



Developing a sustainable model for quality in internationalisation in the context of rapid change

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Benefits of Internationalisation

- Enrich students' learning
- Create vibrant and productive academic communities
- A platform to share best practice,
- Meet workforce and innovation needs and develop synergies in research[1].

Since 2010 the Council of Europe has urged members to develop “an international culture” through student mobility, shared projects and knowledge exchange [2].

Context: Financial Drivers

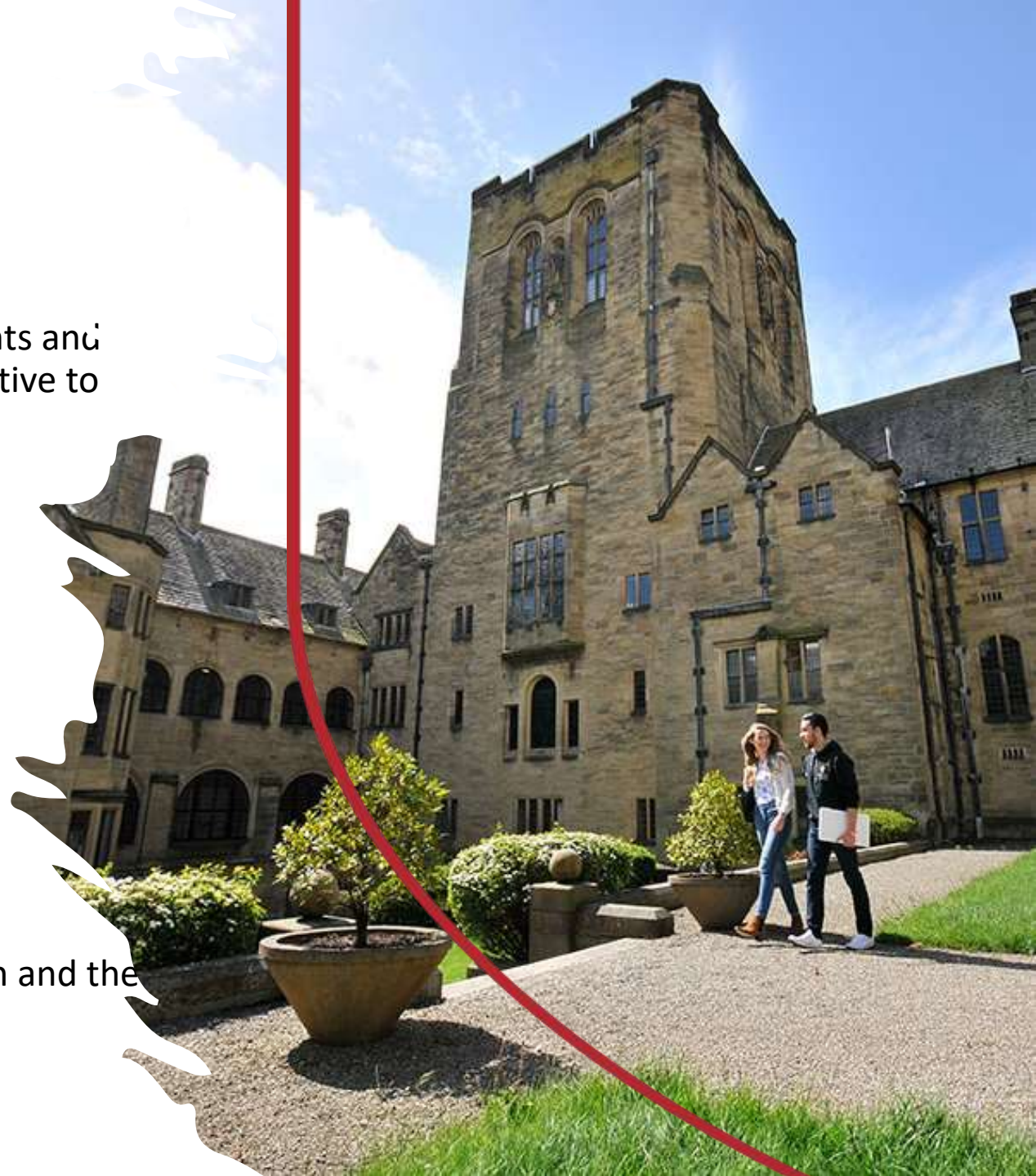
An increased reliance on tuition fees from international students and income from franchising or branch campuses, creates an incentive to regard international education as a commodity [3].

