

Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education: A Case Study of a UK Business School and Five International Institutions

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Chapter Introduction

The following chapter will introduce the main focus of the research conducted and provide an overview of the background to the study, the primary focus of the research, and its significance within the field of cross-cultural relationship management within higher education. The term internationalisation is frequently used within higher education, this chapter will introduce the concept of internationalisation within the frame of international partnership development. The aims and objectives of the research will be identified. A summary of the research methodology and research questions will be highlighted.

1.2 Background to the study

International partnership development has become a prime focus within the higher education sector. The current literature on the topic is fragmented and there is an absence of influential theories explaining the phenomena under study. Many authors have addressed issues surrounding the concept of internationalisation, identifying several myths around internationalisation and reviewing current practices in the global marketplace. The research of key authors in the field will be critically reviewed in the literature review. Knight (2015), and De Wit & Jones (2014) considered areas including barriers and commitment with Borys & Jameson (1989) and Wilson (1995) considering key stages and variables in relationship development and the concepts of risk and the importance of hybrid relationships. De Haan (2014) and Green (2003) explore concepts related to the perceived value of internationalisation in higher education with Bell et al (2014) and Eckel and Hartley (2008) further developing the importance of academic strategic alliances. Turner & Robson (2007) and Van Dijk & Meijer (1997) introduce concepts such as the 'International continuum' and the 'Internationalisation cube' respectively, allowing for clearer

self-assessment of institutions' approaches to internationalisation in higher education. Davies (1995) and later Warwick & Moogan (2013) highlight the role of ad hoc developments and how these can differ across institutions. These key areas of research will be critically reviewed to support the development of a conceptual framework for exploration.

International strategy development within the higher education sector has been identified as a key component to successful development but very few authors have attempted to address how International developments are conceived when considering cross cultural relationship management within higher education partnerships. Alongside International developments, implementation and relationship maintenance are considered crucial to success. This research will explore the impact in the higher education sector and analyse these concepts.

Further to the research based on internationalisation, considerable research has been focused on the nature of cross-cultural relationship management, Hofstede (1980) produced the seminal work on culture with Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975), Johanson and Vahlne (1977), Wiedersheim-Paul et al. (1978) developing the concept of psychic distance. These areas of research will be critically reviewed in relation to internationalisation in higher education. Some criticisms of the concept have been voiced (O'Grady and Lane, 1996; and Stöttinger and Schlegelmilch, 2000) but support is still maintained for the concepts with several key authors (Evans *et al.* (2000), Conway and Swift (2000 and 2002), Brock and Johnson (2004), Sousa and Bradley (2006), Dow and Karunaratna (2006). Babichenko (2006) agreeing the importance of psychic distance in cross-cultural relationship management. As the linkage to the higher education sector has not been identified, these works will be critically reviewed in relation to the higher education sector in the following literature review chapter.

Consideration has been given to the importance of cross-cultural skills development within the sector but primarily focused on the student experience. This research will identify the cultural differences at a macro level between

institutions and how they approach international partnership development. Further, the research will analyse how cross-cultural experience is valued within higher educational establishments and how this feeds into the development of international partnerships. The research will address these gaps in the literature in relation to the Higher education sector.

1.2.1 Research significance and focus

De Haan (2014) Highlights the fact that higher education institutions widely acknowledge the link between internationalisation and competitive advantage. She states that concerns have been raised by higher education institutes about whether competitive advantage can be gained using current internationalisation strategies. She further acknowledges that this relationship has not yet been investigated, and highlights that different institutions view international relationships differently and also that there is a gap between senior management and faculty members when considering the benefits of internationalisation. This concept is further supported by Williams (2021) highlighting issues where strategic plans related to internal process and are more a figurative activity not fully addressing the need for change. This concept has further reviewed by Warwick & Moogan (2013) comparing internationalisation strategies of groups of UK universities and the views of the different staff groups involved in the process. They highlight how differing approaches vary in success depending on a series of qualities the institutions need to possess in order to implement effective internationalisation strategies. They conclude that within UK universities there are significant commercial pressures to recruit international students. They emphasise that recruitment should not be confused with internationalisation whereby internationalisation is viewed as an ongoing process involving teaching and learning, research collaborations, curriculum development, the student experience, staff development, and student support services. From their research they conclude that there are many gaps between the intentions of the organisations from their strategies and the actual capability to deliver the strategy. Significant gaps relate to the lack of staff development an investment in other resources to

support the level of internationalisation. The importance of both staff and student mobility is highlighted as a key development required to truly develop internationalisation. They further highlight the need for communicating the internationalisation strategy is of significant importance.

Altbach and Knight (2007) place emphasis on how universities have developed strategies to benefit from the global environment and attract international students. They discuss the various methods universities have established partnerships with other academic institutions to offer academic programmes, develop research, develop branch campuses, offshore academic programmes, and franchise agreements. They further acknowledge an increase in the development of twinning programmes where universities collaborate to offer joint or dual degrees. They acknowledge that these developments may create additional revenue, but they also contribute to the internationalisation of the home campus and the partner institutions. Sharipov (2020) further explores these concepts concluding that there are many forms of internationalisation and the key drivers remain both financial alongside staff/student mobility, further stressing the need for higher education institutions to adapt to the changing environment. Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley (2009) highlight the importance of culture and quality within higher education and emphasise the growing number of quality assurance agencies in operation. They discuss how universities have become more bureaucratic as they have grown and increasingly have become more accountable to external authorities such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) as well as The European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS). Differing institutional strategies may impact the direction these accrediting bodies have of international developments and how different institutes place value on these accreditations. Kosmutzky and Putty (2015) discuss the importance of quality assurance and regulation and support the concept that risk is a significant challenge and needs to be adequately addressed. They point to international guidelines and policies to support quality assurance at institutional and policy level an international registry for accreditation agencies and bodies. They further highlight that some

national frameworks and regulatory systems for quality assurance are not necessarily in agreement with the external assessment methods approved by international accrediting bodies.

When considering competition and strategy in higher education Pucciarelli and Kaplan (2016) Identify the challenges faced by the higher education sector as providers of high quality public education. They discussed the pressures of an ever increasing and competitive knowledge marketplace and highlight the importance for the need of appropriate strategies for higher educational institutions to successfully develop. They propose 3 key challenges that higher education institutions will face namely;

- The need to enhance prestige and market share
- The need to embrace an entrepreneurial mindset
- The need to expand interactions and value co-creation with key stakeholders

To this end they place university management and academics at the core of this activity whereby managers must act as leaders but must also balance prestige driven and market driven logics embedded in co-creation. The concept of co-creation and collaboration is highlighted by Caruana & Montgomery (2015:16) where they suggest that academics and students have 'yet to find their voice' when considering transnational Higher Education developments.

The significance of collaboration and co-creation can be further considered as function of staff involvement and experience. Henderson, Barnett & Barrett. (2017) discuss the challenges for higher educational professional staff. The consideration that transnational education is a considerable growth area requiring both professional staff and academic staff to develop rapidly to meet the challenges of the market is significant. They highlight the importance to evaluate potential opportunities and risks across multiple partnerships and further emphasise the necessity for clear organizational practices, due diligence, stakeholder management, quality assurance, financial investment,

decision making, commercial and legal support and significant adaptation and management. Although significant experience is held within academic institutions, gaps still clearly remain and the need to share best practice and experience is increasing. Bovill, Jordan, & Watters (2015) further place emphasis on the challenges faced by academic staff when considering transnational developments and teaching, they highlight the use of Hofstede's cultural dimension model to emphasise the challenges faced.

This research focuses on cross cultural relationship management between a UK Business School and five of the Schools' International higher education partner institutions. The initial stages of the research will be to analyse the systems in place at each institution employing document analysis relating to the organisation and partnership agreements. The focus in this study will be placed on recognised higher education institutions undertaking collaborative credit bearing programmes. The research will purely focus on partnerships where quality assurance and communication is a key factor for successful development, implementation and maintenance. The operational practices of the partnerships will be further explored via interviews with the key stakeholders at both the UK Business School and the associated partner institutions. From the analysis of the differing systems in place a conceptual framework will be developed to identify the key entities and processes involved international partnership development, implementation and maintenance. The analysis will further identify the key stakeholders involved in international strategy development and the communication methods to support effective implementation and ongoing maintenance of the relationships. Using published works within the field of cultural difference and international strategy development the research will assess the effectiveness of the current practices and the impact these may have between the higher educational institutions. The research will follow an embedded case study approach where the researcher, dependant on the start date of the partnership, has had between 4 to 15 years experience working with the institutions.

1.3 Research Aims

To evaluate critically the stakeholder perceptions of factors impacting the effectiveness of cross-cultural international relationship management in global Higher Educational partner Institutions and analyse the impact on International strategy development, management, implementation and maintenance.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. Evaluate international academic strategic alliances in relation to partner selection, purpose, boundaries, value and maintenance; identify the key stakeholders and drivers.
2. To investigate the approaches to strategic relationship development in the UK and Partner institutions.
3. To evaluate the role culture plays in relationship management of the partnership.
4. To explore the effectiveness of implementation strategies in the institutions.
5. To evaluate the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation in the institutions.

1.5 Research Questions

- How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?
- What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?
- How are new international developments managed and supported?

- How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?
- What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?
- What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?
- How effective is the support and communication?

1.6 Proposed Methodology

Following a thorough review of the current literature and the available methodologies, the most appropriate primary research approach will be selected and conducted. Saunders et al (2015) describe the research 'onion' approach to formulating a research philosophy; the research will follow this approach. Secondary data will be collected to establish the current situation of the Universities involved in the international partnerships; thus enabling a general overview of the institutions relative position to gain an appreciation of their current level of internationalisation and their future aspirations. Each Institution will be analysed internally to assess the organizational attributes and identify the key stakeholders and processes involved in the international activities. By generating this model for each of the institutions in question a better perspective of both the processes and the primary stakeholders at each stage can be identified. To gain an appreciation of the views of the primary stakeholders in the respective institutions and given the nature of the research an epistemological philosophical standpoint and inductive approach will be adopted. The research will adopt Critical Realism as a phenomenological epistemology and follow an inductive approach; the research design will be adopted to conduct case study analysis; purposive sampling will be adopted. By adopting the case study approach a true picture of how the interactions

between the identified processes and stakeholders will be understood and clearly defined. The relationship both internally and externally can then be related to the international strategy of each institution. The case study will consist of three main components of analysis; documentary evidence from each of the institutions, semi structured interviews with the key stakeholders, and observational research conducted by the researcher. The researcher has from 4 to 15 years experience working with the partnerships and therefore has an in depth understanding of the organizational structure, the processes, the primary stakeholders and the differing challenges faced at each stage both internally and externally. The choice of institutions for the case studies will be made with consideration to access for the researcher, the experience of working within the institution's operational structures, and the relationship between each of the institutions. Consideration will also been given to the cultural differences, the operational differences, and the demands imposed on each institution from their differing governance structures. By utilising Hofstede's 6 dimensions of national culture, and experience of the different partnership agreements five international partners from five countries with differing attributes will be selected. De Haan (2014) researched the relationship between internationalisation and competitive advantage and adopted a qualitative approach by initially identifying the key stakeholders involved in the processes (purposive sampling) and using semi structured interviews. By adopting this approach, the research will gain an understanding of the personal opinions, experiences, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, and behaviours of the participants.

Institutional faculty (and institution) stakeholders from each country will be selected by adopting a critical case sampling method related to the current partnership agreement. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the following stakeholders from each institution.

International Partners

- Senior Faculty Management and or
- Senior Institution Management

- Senior Faculty Management
- Academics with partnership responsibilities (Link Tutors)
- Faculty academics
- Faculty professional support staff
- University International Office Heads of Department
- University International Management

1.7 Contribution to Knowledge

This research will combine multiple models to analyse the situation. Initially, analyses will be conducted on each institution to identify the key stakeholders processes and entities. Models of analyses will be further applied to assess the impact of cultural difference within the institutions on the level of importance given to stakeholder involvement. Following the review of the current literature key models have been identified to build into the analysis framework.

1.7.1 Gap Analysis

From the gap analysis several key areas have been identified.

- Strategy development & communication
- Cultural Differences & Psychic Distance in Higher Education
- Ad hoc vs systematic developments in Internationalisation
- Relationship development in HE
- Human Resource policy and organisational structures

The research will analyse these gaps by adopting the established models from the literature.

1.8 Organisation of Study

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter will introduce the background to the study, the focus and significance of the research, and identify the aims and objectives of the research. The chapter will also include the research questions, proposed methodology and contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will provide an overview of cross-cultural relationship management in higher education. A review of the current cultural difference models including Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the concept of psychic distance. The chapter will further explore strategic relationship development, international partnership typologies, and the role of internationalisation in higher education. Staff knowledge, experience, and selection will be discussed in the context of higher education. Identification of a theoretical framework will be made to enable exploration of the entities and processes adopted by the institutions to support the analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter will contain a critical review of available research methods. A review of the different research stages, research philosophy and approaches will be analysed. The focus of the research will be identified, and the research design and strategy discussed. The case study approach will be detailed including design, questions, propositions, analysis tools and reliability and validity. Case selection will be discussed for both institutions on participants followed by a description of the analysis methods adopted.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The chapter will focus on the research collected from the semi-structured open ended interviews with all the participant supported by the embedded

observational research and document analysis. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify key themes arising from the data collection in relation to the research questions..

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations

The chapter will evaluate the findings of the research in relation to the aims and objectives reviewing the theoretical framework to identify key areas of interest. Relationships to the models examined in the literature review will be related to the findings of the case study and any generalisable recommendation will be made.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

The following chapter analyses the current models available in relation to cross-cultural relationship management, strategic international developments, international partnership typologies, and the role of internationalization in Higher Education. It will consider the implications of staff knowledge, experience and selection with respect to policies and practices. In conclusion, the review will present a theoretical framework to connect the propositions, entities/processes, research questions and highlight the current gaps in research.

Developing international relationships through partnerships and collaborations is gaining increasing importance in Higher Education; so much so, that for effective collaborations to take place, established models of cross-cultural relationship management and internationalisation strategy developments must be reviewed and adapted to the specific needs of the sector.

As businesses expand globally, future business decision makers will increasingly be required to demonstrate dexterity in dealing with cultural differences. However, the training and education of these individuals is problematic due to the differences between cultures that may be found at national, organisational and individual levels. De Wit and Jones (2014) highlight that from the International Association of Universities 4th Global Survey (2014) leaders in the Higher Education sector consider academics have limited experience, expertise, interest, engagement and capacity for internationalisation. Ryan, Faulkner, Dillane, & Flood (2020) further discuss the lack of research in understanding engagement within an internationalised curriculum from the academics perspective.

Knight (2015) supports the importance of the Internationalisation of HEIs but notes the previous barriers of lack of senior management commitment, policy

and finances are being superseded by lack of expertise of international offices, and significantly, the level of interest, involvement and lack of international/intercultural experience by faculty members.

2.2 Strategic relationship development

Wilson (1995) built on the earlier works of Borys & Jameson (1989) exploring the models defining the variables that reflect success or failure in international relationships, and further explored the potential processes (stages) involved in relationship development. His integrated model encompassed the variables and stages involved in successful relationship developments. The integrated model describes a five stages process model where each stage gains greater or lesser importance (focus) depending on the development stage of the relationship.

1. Search and selection of an appropriate partner
2. Defining the purpose of the relationship
3. Setting the boundaries of the relationship
4. Value creation
5. Hybrid stability

In addition to the need for a structured approach to relationship development he emphasises the pressures created in today's environment to create strategic alliances within a relatively short term time scale to achieve mutual goals.

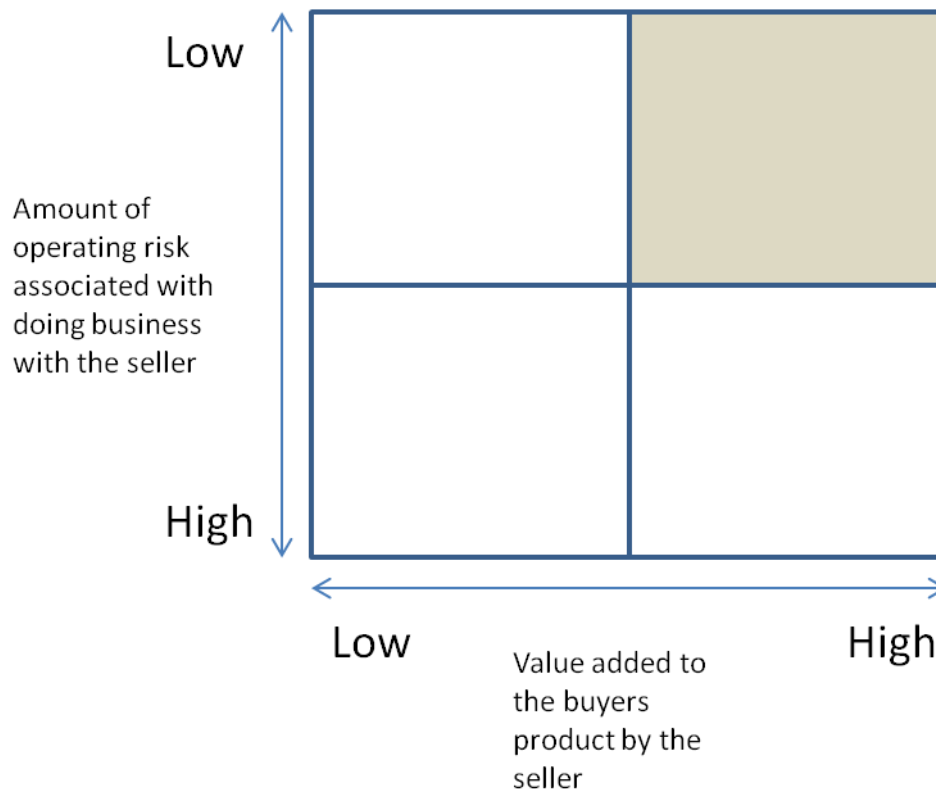
Shamsollahi, Chmielewski-Raimondo, Bell, & Kachouie (2021) further add to Wilsons previous work by developing a four stages process.

1. Relationship continuity
2. Relationship learning
3. Relationship stages and trajectories

4. Relationship fluctuations

In *Figure 1* Wilson (1995) shows a 2 x 2 table to indicate categorisation of buyer-seller relationships, the value added and the operating risk involved. Although this model is purely designed to categorise buyer-seller relationships, it could be utilised to encompass potential relationships within the Higher Education sector.

Figure 1: Categorisation of buyer-seller relationships



Source: Wilson (1995)

Organisations which fall into the upper right quadrant will have low risk with high added value. Risk in international partnership development can be described in several ways, financial risk, reputational risk and operational risk. An institution will undertake due diligence at the initial partnership exploration stage. From the due diligence analysis reputational risk and financial risk at a broad level can be assessed. The decision to continue with a potential partner is fundamentally decided at this stage. Further to this the institution embarking on

the new partnership will produce a business case to test the viability of the partnership through all stages of risk. For example, a potential partner with a proven track record and history of high quality assurance in the sector, in a stable geopolitical environment will be deemed as having low operational risk. The nature of the development will describe the value added to the institution be that financial or reputation. Therefore, a partnership operating a new franchise that meets all the above conditions can be seen as low risk with high added value. To effectively analyse both risk and potential added value any development needs to be tested against a set of defined criteria or variables.

Wilson (1995) develops a set of variables adapted from Han and Wilson (1993) based on empirical and theoretical research. Although the list is focused on buyer-seller relationships, these can be adapted to the Higher Education sector when considering international relationship developments.

Table 1: Extended list of Relationship Variables (Wilson, 1995)

Commitment
Trust
Cooperation
Mutual goals
Interdependence/Power
Imbalance
Performance Satisfaction
Comparison level of Alternative
Adaptation
Non-Retrievable Investments
Shared Technology

Summative Constructs

Structural Bonds

Social Bonds

Source: Wilson (1995)

It is envisaged that these variables will have greater or lesser importance when applied to the Higher Education sector. The research will explore these variables and their relationship to international developments within Higher Education partners. Wilson suggests that these variables have differing levels of activity depending on the development stages of the relationship and further builds on Borys and Jemison's (1989) Hybrid concept. Borys and Jemison (1989:pp235) define hybrids as "organisational arrangements that uses resources and/or governance structures from more than one existing organisation".

In addition, when considering Academic Strategic Alliances, Eckel and Hartley (2008) highlight a number of propositions to enable effective partnerships;

- By selecting familiar partners who have common ambitions and objectives rather than partners that might maximise a particular outcome, institutions establish a set of shared values that allows for easier reconciliation of disruptive differences.
- Recognising the inherent tensions between the interests of the individual partners and the collective was a key factor influencing organisational resilience and stability.
- Effective partnerships require a personal commitment built on ongoing face-to-face interaction rather than watertight policies and procedures.
- The more alliances are able to create a shared identity, the greater a chance that conflict will be diminished.

