

# The Practice of Internationalisation: Managing International Activities in UK Universities

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UK Higher Education International Unit  
**Research Series/1**  
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## Contents

|          |          |                                                                      |
|----------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <b>1</b> | <b>Executive summary</b>                                             |
| <b>1</b> |          | <b>Introduction</b>                                                  |
|          | 5        | Aim of the report                                                    |
|          | 6        | What we did                                                          |
| <b>2</b> |          | <b>Internationalisation activity in the UK, Australia and Canada</b> |
|          | 8        | The UK picture                                                       |
|          | 10       | The Australian picture                                               |
|          | 12       | Some evidence from Canada                                            |
|          | 14       | Conclusions                                                          |
| <b>3</b> |          | <b>Internationalisation strategies in the UK</b>                     |
|          | 15       | The spectrum of strategies                                           |
|          | 16       | Co-ordination with other strategies                                  |
|          | 17       | Monitoring the strategy                                              |
|          | 18       | Conclusions                                                          |
| <b>4</b> |          | <b>How internationalisation is being managed</b>                     |
|          | 19       | Senior leadership                                                    |
|          | 20       | Faculty leadership                                                   |
|          | 21       | Committees and working groups                                        |
|          | 23       | Funding                                                              |
|          | 24       | Managing the internationalisation of the curriculum                  |
|          | 25       | Conclusions                                                          |
| <b>5</b> |          | <b>International Offices</b>                                         |
|          | 26       | Changing roles and structures                                        |
|          | 28       | Overseas offices                                                     |
|          | 30       | Skills required of International Office staff                        |
|          | 30       | Conclusions                                                          |
| <b>6</b> |          | <b>Managing international partnerships</b>                           |
|          | 31       | Links to the strategy                                                |
|          | 34       | Top-down, bottom-up or both?                                         |
|          | 35       | Conclusions                                                          |
| <b>7</b> |          | <b>What is good practice?</b>                                        |
|          |          | <b>Appendix</b>                                                      |
|          | 39       | Institutional case studies                                           |



## Foreword

This is the first report from the research programme of the UK Higher Education International Unit based at Universities UK. The subject is an analysis of how the full range of international activities at UK universities are organised and managed. It is a topic that has relevance for the whole sector: every university and college conducts activities with some international aspects. As the report's author, John Fielden, says, if an institution wishes to engage fully in international activities, each academic and administrative staff member and department will be affected in some way. This poses new managerial challenges for universities and has implications that go well beyond International Offices.

Most observers will agree that the UK higher education sector has been in the vanguard of internationalisation. We are the world's second most popular destination for international students. But in the UK it is also clearly understood that internationalisation means more than international recruitment. It is about our sector forging new teaching partnerships abroad and about international collaborations in research and commercialisation. The more effective our universities are at managing all these strands, the better. Our success in these activities is directly linked to the health of the UK economy and the country's international competitiveness. The fact that this work received financial support from a number of government departments speaks for itself.

In spite of our successes, the UK higher education sector is characterised by a prudent absence of complacency. This report takes a critical look at some case studies in managing international activities and provides a typology of models for senior university managers to compare with their own efforts. There is, of course, no single template and no one-size-fits-all answer. But I hope that those who have a role in managing international activities at their institutions may find the analytical material in this report of practical use in realising their international strategies.

**Professor Rick Trainor**

President

Universities UK



1

Knight, J (1994),  
*Internationalisation: Elements  
and Checkpoints*, Canadian  
Bureau for International  
Education, Ottawa.

1

This report uses the findings from six case studies to analyse how internationalisation is managed in UK universities. It takes a classic definition of internationalisation as being 'the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and services functions of the institution.'<sup>1</sup>

2

Our case-study institutions and a recent survey of International Offices illustrate the diversity of the way that internationalisation is managed in the UK. There is no one model. In addition, in many institutions responsibility for implementation is spread throughout faculties and the support departments. If a university wishes to internationalise comprehensively, it will affect almost every academic staff member, and almost every academic and administrative unit will be involved to varying extents. Thus, the management of internationalisation is inevitably complex and in some institutional cultures it may not even be manageable.

3

Australia has given internationalisation much greater importance strategically for many years because of its great reliance on international student numbers, and the International Office has a much higher profile in terms of reporting to the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor. Australian International Offices have a wider range of functions than their UK equivalents. The prime motive for much of their work, however, still appears to be financial. In Canada the financial motive has never been the main driver and internationalisation has always been based on academic or developmental objectives.

4

Many UK internationalisation strategies are still in a state of flux or transformation. The trend is for them to become more all-embracing and to require the involvement of all the community. This is where we have found a communication problem, since the evidence from several institutions is that the corporate messages about the importance of internationalisation are not getting through to all academic staff.

5

There is a risk that the comprehensive nature of the changes required is not reflected in a university's other corporate strategies; however, this lack of integration may be due to the different timings of the many strategies. The co-ordination of an international strategy with all the other strategies requires either a very clear steer from the head of the institution or a shared commitment to internationalisation in the Senior Management Team (SMT). The key point is that an integrated approach to internationalisation will not just happen. There are too many distractions and barriers in the way; it will need to be encouraged or directed.

6

The role of the Vice-Chancellor is vital in promoting internationalisation and stressing its importance, particularly where the goal is for it to be embedded in everything that the university does.

- 7 There are some clear messages from the case studies about the structures needed to manage internationalisation:
- A member of the SMT should have overall responsibility.
  - A university Steering Group with wide professional and academic membership is required to co-ordinate the overall implementation of the strategy.
  - Senior academics can be given responsibility for cross-cutting themes or for co-ordinating activities in countries or regions.
  - In order to encourage such co-ordination it is helpful to have working groups of champions or specialists for each country.
- 8 The implementation of an internationalisation strategy will require explicit funding. The main rationales for central financial support are either to pump-prime the start of potential partnerships or to reimburse faculty budgets for work that benefits the whole institution.
- 9 The scope and size of International Offices is changing in most institutions and is generally embracing more functions. There is a general trend away from a traditional group of International Office functions to the model structures we describe as 'Core Plus' and 'Comprehensive.' In such models the Head of the Office inevitably acquires greater seniority and in some cases is given overall responsibility for the implementation of the internationalisation strategy, reporting to the SMT member in charge.
- 10 There are some potential organisational overlaps between the International Office and other support services that need careful management if they are not to be troublesome. They are the alumni office, the public relations department and the marketing function; each of these has international aspects that are the legitimate concern of the internationalisation strategy.
- 11 Universities' overseas offices rarely follow one standard model – even in the same university – since their role depends on the importance of the country, the existence or not of recruiting agents and the experience and skill of the resident office manager. They have the potential to be very valuable in fostering collaborations and partnerships and using alumni connections to help in finding jobs for returning graduates.
- 12 Partnerships are of three kinds: strategic links at the university level that require formal approval and management, faculty partnerships with peer faculties which also usually need to be approved and the vast mass of individual one-to-one teaching or research collaborations at the third level. The latter are not managed or even recorded in most institutions.
- 13 Evidence from case studies confirms that the most successful first-level strategic partnerships are based on successful second- or third-level partnerships. A top-down relationship might work on its own, but if there are existing bottom-up connections the chances are much better.
- 14 It is accepted that strategic research partnerships should be managed in order to achieve the intended outcomes and to maintain the university's reputation with the partner institution in the country concerned. We found few examples of this happening regularly but this may be due to the relative novelty of the arrangements.

The report concludes with a list of ten suggested 'Good Practice' points for managing internationalisation. These, we recommend, might be used by the responsible Pro Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor to assess their performance. They are:

---

1

The internationalisation strategy is a fundamental element of the corporate strategy and is fully integrated with all the other institutional strategies.

---

2

The Vice-Chancellor strongly supports internationalisation, but one member of the SMT is responsible for its implementation and has a senior manager to support that role.

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3

Mechanisms are in place to ensure that faculties or schools develop their own plans for implementing the key points in the internationalisation strategy.

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4

The university has a central Group or Committee, chaired by the SMT member, to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy and review progress regularly.

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5

Senior managers chair Country Groups of specialists and active international staff that co-ordinate the university's efforts in target or key countries.

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6

There is a clear policy on the development of strategic partnerships showing what is expected of institutional strategic partnerships and the criteria to assess new ones.

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7

The university supports the development of strategic partnerships at institutional and faculty level, provides funding where appropriate and monitors their performance.

---

8

It is accepted that implementation of the internationalisation strategy will require some central funding and an appropriate budget is available.

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9

The strategy acknowledges the centrality of academic staff commitment to internationalisation and the university and faculties devote effort to getting them involved.

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10

Overseas offices work in conjunction with the relevant country group to provide an all-round support service for academic staff, current students and alumni, as well as undertaking marketing and promotional activity.

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2

Knight, J (1994), *ibid.*

3

Fielden, J (2007), *Global Horizons for UK Students: A Guide for Universities*, The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

4

Fielden, J (2007), *Global Horizons for UK Universities*, The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

## Aim of the report

### 1.1

This report was commissioned by the UK Higher Education International Unit with the aim of helping UK universities to identify good practice in the way that they manage their internationalisation activity. Since internationalisation involves a very broad range of functions, its adoption by a university has often been referred to as requiring a complete cultural change. Inevitably this is a major challenge to management.

### 1.2

The study was commissioned in the autumn of 2007 and ends with the publication of this report in April 2008.

### 1.3

A study of the skill sets required to manage internationalisation is being undertaken by UKCISA under the umbrella of the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2). It will review all the training and professional development needs of specialist support staff involved with international students. This study is due to report in Spring 2008 and will cover the full range of functions within International Offices. A national online survey inviting responses is underway.

### 1.4

International activities and internationalisation are hot topics in universities. In response to political, cultural and financial influences every university is revising or extending its international strategy. The focus of attention has swung from the strictly commercial objective of income generation to a broader one of developing partnerships with overseas institutions and higher education communities. At government level, initiatives such as PMI2 and Research Councils UK's decision to open offices in Washington, China and India, have set the seal on this approach as a way of promoting the UK as the preferred partner country for higher education collaboration.

### 1.5

There are many definitions of internationalisation. The most widely used, that by Jane Knight, describes internationalisation as 'the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and services functions of the institution.'<sup>2</sup> This is helpful for the purpose of this study since it confirms how wide-ranging internationalisation is and also supports the theme of this report that something so comprehensive has to be managed.

### 1.6

This study can build on two recent projects by its author, both undertaken by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, for the Funding Councils and the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills. The first, *Global Horizons for UK Students: A Guide for Universities*, studied what International Offices do to help outward student mobility and presented some good-practice examples.<sup>3</sup> The second, *Global Horizons for UK Universities*, took a broad look at how UK institutions interpret internationalisation and, again, presented some instances of potential good practice.<sup>4</sup> One of the topics briefly studied was the management of internationalisation and how universities review their success in this area. This report builds on that part of the study.

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## What we did

1.7

The work programme envisaged that up to five case-study visits would form the main evidence base for the UK. In the event six visits were undertaken and are reported in full in the Appendix. These have been approved by the senior member of staff responsible in the university. The following institutions are included to reflect the diversity of the sector:

University of Bath  
University of Birmingham  
Harper Adams University College  
Napier University  
Sheffield Hallam University  
University College London (UCL)

1.8

In addition, further visits or conversations have been held with some key players in other institutions, such as the University of Manchester, Middlesex University, the University of Exeter and the University of Leiden in the Netherlands.

1.9

For evidence of what is happening in the UK, the report relies on a statistical survey of International Offices in 2007 by Hobsons, as well as the author's knowledge from previous studies. Our information on Australia has come from a study commissioned for this report. In Canada we have relied on a recent survey undertaken by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

1.10

The factual questions that we raised with case-study institutions and which are covered in each of their reports in the Appendix are:

1

Who has overall responsibility for the international strategy?

2

What is the relationship between the international strategy and the other institutional strategies?

3

What administrative structures support the international strategy?

4

What committee structure, if any, supports the strategy?

5

What is the scope of the International Office?

6

How are schools and faculties involved in the strategy?

7

How is the internationalisation of the curriculum managed?

8

What funding arrangements exist to manage international activities?

9

What is the role of the overseas offices and how are they managed?

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**1.11**

The strategic questions which follow on from these and which will be explored in this study are:

- How does internationalisation become embedded? What has to be done after the strategy has been agreed?
- How is the internationalisation activity best managed, at central and faculty level? What kind of formal structures will help?
- What support should the centre give and how can it best co-ordinate everyone's efforts? Where is a top-down push useful?

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**1.12**

These questions will mean different things in different institutional cultures. One recurring theme of this report will be the extent to which central direction of internationalisation is feasible and necessary.

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**1.13**

This study would not have been possible without the support and active collaboration of the six case-study institutions. The UK Higher Education International Unit and the consultant are extremely grateful for their willingness to agree to the publication of their case studies in this report.

