COUNTRY REPORT:

Hong Kong

(Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China)

Contents

Introduction

This report is part of a series of country reports that QAA, as part of its contractual arrangement with the four national funding bodies in the UK, regularly produces to offer higher education providers an insight into the higher education and regulatory landscape of key countries for UK transnational education (TNE). The reports offer high-level information and intelligence about regulations, challenges and opportunities, signposting to sources of further information.

Country reports might also be associated with TNE review activity, in which case they also include the main lessons learned from reviewing TNE in the subject country, for the benefit of the whole sector. This report is associated with the review of UK TNE in Hong Kong (a Special Administrative Region of China) carried out in 2018.

In producing these reports, and in reviewing UK TNE, QAA seeks to liaise with local regulators and quality assurance agencies, and other UK sector bodies with relevant expertise. QAA has a number of strategic partnerships with counterpart agencies in key countries for UK TNE. These are a source of intelligence and direct access to up-to-date information about local regulatory developments.

We would like to thank our partner agency in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), for their valuable support in developing this report, and throughout the TNE review process, which included joint review activity.

香港學術及職業資歷評審局
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China)

1   The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China. It is located on the eastern side of the Pearl River Delta, bordering Guangdong province in the north and facing the South China Sea in the east, west and south. It consists of four administrative districts: Hong Kong Island, Lantau Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. About 95 per cent of Hong Kong population is ethnic Chinese, and the official languages are Cantonese and English, with a growing use of Putonghua. With a land area of 1.104 km² and a population of 7.4 million,[1] urban Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated regions in the world.

2   Over the past 30 years Hong Kong's population has kept growing at an average of 0.9 per cent per year, but it has also shown a significant ageing trend. The median age of the population has increased from 28.7 in 1986 to 44.3 in 2016, with the number and proportion of school-aged population aged under 24 falling from 41.7 per cent to 22.9 per cent of total population.[2] This will have implications on higher education student enrolment and labour force participation, which is predicted to fall from 61 per cent in 2017 to 49.5 per cent by 2041. Immigration, especially from mainland China (hereafter referred to as 'the Mainland') may mitigate these issues, but it will need active policy intervention. Currently, migration from the Mainland is controlled through the One-way Permit scheme, which limits permit holder entry to 150 per day.

3   Hong Kong is a significant global financial centre. Leveraging its position as a gateway to the Mainland, it has become a regional trading hub. It has a Gross Domestic

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[1] www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/so20.jsp
[2] www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B1120017042017XXXXB0100.pdf

Product (GDP) of 347 million USD, with a 4.7 per cent growth rate in the first quarter of 2018, its strongest since 2011. This growth has been driven primarily by exports of goods and services and by private consumption.[3] Hong Kong was the 7th largest exporter of merchandise - much re-exported from the Mainland - and the world's 15th largest exporter of commercial services in 2017. It is ranked 12th in the Human Development Index,[4] and is consistently ranked among the most competitive and freest economic areas in the world.

4   Hong Kong has moved from an economy based on low-cost manufacturing into a service-led economy (92.7 per cent of its GDP in 2016). The four 'pillar industries' of Hong Kong's economy are trading and logistics (contributing 21.7 per cent of GDP in 2016), financial services (17.7 per cent), professional and producer services (for example business, financial and real estate services) (12.5 per cent), and tourism (4.7 per cent). Industrial production is limited by high land and property prices and wage costs, which are much higher than in the Mainland. With a view to diversifying Hong Kong's economy the government has identified six industries of key growth potential: cultural and creative, medical services, education services, innovation and technology, testing and certification services, and environmental industries, which together accounted for 8.9 per cent of GDP in 2016. [5]

5   Mainland China is the main export market for Hong Kong making up 54.5 per cent of total exports, followed by the EU, the US and ASEAN (8.9 per cent, 8.4 per cent, and 7.3 per cent respectively). The Mainland is also the largest source of direct investment in Hong Kong, accounting for 25.7 per cent of total foreign direct investment (FDI) (followed by the US, Singapore, and the UK - 2.5 per cent, 2.3 per cent, and 2.2 per cent respectively). Besides being a highly attractive market for FDI, ranked fourth globally for FDI inflows behind only mainland China in Asia, Hong Kong is itself a major international investor, being the largest source of overseas direct investment in the Mainland (44.7 per cent of total FDI). Hong Kong also represents the third largest trading partner of Chinese mainland after the US and Japan. The strong economic ties between Hong Kong and mainland China have been supported by the Mainland-Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) firstly concluded in 2003, and further strengthened with additional economic agreements aimed at expanding market liberalisation and facilitating trade and investment between the two places.

6   Hong Kong was a Crown Colony of the UK from 1842[6] until the transfer of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China in 1997. Since then it has been governed under the principle of 'one country, two systems', which gives the territory a degree of political and economic autonomy. Pursuant to its status as a special administrative region, Hong Kong retains sovereignty over almost all aspects of its internal governance, including education.

Key policy drivers

7   The Chief Executive Carrie Lam in her Policy Address on October 2017 set out the key priorities of her Government policy agenda. She emphasised the Government's role not only as public service provider but increasingly as a facilitator and a promoter of Hong Kong business internationally. She also emphasised the importance of promoting innovation and technology to create a diversified economy and boost competitiveness, and of seizing

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[3] https://tradingeconomics.com/hong-kong/gdp-growth
[4] http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI
[5] http://hong-kong-economy-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/Market-Environment/Economic-and-Trade-Information-on-Hong-Kong/etihk/en/1/1X000000/1X09OVUL.htm
[6] The date refers to the cession of Hong Kong Island. The cession of Kowloon dates from 1860, and that of the New Territories from 1898.

opportunities brought by the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area (Bay Area).[7]

8 The Government will promote Hong Kong as an international innovation and technology hub, aiming to double research and development expenditure as a percentage of GDP from 0.73 to 1.5 per cent. The 2018-19 Budget has already earmarked an additional HK$50 billion for supporting innovation and technology, focusing on the first phase of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park. Investment in education is seen as key to support Hong Kong's social and economic aspirations.

9 Mrs Lam's 2017 Policy Address places particular emphasis on improving the quality of education at all levels.[8] In support of this goal, recurrent spending on education has been increased by HK$3.6 billion to implement a range of policy initiatives. These include promoting vocational and professional education and training, fostering closer business-school collaboration to meet the workforce needs of Hong Kong, and meeting the government policy objectives for the post-secondary sector. As stated by the Education Bureau these are to:

- provide multiple and flexible articulation pathways for young people to pursue post-secondary education
- support the development of the self-financing post-secondary sector and promote the diversification of post-secondary education through various support schemes such as the Land Grant Scheme and Start-up Loan Scheme
- support the development of the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) through the provision of publicly funded study places at various levels, as well as the provision of research and capital grants
- ensure that no qualified students are denied access to higher and post-secondary education due to a lack of financial means
- assure the quality of post-secondary education and ensure its relevance to the needs and development of the community
- ensure that courses leading to non-local higher academic and professional qualifications are conducted by recognised institutions and professional bodies and have comparable standards and recognition to similar courses in the home countries concerned
- further develop Hong Kong as a regional education hub.[9]

10 The Government has committed to specific measures to support these policy objectives, including:

- a HK$3 billion increase in means-tested studentships for all local students of UGC-funded research postgraduate programmes
- a non-means-tested annual subsidy of HK$30,000 for eligible students pursuing full-time locally accredited local and non-local self-financing undergraduate programmes (including top-up degree) (see paragraphs 15 and 34-38 for details about local accreditation and non-local provision)
- continued support for up to 100 outstanding local students per year to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate studies in world-renowned universities outside Hong Kong
- a non-means-tested annual subsidy of HK$5,000 for eligible students pursuing eligible undergraduate (including top-up degree) programmes on the Mainland

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[7] www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2017/eng/pdf/Agenda_Ch3.pdf
[8] www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2017/eng/pdf/Agenda_Ch4.pdf
[9] www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/postsecondary/policy-objectives/index.html

- an increased number of subsidised places under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions, from 1,000 to 3,000 per cohort
- continued encouragement of students from regions along the Belt and Road[10] to enrol in post-secondary programmes in Hong Kong, providing scholarships for students from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand
- an additional HK$1.2 billion injection into the Qualifications Framework Fund for ongoing support for various stakeholders to participate in the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) to promote lifelong learning and to support the workforce needs of Hong Kong[11] (see paragraph 12 for more information on the HKQF).

The Hong Kong higher education landscape

11   Higher education in Hong Kong is organised according to four levels of award: sub-degrees (such as associate degrees and higher diplomas); bachelor's degrees; master's degrees; and doctorates. The typical duration of these awards for a student studying full-time is two years, four years, one to two years, and four years (three years for students who have completed a master's degree) respectively. This may vary depending on the nature of disciplines. Graduates of associate degrees and higher diplomas may be eligible to enter bachelor's degree courses at an advanced stage, depending on the number of credits they have accumulated.
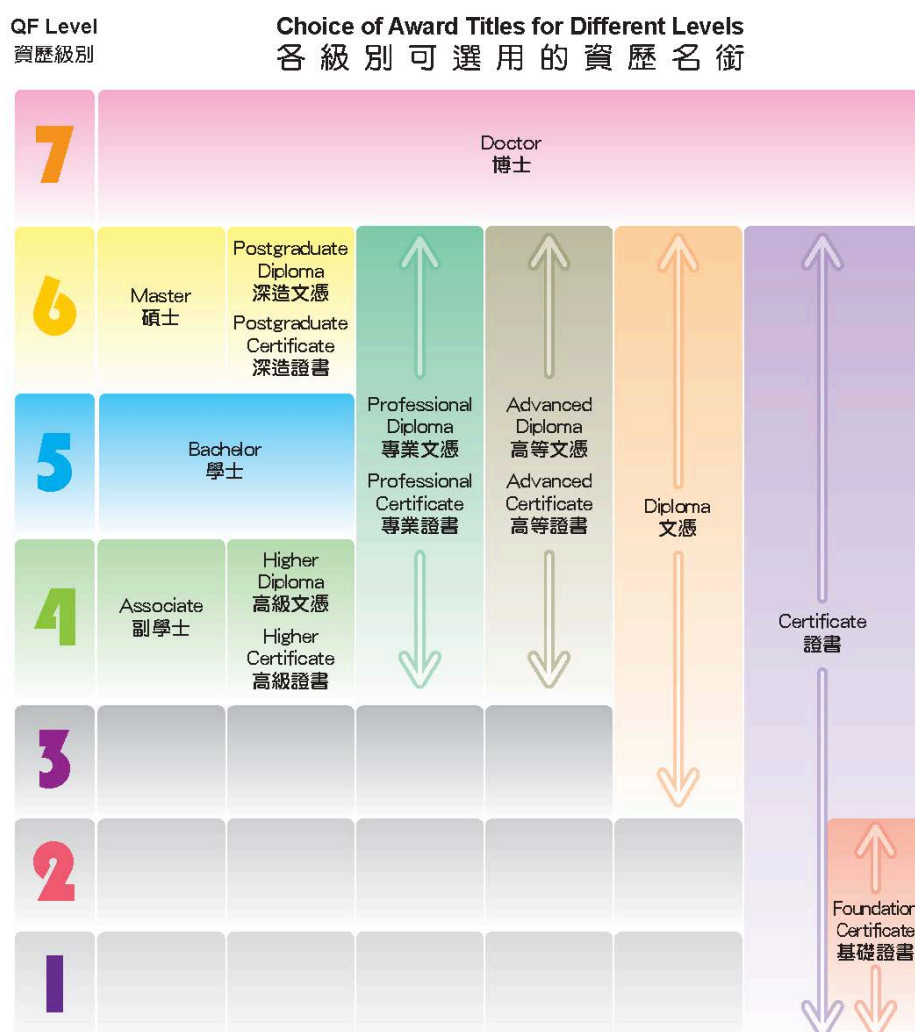
12   Figure 1 shows the Award Titles Scheme (ATS) introduced in 2013 to regulate the use of titles for qualifications recognised under the HKQF. The ATS specifies the award titles that can be used by providers for qualifications they offer at various HKQF level. The HKQF is a seven-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational and professional sectors as well as continuing education to promote and support lifelong learning. It was first launched in 2008 and was recently reviewed in 2017.

13   The Education Bureau is responsible for developing policies, legislation and initiatives in education at all levels and oversees their effective implementation, including with respect to the HKQF. The Bureau is headed by the Secretary for Education, who is appointed by Hong Kong's Chief Executive. Public funding for higher education is distributed by the University Grants Committee (UGC). The main functions of the UGC are to offer expert advice to the Education Bureau on the development and funding of higher education in Hong Kong and to provide assurance to the Government and the community on the standards and cost effectiveness of the operations and activities of the eight Universities it funds (See Figure 2).

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[10] The Belt and Road Initiative was launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013 to drive the development of new trading routes, links and business opportunities between China and over 60 countries across Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, along two historical strategic routes: the Silk Road Economic Belt (One Belt), aimed at enhancing and developing land routes, linking China's east coast all the way to Western Europe; and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (One Road), a sea route that runs west from China's east coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.

[11] www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2017/eng/pdf/Agenda_Ch4.pdf

Figure 1: Award Titles Scheme[12]

QF Level 資歷級別 — Choice of Award Titles for Different Levels 各級別可選用的資歷名銜

QF Level						
7	Doctor 博士					
6	Master 碩士	Postgraduate Diploma 深造文憑 / Postgraduate Certificate 深造證書	Professional Diploma 專業文憑 / Professional Certificate 專業證書	Advanced Diploma 高等文憑 / Advanced Certificate 高等證書	Diploma 文憑	Certificate 證書
5	Bachelor 學士					
4	Associate 副學士	Higher Diploma 高級文憑 / Higher Certificate 高級證書				
3						
2						Foundation Certificate 基礎證書
1						

14   Each UGC-funded institution is an autonomous and self-accrediting body with its own Ordinance and Governing Council. The institutions have substantial freedom in the internal allocation of resources, academic standards and curricula, and the selection of staff and students. The UGC discharges its responsibilities for the quality assurance of higher education in Hong Kong through another semi-autonomous body called the Quality Assurance Council, established in April 2007. The Council's terms of reference are:

- to advise the UGC on quality assurance matters in the higher education sector in Hong Kong
- to conduct audits and other reviews as requested by the UGC, and report on the quality assurance mechanisms and quality of the offerings of institutions
- to promote quality assurance in the higher education sector in Hong Kong
- to facilitate the development and dissemination of good practices in quality assurance in higher education.

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[12] www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/KeyFeatures/ats/index.html

15   The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), formerly the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA), was established in 1990 as an independent statutory body to provide authoritative advice on the academic standards of degree programmes in higher education institutions in Hong Kong. In 2007, the Council was reconstituted under the HKCAAVQ Ordinance (Chapter 1150).[13] The HKCAAVQ took on responsibility for the vocational sector and statutory roles as the Accreditation Authority and Qualifications Register (QR) Authority under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (Chapter 592).[14] HKCAAVQ is entrusted as the Accreditation Authority with the duty to implement the quality assurance system underpinning the HKQF. As the QR Authority, HKCAAVQ is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the QR to support the HKQF. All qualifications delivered by non-self-accrediting institutions must be accredited by the HKCAAVQ before they can be registered in the QR and recognised under the HKQF.