Eckel and Hartley (2008) conclude that the management and maintenance of strategic partnerships is at least as important as the development of curricular innovations. The need for a set of principles grounded in an academic culture is a key determinant for success. The value of familiarity, shared objectives, and the development of a shared identity is also highlighted. This concept closely relates to Borys and Jemison's (1989:pp247) Hybrid concept where they focus on four main concepts;

- the breadth of hybrid purpose and the claims and plans that it legitimates,
- the permeability of hybrid-partner boundaries and the resources and obligations allowed to cross them,
- the interdependence of partner operations in the value creation process and the complexity of the arrangements required to manage it, and
- the nature of the hybrid's stability mechanisms.

Penalva (2021) acknowledges Eckel and Hartley's earlier research and propose an 'ecological approach to innovation in Higher Education' discussing the importance of 'building communities of learning' (collaborations) and 'social relationships' (partnerships).

When considering co-curricular developments through a series of international partners, it is clear that all of these issues are relevant. Each partner has a set of policies and procedures that they must adhere to, often with limited flexibility.

2.3 International partnership typologies

Knight (2015a) describes several typologies for cross border partnership relationships within higher education and the differing nature of the providers. The providers include; recognised 'traditional' higher education institutions, non-recognised higher education institutions, commercial company higher education institutions, corporate higher education institutions, networks and affiliations, and virtual higher education institutions. Knight (2020) expands on

her previous work discussing the increase in the number of overseas campuses, joint/dual awards and distance learning highlighting the associated consequences including the risks and benefits with these ventures.

Award accreditation can be provided by the host institution, the affiliated partner, or jointly. Programme delivery can also be considered in various forms; franchising, twinning, dual/joint degrees, articulation, and validation models, plus distance or blended learning delivery. For this study the focus will be placed on recognised 'traditional' higher education institutions undertaking collaborative credit bearing programmes as stated above. Although international strategies do also consider international student recruitment as a priority it is deemed beyond the scope of this study. The research will purely focus on credit bearing collaborations where quality assurance and communication is a key factor for successful development, implementation and maintenance.

2.4 The role of Internationalization

It is important at this stage to appreciate what is meant by the term internationalisation in a Higher Education context. Knight (2015b:pp2) proposes the definition that "Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education." She further breaks down the definition into its constituent elements. The term process denotes the evolutionary aspects of the relationship with emphasis on the traditional concepts of input, process, output where output is deemed to be of increasing significance in today's climate and relates directly to the partners, or countries, overall priorities. This can be seen as a reference to the value of the relationship and the associated importance placed at an early stage of the strategic decision making process. International indicates the cross boarder nature of relationships either at a country or cultural level. Intercultural further expands on this to describe the differences that exist within cultures and the diversity inherent within them. The triad is completed by emphasising the

worldwide nature of internationalisation. The term integration places emphasis on the concept that these elements do not stand alone and must be embedded into the overall strategy and policies of higher education institutions when considering all aspects of future developments and their associated perceived value or competitive advantage.

De Haan (2014) explores the relationship between internationalisation and institutional competitive advantage emphasising the differing perceptions of perceived value within the organisational structures of Higher Educational Institutions. Building on the work of Green (2003) who discusses the positive view of students and faculty, with respect to international education highlighting a lack of internationalisation at the institutional level. Following on from Green's research, Guo-Brennan (2022) discusses authenticity in cross-cultural learning and cross cultural collaboration via virtual learning as a high-impact practice in higher education to further support international student experience and knowledge sharing.

De Hann's work primarily focuses on the perceived advantage gained at an institutional level citing; building the international profile and reputation, enhancing inter-cultural staff and student knowledge, strategic alliances, knowledge production, and financial gains as the main focus points. Increased international student enrolment being the key driver to financial gain and hence increased competitive advantage, at the same time, acknowledging the problematic issues that these developments can create. Table 2 shows the distinction between job roles when considering competitive advantage and internationalisation. Distinctions can be seen within the perceptions of senior management and other academic stakeholders in the perceived value of the internationalisation agenda, with education and research quality showing the largest difference.

Table 2. Data analysis on the relationship between internationalisation and competitive advantage enhancement along job function dimension

	Senior Management	International staff Central	International staff Faculty	Academics
Survival and Growth (66%)	75%	72%	46%	65%
Education/Research Quality (42%)	100%	31%	31%	43%
Student Employability (36%)	38%	45%	31%	26%

Source: De Haan (2014)

Table 2 highlights some of the key issues when considering priorities given by differing groups of stakeholders involved in institutional internationalisation developments. Table 2 highlights that survival and growth is the highest priority followed by education and research quality with student employability appearing as the least important. It can be seen from the table that international staff at the faculty level view survival and growth lower than other job functions. Education and research quality is ranked highest by senior management but considerably lower by the other job functions, the research will investigate the reasons behind this difference and explore the relationship between senior management perspectives of the strategic importance of education and research quality compared to that at an operational level. Further, student employability is ranked low across all job functions with the exception of international staff at the central level; the research will explore whether this holds true and is a function of marketing as opposed to a direct face to face student operational issue. The relationship between senior management decision makers and other job functions at the operational levels need to be explored in depth to assess the perceived difference from the various stakeholders. Turner and Robson (2007) highlighted the gap between competitive and cooperative motivation within Higher Education policy makers and academics when considering commercial internationalisation on an

academic community. They emphasise that in an increasingly commercially based environment academic stakeholders may disengage with the activities and thus jeopardise the success of the institution's internationalisation strategy. Ma and Montgomery (2021) refer to the research of Turner and Robson highlighting the importance of the individual in partnership relationship development discussing the increasing importance placed on "formalised collaborative agreements" overshadowing the role of the academics and their associated networks.

Table 3 shows the International continuum where the extremes of the continuum represent differing stakeholder perceptions.

Table 3 The International continuum		
		
International	Symbolic	Transformative
Orientation:		
Stimulus:	External	Internal
Management Style:	Designed	Emergent
Financial Cost- and Focus:	Revenue-focused	Investment-focused
International	Business-led	Internationalist
Impetus:		
External	Competitive	Cooperative
Engagement:		
Institutional	Prescriptive	Descriptive
Characterization of Internationalization:		
Style of Participation:	Compliance	Commitment
International	Institutional	Personal
Values:		

Turner and Robson (2007)

The continuum demonstrates a clear distinction at each extreme, although each place on the continuum has its own merits, they are dependent on the aims of each institution. The research will explore these variables in the context of the different stakeholders.

It is important to note that several misconceptions surrounding internationalisation have been highlighted. Knight (2011) describes five myths about internationalisation, although clearly acknowledging that these are not the case in all institutions.

1. Foreign Students as Internationalization Agents: The myth stems from the belief that the larger number of international students on campus the greater level of cultural experience within the curricula. This is not always the case as some groups of international often feel marginalised with limited interaction with home students (unless specifically designed within the curriculum). The myth can be viewed as a positive justification for increasing revenue from overseas registrations; with emphasis placed on the academic staff to integrate the students without sufficient support, planning or design, thus creating disparity on the internationalisation continuum at various levels.

2. International Reputation as a Proxy for Quality: The drive for increased international reputation is evident in higher education in terms of global, national rankings. The greater the level of internationalisation in terms of number of agreements, students, faculty, curriculum, research and networks the greater the quality of the institution will be viewed. Again, without effective support, policy and implementation, this potentially creates greater challenges for quality assurance rather than creating a guarantee of quality.

3. International Institutional Agreements: A common misconception is that the greater number of institutional agreements the greater the status of the institution. The pressure and workload generated by too many agreements that may not necessarily function in a positive way can create problems at various levels. The maintenance of these relationships can be complex and require specific skill sets from staff involved, in addition the knowledge required by

academics to appreciate a large variety of cultural differences can potentially lead to disengagement, again creating a polarising effect on the internationalisation continuum.

4. International Accreditation: The drive to achieve the maximum number of external international accreditation is high on many institutions agendas, Urgel (2007), Trapnell (2007). Although these accreditations can be viewed as a quality stamp for an institution, Knight (2011:p15) states that this is 'simply not true', in that consideration is not given to the 'scope, scale, or value of international activities related to teaching/learning, research, and service to society either through public engagement or private enterprise'.

5. Global Branding: The myth here is embedded in the fact that an international marketing strategy is not an integrated academic internationalisation plan. Although successful internationalisation of an institution can lead to opportunities to create a successful marketing strategy, the one follows the other and not the opposite.

Knight summarises these myths as warnings to institutions that some of the common drivers for internationalisation such as competitiveness, rankings, and commercialism may have unintended consequences. The common feature of these myths is that they are not quantifiable and '... do not capture the human key intangible performances of students, faculty, researchers, and the community that bring significant benefits of internationalization'.

De Wit (2017) builds on Knights five myths exploring the concept that internationalisation has moved from a marginal factor to a central factor, highlighting that organisational strategies to promote internationalisation have become a goal rather than a means for development. The nine myths are;

Education in the English language

The influence of the English language as a medium of communication in research has been dominant for a long period of time. Also, over the past 20 years the tendency in higher education has been to teach in English, as an

alternative for teaching in one's mother tongue. There are several unintended negative effects. Increasingly, education offered in the English language is regarded as the equivalent of internationalization, which results in a decreasing focus on other foreign languages; in an insufficient focus on the quality of the English spoken by students and teachers for whom English is not their native language; and thus leading to a decline in the quality of education.

Studying or staying abroad

A study or internship abroad as part of your home studies is often regarded as the equivalent of internationalization. In particular, the European Commission's policy to stimulate this manner of mobility has contributed to that instrumental approach over the last 25 years. It is questionable, however, whether the imbalanced and oversimplified approach to mobility matches internationalization. As well, it can be said that mobility is merely an instrument for promoting internationalization and not a goal in itself. Mobility needs to be finely embedded in the internationalization of education. It should be determined whether these Internationalization in European higher education has developed over the last 20 years, from a marginal point of interest to a central factor—also called a mainstreaming of internationalization. Indisputably, globalization of our societies and economies has expanded the influence of competition and market processes on the manner in which internationalization is implemented. Internationalization distinguishes many motives and approaches. The mainstreaming of internationalization assumes a more integral process-based approach, aimed at a better quality of higher education and competencies of staff and students. Reality is less promising, however, although the international dimension takes an increasingly central role in higher education. Still, there is a predominantly activity-oriented or even instrumental approach toward internationalization, which leads to major misconceptions about the nature of this development.

An international subject

A third misconception that continues to surface persistently is that internationalization is synonymous with providing training based on international content or connotation: European studies, international business, or universal music. Within the institutions and schools offering these programs, the prevailing opinion seems to imply that, in this way, internationalization has been properly implemented. Without meaning to ignore the valuable contribution of such programs, again, it is too simplistic and instrumental an argument to declare regional studies as synonymous with internationalization.

Having many international students

A fourth misconception of internationalization is the assumption that having many international students equals that trend. Without denying that the combination of local and international students in the lecture room can make a significant contribution to internationalization, simply having international students is not sufficient. Unfortunately, countless examples can be given of programs that are oriented exclusively toward international students or where international students are being added as an isolated group.

Few international students guarantees success

The other side of the preceding misconception occurs as well. In particular, many international programs have developed a distorted proportion between the number of local and international students. Partly as a result of the increasing national and international competition for international students, the proportion between local and international students becomes more and more unequal. Thus, one can hardly speak of an international classroom setting. Conversely, this development has a negative effect on the internationalization of mainstream, non-English-language programs. Local students with a certain, whether or not motivated, international interest preferably enroll in the international programs which means the interest of mainstream education in the local language dwindles. Also, in these programs, the presence of a small number of international students creates tensions. Should the courses be taught in English if there are only one or two international students in the lecture

room? How can the integration of international students be realized in such distorted proportions?

No need to test intercultural or international competencies

A sixth misconception assumes that students normally acquire intercultural and international competencies if they study or serve their internship abroad or take part in an international class. This misconception is closely related to the previous ones about mobility, education in English, and the presence of international students. If these kinds of activities and instruments are considered synonymous with internationalization, then it is obvious to assume that intercultural and international competences will therefore also be acquired. Once again, reality is more complicated. It is not guaranteed from the outset that these activities will actually lead to that result. After all, students can completely seclude themselves from sharing experiences with other students and other sections of the population in the countries they visit.

The more partnerships, the more international

A seventh misconception on internationalization is the focus on partnerships: the more partnerships, the more success of internationalization. Globalization, competition, and market processes have reinforced the development toward strategic partnerships. This tendency toward strategic partnerships often implicates intentions, however. The majority of partnerships remain bilateral, and in several institutions and schools the number far exceeds the number of students and teachers being exchanged.

Higher education - international by nature

At universities and among their researchers, the general opinion identified a truly international characteristic, and thus there is no need to stimulate and guide internationalization. Thereby, references are made to the Renaissance, the time of the philosopher Erasmus (ca. 1467–1536), whom the European exchange program is named after. This historic reference ignores the fact that universities, mostly originated in the 18th and 19th century, had a clear national

orientation and function. Internationalization does not arrive naturally in general universities and universities of applied sciences, but needs to be introduced. That is why the rather widely accepted definition of internationalization by Jane Knight refers to an integration process.

Internationalisation as a precise goal

Most of the mentioned misconceptions conceive an activity or instrument as synonymous with internationalization. The last, also fairly prevailing, misconception regards internationalization as a main goal, and therefore it is in line with the misconceptions mentioned earlier. Internationalization is a process to introduce intercultural, international, and global dimensions in higher education; to improve the goals, functions, and delivery of higher education; and thus to upgrade the quality of education and research. If internationalization is regarded as a specific goal, then it remains ad hoc and marginal.

Source: De Wit (2017)

To further understand the impacts of internationalisation on Higher education institutes the changing value of mobility and international experience need to be addressed.

2.5 The changing value of mobility and international experience

The increasing importance of international engagement is emphasised in the Erasmus Impact Study (2014) in that; employer importance to study abroad has nearly doubled from 37% in 2006 to 64% in 2013 and that 92% of employers are now looking for 'transversal' skills.

The Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study (2019) states that "Between 2014 and 2018, two million students and staff in higher education undertook a learning, training, or teaching period abroad with the new Erasmus+ programme. The objective of the study was to assess the impact of Erasmus+ mobilities on staff, students and higher education institutions. It was based on

almost 77,000 survey responses from these groups.” The main findings are included in the following table

Table 4: The Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study (2019)

<p>Access to mobility</p> <p>Institutional support has improved since 2014: students assess the conditions for internationalisation at their home institution remarkably better than they did in 2014.</p> <p>Institutional support plays a vital role for the quality of the mobility experience: the better students assess the support and services at their home institution, the larger the gain they report from their mobility experience.</p> <p>Former Erasmus+ students who reported to have a disadvantaged background consider the opportunity to receive an Erasmus+ grant for their mobility more important for their decision to take part than those who did not report a disadvantage.</p> <p>Academic Path and Learning Experience</p> <p>Erasmus+ participants experience new teaching methods and learning practices while abroad. More than 2/3 report to have started using new learning techniques after their mobility.</p> <p>Participants in Erasmus+ are likely to proceed to a higher level of studies. Moreover, around one in four reported to have changed their study plans, and of those more than 80% state that the mobility was helpful to make decisions regarding what they want to study. After their Erasmus+ experience, 72% have a better idea of what they want to do in their future career.</p> <p>Students from countries with lower GDP reported the highest levels of impact from mobility on their studies. The highest impact is reported from the low GDP group. By region, participants from Southern European Programme Countries and Partner Countries report the highest impact, while participants from Western European Programme Countries report the lowest.</p>

Competencies relevant to employment and a cohesive society

Former Erasmus+ participants reported a gain in their knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to employment and to the development of cohesive societies: 9 in 10 participants, for example, reported to have improved their knowledge of the host country, adaptability, interaction with people from other cultures and intercultural competencies.

Former participants perceived an improvement of skills that help foster social cohesion: 95% reported to get along better with people from other cultural backgrounds and 93% to better take into account cultural perspectives/ differences when others have different ideas/ opinions. They also perceive a higher impact on their personality (e.g. the ability to assess their own strengths and weaknesses), social engagement, intercultural openness and studies than participants in other mobility programmes.

Former participants from countries with lower GDP travelling to distant countries report higher gains on intercultural openness, social engagement and employability skills.

Employability

Erasmus(+) graduates report that mobility helped their careers: 72% of Erasmus+ graduates reported that mobility had been beneficial for their careers. Graduates from Southern and Eastern Programme Countries, as well as those from Partner Countries, reported a benefit to their careers more frequently than those from other regions.

Erasmus(+) graduates find their first job after graduation quicker than non-mobile students. They are also happier with their jobs than non-mobiles. Erasmus+ graduates report higher values on the Job Quality Index, which measures aspects of the current job such as job security, career prospects.

Erasmus+ participants (POST group) are very open to international careers - 87% agree or rather agree that they definitely want to work abroad for at least

some time. The careers of Erasmus(+) graduates are more international than those of non-mobile students: 23% started their first job abroad.

Erasmus+ graduates from Northern and Western European Programme Countries tend to stay in the same geographical region for their first job –even when they go abroad to work- (46% did in both regions), to a higher extent than those from Eastern (24%) and Southern (28%) European Programme Countries, who tend to change region more often when they go abroad to work.

Compared to non-mobile graduates, the jobs of Erasmus(+) graduates have significantly more international aspects. Only 20% of Erasmus(+) graduates state that their current job has no international characteristics.

Graduates in Southern European Programme Countries are those who report a higher level of satisfaction with their jobs, whereas those from Eastern European Programme Countries have the most international careers.

40% of graduates who undertook an Erasmus+ traineeship were offered a position by the employer that hosted them. In EIS 2014 this share was 33%.

Access to mobility: barriers and motivations

Personal reasons and work responsibilities hinder staff participation in Erasmus+: the most frequent barriers are family reasons and personal relationships (67%), followed by working responsibilities (64%).

84% of staff participants find that the duration of stays abroad is adequate

Financial support provided by the programme is an important factor stimulating mobility according to 85% of staff

Professional and institutional advancement are important motivations for participants: over 90% of respondents reported the opportunity to establish new collaborations, to improve their competences in their field, to reinforce collaboration with a partner institution abroad or to internationalise their professional networks as reasons to take part in the programme.

Competencies

Erasmus+ staff participants perceive greater benefits for their transversal and social skills than participants from other mobility programmes: 91% reported a gain in intercultural competencies and 86% in their social competencies, compared to 85% and 78% respectively from other mobility programmes. The perceived impact on competencies is higher for Erasmus+ participants from Southern and Eastern Europe and from Partner Countries than for those from other regions.

Impact on Institutions

This section presents findings on the impact of Erasmus+ at the institutional level based on two surveys: a survey of staff (asking staff about the impacts of staff mobility at the department –rather than the individual- level), and a survey of higher education.

Continuation of Erasmus+ was reported to be very important or absolutely essential by 95 % of HEIs. There are marked imbalances between the demand and supply for places across participating countries. In a considerable share of HEIs the demand for mobility is higher than the number of available places, both for students (24%) and staff (28%). In 21% of institutions there is a lower demand than student mobility places available, and in 19% this is the case for staff. Demand for mobility is higher than supply especially in Partner countries (where more than 50% of respondents reported higher demand than supply in the case of student and staff mobility).

Institutions expect mobility to add value compared to their other activities: almost 80% of institutions expect student mobility to enable students to acquire new competences, and over 50% (63% in the case of small HEIs) expect staff mobility to provide inspiration for new teaching methods.

The benefits of Erasmus+ participation spread beyond individual participants. The majority (54%-83% depending on the method) of mobile staff report an impact on the use of teaching methods in their home and in their host

department as a result of participation in the programme. Similarly, a large share of staff report impact on curriculum development and teaching activities (72%-85% depending on the type of activity). Staff from Southern, Eastern European and Partner countries report the highest impact at departmental level

A large majority of respondents attribute improvements in student mobility management and student support at least to some extent to participation in Erasmus+. Around a quarter of respondents reported that Erasmus+ had impacted support services to a high degree.

The vast majority of HEIs reported having an internationalisation strategy (almost 90%). Such strategies tend to be strongly student-centred and refer to international student mobility.

50% of the HEIs reported that cooperation with institutions from partner countries had taken place as part of Erasmus+ international credit mobility (ICM). Erasmus+ and its predecessor programmes have been instrumental in putting ICM arrangements in place.

Inviting staff from enterprises generates positive impacts on curriculum development and teaching activities. According to staff, the impact of inviting staff from enterprises is highest with regards to helping students to gain a better understanding of entrepreneurship, the application of knowledge to real life cases and employers' skill demands (around 90% of respondents reported at least some impact in these areas).

