Principal of Reading Academy noted in an interview that autonomy has provided huge advantages to the management board during the running of the joint institute. In particular, the power to sign off independently on various decisions has enabled the academy to quickly and efficiently mobilise various resources, which has been significant for institutional reforms and innovations.

There is general agreement among TNE administrators that greater autonomy is conducive to the development of their programmes or institutes. Given the difference between joint institutes and traditional Chinese university management, existing administrative processes are often unsuitable. However, it is often hard to directly copy this concept, as in Chinese universities it is often the senior university leadership who decide whether to delegate powers.

A second notable feature at Reading Academy relates to the management of teaching staff. Teaching staff employed by the joint institute are recruited through the same procedures as those of the Chinese parent institution and have the same status as those staff, but enjoy a higher level of salary and benefits. According to an interviewee, this was an early point of discussion between Reading Academy and NUIST. This helps to maintain a stable teaching team by allowing academics to retain their status within the parent university, and to protect their rights in terms of research and training opportunities, as well as other benefits such as arrangements for their children's education.

Reading Academy's teaching staff must participate in a collective lesson preparation session once a week, as well as a regular teaching meeting. At the teaching meeting, both lecturers and student liaison officers give feedback in order to both monitor and improve the teaching process.

In order to strengthen student management, the academy no longer has full-time counsellors, and instead each Chinese member of the teaching staff is responsible for their respective group of students.

3. Joint programme case study: School of International Education, HAUT

Henan University of Technology (HAUT) was one of the first universities approved to launch China-foreign joint programmes. The university's School of International Education (SIE) was established in 2003 and began to recruit students, setting a requirement for Tier 2 *gaokao* (the Chinese college entrance examination) scores.

The university has two undergraduate joint programmes with the University of Reading (Food Science and Engineering, Biotechnology), and three business-related undergraduate programmes with the University of Wales (Accounting, Marketing, Human Resource Management). In each case, the two sides exchange teachers, recognise each other's credits and share educational resources. Students meeting certain conditions can transfer to the partner universities to complete their studies.

All of HAUT's joint programmes are operated through the School of International Education, which is run as a separate department. This is a very common operation model for joint programmes in China. SIE has established offices for party and political affairs, teaching management, programmes and students' affairs, which are responsible for daily administrative management. However, teaching resources are mainly provided by other relevant colleges and departments. HAUT SIE has adopted its own innovative approaches to cultivation and the management and development of teachers.

Unlike most other joint programmes and institutes, HAUT SIE employs a "dual track system" giving students the choice between a more international or more domestic-focused education. Students choosing the domestic stream receive bilingual education mainly through HAUT's professional courses, with no minimum English-language requirements. Those choosing the international stream are taught completely in English through courses mainly given by the UK partners and have to meet relevant linguistic requirements. The two modes differ significantly in terms of teachers, teaching content and academic appraisal.

In contrast to traditional single and dual degree courses, SIE has directly designed teaching processes based on two different training objectives. According to the administrators, this design is a response to the problems some students encounter through studying in English. For example, many students choose not to study abroad and therefore think they do not need to spend much time studying English. In addition, student feedback shows that intensive English learning may affect students' subject-specific studies.

SIE's teaching methods call for UK and Chinese teaching staff to pair up to work on course development. UK teaching staff come to China on short-term assignments, but each works with a Chinese academic who will ensure that the remaining part of the course will be completed smoothly after the UK teacher has left China.

In order to attract outstanding teachers from other colleges and departments, SIE also offers long-term and short-term international research tours. Academics may also have the opportunity to receive training or go for further studies at UK partner universities.

4. Joint institute case study: DUFE-SII – from a UK partner's perspective

The Surrey International Institute (SII) is a joint institute established by Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE) and the University of Surrey (UoS), which was established in 2007. SII is located on DUFE's campus at Shahekou District in Dalian, Liaoning Province. In accordance with relevant regulations, DUFE, the Chinese host institution, is the legal representative of SII within China and is also responsible for managing its financial affairs.

SII runs both joint undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate programmes (PG), where upon successful completion, students gain degrees from both universities (referred to as dual degrees).

Chinese matriculating students are recruited by DUFE in accord with the approved Ministry of Education quota for SII and from selected provinces, as submitted and approved in DUFE's recruitment plan. Students come from Tier 1, but must further meet a matriculation English score of 115 out of 150. While the UoS would prefer a more free market approach to recruitment, this system has worked well so far, with quotas being filled or near-filled over the past decade and will most likely remain the agreed approach going forward.