16   Higher education in Hong Kong can be divided into three main categories:

- **Publicly funded programmes offered by publicly funded institutions**: that is, the eight UGC funded universities, and two institutions without self-accrediting status offering sub-degree and degree programmes (see Figure 2)
- **Self-financing programmes leading to local awards offered by publicly funded institutions (including their self-financing arms) and self-financing institutions**. There are 19 self-financing institutions offering self-financing locally-accredited higher education programmes. Twelve have local degree awarding powers, and can thus offer programmes at bachelor's level and above. The others are vocational institutions and community colleges providing locally-accredited sub-degree programmes (see Figure 2).
- **Self-financing programmes leading to non-local awards being offered in Hong Kong** (see paragraphs 22 to 25)

Figure 2: Higher education providers in Hong Kong

| **Publicly funded universities (UGC funded)** |
| City University of Hong Kong (CityU) |
| Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) |
| Lingnan University (LU) |
| The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) |
| The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) |
| The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) |
| The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) |
| The University of Hong Kong (HKU) |
| |
| **Publicly funded institutions** |
| Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) (with degree awarding power) |
| Vocational Training Council (VTC) |
| |
| **Self-financing institutions with degree awarding powers offering self-financing locally accredited local degree programmes** |
| Caritas Institute of Higher Education |
| Centennial College |
| Chu Hai College of Higher Education |
| Gratia Christian College |

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[13] www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap1150!en@2007-10-01T00:00:00
[14] www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap592!en@2016-05-27T00:00:00

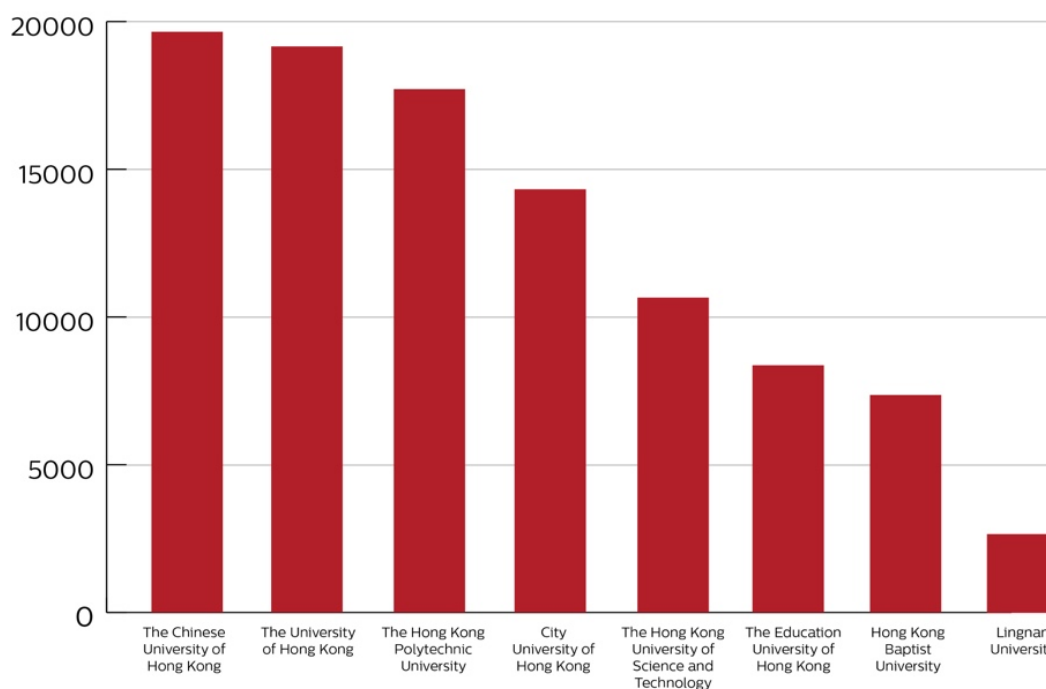| |
|---|
| Hang Seng Management College |
| HKCT Institute of Higher Education |
| Hong Kong Nang Yan College of Higher Education |
| Hong Kong Shue Yan University |
| Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong under the Vocational Training Council |
| The Open University of Hong Kong |
| Tung Wah College |
| Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education |
| |
| **Self-financing institutions offering self-financing locally-accredited local sub-degree programmes** |
| Caritas Bianchi College of Careers |
| Caritas Institute of Community College |
| Hong Kong Art School |
| Hong Kong College of Technology |
| Hong Kong Institute of Technology |
| HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Stanley Ho Community College |
| YMCA College of Careers |

17   Since 2012, students sit the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) at the age of 17 or 18 before progressing to four-year undergraduate programmes or two-year sub-degree programmes.[15] Access to higher education is mainly via the HKDSE exam. Students face competition through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS), which is a unified system for applying for full-time undergraduate programmes in Hong Kong for 15,000 first-year first-degree positions at the eight public universities funded by the UGC. Of the 68,187 HKDSE takers in 2016, only 22 per cent were able to find places in UGC-funded universities.

18   According to the latest available statistics in 2016-17 there were about 250,000 students in Hong Kong higher education.[16] The eight UGC-funded universities accounted between them for 40 per cent of all post-secondary student recruitment, excluding students attending programmes of their self-financing extension arms. Figure 3 shows the distribution of students studying in publicly funded programmes at the eight UGC-funded universities. Of these the largest are the Chinese University of Hong Kong with 19,655 students, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University with 19,160 students, and the University of Hong Kong with 17,713 students.

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[15] www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/Progress_promote_HKDSE/EDB-NSS.pdf
[16] www.cspe.edu.hk/resources/pdf/en/postsec_keystat.pdf

Figure 3: Distribution of students across the UGC-funded Universities (2016-17)[17]

Figure 3 shows a bar chart with the y-axis ranging from 0 to 20000 (marked at intervals of 5000), and the following universities along the x-axis with approximate values:

- The Chinese University of Hong Kong: ~19700
- The University of Hong Kong: ~19200
- The Hong Kong Polytechnic University: ~17700
- City University of Hong Kong: ~14300
- The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology: ~10600
- The Education University of Hong Kong: ~8400
- Hong Kong Baptist University: ~7400
- Lingnan University: ~2700

19   The largest provider of sub-degree level qualifications is the Vocational Training Council, which, across all its member institutions, accounted for 24 per cent (60,000) of total higher education registered students. VTC is followed by the Open University of Hong Kong accounting for 9.6 per cent (24,000) of the higher education student population. The twelve self-financing degree-awarding bodies together account for 4 per cent (10,100 students).[18]

20   While most students studying undergraduate and research postgraduate programmes are registered on publicly funded programmes in the UGC-funded universities, the majority of students studying on sub-degree and taught postgraduate programmes are on self-financing programmes, including those offered by the self-financing arms of UGC-funded universities (Figure 4).

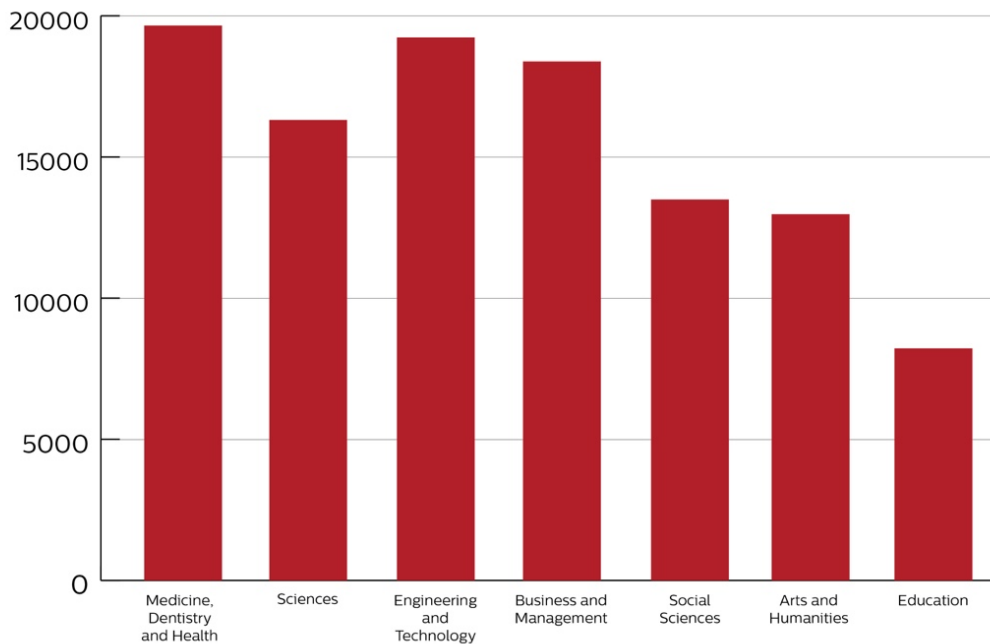[17] www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B10101232017AN17B0100.pdf
[18] www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B10101232017AN17B0100.pdf

Figure 4: Proportion of students for level of qualifications at publicly funded and self-financing programmes (2016-17)[19]
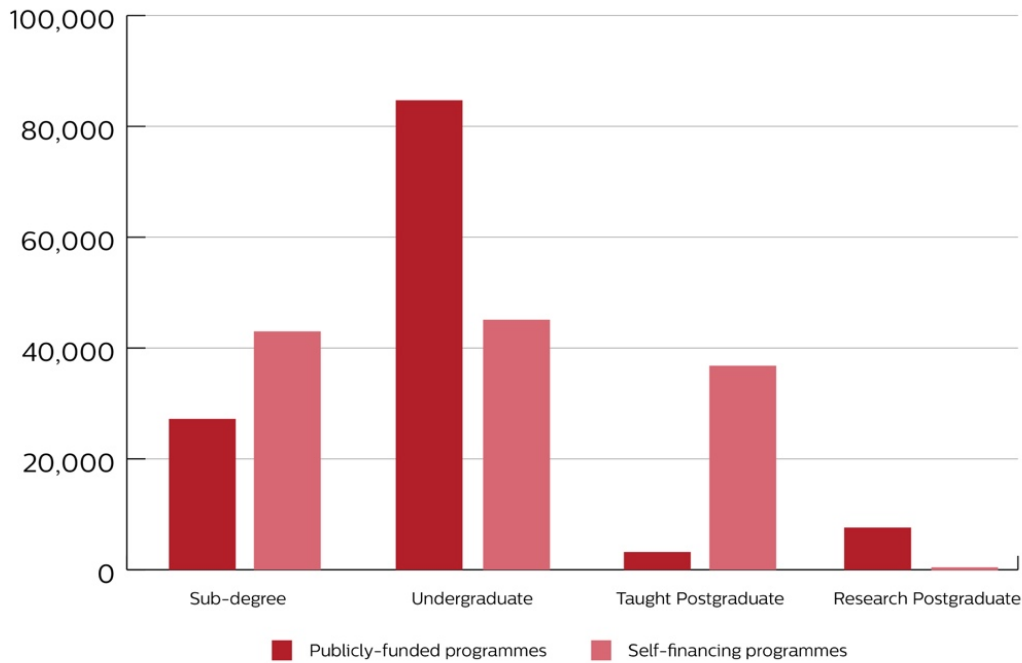
21   Looking at available statistics for the eight UGC-funded universities, the top three subject areas studied are Engineering and Technology (19.2 per cent), Business and Management (18.4 per cent), and Sciences (16.3 per cent); followed by Social Sciences (13.5 per cent), Arts and Humanities (12.8 per cent), Medicine, Dentistry and Health (10.8 per cent) and Education (8.2 per cent).

Figure 5: Number of students at UGC-funded universities by subject area (2016-17)[20]

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[19] www.cspe.edu.hk/resources/pdf/en/postsec_keystat.pdf
[20] www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B10101232017AN17B0100.pdf

22   Higher education outside the UGC-funded universities has witnessed significant growth over the past 20 years as a result of government's effort to increase secondary school leavers' higher education participation rate, and create a more diversified higher education system able to cater for growing demands for higher education, from local and non-local students. Self-financing institutions have been key in providing alternative pathways enlarging access to higher education beyond the UGC-funded universities. To this effect, a wide range of self-financing schools and colleges, including the self-financing arms of publicly funded institutions (see Figure 6), work closely with local universities[21] and overseas degree-awarding bodies to provide students with pathways to upgrade their sub-degree level qualifications, as well as providing full bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes.

Figure 6: Self-financing arms of publicly funded institutions

Self-financing arms of publicly funded institutions
School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE), CityU
College of International Education (CIE), HKBU
School of Continuing Education (SCE), HKBU
Lingnan Institute of Further Education, LU
School of Continuing and Professional Studies (CUSCS), CUHK
Hong Kong Community College (HKCC) PolyU
School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED) PolyU
HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE), International College
HKU SPACE Community College
School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), VTC

23   Higher education provision by overseas institutions in Hong Kong (referred to as 'non-local provision') started to expand significantly in the late 1990s and early 2000s mainly to meet a rising demand for top-up courses. This was to a large extent the result of a cap on student places in the eight UGC-funded institutions, which led to an increase in the numbers of students registering on higher diplomas and associate degrees with private providers, then seeking to attain full degrees through top-up courses. More recently, the government has introduced a new education subsidy of HK$30,000 for eligible students pursuing full-time locally accredited undergraduate programmes (including top-up degrees) for both local and accredited non-local provision (see paragraphs 34-38 for accreditation of non-local provision). This is intended to further support the expansion and diversification of the Hong Kong higher education sector and address the shortage of places at publicly funded universities.[22]

24   The Information Portal for Accredited Post-secondary Programmes (iPASS) offers information on locally accredited full-time sub-degree, bachelor's degree and top-up degree programmes not covered by JUPAS, including non-local programmes. The Education Bureau maintains a register of 'Non-local Higher and Professional Education Programmes'

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[21] Only about 18 per cent of students completing sub-degree programmes are able to articulate to bachelor degree places in the local publicly funded universities.

[22] As the Hong Kong higher education sector as a whole has now reached a level of saturation, looking at the supply of and demand for sub-degree and undergraduate programmes, and taking into account the decreasing number of secondary school-leavers associated with demographic changes, the Chief Executive in her 2017 Policy Address announced that a task force would be set up to consider issues pertinent to the development of the self-financing higher education sector. The Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education was set up in October 2017 and has just published a consultation document with their findings and recommendations. https://edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/consultation/TF_SFPE_Consultation%20Doc_Eng.pdf

(NLP),[23] which lists all programmes or courses provided either in whole or in part by non-local providers within Hong Kong by name of non-local provider, course name and local partner.

25   All NLPs must be registered with the Registrar of the Education Bureau. NLPs delivered in partnership with the eight UGC-funded universities, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the Open University of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong Shue Yan University are exempted from registration. Exempted NLPs are still listed in the NLP Register. Wholly distance-learning courses are not required to be registered or exempted from registering with NLPs Register.