**2.1** This section looks briefly at how internationalisation is managed in the UK, Australia and Canada. The aim is to illustrate the common features between the three countries and highlight some of the differences.

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### The UK picture

**2.2** Our main evidence on the position of International Offices in UK institutions has been taken from a benchmarking survey of UK International Offices commissioned by Hobsons from Alan Olsen of SPRE in Hong Kong in mid-2007. This was sent to all such offices and 31 responses were received. The survey centred only on the activities within International Offices and did not look broadly at all those involved in internationalisation. Due to confidentiality agreements, we were unable to review material relating to individual institutions. We are, however, very grateful to Hobsons for their agreement to provide the summary information.

**2.3** Eleven of the questions posed to International Offices related to structural issues. The key findings are:

- There are 14 different job titles to whom the heads of International Offices report, with only 7 of the 31 reporting directly to a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) or Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC). As we show later, this is a much lower proportion than in Australia.
- All 31 universities had an International Office; 19 describe it as an entity within an international portfolio, 14 as an entity within a marketing portfolio, three as an entity within an entrepreneurship or commercial portfolio, one as an entity within an academic administration portfolio and three as an entity within an administration portfolio. While this picture is obviously influenced by historical and personality factors, it also illustrates the different views of where international activities best fit.
- 18 of the 31 universities say that the International Office has the total or lead responsibility for international marketing and international enquiries.
- Other than the 'core functions', the survey found that the International Offices had lead responsibility for the following functions:
  - internationalisation policy and strategy in 17 responses.
  - strategic development of the university internationally in 21 responses.
  - international relations and international links in 27 responses.
  - international student mobility including exchanges in 23 responses.
  - compliance with legislation, administrative requirements and codes specific to international students in UK in 17 responses.
  - new business development offshore in 15 responses.
  - development assistance projects in three responses.
  - English-language learning within the university in three responses.

5

Lewis, VF (2007),  
*'Integrated internationalism'  
in UK Higher Education:  
Interpretations, Manifestations  
and Recommendations*,  
doctoral thesis, University of  
Bath, School of Management.

- Universities were asked whether they had established offices overseas. The survey found 18 responding universities with 49 offices overseas, which represent the university across a range of functions in 15 cases and primarily to recruit students to the UK in 13 cases.
- On average the 31 universities spend 7.5% of the income generated from international fees on international student activity.

#### 2.4

As one would expect, the conclusions from the Hobsons survey are that there is a great deal of diversity in the allocation of responsibilities to International Offices. There is absolutely no standard model. About two-thirds of the sample had responsibility for 'strategic development of the university internationally,' but if only one-third report directly to a member of the senior management team, this must raise doubts as to whether this is achievable.

#### 2.5

A recent research study that has taken an overall view of internationalisation is a doctoral thesis by Victoria Lewis, a senior manager with responsibility for the International Office at Bournemouth University.<sup>5</sup> She examined how internationalisation was managed in three case-study institutions which were anonymous in her report.

#### 2.6

Her report summarised the findings from a survey of responses by 46 universities to a questionnaire in May 2005 that sought principally to examine institutional motives for internationalisation. She found, *inter alia*, that at that time only 30% of the heads of International Offices reported to a VC or PVC equivalent (a slightly higher proportion than in the Hobsons survey).

#### 2.7

Two quotations from respondents to her survey illustrate the rationale for this project:

*There are many different international strands happening across the institution and apart from the International Office, whose main function is increasing student numbers, there is no co-ordination of international activity across the institution.*

*It is difficult to get a sense of how well the university implements internationalism across areas such as research, business development, community relations etc when working in an International Office.*

#### 2.8

These quotes summarise the core challenge. If a university wishes to internationalise comprehensively, it will affect almost every academic staff member, and almost every academic and administrative unit will be involved to varying extents. Thus, the management of internationalisation is inevitably complex and in some institutional cultures it may not even be manageable.

6

OECD, *Education at a Glance 2007*, Table C3.8.

7

A listing of Australian senior post holders responsible for internationalisation is given on the Universities Australia website.

8

Defined as the delivery of higher education by Australian institutions offshore.

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## The Australian picture

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### 2.9

We commissioned Alan Olsen of SPRE to report on current developments in Australia, based partly on his parallel benchmarking study of Australian universities. He reported at the end of October 2007.

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### 2.10

There are many similarities between the UK and Australian situations, but both are changing rapidly. Some of the contextual issues influencing the Australian picture are:

- The federal government's concern about quality which leads to greater emphasis on Codes of Conduct and the need for compliance with guidelines.
- Universities' heavy reliance on international student fee income for financial security. Australia's global market share rose between 2000 and 2005 from 5.8% to 6.5%, while the UK's declined from 12.3% to 11.7%.<sup>6</sup> One-quarter of Australia's HE students are from abroad.

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### 2.11

The SPRE report provided the following information on the International Offices of Australian universities:

- The International Office reports direct to the VC in 5 cases, the DVC in 10 cases and a PVC in 11 cases.
- In 26 of the 38 Australian universities there is a DVC or PVC with International in the job title. In some cases the role is combined with Development or Enterprise and in others with the Academic portfolio. In just two cases there is a Chief Officer International or a General Manager International.<sup>7</sup>
- The International Office has responsibility for marketing materials and marketing missions in all 36 universities, for enquiries in 35, for admissions in 33, for student services up to the point of arrival in 29 and for student services after arrival in 20 universities. In 26 of the 36 universities, the International Office has responsibility for all four core functions: marketing, enquiries, admissions and student services up to the point of arrival.
- The admissions processes are usually centralised and fewer of the detailed admission decisions are devolved to faculties than in the UK (18% compared to 44%). This will have implications for the numbers of staff needed in the Office as well as for working relations with faculties.
- A roughly similar proportion of International Offices in both the Australia and the UK have responsibility for international policy and strategy and international relations. Fewer UK Offices are responsible for student mobility.
- There is an emphasis in the work of the International Office on compliance with federal legislative requirements and sector-owned Codes of Conduct.
- Where the university has significant involvement in the provision of trans-national education,<sup>8</sup> the PVC is likely to have an organisational unit outside the International Office dedicated to trans-national education. The International Office is not involved.

- Nearly half of Australian universities bring together marketing with international in the same portfolio; a growing number also include international alumni matters.
- The PVC International is likely to chair an International Committee, covering all aspects of internationalisation, which will include the PVC responsible for Learning and Teaching and the PVC Research among its members.
- Nearly half of Australian universities include responsibility for marketing and international alumni within the scope of the International Office; this helps to remove any internal tensions.

#### 2.12 Other findings were:

- The PVC International is likely to chair an International Committee, ensuring co-ordination of international activities through the university, covering both internationalisation abroad and internationalisation at home, and using the Committee to involve the PVC Teaching and Learning and the PVC Research in ensuring academic involvement specifically in internationalisation of curriculum and teaching and internationalisation of research and research links.
- Australian universities on average get 15% of their income from international student fees, compared with 8% in the UK.
- 56% of international students are recruited through agents compared with 46% in the UK sample. Australian universities have fewer overseas offices of their own.

2.13 Australian International Offices have been benchmarking themselves for four years and as a result can produce a times series in some areas. These show that the costs of international operations have been rising slowly due to more being spent on commission and in-country recruitment costs and now stand at about 12.7% of the income generated from international student fees. Overall, however, they claim that the core costs in International Offices have remained constant.<sup>9</sup>

2.14 If we compare Australia and the UK, some points are immediately obvious: a greater proportion of International Offices have more comprehensive and wider portfolios than in the UK (including marketing and international alumni, for example); and a larger number have a direct report to a DVC or PVC (and more of these are specifically dedicated to international work). Some of this can be explained by the greater strategic and financial importance of international students and their fee income to Australian universities.

2.15 Benchmarking studies in the two countries suggest that there may be greater efficiency when the admissions decisions on international students are centralised and not devolved to faculties. In Australia, only 18% of admissions staff are devolved, while 44% are in the UK and this has led to the comparative staff numbers being 5.2 per 1,000 commencements in Australia compared with 8.0 per 1,000 in the UK.

10

Manning, K (2003), *Managing Internationalisation in Australian Universities*. Working Paper Series, School of Management, Victoria University of Technology.

11

Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC), Internationalization Survey, 2007.

## 2.16

Australian universities have been developing their international operations more strategically than the UK for some time. Five years ago a research study of how internationalisation was being managed concluded:

*There is a broad tendency for strategies for internationalisation that have in the past been tacit, fragmented and ad hoc, to become explicit, managed and co-ordinated. There has also been a more systemic approach, with policy decisions, support systems and organisational structures located both at central and decentralised levels and with flexible connections between these levels.*<sup>10</sup>

As this report shows, this last sentence describes the position in only a few of our UK case-study institutions.

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## Some evidence from Canada

### 2.17

Evidence from Canada is less specific than from Australia. Our main source of information on the national picture is a comprehensive survey of all 92 universities which achieved a 78% response rate.

### 2.18

The survey by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) was addressed to Presidents and not International Offices. Four fact sheets have been published on specific aspects of the survey, covering inwards and outwards international student mobility, internationalisation of the curriculum, 'knowledge exports' by Canadian universities and engagement in international development.<sup>11</sup> The survey is not directly relevant to this study since it had only a few questions that were specific to organisation or structure.

### 2.19

Despite this, a senior policy analyst in AUCC has very helpfully extracted some conclusions for us from the survey, which show that:

- Internationalisation is managed by a range of Vice-Presidents. Among 30 respondents it is the responsibility of a Vice-President (Academic) in 13 cases, of a Vice-President (International) in 11 cases and of a Vice-President (Research) in 6 cases.
- The principal motive for expanding the numbers of international students is to increase the internationalisation of the campus and not solely to generate income. This is a major point of difference from many UK institutions.
- International strategies have been developed within the community, with Deans having a major role in their design. In almost 50% of cases faculties are expected to have their own international plans. A majority of institutions have developed overall institutional strategies for particular countries.
- There has been a growth in providing university scholarships for international students, particularly to those from the developing world. 69% of institutions offer such scholarships.
- Most postgraduate students are recruited through faculty-based collaborative partnerships and exchanges and the role of the International Office is thus limited.

12

They were: Queens University in England, University of New Brunswick in Singapore, University of Calgary in Qatar and Cape Breton University in Egypt.

13

See *Canadian Universities and International Student Mobility*, one of the AUCC Fact Sheets referred to above.

14

Mallea, J Presentation at the British Council *Going Global* conference, Edinburgh, December 2006.

15

See the 'York International' website that includes the following: A list of international institutions with which the university has links and co-operation agreements; Lectures and presentations related to internationalisation; International awards received by staff and students; Annual summary of the internal projects that have been successful in receiving internationalisation grants; Proceedings of symposia, conferences and student days on internationalisation held on campus; Access to language courses for Canadian and international students; List of university research centres with international interests.

- There are few institutional-level strategic partnerships; most partnerships are developed at the faculty level and are based on personal links.
- There is a much greater focus on development work overseas than in the UK, fuelled partly by significant funding in the past from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).
- Canadian institutions are setting up overseas operations and in the survey four overseas campuses have been identified – in England, Egypt, Qatar and Singapore.<sup>12</sup> The survey also found that three-quarters of Canadian institutions deliver some education or training programmes overseas. A fuller survey of such activity and of campuses will be carried out by the AUCC in 2008.

## 2.20

The Canadian picture is influenced by a recent growth in the numbers of international students after many years when there was little incentive for universities to recruit them. The most recent AUCC figures show that foreign students now represent 7% of undergraduates and 20% of postgraduate numbers.<sup>13</sup> The national focus on internationalisation is sometimes seen as part of a much broader picture in which the country is reformulating its international role. According to Dr John Mallea, a former President of Brandon University, Canada is attempting to re-interpret the public good, civil society and citizenship in global terms.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.21

Each year innovative Canadian practitioners of internationalisation are identified in workshops on excellence in internationalisation organised by the AUCC and sponsored by Scotiabank. One university that is a regular award winner at these workshops, and in which the leadership is very supportive of internationalisation, is York University in Toronto.

## 2.22

At York University the international activities are under the direction of an Associate Vice-President International (who reports to the Vice-President Academic) and are brought together under an umbrella term 'York International'. The website contains a comprehensive range of material and content relating to international activity in the university – as well as the usual elements relating to recruiting and supporting international students.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.23

York's internationalisation strategy is based on four premises: that the key driver for internationalisation is academic, that knowledge of languages is central ('internationalisation means overcoming monolingualism'), that for students some international experience is essential and that broad-based support for the strategy is crucial if it is to succeed.

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## Conclusions

### 2.24

A recent survey of the way that International Offices were structured and managed in the UK revealed a diverse picture in their reporting relationships and the range of responsibilities they are given.

### 2.25

A review of current practice in Australia and Canada has shown that a drive to internationalisation has become a universal characteristic of universities, and that its management has moved to the centre stage. Australia has given internationalisation much greater importance strategically for many years due to the reliance on international student numbers and the International Office has a much higher profile in terms of reporting to the VC, DVC or PVC. Australian International Offices have a wider range of functions than their UK equivalents. However, the prime motive for much of their work still appears to be financial.