Erasmus+ cooperation projects contribute to the development and strengthening of cooperation between HEIs and enterprises as well as other actors outside the HE sector. Cooperation between HEIs and enterprises most often pertains to knowledge sharing and research cooperation and is reported to have important positive impacts on curriculum and teaching activities.

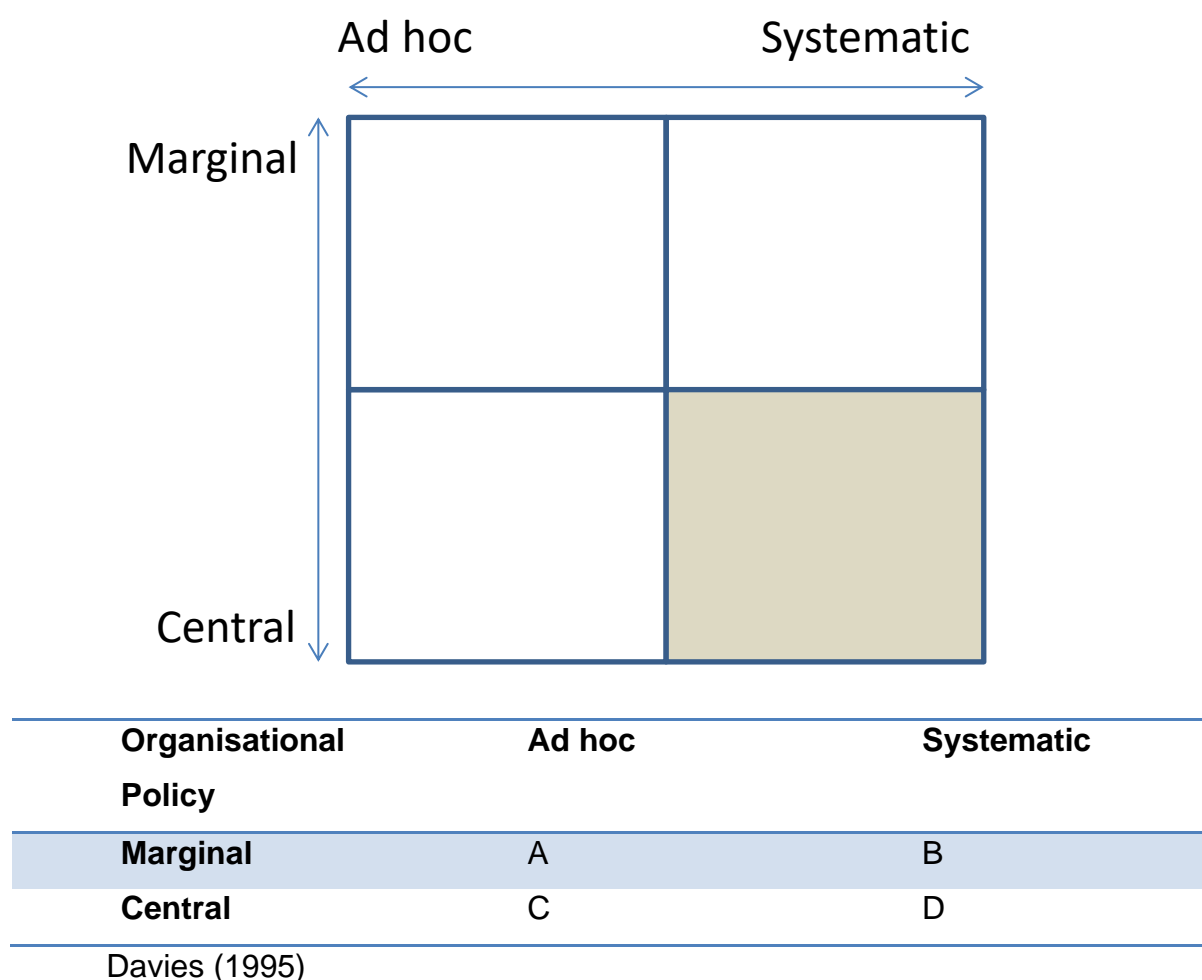
Source: Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study (2019)

2.6 Approaches to Internationalisation

The proposition of assessing or benchmarking the effectiveness of internationalisation strategies has been researched in detail. De Wit (2017) addresses these issues based on previous works, and highlights the lessons learned from these differing approaches and experiences.

The concept of a systematic strategic approach to the internationalisation of higher education institutions was emphasised by Davies (1995) proposing a model for self-evaluation of a Universities International strategy base on two dimensions;

Figure 2: Institutionalisation of approaches to internationalisation in Universities.



The bottom right quadrant D describes a University with a large volume of international activities accompanied by an explicit international strategy supported by all the associated resources, policies and procedures. Universities in the top left quadrant A could be described as having individuals developing their own projects with a minimal centralised strategy, with potentially limited resource support and limited management incentive for development. Davies (1995) discusses the changing nature of international activities within Universities indicating that the sector is increasingly being driven by financial needs and the rise of academic entrepreneurship. He further emphasises the role of entrepreneurial activities being driven from the corporate level, often by external factors. The nature of relationship developments within higher education could be described, depending on the individual University's International Strategy, as high risk with low added value to low risk with high added value. For example, a University strategy which places high importance on international developments (and resources) may place themselves in a high risk (for return on investment) position with the potential for low added value, if the relationship developments are not managed effectively. Equally, a university with an established and effective international strategy could position itself at low risk with the potential for high added value supporting Wilson's (1995) categorisation of buyer-seller relationships. Even given a comprehensive international strategy; the effectiveness of support mechanisms and international relationship management is still central to successful developments.

As Davies's model only considers the design stages of internationalisation strategies Policy and Implementation; Van Dijk & Meijer (1997) enhanced Davies' model to encompass support of the strategies, thus creating a third dimension. Their Internationalisation Cube remains the seminar work in this area and model consisted of;

Policy – the importance attached to internationalisation aims: Priority/Marginal

Implementation – the method of implementation: Systematic/Ad hoc

Support - the type of support for internationalization activities: Interactive/One-sided

Table 5. The Internationalisation Cube model

	Policy	Support	Implementation
1	Marginal	One-sided	Ad hoc
2	Marginal	One-sided	Systematic
3	Marginal	Interactive	Ad hoc
4	Marginal	Interactive	Systematic
5	Priority	One-sided	Ad hoc
6	Priority	One-sided	Systematic
7	Priority	Interactive	Ad hoc
8	Priority	Interactive	Systematic

Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)

The model can be interpreted in that an institution in row 1 may have limited international contacts or activities at either an institutional or departmental level, activities based on individuals' own interests with limited support and communication across centres; this could be seen as an institution in the early stages of internationalisation. An institution in cell 8 has a clearly defined internationalisation strategy supported and communicated at both institutional and departmental levels with a high degree of focused activity. Although institutions located in row 8 would be seen to have a higher level of internationalisation to ones in row 1, the authors acknowledge that the matrix is not a normative model where institutions are required to move up the scale. The model guides institutions on where they consider themselves to be and the actions required to move from one cell to the other. They further acknowledge that the matrix does not take into account whether the institutions adopt a top-down or bottom-up approach to strategy development. The initial stage of this research will adopt a Top down approach to establish a theoretical framework of the universities international processes. Once a clear framework has been established the model will be tested to evaluate the effectiveness of each stage across development, implementation and maintenance.

The findings of Van Dijk & Meijer (1997) show a clear correlation between the Policy and Implementation dimensions; but no relationship between the Support and Implementation dimensions. For example, an institution with an ad hoc approach to implementation can still show successes with either systematic or one-sided support. They further acknowledge that a detailed policy (strategy) would allow for suitable support across all levels of the institution. The research adopted two measures to assess the success of internationalisation, based on student/staff mobility both incoming and outgoing (expressed as actual numbers and their associated percentages). As the institutions used in the survey were of different sizes; the percentage measure was deemed to be the most robust. From the findings the authors concluded the following;

- More staff involved in internationalization correlates with broader support and better implementation. A higher budget is related to higher policy priority, broader support, and more solidly founded implementation.
- There are links between investments and results. The more an institution invests in internationalization, the higher the results achieved, especially in terms of student exchanges.
- Of the three process features defining the place of the institution in the cube, the support dimension displays the (relatively) strongest correlation with the results. There are links between the support dimension, that is, the degree of communication and interaction between all levels of the institution and the importance assigned to the internationalization policy.

Source: Van Dijk & Meijer, (1997)

The distinction is drawn that an institution of a proportionally larger size will ultimately have the level of resources (experiential, physical and economical) to position themselves higher in the cube, and consequently the relative success will be greater. They further conclude that to refine the model, several addition factors need to be considered;

- Further refinement of, for example, the percentage values of participation in international activities.
- The inclusion of additional values, for example, success in the acquisition of funds or recognition as leader in a consortium, internationalisation of the curricula.
- The combination of these values into an overall measure of success.

Source: Van Dijk & Meijer, (1997)

In addition, a key conclusion highlights that the cube is a developmental model. The research does not take into account the need for successful relationship management with partner institutions to develop and maintain productive relationships.

Knight (2015c) discusses that although more institutions are moving towards a more centralised International office and policy environment, and thus moving away from the ad hoc approach and getting closer to a more planned strategy, there are still considerable barriers to surpass. She notes that the previous barriers of lack of senior management commitment, policy and finances are being superseded by lack of expertise of the international offices, interest and involvement by faculties and significantly the lack of international/intercultural experience of staff. These gaps highlight the need for cross cultural management experience/expertise and significant human resource development at all levels of international policy/implementation activities. Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2015) further discuss the impacts of globalization and Internationalization at an individual level and propose the need for further research differentiated by higher education systems and their associated faculty members. Acknowledging the research of Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, Tight (2021:52-74) in the paper 'Globalization and internationalization as frameworks for higher education research' concludes "In conclusion, then, it may be said that while globalization and internationalization have had, and are

having, considerable influence on higher education policy and research, this influence forms part of a continuing tradition, and relies heavily on the complicity of the governments and institutions involved. Paradoxically, however, both researchers and policy-makers remain largely focused on national issues.”

Much research has sought to rationalise differences at national, organisational and individual levels of culture, yet despite this plethora of culture-related information, the development of future decision makers’ ability to operate in multicultural groups within Higher Education Institutions is still a challenging proposition, (Bell et al, 2014). Future developments require clearly defined internationalisation strategies supported, and maintained, by interculturally experienced stakeholders focusing on the differing forms of partnership agreements to meet the demands of today’s Higher Education environment.

To gain a full appreciation of underpinning principles of cross-cultural relationship management with the Higher Education sector; the work of key authors’ in the fields of cultural difference must be evaluated.

2.7 Cultural Difference

Cultural difference is one of the key issues that need to be considered when entering any international business relationship. To gain an appreciation of how cultural difference can affect a relationship a clear understanding of the existing models that exist must be reviewed. In the initial stages of an international business relationship cultural differences need to be a key consideration. Cultural differences should not dictate whether a business relationship is embarked upon but is an important factor in designing the strategy and approach to developing the relationship. As the prime focus of the research is based on cross cultural relationship management the research will further examine the extent to which each institution value the cultural difference models for their staff directly involved in the relationship development, management, and maintenance. Further, the research will analyse the importance associated

with cultural awareness through their policies and faculty selection. To this end two key cultural difference models have been adopted for this study; Hofstede's cultural difference model and the concept of psychic distance.

2.7.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Arguably one of the most important of the many frameworks devised for identifying and understanding cultural differences, is that proposed by Hofstede (1980). This model is based on his global empirical study of IBM personnel, and allows a comparison of different cultures, based initially on four "dimensions" of culture and remains the seminal work in the field. The Cultural Dimensions index presented an aggregate of national culture and has been used extensively by many social scientists since its publication. In relation to consumer behaviour, most research tends to focus on the Uncertainty Avoidance index, Power Distance index or Individualism Index or all three (and not on the fourth, fifth and sixth dimensions; masculinity/femininity, long term/short term orientation and Indulgence). Although the benefits of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions index to business decision makers have been demonstrated, they are not applicable at the organisational or individual level. Hofstede himself explained that the dimensions "are meant to be a test of national culture, not of individual personality; they distinguish cultural groups or populations, not individuals" (Hofstede, 1998:481).

There is little research on adapting Hofstede's model to higher education. Signorini *et al.* (2009) when discussing the application of Hofstede's cultural differences model (in the context of Higher Education) suggested that students who typically engage in prolonged international activities are not typical of the whole student body and therefore may have differing expectations and interactions from other 'home' students. Their willingness to engage in international learning activities enables them to adapt to differing learning styles and new educational experiences. Lilyman and Bennett (2014) discuss the importance for institutions and faculty to develop awareness of cultures and

beliefs. These assumptions are key to the development of cross-cultural learning experiences for ‘traditional’ students who may not normally engage in prolonged international activities and mobility away from their home environment. Warwick & Moogen (2013) Also describe a similarity within international faculty staff where pockets of international activities are often driven by faculty members who have a specialist interest in international developments. Signorini *et al* (2009) further highlight a key area of concern in that “Hofstede’s model does not take into account the flexible and challenging nature of culture and his model is not able to reflect cultural changes in the new global context of HE” (Signorini *et al.* 2009:262). Aligned to this thinking, they adopt a micro-culture stance whereby individual areas of activity and the individual’s characteristics have a more profound effect on the experience than simply nationality or geopolitical constructs. Davies (1995), Turner and Robson (2007), Warwick and Moogen (2013), highlight the principle that pockets of international activity will exist within institutions and these relate to individuals interests and can come in the form of ad hoc international developments and those purely with an enthusiasm for international activities. The research will examine the relationship between international strategy development as a systematic designed process and the links between ad hoc developments, how flexible each of the systems are, and their interrelations. The importance of faculty experience and enthusiasm can be demonstrated through the primary data collection and consideration of each institution's international development strategies.

The research aims to assess how cultural difference impacts the relationship between five International Higher Educational Institutions and the UK University Business School and how each of the institutions both appreciate and manage the differences. Definitions of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Hofstede’s Dimensions - Definitions

Dimension	Definition

Power Distance	Power Distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This dimension is thought to date from the advent of agriculture, and with it, of large-scale societies. Until that time, a person would know their group members and leaders personally. This is not possible where tens of thousands and more have to coordinate their lives. Without acceptance of leadership by powerful entities, none of today's societies could run.
Individualism /Collectivism	Individualism is the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes. Individualism does not mean egoism. It means that individual choices and decisions are expected. Collectivism does not mean closeness. It means that one "knows one's place" in life, which is determined socially. With a metaphor from physics, people in an individualistic society are more like atoms flying around in a gas while those in collectivist societies are more like atoms fixed in a crystal.
Masculinity /Femininity	Masculinity is the extent to which the use of force is endorsed socially. In a masculine society, men are supposed to be tough. Men are supposed to be from Mars, women from Venus. Winning is important for both genders. Quantity is important and big is beautiful. In a feminine society, the genders are emotionally closer. Competing is not so openly endorsed, and there is sympathy for the underdog. This is not about individuals, but about expected emotional gender roles. Masculine

	societies are much more openly gendered than feminine societies.
Uncertainty Avoidance	Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. Uncertainty avoidance has nothing to do with risk avoidance, nor with following rules. It has to do with anxiety and distrust in the face of the unknown, and conversely, with a wish to have fixed habits and rituals, and to know the truth.
Long/Short-term Orientation	Long-term orientation deals with change. In a long-time-oriented culture, the basic notion about the world is that it is in flux, and preparing for the future is always needed. In a short-time-oriented culture, the world is essentially as it was created, so that the past provides a moral compass, and adhering to it is morally good. As you can imagine, this dimension predicts life philosophies, religiosity, and educational achievement.
Indulgence /Restraint	Indulgence is about the good things in life. In an indulgent culture it is good to be free. Doing what your impulses want you to do, is good. Friends are important and life makes sense. In a restrained culture, the feeling is that life is hard, and duty, not freedom, is the normal state of being.

Source: <https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/6d-model-of-national-culture/> [accessed 23-6-2021]

Hofstede (2011) further expands the definitions demonstrating each dimension by describing opposing cultures by high and low scores.

Table 7: Hofstede's opposing cultures by Low and High scores.

Small Power Distance	Large Power Distance
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Use of power should be legitimate and is subject to criteria of good and evil	Power is a basic fact of society antedating good or evil: its legitimacy is irrelevant
Parents treat children as equals	Parents teach children obedience
Older people are neither respected nor feared	Older people are both respected and feared
Student-centred education	Teacher-centred education
Hierarchy means inequality of roles, established for convenience	Hierarchy means existential inequality
Subordinates expect to be consulted	Subordinates expect to be told what to do
Pluralist governments based on majority vote and changed peacefully	Autocratic governments based on co-optation and changed by revolution
Corruption rare; scandals end political careers	Corruption frequent; scandals are covered up
Income distribution in society rather even	Income distribution in society very uneven
Religions stressing equality of believers	Religions with a hierarchy of priests
Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
Higher scores on subjective health and wellbeing	Lower scores on subjective health and well-being
Tolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is curious Comfortable with ambiguity and chaos	Intolerance of deviant persons and ideas: what is different is dangerous Need for clarity and structure
Teachers may say 'I don't know'	Teachers supposed to have all the answers
Changing jobs no problem	Staying in jobs even if disliked
Dislike of rules - written or unwritten	Emotional need for rules – even if not obeyed

In politics, citizens feel and are seen as competent towards authorities	In politics, citizens feel and are seen as incompetent towards authorities
In religion, philosophy and science: relativism and empiricism	In religion, philosophy, and science: belief in ultimate truths and grand theories
The uncertainty inherent in life is accepted and each day is taken as it comes	The uncertainty inherent in life is felt as a continuous threat that must be fought
Ease, lower stress, self-control, low anxiety	Higher stress, emotionality, anxiety, neuroticism
Individualism	Collectivism
Everyone is supposed to take care of him- or herself and his or her immediate family only	People are born into extended families or clans which protect them in exchange for loyalty
"I" – consciousness	"We" –consciousness
Right of privacy	Stress on belonging
Speaking one's mind is healthy	Harmony should always be maintained
Others classified as individuals	Others classified as in-group or out-group
Personal opinion expected: one person one vote	Opinions and votes predetermined by in-group
Transgression of norms leads to guilt feelings	Transgression of norms leads to shame feelings
Languages in which the word "I" is indispensable	Languages in which the word "I" is avoided
Purpose of education is learning how to learn	Purpose of education is learning how to do
Task prevails over relationship	Relationship prevails over task
Femininity	Masculinity
Minimum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders	Maximum emotional and social role differentiation between the genders

Men and women should be modest and caring	Men should be and women may be assertive and ambitious
Balance between family and work	Work prevails over family
Sympathy for the weak	Admiration for the strong
Both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings	Fathers deal with facts, mothers with feelings
Both boys and girls may cry but neither should fight	Girls cry, boys don't; boys should fight back, girls shouldn't fight
Mothers decide on number of children	Fathers decide on family size
Many women in elected political positions	Few women in elected political positions
Religion focuses on fellow human beings	Religion focuses on God or gods
Matter-of-fact attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of relating	Moralistic attitudes about sexuality; sex is a way of performing
Short-Term Orientation	Long-Term Orientation
Most important events in life occurred in the past or take place now	Most important events in life will occur in the future
Personal steadiness and stability: a good person is always the same	A good person adapts to the circumstances
There are universal guidelines about what is good and evil	What is good and evil depends upon the circumstances
Traditions are sacrosanct	Traditions are adaptable to changed circumstances
Family life guided by imperatives	Family life guided by shared tasks
Supposed to be proud of one's country	Trying to learn from other countries
Service to others is an important goal	Thrift and perseverance are important goals

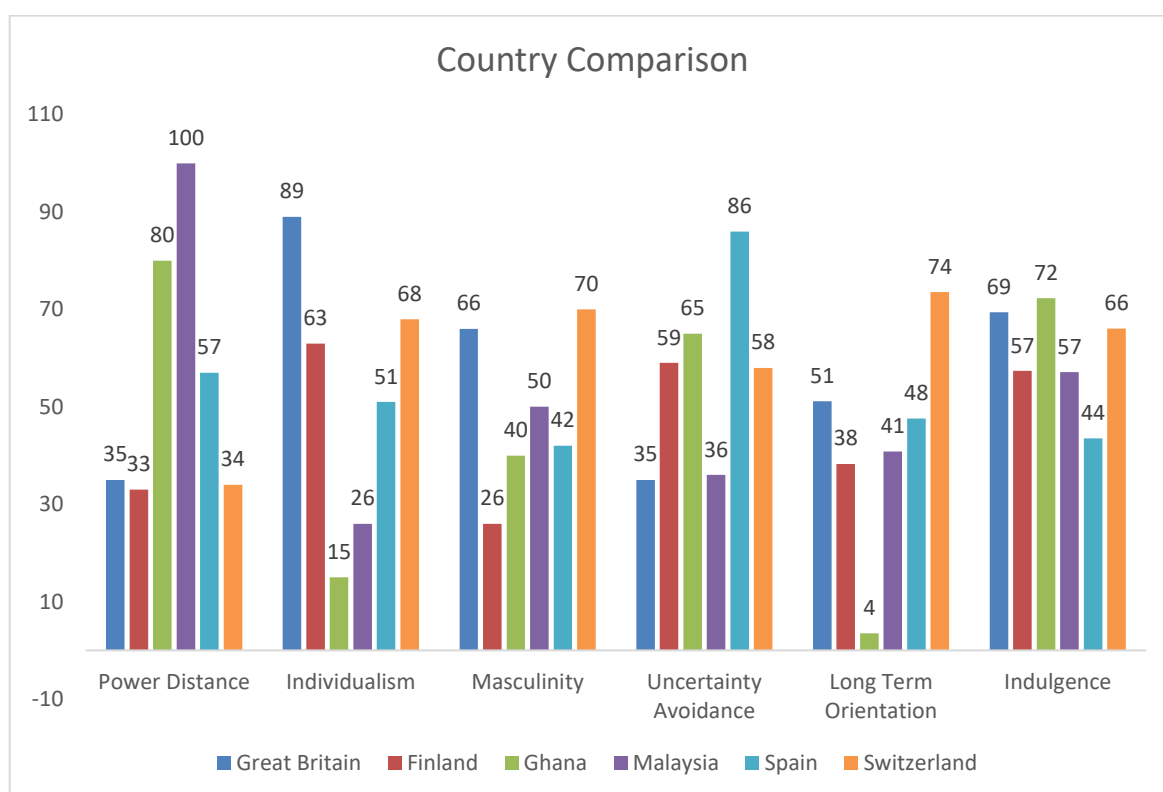
Social spending and consumption	Large savings quote, funds available for investment
Students attribute success and failure to luck	Students attribute success to effort and failure to lack of effort
Slow or no economic growth of poor countries	Fast economic growth of countries up till a level of prosperity
Indulgence	Restrained
Higher percentage of people declaring themselves very happy	Fewer very happy people
A perception of personal life control	A perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my own doing
Freedom of speech seen as important	Freedom of speech is not a primary concern
Higher importance of leisure	Lower importance of leisure
More likely to remember positive emotions	Less likely to remember positive emotions
In countries with educated populations, higher birthrates	In countries with educated populations, lower birthrates
More people actively involved in sports	Fewer people actively involved in sports
In countries with enough food, higher percentages of obese people	In countries with enough food, fewer obese people
In wealthy countries, lenient sexual norms	In wealthy countries, stricter sexual norms
Maintaining order in the nation is not given a high priority	Higher number of police officers per 100,000 population

Source: Hofstede (2011).