26   According to the latest data from the NLPs Register, there were a total of 1,151 NLPs as of May 2018, 60.7 per cent of which (699) were exempted from registration. Most NLPs lead to UK degrees, specifically 62.6 per cent of registered programmes and 81.6 per cent of exempted programmes as illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7: Proportion of registered NLPs

Others 5.5%
Australia 13.7%
USA 13.9%
Canada 0.2%
Mainland China 3.8%
United Kingdom 62.8%

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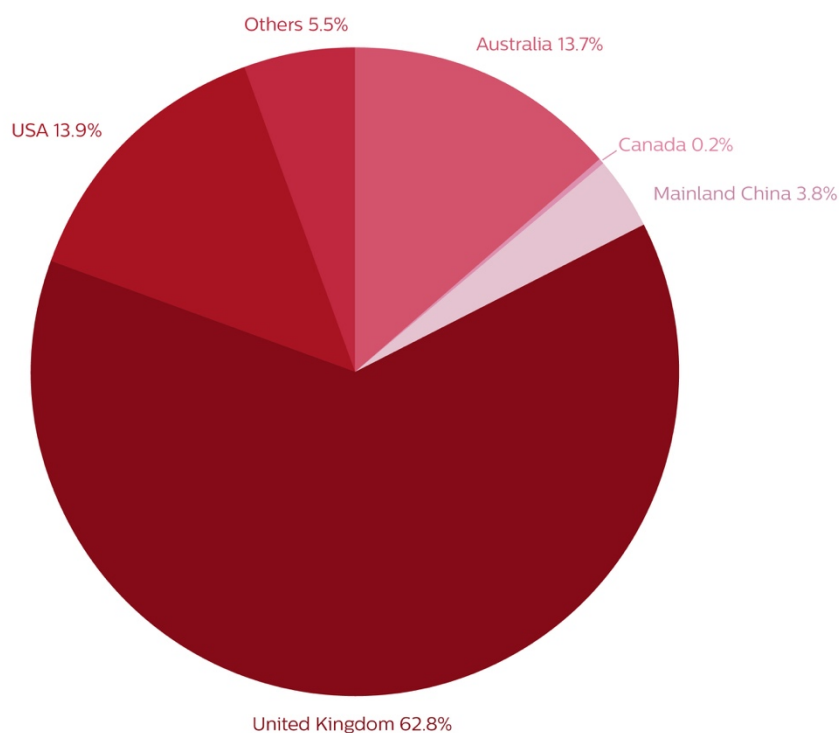
[23] www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/postsecondary/non-local-higher-professional-edu/info-for-course-providers/index.html

Figure 8: Proportion of exempted NLPs

Mainland China 3.9%
Australia 9.4%
Others 1%
USA 4.3%
United Kingdom 81.4%
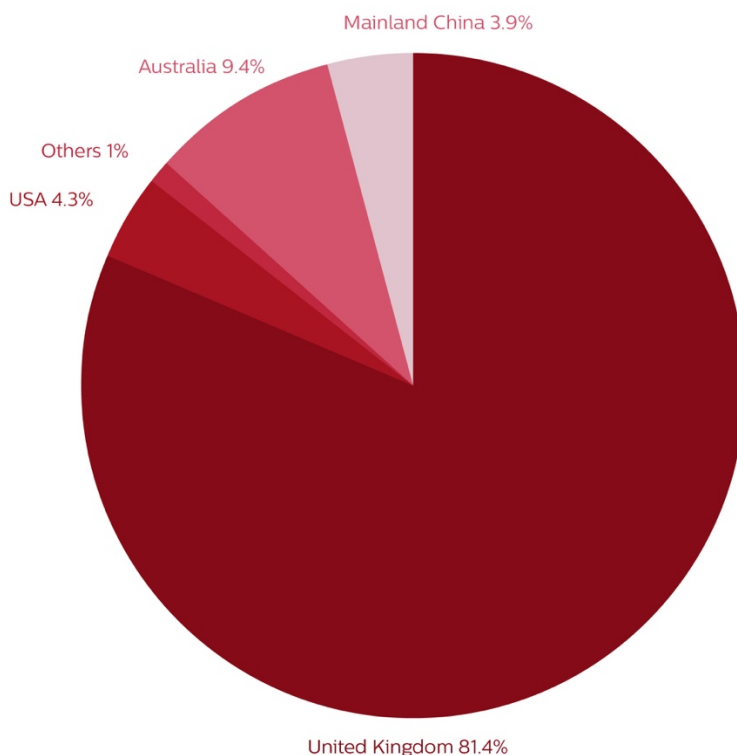
The Hong Kong regulatory framework for transnational education

27   The legislative framework for the regulation of non-local programmes delivered in Hong Kong was established in June 1997 with the enactment of the *Non-local Higher and Professional and Education (Regulation) Ordinance (Cap 493)* and subsidiary legislation.

28   The Ordinance provides a legislative framework to regulate the standards, advertising, and payment and refund arrangements of non-local courses of higher education conducted in Hong Kong by non-local institutions or professional bodies. The objective of the Ordinance is to protect local consumers by guarding against the marketing of non-local courses in Hong Kong which do not fulfil the registration criteria.

29   In compliance with the Ordinance, NLPs must be registered or be exempted from registration with the Registrar of Non-local Higher and Professional Education Courses (the Registrar) of the Hong Kong Education Bureau. Since 1997 the HKCAAVQ has been appointed by the Registrar to provide professional advice as to whether a particular programme delivered in Hong Kong leading to a non-local higher and professional qualification meets the registration criteria stipulated in Cap 493. The final approval for registration under Cap 493 rests with the Registrar.

Registration criteria for NLPs

30   The main registration criteria for a programme leading to the award of a non-local higher academic qualification by a non-local institution are as follows:

- the awarding institution is a non-local institution recognised in its home country
- effective measures are in place to ensure that the standards of the programme are maintained at a level comparable with programmes conducted in the home country leading to the same qualification, and they are recognised as such by that institution, the academic community in that country, and the relevant accreditation authority in that country.

31   The main registration criteria for a course leading to the award of a non-local professional qualification by a non-local professional body are:

- the course is recognised by the awarding professional body for the purpose of awarding the qualification or preparing students for any examination, test or other assessment, the sitting, passing or undergoing of which will lead to the award of the qualification
- the professional body is generally recognised in the home country as an authoritative and representative professional body in the relevant profession.

32   As referred to above, non-local courses conducted in collaboration with the eight UGC-funded universities, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, the Open University of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong Shue Yan University are exempt from registration.[24] Exemption from registration requires that the executive head of the local institution certifies that the course meets the criteria required for registration both in terms of the standing of the non-local institution (or professional body) and the quality assurance and recognition status of the course.

33   Operators of registered NLPs are required to submit annual reports to the Registrar on registered courses. Annual reports must demonstrate continued compliance with the registration criteria. Where an operator proposes to make changes to a registered course, the Registrar will seek the advice of HKCAAVQ as to whether this is likely to affect the course's eligibility.

Local accreditation for NLPs

34   Providers (or 'operators' as referred to in Hong Kong) of NLPs registered or exempted under Ordinance 493 can seek voluntary local accreditation by HKCAAVQ under the HKQF. The accreditation conducted by HKCAAVQ benchmarks the NLP against the Hong Kong education system. An accredited NLP enjoys a similar status as an accredited local programme: its qualification can be placed on the Qualifications Register and recognised under the HKQF. Full-time students of accredited NLPs also enjoy financial assistance provided by the Government.

35   Operators may apply for partial reimbursement of the accreditation fees charged by HKCAAVQ for local accreditation of non-local courses upon successful accreditation, under the Accreditation Grant Scheme for Self-financing Programmes of the Qualifications Framework Fund. Accreditation does not replace the registration/exemption process under the Ordinance, and its result does not affect the programme's registration/exemption status.

36   The principles and approach employed for the accreditation of NLPs are similar to those for the accreditation of local programmes. The main difference is that NLP accreditation reviews the partnership arrangements and involves only the first two stages of the four-stage quality assurance process for local programmes: Initial Evaluation and
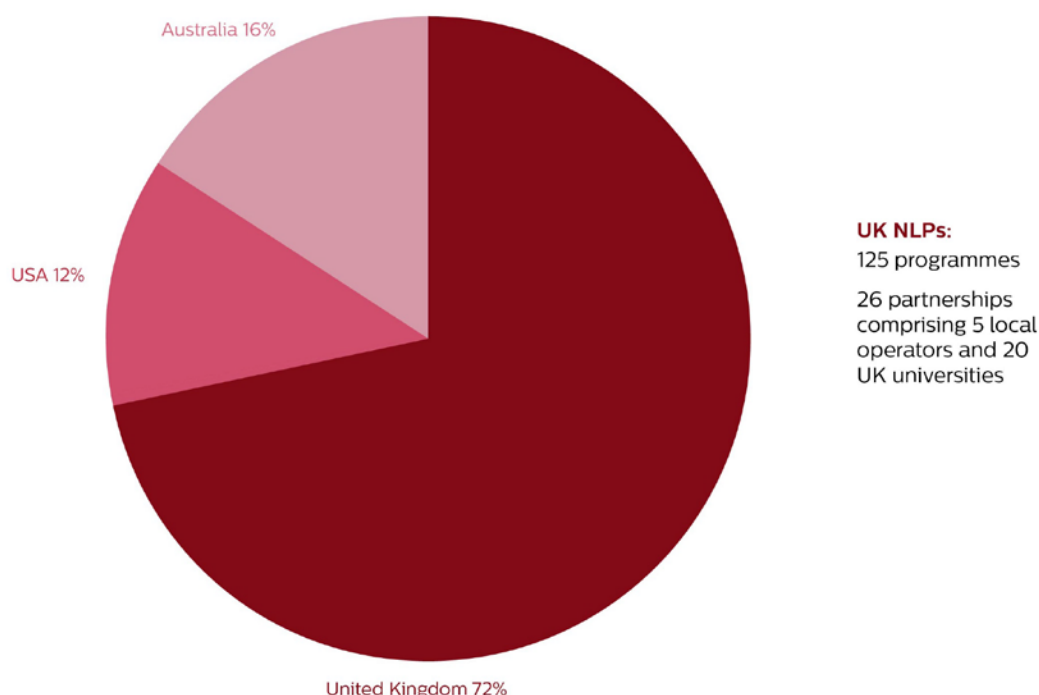
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[24] See the education bureau website for more information about the Cap 493 Ordinance and criteria for NLPs registration www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/postsecondary/non-local-higher-professional-edu/info-for-course-providers/index.html

Learning Programme Accreditation. The *Guidelines on Accreditation of Non-local Learning Programmes*[25] - and the submission guides for initial evaluation for collaborative provision of NLPs, learning programme accreditation for NLPs, and re-learning programme accreditation for NLPs - are publicly accessible on the HKCAAVQ website.[26]

37   HKCAAVQ began accrediting NLPs in 2009. These programmes are mainly offered through partnerships between non-local and local institutions, with the non-local institutions as the awarding bodies. Some non-local institutions have also established branch campuses to offer their own NLPs: for example, the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and the Savannah College of Art and Design. Both of these institutions and their programmes have undergone accreditation. The University of Sunderland has also recently established a branch campus through the acquisition of a previous collaborative partner.

38   As of May 2018, 168 of the 1,151 registered or exempted NLPs had been accredited by the HKCAAVQ. The vast majority of accredited NLPs lead to UK degrees, as illustrated by the following graph provided by the HKCAAVQ.

Figure 9: Accredited Non-local Programmes by Country (Hong Kong Qualifications Register, Education Bureau, as at 17 March 2018)

Australia 16%

USA 12%

United Kingdom 72%

UK NLPs:
125 programmes

26 partnerships comprising 5 local operators and 20 UK universities

Recruitment of non-local students on NLPs

39   The Hong Kong government is open to the recruitment of non-local students on non-local programmes, although with some important limitations which non-local providers need to be aware of. Mainland students are not allowed to study on non-local programmes, whether these are locally accredited or not. Students from Macao and Taiwan are only allowed to study on full-time locally accredited non-local programmes, with a quota restriction of 10 per cent of total student enrolment of all such non-local programmes of the

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[25] www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/files/review-of-standards/overview/Guidelines_on_Accreditation_of_NLP_20140801.pdf
[26] www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/services/accreditation/non-local-learning-programmes

institution in the preceding year. Other international students can study without any quota restriction on any full-time non-local programme, whether locally accredited or not. However, part-time non-local programmes, whether locally accredited or not, are not allowed to recruit any type of non-local student.

40   In 2016 the Government announced that Savannah College of Art and Design and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the two established branch campuses in Hong Kong, can recruit Mainland students to designated locally accredited non-local degree programmes starting from the 2016-17 academic year to 2020-21.[27] This decision might pave the way to extend the permission to admit Mainland students to other non-local locally accredited programmes in the future.

The UK transnational education landscape in Hong Kong

41   According to the latest Aggregate Offshore Record published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for the academic year 2016-17, Hong Kong is the sixth largest host country or region for UK TNE, with 27,390 students studying for a UK award (see Figure 10). This represents a decrease of approximately 6.2 per cent from the previous year, and of about 10 per cent over the past six years. This is in part the result of the decrease in the overall Hong Kong student population due to changing demographics, but also consequence of the 2012 reform to the Hong Kong academic structure with one year shorter senior secondary education and a move from three to four years undergraduate study.

Figure 10: UK TNE in Hong Kong 2011-17 (HESA)

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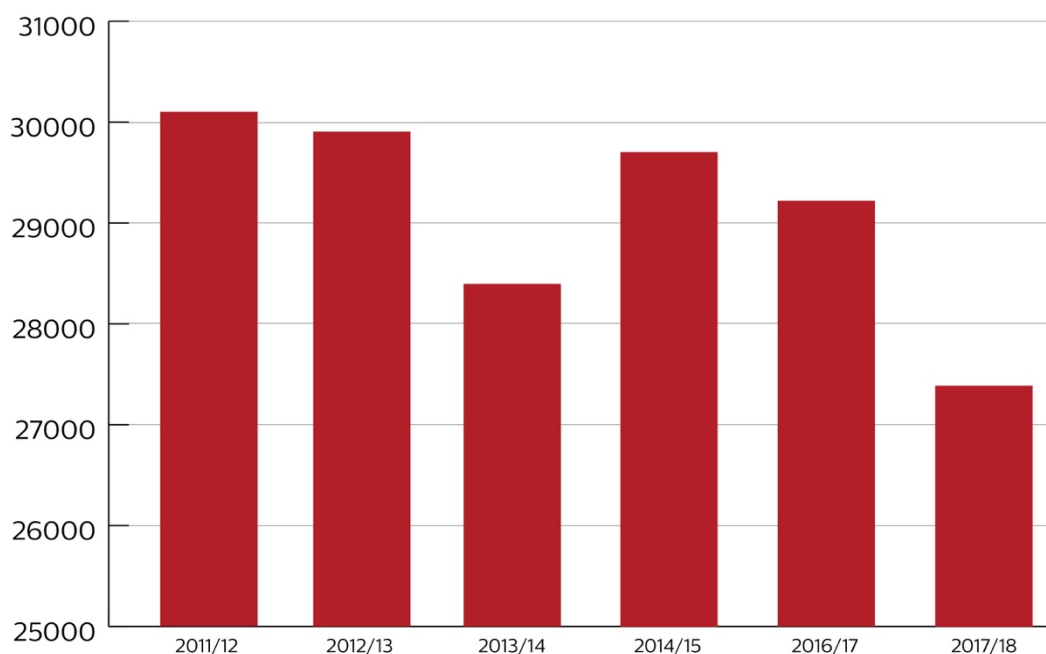
[27] www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201607/04/P201607040558.htm

42   If students registered on distance learning programmes, including the Oxford Brookes University BSc in Applied Accountancy offered in collaboration with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)[28] are taken out of consideration, Hong Kong is the fourth largest host country or region for UK TNE with 17,716 students. It follows Malaysia (46,404 students), mainland China (30,132), and Singapore (19,937). Hong Kong is also the third largest sending country/region of international students to the UK, with 16,680 students, after the United States (17,580) and mainland China (95,090) and exceeding India (16,550) and Malaysia (16,370).

43   As part of QAA's 2018 review of UK TNE in Hong Kong, all UK degree-awarding bodies with provision registered in the Education Bureau NLP Register were surveyed to obtain up-to-date information about programmes delivered and student numbers, thus complementing Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data which does not collect data at partner and programme level. Since distance learning provision is not required to register with the Education Bureau, the QAA survey focused on provision delivered on the ground in Hong Kong.[29]

44   According to QAA's survey, a total of 39 degree-awarding bodies offer provision in Hong Kong in different forms of collaborative partnership with 20 local education and training providers (see Figure 11). This excludes 10 UK providers offering locally supported distance learning provision, such as the University of London International Programmes, the largest single provider of UK degrees in Hong Kong, with over 2,800 students registered on over 80 programmes at different levels delivered with local tuition support from the University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE).