### 2.26

In Canada the financial motive has never been the main driver and internationalisation is primarily based on academic or developmental objectives. In addition, the higher education system is keen to share experiences about its internationalisation activities with the regular identification of good practice in award ceremonies. It is unsurprising that almost all these awards relate to academic activity rather than to management practices.

16

See Fielden, J (2007),  
*Global Horizons for  
 UK Universities, op cit.*

**3.1** This section looks at the strategies that UK institutions are developing for their internationalisation activities and suggests how they should be integrated with the other strategies that most institutions have developed. It then briefly considers how they might be monitored.

### The spectrum of strategies

**3.2** Our six case studies illustrate the different approaches that institutions are taking to their international strategies. From them we can identify the following different models:

- The 'traditional' international strategy in which the main focus is the recruitment of international students, but with mixed motives of encouraging an international community on campus and generating valuable income.
- An international strategy in which recruitment of students is combined with the development of selected partnerships with overseas institutions or organisations. The objectives of such partnerships can vary from ensuring a flow of students through teaching partnerships and joint degrees to fostering research collaborations and exchanges of Master's and PhD students.
- An internationalisation strategy in which the aim is to make the university a wholly international community with an international mix of staff and internationalised curriculum. In such strategies phrases such as 'embedding an international culture' are sometimes used.

**3.3** Allied to this is a distinction made elsewhere between strategies that are university-centred (with a prime aim of enhancing the university's status globally) and those that are student-centred (in which the aim is to offer students an experience of global citizenship).<sup>16</sup>

**3.4** A further distinguishing feature is the existence of a published international strategy. Some institutions that consider themselves well on the way to being fully internationalised do not see the need for a separate international strategy. The University of Manchester, for example, believes that the clear leadership signals given by its President and the international elements in each of the nine goals of the University's 2015 Vision make a separate strategy superfluous. Each Faculty is expected to develop its own derivative strategy and operational plan to implement the University's 2015 Vision. These will inevitably include international work.

At UCL for example a draft research strategy suggests some 'Grand Strategic Challenge' research topics where the university might be pro-active globally in its research work.

### 3.5

A well-honed strategy is one thing but to seek to make it known and understood by the academic community is a different matter. Several case-study institutions admitted that they relied on the cascade method of ensuring that faculties/schools passed on the messages of the internationalisation strategy. This had not been effective and they felt that these messages had not reached the majority of academic staff. While some institutions have given all staff compact paper versions of the learning and teaching strategy, for the internationalisation strategy a more common approach is to place the text on the university website. This gives no guarantee that it will be read or understood. The combination of a wealth of strategies at the corporate level covering university-wide topics with a general communications overload means that the optimal way of disseminating a strategy, which is likely to call for a universal cultural shift, is elusive.

### 3.6

The international strategy was developed participatively in all case-study institutions, and at Sheffield Hallam a focus group was used to review the strategy and suggest amendments at a mid-term stage. At UCL a sub-group of an International Strategy Steering Group is currently undertaking a review of the strategy after two years.

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## Co-ordination with other strategies

### 3.7

The extent to which the international(isation) strategy is directly linked to a university's other strategies, such as its overall corporate strategy and its learning and teaching strategy, depends on factors such as the timing of its production vis-a-vis the production of the other strategies. In one institution the arrival of a new VC led to the revision in an integrated manner of all the key strategies, but the more common approach is for them to appear at intervals depending often on the appointment of particular PVCs. Where this happens, it is possible that they may not be fully co-ordinated.

### 3.8

In an institution where the strategies were co-ordinated perfectly, the relationships between the strategies would be as follows:

- The overall corporate strategy would describe the place of international activity in the overall vision and would include suitable references to the international dimension in its targets and plans for all the main functions of the institution.
- The learning and teaching strategy would include a commitment to internationalisation of the curriculum, some encouragement for recruiting increased numbers of international staff and a description of how the international mobility of staff and students will be encouraged.
- The research strategy would set a framework for the development and supervision of international research collaboration and partnerships. It would define the place of institutional strategic partnerships as opposed to individual faculty or researcher links.<sup>17</sup>

- The human resources strategy would tackle issues such as the internationalisation of the academic staff, support for international staff members and development of human resource policies on study abroad. Consideration would be given to the weighting of international experience in the criteria for promotion and to any special reward and recognition for those undertaking international work.
- The estates strategy would include descriptions of how facilities will be provided for the particular needs of international students. It would also cover policies on the acquisition of property overseas.

### 3.9

The co-ordination of an international strategy with all the other strategies requires either a very clear steer from the head of the institution or an effective shared commitment to internationalisation in the Senior Management Team (SMT). In some of the case-study institutions it is achieved through having PVC involvement on some form of International Board, which we discuss later. The key point is that an integrated approach to internationalisation will not just happen; there are too many distractions and barriers in the way; it will need to be encouraged or directed. This is crucial where the strategy is calling for a comprehensive internationalisation strategy to be embedded in the whole institution.

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## Monitoring the strategy

### 3.10

Our case-study institutions do not present a consistent picture for the monitoring of international strategies:

- At Bath there are no formal monitoring processes.
- At Birmingham monitoring is carried out with a project progress register and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against 18 goals under five headings by an International Board and the Director of International Relations.
- At Harper Adams the small scale of the institution (80 academic staff) means that it is easier for the SMT to monitor policy implementation and there is no formal structure for this to happen.
- At Napier University the strategy is managed by a Vice-Principal with the support of the Dean of the International College.
- At Sheffield Hallam, while there are no formal targets in the strategy, the execution is closely managed by a University International Group under the responsible PVC.
- At UCL an International Strategy Steering Group meets five times a year to monitor progress in implementing agreed activities within the international strategy, for which individuals have been allocated responsibility.

### 3.11

As we see in two of the research-intensive institutions, there is no reluctance to monitor progress on internationalisation in quite formal, managerial terms. Nor is this a worry in other countries. At the University of British Columbia (UBC), for example, the university's strategy (called Trek 2010) has goals, strategies and targets set for each of five elements and individuals are held accountable with annual assessments required on the progress made.

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## Conclusions

### 3.12

The conclusion from this review of internationalisation strategies is that many of them remain in a state of flux on the road to being truly international. The trend is for them to become more all-embracing and to require the involvement of all the community. This is where we have found a communication problem, since the evidence from several institutions is that the corporate messages about the importance of internationalisation are not getting through to all academic staff. There is also a risk that the comprehensive nature of the changes required is not reflected in a university's other corporate strategies; this lack of integration may be due to the different timings and sponsorships of the many strategies.

### 3.13

Our case studies show that the internationalisation strategy is closely monitored against plans and targets in the majority of institutions. However, there is often inadequate evidence about developments and activities at the faculty level.

**4.1** This section takes a look at five aspects of managing internationalisation: who is responsible at university level; how the activity is managed at faculty/school levels; what special committees are required; what funding is needed and how internationalisation of the curriculum is managed.

### Senior leadership

**4.2** In all our case-study institutions there was a clear designation of primary responsibility for the international strategy with the following persons in charge:

**Table 1**  
Responsibility  
for International  
Strategies

| Institution      | Primary responsibility                       |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Bath             | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Developments) |
| Birmingham       | Vice-Principal (DVC equivalent)              |
| Harper Adams     | Dean of External Relations                   |
| Napier           | Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Development) |
| Sheffield Hallam | Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development)   |
| UCL              | Vice-Provost (Academic and International)    |

**4.3** Thus, in all cases a member of the senior management team is in charge of international matters, but in only one of the six cases is the word 'International' in the job title. The sample supports the findings from the Hobsons/SPRE survey described earlier that found 14 different job titles to which the head of the International Office reported. As in that survey, we found that the most common grouping was for the international portfolio to be grouped with a responsibility for learning and teaching. However, a grouping with an 'Enterprise' portfolio is also common in research-intensive institutions.

**4.4** At the next tier below the SMT level, the situation in regard to responsibility to the SMT is less clear-cut. At Birmingham and Napier, the Director of International Relations and the Dean of the International College, respectively, are held accountable for overseeing the implementation of the strategy. In most institutions no one person is given responsibility by the PVC for overseeing the implementation of the strategy, and many senior administrative posts are involved as well as all the Deans.

**4.5** As the Hobsons/SPRE survey showed, the reporting lines of the Head of the International Office are frequently to a senior administrative post such as the Director of Marketing or the Academic Registrar, even where there is a PVC with overall responsibility. This means that the PVC responsible has to work in a once-removed reporting relationship through a senior administrator for the main functions in the internationalisation agenda. This requires good working relationships; however, there was no evidence of this being an issue in the case studies.

**4.6** The role of the Vice-Chancellor is vital in promoting internationalisation and stressing its importance, particularly where the goal is for it to be embedded in everything that the university does. There are many examples in the sector where the Vice-Chancellor's views are well known – the Universities of Nottingham and Manchester for example – and this forms the backdrop to any successful change in the institutional culture. Achieving this is not a speedy exercise. The first International Strategy at the University of Nottingham was promulgated over ten years ago – nor is it necessarily a case of slow persuasion over time. The Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool stated that one of the main objectives of that university's collaboration with X'ian Jiaotong University in Suzhou was to send strong and symbolic signals to the community about the need for an international outlook.<sup>18</sup>

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### Faculty leadership

**4.7** Universities always have difficulty translating centrally promulgated strategies into action at the faculty level – however much consultation has taken place. Two key issues therefore are how faculty commitment is gained and how they should be involved in the process of internationalisation. There are various approaches in the case-study institutions:

- Asking Deans to develop their own international strategies or action plans based on those of the university. This happens at Sheffield Hallam where in each faculty the lead is taken by a Head of International, funded for 0.6 of the time. In Birmingham, similar arrangements are being developed with a post of Associate Dean (International), funded for 0.15 fte, responsible for implementing the strategy within the faculty.
- Expecting Deans to include international activities in their annual plans and providing them with checklists of topics to be covered in planning and reporting back (Bath).
- Expecting Deans to include internationalisation as part of their commitment to the common international vision and goals of the University (UCL and Manchester).

**4.8** The particular institutional culture is a key determinant of how directive the university is. Given that research-intensive institutions are usually less 'managerial' than teaching-intensive institutions, it is interesting that a research-intensive institution such as Birmingham is willing to ask for formal reporting from faculties on their international activity. UCL also realises it may have to go this way and has set as one of its tasks in its implementation plan 'the challenge of changing internal cultures' to accept some central direction, co-ordination and information exchange. Such formality is less common at faculty level in our case-study institutions and the usual approach is for any such monitoring to be done through broader frameworks such as annual reports on overall faculty/school performance.

**4.9** Some faculties are preparing their own international strategies. At Sheffield Hallam one such faculty strategy goes further than the university's current strategy by calling for internationalising the curriculum before it has been adopted by the university as a whole.

#### 4.10

When faculties do become seriously engaged in international activities the university faces another problem: knowing what is going on in the faculties. If informal links and teaching exchanges are being created or significant investment made in researching a country or a partner institution in that country, then the university administration needs to know. There are several means of addressing this:

- By creating posts which require the holder to co-ordinate activities in certain countries or certain tasks across the university. UCL has created six part-time posts of Pro Provost that are held by senior academic staff and are given responsibility for a country or region. At Sheffield Hallam each of the four faculty Heads of International has a further 0.3 fte of their time paid for by a central budget to coordinate what the university is doing in, say, China or India. At Birmingham, the Assistant Deans International are given cross-university responsibility for helping to oversee the implementation of one strand of the strategy.
- By instituting some administrative mechanism (such as obtaining the right insurance cover or having a central ticketing service) that at least informs the university that academic staff are travelling overseas. This happens at Sheffield Hallam but could become an unmanageable burden once regular travel is universal.
- Establishing country working groups in which all those active in a region or country share their plans and experiences with the senior members of the university. In Birmingham, these regional groups focus their efforts on co-ordinating the recruitment of students in the country concerned. At UCL, the country groups are chaired by the respective Pro Provosts. At Manchester, seven country Steering Groups are chaired by senior academic staff – Deans in some cases – with the task of seeking to co-ordinate activities and developing strategies for the country concerned.

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### Committees and working groups

#### 4.11

International committees can have differing roles: to manage the implementation of the strategy (which is the most common), to review the strategy and recommend revisions if necessary, or to develop new strategies. The common roles for such groups are to co-ordinate developments, to exchange information and to encourage those involved to collaborate in international activities. It is usual for them to be chaired by the SMT member responsible.

#### 4.12

UCL has an International Strategy Steering Group that oversees the implementation of its international strategy. However, this contains only administrative and professional staff and the six Pro Provosts with no other members representing academic departments or faculties. It is thought that to include them would make the Group an unmanageable size. In Birmingham a similar body, called an International Board, is more broadly based and has members, called Assistant Deans (International), from each of the five new College Boards as well as the central support staff. At Napier University an International Steering Group has a similarly broad composition and involves members from faculties. Sheffield Hallam has a University International Group containing faculty Heads of International that reports to the Executive on the implementation of the strategy.