In the UK, real-terms funding for UK students has declined. Tuition fees from non-EU students now make up 20% of total income across UK institutions [4].

10-year International Education Strategy aims to

- *increase educational exports to £35 billion per year, from £20 Billion in 2016*
- *increase international students studying in the UK to 600K per year [5].*

Note: this strategy is shared between the Ministry of Education and the Department for International Trade.



- Across the Global South, States use international collaborations to drive national development.
- Republic of Uzbekistan, aims to use international partnerships and branch campuses aims to both to:
- *“increase to enhance the higher education coverage and to improve the quality of teaching in higher education”* [6].
- Higher Education coverage in Uzbekistan sky rocketed: from 9% in 1991, 15% in 2016 to 40% in 2022 and is on target to reach 50% by 2030 [7]

The student population has quadrupled to a million

Number of HEI trebled

31 TNE ventures operating in Uzbekistan [7]



Uzbekistan: quality, staff capacity and standards

- 10 Uzbek HEIs to rank in the top 1000 worldwide, two leading national universities to rank in top 500.
- Key issues: wider cohort of appropriately qualified faculty, develop capacity to teach higher level skills, research infrastructure and aligning research with regional needs [6]
- International benchmarking of teaching and assessment, employer and student involvement in curriculum design and production of high-quality teaching materials [6].
- 2023 is “Year of Human Care and Quality Education”.
- Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations, created and oversees HEI accreditation through the appraisal of outcomes, including student surveys and routine data at a distance [8].
- Risk based oversight





Alignment with International norms

Align with QAA's UK Quality Code for Course Design [9]:

- *benchmarking content to external reference points, student and stakeholder involvement,*
- *aligning the level of teaching to international standards*
- *ensuring staff are appropriately supported through continual professional development*

They also reflect with QAA Core Expectations for partnerships:

- *ensuring that the standards of courses meets the requirements of relevant national qualification framework*
- *courses are well-designed and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed,*
- *and that students are supported to succeed and benefit from their education [10].*

Based on the information available, plans for QA oversight in Uzbekistan also reflect the full range of ESG standards [11].



Delivering Quality International Teaching in a Complex Environment

- Financial motivations of international HEIs
- Growth and quality can pull in different directions
- Teaching at large scale – standardized content to home country norms [12]
- Dismissing regional context and expertise, neo-colonialist in effect [13]
- Teaching staff in partnerships may not have a voice in decision making or empowered to speak
- Deficit model – everything relating to partnership is assumed to be problematic, teaching, students
- Review of 20 years of research on internationalization – papers only focus on problems [14].



Enhancement in Scotland and Wales

Definitions

Quality Assurance: *“guaranteeing the quality and academic standards of educational provision”*

Enhancement: *“taking deliberate steps to improve the effectiveness of the student learning experience”* [15, 16]

Introduced in Wales in 2023 [16].

- **Quality Assurance is Embedded in Enhancement**
- Continuum and both Wales and Scotland still use the full UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- Shared principles include collaboration with students, evaluation built into interventions and readiness to report



The initial challenge

Long term, 3-way partnership with Management Development Institute of Singapore in Singapore and Tashkent. Singapore: teaching material, assessment, marking, Tashkent teaching and Bangor QA and oversight.