Figure 11: UK degree-awarding bodies with on the ground provision, excluding locally supported distance learning (QAA survey)

UK degree-awarding body	Students	Partnerships	Programmes
1. Edinburgh Napier University	1,753	2	18
2. University of Central Lancashire	1,256	3	15
3. University of Sunderland	1,050	3	13
4. Birmingham City University	815	3	19
5. De Montfort University	790	1	2
6. Sheffield Hallam University	766	2	13
7. Coventry University	615	2	12
8. University of Northumbria at Newcastle	600	3	11
9. Manchester Metropolitan University	550	2	1
10. University of Hull	537	3	10
11. University of Wolverhampton	532	2	3
12. University of the West of England	526	1	3
13. University of Plymouth	421	1	7
14. Leeds Beckett University	415	2	11
15. University of Greenwich	386	2	7
16. Middlesex University	371	2	18
17. Glyndŵr University	313	1	5
18. University of Warwick	288	2	12
19. Staffordshire University	246	1	3

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[28] On the basis of the arrangement between Oxford Brookes and ACCA, students registering with ACCA qualifications are automatically registered on the Oxford Brookes BSc in Applied Accountancy top-up degree which requires the completion of a project-based dissertation through supported distance learning. Students have 10 years to complete the dissertation. This arrangement explains the high numbers of Oxford Brookes registered TNE students in the HESA Aggregate Offshore Records.

[29] It is also important to note that not all joint programmes leading to dual awards with self-accrediting Hong Kong universities are listed in the Education Bureau register. Hence the returns to our survey cannot be regarded as comprehensively covering this type of programme, including for instance a range of joint PhD programmes.

20. University of Birmingham	178	1	3
21. University of Bristol	149	1	2
22. University of Kent	132	1	2
23. Ulster University	93	1	4
24. University of Bedfordshire	77	1	2
25. University of Huddersfield	67	1	4
26. University of Lincoln	63	1	2
27. Nottingham Trent University	61	1	2
28. Teesside University	59	1	5
29. University of Wales	59	1	1
30. University of the Arts London	55	1	2
31. Southampton Solent University	40	1	1
32. Kingston University	36	1	1
33. University of Salford	32	1	1
34. University of Stirling	32	1	3
35. University of Sheffield	30	1	1
36. University for the Creative Arts	27	1	1
37. University of Cambridge	27	1	1
38. University of Wales Trinity Saint David	17	1	2
39. University of West London	12	1	8
Total	13,476	58	231

45   In total there are 58 partnerships delivering 231 programmes with a total of 13,476 students. Figure 12 lists the top 30 UK-Hong Kong TNE partnerships in terms of student numbers.

Figure 12: Top 30 UK-Hong Kong TNE partnerships in terms of student numbers

UK degree-awarding body	Hong Kong partner	Students
1. Edinburgh Napier University	CityU School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE)	1,104
2. De Montfort University	CityU SCOPE	790
3. Edinburgh Napier University	HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE)	649
4. Sheffield Hallam University	VTC, School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE)	636
5. University of Central Lancashire	CityU SCOPE	598
6. University of Sunderland	The University of Sunderland in Hong Kong	556
7. Manchester Metropolitan University	HKU SPACE	550
8. University of the West of England	VTC SHAPE	526
9. Coventry University	VTC SHAPE	515
10. University of Central Lancashire	VTC SHAPE	476
11. University of Wolverhampton	CityU SCOPE	454
12. University of Sunderland	Hong Kong College of Technology International	440
13. University of Hull	HKU SPACE	427
14. University of Plymouth	HKU SPACE	421
15. Birmingham City University	Continuous Professional Education Centre	420
16. University of Greenwich	Hong Kong Management Association	342
17. University of Northumbria at Newcastle	VTC SHAPE	321
18. Glyndŵr University	Hong Kong Management Association	313
19. Leeds Beckett University	Asian Institute of Built Environment	265
20. Middlesex University	HKU SPACE	258

21. Birmingham City University	PolyU School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED)	254
22. Staffordshire University	CityU SCOPE	246
23. University of Northumbria at Newcastle	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	244
24. University of Warwick	Hong Kong Polytechnic University	192
25. University of Central Lancashire	Hong Kong College of Technology International	182
26. University College Birmingham	Aston Institute	178
27. Leeds Beckett University	Hong Kong College of Technology International	150
28. University of Bristol	CityU SCOPE	149
29. Birmingham City University	Kaplan Higher Education (HK)	141
30. University of Kent	Hong Kong Baptist University	132

46   The most popular subject areas are Business and Administration Studies (52.5 per cent of all TNE students, with 150 TNE programmes across 32 partnerships), Architecture, Building and Planning (13.8 per cent of all TNE students, 22 programmes, eight partnerships), and Engineering & Technology (7.8 per cent of all TNE students,12 programmes, eight partnerships), followed by Mathematical and Computing Sciences (6.8 per cent of all TNE students, 13 programmes, 10 partnerships). Figure 13 shows the most popular subject areas in terms of UK TNE student numbers. Most provision is at undergraduate level, which accounts for 81.7 per cent of all UK TNE students; while 17.5 per cent are studying at master's level, and the remainder at doctoral level.

Figure 13: Subject areas of UK TNE by student numbers
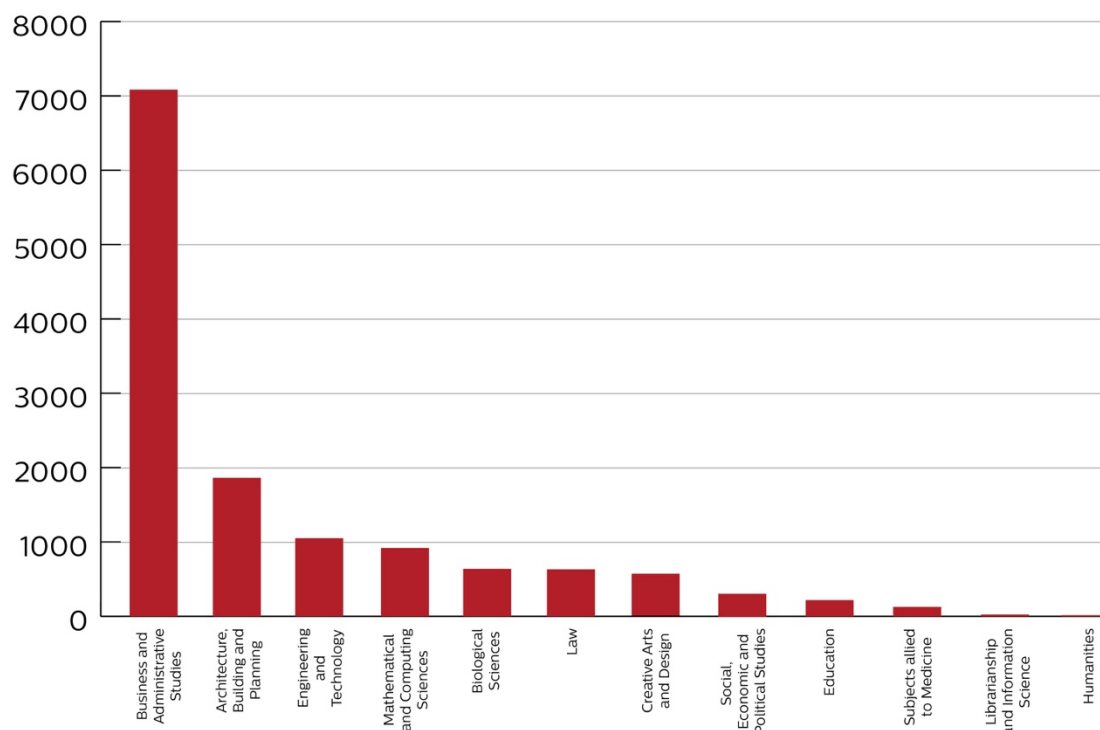
QAA 2018 review of UK TNE in Hong Kong

Background

47   QAA's in-country review of TNE operates on a country-by-country basis, with a three-year programme of TNE review activity. Each year a country/region with significant UK TNE provision, or of strategic importance for UK higher education, is identified for review, and a sample of UK TNE arrangements are selected for a review or case study. Hong Kong was selected as the 2018 destination for TNE review. Hong Kong is the fourth largest host country/region for UK TNE, when distance learning is excluded. The last time it was subject to TNE review was 2007. In addition to looking at the quality of UK TNE in a strategic country for UK higher education, the TNE Review in Hong Kong aimed to advance inter-agency cooperation in quality assurance.

48   QAA and HKCAAVQ have a long history of cooperation underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding, most recently renewed in 2016.[30] Both agencies are committed to working towards establishing a strategic alliance to enhance external quality assurance in both jurisdictions and improve the quality of higher education in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong. This commitment includes seeking to strengthen cooperation in the quality assurance of UK TNE in Hong Kong. A specific aim is to reduce avoidable duplication of quality assurance requirements and processes.

49   In the spirit of this joint commitment, the QAA TNE review exercise in Hong Kong included joint review activity with HKCAAVQ. Two joint QAA and HKCAAVQ reviews were carried out that covered both HKCAAVQ accreditation and QAA TNE review activity. These were undertaken by a single panel, with all members part of the HKCAAVQ accreditation panel and one or two panel members also acting as QAA reviewers. This meant a single visit and a reduced information collection burden for the operators.

50   The joint review exercise allowed both QAA and HKCAAVQ to benchmark processes and reference points. The QAA review concluded that through HKCAAVQ's peer review panels and the use of the HKQF, QAA can confidently rely on HKCAAVQ's accreditation decisions for UK TNE provision in Hong Kong.

51   QAA and HKCAAVQ engaged closely throughout the TNE review process beyond the joint review exercise. HKCAAVQ shared valuable information, data and intelligence about the local operating framework and UK TNE providers in Hong Kong at critical stages of the review process. This contributed to selecting the sample of TNE arrangements to be looked at, identifying areas of inquiry, and briefing the review team about the Hong Kong higher education and quality assurance system. This close cooperation between the two agencies contributed significantly to deepening common understanding and strengthening reciprocal trust in each other's higher education and quality assurance systems.

52   The cooperation between QAA and HKCAAVQ in this review can be regarded as an example of good practice in international cooperation as outlined in the QACHE Toolkit for quality assurance agencies *Cooperation in Cross-Border Higher Education.*[31]

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[30] www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/international/memorandum-of-agreement-hkcaavq-qaa.pdf?sfvrsn=aa27f381_0
[31] www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/occasional-papers/QACHE%20Toolkit_web.pdf

The TNE review process

53   On the basis of the survey returns, QAA selected 14 TNE arrangements to be looked at through either a review or a case study. The selection considered a range of factors including the number of students, programmes and partners; the type of TNE arrangements; and disciplinary areas of provision. The aim was to select as representative a sample as possible across the four nations of the UK. Consideration was also given to whether QAA had engaged with UK providers in recent TNE reviews in other countries, as well as intelligence from HKCAAVQ, as the local quality assurance agency, on areas of perceived risk. To carry out joint QAA-HKCAAVQ review activity, two cases of UK provision due to undergo HKCAAVQ accreditation at the time of the QAA TNE review were selected as part of the overall sample. On the basis of these considerations the TNE partnerships in Annex 1 were selected for review or case study. Within a partnership that had a wide variety of programmes, a sample (also indicated in Annex 1) was selected for the review or case study.

54   Selected UK providers (in the following 'provider' and 'degree-awarding body' will be used interchangeably) were requested to submit an information set focusing on the documentation of how quality and standards were maintained in the TNE arrangement under consideration. The review team, comprising three peer reviewers with extensive experience of TNE, conducted a desk-based analysis of this documentation, which informed the review or case study visits to the provider. two review visits were carried out in the UK in April 2018, the other 12 visits (seven reviews and five case studies) took place in Hong Kong in April and May 2018.

55   Each review visit was conducted by two peer reviewers and managed by a QAA quality assurance manager. Other than the joint activity with HKCAAVQ (which followed standard HKCAAVQ durations for accreditation visits), review visits took place over one day for each provider, involving meetings with senior management, teaching and administrative staff, and students. Visits followed up issues identified in the desk-based analysis, to better understand how the TNE arrangement works in practice and to look directly at the student experience. The review team made use of videoconferencing technology to meet staff and students based at the Hong Kong delivery site during visits in the UK, and vice versa with staff in the UK when undertaking visits in Hong Kong. Case study visits were undertaken by one of the three reviewers in the TNE review team. Case study visits had a more focused scope, taking place over half a day, and involving a single meeting with selected members of staff involved in the specific aspect being considered by the case study.

56   Both case studies and review visits were undertaken in an enhancement spirit, with a view to learning lessons that could benefit the partnership under consideration and more generally improve the capacity of the UK higher education sector to engage in high quality TNE. Review visits do not issue any formal judgement of confidence in a degree-awarding body's capacity to safeguard the standards and quality of its overall TNE provision. It would not be possible to generalise in such a way from looking at a single TNE arrangement among the many different kinds that a degree-awarding body might have in different parts of the world. However, review visit reports include recommendations for improvement as well as highlighting positive features. Individual reports are published for both case studies and reviews.[32] Abstracts of the reviews and case studies are reported in Annex 2; full reports are accessible on QAA's website.[33]

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[32] See TNE Review Handbook for a description of the different stages of the TNE review process: www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education-review
[33] www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education-review/review-of-tne-in-hong-kong

57   The joint review activity between QAA and HKCAAVQ involved two partnerships that were scheduled for HKCAAVQ programme accreditation or reaccreditation visits. One QAA reviewer acted as panel chair of the HKCAAVQ accreditation panel for the visit to VTC SHAPE and the University of the West of England. This visit formed a TNE review case study. The visit to HKU SPACE and the University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN) formed a QAA TNE review visit. For this purpose, the HKCAAVQ accreditation panel included two QAA reviewers, one acting as panel chair. In both cases, the QAA reviewers simultaneously discharged responsibilities as full HKCAAVQ accreditation panel members, as per standard HKCAAVQ accreditation processes, and acted as QAA TNE reviewers. The reviewers were able to draw on the information collected as part of the HKCAAVQ accreditation visit to inform the QAA case study and review reports. This enabled QAA to reduce the information collection burden for its TNE review exercise. Given the different focus of the two processes - HKCAAVQ's on programme accreditation and QAA's with a more institutional and strategic level - a final brief additional meeting was added to the HKCAAVQ accreditation visit to gather information required specifically for QAA's TNE review purposes.

58   The QAA review manager acted as observer during part of the HKCAAVQ accreditation visit to SPACE and UNN. The HKCAAVQ case officer acted as observer in the final meeting that was specific to the QAA TNE review. HKCAAVQ representatives also joined QAA as observers in some TNE review and case study visits beyond the two joint reviews.

Key findings of the TNE review in Hong Kong

Variety of TNE partnerships

59   The TNE arrangements selected for TNE review in Hong Kong took a number of forms, including branch campus delivery, joint/double degrees, and partnership with local organisations.

60   There is just one UK branch campus in Hong Kong, the University of Sunderland in Hong Kong Ltd (UoSiHK), which evolved through the takeover of a previous partner and subsequent integration into the University.

61   There are a range of joint programmes delivered with Hong Kong degree-awarding bodies. Our review included a longstanding one, offered by PolyU and the University of Warwick.

62   The majority of UK TNE in Hong Kong is based on partnerships with local providers, and the other reviewed TNE arrangements fall under this category. Local partners are of three main types:

- university-based partners: self-financing extension arms of UGC-funded universities
- vocational training partners: self-financing non-profit providers of sub-degree programmes which offer non-local degrees
- other partners.

63   University-based partners have grown out of the 'extra-mural studies' activities of the UGC-funded Hong Kong universities. The main local providers of this type include CityU SCOPE and HKU SPACE (see information box on page 22). These partners operate quality systems within the overall quality management of the parent university. These quality systems and associated committee structures were well documented and included procedures for partner and programme approval, and annual and periodic review. Of note is

that these university-based partners have multiple relationships with UK and other non-local degree-awarding bodies offering international degree awards, with a long history of managing collaborative provision of a scale and complexity that can exceed that of some UK providers operating in Hong Kong.