**4.13** Membership of such a committee is an opportunity to involve all senior decision-makers with a contribution to make to the internationalisation strategy. Whether or not the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) is a member of the overseeing committee is a key indicator of the comprehensive nature of the strategy. If he or she is not, the relationship between the research strategy and the international strategy could be at risk. The presence of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is even more crucial in those cases in which that portfolio is not aligned with the international responsibility. At Birmingham University, for example, the Vice-Principal and the Director of International Relations need to co-ordinate their activities very closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic). At Napier there is also a need to work alongside the Vice-Principal (Student Experience).

**4.14** In all the cases mentioned the committees have no involvement with lay members of the governing body. Only in Exeter, where many committees have been abolished, does its replacement – the ‘dual assurance system’ – require the involvement of a lay member in reviewing the implementation of the agreed international strategy in informal meetings with the responsible PVC and the key professional officer.

**4.15** The role of the Governing Body in internationalisation has usually been very limited. However, we found the following examples of its involvement in the case-study institutions:

- The Chair of the Council at Birmingham played a major role in encouraging the development of the international strategy and in ensuring that it contained a focus on governance and management of internationalisation. The Council receives an annual update on the implementation of the strategy.
- At UCL the keen interest of the Council is shown by its request for an update on the international strategy at each of its meetings.
- At Sheffield Hallam the Governing Body was initially nervous about too much overseas involvement. As a result, the current strategy is cautious and has a strong emphasis on risk analysis and careful business management.

**4.16** We would expect the Governing Body to be involved in all major decisions requiring financial investment overseas and, where income from international students is a significant share of the total, it would usually be one of the main risk factors that the Governing Body concerns itself with. In post-1992 institutions in which the Governing Body is responsible for ‘the educational character and mission of the institution’, it is moot whether this would require them to be concerned with a strategy of internationalising the curriculum.

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## Funding

**4.17** Despite the fact that internationalisation is central to most universities' aspirations we found little evidence of substantial funding specifically set aside for it and only one of the case-study institutions had invested in a strong support structure for internationalisation. However, the funding of international activity is rarely transparent, as it often draws on central university reserves that are not well documented or publicised or are buried in the budgets of the International Office and individual faculties. As internationalisation becomes more central to a university's operations and requires investment, the funding requirements will need to become more transparent.

**4.18** There were some exceptions to this rule, which were all small in scale:

- Limited central funds held by the SMT member responsible for internationalisation are used to meet travel costs, where the destination was a university with which a major strategic partnership was being sought.
- The creation of an International Strategic Fund used to finance incoming scholars and give occasional limited subsidies for foreign travel. (Bath). At Napier a central Strategic Investment Fund has been used to finance exploratory missions or due-diligence studies.
- Central funding of some posts in faculties where the post-holders were being asked to do work on behalf of the whole university (Sheffield Hallam and Birmingham)
- A small Overseas Fellowships and Placement Fund created to finance study visits by academic or administrative staff to overseas institutions (Birmingham).

**4.19** The main rationales for central financial support are either to pump-prime the start of potential partnerships or to reimburse faculty budgets for work they do that benefits the whole institution. A good example is the University of Leiden where the university meets the costs of exploratory missions of senior staff to visit a number of universities in countries where the university wishes to develop strategic research partnerships. This is justified by the university's wish to be proactive in steering its academic staff towards partnerships in certain target countries. The university hopes that individual research collaborations will be identified during these visits and then lead to deeper strategic partnerships with the institutions concerned.

## Managing the internationalisation of the curriculum

### 4.20

There are various definitions of what 'internationalisation of the curriculum' means.<sup>19</sup> These tend to centre on ensuring that the curriculum is inclusive, culturally responsive and helps students to understand the global context of their studies and to operate effectively in international professional environments. The internationalisation of the curriculum is in almost every institution's strategic plan; yet, few have achieved it across the board and some have barely started to develop their approach. In at least two of the case-study institutions there was some doubt as to what it meant. In Harper Adams it was thought that it had already been achieved due to the specialist nature of their core agricultural discipline.

### 4.21

Where internationalisation is acknowledged as a key strategic task, it is approached cautiously, as it is an issue that affects every individual academic and one that will vary according to discipline. Thus, it can only be interpreted and applied at faculty/school level or departmental level. The major barrier to its adoption is that the change could require a significant time commitment as well as technical support from educational developers.

### 4.22

There are some management actions that can be taken to help internationalisation of the curriculum take root in faculties. They involve the university in:

- Agreeing what internationalisation of the curriculum means, usually by the involvement of an academic working group to study and report back.
- Obtaining the endorsement of Senate or its relevant sub-committee to the policy of internationalisation and including the topic in the planning framework required of faculties or schools.
- Producing explanatory guidelines/examples for academic staff to apply in, or adapt to, their respective disciplines. These will need to cover the two aspects of internationalisation: the content of the curriculum and approaches to teaching an inclusive curriculum.
- Ensuring that staff developers and academic development staff are able to offer support and practical examples.
- Including suitable content in the Post-Graduate Certificate of HE offered to new staff and covering the topic in the induction programme for all academic staff.
- Encouraging faculties to use the existing resource of their own international staff in the internationalisation process.
- Building in some review of the extent to which curricula have been internationalised in the quinquennial departmental or programme review processes.

### 4.23

In one case-study institution the brief of overseeing the internationalisation of the curriculum was given to an Associate Dean (International) as a cross-university responsibility working with the PVC (Learning and Teaching), while in two other cases the Director of International Relations and the Dean of the International College were asked to take the lead in trying to make it happen. Internationalising the curriculum was thought an important enough element in the strategy to designate one person to monitor what was happening across the institution.

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## Conclusions

4.24

This section has shown that, while the overall responsibility for achieving internationalisation is usually clear, there is less certainty and clarity about the structures below the SMT level. If internationalisation is to have a chance of becoming embedded it must have the strong support of the Vice-Chancellor, but this is no guarantee that the academic community will either know about it or be willing to invest their time in making it happen. The university needs to communicate what internationalisation means in practical terms and it may not be enough to rely on high-level visionary statements in the corporate strategy.

4.25

There are some clear messages from the case studies about the structures needed to manage internationalisation:

- A member of the SMT should have overall responsibility.
- A university Steering Group with wide professional and academic membership is required to co-ordinate the overall implementation of the strategy.
- Senior academics can be given responsibility for cross-cutting themes or for co-ordinating activities in countries or regions.
- In order to encourage such co-ordination it is helpful to have working groups of champions or specialists for each country.

4.26

The internationalisation of the curriculum is one of the most difficult elements of internationalisation to achieve, as there is a limit to what central support can be offered to faculties. The university has to rely on them to interpret guidelines in the context of their discipline. This illustrates the dilemma of managing internationalisation: anything that requires the involvement of almost all staff will not be easily achievable in a non-hierarchical culture. It requires the energy of champions at various levels of the university and this is recognised by those institutions in our case-study that have used university funding to appoint staff with cross-university responsibility for co-ordinating international work either by activity or by region. The work of these champions then has to be co-ordinated and channelled towards the achievement of the overall internationalisation goals.

### Changing roles and structures

**5.1** This section focuses on the International Office as one part of the overall management framework for achieving internationalisation. It explores the different organisational models and responsibilities within International Offices.

**5.2** There is no standard model structure for an International Office. The situation is rapidly changing, with a general trend to the widening of the functions within the office and a consequent upgrading of its Head. In paragraph 2.3 we reported the position in a sample of 31 institutions in the UK, while paragraph 2.11 showed a partial picture in 36 Australian universities. There is clearly a breadth of current practice in both countries.

**5.3** A possible classification of International Offices could use the terms 'Core', 'Core Plus' and 'Comprehensive' to describe the various stages in the widening of functions within the Office. All offices undertake the Core functions that represent the traditional International Office. Core Plus and Comprehensive show various degrees of widened responsibility.

**Table 2**  
**Classification**  
**of international**  
**office functions**

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Core</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International marketing, liaison with agents</li> <li>Handling international enquiries</li> <li>Managing the international admissions</li> <li>Student support before and after arrival</li> <li>Compliance with legislation and codes of conduct</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Core Plus</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study abroad, student mobility</li> <li>Support for incoming international staff and their families</li> <li>Staff travel and research abroad</li> <li>Review and due diligence for agreements and MOUs</li> <li>Support for academic exchanges and teaching partnerships</li> <li>English language support</li> <li>Financial and welfare advice for students</li> <li>Assisting with access to scholarships</li> <li>Management of overseas offices</li> </ul> |

The University of Leiden has a Visitor Centre at the city's central railway station that is staffed for 12 hours a day to welcome incoming academic visitors and students from the Netherlands and other countries. This office co-ordinates all such visits and manages the visitors' accommodation and programmes while they are guests of the university. Longer-term academic visitors are directed to web pages describing the support and help on offer. In October 2008, the Centre will widen its role by offering its services to the City of Leiden and to major companies in the region.

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### Comprehensive

Overall responsibility for the internationalisation strategy

Looking after incoming international visitors/scholars

International market intelligence and due diligence on potential partners

International alumni relations

Fostering global employability

Integrating the experience of international and domestic students

Delivering staff and student development in cross-cultural matters

Management of international volunteering

Relationships with international networks (such as World Universities Network or Universitas 21)

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#### 5.4

Our case-study institutions include the first two categories but no example of the full Comprehensive model, but there are several examples in which the functions in the Core Plus and Comprehensive categories were carried out by other parts of the central administration. In many cases the functions listed under Comprehensive requires the close collaboration of another part of the professional support services. Where the latter happens, one of the roles of the Office is to present a comprehensive front to international students, usually through a page on the International Office website providing a gateway to all the relevant services. A good example of this, from York University in Toronto, was described in paragraph 2.22.

#### 5.5

In our case-study institutions a strengthened International Office to support all international activity is adopted by both Napier and Birmingham, which would place them in the Core Plus category shown above. In both cases the head of that office has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the international strategy. At Birmingham this has been widened recently to include responsibility for seeing that the curriculum is internationalised.

#### 5.6

As the scale of international interactions increases, one of the key functions is what overseas universities often call 'The Office for International Affairs,' which covers discussions with international enquirers and the handling of inward visitors from scholars. UK institutions are often embarrassed by the poor quality of the hospitality they provide compared to that received by their staff on overseas missions. One case-study institution had identified this as a key function, but none had moved as far as the University of Leiden in establishing a Visitor Centre.<sup>20</sup>

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**5.7**

Where other administrative offices are closely involved in international activities, there is a risk of poor co-ordination unless both departments are under the same senior manager. The three main functional areas in which this can occur and where problems were identified in the case studies were:

- Strategic marketing, particularly related to background country research for recruiting or partnership development. There is a potential conflict between those marketing the university to students and those concerned with marketing the image of the university overseas as a credible partner for research.
- International public relations, where there needs to be close co-ordination between the work of promoting the university brand (perhaps as a global player) and the work of promoting it as a study destination or research partner. As more and more universities start to focus their research efforts on finding good strategic partners with whom to work, the public relations/image-building aspect becomes more important.
- Relations with international alumni, where a central alumni function may not be in step with overseas offices, which will have more up-to-date information on international alumni in their country. Several case-study institutions complained that their desire to build up relationships with key overseas alumni was being thwarted by poor information and support from an alumni department that is primarily UK-focussed.

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**5.8**

The co-ordination of the various support departments with an interest in internationalisation is one of the emerging management challenges. It would be unrealistic to place all the sections of affected departments in an enlarged International Office (even of the Comprehensive variety) and the answer must always rely on regular co-ordination and management under the auspices of the PVC or senior manager charged with the implementation of the strategy.

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**Overseas offices**

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**5.9**

There is a growing trend to setting up overseas offices. The two SPRE reports showed that 18 of the 31 sample UK institutions had established them, but there are a lower proportion of them in Australian institutions, since they rely more on overseas agents for recruiting. In the institutions visited there were the following overseas offices:

- Napier in Beijing.
- Sheffield Hallam in Delhi and Beijing.
- Exeter in Dubai.
- Middlesex in 18 locations in Asia, Europe, Middle East and Africa.