While SII originally ran three UG programmes and two PG programmes, it is currently offering two UG programmes in Business Management (BM) and International Tourism Management (ITM). Lessons were learned by both sides from the reductions and currently SII is now planning further expansions.

The SII approved student quota is 450 per annum, with BM taking two thirds and ITM the remainder. A recent development regarding the quota is that the Liaoning Education Bureau (LEB) has cut university quotas within the province based on economic and other data and this cascades down to individual units like SII. Consequently, in the past two years, quotas have fallen to 360 and 330, respectively. This is a major concern for SII and the UoS has little insight into future LEB decisions, adding uncertainty and risk.

Under the agreed undergraduate delivery format, students initially follow two years of the Chinese curriculum (accredited towards the UK FHEQ level 4). Then, on successfully meeting the UoS's entry criteria, students may choose to complete the final two years of the UoS programme (FHEQ levels 5 and 6), mostly still on the DUFE-SII campus. This has worked reasonably well, though English language capabilities are an ongoing challenge. However, this situation has improved over time, due to recent English language curriculum changes and increasingly higher entry standards.

Students who do not meet UoS' entry criteria, or who for other reasons do not choose the UoS programme, may complete DUFE's equivalent degree programme within SII (referred to as the single degree option). This was originally intended essentially as a safety net for students – a pathway to complete their studies. However, it became a popular choice even among students who did meet the UoS' entry criteria. This was problematic, as SII was established to deliver the dual degree programmes and this has resulted in some planned changes for the future.

Students joining a dual degree programme have the option to complete their studies at SII or transfer to the UoS' home campus in Guildford (Stag Hill) to complete the remaining portion of their programmes. Transfers can either be at FHEQ levels 5 or 6. Those transferring to the UK have, on average, outperformed UK-based students who studied the whole course in Surrey.

Both DUFE and the UoS have academic teaching staff based in China servicing SII. All administrative staff are Chinese citizens, employed by DUFE or agencies. It would be helpful if some foreign administrators could be employed in SII, but visa and expert certificate requirements make this unlikely.

The Joint Management Committee (JMC) is the most senior governance forum and is led by the DUFE Chairman and deputised by UoS' Vice-Chancellor and President. The JMC has an evenly balanced membership from the two universities and includes the Chinese Dean as an ex officio member. These meetings typically last a couple of hours and cover performance reviews, statutory sign-offs and discussions on strategy.

The Executive Group (EG) is appointed by the JMC, oversees the operations and reports back to the JMC. Its membership is evenly balanced between the parties, with the Dean included as part of DUFE's representation. A senior UoS member chairs the EG. These meetings can take up to eight hours (and more if needed) and deal with tactics, budgets, programmes, quality, performance, staff and so on. They can be lively and both sides need to question many aspects of the operations, reach agreements and progress the joint institute.

The JMC meets annually, alternating meetings between the two universities' campuses. The EG runs three meetings per annum. Both face-to-face and video/conference call meetings are used, as needed.

SII itself is run by the Chinese Dean, who chairs a Management Committee (SII-MC) overseeing all other internal committees. Membership comprises five members, including the Chinese Dean, a DUFE Party Secretary appointed to SII, two Associate Deans from DUFE and one from UoS. Other major committees cover Learning and Teaching, Research, Student Liaison and the Library, together with several staff forums. There are a range of administrative services covering registry, personnel, finance, marketing, building management and other necessary functions. The Party Secretary oversees the Student Affairs Office, which manages and maintains student welfare and provides services such as professional counselling, a series of student interest clubs, the student union, celebratory events and gala shows, sporting participation and more besides. There are also a number of student study support operations and career and alumni services.

Members of the SII-MC (or other nominated staff) attend select DUFE or UoS meetings, depending on which university they work for, in order to represent SII's interests, ensure the flow of communications and for quality purposes. The UoS' Associate Dean, for instance, attends the relevant UK home campus Boards of Examiners and Studies via video connection.

These arrangements have worked well to date.

- **Challenging issues for the two partners to reach agreement**

Where difficulties arise in attempting to reach agreement, they tend to stem from two realities – the two partner universities' internal issues and their respective policy arrangements.

The most challenging issues for DUFE and the UoS to agree on have been such things as timing of degree certificate issuance, the suite of programmes offered and tuition fee levels. There are others, though these examples adequately highlight the types of issues that aren't easily solved and reflect the above realities.