Table 7 describes the dimensions by high and low scores and allows for a generic understanding of the dimensions. This research focuses on 6 different countries. Figure 3 describes the cultural differences specific to each country in the study, namely: Great Britain, Finland, Ghana, Malaysia, Spain, and Switzerland.

Figure 3: Hofstede's cultural dimensions: Country Comparisons

Hofstede Insights [<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>]



Country	Score	Description
Power Distance		
Great Britain	35	At 35 Britain sits in the lower rankings of PDI – i.e. a society that believes that inequalities amongst people should be minimized. Interestingly is that research shows PD index

		lower amongst the higher class in Britain than amongst the working classes. The PDI score at first seems incongruent with the well-established and historical British class system and it exposes one of the inherent tensions in the British culture – between the importance of birth rank on the one hand and a deep seated belief that where you are born should not limit how far you can travel in life. A sense of fair play drives a belief that people should be treated in some way as equals.
Finland	33	Finland scores low on this dimension (score of 33) which means that the following characterises the Finnish style: Being independent, hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, superiors accessible, coaching leader, management facilitates and empowers. Power is decentralized and managers count on the experience of their team members. Employees expect to be consulted. Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and on first name basis. Communication is direct and participative.
Ghana	80	Ghana scores high on this dimension (score of 80) which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.
Malaysia	100	Malaysia scores very high on this dimension (score of 100) which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organisation is seen as

		reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. Challenges to the leadership are not well-received.
Spain	57	Spain's score on this dimension (57) is a high score, which means that Spain has a hierarchical society. This means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organisation is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralisation is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.
Switzerland	34	At 34, Switzerland sits in the lower rankings of PDI – i.e. a society that believes that inequalities amongst people should be minimized. This means that the following characterizes the German Swiss style: Being independent, hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, superiors accessible, coaching leader, management facilitates and empowers. Power is decentralized and managers count on the experience of their team members. Employees expect to be consulted. Control is disliked and attitude towards managers are informal and on first name basis. Communication is direct and participative. On this dimension, there is a vast difference with the French speaking part of Switzerland, which scores higher in PDI (very similar to France), which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organisation is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told

		what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. Challenges to the leadership are not well-received.
Individualism		
Great Britain	89	At a score of 89 the UK is amongst the highest of the Individualist scores, beaten only by some of the commonwealth countries it spawned i.e. Australia and the USA. The British are a highly Individualist and private people. Children are taught from an early age to think for themselves and to find out what their unique purpose in life is and how they uniquely can contribute to society. The route to happiness is through personal fulfilment. As the affluence of Britain has increased throughout the last decade, with wealth also 'spreading North', a much discussed phenomenon is the rise of what has been seen as rampant consumerism and a strengthening of the 'ME' culture.
Finland	63	Finland, with a score of 63 is an Individualist society. This means there is a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In Individualist societies offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, management is the management of individuals.
Ghana	15	Ghana, with a score of 15 is considered a collectivistic society. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or

		extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivist societies offence leads to shame and loss of face, employer/employee relationships are perceived in moral terms (like a family link), hiring and promotion decisions take account of the employee's in-group, management is the management of groups.
Malaysia	26	Malaysia, with a score of 26 is a collectivistic society. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the "member" group, be that a family, extended family or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount and overrides most other societal rules and regulations. Such a society fosters strong relationships, where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivistic societies, offence leads to shame and loss of face. Employer/employee relationships are perceived in moral terms (like a family link), hiring and promotion take account of the employee's in-group. Management is the management of groups.
Spain	51	Spain, in comparison with the rest of the European countries (except for Portugal) is Collectivist (because of its score in this dimension: 51). However, compared with other areas of the world it is seen as clearly individualist. This has made Spaniards quite easy to relate with certain cultures - mainly non-European- whereas other cultures can be perceived as aggressive and blunt. On the other hand, teamwork is considered as something totally natural,

		employees tend to work in this way with no need for strong motivation from Management.
Switzerland	68	Both German and French speaking Switzerland score relatively high on this dimension, giving Switzerland a score of 68, and it is therefore considered an Individualist society. This means there is a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In Individualist societies offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, management is the management of individuals.
Masculinity		
Great Britain	66	At 66, Britain is a Masculine society – highly success oriented and driven. A key point of confusion for the foreigner lies in the apparent contradiction between the British culture of modesty and understatement which is at odds with the underlying success driven value system in the culture. Critical to understanding the British is being able to “read between the lines” What is said is not always what is meant. In comparison to Feminine cultures such as the Scandinavian countries, people in the UK live in order to work and have a clear performance ambition.
Finland	26	Finland scores 26 on this dimension and is thus considered a Feminine society. In Feminine countries the focus is on “working in order to live”, managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working

		lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. Focus is on well-being, status is not shown. An effective manager is a supportive one, and decision making is achieved through involvement.
Ghana	40	Ghana scores 40 on this dimension and is thus considered a relatively Feminine society. In Feminine countries the focus is on “working in order to live”, managers strive for consensus, people value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. Focus is on well-being, status is not shown. An effective manager is a supportive one, and decision making is achieved through involvement.
Malaysia	50	With an intermediate score of 50, a preference for this dimension cannot be determined.
Spain	42	Spain scores 42 on this dimension and is a country where the key word is consensus. So polarization is not well considered or excessive competitiveness appreciated. Spanish children are educated in search of harmony, refusing to take sides or standing out. There is a concern for weak or needy people that generate a natural current of sympathy. Regarding management, managers like to consult their subordinates to know their opinions and, according to it, make their decisions. In politics, it is desirable to have participation of all the minorities, trying to avoid the dominant presence of just one winning party. It is the country opposite to ‘the winner takes it all’.

Switzerland	70	Switzerland scores 70 in this dimension, with both rankings for German speaking Switzerland and the French speaking of the country indicating a Masculine society – highly success oriented and driven, albeit that in the German speaking part the impact is much more noticeable. In Masculine countries, people “live in order to work”, managers are expected to be decisive, and the emphasis is on equity, competition and performance. Conflicts are resolved by fighting them out.
Uncertainty Avoidance		
Great Britain	35	At 35 the UK has a low score on Uncertainty Avoidance which means that as a nation they are quite happy to wake up not knowing what the day brings and they are happy to ‘make it up as they go along’ changing plans as new information comes to light. As a low UAI country the British are comfortable in ambiguous situations – the term ‘muddling through’ is a very British way of expressing this. There are generally not too many rules in British society, but those that are there are adhered to (the most famous of which of course the British love of queuing which has also to do with the values of fair play). In work terms this results in planning that is not detail oriented – the end goal will be clear (due to high MAS) but the detail of how we get there will be light and the actual process fluid and flexible to emerging and changing environment. Planning horizons will also be shorter. Most importantly the combination of a highly Individualist and curious nation is a high level of creativity and strong need for innovation. What is different is attractive! This emerges throughout the society in both its humour, heavy consumerism for new and innovative

		products and the fast highly creative industries it thrives in – advertising, marketing, financial engineering.
Finland	59	Finland scores 59 on this dimension and thus has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work), time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted and security is an important element in individual motivation.
Ghana	65	Ghana scores 65 on this dimension. This score expresses a preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted, security is an important element in individual motivation.
Malaysia	36	Malaysia scores 36 on this dimension and thus has a low preference for avoiding uncertainty. Low UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles and deviance from the norm is more easily tolerated. In societies exhibiting low UAI, people believe there should be no more rules than are necessary and if they are ambiguous or do not work, they should be

		abolished or changed. Schedules are flexible, hard work is undertaken when necessary but not for its own sake. Precision and punctuality do not come naturally, innovation is not seen as threatening.
Spain	86	If there is a dimension that defines Spain very clearly, it is Uncertainty Avoidance, as is reflected in a high score of 86. Spain is considered the second noisiest country in the world. People like to have rules for everything, changes cause stress, but, at the same time, they are obliged to avoid rules and laws that, in fact, make life more complex. Confrontation is avoided as it causes great stress and scales up to the personal level very quickly. There is great concern for changing, ambiguous and undefined situations. Thus, for example, in a very recent survey 75% of Spanish young people wanted to work in civil service (i.e. a job for life, no concerns about the future) whereas in the USA only 17% of young people would like it.
Switzerland	58	Switzerland scores 58 in UAI, perhaps reflecting the difference between the French and German parts. French speaking Switzerland has a strong preference for avoiding uncertainty while German speaking Switzerland scores lower. Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted, security is an important element in individual motivation.

		Decisions are taken after careful analysis of all available information.
Long Term Orientation		
Great Britain	51	With an intermediate score of 51 in this dimension, a dominant preference in British culture cannot be determined.
Finland	38	With a low score of 38, Finnish culture can be classified as normative. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.
Ghana	4	Ghana has the incredibly low score of 4 in this dimension. A score this low indicates a very strong preference to a normative way of thinking. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.
Malaysia	41	The low score of 41 in this dimension means that Malaysia has a normative culture. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute Truth; they are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.

Spain	48	Despite an intermediate score of 48, Spain is a normative country. Spanish people like to live in the moment, without a great concern about the future. In fact, Spain is the country that has given the meaning of 'fiesta' to the world. In Spain, people look for quick results without delays. Moreover, there is a need for clear structures and well defined rules prevailing against more pragmatic and relaxed approaches to life, particularly, in the long term time.
Switzerland	74	With a high score of 74, Swiss culture is definitely pragmatic. In societies with a pragmatic orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time. They show an ability to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest. thriftiness and perseverance in achieving results.
Indulgence		
Great Britain	69	A high score of 69 indicates that the British culture is one that is classified as Indulgent. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.
Finland	57	The relatively high score of 57 indicates that Finland is an Indulgent country. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and

		having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.
Ghana	72	On this dimension, Ghana has a high score of 72. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.
Malaysia	57	Malaysia's high score of 57 indicates that the culture is one of Indulgence. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.
Spain	44	With a low score of 44, Spain is not an Indulgent society. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to Indulgent societies, Restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are Restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong.

Switzerland	66	Switzerland scores high in this dimension, its score of 66 indicates that the culture is one of Indulgence. People in societies classified by a high score in Indulgence generally exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They possess a positive attitude and have a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they please and spend money as they wish.
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Source: Hofstede Insights [<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>] Accessed 1-12-2020

2.7.2 Psychic distance

When applying models of Cultural difference to the Higher Education sector, the focus needs to be aimed at the national and organisational level, with an emphasis on the individual stakeholders; to this end the concept of 'Psychic Distance' must be explored.

Beckerman (1956) was the first to use the term psychic distance in relation to differences in perception, but it only came into wider use as a variable in international business relationships from the 1970s, when it was included in studies by authors such as Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975), Johanson and Vahlne (1977), and Wiedersheim-Paul *et al.* (1978). The concept received increasingly more attention in the 1980s and 1990, with publications by Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul (1984), Kogut and Singh (1988), Gripsrud (1990), Klein and Roth (1990), Holden and Burgess (1994), O'Grady and Lane (1996) and Swift (1999). Despite some criticisms of the concept of psychic distance (O'Grady and Lane, 1996; and Stöttinger and Schlegelmilch, 2000) the concept continues to receive attention in the 21st Century: Evans *et al.* (2000), Conway

and Swift (2000 and 2002), Brock and Johnson (2004), Sousa and Bradley (2006), Dow and Karunaratna (2006). Babichenko (2006) suggests that, of all the forms of distance (geographical, social, cultural, and psychic) that influence the development and successful maintenance of cross-cultural relationships, it is psychic distance is the most important.

Ambos, Leicht-Deobald and Leinemann (2018:p660-699) discuss the perception of psychic distance in relation to foreign countries exploring social comparison, exposure, and social learning with an aim to explore how individuals affect the formation of the perceptions. Their survey (based on 1,591 managers in 25 countries) found that “country-specific international experience, formal education, and a match between a managers’ first language and the language of the target country reduce psychic distance perceptions. Surprisingly, and in contrast to conventional wisdom, managers’ international and overall work experiences do not seem to have any effect on their distance perceptions. However, relative to country-level factors, individual-level antecedents seem to have rather limited explanatory power as predictors of overall psychic distance perceptions, lending support to the widely-employed practice of operationalizing psychic distances through country level indicators.”. They conclude that “macro level antecedents have a determining influence on individual perceptions and that individual characteristics are of secondary importance.” They further conclude “...that specific international experience, formal education, and command of the local language reduce perceived psychic distances to individual foreign countries.”. They acknowledge that the macro-level indicators are powerful compared to the relatively small proportion of the variance of individuals’ perceptions formed from their personal characteristics.

There has been little research on the concept of psychic distance and its effects on Higher Education organisations and its stakeholders. Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul define psychic distance as the “...difference in perceptions between buyer and seller regarding either needs or offers” (1984:17). They regard physic distance as a consequence two other related but different

measures of distance - cultural and social distance – and suggest (p.18), that the three variables that constitute physic distance (cultural affinity, experience, and trust), are influential to varying degrees at three different levels of relationship. These different levels are: the National (Country) level, the Organisational (Corporate) level and the Individual (Personal) level. These are all interrelated, and as such, exert an influence on each other. Furthermore, the relative importance of these variables changes throughout the life, or stages, of a business relationship.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework (Figure 4) combines the concepts drawn from the literature review and unifies them into one single diagrammatical conceptual frame. It links the gaps identified (Table 8) and aids exploration of the relationships between the key identified constructs. The framework also places the stakeholders in the process to support analysis of their relationships to the concepts. Further the theoretical framework supports the research objectives, research questions and forms the basis for the proposed propositions.

Table 8 below aims to highlight areas in the current literature where key concepts are highlighted but not explored in detail in the Higher Education sector. These gaps especially relate to international strategy development, implementation, maintenance and cultural difference alongside international partnership development. The ‘Gap Theme’ signifies the areas of focus and the ‘Implications’ identify where further research and analysis is required.

Table 8: Gap analysis

Gap Theme	Source	Implications	Gap
Senior management commitment	Knight (2015), Erasmus Impact study (2014), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)	strategy development & communication	1

finances	Knight (2015), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)	strategy development & communication	1
internationalisation strategies	Bell et al (2014), Erasmus Impact study (2014), Knight (2015a), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)	strategy development & communication	1
support	Bell et al (2014), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)	strategy development & communication	1
maintenance	Bell et al (2014), Eckel and Hartley (2008), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)	strategy development & communication	1
management	Bell et al (2014), Eckel and Hartley (2008), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997), Kight (2015c)	strategy development & communication	1
partnership agreements	Bell et al (2014)	strategy development & communication	1
Intercultural diversity	Knight (2015a)	strategy development & communication	1
competitive advantage in HE	De Haan (2014)	strategy development & communication	1
Internationalisation continuum	Turner and Robson (2007)	strategy development & communication	1

Demystification (internationalisation Value)	Knight (2011)	strategy development & communication	1
Differential HE systems	Bedenlier & Zawacki- Richter (2015)	strategy development & communication	1
Psychic distance in HE	Johanson and Wiedersheim- Paul (1975), Johanson and Vahlne (1977), Wiedersheim- Paul et al. (1978) Hallén and Wiedersheim- Paul (1984), Kogut and Singh (1988), Gripsrud (1990), Klein and Roth (1990), Holden and Burgess (1994), O'Grady and Lane (1996), Swift (1999). Stöttinger and Schlegelmilch, 2000) Evans et al. (2000), Conway and Swift (2000 and 2002), Brock and Johnson (2004), Sousa and Bradley (2006), Dow and Karunaratna	Cultural Differences & Psychic Distance in HE	2

	(2006). Babichenko (2006)		
Interest	De Wit and Jones (2014), Knight (2015)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
engagement/involvement	De Wit and Jones (2014), Knight (2015)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
Partnership Typologies in HE	Knight (2015a)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
student group differences	Signorini et al (2009)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments & strategy dev	1 & 3
global context of HE	Signorini et al (2009)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
Flexibility	Signorini et al (2009)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
micro-culture in HE	Signorini et al (2009)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
Strategic approach in HE (Ad hoc vs systematic) - Policy, Implementation & Support	Davies (1995), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997)	Ad hoc vs systematic developments	3
Success or Failure (risk) in HE	Wilson (1995), Borys & Jameson (1989)	Relationship development	4

expertise - international office	Knight (2015)	Policy and organisational structure	5
International experience	De Wit and Jones (2014), Knight (2015) Ambos et al (2018)	Related to Psychic distance - individual . Related to communication & strategy involvement (internationalisation cube)	1 & 2
Multicultural groups operation	Bell et al (2014)	Related to Psychic distance - individual . Related to communication & strategy involvement (internationalisation cube)	1 & 2
Relationship variable in HE	Wilson (1995), Borys & Jameson (1989), Eckel and Hartley (2008)	strategy development & communication & Psychic Distance in HE	1 & 2
Academic strategic alliances	Eckel and Hartley (2008)	strategy development & communication. Relationship development	1 & 4
Capacity	De Wit and Jones (2014)	strategy development & communication	1 & 5

Policy	Knight (2015) (2015c)	strategy development & communication	1 & 5
Human Resources - individual level	Kight (2015c), Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2015)	strategy development & communication	1 & 5
intercultural experience	Knight (2015), Bell et al (2014), Zawacki-Richter (2015)	Relate to Psychic distance - individual . Relate to communication & strategy involvement (internationalisation cube)	1,2 & 5
Academic culture	Eckel and Hartley (2008)	Relate to Psychic distance - individual . Relate to communication & strategy involvement (internationalisation cube)	1,2 & 5
Perceived value in HE; international profile , reputation, enhancing inter-cultural staff , student knowledge, strategic alliances, knowledge production, and financial gains	De Haan (2014), Green (2003), Van Dijk & Meijer (1997), Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2015)... etc	All aspects in internationalisation	1,2,3

expertise - academic	De Wit and Jones (2014), Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2015)	Relate to Psychic distance - individual. Relate to communication & strategy involvement (internationalisation cube)	1,2,5
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The Table above can be summarised into the main gaps identified from the literature.