CityU SCOPE: The Centre for Continuing Education was established by the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) in 1991 to serve the lifelong learning needs of the community. SCOPE offers several categories of programmes: programmes leading to international degree awards (foundation degree to doctoral level); programmes leading to Hong Kong continuing education awards; government-initiated programmes and short courses. SCOPE has around 30,000 degree programme graduates. It currently offers top-up degrees with awards from seven UK universities and full degrees from four UK universities. Master's programmes are offered with awards from three UK universities.

HKU SPACE: The University of Hong Kong's School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE) was established as the Department of Extra Mural Studies (DEMS) of The University of Hong Kong (HKU) in 1956-57, as the first university continuing education unit in the region. It was renamed as SPACE in 1992 and became a non-profit-making company limited by guarantee in 1999. HKU SPACE offers a range of sub-degree programmes through the HKU SPACE Community College and the HKU SPACE Po Leung Kuk Stanley Ho Community College. These include higher diplomas and associate degrees which typically involve two years' full-time post-school study (or the equivalent if studied part-time). As there are limited opportunities for graduates of these programmes to transfer to HKU or other UGC-funded universities, HKU SPACE offers a range of non-local degree programmes, many of which are awarded by UK universities. Support services for non-local degree programmes are also provided by the International College within HKU SPACE.

64   Vocational training partners offer degree programmes as an extension of their role in providing sub-degree qualifications and non-degree training. The main providers include VTC SHAPE and Hong Kong Management Association (see information box on page 23). Like university-based partners, these vocational training partners have a long history of partnering with multiple UK and other non-local degree-awarding bodies offering international degree awards.

65   While a majority of students registered for UK degrees in a partnership arrangement are in university-based or vocational training partners, a range of other organisations partner with UK degree-awarding bodies to offer degrees. These include both non-profit and for-profit partners, for instance the Asian Institute of Built Environment, a specialist non-profit education provider for the construction industry, which partners with Leeds Beckett University; and Aston Institute, a for-profit organisation, which partners with University College Birmingham to support the delivery of University of Birmingham degrees. In contrast to the university-based and vocational training partners described above, many of these partners have less formalised quality systems than the UK degree-awarding bodies with which they are partnering. As a result, a higher proportion of quality assurance is undertaken directly by the UK provider.

VTC SHAPE: The School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), established in 2003 as a member institution of The Vocational Training Council (VTC). Established in 1982, VTC is the largest vocational and professional education and training provider in Hong Kong with13 member institutions including SHAPE. VTC offers a range of sub-degree programmes through IVE (Institute of Vocational Education) and other member institutions. It offers 60 UK degree programmes with 12 UK degree-awarding bodies.

HKMA: The Hong Kong Management Association was founded in 1960 as non-profit institution with a mission to deliver management education and training, much of which is part-time. HKMA has 12,000 individual members and delivers continuous professional development activities and conferences as well as degree programmes. HKMA sub-degree education includes advanced diploma and certificate programmes. Over 2,000 programmes are offered annually with more than 50,000 participants from over 1,000 organisations in Hong Kong, mainland China and other countries/regions. HKMA offers a range of non-local degree programmes, many of which are awarded by UK universities. At bachelor's level, all TNE degree-awarding bodies are UK universities. At master's level, the degree-awarding bodies are from the UK, Australia, China, USA and Switzerland.

66   The reviews found a number of cases where there is a strong relationship between the UK degree-awarding body and the Hong Kong partner covering programme leadership, student support and administration, and teaching staff. This was noted as a positive feature in a number of reviews, as was the longstanding cooperation and reputation of the partnerships.

67   The review team also found that the focus of all the partnerships reviewed was on teaching with little on research except for the registration of a few Hong Kong based staff with the UK providers as doctoral students. Several reviewed partnerships expressed the desire to expand relationships to cover research but even in longstanding partnerships this had not yet been achieved.

Variety of TNE provision

68   The range of awards offered in Hong Kong by UK degree-awarding bodies is wide, ranging from undergraduate through master's to doctoral programmes. As highlighted above, the majority of provision is at undergraduate level, having typically started with top-up degrees targeted at the local Hong Kong market. The strategy of many UK providers has been based on starting with top-up degrees through establishing a partnership and then building on this to extend to full three-year degrees and/or postgraduate programmes, offered on a part-time and/or full-time basis.

69   Behind this evolution is the limited proportion of Hong Kong school-leavers going to the eight UGC-funded universities, which was 22 per cent in 2016, much lower than the proportion of school-leavers progressing to university in countries like the UK. Given the high quality of these UGC-funded Hong Kong universities, almost all local applicants choose these as a first choice, other than those who choose to study abroad. Those who do not obtain UGC-funded university places can take advantage of a relatively well-developed vocational education system that offers higher diplomas focused on specific areas and associate degrees that include requirements for study outside the main subject area. These involve the equivalent of two academic years of full-time study, and are broadly equivalent to Higher National Diplomas and foundation degrees in the UK.

70   Some students wanting to progress to a full bachelor's degree can then join a UGC-funded university for the final two years of a Hong Kong degree. However, such places are limited, making non-local top-up degrees that accept prior learning through Hong Kong higher diplomas and associate degrees attractive. As UK degrees (other than in Scotland)

are typically a total of three years, the top-up element is shorter than when taking a Hong Kong degree. This adds to the attraction of a UK degree, though educationally the challenge is to ensure that the full bachelor-level learning outcomes can be achieved. This challenge has led the majority of UK universities to offer 180-credit (one and a half academic years of full-time study) top-up degrees rather than the more usual UK 120-credit (one academic year of full-time study) top-up degree. This also takes into account the operational guidelines developed by the Education Bureau on credit accumulation and transfer, which recommend providers to accept the transfer of credit from other institutions up to a ceiling of 50 per cent of the total credits required for completion of a programme.[34]

71   As the demand for bachelor's degrees has risen, UK providers also offer three-year bachelor's degrees in addition to top-up degrees. A three-year bachelor's degree is attractive to students in Hong Kong since UGC-funded have moved to a four year duration. HKCAAVQ accreditation also contributes to making full non-local bachelor's degrees attractive to Hong Kong students, as accreditation allows them to receive student financial support. Meanwhile pressure for upgraded professional qualifications in sectors such as property management and public service has boosted the demand from those already employed but without relevant qualifications who wish to undertake a part-time programme. Many UK degree-awarding bodies now offer full degree programmes, typically evolving from top-up degrees.

72   According to QAA's survey around 3,300 students are registered on taught postgraduate UK TNE programmes. Around half are on distance learning programmes - these were not covered by the TNE review. The remaining half take different forms. One form is joint/double degrees: those of the University of Warwick in collaboration with PolyU were part of the TNE review. Others are run with local partners, such as Birmingham City University's partnership with Continuous Professional Education Limited for MSc programmes in construction-related subjects and Glyndŵr University's partnership with the HKMA for a Master in Business Administration (MBA) were covered in the TNE review. The University of Sunderland's branch campus, which offers an MBA programme, was also covered by the TNE review. In addition, a number of UK providers are in the process of launching new master's programmes, typically building on existing undergraduate programmes.

73   Around 200 students were identified in QAA's survey as registered for doctoral degrees, of which around two-thirds are on the University of Bristol Doctor of Education (EdD) programme. The overwhelming majority of UK provision is in part-time professional doctorates covering such areas as education, business and theology. The University of Warwick's Engineering Doctorate (EngD) was the only doctoral programme included in the TNE review. In practice, this is more of a distance learning doctorate with local resources provided by PolyU than a joint programme, unlike the arrangements for its jointly delivered master's programmes.

Contextualisation to Hong Kong

74   All programmes reviewed have some contextualisation in programme content to reflect the Hong Kong environment. In all cases, ultimate responsibility for the curriculum and for assessment is retained by the UK degree-awarding body. For example, in the case of an Architectural Technology and Design programme at the University of the West of England (UWE) and VTC SHAPE, contextualisation activities would be completed prior to the teaching blocks concerned. It involves SHAPE teaching staff along with discussions and oversight by UWE module leaders, with pre-assessment moderations by UWE ensuring that the contextualised assessments would meet the UWE standard.

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[34] www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/KeyFeatures/cat/index.html

75   The precise processes differ, but in most cases Hong Kong staff are able to adapt the curriculum to achieve identical learning outcomes to reflect specific local conditions that included Hong Kong SAR law, weather conditions (more focus on air-conditioning and less on heating for example), sporting preferences and political systems. Most TNE arrangements reviewed are able to develop Hong Kong specific assessments that were contextualised and approved by the UK degree-awarding body.

76   Some issues were noticed by the QAA review team to which UK providers should pay attention. The first is the need for good planning of contextualisation when introducing new programmes, involving both prospective programme management and faculty members. A second relates to maintaining appropriate information in virtual learning environments. In one case, students saw the original PowerPoint from the UK rather than those which had been contextualised by Hong Kong teaching staff.

Connections to local employers

77   The reviews found that many UK degree programmes had close links to local employers. Vocational training based partners (in particular VTC and HKMA) have strong business and industry links as their main activity is to provide vocational training to companies and employees. University-based partners also have extensive industry links given the vocational nature of their sub-degree qualifications. The core operations of these partners therefore contribute to understanding of employer demand for graduates of UK degrees. It also means that many of their staff have personal links to employers and/or professional bodies; many of the part-time staff are in fact from industry. This is also true of other partners, especially where they have been founded by industry experts. For example, the Asian Institute of Built Environment, which partnered with Leeds Beckett University, is closely linked to the construction industry.

78   This connection with employers helps to ensure that the programmes launched in Hong Kong are relevant to local needs and priorities, hence enhancing student employability. The substantial proportion of part-time students with employer support on some programmes also confirms their relevance to employer needs and students' career development. Many programmes are able to access guest speakers from relevant local organisations. While this connection to employers is strong at an institutional level, there are opportunities to develop industry links further, for example the collective input of employers at programme level.

Academic staff

79   The TNE review found that many UK providers operating in Hong Kong are able to recruit part-time teaching staff who combine academic qualifications with current or previous in-depth practical experience of the fields in which they teach. This is appreciated by students in a range of programmes covered by the TNE review, for example those related to business, architecture, engineering and sport.

80   This pool of part-time teaching staff is often reinforced by full-time lecturers from partners who work part-time on the UK degree programme, and in some cases by UK-based faculty who contribute to programmes in block mode teaching, coming to Hong Kong for short periods. The range of successful delivery models - from 100 per cent Hong Kong based to 'fly in, fly out' UK faculty - indicates that no one model was best from a student viewpoint.

81   One challenge is posed by master's and doctoral provision. While Hong Kong partners have access to part-time (and in-house) teaching staff with doctoral qualifications, few are research active apart from those in the 'core' of UGC-funded universities - for

example the PolyU staff involved with the University of Warwick programmes. Hence, the staffing of postgraduate-level programmes and supervision of students may well be a challenge for UK providers, especially for research dissertations and similar research-based projects.

82   The reviews showed a solid base of opportunities for staff development for academic staff based in Hong Kong. These include face-to face development activity with visiting UK staff (typically a few times each year), and electronic staff development and learning resources offered by the UK provider. In a few cases, this included participating in doctoral research at the UK partner. In addition, teaching staff in university-based and vocational training partners can take advantage of resources offered by their Hong Kong institution.

83   Overall, expanding staff mobility was an area for potential enhancement of UK provision in Hong Kong, as was expanding student exchange and mobility. The use of virtual technologies has significant potential, which was recognised by many of the UK-reviewed providers, as this can compress time and distance to reduce the costs associated with physical mobility while providing many of the benefits.

Students

84   The TNE review found that student support is generally good in terms of the opportunities available but that the take-up of these support opportunities could be higher on some programmes. These include both academic and English support. The latter is of increasing concern in Hong Kong as it is perceived that the English language level of school leavers is declining as Hong Kong moves from being bilingual (Cantonese and English) to tri-lingual (Cantonese, Mandarin (*putonghua*) and English). The level of monitoring of take-up of these support opportunities is variable, as is analysis of the impact of such support. Increased focus on monitoring student support was identified by the TNE review team as an area for enhancement.

85   Student satisfaction with library facilities is generally high. These include online access to UK-based provider's library system and other learning resources, as well as in many cases high-quality library resources available through university-based and vocational training partners (especially the former). However, in some cases students pointed out how the limited library facilities at local operators means they need to resort to public libraries instead.

86   The reviewed UK degree-awarding bodies all operate similar student feedback mechanisms to those used in the UK. This typically included course and module feedback and student representatives meeting with programme staff. Students generally felt that their feedback is valued and action is taken in most but not necessarily all cases. In some cases, efforts had been required to reinvigorate student representative systems. Overall, the TNE review considered that students are engaged in quality assurance at programme level but generally not at institutional level. One exception is the University of Warwick, which is using a student representative to raise awareness at faculty level of the situation of students distant from the main campus in the UK.

87   Both providers and students expressed the desire for greater student mobility to and from the UK. In some cases, this is happening to a limited degree with short visits. Overall, there is more inward mobility from the UK than vice versa. There are practical issues in achieving this, for example the non-study commitments of part-time students, the cost of travel and accommodation, and the alignment of academic calendars. As noted above, virtual technologies can provide many of the benefits without the time and cost

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demands of physical mobility. The TNE review considered that this is an opportunity for enhancement in the future, as is mobility of academic staff.

HKCAAVQ accreditation and the HKQF

88   While all UK degree-awarding bodies operating in Hong Kong must register their programmes with the Education Bureau, accreditation by HKCAAVQ is voluntary. Whether or not to obtain such HKCAAVQ institutional and programme accreditation is an important decision for UK providers operating in Hong Kong. The main advantages are: (i) greater access to student finance for undergraduate programmes; (ii) full acceptance of the degree by local employers; and (iii) potential enhancement of the reputation of the programme resulting from greater scrutiny than for registration alone. One of the goals of this TNE review was to establish whether or not this accreditation was equivalent to UK requirements for academic standards and quality, including the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* (the Quality Code).

89   The TNE review found that the academic standards embodied in the HKQF were similar but not identical to those of the FHEQ and the Quality Code. Differences were analysed during the TNE review and using a prior analysis by the Hong Kong Education Bureau titled *Comparability Study of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)*.

90   Among the similarities are that both the FHEQ and HKQF are based on the achievement of learning outcomes as the basis for the award of a qualification at similar levels of higher education attainment, for example bachelor's honours degree, master's degree and doctorate. The naming of bachelor's, master's and doctoral awards is similar. However, there is a difference in the nomenclature for equivalent levels of study and award:

FHEQ (and EQF)	HKQF
Level 4	Level 3
Level 5	Level 4
Level 6	Level 5
Level 7	Level 6
Level 8	Level 7

91   In relation to academic credit, a similar approach and measure of credit (one credit = 10 notional learning hours) is used by the HKQF and most UK degree-awarding bodies. One area to which the HKQF and HKCAAVQ accreditation pay particular attention is the ratio between contact hours and total learning hours. This is documented in Annexure 3 'Range of Ratios Between Contact Hours and Self-study Hours' of the *Operational Guidelines on Use of Credit* [35] issued by the Education Bureau. For face-to-face learning, this specifies a range of between 1:0.5 to 1:2 (contact time to non-contact self-study time).