- SII dual degree students completing their qualifications in China are taking the same degrees as taught in the UoS' home campus, though the semesters are asynchronous and with UoS degree certificates issued after DUFE's main graduation ceremony. As the students are taking degrees from both institutions and the UoS has not completed their administrative processes, then DUFE cannot issue their degree either, as they need to accredit the UoS modules to students' academic record. For either university to change their semester schedules would invite a tsunami of administrative problems, with costs outweighing the benefits. Other administrative avenues have proved similarly unworkable. A simple fix of issuing a scroll in place of the official degree certificate at the DUFE event is adequate for ceremonial purposes, though the students then have to wait another month before they get their actual degree certificates. Both sides want a better solution, but struggle with generating workable alternatives.

- Both universities have at times preferred to introduce one programme in place of another and faced the challenges of trying to balance the interests of the joint institute with their own internal interests. This usually occurs where a school or institute running the desired programme has other strategic pursuits or partnership commitments and prefers not to extend the programme offering to the institute. Similar complications have arisen on the level of resourcing and related concerns about quality assurance. These types of problems have surfaced on several occasions and stymied progress, even when both sides agree that it would add value to the joint institute. While a senior university representative negotiating this type of arrangement may override a school or institute, this forced approach in a university settings is likely to be the least preferred option for obvious reasons. Indeed, a more diplomatic response of informing the partner that it is not possible at the given time is the norm for both sides and this usually defers the issue until it can be revisited at a later time. This has happened on a few occasions.

- Tuition fees tend to be a controversial issue. The Chinese partner university tends to use their own institution as a benchmark of acceptable quality. Equally, they fully understand the foreign partner's usual position; namely, that the tuition fee directly impacts quality and it needs to be at a level (usually far higher than the host institution wants) to sustain the foreign partner's defined or expected quality levels. DUFE and UoS are no different in grappling with determining the "right" fee levels at SII. The final agreement – which was achieved at an EG meeting and approved at the JMC meeting, was a compromise by both partners.

- **Day-to-day decision making**

SII has both management and committee structures to systematically handle key decisions for the operations, as detailed above. These are regularly run and meetings documented. As there are both DUFE and UoS curricula being delivered within the same Institute, though operating under different policies, it is incumbent on the senior management team to openly communicate to ensure SII's interests are protected.

The Dean, although employed by DUFE, is charged with representing SII and has a UoS Associate Dean in situ to ensure support, liaise with the UK campus and raise matters via more formal channels, such as, the EG and JMC. The minimum of one UK staff member on the senior team makes a big difference, as many issues can often be resolved on the spot.
In practice, this means that for matters that cannot wait to proceed through normal committee meetings, the Dean or relevant Associate Deans will handle them. An informal open door policy exists among the senior team or appointments are made usually within the same day, ensuring quick responses. As the Associate Deans usually oversee committees, they can take chair's actions if needed and later submit to the relevant committee.

For more serious matters, the Dean can immediately consult with DUFE directly, and the UoS Associate Dean can phone or video call the home campuses on the same day.

Therefore, if the appropriate organisation and balanced senior team are in place then there is nothing particularly special about a joint institute and the daily decision-making processes.

- **Key administrative challenges**

There are many challenges when running a joint institute, from time zones and languages through to compliance with laws or policies that can be specific but, paradoxically, unclear as to their application. The "one-third rules" specified in the implementation measures, for instance, are one area often cited as a challenge by foreign institutions. Indeed, UoS is no exception, though different joint institutes will likely identify different key challenges. The following are some of the key challenges faced at SII, from a UK partner perspective.

Given the requirement to submit to the host university's management, the joint institute will necessarily be treated and subjected to reporting and policy requirements like any other school. And yet, joint institutes are international organisations with different needs, striving to minimise bureaucracy, adopting best practices, needing frequent visits between partners, expecting better facilities, desiring more liberal benefits and use flexible approaches to such things as staffing. These can be affected in varying degrees when local standards are applied.

Joint institutes are subject to double quality assurance and/or compliance audits involving both Chinese and UK authorities. While SII, like any responsible educational institution, has no issue with being audited by such bodies and openly supports such endeavours, this places a heavy burden on the institute that operates with limited resources. Each audit usually requires the involvement of many staff and students, voluminous documentation and reporting and the organising of visits for meetings.