- 5.10** The role of overseas offices varies considerably. In the case of Middlesex it is centred on supporting applications from interested students, but some of their offices offer much wider support. The core service involves advice on studying and living in London as well as help with visas. Many offices also undertake preliminary enquiries on the status and reputation of potential partners in the country concerned. One Middlesex office is staffed by a former Dean who is able to act in a much wider capacity. His role includes liaison with partners, developing research links, contacting and developing the alumni network and helping returning graduates with employment. At Harper Adams there is a similar situation since the College's agent in China was formerly a Head of Department and is thus able to provide a much deeper service to the college and its past and present students.
- 5.11** An overseas office will be in a much better position to provide an effective service to returning students as regards contact with past alumni or help with employment than any UK-based office. If the country's alumni network is suitably primed, it can be a valuable support to graduates looking for work. Alumni who are satisfied with their university experience may well be happy to take on younger staff with the same educational experience.
- 5.12** Another function for overseas offices is the development of continuing relationships with research partners and the provision of support for visiting researchers from the UK. The majority of overseas offices in our sample have been established by universities that are not research-intensive, so we have little evidence of how well this support might work.
- 5.13** The reporting responsibility for the overseas offices is usually to the Head of the International Office, although where they have a wider function they may report directly to the DVC or PVC responsible or another senior post. At Middlesex University, for example, all the offices are under the wing of the Director of International Partnerships and Education, who heads the Centre for International Education. She reports directly to the Director of Middlesex International who is the DVC.
- 5.14** The case studies showed that the relationship between a university's overseas office and the recruiting agents it uses in the country or region concerned will depend on its recruitment strategy and the scale of activity in the country concerned. In some countries the overseas office will carry out recruiting functions and replace the agents, while in others it will be responsible for co-ordinating and managing their work.

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### Skills required of International Office staff

- 5.15** We were asked to review the skills needs of International Office staff. Conversations with Heads of International Offices on the topic have usually centred on marketing competences, as they are the main skills required for the Core functions shown in paragraph 5.3. Expertise in overseas education systems and qualifications are among the technical areas of knowledge needed. However, once the brief of the International Office is widened to cover some of the functions in the Core Plus and Comprehensive categories, the skills needs will expand to cover financial analysis, some legal knowledge, and fundamental management competences such as strategic planning and monitoring. Overriding every technical competence there is the fundamental requirement of sensitivity to international cultures and the overall ability to get on with people of all kinds.
- 5.16** This question is being studied by a consultant working for UKCISA on a PMI2-funded project. The consultant's brief is to look at the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of all staff supporting the needs of international students in FE and HE. The consultant's report, due in Spring 2008, is asking fundamental questions as to whether International Office and support staff think of themselves as being in a profession. If they do, is there a case for some form of qualification and what skills areas should it cover? In Canada the equivalent organisation to the British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA) has no doubt about the answer to these questions, since it sees its main role as being 'to provide professional development and "training the trainer" activities through workshops, seminars and courses alone or through partnerships with existing training programs.'<sup>21</sup>

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### Conclusions

- 5.17** The scope and size of International Offices is changing in most institutions and is generally embracing more functions. There is a general trend to the model structures we describe as Core Plus and Comprehensive. In such models the Head of the Office inevitably acquires greater seniority and in some cases is given overall responsibility for the implementation of the internationalisation strategy reporting to the SMT member in charge.
- 5.18** Even where the Core Plus or Comprehensive model is adopted there are some overlaps with other support services that need careful management if they are not to be troublesome. They are the alumni office, the public relations department and the marketing function; each of these has international aspects that are the proper concern of the internationalisation strategy.
- 5.19** We identified a trend to opening overseas offices and found that these rarely follow one standard model – even in the same university – since their role depends on the importance of the country, the existence or not of recruiting agents and the experience and skill of the resident office manager. In the most favourable circumstances such an office can become a very valuable tool for fostering research collaborations and finding graduates employment through active alumni co-operation.

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### Links to the strategy

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#### 6.1

Almost every university includes an expansion of strategic partnerships in its internationalisation strategy, but there are three levels of strategic relationship:

- An institution-level partnership that is often developed from the top down, is enshrined in a formal agreement with the partner institution and is also funded centrally. Such a relationship is always with a peer institution with which the university is happy to partner. It must have at least as good a reputation and standing as the university itself. Strategic partnerships of this kind are expected to involve several faculties and many research or teaching collaborations.
- A faculty or school-level partnership in which the discipline fit or research interests are complementary and are a good basis for collaboration in teaching or research. Such partnerships may receive university support, but will usually be funded from within the faculty itself. It is not essential that the overall international ranking of the institution is uniformly high, but it is to be expected that it has internationally recognised status in the discipline(s) concerned.
- An individual research or teaching collaboration between academic staff, which may have developed through joint interest, meeting at conferences, collaboration in research and publications or regular personal exchanges.

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#### 6.2

Most internationalisation strategies have inherited a vast number of existing links and partnership arrangements (an estimated 3,500 in one case-study institution) and a recurring question is whether they should be recorded or classified in any way. Should there not be some tidying up in order to identify those worth investing in? The general view among interviewees is that this is not worth the effort, since as many as 90% might not be operational and the productive ones will identify themselves anyway at faculty level. A common belief is that the one-to-one partnerships 'that are below the institutional radar' should continue without any degree of central involvement. It is essential in an internationalised university that every academic staff member has several international activities and there are far too many to justify any intervention. In other words they do not need to be managed. While this view may seem to run counter to good management practice, it is widely held and is a rational response to the scale of the activity. It does, however, run the risk that the university may unknowingly embark on first- and second-level partnership negotiations without knowing about any third-level collaborative activities. An administrative solution to this is to ask any specialist country working groups for advice on their contacts with potential partner institutions.

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#### 6.3

In most internationalisation strategies references to teaching and research partnerships are in the first two categories, since it is these that will involve an element of management and administrative support at the university level.

**6.4** The first management function is the decision to make a collaboration agreement with the particular institution. This is becoming a more rigorous process than before and increasingly questions of shared values are being raised. One case-study institution told us that they received a regular flow of requests for partnership, but rejected over 90% of them. An explicit statement of what is expected from a strategic partnership, and the criteria for assessing potential partners, has been developed by another of our six institutions. Typical criteria that come into play are: the partner's national and international reputations and position in any relevant league tables, financial soundness, the personal qualities of the leadership, the degree of independence from government funding, a commitment to academic freedom, the place of the institution in the country's system and the number of postgraduate and doctoral students. As we have seen, overseas offices can be used to help in reaching judgements in some of these areas.

**6.5** After the institution has been approved as a worthy partner, the detailed discussions on the terms of the agreement are usually handled by a specialist unit, which is increasingly based in the International Office. At Napier, this was originally called the Overseas Programme Support Unit, while at UCL it is a small unit within the office of the Vice-Provost responsible for international matters. In Birmingham, the approval of all agreements is one of the core functions of the International Relations Division. In all cases the university now insists that such agreements are reviewed and signed by a member of the SMT on behalf of the university. Some institutions have a standard template that is adapted for each case. 'Rogue' agreements signed by Deans or others without central approval do slip the net, we were told, but these are less common than they were.

**6.6** Once an agreement has been signed, the central management role becomes less clear. For teaching exchanges or agreements in which there are regular flows of students in either direction, some recurring administrative involvement is unavoidable, although management of the initiatives will always rest with the faculty or department concerned. At Middlesex, for example, the Director of the Centre for International Education works very closely with an Associate Dean (Academic Development) in each faculty and a nominated main point of contact for each partner. The Director's office has established a standard Procedures Manual for the operation of such partnerships and monitors progress on them each year, with regular visits to the partner concerned. However, any quality assurance checks on the partner are the concern of each faculty, as is adherence to the relevant Quality Assurance Agency or internal quality assurance processes.

**6.7** At Harper Adams, the College's largest teaching collaboration with a Chinese university involves two joint degrees and is important enough to merit having a committee that co-ordinates all the academic and administrative aspects of the collaboration, including staff and student exchanges.

22

Technopolis Group (2008), *International Research Collaboration*, Universities UK/UK Higher Education International Unit. The final report will be published in Spring 2008.

23

See 'Global Operations Support' on the University of Washington website.

24

Discussions with the Chief Executive of WUN confirm that such collaborations usually require a top-down push to get underway.

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## 6.8

In a recent survey undertaken on behalf of Universities UK and the UK Higher Education International Unit, Technopolis found that 94% of respondents had an active policy of developing international research collaboration.<sup>22</sup> As we have seen, these can be developed at both faculty and university level, but in almost all cases they have emerged as an option because of a successful third-level research or teaching relationship between academic staff in each institution. In research collaborations, the role of the university and its support departments is varied and will usually be one of offering technical support where required in matters such as travel or international intellectual property rights (IPR). An example of a comprehensive support service by an American university is shown below.

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### Support for international research

The University of Washington in Seattle has a well-developed support structure for internationalisation. It has created an Office of Global Affairs that brings together under a 'Global Support Project' all the possible services that academics and students require for their international activities.<sup>23</sup> The Provost's Office and the Department of Financial Management have collaborated in assembling an impressive wide-ranging website covering topics such as:

- Research abroad – personal health and security, export controls, legal status in foreign countries.
- Visiting scholars from abroad – visas, housing, contractual terms.
- Tools for working overseas – money, subcontracting, foreign tax, budget planning worksheets.
- Purchasing items abroad.
- Hiring staff abroad.
- Operating a Field Office overseas.
- Global travel and insurance.
- IT connectivity abroad.

This aims to provide academic staff and students with a one-stop location for all their information needs relating to international study or research.

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## 6.9

The mechanisms for monitoring and managing international research partnerships are less well developed than those for international teaching partnerships. Partly this is due to universities' reticence at trying to manage research in the first place and partly to the relative novelty of strategic research alliances (as opposed to the one-to-one arrangements). The exceptions to this are the arrangements undertaken within existing collaborative networks such as the World University Network (WUN), the League of European Research Universities (LERU) or Universitas 21. In these cases the framework that these networks offer mean that there should be an infrastructure of mutual understanding. Regular meetings between the members offer opportunities to develop joint research projects.<sup>24</sup>

### 6.10

We found no instances of the centre monitoring international research collaborations, except where they are within a project framework funded by external agencies or corporations and an element of mid-term or end-of-project review is called for. In any event the responsibility for any such management will rest with the PVC (Research) rather than within the International Office.<sup>25</sup> The management of international research partnerships does not occur in the listings of functions in Table 2 above. This emphasises the importance of the PVC Research's membership of an overall committee reviewing the implementation of the internationalisation strategy. This is important since research collaborations, while regularly involving the exchange of doctoral or master students, can also develop into formal teaching exchanges or joint degrees.

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### Top-down, bottom-up or both?

### 6.11

We examined the issue of the relative effectiveness of developing partnerships from the top-down or from the bottom-up. There was a good opportunity to test this from the example of two top-down relationships with Chinese universities that was set up under the auspices of the Leadership Foundation's Sino-UK Leadership Development Programme. In this scheme a PVC from the UK was paired with a Vice-President of a Chinese university and invited to spend at least a week on their partner's campus studying a management topic. It was hoped that long-term collaboration might result from the experience. In the case of the two universities involved, one has worked well and one has yet to bear fruit. One difference that may explain the result is that the individual partners in the successful case found an immediate common personal research interest with their opposite number. This has since been the trigger for a number of collaborative ventures between several faculties.

### 6.12

This finding matches the widespread view that to be effective any partnership must be firmly rooted in an existing research link or bond between faculties, departments or individuals. Partnerships that are developed as top-down initiatives may not work, but, if they are based on existing third-level bottom-up collaboration, they are much more likely to succeed. Interviews in case-study institutions confirm that the most successful institutional partnerships are those where there are a number of well-founded faculty and school collaborations in place at the start of the strategic partnership.

### 6.13

The same conclusion even applies to strategic partnerships and the Vice-President (International) at Leiden University has described their international strategy as 'conducting internationalisation through academic links.' Consequently, the university will not make strategic first-level partnership agreements, unless there are already some existing academic connections.

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## Conclusions

- 6.14** Strategic partnerships are the basis for most universities' international strategies. It is common throughout the sector for management attention to be focussed on a few select partnerships and to leave the vast mass of one-to-one research or teaching collaborations to develop or wither away. While this is inevitable due to their number, it runs the risk that potentially valuable work may not be identified and built upon for the benefit of the university as a whole.
- 6.15** It is accepted that strategic research partnerships should be managed in order to achieve the intended outcomes and to maintain the university's reputation with the partner institution in the country concerned. Establishing such partnerships and maintaining them is acknowledged to be very time-consuming; one institution suggested that no more than one such arrangement could be concluded each year and that a total of five or six such strategic relationships was the most that could be reasonably managed. However, we found no regular mechanisms for reviewing such partnerships, but this may be due to their relative novelty.
- 6.16** The management of teaching partnerships is more ordered due to the need for quality assurance mechanisms to be in place for the protection of the university's reputation and students' learning experience.
- 6.17** Evidence from case studies confirms that the most successful first-level strategic partnerships were based on successful second- or third-level partnerships. A top-down relationship might work but if there are existing bottom-up connections at faculty level the chances are much better.

## 7.1

Having examined how international activities are managed in at least six institutions, we should now try to pull together the messages that have emerged about what is possible good practice. We therefore present a summary of the Top Ten 'Good Practice' points to consider. A major qualification should be applied since an institution's prevailing management culture will be the key factor in deciding whether any point is applicable. In some cases the good practice suggestion might prove impossible to present to the academic community, while in others it would be quite acceptable. For this reason we do not present any model organisation structures or recommended templates of procedures.