92   In UK programmes that were covered by the joint reviews with HKCAAVQ, the class contact hours are the same as (or slightly higher than) in the programmes in the UK. However, the proportion of self-study time is substantially lower than the norms in the Hong Kong Education Bureau *Operational Guidelines on Use of Credit*. As a result, the HKCAAVQ panels paid special attention to the way in which students are expected and supported to learn independently. It was found that, in line with UK higher education norms, self-study hours include a substantial proportion of directed study with clearly specified learning activities, typically with opportunities for feedback and formative assessment. Meetings

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[35]www.hkqf.gov.hk/filemanager/en/content_14/Operational%20Guidelines%20on%20Use%20of%20Credit%20(E)_Web_Final.pdf

with staff and students confirmed that such learning activities are guided by teaching staff to help students learn independently. As a result, the style of learning is effective in achieving programme learning outcomes and was accepted by the HKCAAVQ panel. UK providers seeking HKCAAVQ accreditation therefore need to pay particular attention to the nature of self-study learning hours when seeking HKCAAVQ accreditation.

93   There are also differences in the Generic Level Descriptors for Hong Kong qualifications and those embodied in the Quality Code. These relate to specific requirements in the Hong Kong environment. For example, there is an explicit *Communication, IT and Numeracy* domain in the HKQF, which specifies generic foundation competencies in English, Chinese, IT and Numeracy at HKQF levels 1-4. More generally, while the intent of the two frameworks is similar, the HKQF makes fewer references to knowledge per se and concentrates more on skills required for the attainment and application of knowledge. At FHEQ level 5 and above, the Education Bureau study found fewer differences between the FHEQ and HKQF than at lower levels. The TNE review found that while there were differences, in practice UK degrees met HKQF requirements in relation to Generic Level Descriptors.

94   The scope of reviews is comparable but not identical. In particular, the HKQF requires scrutiny to include analysis of the requirement that 'the partnership must have adequate financial and physical resources for the delivery of their learning programmes'.[36] In contrast, QAA focuses on the management of learning resources rather than direct assessment of their sufficiency. HKCAAVQ also scrutinises programme financial information involving the panel chair rather than the whole panel, and financial experts may be involved in the accreditation process (if needed).

95   The accreditation process followed by the HKCAAVQ is similar to that of QAA. The HKCAAVQ states four guiding principles in conducting the accreditation processes: threshold standard; peer review; fitness for purpose; and evidence based. These are similar to those used by QAA.

96   The HKCAAVQ panels use a combination of documentary analysis followed by meetings with stakeholders that are similar in nature and duration to those used by QAA, though with minor procedural differences. The main difference in the two cases subject to joint review activity was that HKCAAVQ accreditation focused at programme level, since the providers had already passed the first stage of accreditation - Initial Evaluation - which looks at institutional-level processes, organisational structures, and resources. When it comes to the second stage of accreditation, Learning Programme Accreditation, the HKCAAVQ process provides an analysis of programmes that is more in-depth than a QAA TNE review, including an analysis of relevant institutional aspects that is more focused on programme-related matters. The HKCAAVQ processes also cover a scope similar to that of an internal validation panel for programme approval or periodic review typical of a UK provider.

97   Hence in relation to academic standards and quality reviews, the TNE review exercise concludes that UK and Hong Kong standards and requirements are comparable, as is the review process. Therefore, reliance can be placed on HKCAAVQ reviews by both UK providers and QAA.

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[36] www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/files/review-of-standards/revised-accreditation-standards/The_Revised_Accreditation_Standards__Eng_cleaned_20180403.pdf

Quality assurance

98   All reviewed UK providers have internal quality assurance systems that cover the operation of TNE. These systems cover the approval of partners and programmes, as well as regular (normally annual) and periodic review. In several cases the relevant approvals had taken place under previous processes that had subsequently been enhanced.

99   Processes for the management of TNE in Hong Kong are generally well-developed, including such areas as:

- formal contracts with Hong Kong partners, using standard templates as a basis, that makes clear the arrangements between the UK degree-awarding body and the Hong Kong partner
- operational handbooks that specify detailed processes and responsibilities required to run programmes effectively
- committee structures that provide oversight of the quality of TNE delivery
- annual monitoring processes that are similar to those used in UK delivery and sometimes integrated into a single annual programme report
- periodic partner and programme reviews, either Hong Kong specific or part of an overall review in the UK degree-awarding body.

100   Details of the approach used in each institution are provided in the individual review reports and case studies.

101   The reviews and case studies identified that quality processes are often duplicated as a result of the relationship between UK degree-awarding bodies, local partners and HKQAAVQ accreditation. While these duplicated processes provide depth of quality assurance, there is also duplication of effort and overlapping documentation that has the potential to be simplified. This is particularly true in university-based and vocational training partners which have well-developed quality assurance systems used for both their own awards and those made by non-local providers. Specific issues include the submission of different annual reports with similar information to multiple organisations, for example the Hong Kong partner, the UK provider and HKCAAVQ; and duplication of effort between the UK provider's partner approval and review, Hong Kong partner internal validation and periodic review, and HKCAAVQ accreditation.

102   In general, university-based and vocational training partners accept this duplication of effort as a necessary consequence of the UK's requirements for TNE and local requirements for educational regulation. However, the TNE review saw the potential for reviewing processes to see where the same activity or report could be used to satisfy the quality requirements of more than one organisation.

103   All reviewed providers make appropriate use of external examiners and have formal processes for the involvement in making awards and reporting to the institution as required by the Quality Code. Specific arrangements differ, for example whether the same external examiner(s) are used in both UK, Hong Kong and other delivery locations. In all reviews, there was assurance of comparability with threshold academic standards and the opportunity for external examiners to make recommendations to the UK degree-awarding body, as well as formal responses to these recommendations.

104   External examiner annual reports were used appropriately in annual monitoring and other quality processes; most students were not aware of their existence and not all institutions made annual reports and responses available to students. While not making formal recommendations on this, UK providers could make these reports available to all

students, for example in a virtual learning environment, and make students more aware of their existence and importance.

105   Degree certificates and transcripts are issued by the UK degree-awarding body. These are equivalent to those issued to studying on programmes in the UK. In the one case of Chinese language teaching and assessment, the language was specified on the transcript.

Programme documentation

106   An important requirement of the Quality Code is that definitive programme documentation should be approved, stored and maintained to provide key information to stakeholders including academic staff and students. All providers covered by the TNE review exercise have processes that met basic requirements for definitive documentation. However, there is a range of practice ranging from very effective in some cases to needing improvement in others.

107   One issue is whether a single programme specification is appropriate or different versions are required for each partner delivery. Specific issues identified include:

- a UK-specific programme specification, which was provided as the definitive record when it contained information that clearly related only to UK provision and occasionally was incorrect in relation to Hong Kong
- a UK programme specification that was complemented by a Hong Kong delivery supplement - while in principle this was appropriate, in practice the supplement did not clearly state which parts of the UK version were replaced and the two documents were not stored together
- Hong Kong specific programme specifications and documentation, which needed to be updated systematically when changes were made in the UK programme and applied to Hong Kong.

108   More widely, updating was not always performed comprehensively in documentation such as student and operational handbooks, for example changes in committee names and in student contact hours. Some reviews noted that updating in Hong Kong was sometimes required as a result of the combination of implementing operational changes driven by UK-specific needs, and the UK provider's requirements for global consistency especially in franchised programmes, which meant that these changes had to be implemented whether or not there was a local need or benefit.

109   The TNE review concluded that the area of definitive programme documentation is one in which most UK providers could make improvements. More specifically they could review:

- the structure of definitive documentation where programmes are likely to be delivered in multiple locations
- measures to avoid UK-centric programme documentation that is not appropriate to delivery locations such as Hong Kong and ensuring a more global mindset among UK-based academic and professional staff
- arrangements for effective storage of, and access to, definitive programme documentation used in TNE delivery
- processes for updating documentation when changes are made either in the UK or locally.

Mapping of sub-degree qualifications

110   In implementing top-up degrees, all reviewed providers used a mapping approach to recognition of prior learning. The learning outcomes and course content of the previous studied programme (Hong Kong higher diploma or associate degree or an international qualification) are 'mapped' against the learning outcomes and course content of the first two years of the relevant UK bachelor's degree. There are then three choices: (i) full acceptance of recognised prior learning; (ii) acceptance subject to undertaking specific 'bridging courses' to fill gaps in prior learning; or (iii) rejection of the previous programme as sufficient prior learning to start the top-up degree. While the Hong Kong partner would provide information about such prior qualifications, especially if they are offered within the partner, all UK providers covered by the review took the responsibility for approval decisions.

111   In many cases, the Hong Kong partner has its own 'target' qualification(s) for which further study to bachelor's level was sought and recognition of prior learning preapproved, normally one or more higher diplomas. The reviews found that the quality of mapping for 'target' qualifications is rigorous in all cases. This results from the close cooperation between Hong Kong partners and UK providers. The local providers proactively identified partner(s) whose degrees would fit their own previous qualification. Further, the local partner's knowledge of its own qualifications helps UK providers undertake rigorous mapping. This process would typically form part of the UK providers' internal approval process, for example an academic validation of programme academic standards and quality.

112   As a result of this approach, students, institutions and employers can all be assured of the fit between a previous higher diploma and the UK degree-awarding body's top-up degree in terms of academic standards (for example, equivalent volumes and level of academic credit), and likely student success after admission. Top-up degree programmes accredited by HKCAAVQ are scrutinised for the quality of mapping, providing further assurance of quality and standards in line with UK requirements.

113   For 'non-target' qualifications, such a mapping process is unlikely to be undertaken in advance as it will not be clear for which qualifications applications will be received and mapping required. In general, mapping was reactive based on the receipt of applications. The reviews found varying quality of mapping processes for 'non-target' qualifications. In some cases, this was as rigorous as for 'target' qualifications while in others, it was less in-depth and systematic. This led to recommendations for some institutions to improve the mapping processes for 'non-target' qualifications to avoid potential risks of applications being accepted with insufficient prior learning.

Chinese language provision

114   All except one institution taught and assessed their programmes in English. The exception was Glyndŵr University which offered programmes in both English and Chinese (Cantonese). The University's arrangements for this bilingual provision were sound, based on a combination of processes to ensure equivalence and on bilingual staff in key roles. These included an Academic Link responsible for the operation of the programmes and external examiners who ensure equivalence of assessment in English and Chinese. Given its position in Wales where there are options to study in Welsh, Glyndŵr University could draw upon relevant experience of teaching, assessment and quality management in dual languages. One challenge was library and information sources in Chinese, though through an arrangement with a Chinese university, Chinese language resources were available.

Published information

115   All the reviewed providers have generally appropriate procedures for the production and checking of English language documentation and for the publication of information to external stakeholders, such as applicants, parents and employers. These arrangements for English language materials met the requirements of the Quality Code.

116   Most providers make marketing materials available in both English and Chinese. This is appropriate as some stakeholders will not necessarily have the English language ability to use English language materials only. While those in English are consistently approved by the UK provider, those in Chinese are not always formally checked or overseen effectively. TNE arrangements with university-based and vocational training partners have well-established processes for the management of information, but with other partners, these processes were often less formal. While no material issues were found in Chinese materials, there is a risk that should the UK degree-awarding body or its programmes be misrepresented, its processes would not identify the issue.

117   Good practice in several TNE arrangements is to ensure that Chinese-speaking staff in the UK provider check marketing materials to ensure the quality and accuracy of translation. In the case of Glyndŵr University, the bilingual nature of the programmes that are delivered in both English and Chinese means that suitable staff are already working on the programme. In other cases, other Chinese speaking staff employed by the UK provider are used. However, in some cases there was no process or formal check on Chinese language marketing materials. From the viewpoint of the UK degree-awarding body's management of information on higher education provision, it is important that it has internal processes to oversee the translation of information into a local language.

118   In one institution, this issue affected the name of the programme in Chinese. In examining programme documentation, it became clear that two different Chinese words were used for Sport when it is the same word in English. The panel also noted that a character was used in one programme name that appeared to suggest the programme was more academically oriented. While the programme team provided justification for their proposals, stakeholders had diverse views and there was no universally accepted usage. In this case, the HKCAAVQ panel recommended that the UK providers and its local partner review the Chinese terms to be used to describe the programmes.

119   These issues mean that UK degree-awarding bodies should put in place formal processes for the checking and approval of Chinese language marketing materials and ensure the consistency and appropriateness of Chinese translation in key terminology such as programme names.

Summary of findings

120   Overall, the TNE review made the following findings, regarding the overall UK higher education provision in Hong Kong, and the quality assurance of UK TNE in the Hong Kong context.

UK higher education provision in Hong Kong

- UK degree-awarding bodies provide a wide range of programmes in Hong Kong to around 18,000 students through face-to-face, blended learning and distance education at undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.
- Top-up degrees are a major part of UK higher education provision in Hong Kong, based on the opportunity to provide places for students who have taken sub-degree qualifications.
- While almost all programmes are taught and assessed in English, the small provision of Chinese language delivery was effectively managed, meeting UK quality requirements.
- Good links exist between industry and UK higher education in Hong Kong, which help ensure the employability of graduates as well as the alignment of programmes with industry needs.
- UK higher education in Hong Kong is well-supported by the university-based and vocational training partners with which many UK providers collaborate. They are experienced local partners with well-developed programme and quality management systems, extensive learning resources including libraries, and good faculty management.
- All partnerships were teaching-focused though some intend to develop further research cooperation in the future.
- Many UK providers have strong local reputations based on the relevance of their programmes to local needs and good, often long-standing, relationships with local partners.
- The part-time teaching staff employed in Hong Kong frequently combine both academic qualifications and professional experience, which enhances the student experience.
- The approaches used by UK providers for contextualisation of programme content, teaching and assessment in Hong Kong are sound, ensuring that the UK degree-awarding body has ultimate responsibility while increasing relevance to the local environment and student needs - though in some cases, contextualisation would benefit from more systematic processes.
- An area for enhancement is increased faculty and student mobility, to and from the UK - this can be complemented by the use of virtual technologies.

Quality assurance of UK TNE in the Hong Kong context

- The UK degree-awarding bodies reviewed apply UK academic standards and quality requirements consistently in their higher education provision in Hong Kong.
- Processes for the management of TNE in Hong Kong by UK providers are generally well developed through the life-cycle of partnerships and programmes.
- In relation to higher education level programmes at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level, the HKQF and UK Quality Code are broadly equivalent in terms of academic standards and requirements for student learning opportunities.
- HKCAAVQ reviews and judgements can be relied upon for the purpose of UK quality assurance by QAA.

- For HKCAAVQ accreditation, UK providers need to pay attention to specifying and documenting their approach to guided self-study learning in order to demonstrate the appropriateness of programmes that typically are outside the normal ratio of contact time to self-study time in Hong Kong credit guidelines.
- While the general processes for recognition of prior learning through mapping of sub-degree qualifications are sound, some providers could enhance their rigour and consistency.
- While appropriate student support is in place for English language and academic skills, this is not always used by students, so monitoring of the use and effectiveness of this support can be enhanced.
- In several institutions, processes for the development, approval and storage of definitive programme documentation for programmes delivered in multiple locations need to be improved to avoid the risk of confusion in local delivery.
- Formal processes should be in place for the approval of local language marketing materials and translation of key terminology such as programme names.
- Quality processes are often duplicated as a result of the relationship between UK providers, university-based and vocational training partners, and HKQAAVQ accreditation, pointing to the potential for simplification in the future.

Conclusions

121   Hong Kong has a long history of higher education provision offered by overseas providers. TNE developed to meet a rising higher education demand as the Government in the late 1990s and early 2000s sought to increase higher education participation while at the same time capping student enrolments in the eight UGC-funded universities. This led to an increase in the numbers of students registering on higher diplomas and associate degrees with private providers, then seeking to attain full degrees through top-up courses with local and non-local providers.

122   UK degree-awarding bodies are the main providers of TNE in Hong Kong, with over 70 per cent of all non-local programmes leading to a UK degree. Conversely, Hong Kong is the fourth largest host country for UK TNE, although TNE student numbers seem to be affected by the decreasing number of secondary school-leavers associated with local demographic changes.