Government controlled tuition fee levels have affected budgets and impacted the UoS expatriate package design and the academic contract category. The UoS Associate Dean aside, staff were employed as Teaching Fellows so that programmes could be delivered on budget, though this equally undermined research ambitions. Similarly, the appointment of other more senior UoS staff to be based at SII would strengthen the senior team, though this is currently not possible until income and budgets can be increased. This equally affects the host institution that also employs expatriates, especially for English language teaching.

While SII has a student exchange programme, it has proved difficult to get UK students to transfer from Stag Hill to SII. Those who have come have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and form part of the institute's word-of-mouth marketing.

Chinese UG degrees are four years in length and have a liberal arts bent, which is propitious as the English language modules need to be incorporated into the first two years, along with other required courses like the Party's social studies, business subjects and an array of electives. The British UG programmes, by contrast, are three years in length and narrowly focused on the field of study. The combining of curricula and cross-accreditation processes both need to be handled carefully and, importantly, with the recognition that both partner institutions will modify modules and the curricula periodically and independently. Therefore, procedures to identify changes by either side must be put in place so the respective Associate Deans within SII can scrutinise the proposed changes and provide feedback before modifications are implemented to ensure the module fits within the current arrangements and can be logistically delivered in SII. Any mistakes can be very problematic and will likely catch the attention of quality assurance agencies. Attention to the "one-third rules" under the MoE Opinion (2006) Item 4.v, also need to be considered and followed: this is easier said than done.

Staffing a joint institute is always challenging, especially as regards foreign expatriate staff. Difficulties can be encountered in the preparation and processing of visas and associated documentation. Sufficient time must be allocated for these processes as otherwise delays can affect the arrival of a teaching member and emergency measures may need to be enacted to ensure class delivery.

- **Dealing with the Chinese parent institution**

Overall, the operational functioning of SII has worked well over the past decade and DUFE is to be commended on the caliber of Chinese staff employed within the Institute. Most administrators are employed at the master degree level and operate within a complex, bilingual environment. The staff are dedicated and efficient.

The Dean of SII has submitted SII to CEAIE accreditation, which resulted in SII being the first joint institute to achieve this recognition. Similarly, the Dean was instrumental in the evolution of the Dean Association of Chinese-foreign Cooperation (DACC), which has brought greater awareness of SII among joint institutes. Both activities were positive contributions to SII's reputation.

The UoS has recognised that the Student Affairs portfolio has done an excellent job in looking after student welfare at SII, engaging students in a variety of clubs, events, gala performances and internships.

The SII financial team has navigated some complex matters dealing with internal accounting, external auditors, taxation authorities, banks and other government authorities. Despite this, the financial arrangements and records of SII are current and running smoothly. This is a critical function that when run well, places the foreign partner at ease and builds trust.

DUFE, as a partner institution, is focused on its student body and this is reflected within the leadership and operations at SII. This is appreciated by the UoS.

- **Advice from SII to other proposed or newly established joint institutes**

There are many issues for UK universities considering whether to establish a joint institute, but an important starting point would be having an appreciation of the context, including legal, policy, financial and cultural elements, choosing a suitable partner and having a clear and agreed strategic plan. This may sound obvious, but it means going into great detail, putting aside assumptions, involving key administrators like faculty Registrars and Accountants and academics dealing with L&T. Talking through processes over several days and several trips – both ways – may save a lot of problems later on. All should be documented and shared.

It will be essential to appoint a reputable law firm specialising in the sector to undertake due diligence, and probably also a major accounting firm for advice and organisation of auditors.

An agreement should take into account limitations placed on the Chinese partner and efforts should be made to structure the agreement to overcome such restraints. For instance, one area for such consideration may be the training and development of staff, given Chinese staff may be subject to limited travel opportunities.

Having UK partner staff on the ground is critically important for suitable representation and operational functioning, albeit costly.

Chinese partners may prefer foreign partners that compliment and add value to their own operations rather than having ones that essentially have the same strengths and programmes. Also, be aware that under the MoE Opinion (2006) “The Chinese education institution shall vigorously introduce foreign education resources for these types of programmes and diligently evaluate the subjects to be introduced from the foreign education institution, particularly for those subjects substituting Chinese education for academic qualifications.” Put simply, you get market access but at a price.

Joint institutes are not for profit-making, however, pipelines to the UK are acceptable components and address this motive. So, foreign partners need to be clear why they want to be operating in China because if money and students is the main interest then it may be better to channel resources into advanced recruitment programmes rather than a joint institute.