Table 9: Gap Analysis summary

Gap	Implications
1	Strategy development & communication
2	Cultural Differences & Psychic Distance in HE
3	Ad hoc vs systematic developments
4	Relationship development
5	HR policy and organisational structures

2.8.1 Relationship to Research Objectives

Figure 4 diagrammatically shows the links between the constructs, processes, and primary stakeholders. Following these links propositions can be made to explore the relationships and further support the primary data collection and analysis. Table 10 further links the Research objectives to the gap analysis.

Table 10 The relationship of Research Objectives to Gap analysis.

Research Objectives		Gap
RO1	Evaluate international academic strategic alliances in relation to partner selection, purpose, boundaries, value and maintenance; identify the key stakeholders and drivers.	1,2,3,4,5
RO2	To investigate the approaches to strategic relationship development in the UK and Partner institutions.	1
RO3	To evaluate the role culture plays in relationship management of the partnership.	2,3
RO4	To explore the effectiveness of implementation strategies in the institutions.	1,2,3,4,5
RO5	To evaluate the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation in the institutions.	1,2,3,4,5

The Research Objectives will be analysed by addressing the following research questions.

- How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?
- What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?
- How are new international developments managed and supported?
- How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?
- What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?
- What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?
- How effective is the support and communication?

2.8.2 Development of the Theoretical Framework - Constructs

As discussed, the framework aims to link the key constructs identified from the literature. The constructs can be sub-divided into respective areas of the process and linked to their relationships with the primary stakeholders.

2.8.3 Primary Stakeholders

From the initial work of De Haan (2014) the primary stakeholders have been identified and expanded upon as all people who have an influence in cross cultural relationship management and International strategy development, implementation, and maintenance of Higher Education partnership developments. For this study they have been identified as;

International Partners

- Senior Faculty Management
- Senior Institution Management

UK Business School

- Senior Faculty Management
- Academics with partnership responsibilities (Link Tutors)
- Faculty academics
- Faculty professional support staff
- University International Office Heads of Department
- University International Management

These stakeholders will have influence on the whole process to varying degrees and therefore have an impact on each of the research objectives below;

- Explore international academic strategic alliances in relation to partner selection, purpose, boundaries, value and maintenance; identify the key stakeholders and drivers.

- To investigate the approaches to International strategy development in the institutions.
- To evaluate the degree of adoption of existing cross cultural relationship management models in the Higher Education institutions.
- To explore the effectiveness of implementation strategies in the institutions.
- To evaluate the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation in the institutions.

The degree of influence on cross-cultural relationship management can be ideally seen as a feedback loop where all stakeholders have a specific role. As strategic decision making is a primary function of University 'Senior' staff and operational functions the responsibility of 'Operational' staff; the stakeholders have been subdivided into two categories. The categories have been categorised below but are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Senior Executive staff

Senior staff are those who have primary responsibility for the development of International strategies, the management of the partnerships and management of operational staff. From the selected sample (see section 3.8 Case selection – Participants) the following roles have been identified;

- Faculty senior academics (Associate Deans or equivalent)
- Senior International office managers (or equivalent)

Examples of role descriptors for the identified staff (see Appendix A for full role descriptors) are summarised below.

• Role Title: Associate Dean/Head (International)

To work with the Dean of School, the relevant PVC and relevant functions of Professional Services in order to ensure alignment of the School International Strategy with that of the University's Strategic Plan and initiatives.

Faculty/professional Operational Staff

Operational staff are those who have primary responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of the partnership developments. From the selected sample (see section 3.8 Case selection – Participants) the following job roles have been identified;

- Faculty academics
- Non-academic faculty support staff

- **Role Title: Faculty: Lecturer**

To develop and deliver high-quality teaching material across a range of modules or short programmes. To contribute to the planning, design and development of programmes. To engage in scholarly activity and undertake high quality research.

- **Role Title: Faculty: Link Tutor International**

To develop and manage international partnership activities for the School established under formal collaborative partnership agreements. This role provides direct support to the School's Associate Head International on the development, delivery and reporting on international partnerships to facilitate planning/review of international partnerships in the context of School international plans.

Source: Academic Role Description Manual v1.8 UK University, June 2016

These stakeholders form the basis for investigation into the relationships been the primary constructs and the processes involved in successful relationship development, implementation and maintenance.

2.9 Adoption of Cross-Cultural Relationship management techniques

The construct that relates cross cultural relationship management theory to the process of International strategy development, implementation and maintenance can be viewed as two primary concepts. Firstly, Hofstede's

cultural difference model and secondly, the concept of psychic distance. As discussed in the literature review, each concept is not mutually exclusive in nature, but explores differing ways to view cross cultural relationships from different perspectives. The theoretical framework identifies the perceived relationships to the primary stakeholders, the associated policies (and the relationship to staff experience, knowledge and motivation), the leadership styles, the differing education systems and ultimately the international strategy development, implementation and maintenance within Higher Education agreements. The research explores how, why and to what degree the institutions adopt these theories and their importance at each stage of the life cycle of the process.

2.9.1 Education systems

The nature of the different education systems in the respective institutions will have a significant impact on the drivers to international development, the operational management of the process and the potential barriers to successful cross-cultural relationship management. This study will analyse how these differing systems impact the decision making process of the stakeholders of the partnership dependant on the country specific standpoint with respect to cultural differences, governmental policies, and the overarching strategies of the institutions.

2.9.2 Leadership in Higher Education agreements

The theoretical framework places emphasis on leadership as a potential driver for the institutions executive decision making and management of operational activities. The impact of cultural awareness is also significant in the management of partnership development, implementation and maintenance. From the literature, leadership styles can be summarised under the following key areas;

- Autocratic
- Democratic/Participatory
- Bureaucratic
- Charismatic
- Servant leadership
- Laissez-faire
- People-orientated
- Task-orientated
- Transactional
- Transformational

The theoretical framework allows for the differing styles to be assessed at a single case level (within institution) and at a multi-case level (across institutions). It is envisaged that a situational leadership style adopting various sub-styles would be adopted dependent on the situation in question.

2.9.3 Human Resource Policies in Higher Education agreements

The Human Resource policies in Higher Education agreements construct refers to the degree in which stakeholder experience and knowledge is considered in the decision making process by the executive stakeholders with respect to appointing operational staff. From the literature, this is not solely based around a structured policy for hiring of new staff but an integrated approach to allocating staff resources to international partnership roles. The theoretical framework allows for exploration of how the institutions make decisions and their perceived importance and also consideration to international cross-cultural exposure, knowledge and experience. The framework also allows for investigation of staff development opportunities and analysis of their perceived

effectiveness. The construct then links to staff motivation and ultimately the impact on successful development, implementation and maintenance of the relationships.

2.9.4 Staff experience and knowledge

From the literature questions are raised to the gaps within staff knowledge and experience at both the academic faculty level and the international office level. Knight (2015) specifically highlights the barriers of lack of senior management commitment, policy and finances being superseded by lack of expertise of the international offices, interest and involvement by faculties and significantly the lack of international/intercultural experience of staff. Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter (2015) discuss the impacts of globalization and Internationalization at an individual level and propose the need for further research differentiated by higher education systems and their associated faculty members, thus highlighting the link between institutions, education systems and their associated staff experience and knowledge. The concept of Psychic distance (Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul, 1984) places emphasis on cultural affinity and clearly identifies trust and experience as a critical factor. The literature also highlights the importance of change throughout the lifecycle of the relationship; therefore staff knowledge and experience will have a significant impact on the successful maintenance of relationships. Staff experience and knowledge, as a derivative of cross-cultural understanding and country specific education systems, is a key construct in the research framework as it links all operational staff, the executive, HR policies, motivation and ultimately the successful development, Implementation, and maintenance of the relationships in the context of Higher Education agreements.

2.9.5 Motivation in Higher Education agreements

Motivation as a construct is linked directly to both the executive and operational staff, as Turner and Robson (2007) discuss in the internationalisation

continuum motivation may come from differing parts of the continuum dependent on the position in the organisation even though the primary objective is the same e.g. Academic staff may view International values/orientation as personal/transformational whereas the executive may view them as Institutional/symbolic (Turner and Robson, 2007). The perceived importance of international activities can also have an impact on motivation dependent on job function. As De Haan (2014) highlights when considering stakeholder perspectives of competitive advantage International education/research quality may be rated at 100% for senior management falling to 43% by academics and 31% by International staff at both the central and faculty level. The theoretical framework links motivation to the executive/operational staff and cross-cultural awareness through staff experience and knowledge, thus potentially having a significant impact on the life-cycle of the relationship at all levels. The importance and value of international experience can be evaluated by reviewing the key findings of the Erasmus impact studies over the period 2014-2019.

2.10 Development of the Theoretical Framework – Processes

The theoretical framework differentiates the primary constructs of cross-cultural understanding and staff related issues from the processes involved in partnership development. The three key processes identified are International Strategy Development, Implementation and Maintenance. The final process of relationship closure could be included here but it is deemed to be beyond the scope of this study.

2.10.1 International Strategy Development

International Strategy Development as a concept contains multiple variables each interrelated and contributing to the overall success of the strategy. From the literature we can see that there are several models that can be reviewed when considering International relationship developments. Borys & Jameson (1989), and later, Wilson (1995) discusses an integrated model consisting of five stages: search and selection of an appropriate partner, defining the purpose

of the relationship, setting the boundaries of the relationship, value creation and hybrid stability. Wilson (1995) highlights the importance of risk at the decision making stage and further developed a set of extended variable when considering relationship development; Commitment, Trust, Cooperation, Mutual goals, Interdependence/Power Imbalance, Performance Satisfaction, Comparison level of Alternative, Adaptation, Non-Retrievable Investments, Shared Technology, Summative Constructs, Structural Bonds, and Social Bonds. Although these variables were developed for buyer/seller relationships several of the variables can be explored and adapted for international higher education partnership developments. Borys and Jemison (1989) consider hybrid stability as a key issue and Eckel and Hartley (2008) emphasise the management and maintenance of strategic partners as at least as important as curricular innovations. Davies (1995) proposed a model for self-evaluation of a Universities International strategy base on two dimensions; Systematic or Ad Hoc based on centralised or margin strategies. Davies's model is limited in that it only considers the design stages of internationalisation strategies Policy and Implementation; Van Dijk & Meijer (1997) enhancing Davies' model created the Internationalisation Cube model consisting of;

- **Policy** – the importance attached to internationalisation aims:
 - Priority/Marginal
- **Implementation** – the method of implementation:
 - Systematic/Ad hoc
- **Support** - the type of support for internationalization activities:
 - Interactive/One-sided

This model allows institution to place themselves in a matrix by self-evaluation and demonstrate their position leading to realistic aims for future development. It is important to note that different form of partnership will necessitate different strategies. Knight (2015) highlights the main types of partnership development; franchising, twinning, dual/joint degrees, articulation, and validation models,

plus distance or blended learning delivery. The focus of this research will be based on transnational credit/award bearing programmes. International Strategy Development is directly inextricably linked to partnership development and forms the basis of all activities between institutions.

The theoretical framework enables International Strategy Development at the institutions to be explored and links the primary stakeholders via the institutional executive to all constructs in the process.

2.10.2 Implementation

Whereas International strategy development can be seen as the responsibility of the individual institutions, the implementation phase of the process has a tangible impact on all institutions in the partnership and is dependent on all stakeholders appreciating the strategies of each institution. The theoretical framework places the implementation phase after the international strategy/partnership development phase as it is the practical implementation of the strategic decisions. Stakeholder involvement should be at all levels of the implementation phase and has a key link to staff experience, knowledge and motivation. The theoretical framework allows for analysis of the implementation phase and the interrelations of strategy development, leadership styles, education systems and staff experience, knowledge, and motivation in the context of Higher Education agreements.

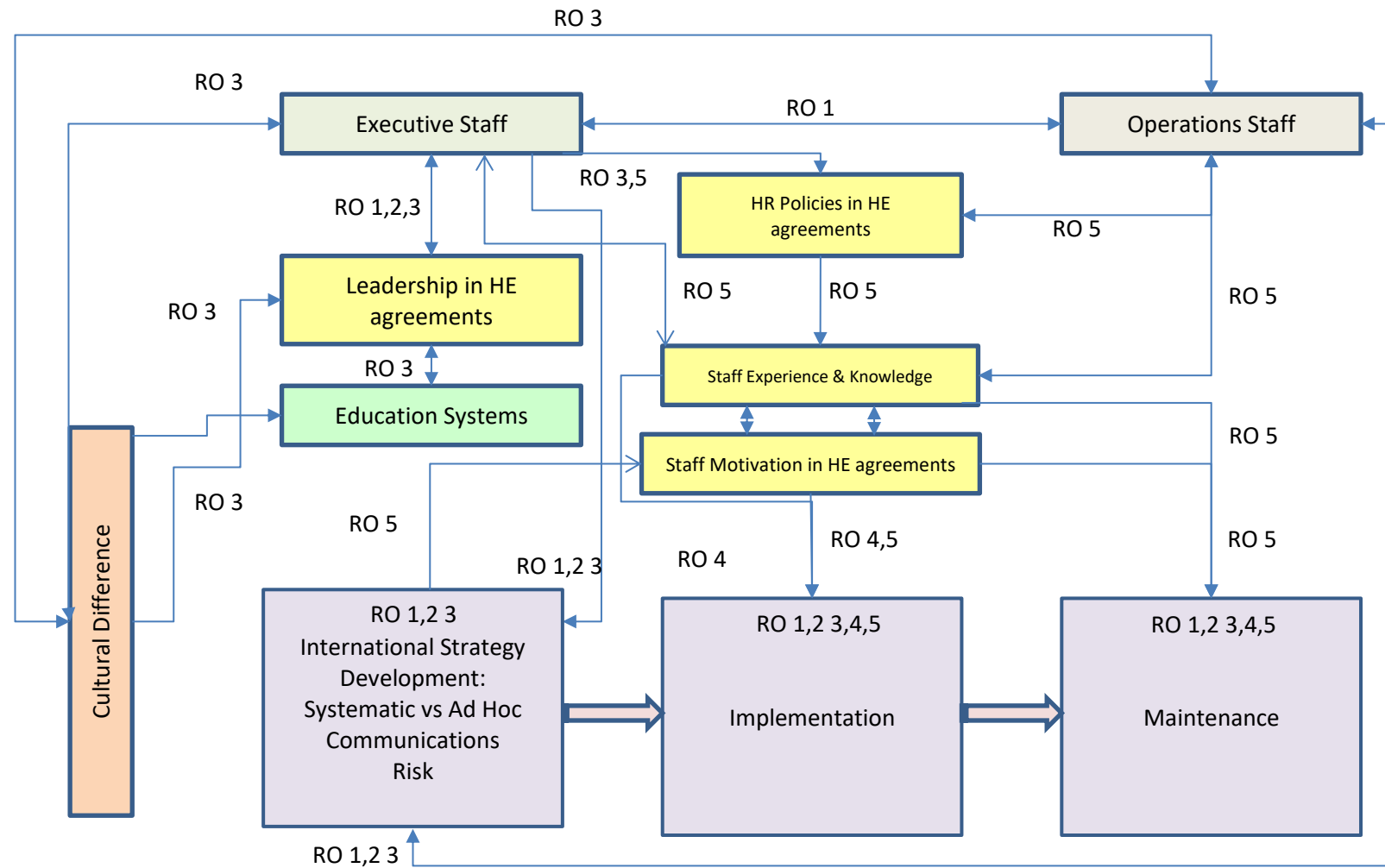
2.10.3 Maintenance

The maintenance stage of the relationship is critical to partnership success and is directly linked to staff experience, knowledge and motivation. As the literature demonstrates the emphasis of different variables will change during the life-cycle of the relationship with the concept of psychic distance being one of the key drivers. Emphasis here can be made for effective communication at all levels at each institution as change will naturally occur within institutions be it at strategy level, staffing, curricular developments, or governmental influence.

2.10.4 Diagrammatic representation of the Theoretical Framework

Following a critical review of the literature Figure 4 shows the diagrammatic representation of the theoretical framework highlighting the main entities and processes linked to the research objectives and gap analysis.

Figure 4: Diagrammatic representation of the Theoretical Framework



2.11 Chapter summary

The chapter has provided a current review of the literature available in the field. From the literature a theoretical framework for the research has been developed. The models introduced in this chapter will be analysed alongside the theoretical framework and the aims, objectives, and research questions. The following chapter will explore the research methods available to meet the aims and objectives of the research.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter will evaluate and justify the rationale for the design of the research methodology and research methods adopted to achieve the aim and research objectives discussed in chapter one. Justification will be given for the research design, philosophy, strategy, and theoretical framework. The sampling methods adopted will be discussed and justified for national, institution and participant selection. Reliability and validity of the study will be explained, and analysis methods adopted will be described.

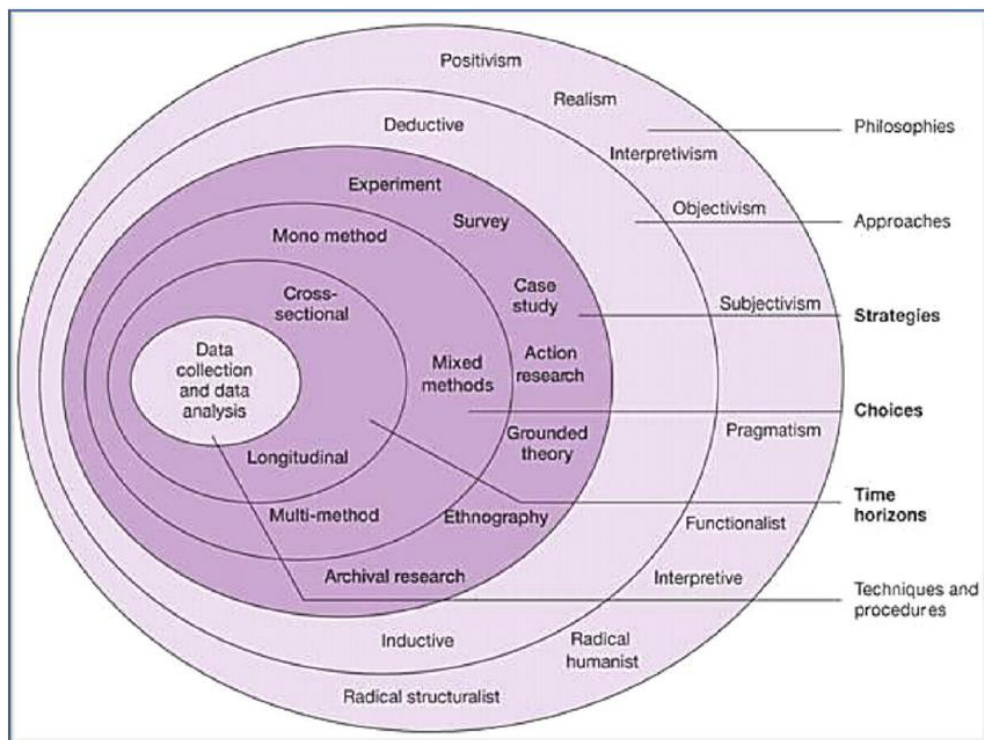
3.2 Research Stages

Saunders et al. (2014) proposed several stages of research approaches in their 'Research Onion' model (Figure 5). The model separates the key stages as;

- Philosophies
- Approaches
- Strategies
- Choices
- Time horizons
- Techniques and procedures

These stages are designed to encompass all possible fields of research and to act as guide to identifying the most appropriate approach when designing a research project.

Figure 5: The Research Onion.

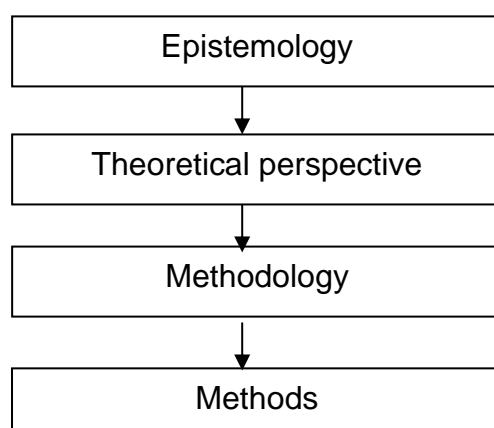


Source: Saunders et al. (2014)

From fig 4.1 each stage has its associated elements primarily dependant on the previous layer and underpins the adopted strategy as you progress through the process. In contrast, Crotty (2014) explores a modified model differentiating the epistemological and theoretical perspectives in a simplified 4 stage process;

- Epistemology
- Theoretical perspective
- Methodology
- Methods

Figure 6 The Research Stages.