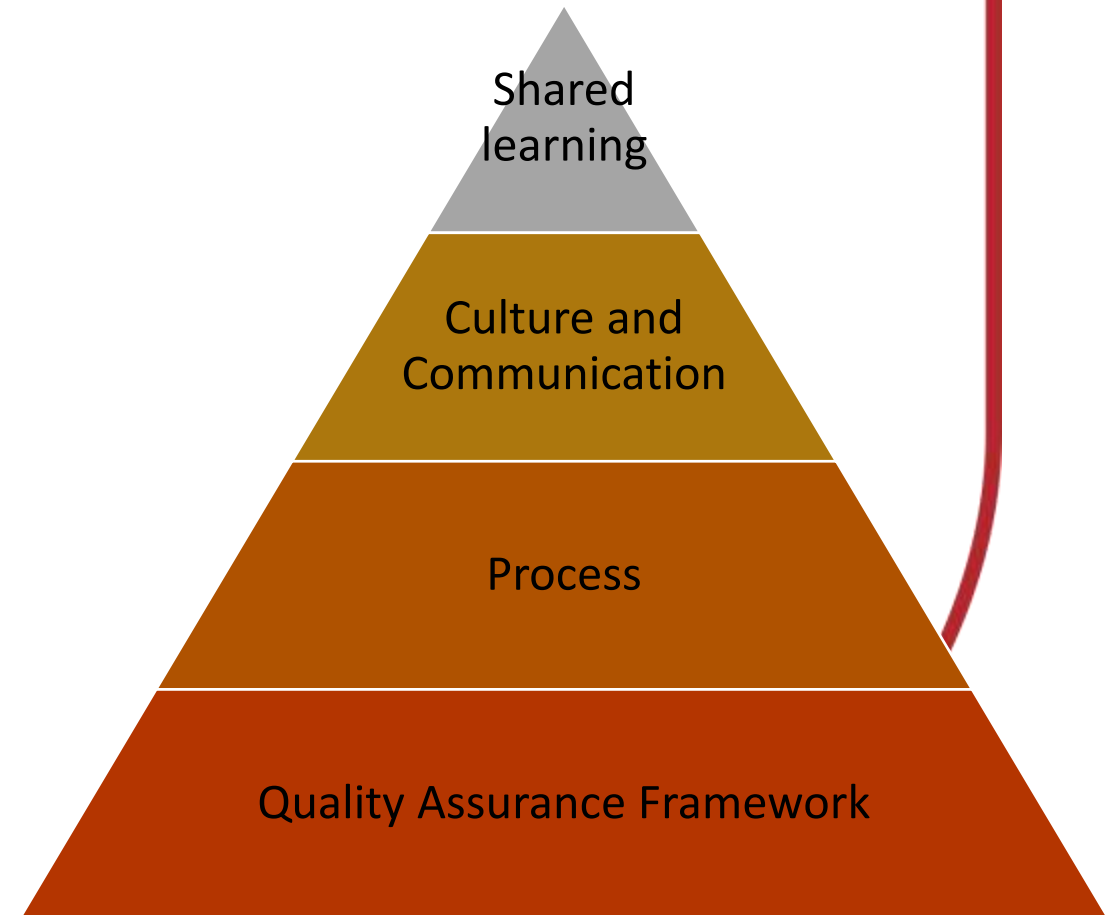
Tashkent staff would only see examinations on the day they were sat by students.

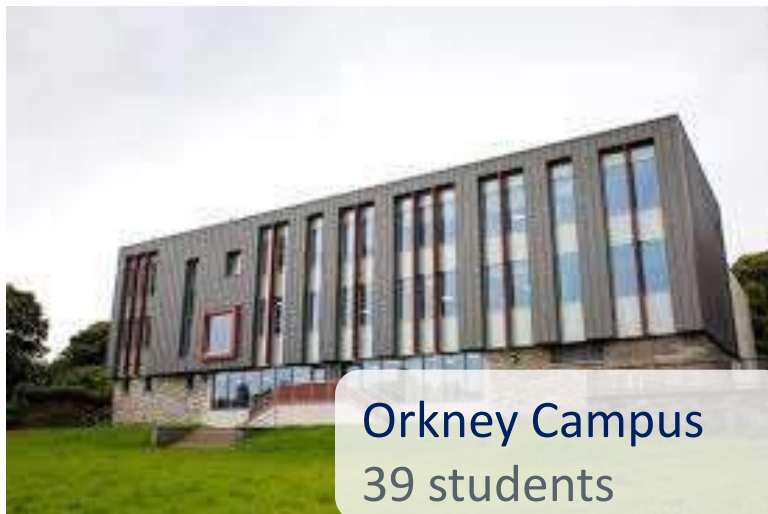
2016/17 External Examiner concerns with high failure rates, borne out by investigation.