VI. Key suggestions

Based on findings from interviews and surveys of TNE administrators, as well as student experience surveys, case studies and other research, the following factors are potential areas where joint programmes and institutes could be improved:

1. Autonomy of TNE programmes and institutes

Chinese TNE administrators saw autonomy as an important positive factor affecting the development and success of joint institutes and programmes. They agree that the ability to take decisions autonomously this contributes to taking full advantage of the high-quality resources introduced.

Many TNE administrators said that there was room to be more efficient and effective, but sitting in the traditional conservative environment and administrative systems of the parent Chinese universities, Chinese TNE administrators are less likely to adapt quickly enough to changes. Differences between Chinese and UK structures have also caused problems in coordination and communication between the partners of a joint programme or institute.

Although 72% of Chinese joint programme administrators surveyed agreed that they are more autonomous compared with other Chinese programmes in the Chinese partner university, only 28% strongly agreed with this. Among UK administrators, the proportion expressing agreement was even lower. As with interview findings, this may suggest that many TNE administrators would prefer even greater autonomy.

This suggests that besides setting clear objectives and agreeing on development strategies, parent institutions should consider delegating appropriate authority to TNE programme and institute administrators, allowing more innovation and flexibility. This may cover enrolment policy, internal organisation, finance, staffing, student management and services, specialty development and curriculum setting, although the way power is delegated should be determined based on the needs of the individual institution. However, this flexibility should also be paired with strong quality assurance and control systems in order to protect students' rights and ensure quality education.

It should be emphasised that autonomy does not necessarily mean directly following the UK University's teaching and learning model. Given the different needs and experiences of Chinese students, joint programmes and institutes should work towards integration and innovation, and ensure that teaching models from both sides are taken into account in order to establish distinctive curriculum systems and training targets.

2. Teaching staff development

A good combined team of teaching faculty from the UK and China is the core of a successful joint programme or institute and a key driver of education quality and future development. Administrators of parent institutions from both the UK and China attach great importance to the development of teaching staff, and appropriate teacher recruitment plans and standardised teacher management systems were in place in every programme or institute.

However, interviews and surveys show that challenges still remain. It is mostly agreed that a key challenge is ensuring that the structure and diversity of teaching staff meets students' needs. This is a particular issue for joint programmes that are reliant on flying faculty, which can cause a lack of continuity of engagement between the UK teaching staff and their Chinese students.

In some cases, the level of experience of local Chinese staff employed could also be improved. According to analysis by the Global Institute of Management and Economics at the Dongbei University of Finance and Economics, the breakdown of teaching staff by professional title is above the overall national average for university teaching staff at 60 per cent of joint institutes and programmes – but this means that there are 40 per cent of programmes and institutes where this is not the case. Given the high profile (and high fees) of TNE programmes, there is still room to increase the employment of more quality teachers with appropriate experience, qualifications and senior professional titles.

Quality building is not solely a question of teacher recruitment. Instead, it involves the entire process from training and development to the evaluation and promotion of teachers. Some TNE administrators identified English proficiency as a barrier to further progress among Chinese academic staff. Moreover, teachers need to spend more time and energy preparing lessons and actively participating in teacher development trainings.

One particular issue identified by a number of administrators was a lack of communication between Chinese and UK teaching staff. UK and Chinese academics in many institutions have formed their own "small circles," without close contact with their counterparts from the other institution. This acts as a barrier to the effective integration of teaching resources. Therefore, joint institutions and programmes should actively establish bridges and platforms for communication and interactions between Chinese and UK academics, and encourage and guide exchanges and cooperation between the two groups.

3. Addressing shortcomings related to specific programme formats

Transnational education takes a range of different forms. As well as differences between joint programmes, joint institutes and other partnership types not covered in this report, partnerships also differ by the amount of time spent studying at each partner institution and by the language of instruction while students are in China.

Although the various different programme formats each have their own advantages, the student and management research presented in this report has revealed some common pitfalls with certain programme types. Addressing these issues can help to increase student satisfaction as well as improve learning outcomes.

- **Programmes without a long-term UK study component**

As Section IV shows, students on programmes that do not involve long-term study in the UK tend to be significantly less satisfied with the international elements of their courses. This in turn makes these students less satisfied with their courses as a whole, and less likely to recommend them to other potential students.

Students on these courses expressed a wish for a greater connection with the UK. This is especially true for some students on courses like engineering that have less directly UK-relevant content.

Therefore, although 4+0 programmes do not involve long-term study in the UK, institutions should consider other international opportunities for students on these courses, such as short-term summer or exchange programmes based on the UK campus.

