

**Title:** **It's a family affair? Factors involved in developing positive partnerships between higher education institutions in a global context**

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Recognise issues involved in setting up and maintaining partnerships and communities of practice in an international environment
- Plan their involvement in such partnerships based on a clearer understanding of key issues

#### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

In the globalised market of education (Altbach & Knight 2007), partnerships between HEIs in different parts of the world are increasingly playing a part. There are a number of drivers involved, eg, British universities which are diversifying what they do in order to attract more international students. One model which has been adopted for collaboration in transnational education involves establishing partnerships through which students study in their home country and eventually receive either a degree from the UK partner, or a joint degree from both institutions. This model raises a number of questions, and the danger is that unless these are addressed, the partnership runs the risk of being a dysfunctional relationship (Heffernan & Poole 2004). Some of these questions are:

*1) What is the nature of the degrees which students receive? Is it exactly the same as that given by the UK university, which would imply some kind of franchise relationship; or is it similar but dependent on the context in which it is being studied for? 2) Is it delivered by a team of UK and home academics, delivered exclusively by the UK academics, through distance or by delivery in situ? Is it delivered exclusively by academics from the non-UK partner? 3) What is the relationship between the Quality Assurance philosophies and mechanisms of the partners in their respective countries, how are these reconciled, and what are the implications for appropriate procedures? (McBurnie G & Ziguras 2001) 4) Are there different academic practices among both teachers and students in the different countries, how are these addressed? (Dunn & Wallace 2008) 5) What are the implications for teacher development and quality enhancement practices, and how can the effectiveness of these be maximised to the satisfaction of both partners?*

In addressing these issues, we will use examples from our experience of involvement in these different types of partnership, between a UK university and partners from Malaysia, India and China.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

The session will comprise:

an **initial small group discussion (15 mins)** of possible issues to be addressed when one's institution establishes a partnership with another institution in a different part of the world, followed by a middle section of **input from the presenters (15 mins)** on their own experiences, and data they have collected, of such partnerships. The final section will encourage participants to **identify key principles (15 mins)** of establishing potentially successful partnerships through brainstorming with the presenters in plenary.

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