Concerns that we were in danger of failing to meet Quality Code expectation in relation to course design: *the courses are well-designed and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed, and that students are supported to succeed and benefit from their education.*

- Year 1: Data and intelligence driven, student performance, staff and student consultation, management discussion. Some exams were on material not taught, assessment and feedback inconsistent.
- Response: Introduced a vetting form as a check material taught, introduces student experience surveys and accessed them. Affirmation from the QAA.
- Year 2: Uzbek Government target to treble student numbers, 1500. Still issues with high failure rates and assessment and feedback.
- Response: Introduced comparative data to exam boards, ensured teaching dyads were present to discuss inconsistencies. Reported student focus groups
- Year 3: Student performance better but Externals noting need for more criticality in assessment questions and student work
- Response: introduced expectations that staff in all three parts of the partnership contribute to annual actions plans reflecting on evidence. Workshops with staff on teaching for criticality/analysis leading to sharing seminar work development in Tashkent.
- We realised the value of contextualisation and developed a degree in Tourism with the Uzbek staff. Decision to move to a franchise

- Year 4 (lockdown): Substantial increase in good degrees since 2016/17
- However, difficulties remain as we introduced the franchise, not least with our schools, and as the student cohort grew with a large cohort of new staff.
- In 2021, an externally led report concluded:
“although impressive progress has been made in establishing collaborative processes and systemic ways of working there is still progress to be made to ensure a shared understanding of Quality Assurance” (Evans, 2021)
- Student performance broadly equivalent but how much faster with shared QA framework.





Case 2: Heriot-Watt - Global Quality Governance

SINGLE ACADEMIC QUALITY OFFICE

HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY
UK | DUBAI | MALAYSIA

ACADEMIC QUALITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Annual Monitoring and Review (AMR) including Student Annual Monitoring and Review (SAMR) and Partnership Annual Monitoring and Review (PAMR)
- Approved Teachers, Tutors, Markers, Demonstrators (ATTMD)
- Committees
 - University Student Committee
 - University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS)
- Deans' Administration
- Examination Boards (Deans Representatives and Chairs)
- External Examiners
- Multi-Code / Global Code
- Periodic Reviews (Internal Audits, Academic Reviews, Professional Services Reviews)
- Policy development and review (insurance)
- Programme Approval (including CMA guidelines)

ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT

- Committees
 - Learning and Teaching Enhancement Forum
 - Student Learning Experience Committee (SLEC)
 - University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT)
- Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR)
- Learning and Teaching Policy Bank
- Learning and Teaching Strategy and Operational Plan
- Personal Tutoring
- Policy development and review
- Refutation
- Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework
- Student Partnership Agreement
- Student Survey Management
- UG and PG Student Learning Experience

ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Trinidad & Tobago (ACTT), China (MOE)
- Overseas campus accreditations, including Malaysia (MQA) and Dubai (WDA)
- Partnership arrangements
 - Approved Learning Partners
 - Articulation Partners
 - Joint Collaborative Partners
 - Memorandum of Understanding
- Partnership monitoring and review activities
- Partner visit reports
- Policy development and review (accreditation and partnerships)
- Professional, Statutory, Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditations
- Transnational Education (TNE) Reviews

Based within the Registry and Academic Support Directorate, the Academic Quality team aims to provide a professional support service across the global University.

We are responsible for the development of policies and procedures in relation to Quality Assurance, Academic Enhancement and Accreditation and Academic Partnerships.

Whilst focusing on our primary aims, we will endeavour to:

- consistently demonstrate our highest standards of professionalism and commitment to providing an excellent service to our colleagues, students and external stakeholders
- operate objectively, with empathy and integrity
- adopt a team approach, working collaboratively and supporting others, within the team and across the wider University
- use our knowledge and experience to continually develop and improve
- support and promote the four Heriot-Watt values

BELONG | INSPIRE | COLLABORATE | CELEBRATE

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Find us at:
heriotwatt.sharepoint.com/sites/registry-academicquality
www.hw.ac.uk/uk/services/academic-registry/quality-external-partnerships.htm

Global Team with responsibility for quality across all 5 campuses, all partnerships and online

EXTERNAL QUALITY PROCESSES

Quality Assurance Agency (Scotland)

Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) **All of HWU's provision across all modes and locations**

In-country Accreditation Authorities Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA), Knowledge and Human Development Agency (KHDA: Dubai)

Quality Assurance Agency (UK) Transnational Education Reviews

Professional, Regulatory and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs)
UK and international accreditation of HWU programmes

Challenge of meeting requirements of multiple accreditation authorities/ organisations