123   UK TNE is offered in Hong Kong through a variety of models, including distance learning, which was outside the scope of the QAA 2018 TNE review. The vast majority of TNE provision takes the form of partnerships with local providers, primarily self-financing extension arms of UGC-funded universities, self-financing non-profit providers of sub-degree programmes, and other private entities. UK degree-awarding bodies also partner with Hong Kong degree-awarding bodies in delivering a number of joint programmes, including a range of joint PhD programmes. Many of these, however, fell outside the scope of the TNE review, which focused on provision registered with the Education Bureau.

124   Most local partners of UK providers in Hong Kong have strong vocational orientation and strong business and industry links. This connection to employers, and the vocational nature of local partners, allow UK providers to deliver programmes that are relevant to local needs and priorities, and that enhance student employability. All programmes reviewed have some contextualisation in programme content to reflect the Hong Kong environment. Many students appreciated this dimension of their TNE student experience, as well as the flexibility of UK TNE programmes, which, through top-up arrangements and intensive teaching block, for instance, allow them to pursue higher education studies and advance their career while in employment.

125   Overall, the TNE review exercise found that UK TNE provision offered in Hong Kong is generally both relevant to the local market and employment needs, and meets the expectations of the UK Quality Code. Processes for the management of TNE in Hong Kong are generally well developed, ensuring that standards and quality are equivalent to similar provision delivered in the UK. Many of the local partners also have well developed quality assurance systems used for both their own awards and those made by non-local degree-awarding bodies. Partnering with multiple local and non-local degree-awarding bodies, many have extensive experience of managing collaborative provision of a scale and complexity that can exceed that of some UK providers operating in Hong Kong.

126   A key aim of the TNE review in Hong Kong was to explore innovative ways to cooperate with host agencies in quality assuring UK TNE. QAA and HKCAAVQ have a well-established strategic partnership. Both agencies are committed to developing cross-border cooperation in the quality assurance of TNE, with a view to lessening any unnecessary regulatory burden and enhance the efficiency of quality assurance processes. This

commitment is expressed in the Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies, as well as participation in multilateral initiatives such as the Quality Beyond Boundaries Group.[37]

127   QAA and HKCAAVQ cooperated closely throughout the TNE review process, sharing data, information, and intelligence on UK TNE provision delivered locally, and for the first time they carried out joint review activity. Such close cooperation allowed both agencies to deepen reciprocal understanding and strengthen reciprocal trust in each other's quality assurance systems. Carrying out joint review activity through participation of QAA reviewers in HKCAAVQ accreditation panels facilitated the benchmarking of standards and processes. Based on peer-review evaluation, it is possible to conclude that HKCAAVQ reviews and judgements can be relied upon for the purpose of UK quality assurance by QAA. This means that QAA can recognise HKCAAVQ accreditation decisions, avoiding the need in the future to review UK TNE provision already accredited by HKCAAVQ.

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

Annex 1: TNE partnerships selected for review or case study

UK degree-awarding body	HK partner	Type of review	Programmes	Students (2017-18)	Type of delivery
Birmingham City University	Continuous Professional Education Centre	Review in the UK, 26 April 2018	BSc (Hons) Construction Management (Final Year Part-Time)	57	Franchised delivery
			BSc (Hons) Quantity Surveying (FY PT)	211	
			BSc (Hons) Building Surveying (FY PT)	62	
			BSc (Hons) Real Estate (FY PT)	9	
			MSc Construction Project Management (PT)	44	
			MSc Quantity Surveying (PT)	18	
			MSc Building Surveying (PT)	19	
University of Birmingham (through validated arrangement with University College Birmingham)	Aston Institute	Review in the UK, 27 April 2018	BA (Hons) Business Enterprise (FY PT)	102	Validated 'fly in/fly out' delivery
			BA (Hons) Marketing Management (FY PT)	51	
			BA (Hons) International Hospitality and Tourism Management (FY PT)	25	
University of the West of England	Vocational Training Council, School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE)	Case study in HK, through joint review activity with HKCAAVQ, 25-27 April 2018	BSc (Hons) Information Technology (FY PT)	181	Franchised delivery
			BSc (Hons) Digital Media (FY PT)	199	
			BEng (Hons) Building Services Engineering (FY PT)	146	
			MSc Information Technology (FT)	0 (starting 2018)	
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE)	Review visit in HK, through joint review activity with HKCAAVQ, 9-11 May 2018	BSc (Hons) Sport Management (FY)	19	Franchised delivery
			BA (Hons) Sport Development with Coaching (FY)	16	
			MSc International Sport Management (FT)	0 (not yet started)	
Leeds Beckett University	Asian Institute of Built Environment (AIBE)	Review visit in HK, 12 May 2018	BSc (Hons) Building Services Engineering (FY PT)	163	Franchised delivery
			BA (Hons) Housing Studies (FY PT)	65	
			BEng (Hons) Building Services Engineering (PT)	7	
			MSc Building Services Engineering (PT)	30	

University of Warwick	Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)	Review visit in HK, 14 May 2018	MSc in Engineering Business Management (joint degree, FT and PT)	4	Joint delivery with 'fly in/fly out' UK faculty (joint-supervision for EngD)
			MSc in Manufacturing Systems Engineering and Management (joint degree, FT and PT)	122	
			MSc in Supply Chain and Logistics Management (joint degree, FT and PT)	15	
			Engineering Doctorate (EngD) (PT and FT)	26	
University of Hull	University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE)	Case study visit in Hong Kong, 14 May 2018	BSc (Hons) Accounting (FY, PT and FT)	163	Franchised delivery
			BA (Hons) Marketing and Management (FY, PT and FT)	124	
			BA (Hons) Criminology (with Psychology) (FY, PT and FT)	78	
			BA (Hons) Sociology (FY, FT)	12	
			BA (Hons) Marketing (FY, PT and FT)	40	
			MSc Accounting and Finance	0 (not yet started)	
Glyndŵr University	Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA)	Review visit in Hong Kong, 15 May 2018	Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business Marketing (all years FT)	1	Franchised delivery
			Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business Management (all years FT)	36	
			Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business (all years FT)	117	
			Master of Business Administration (FT and PT)	159	
De Montfort University	City University of Hong Kong, School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE)	Review visit in Hong Kong, 16 May 2018	BA (Hons) Business Administration and Management (FY FT & PT, and all years FT)	428	Franchised delivery
			BA (Hons) Public Administration and Management (FY FT & PT, and all years FT)	362	
University of Plymouth	University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPACE)	Case study visit in Hong Kong, 16 May 2018	BA (Hons) International Trade and Operations Management (FY PT)	49	Franchised delivery
			BSc (Hons) International Supply Chain and Shipping Management (FY PT)	52	
			Bachelor of Science (Hons) Business Management (FY PT and FT)	144	
			Bachelor of Science (Hons) Hospitality Management (FY PT and FT)	106	
			BSc (Hons) Computer and Information Security (FY PT)	19	

Edinburgh Napier University	City University of Hong Kong, School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE)	Review visit in Hong Kong, 17 May 2018	BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance (FY, FT & PT)	135	'Fly in-fly out' delivery
			BA (Hons) Accounting (FY, FT & PT)	376	
			BA (Hons) Marketing Management (FY, FT & PT)	377	
			BA (Hons) Tourism and Airline Management (FY, FT & PT)	96	
			BA (Hons) Hospitality and Service Management (FY, FT & PT)	71	
			BA (Hons) Tourism Management (FY, FT & PT)	49	
University of Sunderland	University of Sunderland in Hong Kong	Review visit in Hong Kong, 18 May 2018	BA (Hons) Business Management (FY, FT)	177	Branch campus delivery
			BA (Hons) Accounting and Financial Management (FY, FT and PT)	18	
			BSc (Hons) International Tourism and Hospitality Management (FY FT)	196	
			BA (Hons) Business and Management (all years FT and PT)	55	
			BA (Hons) Business and Human Resource Management (all years FT)	7	
			Master of Business Administration (FT and PT)	90	
Sheffield Hallam University	Vocational Training Council, School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE)	Case study visit in Hong Kong, 14 May 2018	BSc (Hons) Events and Leisure Management (FY FT)	126	Franchised delivery
			BSc (Hons) International Hospitality Business Management (FY FT)	95	
			BSc (Hons) Sport Business Management (FY FT)	71	
			BA (Hons) Jewellery and Metalwork (FY, FT and PT)	40	
			BEng (Hons) Electronic Engineering (FY, FT and PT)	51	
			MSc Sport Business Management (PT and FT)	13	
Coventry University	Vocational Training Council, School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE)	Case study visit in Hong Kong, 14 May 2018	BA (Hons) Business Administration (FY FT)	197	Franchised delivery
			BSc (Hons) Construction Management (FY, FT and PT)	18	
			BSc (Hons) Computing (FY, FT and PT)	85	
			BSc (Hons) Human Biosciences (FY, FT and PT)	37	
			BSc (Hons) Public Health Studies (FY, FT and PT)	20	
			BA (Hons) Media (FY, FT and PT)	23	

Annex 2: Review and case study report executive summaries

The full review reports and case studies are available at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/international/transnational-education-review/review-of-tne-in-hong-kong

Reviews

Birmingham City University and Continuous Professional Education

The Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment (CEBE) at Birmingham City University (BCU) entered into an agreement with Continuous Professional Education (CPE) in Hong Kong in 2012. The collaboration delivers programmes for practising professionals in the property and construction industries that provide opportunities for them to enhance their career prospects by studying for a BSc honours degree from BCU while studying locally on a part-time basis with CPE. Higher diploma graduates are able to access top-up programmes that lead to a degree qualification in Building Surveying, Construction Management, Quantity Surveying, or Real Estate. The programmes are offered in part-time format, with face-to-face delivery. All the BSc programmes are top-up awards.

Oversight of these and other collaborative BCU programmes has recently been tightened up, following a review of collaborative provision governance in June 2017. The report included a number of recommendations that included the creation of a definitive register of collaborative provision, cross-referenced against information published on the website. A revised set of definitions of collaborative provision was created that aligned more closely to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and encompassed a much broader range of activity than had previously been considered to be collaborative provision. The report also noted that governance of collaborative provision at BCU required improvement and made a series of recommendations intended to improve practice and consistency. These included the establishment of a Collaborative Provision Unit (CPU), and passing responsibility for oversight of the full range of collaborative provision to a Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC). All partnerships that involve the award of BCU degrees are monitored in line with a risk based approach thereby enhancing the requirements for due diligence.

BCU places considerable emphasis on developing highly employable graduates through practice-based approaches and is committed to gaining professional accreditations. All the programmes delivered in partnership with CPE are currently accredited by professional bodies.

The Faculty Link Tutor plays an important role as the principal academic link for each collaborative programme, providing oversight of quality assurance, including approval and review activities. Each link tutor is required to prepare an annual report on the collaborative programmes they monitor.

There was clear enthusiasm for the collaboration displayed by all the staff, and recognised by the students. This facilitated the exchange of good practice and more general learning from each other, and was considered by the review team to be a positive feature.

One practical outworking of the commitment to developing highly employable graduates is the inter-professional project that incorporates problem solving with interdisciplinary team work. It nurtures multidisciplinary teamwork skills, is applied to real-life issues, and was developed in response to employer feedback.

De Montfort University and CityU SCOPE

De Montfort University (the University) has been working with the Hong Kong City University (CityU) School of Continuing Professional Education (SCOPE) for over 20 years. Currently the University and SCOPE offer a top-up degree in Public Administration and Management, (BAPAM), which started in 1995 and led to the development of a three year degree in 2018, and a top-up degree in Business Administration and Management (BABAM), which started in 1997 and led to the development of a three year degree starting in 2016. The long-standing programmes have a strong reputation in the Hong Kong market, in particular those in public administration. All programmes are accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).

The programmes are franchised and managed by the University's Faculty of Business and Law. They are managed in line with the University's general academic governance and arrangements for collaborative provision. A Programme Management Board brings together staff from both institutions. Programmes are overseen by faculty committees and at university level. Processes are well defined and documented, for example, in the Guide to Managing Collaborative Provision and the Collaborative Link Tutor Handbook.

The academic frameworks of the University including external examining ensure that academic standards are equivalent to those in the UK while programme content and assessment is contextualised to Hong Kong. Programmes are subject to the University's monitoring and review processes, as well as those in SCOPE. Teaching staff are well qualified and bring a depth of both teaching and professional experience. Staff and students have support from both the University and SCOPE. Student feedback mechanisms are similar to those in the UK.

The University seeks to provide student mobility and has done so with UK students visiting Hong Kong but outward mobility from Hong Kong has been more limited. While the University's quality assurance processes are sound, the environment in Hong Kong is changing. As a result, annual review and other processes need to enable continued adaptation of programmes. Information provided to students is generally of high quality, though with some specific areas for improvement.

Overall, the cooperation between De Montfort University and CityU SCOPE provides an educational experience that meets UK academic standards and requirements for the student experience with well-established teaching and administrative teams linking the two institutions.

Edinburgh Napier University and CityU SCOPE

Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) entered into an agreement with the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SCOPE) at the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) in 1997, and is now one of the largest providers of UK education in Hong Kong.

CityU is a public university that is committed to the pursuit of academic excellence and service to the community. SCOPE opened in 1991 and now operates as a separate entity within CityU, with its own mission and vision. SCOPE currently offers a number of postgraduate, three-year degree and top-up degree programmes as well as advanced diplomas, diplomas and short programmes.

The Business School of ENU currently offers a number of programmes in collaboration with CityU SCOPE. The programmes that form part of the QAA TNE Review of Hong Kong are:

- BA/BA (Hons) Accounting & Finance (2009)

- BA/BA (Hons) Accounting (1997)
- BA/BA (Hons) Hospitality & Service Management (2006)
- BA/BA (Hons) Tourism Management (2014)
- BA/BA (Hons) Marketing Management (2010)
- BA/BA (Hons) Tourism & Airline Management (2008).

All of these programmes have been accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). They are delivered by flying faculty. ENU staff travel to Hong Kong for intensive blocks of teaching, and locally employed tutors then complete tutorials for each module and provide continuity between the visits from ENU staff.

The institutional processes for agreeing and establishing new links, and for monitoring and reviewing quality and maintaining standards are effective and well understood by both ENU and CityU SCOPE staff.

The ENU programme leader visits Hong Kong every year to take part in the induction programme for new students. Ongoing academic and pastoral support is principally provided by the local tutors, though students may also contact ENU teachers or local or ENU administrative staff. The review team noted the quality of the support that was recognised and appreciated by the students.

Glyndŵr University and Hong Kong Management Association

Glyndŵr University (the University) had limited transnational education provision until recently, other than its partnership with the Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA). Currently three degrees are run in collaboration with HKMA: two business bachelor's degrees and an MBA. These programmes are registered in Hong Kong but not accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).

A distinctive feature of all programmes is that they are taught in both English and Chinese (Cantonese). The University's arrangements for this bilingual provision are sound, based on a combination of processes to ensure equivalence and on bilingual staff in key roles. These include an Academic Link responsible for the operation of the programmes and external examiners who can ensure equivalence of assessment in English and Chinese.

As franchised programmes, both the content and assessment are in principle the same as in the UK. In practice there is some contextualisation of programme content, which is taught by experienced faculty, often with substantial professional experience. Admissions criteria are equivalent to those in the UK, though documented criteria for the MBA differed from those applied in practice.

In general, learning resources for English and Chinese programmes are equivalent, though with some areas where Chinese provision can be enhanced. Issues were identified regarding UK-centric programme specifications for which more global processes are recommended.

Mechanisms for ongoing assurance of academic standards and quality have been systematically implemented including annual monitoring and external examining. Actions have been taken within both the University and HKMA in response to stakeholder feedback, including that from Student Voice Forums.