## 7.2

The good practice points acknowledge that the management of internationalisation is far from easy, since its implementation is most likely to cover all facets of an institution. Indeed, some internationalisation strategies call for a major change in culture and for the embedding of internationalisation in everything that the university does. This has led to the suggestion that the introduction of internationalisation overall may well not be manageable, although many of the individual activities within the strategy can be managed.

## 7.3

Our list of possible good practice statements is shown below:

**Table 3**

**Ten possible good practice points**

1

The internationalisation strategy is a fundamental element of the corporate strategy and is fully integrated with all the other institutional strategies.

2

The Vice-Chancellor strongly supports internationalisation, but one member of the SMT is responsible for its implementation and has a senior manager to support that role.

3

Mechanisms are in place to ensure that faculties or schools develop their own plans for implementing the key points in the internationalisation strategy.

4

The university has a central Group or Committee, chaired by the SMT member, to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy and review progress regularly, using KPIs where relevant.

5

Senior managers chair Country Groups of specialists and active international staff that co-ordinate the university's efforts in target or key countries.

6

There is a clear policy on the development of strategic partnerships showing what is expected of institutional strategic partnerships and the criteria to assess new ones.

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7

The university supports the development of strategic partnerships at institutional and faculty level, provides funding where appropriate and monitors their performance.

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8

It is accepted that implementation of the internationalisation strategy will require some university funding and an appropriate budget is available.

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9

The strategy acknowledges the centrality of academic staff commitment to internationalisation and the university and faculties devote effort to getting them involved.

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10

Overseas offices work in conjunction with the relevant country group to provide an all-round support service for academic staff, current students and alumni, as well as undertaking marketing and promotional activity.

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7.4

We recommend that this list is used by the SMT member in charge of internationalisation to self-assess the institution's performance in managing its internationalisation strategy.



**Appendix**  
**Institutional case studies**

- A** University of Bath
- B** University of Birmingham
- C** Harper Adams University College
- D** Napier University
- E** Sheffield Hallam University
- F** University College London

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### Background and context

The University of Bath's international strategy was drafted by the present Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Developments) and adopted after an extensive consultation exercise in January 2007. It is a concise three pages, but the document nevertheless contains an International Strategy Vision, five International Strategic Goals and more detailed sets of objectives under two broad headings:

- **Aim 1**  
To embed and sustain an active international culture that fosters cultural awareness, provides opportunity for international collaboration for staff and students and develops understanding of global issues.
- **Aim 2**  
To raise the University's international profile and to enhance the University's international reputation as a leading research university.

The International Strategy Vision is that Bath should be 'a world-class university, comprising an international community committed to partnerships with other world-class institutions, inside and outside academia, to produce research of global significance and value and graduates with commitment and skills for life and work in the global community'. This is a demanding aspiration that embraces all the key features of internationalisation: international composition of staff and students, selected partnerships, significant research in global terms and graduates with an internationally relevant experience. The unusual features of the strategy are its emphasis on partnering with multinational business and NGOs as well as academic institutions and an explicit commitment to producing graduates who are 'prized in the international jobs market'.

Although the strategy is called an international strategy, it could fairly be described as an internationalisation strategy in view of its breadth.

Since the international strategy was written the University's research and learning and teaching strategy have been revised so as to be compatible.

No aims or goals are set regarding internationalisation of the curriculum, since it is thought that almost all departments have already internationalised their content, in so far as it is relevant to do so. All students are offered foreign-language programmes and about one-third now take them up, with a growing number (about 90) starting to study Japanese and Chinese. It is acknowledged, however, that ensuring the curriculum is globally relevant is an ongoing process.

The University starts from a good position for international staff and students, with 25% of the student population from overseas and 20% of the academic staff. The growth in international student numbers is the only quantitative KPI adopted in the internationalisation area. There are no other ways in which success in achieving the international strategy is measured and there are no quantitative targets for the proportion of international staff, study abroad by students or travel by staff. The University does seek to limit the number of undergraduate international students with a peg of one-third on the numbers in any particular programme cohort (but permission can be granted to exceed this). However, in the case of masters programmes, most run with a 50% or more international student population and this is something of a de facto situation.

There is no formal requirement for faculties or departments to develop international strategies of their own, but they are asked to respond to some questions about internationalisation when preparing their annual plans each year. Some are extremely active internationally and report this, but not all departments provide information on their international plans.

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### **Management of internationalisation**

The management of the international strategy is the responsibility of the PVC (Strategic Developments), which is a half-time post, covering also areas such as the estates strategy and equal opportunities. The head of the International Office reports formally to the Academic Registrar, but has a regular 'dotted line' reporting relationship with the PVC (SD) on international matters.

Some funding for implementing the strategy has been found and placed in an International Strategic Fund which is used to finance incoming visiting scholars and international travel. In addition, extra funds have been invested in strengthening the International Office, in scholarships for international students, in the services offered to international students by the careers service, and in subsidies for students wishing to study abroad.

The University has no overseas offices of any kind and uses a large number of agents for recruiting students; however, a significant number come from international schools in the UK.

Because the strategy is to embed international work in the university's culture, there is no overall committee to coordinate international work and no formal feedback processes from faculties or departments on their international activity. Already there is an expectation that all staff sabbaticals will involve a period of study away from the institution, most probably abroad, and there are plans to ensure that better use is made of the experience and the overseas connections of international staff on campus. Departments are encouraged to use their own conference funds to pay for regular inward flows of visiting scholars.

The University has decided not to attempt to map its entire academic links, as the vast majority are small one-to-one relationships which will always occur and which have no long-term strategic value. There are two exceptions: exchange agreements and MOUs relating to regular student flows and the development and maintenance of 'long multi-stranded research, teaching and knowledge transfer partnerships.' These will be the focus of effort centrally and will be vetted centrally and managed. It is important that all such potential partners are of the highest quality; experience to date suggests that collaborations can work particularly well when there are complementary strengths. One such partnership is developing with Shandong University and it began as a top-down initiative with exchange visits between the VC and the President of the university under the Sino-UK Leadership Development Programme. Since then, due to a combination of good personal relationships, some central pump-priming funding and shared research interests between the VC, the PVC (SD) and their Chinese counterparts, the relationship is developing well with several areas of collaboration in research and teaching. The centre encourages (and funds) departments to explore collaboration with their opposite numbers in a form of 'facilitated matchmaking.' The University wants to repeat this model of building deep relationships with a few international partners across a range of faculties. South Africa is currently being explored as the location of the next major partnership. The practical experience gained from SETsquared, a regional consortium of four universities dedicated to collaborative activities in the areas of enterprise and entrepreneurship, will be of great benefit.

Since the expansion of international student numbers (particularly at master's level) is a strategic objective, the University takes the experience that international students get at Bath very seriously. While the city of Bath is a major attraction, some parts of the campus are beginning to show their age and this is driving a refurbishment and construction programme. The conjunction of the estates and international strategies under the same PVC may be significant here! Feedback from the International Student Barometer surveys is followed up assiduously and attention is being given to the induction and acculturation of new international students.

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## **Conclusions**

The University has a comprehensive internationalisation strategy focused principally on student numbers and key strategic partnerships. It is willing to invest pump-priming funds in deepening the partnerships through the development of collaborative research activities across the university. The management of this activity is a combination of central strategy setting and the provision of financial incentives with considerable autonomy for departments to follow up as they think fit. This means that there are few reporting or monitoring processes on the extent to which international activity is developing across the campus. This could mean that it will be very difficult to assess whether its first laudable strategic aim – to embed and sustain an active international culture – is being achieved.

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### The context and the strategy

In 2005, when the University of Birmingham wrote its international strategy, it had the fourth-highest number of international students in the UK – 4,500 – and over a quarter of its academic staff were overseas nationals. It currently ranks as number 65 in the THES international league table and sees itself as international in both its mission and its outlook.

The international strategy identifies 18 Goals within five areas of activity and emphasises that many of these depend on ‘adapting the culture of the university to develop a genuinely international culture, outlook and orientation within the university community.’ Partly to this end, the strategy contains an unusual emphasis on the leadership and governance of the strategy. This was influenced by the strong support of the then Pro Chancellor, as chair of the Council, for the international strategy.

The international Goals can be summarised as:

- Restructuring the administrative support for international activities.
- Targeting overseas recruitment on specific countries, providing better support for international students and increasing student mobility.
- Support for academic staff in the international activities they undertake and for international staff when they arrive.
- Getting the most out of Universitas 21 relationships and the many existing overseas partnerships and agreements.
- Diversifying research funding and using research publications to enhance the University’s international reputation and visibility.

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### Organisation structure

The key management unit is the International Relations Division that is part of Corporate Relations. It has two sections: International Recruitment and International Development and Mobility. The former focuses on the recruitment of international students, whereas the latter embraces partnerships, staff and student mobility, and coordinates the University’s participation in the Universitas 21 network. However, the remit of International Relations extends beyond what could be viewed as a traditional International Office. The Director of International Relations has overall responsibility for the implementation of the International Strategy and, in this capacity, reports to and is supported by a newly created International Board (see Committee structure below), chaired by the Vice-Principal (the senior management post below the Vice-Chancellor, equivalent to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor).

The Director is responsible for producing, monitoring and evaluating a detailed Action Plan for the Strategy. The aims of the action plan are four-fold:

1

To determine the actions that need to be taken in order to support the strategy's aims and objectives,

2

To identify *priority* actions and produce target timeframes and performance indicators,

3

To identify members of staff (Senior Leads) who will have responsibility, or ownership, for implementing the action areas and,

4

To establish an effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation procedure.

In addition the Director of International Relations herself leads on a number of areas beyond those of student recruitment, development and mobility. She is, for example, responsible for liaising with regional agencies to promote the city and the region overseas, she leads on raising the profile of internationalisation both internally and externally, and together with the Assistant Deans International is responsible for establishing and developing a communication framework across the campus to help in driving forward the strategic objectives. Finally, she has overall responsibility (with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)) for the internationalisation of the curriculum.

At present Birmingham is undergoing an intensive restructuring exercise, which includes the move from 19 Schools to five Colleges. In order to support the embedding of the strategy, central University funds have been approved to support 15% of a senior academic post, Assistant Dean International, in each of the five Colleges in the new structure. Three of these posts have been filled, even though the new college structure will not be completed until August 2008. Each is responsible for mapping international activity, promoting and helping to implement the international strategy within their school or college. The post is expected to act as coordinator of the two-way knowledge flows of international activity in the college, but is also asked to take on a cross-university responsibility for overseeing one part of the university's strategy. Thus, one Assistant Dean is working with the PVC (Quality and Students) and the Director of International Relations on internationalising the curriculum, while another leads on promoting student mobility and another on partnerships and articulation.

The University is one of the 22 members of Universitas21 (U21) and the Project Officer post for that consortium fits within the Division of International Relations. The activities managed by that post (currently vacant) are staff fellowships, student scholarships and special projects such as an International Summer School. The consortium has significant funding from its members for these activities, such as the Staff Placement Programme (for both academic and non-academic staff), which is drawn upon by the university when its own strategy can benefit. Strategic direction for Birmingham U21 activity is given via the U21 Advisory Group, which is a sub committee of the International Board (see below). The Group gives regular updates to the International Board.

Currently the University has no overseas offices and recruits its international students through a mixture of methods: direct advertising and promotion at fairs, use of networks of agents (20% students are found this way) and inward flows from teaching exchanges with partner institutions. Serious consideration is being given to setting up the first overseas office. If this goes ahead, its functions will include student recruitment, but the office will also provide an opportunity to encourage more interaction with overseas alumni as well as maintaining and developing partnerships and external relations.

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### **Committee structure**

The University Council has a strong commitment to internationalisation and receives an annual update from the Vice-Principal and the Director of International Relations on progress with the strategy. This progress is monitored and steered by an International Board that meets termly and which comprises:

- Vice-Principal (chair)
- Secretary and Registrar
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality and Students)
- Director of International Relations
- Two Heads of Schools
- All Assistant Deans (International).

Unlike similar committees in other institutions academic members dominate the Board.

In order to promote co-ordination of international recruitment activity between schools a number of International Regional Working Groups have been established covering regions; thus, the first ones cover India, China, North America and Japan. They are chaired by the relevant Regional Manager in International Relations, since s/he is the best-informed person on the region in the university. Hitherto the groups have focussed their discussions on recruitment, but their remit is in the process of being reviewed, in light of the creation of the International Relations Division.

Some funding has been made available from the centre to support the international strategy, although this will again be reviewed as the University moves into the College system.

On two recent awards the holders brought back a new procurement scheme for the University and a workplace wellbeing strategy that has influenced HR strategy and recruitment practice.