Source: Crotty (2014)

As opposed to Saunders' 'all encompassing' model Crotty's model has been viewed as suitable only for qualitative research. When conducting qualitative research either model is suitably effective as reference point for the design and implementation of the project.

To establish a clear framework for the research the nature of the research must be clearly considered and a defined rationale for the chosen standpoint justified.

3.3 Rationale for research philosophy and approach

Adopting Saunders (2014) model there are three clearly defined research philosophies; Ontology, Axiology and Epistemology.

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and is subdivided into two categories; Objectivism and Subjectivism. Grey (2017:22) describes objectivism as the notion that "reality exists independently of consciousness" in that there is an objective reality. This does not dismiss the actors' subjective views but means that they must be viewed objectively (Bunge, 1993 in Grey). These link closely to the concept of positivism which dictates that reality exists externally to the researcher and can be measured following a scientific enquiry method.

Axiology refers to the philosophy that focuses on the judgements about value. This is dependent on the researchers own specific values and beliefs in that the articulation of values is fundamental to making judgements. This not only applies to the researcher's decision making during the research but also the actors within the research and their associated values and beliefs.

Epistemology can be viewed as what constitutes acceptable knowledge in the field and can be further subdivided into three main areas; Positivism, Interpretivism and Realism.

3.3.1 Positivism

Positivism tends towards the viewpoint of the natural scientist wherein observable realities can be constructed into natural law-like generalisations. This is dependent on the researcher being fundamentally separate from the area being researched and thus independent of any values or feelings for the subject.

3.3.2 Interpretivism

The third epistemological standpoint is Interpretivism. Critics of positivism and realism argue that the world cannot simply be viewed as a series of laws akin to physical science. Within Interpretivism the researcher is required to understand the role of 'humans' as 'social actors' in any process. As a social actor we are involved in interpreting our roles in any given situation and as a researcher we interpret the roles of other given our own understanding of the situation. Interpretivism can also be viewed as a phenomenological construct in that "Phenomenology is concerned with the understanding of human behaviour from the participant's own frame of reference" Collis and Hussey (2009:47). Saunders et al. (2015) and Grey (2017) propose that there are two main paradigms within epistemology: The Positivist and Phenomenological paradigms. Table 11 outlines the key assumptions of Positivist and Phenomenological paradigms.

Table 11: Assumptions of Positivist and Phenomenology Philosophies

Feature	Positivist paradigm	Phenomenological paradigm
Assumptions	External, objective of social actors. Value - freedom	Socially constructed, subjective
Observation	The observer must be independent. Focus on facts and causality.	Is part of what is being observed, cannot be separated. Focus on meanings and social phenomena
Explanation	Focus on demonstration of causality	Aim to increase general understanding of the situation
Research progress through	Test hypotheses via deductive approach	Gathering rich data from theories from which ideas are induced
Concepts	Need to be operationalised so that they can be measured (highly structured)	Should incorporate stakeholder perspective. The use of multiple or mixed designs to establish different opinions of a phenomenon.

Units of analysis	Phenomena to be reduced to simplest elements	May include the complexity of whole situations
Generalization via	Statistical probability.	Theoretical abstraction.
Sampling technique	Using large samples selected randomly in order to generalize to the population. Quantitative methods	Using small samples researched in-depth. Qualitative methods

Source: Saunders *et al.* (2015).

Further, Grey (2017) summarises the key attributes of beliefs, actions, and methods for the Positivist and Phenomenological paradigms.

Table 12: Summary of Positivist and Phenomenological paradigms

	Positivist paradigm	Phenomenological paradigm
Basic Beliefs	<p>The world is external and objective</p> <p>The observer is independent</p> <p>Science is value free</p>	<p>The world is socially constructed and subjective</p> <p>The research is party to what is being observed</p> <p>Science is driven by human interests</p>

The Researcher should	Focus on facts	Focus on meanings
	Locate causality between variables	Try to understand what is happening
	Formulate and test hypotheses	Construct theories and models from the data
Methods include	Operationalizing concepts so that they can be measured	Using multiple methods to establish different views of a phenomenon
	Using large samples from which to generalize the population	Using small samples
	Quantitative methods	researched in depth over time
		Qualitative methods

Source: Grey (2017:26)

In abstracting these philosophies this study takes Critical Realism as a phenomenological epistemology as the social actors involved in the research have significant experience and involvement in the field and will interpret the phenomenon from their own given perspective.

The research approach adopted is closely linked to the philosophical standpoint taken. Assumptions can be generally made that deduction follows a positivist philosophy and induction follows a phenomenological philosophy although Saunders (2014) argues that this concept is potentially misleading. The table below outlines the major differences between the two approaches.

Table 13: Major differences between deductive and inductive approaches to research.

Deduction emphasises	Induction emphasises
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Scientific principles	Gaining an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events
Moving from theory to data	A close understanding of the research context
The collection of quantitative data	The collection of qualitative data
The need to explain causal relations between variables	A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses
The application of controls to ensure validity of data	A realisation that the researcher is part of the research process
The operationalisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition	Less concern with the need to generalise
A highly structure approach	
Researcher independence of what is being researched	
The necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generalise conclusions	

Source: Saunders (2014:120)

3.3.3 Realism

Realism has its focus in scientific enquiry in that what we see as reality is fundamentally the truth. Realism can be further subdivided in to two areas, direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism supports the proposition that 'what you see is what you get' in that the observed reality is the true reality. Critical realism takes this phenomenon into consideration but adds the concept that what we observe is based on our senses and is one image of the real world.

Hunt (2016) argues that there are many differing approaches to viewing realism but identifies Sayer as one of the key authors in this field. Sayer (1992:5) describes the 8 key attributes related to Critical Realism as follows;

1. The world exists independently of our knowledge of it.
2. Our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory-laden. Concepts of truth and falsity fail to provide a coherent view of the relationship between knowledge and its object. Nevertheless knowledge is not immune to empirical check and its effectiveness in informing and explaining successful material practice is not mere accident.
3. Knowledge develops neither wholly continuously, as the steady accumulation of facts within a stable conceptual framework, nor discontinuously, through simultaneous and universal changes in concepts.
4. There is necessity in the world; objects—whether natural or social—necessarily have particular powers or ways of acting and particular susceptibilities.
5. The world is differentiated and stratified, consisting not only of events, but objects, including structures, which have powers and liabilities capable of generating events. These structures may be present even where, as in the social world and much of the natural world, they do not generate regular patterns of events.
6. Social phenomena such as actions, texts and institutions are concept dependent. We not only have to explain their production and material effects but to understand, read or interpret what they mean. Although they have to be interpreted by starting from the researcher's own frames of meaning, by and large they exist regardless of researchers' interpretation of them. A qualified version of 1 therefore applies to the social world. In view of 4–6, the methods of social science and natural science have both differences and similarities.
7. Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice. For better or worse (not just worse) the conditions and social relations of the production of knowledge influence its content. Knowledge is also largely—though not exclusively—linguistic, and the nature of language and the way

we communicate are not incidental to what is known and communicated. Awareness of these relationships is vital in evaluating knowledge.

8. Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena we have to evaluate them critically

Source (Sayer, 1992,5).

Easton (2010) proposes that points 1,4 & 5 identify the ontological concepts of critical realist assumptions in that there is a reality 'out there'. Given this acceptance that a reality does exist, and that the world is socially constructed; points 2,3,6 & 7 expand on this proposition creating a tension between the two views. The concept of critical realism resolves this conflict by acknowledging that the world is socially constructed, but not entirely so. Easton, alongside discussing the provenance of critical realism and its associated variations further relates the assumptions laid down by Sayer And identifies the key components associated with critical realism related to case study research.

He identifies the main components as objects/entities, causal powers and liabilities, events, the structure of entities, emergence, necessary relations, contingent relations, context, the structure of causal explanation, mechanisms, epistemology, and research process.

3.3.3.1 Objects/entities

Objects/entities Can be described as the fundamental building blocks when considering critical realism with respect to case study research. The concept of entities allows for a broader understanding of the building blocks involved within the research. Typically, these are found to be organisations, people, relationships, attitudes and resources. Easton emphasises that these are far more than traditional variables as perceived by quantitative researchers where the focus is on the fundamental nature of the entity rather than simply its measurable properties

3.3.3.2 Causal powers and liabilities

Causal powers and liabilities Can be described as how an entity behaves or operates. This research will define the entities involved within the processes and identify what the entities are, what are their relationships, and what are their associated powers and liabilities.

3.3.3.3 Events

Events within critical realism research can be described as the external of visible behaviour of things as they occur for example people, systems or processes. It is fundamental to acknowledge the events sometimes do not occur and it is essential to examine this potential behaviour. When considering higher education systems, the principle that an event may not occur can be fundamental to success or failure.

3.3.3.4 The structure of entities

Typically an organisation will comprise of a series of entities such as people, processes, departments and resources with each one having its own set of interrelations. Individual actors within an organisation will have a set of their own characteristics which will have a relation to the entity and is an integral part of it. When considering cross cultural relationship management, a key characteristic of an individual actor maybe fundamental to the structure of the entity and have a direct influence on its composition.

3.3.3.4 Emergence

Emergency is a key concept when considering critical realism and especially in relation to case study research. Entities can be analysed at multiple levels and essentially need to be viewed from both a top down and bottom up approach. It is only by analysing these entities at multiple levels that the emergent reality is formed. This can be viewed as of great significance within this research as the differing stakeholders within a single institution may have considerably different views on the reality of a given concept. This is further compounded by the nature of cross-cultural relationships between differing institutions whereby

not only may the individual actors have a perceived difference of reality, but at an institutional level there may exist fundamental differences in their perception.

3.3.3.5 Necessary relations

Easton (2010) Argues that two kinds of relationship exists between entities these are considered as necessary and contingent. Necessary relations can be described as having a relationship that is dependant and necessary to the entity. The research builds on these necessary relationships with reference to entities; these form the fundamental basis of the theoretical framework. The level of interdependence is not defined but is analysed during the primary data collection and evaluation.

3.3.3.6 Contingent relations

Contingent relations stand side by side with necessary relations in that entities can have necessary relations that will affect each other and some contingent relations which may affect each other. Within this research necessary relations form the basis of the theoretical framework but an understanding of contingent relations is crucial to analysing the overall relationship both internally and across institutions.

3.3.3.7 Context

The context of a relationship is essential to frame the behaviour of the entities involved with in it. The actions of the actors within an entity can be dependant up on the context placed before them in that their behavioural attributes may change to meet the demands of differing projects or developments.

3.3.3.8 The structure of causal explanation

Explanation is the key aim of critical realism I'm there for the structure of explanation between relationships and entities is essential to understanding the true situation. Easton (2010) discuss is the question fundamental to critical realism 'what caused those events to happen?'. To this end he describes a basic understanding in that objects having structures unnecessarily possessing

causal powers and liabilities will under specific conditions result in an event. Under differing conditions the result of the event will change. Given real world behaviour logical frameworks to guide the researcher is often problematic. The key lies in the explanation and interpretation of the data to gain the best possible evaluation.

3.3.3.9 Mechanisms

Easton (2010) Defined mechanisms as a causal explanation that identifies entities and the mechanisms that connect them in combination to cause events to occur.

3.3.3.10 Epistemology

Sayer (2000) when discussing critical realism agrees that the world is socially constructed but equally acknowledges that it is not the full story, stating “Critical realism acknowledges that social phenomena are intrinsically meaningful, and hence that meaning is not only externally descriptive of them but constitutive of them. Meaning has to be understood, it cannot be measured or counted, and hence there is always an interpretive or hermeneutic element in social science”. Sayer (2010:17).

3.3.3.11 Research process

Easton (2010) acknowledges the work of Sayer and that there are two types of research methods extensive and intensive. The extensive method relying on large scale surveys, questionnaires and statistical analysis ultimately looking for regularity and patterns. Intensive research focuses on using qualitative analysis producing causal explanations which are limited to the situation in question. He further discusses case study research in relation to critical realism in that “Case research is an intensive research method according to Sayer’s description and is therefore entirely consistent with a critical realist ontology.” Easton (2010:123).

Given the nature of the research and its philosophical standpoint an inductive approach will be adopted. As the research will adopt Critical Realism as a

phenomenological epistemology and follow an inductive approach; the research design must be justified.

3.4 Research Design and Strategy

When considering research design, we must first concentrate on the research strategy utilized. Saunders (2014) emphasizes the need for a clear focus on the research objectives linked to the philosophy and approach. Research strategies fall into three categories; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Given the adopted approach for this research is inductive, an exploratory research strategy will be followed. The key features of exploratory strategies are reviewing the literature, interviewing experts in the field, and/or conducting focus group interviews. Exploratory strategies mean exploring “what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” (Robson, 2002:59 in Saunders). This study will be the first in Higher Education to link the concepts of Business Relationship Management and Cross-Cultural Relationship Management to internal and external Higher Education organisational structures and their associated approaches to transnational strategy development.

The strategy must be clearly linked to the research objectives to be of value, the research objectives discussed in chapter 1 are as follows;

- Explore international academic strategic alliances in relation to partner selection, purpose, boundaries, value and maintenance; identify the key stakeholders and drivers.
- To investigate the approaches to International strategy development in the institutions.
- To evaluate the degree of adoption of existing cross cultural relationship management models in the Higher Education institutions.

- To explore the effectiveness of implementation strategies in the institutions.
- To evaluate the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation in the institutions.

Given the exploratory nature of the research objectives a suitable method needs to be justified. According to Saunders (2015) the main methods to consider are defined as follows;

Experiment: Research strategy whose purpose is to study the probability of change in an independent variable causing a change in another, dependant variable. Involves the definition of null and alternative hypothesis, random allocation of participants to either an experimental group or a control group; manipulation of the independent variable; measurement of changes in the dependent variable and; control of other variables.

Survey: Research strategy that involves the structured collection of data from a sizeable population. Although the term survey is often used to describe the collection of data using questionnaires, it includes other techniques such as structured observation and structured interviews.

Archival analysis: Research strategy that analyses administrative records and documents as principal sources of data because they are products of day to day activities

Case study: Research strategy that involves the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, using multiple sources of evidence.

Source: Saunders (2015)

Each method is not mutually exclusive, and benefit can be gained by combining elements to achieve the stated objectives. By developing a theoretical framework for the processes involved in the study the most suitable methods

can be selected. Figure 4.3 describes the most relevant situations for the different research methods.

3.5 Choice of methodological approach - Case Study Approach

Yin (2009) describes case study research as the preferred method when focussing on contemporary phenomena in a real life context with the emphasis on “how?” and “why?”. He further explains that when conducting case study research there will be many more variables than data points requiring triangulation of multiple sources of evidence. Yin (2009) highlights the most common application of case study research focuses on situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisation, social, political, and related phenomena and allows for investigation of real-life events including; individual life-cycles, small group behaviour, organizational and managerial behaviour, international relations and the maturation of industries. Given this research focuses on Cross-Cultural Business Relationship Management within and across international Higher Education organisations spanning partnerships with differing life cycles; case study research is the most appropriate.

Saunders (2007) highlights the ability of case study research to not only address the “how?” and “why?” but also the “what?” thus being exploratory and explanatory in nature. He further emphasises the need for the triangulation of multiple sources of information including interviews, observation, documentary analysis, and questionnaires. He defines triangulation as “The use of two or more independent sources of data or data collection methods within one study in order to help ensure that the data are telling you what you think they are telling you.” (Saunders, 2007:614).

Yin (2009) summarises the main methods available to researchers in context of the most relevant situations to employ them. Figure 7 summarises the relevant situations for different research methods.

Figure 7: Relevant Situations for Different Research Methods

METHOD	Form of research question	Requires control of behavioral events?	Focus on contemporary events?
Experiment	how, why?	yes	yes
Survey	who, what, where, how much, how many?	no	yes
Archival Analysis	who, what, where, how much, how many?	no	yes/no
History	how, why?	no	no
Case Study	how, why?	no	yes

Source: Yin (2009)

In summary, Yin (2009) argues that “what?” questions may be either exploratory or about prevalence (e.g. archival records) and “how?” and “why?” relate to histories, experiments or case studies. If the focus is related to contemporary events and does not require control of behavioural events then the case study approach would be the most logical to pursue.

Yin (2009:19) defines case study research as a twofold technical definition.

- A case study is an empirical inquiry that;
 - Investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
 - The boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident

- The case study enquiry
 - Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and one result
 - Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
 - Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis

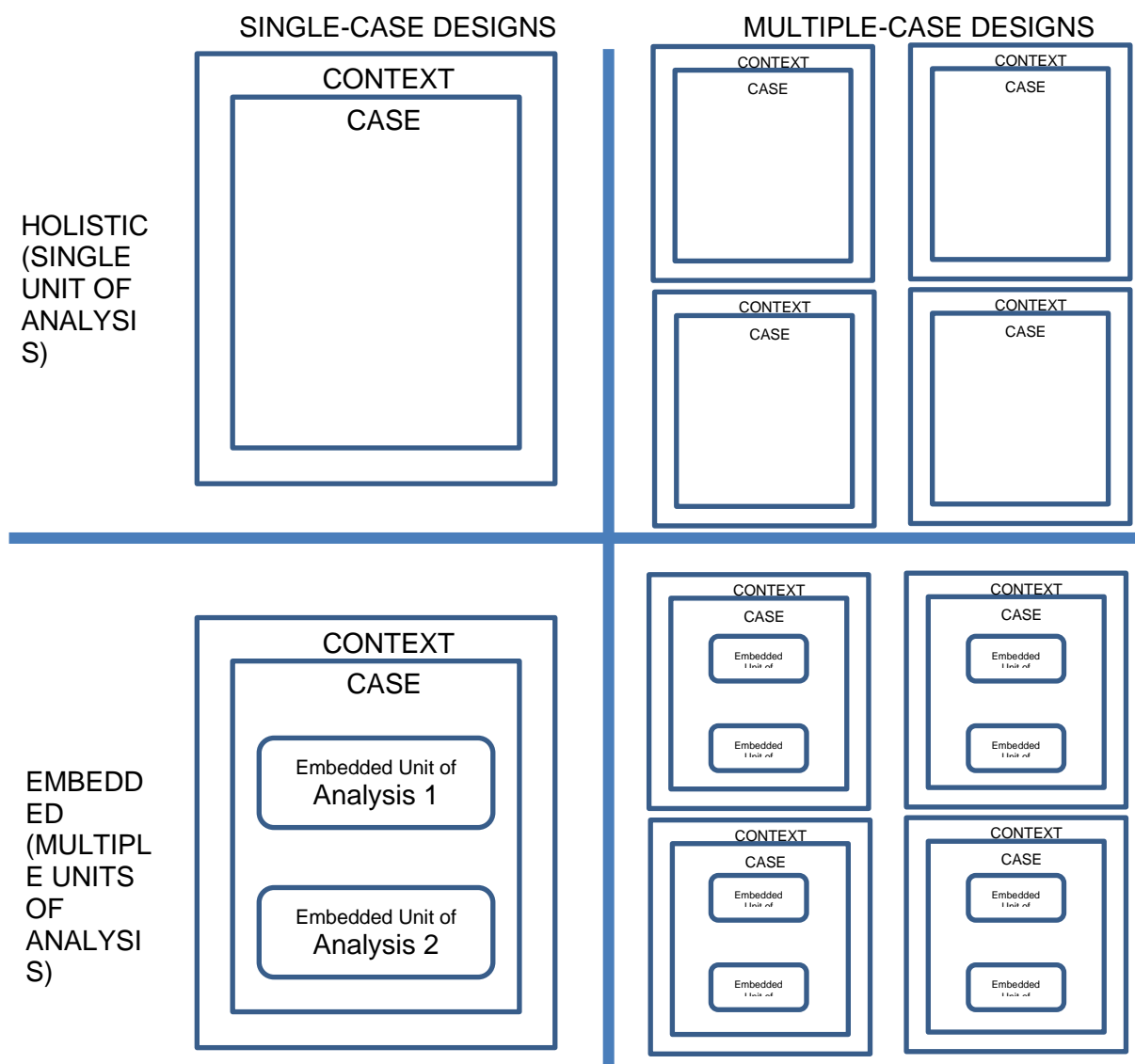
3.5.1 Design

Yin (2009) concentrates on quality through four critical conditions when considering case study design;

- Construct validity
- Internal validity
- External validity
- Reliability

He proposes that there are four major types of Case Study design adopting a 2 x 2 matrix (see figure 8).