A single, global institutional quality framework

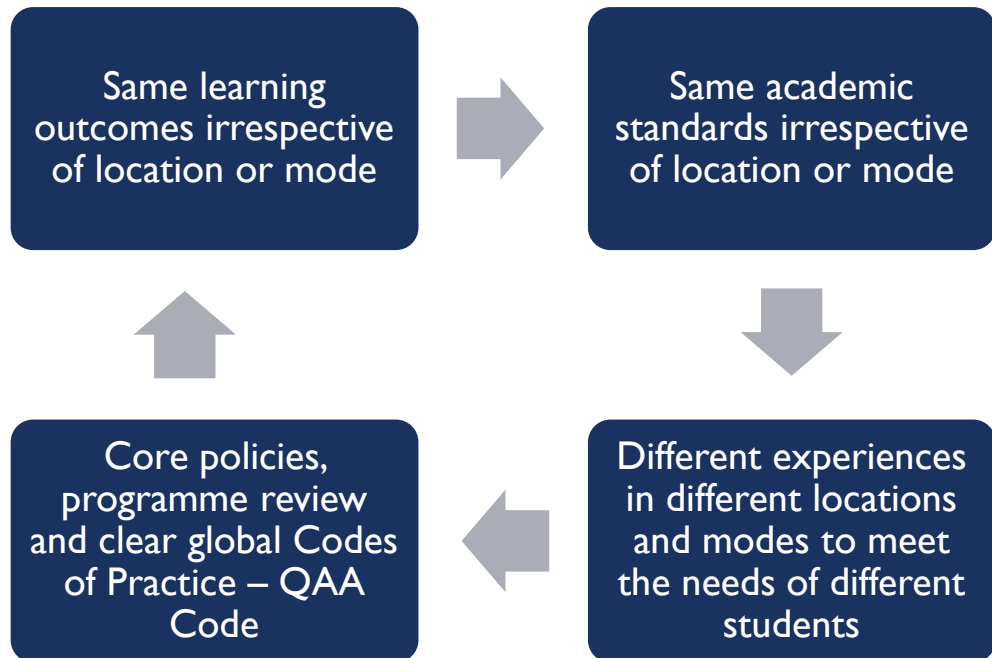


Enhancement-Led Approach

Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework

KEY PRINCIPLE OF IDENTICAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS

***Identical academic standards;
Diversity of learning experiences***



***One Heriot-Watt Degree
Worldwide***



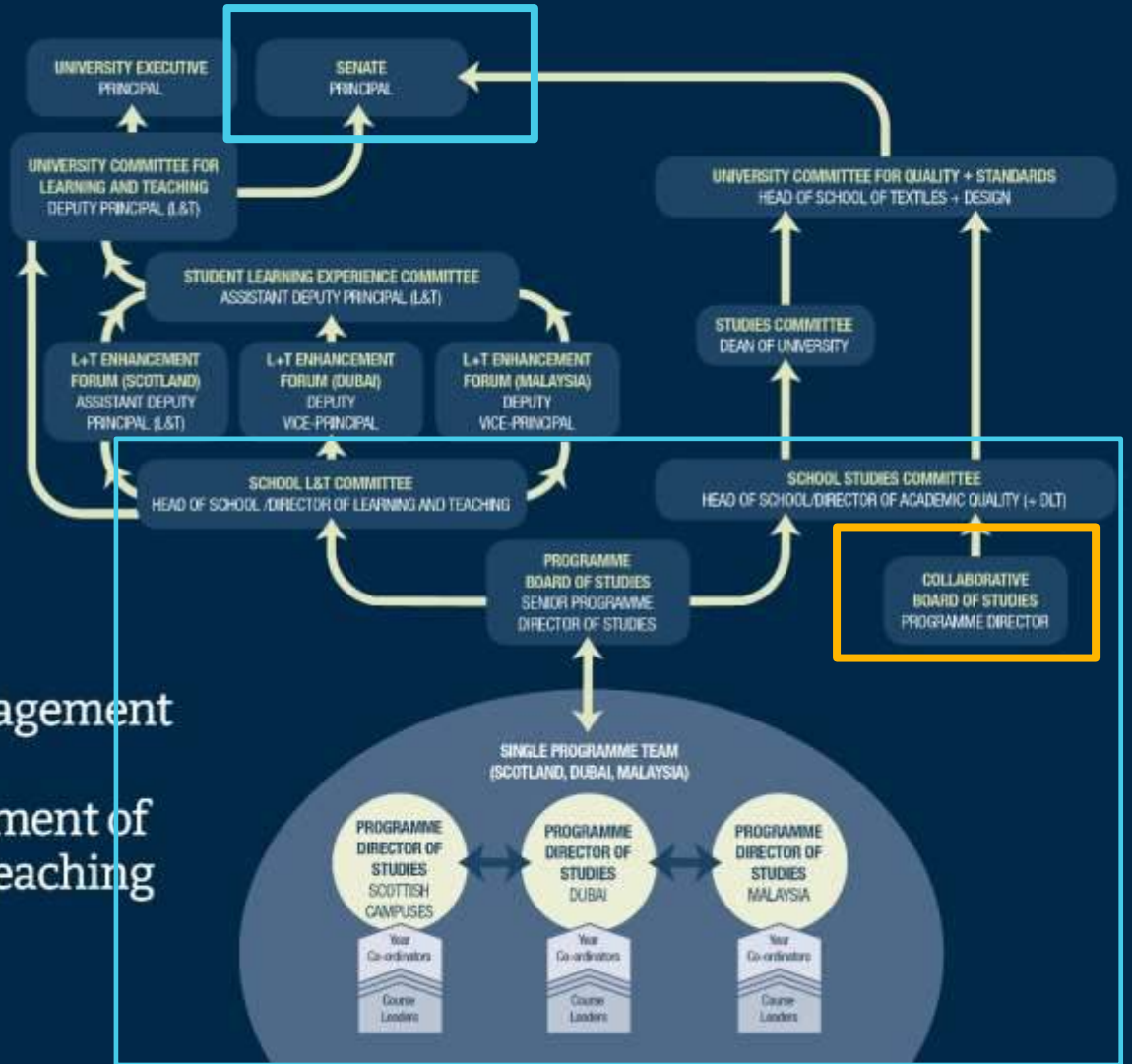
GLOBAL ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES (QUALITY, LEARNING AND TEACHING)