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## Conclusions

The university is making a concerted effort to create a management structure that supports the implementation of the strategy across the campus. Like all research-intensive institutions it relies on the energy and entrepreneurialism of its academic staff to make progress in research. Thus it can be perceived that the 'default' position is for all internationalisation initiatives to be 'bottom-up' and for the role of the centre to be one of mapping, information provision and support. There are, however, some things such as the signing of MOUs that the centre must control. The key questions are how should those MOUs (and more importantly the serious collaboration that should follow them) be developed? Is it as a result of some top-down strategic plan or is it driven by sparks of enthusiasm from the academic community, which are then kindled centrally into an institutional flame?

One area where there is not a clear strategic fit with the internationalisation strategy is research. The PVC (Research) does not attend the International Board and the development of international partnerships is driven by bottom-up initiatives and does not appear to relate to any focused research strategy or the proactive development of global collaborative partnerships in key subject areas. The U21 network offers a framework for collaborative research and has articulated clear research themes, but this is not as central to its existence as it is to WUN (World Universities Network). This may be due to a mismatch between the agreed themes of U21 members and those research areas in which the university wishes to develop its global capacity and reputation.

International staff represent 27% of the total and are rightly seen as an underused resource in the university's internationalisation strategy. The University's Human Resources strategy includes targets for their numbers. It is hoped to involve them to a greater extent in internationalising the curriculum and in advising on outwards student mobility. This would, however, present an organisational challenge if it required any formal commitment of their time, as opposed to their informal voluntary support. HR and International Relations are working on the creation of an International Staff Support Network, using ideas from focus groups to help to shape recruitment and support activities. In addition a support network has recently been set up for the families of international staff.

The University is at the very beginning of the road for the internationalisation of the curriculum, but has an organisational framework in place to make it happen.

The use of Overseas Fellowships and Placement Funds for non-academic staff is said to bring substantial long-term benefits, since the award holders learn new approaches that can benefit all the university.<sup>26</sup>

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### Strategy

Harper Adams University College (HAUC) is a small specialist institution in land-based and food studies with 2,200 students, located in the Shropshire countryside. It produced an international strategy in 2006 that focussed on two aspects of internationalisation: recruitment of international students from a few target countries and the development of a limited number of teaching and research partnerships.

The College's Governing Body is concerned about the impact of too many international students in such a small community and has set a cap of 10% on the numbers from any one country such as China, its major overseas partner country. After careful research in the strategy development process, international activity is therefore limited to recruitment in China and India and partnership arrangements in those countries as well as Australia, USA and Canada. Recruitment activity is undertaken predominantly through its overseas institutional partners and a small number of agents, including one in Beijing who was formerly a Head of Department in the college. As a small institution, another determining factor of the overseas strategy is to ensure that it has a manageable number of overseas partners.

The College believes that international activity should be driven primarily by academic objectives, although financial motives are not unimportant as every international project should have a sound business case. It hopes also that its few selected partnerships will bring in a regular flow of undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as leading to continuing research links.

The strategy includes no mention of internationalising the curriculum or of ways of exposing domestic students to issues of globalisation. It is recognised that the College is not yet ready for these aspects of internationalisation, but they may be considered when the strategy is next updated in a few year's time. However, the strategy does address issues of internationalising the teaching and learning strategies of its overseas Chinese partner institutions through provision of curriculum and staff development support. Issues of global sustainability and environmental change are already formally incorporated into the domestic curriculum.

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### Organisation

The international strategy was written, and is managed by, the Dean of External Liaison, who is responsible for it as a member of the Senior Management Team. An operational Group co-ordinates all the activities at the College's main partner institution in China and this has been meeting every two months to ensure that delivery goes according to plan. It is now thought that this Group, which contains key decision makers such as the Dean of Academic Affairs, will widen its brief to cover all international and domestic partner institutional links.

Apart from this group there are no formal requirements on the five Academic Groups in HAUC to develop plans for international activities; however, the scope of the teaching links with the College's main Chinese partner is gradually widening so as to include a growing number of academic staff. The scale of the research collaboration is constrained by the small number of research-active staff in the College put forward for the RAE (20 out of an academic staff complement of 80). Despite this limitation the College has links with the Ministry of Agriculture and two other institutions in China and is exploring collaboration with another one.

There is no International Office as the size of the College is not thought to justify one and all its functions are undertaken by those staff offering support services to domestic students in the Academic Registrar's office; each spends a proportion of their time on international students. This applies to all the usual support services such as welfare, advice on fees and grants, placements, study abroad and alumni. However international students do receive a special induction programme and can obtain English language courses at no extra cost. They are accommodated in all the Halls of Residence so as to encourage mixing with domestic students.

The College's main partner in China now collaborates in two joint undergraduate degree programmes and a second cohort of Chinese students is spending their third year of study at HAUC. This is the culmination of an eight-year process that has involved Chinese staff coming to HAUC to participate in staff development programmes (such as the PG Cert Ed) and English language tuition. An unusual development is that the College has just decided to fund two research assistant posts in the Chinese partner and will be jointly directing their research, partly by regular use of a video link.

HAUC's main agent in China has a broader role than just recruiting, because of his previous role in the College, and filters enquiries from potential partners as well as making exploratory visits. It is planned that his role in due course will be to help to mobilise the Chinese alumni and managers in the Chinese branches of HAUC's UK commercial partners to help returning Chinese graduates find employment. He will also seek placement opportunities in these branches for UK students.

All domestic students at HAUC have a year's placement with industry (which results in an impressive 98% employment record for graduates) and some of these placements are overseas in English-speaking countries such as Australia and the USA. It is very hard to get domestic HAUC students to consider studying abroad other than in English-speaking countries, although a few do go to Spain and France through Erasmus/Socrates. Were it not for this, a full student exchange with the Chinese partner would have been developed.

The international initiatives have been driven from the top down, but they have taken root because the disciplinary interests of the Dean of External Liaison have been echoed in the partner institutions and have brought a regular flow of students. Some central funding has been involved in paying for developmental visits to India and China, but, once the partnership operations have been put in place, they have paid for themselves, including the cost of a per-diem overseas allowance for the HAUC academic staff who teach in China.

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## **Conclusions**

The story of HAUC shows that it is possible for a small institution to create worthwhile international partnerships with very limited resources. This has been achieved by a focused approach and patience and has been developed from the top down, but has grown to involve almost all the Academic Groups (departments) in the College.

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### Context

Napier University has approx 30% international students, 12% EU students and one overseas office in China. It also has teaching partnerships, principally in Hong Kong, Malaysia, India and Russia (some very long established), that bring in respectable revenues. The University has the fourth-highest percentage of non-UK students in the UK. The leadership of the University is very positive about internationalisation and an international strategy is being updated and extended in scope.

Overseas activity has traditionally been focussed on the Business School that has operated some of its partnerships for over 10 years and aims to embed internationalisation in everything it does. There are two other Faculties but neither of them have significant number of students overseas.

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### The strategy

One key priority in the University's strategic plan is 'to develop the University's international focus'. This has been translated into a current international strategy that has the following aims:

- Achieving an increase of 50% in the international student numbers over a five-year period through partnerships.
- Increasing the offshore provision
- Internationalising the curriculum.
- A greater international focus with regard to staff and student exchanges and knowledge transfer.
- Developing 'appropriate pastoral support'.

A plan for having a campus in China has been reviewed in the light of current policy in the Chinese Ministry of Education.

The strategy is comprehensive since it recognises that internationalisation is all-embracing and requires commitment from all staff. It sees international student recruitment as 'essential to the financial and academic health' of the university. Importantly it also embraces domestic students in an international culture that advances social mobility, cohesion and cultural understanding.

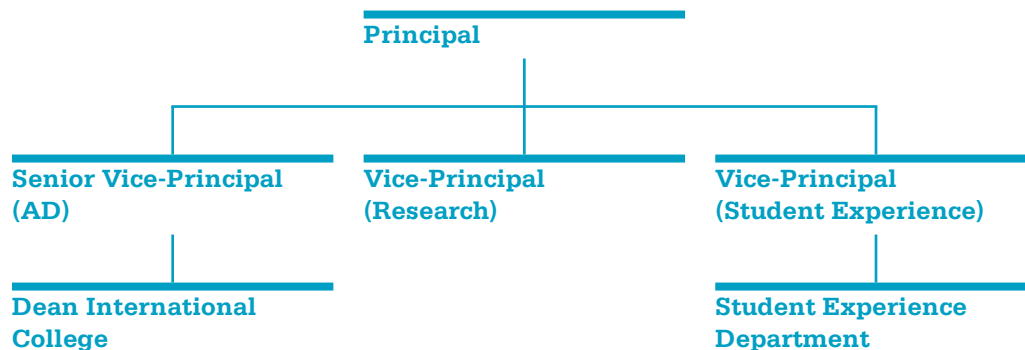
Two underlying aims of the new strategy are:

- To deepen international activities which have until now been left to enthusiasts.
- To ensure that international activity is linked to the strategy and is co-ordinated and focussed.

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## Organisational implications of the strategy

The University has three Vice-Principals and the senior of them is designated Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Development). He has overall responsibility for ensuring that the international strategy is achieved. His key manager in this task is the Dean of the International College (IC). The IC was established a year ago and brings together a wide range of international activities (see below). The present Dean was formerly Dean of the Business School (where he was one of the University's leading players internationally) and agreed to move across to this new role in view of its importance to the overall strategy.



International activities are co-ordinated through an International Steering Group chaired by the Dean of the International College. Participants include the senior Faculty staff identified as having responsibility for international activities.

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## The International College

The IC is the engine room for the international strategy and it undertakes the following functions:

- Managing the China Office and overseas agents.
- Helping to find suitable overseas partners and undertaking due diligence on private institutions (for a Collaborative Provision Committee).
- Promoting and managing study abroad schemes for domestic students and JYA programmes.
- Co-ordinating staff exchanges.
- Providing pastoral support for on-campus international students
- Supporting faculties and schools in their recruitment and enrolment of international students.
- Assisting schools in marketing CPD courses abroad, using a range of delivery channels.
- Providing the University with market research and trend analysis of international activities and competitors as well as marketing materials.
- Developing and maintaining links with overseas alumni.
- Working with the V-P (R) to identify opportunities for international research collaboration and knowledge transfer.

One entity within the International College is an Overseas Programme Support Unit that helps with the set-up and operation of overseas programmes. It has particular expertise in drafting and negotiating collaborative agreements with partner institutions and in validation exercises overseas. This was formerly based within the Business School but its remit is now University-wide.

The IC has only limited discretionary funds and cannot fund exploratory missions by faculties. They must meet the costs themselves. A central Strategic Investment Fund can, however, be used for exceptional projects, and the IC can finance its own overseas visits on behalf of the university.

The Dean of the International College has been given overall responsibility for helping faculties to internationalise their curriculum and a first step is the production of explanatory guidelines describing what internationalisation means in this context. He will be helped in this task by the fact that his reporting line is to the Vice-Principal responsible for the learning and teaching strategy.

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## **Conclusions**

The structure adopted for managing internationalisation is linked logically to the strategy and its aims. The Dean with the most experience of international activity has been given a strengthened International College and a brief to encourage the Deans to develop international activities. He is able to do this because of the strong backing from the Principal and his immediate line manager, the Senior Vice-Principal. With their endorsement and a strengthened central support team he will be able to deepen the university's internationalisation and ensure that activities are effectively co-ordinated.

There is one possible fault line, which is common to many institutions, and it relates to the relationships with, and responsibilities of, the two other Vice-Principals for Research and Student Experience. The Dean of the International College will need to work closely with them both on matters of promoting knowledge transfer internationally and ensuring that international and domestic students enjoy a multicultural and satisfying experience on campus. The institutional response to this is to emphasise commitment to the principles of matrix management, which encourage collaboration between managers and seek to ensure that joint decision-making occurs whenever it is needed.

### International strategy

Sheffield Hallam University's international strategy was written in 2005 and is about to be revised, together with the overall Corporate Plan, due to the arrival of a new Vice-Chancellor. It is not an internationalisation strategy as it contains little about the internationalisation of the curriculum or the domestic students' experience of globalisation.

The focus of the strategy is on increasing international recruitment (currently at about 1,200 students) and the development of a number of 'rich' partnerships with universities overseas. It is suggested that these will be developed in target markets as a way of ensuring a reliable supply of undergraduates and postgraduates. Because of some financial losses on international activities in the 1990s (and the concerns of the Governing Body), the strategy places emphasis on risk analysis and careful business management of international development activities. There are two interesting features of the document:

- The belief that 'a successful national university is significantly defined by its international achievement and diversity, both in educational and business terms'.
- A recognition that staff experience of international activities is vital and that a growth in the numbers of international staff and more staff exchanges overseas are important.