Figure 8: Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies



Source: Yin (2009)

For this study an Embedded Single Case Design (Multiple Units of analysis) approach will be adopted. This will allow for the institutions to be analysed at an individual level under the same parameters and then cross analysed as a replication design, Yin (2009). Replication design has been built into the theoretical framework with acknowledgement that the framework will need to be modified as the analysis is conducted. By allowing for this modification, generalisation can be made to adapt to new models or cases. The decision to select multiple units of analysis is dictated by the principle that there is an

assumption of literal replication between cases, in that each institution has the same or similar outcomes from the same or similar processes and entities. Bass, Beecham and Noll (2018:p13-20) following research on two software engineering case studies, one adopting a single case method and the other a multi case design found "...that both multi-case and embedded case studies are suitable for exploratory research (hypothesis development) but that embedded research may also be more suitable for explanatory research (hypothesis testing). We also found that longitudinal case studies offer better confirmability, while multi-case studies offer better transferability." They further state "...case study researchers may gain a greater understanding of why something happened as it did, and what might be important to investigate in future research."

3.5.2 Questions

The questions will be derived from a combination of the aims, objectives and research questions. Each has been related to the gap analysis (Table 9), and will be built by testing the criteria established from analysis of the models considered. The structure of the interviews will follow a semi structured approach allowing for flexibility with the interviewee.

According to Budiyo, Prananto, and Tan, (2019:p1-14) "A set of interview questions developed to be the guide during the interview. In a sense, the interview questions help the researcher to collect the appropriate information required to answer the research questions, as well as to achieve the objectives of the research. The interviews conducted, therefore, more likely to be guided conversations rather than a rigid question and answer session. The conduct of the stream of interview, however, will be fluid to the extent that the questions managed along the development of the conversation." They further conclude "The embedded case study research design is suitable to facilitate the exploration of the richness of a single case. An embedded case is developed from unique characteristics of a selected case in order to investigate the peculiarity of each embedded case."

3.5.3 Propositions

According to Yin (2014) propositions are built on the understanding of the individual cases. In this research the propositions have been designed based on the research questions, the gap analysis, and the entities and processes (Theoretical framework). To this end the propositions are:

Why and how are;

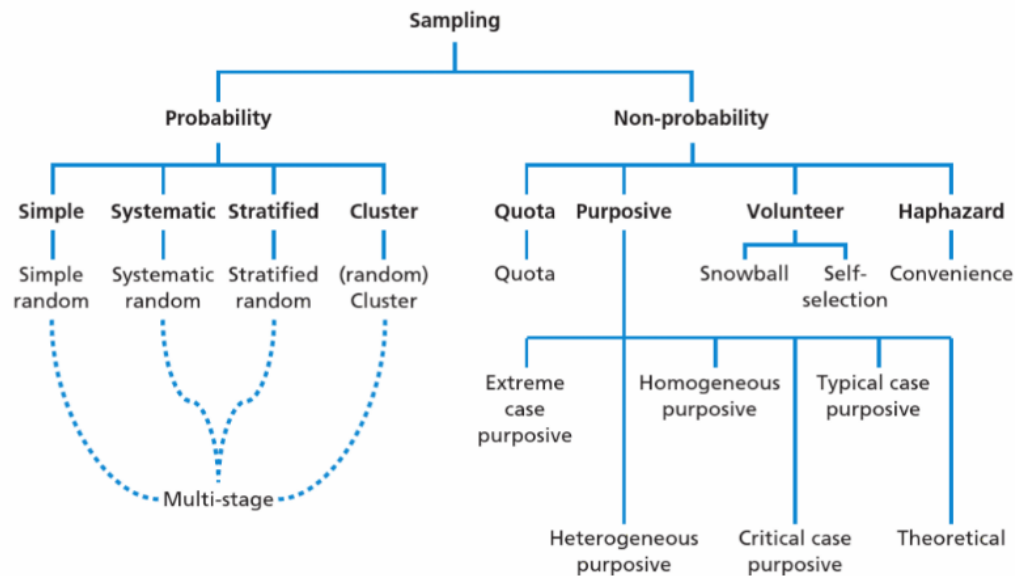
- strategies developed at each institution, and how is this communicated?
- the implications of cultural difference utilised both internally and externally?
- are strategic developments selected – systematically or on an Ad hoc basis, and what are their interrelations?
- are relationships developed, implemented and maintained?
- are management policies adopted within the internal structures, and how does this impact on staff motivation and experience?

The relationships of how these impact on the research questions and gap analysis can be seen in the theoretical framework (figure 4).

3.6 Sampling Techniques

Saunders (2015) initially breaks down sampling techniques into two areas namely; probability sampling and non-probability sampling where the sample can be considered as a sub-section of the target population which in turn is representative of the population as a whole. Figure 9 shows the main techniques and their subcomponents.

Figure 9: Probability and non-probability sampling techniques.



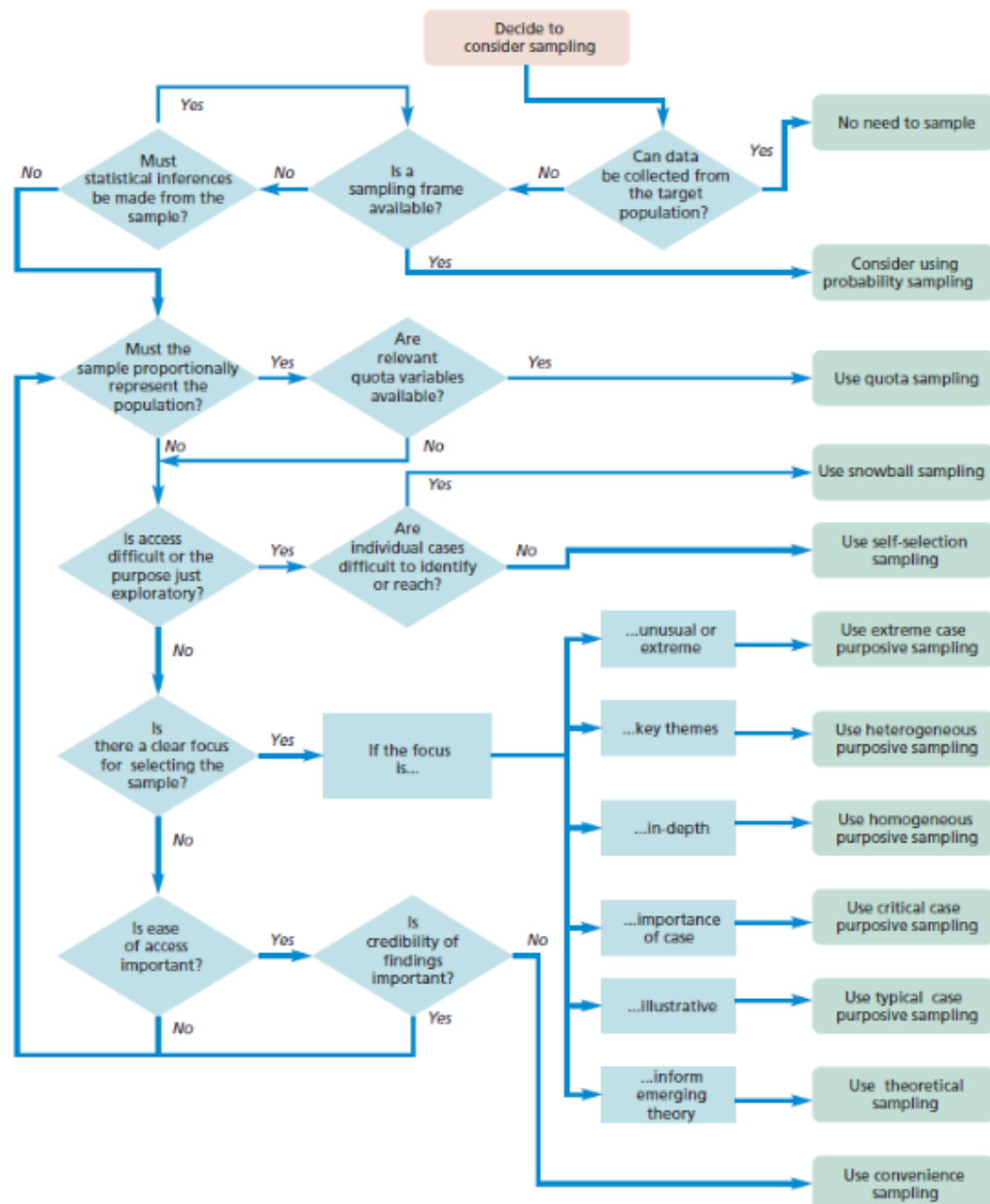
Source: (2015: pp276)

As this study is an embedded case study (multiple units of analysis) the sample selection at this stage will follow the non-probability method. Saunders further explains that probability sampling requires the assumption that the sample is chosen randomly from the sampling frame and states “...within business research, such as market surveys and case study research, this may either not be possible (as you do not have a sampling frame) or not be appropriate to answering your research question. This means your sample must be selected some other way. Non-probability sampling (or non-random sampling) provides a range of alternative techniques to select samples, the majority of which include an element of subjective judgement.”. Saunders also highlights “To answer your research question(s) and to meet your objectives you may need to undertake an in-depth study that focuses on a small number of cases, perhaps one, selected for a particular purpose. This sample would provide you with an information-rich case study in which you explore your research question and gain theoretical insights.” (Saunders 2015: pp295)

Given the case study nature of this study non-probability sampling is the most appropriate method of selecting samples and collecting data (alongside, participant observation and document analysis). It follows that the next stage in deciding the most suitable sampling technique is based on judgement related

to the aims, objectives, research questions, and research strategy of the study. Figure 10 demonstrates the decision making process for choosing the most appropriate non-probability sampling technique.

Figure 10: Choosing a non-probability sampling technique



Source: Saunders (2015: pp296)

Following the figure above the sampling technique is selected as follows.

Question	Response
Can data be collected from the target population?	No
Is a sampling frame available?	No
Must statistical inferences be made from the sample?	No
Must the sample proportionally represent the population?	No
Is access difficult or the purpose just exploratory?	No
Is there a clear focus for selecting the sample?	Yes
If the focus isImportance of the case
Conclusion	Critical Case Purposive Sampling

Saunders (2015: pp302) highlights the critical case sampling on the basis critical cases “...can make a point dramatically or because they are important. The focus of data collection is to understand what is happening in each critical case so that logical generalisations can be made.” Saunders further summarises from (Patton, 2002) several questions relating to critical cases;

- If it happens there, will it happen everywhere?
- If they are having problems, can you be sure that everyone will have problems?
- If they cannot understand the process, is it likely that no one will be able to understand the process?

Given the nature of critical case sampling and understanding of the sample size and the limitations of this technique must be appreciated. Saunders (2015: pp297) acknowledges that given the nature of non-probability purposive sampling especially when considering semi-structured interviews the “validity, understanding and insights that you will gain from your data will be more to do with your data collection and analysis skills that with the size of your sample”. As case study research requires multiple sources of data (semi- structured interviews , observation, document analysis etc) then the sample size will be

dictated by the aims, objectives and research questions. Table 14 generalises samples size by nature of study.

Table 14: Minimum non-probability sample size

Nature of study	Minimum sample size
Semi-structured/In-depth interviews	5–25
Ethnographic	35–36
Grounded Theory	20–35
Considering a homogeneous population	4–12
Considering a heterogeneous population	12–30

Source: Sauder (2016: pp297)

Figure 11 below describes the impact of various factors on choice of non-probability sampling techniques.

Figure 11: The impact of various factors on choice of non-probability sampling techniques.

Group	Technique	Likelihood of sample being representative	Types of research in which useful	Relative costs	Control over sample contents
Quota	Quota	Reasonable to high, although dependent on selection of quota variables	Where costs constrained or data needed very quickly so an alternative to probability sampling needed	Moderately high to reasonable	Specifies quota selection criteria
Purposive	Extreme case	Low	Unusual or special	Reasonable	Specifies selection criteria
	Heterogeneous	Low, although dependent on researcher's choices	Reveal/illuminate key themes	Reasonable	Specifies selection criteria
	Homogeneous	Low	In-depth focus	Reasonable	Specifies selection criteria
	Critical case	Low	Importance	Reasonable	Specifies selection criteria
	Typical case	Low, although dependent on researcher's choices	Illustrative	Reasonable	Specifies selection criteria
	Theoretical	Low	Inform emerging theory	Reasonable	Specifies selection criteria
Volunteer	Snowball	Low, but cases likely to have characteristics desired	Where cases difficult to identify	Reasonable	Selects initial participant
	Self-selection	Low, as cases self-selected	Where access difficult, research exploratory	Reasonable	Offers only general invitation
Haphazard	Convenience	Very low (often lacks credibility)	Ease of access	Low	Haphazard

Source: Saunders (2015: pp298)

From figure 11 above non-probability, purposive critical case sampling yields a low likelihood of the sample being representative and requires specific selection criteria to select the sample. The selection criteria will follow a purposive sampling technique, Saunders describes purposive sampling “With purposive sampling you need to use your judgement to select cases that will best enable you to answer your research question(s) and to meet your objectives. For this reason it is sometimes known as judgemental sampling. You therefore need to think carefully about the impact of your decision to include or exclude cases on the research when selecting a sample in this way. Purposive sampling is often used when working with very small samples such as in case study research

and when you wish to select cases that are particularly informative.” Saunders (2015: pp301)

The following sections will describe the sample selection for this case study.

3.7 Case selection – Institutions

The UK University is a public University established in 1896 as a Royal Technical College and received University status by Royal Charter in 1967. The UK Business School holds various partnership agreement. A summary of the partnerships and their associated agreement (involved in this study) are as follows:

Partner	Typology	Agreement	Number of Programmes	Level of Programmes	Approximate student registrations*
Switzerland	Collaborative	Franchise	19	PG	3,000-3,500
Malaysia	Collaborative	Franchise	2	UG	100-150
Ghana	Collaborative	Franchise	4	PG	50-100
Finland	Collaborative	Dual Award	2	UG	N/A
	Academic	Off Campus Delivery of taught programme	1	UG	N/A
Spain	Academic	Progression	2	UG	N/A
	Academic	Off Campus Delivery of taught programme	1	UG	N/A

* Approximate student registrations are based on typical registrations during a single year for franchised programmes only.

Switzerland

The Swiss Institution is a private provider of higher learning who has a franchise partnership with the UK University Business School. This partnership

commenced in 2013 and enables the UK University Business School to franchise delivery of the following programmes:

- LLM International Commercial Law,
- MSc Accounting and Finance,
- MSc International Banking and Finance,
- MSc International Corporate Finance,
- MSc International Events Management,
- MSc Digital Business
- MSc Financial Services Management,
- MSc Finance and Investment Management
- MSc Global Management,
- MSc Human Resource Management and Development,
- MSc Information Systems Management,
- MSc Fraud and Risk Management
- MSc International Business
- MSc Marketing,
- MSc International Business with Law,
- MSc Procurement, Logistics and Supply Chain Management,
- MSc Project Management,
- MSc Managing Innovation and Information Technology
- MSc Operations Management

Malaysia

The Malaysian Institution (established in its current form in 2013) is a private institute of higher learning and is recognised by the Malaysian Government through the Malaysian Qualifications Authority (MQA). The UK University Business School has a franchise partnership which includes the following programmes:

- BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance
- BSc (Hons) Business Management

Ghana

The UK University entered into a franchise agreement with the Ghanaian Institution in 2016. The College was accredited by the National Accreditation Board in November 2004 and awarded its Presidential Charter in 2020. The programmes covered by the agreement are:

- MSc Accounting and Finance
- MSc Procurement, Logistics and Supply Chain management
- MSc Human Resource Management and Development
- MSc Management

Finland

The Finnish Institution is a privately funded University founded in 1996. The UK University Business School has a Dual Award in the following:

- BSc (Hons) International Business/BBA International Business
- BSc (Hons) Tourism Management/BBA International Business (Tourism)
- The partnership also ran credit bearing Erasmus Intensive programmes under the Lifelong Learning programme from 2007

Spain

The Spanish Institution is a public University founded in 1991, and it has approximately 14,000 students and has 3 faculties including the Faculty of Economics and Law. The University has the following agreements with the UK institution:

- MSc Management – progression agreement
- MSc Global Management – progression agreement
- UG Level 6 undergraduate credit bearing module collaboration in BSc (Hons) International Business/BSc (Hons) Tourism Management
- The partnership also ran credit bearing Erasmus Intensive programmes under the Lifelong Learning programme from 2007

3.8 Case selection – Participants

International Partners

- Senior Faculty Management
- Senior Institution Management

UK Business School

- Senior Faculty Management
- Academics with partnership responsibilities (Link Tutors)
- Faculty academics
- Faculty professional support staff
- University International Office Heads of Department
- University International Management

Adopting the critical case sampling method, the following tables outline the selection of participants.

Table 15: International Partnerships - participants

Institution	Role	International HE Experience	Institution or Faculty	Description
Switzerland	Deputy Dean	17 years	Both	<i>Swiss – Senior Manager</i>
Malaysia	Deputy Principle	15 years	Both	<i>Malaysian – Senior Manager</i>
Ghana	Senior Faculty Academic	6 years	Faculty	<i>Ghanaian – Senior Academic</i>
Finland	Senior Faculty Academic	18 years	Faculty	<i>Finnish – Senior Academic</i>
Spain	Dean/Academic	25 years	Faculty	<i>Spanish – Senior Academic Manager</i>
	Head of International Office	16 years	Institution	<i>Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager</i>

Table 16: UK Institution/Business School - participants

Institution	Role	International HE Experience	Institution or Faculty	Description
United Kingdom	Head of International Office	15 years	Institution	<i>UK – Head of International Office</i>
United Kingdom	International Partnerships Manager	4 years	Institution	<i>UK - International Partnerships Manager</i>
United Kingdom	International Opportunities Manager	19 years	Institution	<i>UK - International</i>

				<i>Opportunities Manager</i>
United Kingdom	Faculty Academic	4 years	Faculty	<i>UK – Link Tutor Malaysia</i>
United Kingdom	Faculty Academic	9 years	Faculty	<i>UK – Link Tutor Ghana</i>
United Kingdom	Faculty Academic	15 years	Faculty	<i>UK – Academic Spain/Finland</i>
United Kingdom	Faculty Academic	5 years	Faculty	<i>UK - Academic</i>
United Kingdom	Faculty Partnerships Lead Administrator	8 years	Faculty	<i>UK - Partnerships Administrator</i>

Table 17: UK Institution/Business School/International Partnerships – Observational Researcher

Institution	Role(s)	International HE Experience	Institution or Faculty	Description
United Kingdom	Director of Global Partnerships	2013 - 2019	Faculty	<i>Simon (Interviewer)</i> <i>(Observational Researcher, Document Analysis.)</i>
	Associate Dean International (Acting)	2019 - 2020		
	International Exchange Coordinator	2013 - 2019		
	Link Tutor Switzerland	2017 - 2022		
	International Project coordinator (Spain/Finland)	2006 - 2022		

	Dual Award in International Business (Finland)	2016 - 2022		
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3.9 Analysis Methods

According to Saunders et al (2015: p579) "Thematic Analysis offers a systematic yet flexible and accessible approach to analyse qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 2006). It is systematic as it provides an orderly and logical way to analyse qualitative data. In this way, Thematic Analysis can be used to analyse large qualitative data sets, as well as smaller ones, leading to rich descriptions, explanations and theorising.". As this research follows a critical case sampling technique, the same semi-structured open ended questions (or themes) are explored with each participant. As critical case sampling was adopted as the sampling technique for participant selection; a relatively small sample size is expected. The decision was therefore made to not adopt Computer Assisted Qualitative Content Analysis (CAQDAS) software to minimise generalisation and to allow for rich understanding of the individual participants experience and perceptions of the topic. Castleberry and Nolan (2018) discuss the use of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis systems such as NVivo® and highlight the potential benefits for organising the process, but further state " These software tools assist the researcher in looking at patterns of codes and links between codes across large fields of data. Linguistic and semantic algorithms detect sequencing and co-occurring phrasing in a reliable and systematic manner. A common misconception is that CAQDAS software can analyze the data for you—this cannot be farther from the truth. While software can assist researchers with organizing large amounts of qualitative data, the researcher's mind is the power behind analysis and not any software program.".

Although the participants and partnership institutional agreements differ in their context, it is assumed that the theoretical framework can still be applied and tested. The questions are designed to identify any themes that may appear across partnerships and enable any distinctive differences to be identified and analysed. The interview data is supported by both the embedded observational research and the document analysis. This enables a clear picture of the current situation to be assessed. The UK institution participants have been selected for the suitability in both the development and maintenance of the partnerships.

The selection adopted a top-down and bottom-up approach to ensure all levels of the partnership management was investigated. Initially themes will be identified from within the UK institution. Secondly the themes across the different partners will be identified, these will then be applied to the document analysis and the embedded observation to identify any inconsistency or differences associated with the differing nature of the partnerships or roles.