University
Committees
are mirrored
in Schools



Partnership
Management +
Approval Group

Academic Management
Structures:
Global Management of
Learning and Teaching



External validation of HWU's effective global quality framework

Enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR) 2020

COMMENDATION

The University has a mature and effective institutional quality framework which is well-understood by staff across all campuses and is supported by the use of clear and accessible documentation.

This has enabled an agile and effective response to the global coronavirus pandemic across all campuses, which was effectively led and coordinated at senior level, working across different national contexts.

CAA, Dubai Accreditation Report 2022

COMMENDATIONS

“..the academic quality and standards that are applied globally”

“the management of quality assurance, based on Scottish standards and the structures in place to engage students and staff as co-creators of their environment.”

Capacity for further development in terms of learning from best practice in Teaching and Learning and student engagement in co-production and survey but model works - enables creativity and standards across locations.

Internationalization at home has been a pillar of European HE policy along with mobility and cooperation and partnership since 2013 [17].

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) uses internet-based tools to connect students and staff from universities in different countries: extend student mobility beyond a relatively small elite [18].

University of Coventry: support for planning COIL; in 2022/3, its students undertook 92 projects with 91 institutions from, 41 countries. Range of subject fields, platforms and involved different kinds of collaboration.

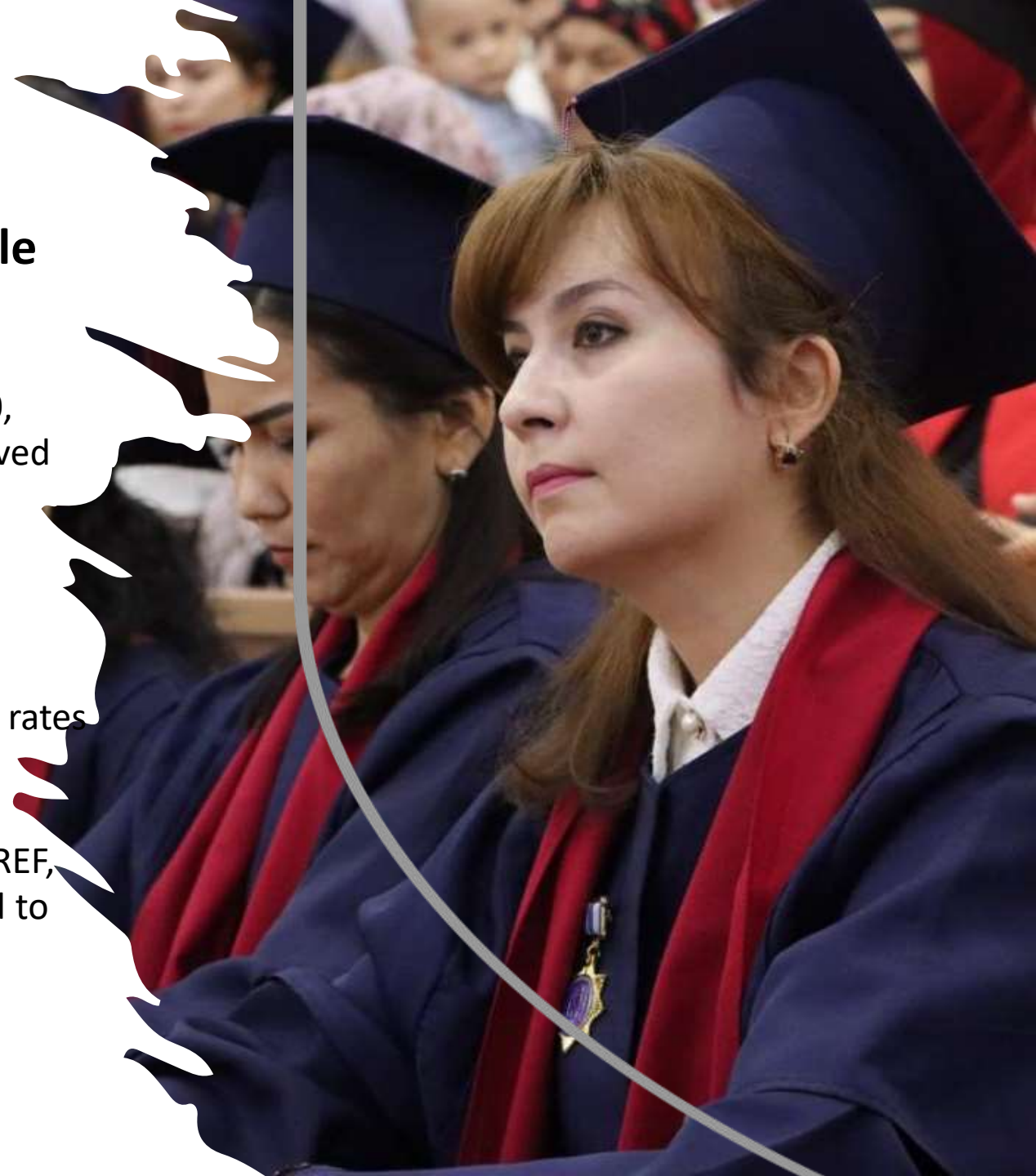


COIL @ Coventry Law School 23/24

Fox-Williams Curriculum Lead for International Law

Capacity Building and Research

- **How to develop excellent education at scale with international partners?**