Overall, the cooperation between Glyndŵr University and HKMA provides a distinctive bilingual educational experience that meets UK academic standards and requirements for the student experience.

Leeds Beckett University and Asian Institute of Built Environment Ltd

Leeds Beckett University (the University) has been in partnership with the Asian Institute of Built Environment (AIBE), a private provider, since July 2012. Institutional recognition took place in July 2012 with re-recognition in April 2016. AIBE's vision is to become a leading provider of specialist higher education, excelling in built environment professional education and research. AIBE's vision and mission is congruent with the University's core values. Both institutions value employer engagement through professional body accreditation and industrial links. AIBE has an industrial advisory panel that meets on a regular basis, similar to that in the UK.

AIBE is steered by a group of academic experts from local universities, many of the part-time academics are also experts from industry. It started as a training centre for professionals in the construction industry, offering courses in building management, electrical, mechanical, electronic, building services, structural and civil engineering, different areas of surveying, architecture, property and facilities management. It has a core group of full-time employees.

The University's strategic aims inform the Global Engagement Strategy approved by Academic Board in July 2017. It sets the strategic framework for international collaborations and partnerships. A review of the 2011-16 Strategy for the delivery of taught undergraduate programmes in collaboration and partnership was undertaken and a number of partnerships were discontinued but the long-standing partnership with AIBE was continued as Hong Kong is considered an important Global Hub for the University.

At the time of the review, the University's collaborative strategy was under revision. The revised strategy for collaborations and partnerships 2018-21 replaces the University's previous strategy for the delivery of taught undergraduate programmes in collaboration and partnership, 2011-16.

The franchise programmes currently delivered are: BSc (Hons) Building Services Engineering (final year top-up), BA (Hons) Housing Studies (final year top-up), BEng (Hons) Building Services Engineering, and MSc Building Services Engineering. Overall, 265 students are registered across the four programmes.

AIBE are required to adopt all aspects of the University's quality management processes and regulations. The ultimate responsibility for academic standards and quality rests with the Vice-Chancellor. The Academic Board has institutional oversight and is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. The Academic Board approves the University Regulations and the responsibility for monitoring and review of the Regulations is delegated to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC).

In September 2015, an executive operational group, the University Collaborative Oversight Group (UCOG) was established as a collaborative support network to provide oversight of collaborative provision, coordination and share good practice in the context of greater devolution of collaborative activities to Schools. The Dean appoints a School representative responsible for collaborative provision and the monitoring and review of operational matters.

Overall, the programmes are well managed and students are effectively supported in the achievement of their academic award. The University considers the relationship with AIBE to be an effective partnership, with potential for further development.

University College Birmingham and Aston Institute HK

University College Birmingham (UCB) established the private provider partnership with Aston Institute in 2010. The partnership agreements cover three top-up programmes: BA (Hons) Business Enterprise, BA (Hons) International Hospitality & Tourism Management and BA (Hons) Marketing Management. A strategic decision was made, even though UCB gained degree awarding powers, that they would continue to seek accreditation of programmes with the University of Birmingham (UoB) where UCB has expertise. UCB has a long-standing relationship with the University of Birmingham, whose brand is very popular in Hong Kong. Students confirm they value having a degree from the University of Birmingham.

The agreement for each programme was signed separately in June 2014. The International Block Mode Delivery Agreements include a separate Operational Plan and Financial Agreement. The programmes are currently registered but not accredited by the Hong Kong Council for the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).

UCB's vision is to remain ambitious and aspirational with high expectations in a collaborative and supportive learning environment. Its Corporate Plan 2017-20 makes it clear it intends to further develop partnerships with local and national Further Education Colleges through validation agreements to provide vocational progression routes into higher education.

Aston Institute's main role is to support recruitment and to support the Operational Agreement. The mode of delivery is block-teaching by flying faculty, with face-to-face teaching from UCB. Aston Institute do not provide any teaching input. There is a dedicated administrator for the block programmes, who ensures teaching facilities and study space are available for students to study outside of the teaching block weeks.

The programmes are delivered over 12 months part-time, enabling students to complete in a minimum of 18 months, taking account of the assessment, with the maximum time for completion of six years. Assessments are set by the Module Leader and in keeping with the assessments delivered on the same modules delivered in Birmingham. Some assessment formats might vary due to the block mode of delivery, although the assessment weightings and learning outcomes assessed remain the same.

The maintenance of academic standards is made clear in UCB's Quality Manual. UCB's Student Services and Standards Committee oversees the effectiveness of the quality assurance and service delivery. It sets and monitors performance against appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements. The University's Academic Board receives reports of quality activity and enhancement, and the Curriculum and Quality Development committee is responsible for supporting and monitoring the programmes. The University of Birmingham has oversight of the quality of UoB accredited programmes.

Overall, the programmes are well managed and students well supported in achievement of the academic award. The University considers the arrangements with Aston Institute to be effective and both institutions support the partnership.

University of Northumbria at Newcastle and HKU SPACE

The University of Northumbria at Newcastle runs programmes in Hong Kong with HKU SPACE, the University of Hong Kong's School of Professional and Continuing Education, as well as other institutions. HKU SPACE was originally established in 1956, and the University's partnership with HKU SPACE began in 2010. Two sport-related top-up degree programmes were launched in 2010 and 2014. One top-up programme is being replaced in 2018-19 and a related MSc is planned. The two top-up degree programmes were accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) in March 2015. This review was conducted together with the HKCAAVQ

which established a panel to accredit a new BSc (Hons) Sport Coaching programme and to re-accredit the BSc (Hons) Sport Management programme. Both are top-up programmes of 180 credits with recognition of prior learning in either specified HKU SPACE 'feeder' Higher Diploma programmes. Two QAA reviewers were part of the HKCAAVQ panel. While specifically reviewing the programmes' academic standards and quality against Hong Kong requirements, the QAA review considered that the HKCAAVQ review was equivalent to scrutiny against the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) in all major respects.

Provision awarded by the University and delivered through a collaborative partner is subject to the same standard monitoring and review processes applied to all University programmes. It is also subject to HKU SPACE's quality assurance systems and procedures. These arrangements are effective in assuring academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities although they involved some duplication of effort in meeting each institution's requirements as well as those of HKCAAVQ.

Strengths of the provision include strong links with the sports industry in Hong Kong including longer duration placement opportunities than in the UK. There are committed teams and good communication on both sides of the partnership. This has led to effective contextualisation of learning in a validated programme. Good support services are provided to students including high quality library facilities. Support for English language and academic skills is provided but students did not always take advantage of this support. Areas for improvement include the management of the University's documentation for programmes run in more than one location.

Overall, the University's programmes are well managed and students supported in the achievement of their academic award. The University's partnership with HKU SPACE is effective, with potential for further enhancement.

University of Sunderland in Hong Kong Ltd

The University of Sunderland in Hong Kong Ltd (UoSiHK) is one of the University's three campuses. The campus evolved from an earlier collaborative partnership in Hong Kong between the University and RDI Limited (Hong Kong), a private provider of education. RDI Limited (Hong Kong) had delivered a range of business programmes on a franchise basis since 2003.

The University's strategic intention was to establish a regional hub in Asia. It aims to double the number of students to around 1,300 by 2021-22 and to expand the range of subjects and breadth of provision with more programmes in business and other areas such as computer science, education, health, media and journalism, as well as offering more post-graduate provision. It intends to improve the student experience by implementing multi-campus opportunities to enable students to study for part of their programme at one of two campuses in the UK and widen the opportunities for Hong Kong students, with cultural exchange and study tours in the UK and mainland China.

The University currently delivers five undergraduate and one postgraduate programmes. A further undergraduate and two postgraduate programmes to commence in 2018 are planned. The focus is on business administration, accounting/finance, tourism and hospitality. The programmes are currently not accredited by HKCAAVQ. The mode of delivery at UoSiHK is based on the franchise model of collaboration which existed when the campus was a partner and teaching staff employed by the partner and approved by the faculty. Although this has now changed and all staff at the campus are employed by the

University there has been little change to the delivery and the campus continues, for a transitional period, to operate as though it was a TNE partnership.

The RDI systems and procedures were replaced in December 2016 by University systems and procedures and the campus is now part of the University. The official launch of the UoSiHK campus was in March 2017.

A Hong Kong Campus Operations Board was established chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (International) to lead the development and provide oversight of governance, guidance, advice and support to staff in Hong Kong dealing with operational issues. The University's Academic Development Committee has oversight of programmes delivered on campus and receives regular reports on developments.

Overall, the programmes are well managed and meet the required standards. Students are effectively supported primarily by local tutors the majority of whom are part-time, with industry experience that is valued by students. The University considers the establishment of the campus to be a major part of its Strategic Plan which is to provide a transformative experience to students, staff, communities and business partners in the UK and across the world.

University of Warwick and PolyU HK

The Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) at the University of Warwick and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) share a focus on meeting the needs of industry and, individually, have strong partnerships with the business and industrial sectors. Intending to exploit this synergy, WMG and PolyU entered into collaborative agreement in 1990 to provide an MSc in Manufacturing Systems Engineering. The partnership now delivers a number of joint award programmes, including those that feature in this review, together with an EngD that leads to a single award from the University of Warwick.

The joint master's programmes delivered at PolyU are based on those delivered at Warwick, with students being able to choose from a wide range of modules. The programmes delivered in Warwick and Hong Kong all follow the same broad pattern of delivery but may start at different times of the year.

Following its success with the flying faculty delivery model in Hong Kong, WMG has used a similar approach to launch collaborative provision in other countries.

The programmes benefit from the deep mutual understanding that has built up over the 28 years of the collaboration. The programmes have evolved over this period and are increasingly attracting international students, particularly from the People's Republic of China. Acknowledging the significant changes that have occurred in Hong Kong over a number of years, including the shift of much of the manufacturing industry from Hong Kong to mainland China, student recruitment remains challenging. This is particularly true for the EngD programme.

Following a review of Academic Governance at the University of Warwick in 2016-17, some key committees and reporting lines to Senate have been restructured. These changes are occurring at the same time as a revision of the processes and systems for course approval and monitoring and review.

Students on the joint programmes recognised and appreciated the breadth and depth of industrial engagement throughout the programmes. This included the invited industry experts who contribute to teaching, the diversity of educational and professional background

of the students, and the possibility of applying what they learned on the programme to their professional practice.

Case studies

Coventry University, Sheffield Hallam University and the School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE)

This case study examines the strengths and challenges in a transnational education partnership in which both sides of the agreement have multiple other partners. The case study is based on the partnerships of two UK universities with the School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE) in Hong Kong. The UK universities are Coventry University (CU) and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU).

Hong Kong is a key strategic market for both CU and SHU, and both highly value their relationship with VTC SHAPE, which aligns with their aim of preparing graduates for global careers and with skills and knowledge that can be used to solve practical problems.

Both universities ensure a comparable experience for students studying at VTC SHAPE and those based at the home campus by using the same teachers across the different delivery sites. Student support is provided by VTC SHAPE and is, therefore, different to that given to UK-based students, but it is comparable, and tailored to the requirements of the local students. Both universities work closely with the local teachers to ensure they understand the expectations for the student experience.

Both CU and SHU and, indeed, VTC SHAPE, are using their multiple partnerships to great effect, to the benefit of their students and staff. For example, both universities draw on their experience of providing the same programmes with different partners, in different countries, to develop good practice and enhance provision across locations. They also offer ample opportunities for student exchanges and mobility between sites, and shared experiences through summer schools and the multi-site student projects. For its part, VTC SHAPE is also managing its partners well. It avoids competition for students among its portfolio of partners by selecting and dedicating feeder programmes for each of the top-up programmes of each partner.

Both universities spoke of the strength and depth of the relationship with VTC SHAPE that extends far beyond the classroom. Each of the partnerships benefits from the strength of SHAPE's reputation in Hong Kong, and all three partners recognise the increasing importance of this, given the implications of the changing demographic in Hong Kong for student recruitment.

University of Hull and the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE)

This case study is based on collaboration between the University of Hull (the University) and the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE). The case study does not attempt to evaluate the overall operation of the partnership in the manner of a review report; the purpose is to look at the scope.

The study is focused on the integration of the two institutions' quality systems from approval to ongoing monitoring - a topic of interest to UK higher education providers who may be considering international partnerships.

To date, the partnership has developed to comprise seven collaborative bachelor's degree programmes, across two Hull Faculties and two HKU SPACE Colleges. There are 427 undergraduate and postgraduate students on a range of full-time and part-time programmes. The programmes are accredited by HKCAAVQ.

The programmes are delivered though a franchise model with the University 'flying-in' to deliver intense teaching blocks and HKU SPACE tutors delivering tutorials. Some programmes have specialist input from local lecturers.

The longstanding partnership between the University and HKU SPACE has been running successfully for the last 12 years. The administration team and teaching staff consider themselves a well-established team. The joint governance arrangements, in keeping with the regulatory requirements of the institutions, have been successfully implemented and avoid repetition. There are no current plans to extend the partnership, the aim is to consolidate and continue to enhance the existing delivery.

University of Plymouth and the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE)

This case study is based on collaboration between the University of Plymouth (the University) and the University of Hong Kong, School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE). The case study does not attempt to evaluate the overall operation of the partnership in the manner of a review; the purpose is to look at the scope.

The study is focused on how the two institutions work together from approval to ongoing monitoring looking particularly at the Enrichment Modules which contribute to the top-up programme; a topic of interest to UK higher education providers who may be considering international partnerships.

The partnership is based on the delivery, by 'flying faculty', of three top-up degrees, BSc Business Management, BSc Hospitality Management and BSc Tourism Management programmes, all accredited by HKCAAVQ. The delivery is primarily by the same academic staff teaching on the same programme at the UK campus, with additional local tutor input.

The University's strategic intent is to strengthen overseas developments. The University sees its role as an anchor institution that forges relationships and builds partnerships based on shared values and mutual benefits. It sees the continued development of TNE arrangements as a key aspect.

This is a longstanding partnership between the University and HKU SPACE that has been running successfully for 11 years. The teaching staff consider themselves a well-established team, with both partners learning from each other. The partners also have a very good relationship at a senior level. There is evidence the teams listen to each other and have mutual respect from programme level upwards. Both institutions see students as central and they are always looking to see how the experience of students can be enhanced.

University of the West of England, Bristol and the School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), VTC

The University of the West of England, Bristol (the University) international strategy includes the development of teaching partnerships for degree programmes It has a portfolio of collaborative provision in other parts of the world, in partnership with local education providers. In Hong Kong it partners with the School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), a member institution of the Vocational Training Council (VTC). Currently three top-

up degrees are run in collaboration with SHAPE, with two further top-up degrees planned as well as one Master's programme. This case study visit was conducted together with new programme accreditation of the two new top-up degrees for HKCAAVQ (the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications). The HKCAAVQ panel concluded that the programmes met Hong Kong requirements, while the QAA case study concluded that HKCAAVQ accreditation can be relied upon by QAA for reassurance that the TNE programmes meet UK requirements.

There is close collaboration between the University and SHAPE in the development and delivery of degree programmes using a franchise model. Both the University and SHAPE have clear structures for the approval and oversight of programmes, together with joint programme teams. This involves some duplication of functions and processes, for example, in annual review of programmes. The two institutions work together closely in programme delivery which includes some teaching by University staff.

There is strong industry input into decision-making about new programmes which therefore respond to current and future employer needs. Programmes are contextualised to the Hong Kong environment using a consistent approach. The objectives of one programme were such that achieving all these aims within 120 credits would be challenging and require ongoing monitoring. Processes for admission of students onto programmes were sound, though the documentation associated with Hong Kong Associate Degrees required further attention.

Mechanisms for ongoing assurance of academic standards and quality were systematically implemented including annual review and external examining. Actions were taken within both the University and SHAPE in response to stakeholder feedback.