- **Programmes making heavy use of UK-based academics ("flying faculty")**

One of students' main complaints was a lack of opportunities to engage with UK teaching staff, with some feeling that overseas staff are hard to contact or difficult to approach. A key reason for this is the limited time many of these staff spend in China, although there are also other factors at play, such as the language barrier. This may be one reason for TNE students' lower level of satisfaction with the academic advice and support they receive on their courses, compared with overseas students studying in the UK.

Although many students suggested increasing the number of modules taught by UK staff or the amount of time UK staff spend in China, this may not be realistic for all joint programmes. Instead, programmes that rely heavily on flying faculty can use innovative methods to increase contact between UK-based academics and their students in China.

Some TNE administrators reported that technology is playing an increasingly important role in helping to address this issue, which includes both greater use of online teaching resources as well as encouraging interaction between students and UK-based teaching staff through online

platforms. Paired teaching was also mentioned as another innovation which helps to bridge this divide.

In some cases, universities have already set up channels to allow students to communicate with UK-based staff, but awareness or usage of these is low. Joint programmes and institutes should ensure that all students are aware of these channels, and should be open to student feedback on ways to improve them.

- **Programmes taught mostly in Chinese**

Some Chinese students attending joint programmes or institutes reported that Chinese was their main language of instruction. These students were noticeably less likely to be happy with their course's language modules compared to those taught mostly in English or in a balanced mixture of the two languages.

This has a strong impact on overall course satisfaction. Language modules have a very strong impact on students' evaluation of the course as a whole. Those who agree that their language modules prepare them well for the English-taught parts of their course are more than twice as likely to be satisfied overall, compared with those who are neutral or disagree. This is also the single factor with the biggest impact on whether students would recommend their course to others.

This finding might at first seem counterintuitive, as students with the lowest need for English are the most likely to see this as a problem. However, the level of proficiency needed for English-taught modules is likely the same regardless of the number of these modules. It is possible that programmes using English as the main teaching language currently pay closer attention to language teaching, while programmes that are mainly taught in Chinese see this as less essential.

Institutions whose courses use Chinese as the main teaching language should therefore assess whether their current language modules are doing enough to prepare students for the English-taught parts of the course.

4. Controlling students' expectations

Many aspects relating to student satisfaction can be controlled by the two universities, and feedback shows that administrators from the two sides are able to work together to overcome problems faced by their students. However, some things are more difficult to change, such as the amount of teaching from UK academics, as opposed to local faculty, as this directly affects the financial sustainability of the course.

Nevertheless, student surveys show that these core aspects of courses are a common source of student dissatisfaction. As these factors are already defined before the course starts, this suggests that students may initially have been unclear about what the course would involve.

In some cases, this might imply that the joint programme or institute – and/or either of the two partners – could do more to make sure that students have a clear and accurate picture of what to expect before signing up to the course.

5. Dissemination of advanced management experience

Many institutions have accumulated large amounts of knowledge and management experience as a result of years of innovations and explorations. However, much of this experience has not been summarised, detailed, or disseminated in written form. Much precious experience has therefore been lost.

An illustration of the interest in sharing experience is the case of Surrey International Institute (SII) at Dongbei University of Finance and Economics. The institute is widely seen as a success story, and SII has been frequently visited by representatives of other institutions' joint institutes and programmes. In 2015 alone, Surrey International Institute received more than 100 visitors from nearly 20 institutions, with learning and innovations in management systems and mechanisms constituting an important part of discussions. This demonstrates that there is a strong demand for information sharing between different joint institutes and programmes.

Regular summaries of experience in TNE administration and management, and in particular analysis of how problems were overcome, can serve as a guide for the development of other jointly run institutions. Meanwhile, joint programmes and institutes should also regularly summarise internal management problems and experience to solidify their internal experience and further the future development of international education cooperation.

Acknowledgement

CEAIE is China's nationwide not-for-profit organisation conducting international educational exchanges. It works with educational and research institutions, academic bodies and schools, as well as organisations, enterprises, foundations and individuals in other countries and regions who are engaged in the promotion of educational development and quality assurance on the basis of equality and friendship. CEAIE is committed to promoting collaboration between Chinese and foreign institutions, and ensuring and enhancing the quality of cooperative operations.

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It creates friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. Using the UK's cultural resources, the British Council makes a positive contribution to the countries it works with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. It works with more than 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Each year it reaches more than 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications.

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