 - University of Greenwich offered PGCert HE through and University of Modern Science and Arts in Cairo since 2020, doubled its cohort, tutored by previous cohorts and received ministerial visit.
- **Value through research?**
 - International collaboration associates with higher citation rates [19, 20].
 - Many national research ranking exercises such as the UK REF, incentivise international work and specific funds allocated to collaboration.





Conclusions and recommendation

Can and should deliver benefits to teaching and learning, student experience, research and diversity

States such as Uzbekistan use internationalisation to address skills deficits and to develop but they must see their quality needs met and capacity built.

Our own intervention progressed through several stages before arriving at real bidirectional learning. The second case study shows how decentralised structures and global QA release creativity and would have helped us design out QA risk and miscommunication in the first place.

Examples of adding value show what can be achieved in terms of shared learning.

Solely financial drivers are likely to lead to homogenous provision and cost-cutting and as other TNE hubs emerge [21], we need to be guided to plan to add value. A clear national QA and QE framework and standards helps design sustainable partnerships and its absence leads to risk.

We should include expectations around **added value** and in large-scale partnerships, commitments **to bilateral learning, global QA parity and devolved decision making**



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Diolch yn fawr!


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Join us!

Please get in touch if you are also developing partnerships using these principles

- Process to cultural (institutional) change
 - Devolved decision-making structures and contextualization
 - Bilateral learning and internationalization at home
 - **Please also talk to us if you see things differently!**
- 
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