The strategy did not set any firm targets or lead to any implementation plan and this is fortunate, as it is now recognised that its plans to develop new partnership underestimated the long lead time involved. Less has been achieved than was hoped, although:

- Two offices have been opened in Beijing and Delhi to carry out a range of support activities and help the recruiting agents used in those countries.
- A number of teaching partnerships have been explored in Malaysia, China and India involving various models of trans-national delivery and collaboration.
- A substantial investment has been made in staffing an international infrastructure (both at central and faculty level – see below).

The international strategy was not widely disseminated and it is thought that a limited number of academic staff are fully committed to it, even though a majority know of its existence.

In June 2007, the international strategy was reviewed by a mixed group of 20 administrative and academic staff and improvements to it were outlined in five key areas: student support, employability, partnerships, curriculum development and the embedding of internationalisation in plans and policies. One theme from this event was that academic staff wanted internationalisation to be more integrated into all the core activities. The forthcoming revision of the strategy is expected to pick up the suggestions from this exercise.

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## Organisation

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) (a full time position) is responsible for the international strategy. Reporting to him in respect of international matters are:

- The Head of the International Office (via the Director of Student and Academic Services).
- Four faculty posts called 'Heads of International' who have 0.6 of their time devoted to international matters in their faculty and 0.3 of their time co-ordinating activities for the whole university in one of five geographical regions (Africa and the Middle East, Europe, India, China and South East Asia).
- A new University post is planned for overseeing and co-ordinating the international academic work of the four faculty posts.

The four faculty Heads of International have each recruited a small team of academic staff to help them to develop their faculty's plan to implement the university's international strategy. In one case the faculty has written an internationalisation strategy that goes well beyond the scope of the University's international strategy. The extra internationally related staff and the work on these plans have been funded from central resources. In some cases the centre will pay for faculty staff to go on exploratory visits to target countries; however, all recruitment visits are paid for from faculty funds.

Regular monthly meetings of the four Heads, the Head of the International Office and the PVC are held to co-ordinate activity and agree collective action such as a combined recruiting mission to India by all four faculties. In addition a University International Group, chaired by the PVC, reports to the Executive on the implementation of the international strategy; this involves the 4 Heads plus senior administrative officers. This group has identified ten key markets and ensures that the university provides full travel insurance for all academic staff. In addition to logging their travel dates with the insurance specialists, staff are expected to register their travel plans on the intranet. This helps to avoid overlaps and duplication.

The University aims to have deep partnerships with contacts between several faculties and each overseas partner, but this is proving hard to achieve and it may opt for a larger number of less intensive partnerships principally at faculty level. Evidence has shown that it is easier to build on faculty-to-faculty links than to try to sell a new partnership from the top down.

In the last two years, two overseas offices have been opened; the one in Beijing spends 75% of its effort on recruitment and the other 25% on general public relations and lobbying for the university. The Indian office supports the University's agents but will also be expected to find and support alumni and research potential partners. Both offices report to the head of the International Office but also liaise regularly with the four Heads.

One distinctive feature of the University's approach is its investment in intensive market research for selected countries. A senior member of the Marketing Department is dedicated to international research and produces country reports that identify opportunities for faculties to follow up. These are then used as a basis for planning by the respective country group, which is chaired by one of the four Heads. These groups co-ordinate visits to the region concerned and receive feedback from any academic who visits. They also decide on the recruitment tactics for the country region concerned, such as the use of agents and participation in fairs. The country strategies which these groups work on with the help of marketing set out the university's plans in some detail with business objectives, targets for numbers of students and collaborative agreements, as well as estimates of research income. Each of these targets will be fed into the university-wide and faculty level planning processes.

The University's International Office has 15 people who undertake the following functions:

- Student recruitment
- Staff and student mobility (under Erasmus), but not overseas placements
- Partnership support – both domestic and international (formerly a separate Collaborative Activities Unit)
- Overseas offices
- Scholarships.

The University has invested in seeking to enhance the experience of international students and has achieved the best scores in the International Student Barometer survey several times. Employability is a concern and the Careers Service has created one post to focus on helping international students and he runs an 'International Students Job Club.'

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## Conclusions

The University has created a substantial infrastructure to drive its international ambitions and there is a great deal of activity and investment of time and money at faculty level.

The University had a risk-averse culture for many years and this is gradually being changed. This led to a limited strategy that makes little mention of recruiting international staff, of internationalising the curriculum or of actively promoting study abroad. This is about to change, and the heavy investment in market research, overseas offices and faculty staff time may soon bear fruit.

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### Background

University College London has had an international strategy since 2004, which has sought to promote the institution as 'one of the world's most prestigious universities operating in a global context'. This aspiration was endorsed by the classification of UCL as one of the world's Top Ten universities in the November 2007 rankings by the THES.

The UCL strategy is ambitious and comprehensive but also unusual in that it embodies some of the original radical themes behind the foundation of the College in 1826. For example:

- Among the aims of the institution are that it will 'contribute to the resolution of problems of global significance' and will 'promote and lead a sense of global citizenship'.
- It calls for a Scholarship Strategy that 'supports participation from third-world (developing) areas'.
- It suggests that adopting an international strategy could require radical changes internally to both structures and culture 'to enable optimum co-operation and efficiency in achieving the global vision'.
- It contains a strand of activity geared to influencing public bodies to support British HE globally. Some of UCL's energies should be devoted to the benefit of the UK HE sector as well as to UCL itself.

The strategy was designed within the context of a White Paper written by UCL's Provost that clearly re-stated the strong liberal traditions of UCL and stressed that they implied an obligation to 'promote a sense of global citizenship, social justice and environmental responsibility actively.' The international strategy suggested that these sentiments should be a factor in the development of global research collaborations.

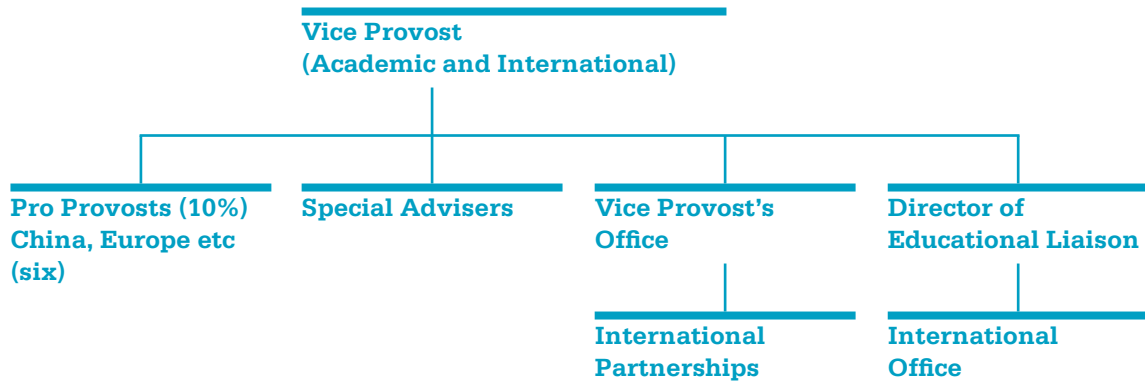
The College is not a member of any international research consortium so that its research partnerships have to be crafted individually. This will follow the recent adoption of a new research strategy calling for cross-faculty research institutes focused on large globally significant research issues. These would by definition international and would be encouraged to tackle four Grand Strategic Global Challenges; global health, sustainable cities, inter-cultural interactions and well being.

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### Organisation and staffing

The chart opposite shows the staff reporting to the Vice-Provost (Academic and International) in respect of the international part of his portfolio. They are:

- Six part-time Pro Provosts who are senior members of academic staff and who are each given responsibility for a region of the world. Their briefs differ according to the region and their interests. Thus, the Pro Provost covering Europe is concerned with issues relating to Bologna and also covers European alumni as a topic. Each Pro Provost is expected to devote 10% of his/her time to the role (which includes travel to the region concerned), in return for which he/she receives a small honorarium. In practice, 10% is thought to be far too low a percentage and is probably exceeded by all incumbents.



- There is provision for a number of Special Advisers, who would be experts in a country or topic area. Only one is in post, covering Kazakhstan.
- Within the Vice-Provost's Office there is a post that reviews all Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) before they are approved by the College. However, there is not a formal Partnerships Office that 'manages' international partnerships.
- Within the Registry the post of Director of Educational Liaison is a second-tier position with responsibilities that include the International Office. The head of that Office has a dotted-line reporting relationship to the Vice-Provost. The International Office is in charge of international recruitment and study abroad.

There are no special appointments or Assistant Dean posts in faculties or departments relating to international matters, nor do departments have to prepare any international strategies (although they are expected to consider it in their plans). The issue of internationalising the curriculum is expected to be covered in each departmental learning and teaching strategy.

UCL has no overseas offices or recruiting agents, but it is still the fifth-largest recruiter of EU and non-EU students. Much of this is due to long-standing European links in language departments. Since it has limited physical capacity in Bloomsbury, the policy is to increase the proportion of postgraduates.

UCL has 25% of its students studying abroad and aims to continue to expand this so that it becomes an expected part of the student experience for almost all students. An increase of 10% a year is targeted which involves a comparable increase in staff time devoted to making study abroad happen.

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## Committees

UCL has established an International Strategy Steering Group (ISSG) that is responsible for monitoring the progress of activities planned in the strategy, but it does not set the strategy. This committee meets 4–5 times a year and comprises:

- The Vice-Provost (Academic and International)
- All 5 Pro Provosts
- Head of the Graduate School
- Director of Educational Liaison
- Director, UCL Language Centre
- Head, International Office
- Deputy Director of Development and Corporate Communications
- Head, Alumni Relations
- Director of Research Planning, Faculty of Biomedical Sciences
- Special Adviser for Kazakhstan

UCL's Council is strongly supportive of its international activity and, unusually, asks for a progress report on the strategy at each of its meetings. The ISSG produces such a report at each of its meetings that monitors progress on 27 activities identified in the International Strategy. For each of these a responsible person is working to an agreed deadline with a date when a review of the activity will be carried out.

An unusual feature of the governance model is that no members of faculties or departments are involved in the ISSG, which is comprised solely of senior managers (several of whom, however, are also senior academics). This may relate to the cultural issues faced by UCL in attempting to introduce some central direction in an extremely decentralised system. It is because of this that the International Strategy talks about the 'challenge of changing internal cultures'. There are several areas where the centre believes that it may need to be more active:

- Prioritising investment in overseas partnerships so that a selected number can be built up to become deep partnerships that share UCL's vision.
- The closer integration of UCL's research strategy with its international strategy. This is about to begin with a selection of the 'Grand Strategic Challenge' research areas, since UCL will need to be proactive in forming collaborative research partnerships to solve global problems.
- Encouraging all departments to promote internationalisation and spot international talents and champions willing to work strategically for UCL. This would involve activities such as effort in promoting study abroad, greater recruitment of international staff and better use of the knowledge and contacts that such staff have.
- Promoting the flow and exchange of information on international activity so that the wheel is not being reinvented and overlapping visits by UCL staff to overseas institutions do not occur.

There is no central committee budget for international activity, although the Vice-Provost can use some limited funds to sponsor travel.

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## Conclusions

UCL has an ambitious internationalisation strategy, but if it is to succeed it has to be adopted by its academic community. International activity has to be initiated from the bottom with facilitation and support from the centre. The evidence seems to be that there is still some way to go before this can happen. UCL is at the stage where the centre is seeking to promote change but not everyone is listening. UCL monitors what is happening in Faculties and Departments through analysis of Departmental and Faculty Learning and Teaching Strategies, through the Internal Quality Review process, and through checking of progress against key performance indicator targets for submission to Council. UCL has not set up cross-Faculty/Department networks to share information on internationalisation; however, each Pro-Provost is now expected to set up and consult with an advisory group made up of academics with an interest in his/her respective region.

UCL has not been flush with funds in recent years and has been unable to increase significantly its annual investment in international activity. Each year, however, some further investment is made, either through the creation of a new Pro-Provost position or through further funds to support international collaborations. The achievement of the central goals would certainly be helped if further and more significant injections of investment funds were available to sponsor or encourage travel or the development of partnerships. In the area of scholarships, UCL has liberal ideals and ambitions to increase scholarship provision; in response the number of scholarships is being increased year on year, both through funding provided by UCL from funds received from the Annual Giving Fund and from funds provided by individual or corporate donors of scholarship funding for international students.

The case-study is an interesting example of an institution that is very successful in academic terms and well regarded internationally; yet it accepts that it needs to do more to promote and 'manage' its internationalisation gradually in line with its prevailing culture.

The International Unit would like to thank the following members of the project steering group for their expert advice:

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We would also like to thank

**Dr Judith Lamie**  
Director of International Relations  
University of Birmingham  
for her comments on the final draft  
of the report

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**April 2008**

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The Practice of Internationalisation:  
Managing International Activities in  
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### About the UK HE International Unit

The UK Higher Education International Unit has been established to coordinate, promote and undertake activities designed to support UK universities in a globally competitive world.

The UK HE International Unit is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland), GuildHE and Universities UK.

### Supported by



We gratefully acknowledge the financial support from the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education (PMI2)

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