3.10 Reliability and Validity

Bass et al (2018: p15) when considering case study trustworthiness, adopt a four criteria model Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability where each implies the following;

“Credibility. The first research quality criterion to be assessed relates to the “truthfulness” of the research. A positivist paradigm recognises a single external reality which researchers seek to uncover. However, naturalistic researchers like Lincoln and Gruba consider the realities created by groups, communities and teams of people to be socially constructed. Hence, they argue “truthfulness” is achieved when the research is carried out in such a way that the findings are found “credible” by researchers and study participants.

Transferability. The second criterion addresses the applicability of research from one group of study participants to another, where results from one context are applicable to another. A positivist might assume that there is some universal truths, regardless of time and context, out there in nature waiting to be discovered. But, many recognise that a group of study participants work within, and are guided by, a particular set of circumstances. Hence, in order to understand the likely application of research from one study group to another, we need to understand the circumstances affecting that group. Transferability refers to the expectation that results from one context are applicable to another.

Dependability. The third criterion relates to the consistency or repeatability of the research. Conventional studies are considered reliable if replication confirms the results. But replication assumes that the precise circumstances

faced by a particular group, community or team of people can be reproduced exactly.

Confirmability. Confirmable research is neutral or objective in terms of researcher interaction with the study context. An independent observer should expect to reach similar conclusions in confirmable research.”

They further state “When it comes to establishing validity, again we see several benefits to the multiple case study, that has relatively high generalizability as it views a variety of situations, where we could not argue convincingly that observations made in any single case study are generalizable. There are gains to be made for internal validity in the single case, with a good opportunity to establish cause and effect in a longitudinal study”. They summarise the difference between Single-case (Embedded) and Multi-case studies in the following table.

Table 18: Cross Case Analysis

<i>Method</i>	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
Embedded Case Study	Confirmability	Transferability
Multi-case Study	Transferability	Confirmability

Source: Bass et al (2018)

3.11 Chapter summary

The chapter has described the chosen methodological approach to the research. The research will adopt Critical Realism as a phenomenological epistemology and follow an inductive approach; the research design will be adopted to conduct case study analysis; purposive sampling will be adopted adopting a critical sampling technique. By adopting the case study approach a

true picture of how the interactions between the identified processes and stakeholders will be understood and clearly defined. The relationship both internally and externally can then be related to the international strategy of the institution. The case study will consist of three main components of analysis; documentary evidence from the institutions, semi structured interviews with the key stakeholders, and observational research conducted by the researcher. The following chapter will present the results and discussions based on the findings.

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter will analyse the findings of the primary research. Thematic analysis will be adopted to address the initial research questions. Document analysis and participant observation will be employed to support the findings from the semi-structured open ended interviews. The research questions will be addressed on an individual basis initially drawing on responses from the participant interviews followed by discussions relating the responses to the document analysis and the participant observation.

Firstly the findings from the UK University will be analysed to assess the current situation in the institution and highlight any themes that are formulated from the responses, observations, and document analysis.

Secondly the findings from the partner institutions will be analysed any associated themes will be discussed with the support of the participant observation and document analysis.

The overall themes will then be summarised from the perspective of both the UK University and the partner institutions. The subsequent conclusions and recommendations chapter will draw on the key findings and relate them to the literature review to address the aim and objectives of the research.

4.2 Research Aims

To evaluate critically the stakeholder perceptions of factors impacting the effectiveness of cross-cultural international relationship management in global Higher Educational partner Institutions and analyse the impact on International strategy development, management, implementation and maintenance.

4.3 Research Objectives

1. Evaluate international academic strategic alliances in relation to partner selection, purpose, boundaries, value and maintenance; identify the key stakeholders and drivers.
2. To investigate the approaches to strategic relationship development in the UK and Partner institutions.
3. To evaluate the role culture plays in relationship management of the partnership.
4. To explore the effectiveness of implementation strategies in the institutions.
5. To evaluate the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation in the institutions.

4.4 Research Questions

1. How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?
2. What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?
3. How are new international developments managed and supported?
4. How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?
5. What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?
6. What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?
7. How effective is the support and communication?

4.5 Relationship to Research Questions

Table 19 shows the relation of the research questions to the primary data collection method.

Table 19 The relation of the research questions to the primary data collection method

Research Questions	Primary Data Collection Method
How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?	<i>Interviews (Q2)</i> <i>Observation</i> <i>Document analysis</i>
What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?	<i>Interviews (Q3)</i> <i>Observation</i>
How are new international developments managed and supported?	<i>Interviews (Q4)</i> <i>Observation</i> <i>Document analysis</i>
How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?	<i>Interviews (Q4)</i> <i>Observation</i>
What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?	<i>Interviews (Q5)</i> <i>Observation</i>
What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?	<i>Interviews (Q1, Q2)</i> <i>Observation</i>

How effective is the support and communication?	<i>Interviews</i> (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5) <i>Observation</i>
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4.6 Interview questions following protocol analysis and pilot testing

The pre-protocol analysis and pilot testing interview questions can found in Appendix H. The protocol analysis was conducted with an experienced colleague from the UK University to test the duration of the interview and the outcomes of the questions asked. The analysis showed that the questions were too specific given the critical case sampling method and therefore a more open ended approach was adopted to allow for free discussion on the main themes in question. The pilot testing confirmed the open ended approach allowed for a more flowing interview where the researcher guided the conversation to allow for a more discursive discussion. The following areas were introduced during the interviews for both the UK University and the partner institutions. The relationship of interview question to the research questions can be seen in Table 18 above.

1. Demographics and motivation. Participant background
2. How do the institutions develop international strategies?
3. What role does culture play in the relationship?
4. How international developments and managed, maintained and supported?
5. What are the barriers institutions face and how effective is the support and communication?

4.7 UK University – Findings

A full transcript of all interviews can be found in Appendix I

Participant Background

The initial questions focused on the background of the participants to add to the documented evidence of role description and international experience. This enables a more detailed perspective on how the participants developed into their current roles and allowed them to summarise their current roles as they see them.

UK – Head of International Office

Simon (Interviewer)

“...how would you class yourself as far as your knowledge and experience of working in international is concerned? ... how many years etc”

UK – Head of International Office

“Quite a few years, ... So I guess going back to my CV, I think that I, you know, I predominantly came from a marketing background. I suppose that was kind of like my thing, marketing, and PR backgrounds and then via teaching English got into international recruitment. So you know that was kind of like that was what the journey was. I think after I came back from Japan and found out you could work in universities, I thought, oh, this is quite good. You know, working, there's a marketing angle. Working with students is quite nice. But still quite salesy for want of a better word, and that was not really liked in universities at the time. So I think from 2007 so that's quite a while now, isn't it, really? Yeah. [15 years]

Simon (Interviewer)

“...So you worked overseas yourself as part of your career development.”

UK – Head of International Office

“So that was probably when I was like, a little bit younger, not that young, though, to be honest with you. I think in my 20s, 30's and stuff. So yeah, like, lived in Japan for two years and Thailand for a bit as well. So just more of a sort of travelling, but then, you know, working in schools, teaching English as well and stuff. And then obviously in these roles travelled pretty extensively.

And to be honest with you less so now, which is nice. you know, as you get older ... it's fine when you're younger..."

Simon (Interviewer)

"I know you've got an extensive role, but what would you describe as your main roles within the institution?"

UK – Head of International Office

"So it's really looking after international recruitment, incoming students, developing partnerships, so off campus students as well. And then mobility, which is a different audience, UK students going out, it's the prime audience there."

Simon (Interviewer)

"And within your role with the partnership development, how does that fit in with your day?"

UK – Head of International Office

"I would say the split between recruitment, partnership development and mobility, it's probably a bit more geared towards recruitment cause there's more students there and that's the quick win basically than partnership development, that's more a bit of a long term. So that's identifying and scoping institutions perhaps within what our overall strategy is. So what are our priority markets and how does that work really, so not knowledgeable about absolutely everything, but we always can find people that are ... and then the mobility piece does include partnership development ..."

UK - International Partnerships Manager

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"I'm primarily partnership managing across UK and international partners across a wide range of typologies everything from progression agreements, right the way through to franchise."

Simon (Interviewer)

"And within that, who are you liaising with mostly in the institution"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"So within the institution, it'd be ADI, or associate Dean Internationals...Deputy Dean's quite a lot and Pro-Vice Chancellor.

Simon (Interviewer)

"So just reflecting to yourself so clearly you're doing a senior role within the institution, you know, developing, managing these partnerships. How would you describe your level experience in in international?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"In this role about four years, but before that, working in admissions with international students... probably about 15 years in that..."

UK - International Opportunities Manager

UK - International Opportunities Manager

So my role within this institution is the International opportunities manager within an international opportunities team and part of the wider International office that also covers recruitment and partnerships. My role specifically is to manage incoming and outgoing ability with the focus on outgoing mobility and essentially to equip our students with the skills awareness, global citizenship, intercultural fluency and everything that they need really to succeed once they graduate from the university. And we play into the General International Office in terms of liaising with external bodies. And so whether that's students, some other universities or whether it's the universities themselves. And we'll so in terms of the partnership side of our team will have to deal with lots of things like contracts and you know agreement templates and things like that... my role is more kind of probably 70% dealing with either partners and schools as well. My role is more kind of from the senior side dealing with the partners, dealing with the schools and also the external funding bodies as well, which are a huge part of what we do, particularly with things like Turing or Erasmus."

Simon (Interviewer)

"If you were to describe yourself, what would you say is your level of

experience? Knowledge? How long have you been working internationally in your past history?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Working at [the UK University] , four years and one day as of yesterday.

... but being in international started working International Office in 2003, so nearly 20 years. So entire career 5 universities all within the International Office in some respects, well, all within an international context, i.e being overseas in Belgium and that's always with being within an international environment. So yeah, understand a lot about what the kids need, what the schools need, what the centres need, what the partners need. And in theory, how it should all line up?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"I'm the lead administrator for all the partnerships within the school."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So every international partner comes through you... So within the partners that you manage, are there different types of partnerships, are they categorized into primarily franchises?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"They're all franchise. So it's our material. Our QA process is everything the partner just literally teaches our materials..."

Simon (Interviewer)

"...how long have you been working in the international environment?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And since 2014, so eight years... all the partners. And we've only had them since 2014. So nobody else has done this role. It was a new role created for me."

Simon (Interviewer)

“So can you just describe as best as you can your main day-to-day duties?”

UK - Partnerships Administrator

“The communication with the partners. So there is daily either MS Teams, messages or emails. I would say not a day goes by when I don't engage with a partner. You've got prep for example boards, so all that goes with that you've the registration of the students, Blackboard sites and it all sort of merges in and you know you can be doing all that in one day. But the communication is probably the biggest one. Where they'll email you, you know you'll see an email first thing in the morning. Because the majority of them are ahead of us, so by the time I log on there even nearly finished another halfway through their day, so you know, I don't know from one day to the next, you know, way although I'm I plan things get, you know, sprung upon you... react when the partners asking the question or a student... And Yeah. So Good communication.”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Well from a link tutor perspective, I think just I'm the mainly in zone or contact. And to make sure there is efficient communication in terms of our policies, procedures, expectations and meeting what the partners need and then if the partners have issues or problems and so on, it is our responsibility to actually take the lead to, to make sure that it's directed to the right people or personal admin in within the Business School to get it sorted. As a faculty member and involvement in international, I don't think there's any established or clear plan of how we as faculty can contribute.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“How much experience have you got in working internationally in any kind of field?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“My international experience prior to The UK Business School Is not working

in partnerships, but simply because I have taught internationally whether it's online or as a visiting faculty and so on, where there is an online in the US online and face to face in Europe and even in Asia as well. And as in terms of my personal background, I'm from the Caribbean. I studied in the Caribbean, but I also studied in the US, the UK... Hong Kong and so on. So I for me, I have an interest in international, all things international, international travel, learning about other cultures. So I saw the opportunity not only to get more experience outside of faculty role in the university, but an opportunity to probably engage with different cultures, possibly travel... I am. I'm from a multicultural background, so I appreciate interacting and engaging with different countries, cultures, etc”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“I've been working international environment for 8 to 9 years. ...at the moment, the partnership Agreement is based on post graduate Programme delivery ... four distinct programmes ... I'm always in contact with the Partners... Well, I said more or less as a liaison officer... Trying to bring their cases to the coordinator, at the Business School. ...everything comes through me... “

Simon (Interviewer)

“Do you do any other roles within the school that doesn't relate to that particular role? ...are you a module leader where you have to work with other partners?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“Three different partners... Sr Lanka, Malaysia and Bahrain, that I am the module leader for some of their modules that are delivered within these institutions again, I mean direct contact with their Module leaders in those institutions for the running of those modules and more or less, I make sure that I manage those modules that are delivered in there.”

UK - Academic

UK - Academic

" I teach on post graduate and undergraduate programmes that have modules that have partners who are delivering the same module... I teach on the MSC HRM and on the module is resourcing for high performance and that is has an international partner Switzerland, Ghana, Sri Lanka At undergrad I have a teach out of a Level 4 module with Bahrain and so that's principles of HRM. ... that's been my experience pretty much throughout the majority of my undergrad and postgrad taught content and has been at least one or more partnerships with an International University and then everything that comes with that.

Simon (Interviewer)

"... how much international experience do you feel as though you have?"

UK - Academic

Very little, really. And so I've never taught at an institution outside the UK directly, so I've prepared content and materials, which some variances. And so, for example, on resourcing for high performance and some of the content we focus on the professional body in the UK, but we then term that in the information for Switzerland in a much more generic way because we're conscious that it's not necessarily relevant to many of the students, and then similarly with Sri Lanka, for example, will develop content that recognises their Institute of Personal Development as opposed to the UK based one. I, but as far as teaching experience is concerned, mine is bounded really by the UK. I don't have taught experience internationally.

I'm the module leader for modules that are taught in these partnerships and these partner universities.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland**UK – Academic Spain/Finland**

"... module leadership from modules taught in other places. I need to coordinate the module Blackboard site, then module teaching and learning

content, and the assessment. And I also need to moderate the assessments from their students.”

“Spain's a different animal because what we do there is we take students across on your work with the university who host us. Originally it was a European funded intensive program which would bring students from Finland, Spain and The UK Business School together to work on a module. The funding died. Since then we have been working with them on a fairly informal basis to take our students across to the town that the university is in to run a module and we are hosted on informal basis by the local university and two of the academics that we have a good relationship with.

Simon (Interviewer)

“...How many years have you been working and then international basis?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“That would be stretching back probably now 15 years.”

Discussion

From the data collected prior to the interview and the responses it can be seen that there is a wide variety of experience in the staff interviewed. The staff in senior positions in the institution all have considerable international experience and demonstrate a clear understanding of their job roles and responsibilities. Observation with these colleagues has been formulated by the observer working directly with these colleagues on multiple projects throughout the duration of the study. Projects with the *UK – Head of International Office* consisted of planning potential new partnerships, overseas visits, student number planning for existing partners and international recruitment activities. Projects with the *UK -International Partnerships Manager* included new partnership agreements (see Appendix G), amendments to existing partnership contracts and renewals, financial and legal aspects of the partnerships including due diligence assessments. The *UK-International Opportunities Manager* has provided support over a range of activities including support for student mobility including the dual awards with Finland, overall mobility of the

Business School students, new partnership development in relation to international opportunities for both staff and students. Formal reporting mechanisms are in place via a series of internal committees, partnership committees including Joint Boards of Study (see Appendix C) and Staff Student Committees (see Appendix D) and partnership meeting for future planning including revisions of existing programmes, new programme offerings, and withdrawals.

From the Business School staff there is again a wide variety of International experience. The link tutors have worked closely with the partners for several years and have developed a strong team working relationship with each. Each of the staff interviewed are also responsible for module leadership at partner institutions so they have direct experience of the day to day academic requirements of the partners alongside the account management of the relationships. The *UK – Academic* is the only colleague who does not have a significant amount of international experience but does manage a series of modules delivered at the partners. The *UK - Partnerships Administrator* has extensive experience and has worked with all the partners in the School from their conception; the day to day responsibilities are providing all the administrative support for both the partner institutions and the school with respect to the partners. From observation, the link tutors have a full appreciation of the work required and act, on the most part, autonomously ensuring the partners needs are met and informing the School of any developments. These are again demonstrated via a series of committees within the school and with the partners.

RQ1 - How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Head of International Office

So how does the UK University develop its international strategy?

UK – Head of International Office

OK, so at the moment we work on five year plans... So really there's certain things that you have to get right with the strategy - what people want to know. First of all, everyone wants to know about countries, markets. You don't like where you're going to go? They wish for their kind of favourite thing on the map. But it doesn't work like that because ...what do we want to do is more important and what we can offer is more important and then it's kind of like that matching exercise really. So, you know, we're developing our strategy over a five year period and over this time it needs to link into what the university wants to do as well. So we need to be aligned with that overall arching strategy. So that's been quite interesting as well because there are some challenges there. You've got this process we work on like 3 themes. Global impacts, growth and growth and diversity which we want to get like over 10,000 new international students on campus by 2027. So that's kind of like that we can measure that quite easily with the number ... global impact which is the partnership one to be honest with you because we want to get at least 5000 new off campus students over that period. And then we've got a global citizenship strand, which is about the kind of like the opportunity for our students ... We've looked at the themes where the university wants to grow, so whether that's, healthy living, creative and resilient communities, we've been talking about that quite a lot, you know, so those kind of like industry 5.0, so all those kind of like areas... if our university is building up strength and expertise in those areas, how can we take that internationally and develop it as well because that's what our overall brand is. It's like how can we enhance our brand?... You know four areas that we always have to check off really and one is just making sure we're doing things efficiently and which is really

important because people always ask about cost and that's one of the restraints that we have and making sure that we're effectively in line with the universities priorities, which I thought about making sure that it's the student experience... then ... currently sustainability aware? Basically because one that's the thing that's running through all education, you know, we as universities need to be kind of like the driving force in climate change, net zero ... This is why you get questions like do you need to travel all the time now? ... that didn't come up before... so that's kind of like how we've been developing, but I'd say the, the important things to bring out is ... what do they offer the university and then where do we want to go rather than where do we want to go and then what can we offer them.”

“So for example, we're talking about partnerships, can we deliver something half of it online and then half of it overseas as well and almost double up the number of students that we could potentially be serving over that period... and haven't got answers to all these questions yet as well. But these are the things that over the five year period we will be... developing as well. We might not have got to the right end of the journey by then, but we would have cracked into it...”

“... There's quite a lot of internal challenges that we do things differently, but not always in the right way. So I always think there's things to clear up before we can keep going...”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... when you considering partnerships specifically, what do you think the drivers are they financial, are they about the brand of the university or they about the student experience, how would you classify them?”

UK – Head of International Office

“... I think sometimes it depends on who you speak to within the university... If I'm honest, I think from our institutional wide, we have seen it from a bit more of an economic focus and I don't know if that's always correct really because you're never going to earn loads and loads of money by doing it this way...”

We should be able to tick a number of different boxes, really economics should be one of them, but it's more about global reach, global impact, who you alumni going to be in like 5-10, fifteen years' time.. That will be a really amazing measure..."

Simon (Interviewer)

"... when you're actually developing the strategies, you're talking at different levels. So presumably Vice Chancellor Pro-Vice Chancellor through to the faculties ...?"

UK – Head of International Office

"I always feel that have we had enough discussion but sometimes you can have too much discussion as well if you're honest. So I think that I think that on this latest iteration it's been... a bottom up approach and partly a bottom down approach.. For example, the corporate strategy is being refreshed, hence we need to work on the international sort of sub strategy... We've had lots of consultation at school and ADI level and obviously working directly with the Pro Vice Chancellor and Student experience. I don't know whether the Deans have always had that information fed down and fed up as well, and then fed wider, I don't know, but how many people do really want to get involved? ...I always think that all we're doing and you can't always keep everybody happy when you're developing a strategy, but it's like, well, you just got to be clear, this is what we're going to deliver. This is how we're going to do it."

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you feel that filters down through the schools to the actual operational staff who are implemented in these decisions?

UK – Head of International Office

"Probably not, to be honest with you, because I've been in meetings as well. You know, sometimes schools have been like, oh, I didn't know that kind of thing really... so I don't think."

"I think sometimes ... we could be a bit too democratic sometimes as well, in a way. It's like, you know, all, you know, my job is to do this... everyone's job. What separates jobs? ... by consulting with them, sometimes you're asking them to do part of your job for you. And I know it totally influences them. So you do have to have that in mind, but that's why schools give you people to represent their decisions. And I think that there has to be those processes and communication channels..."

".., but talking about strategy development, it's almost like... International is a sub strategy. It's not a strategy. It's part of something else. So you know, I think that's part of... A lot of my work internally is... Internal PR, I suppose ... just trying to get everything to the top of the list and everything and it's really hard. It's really hard, especially really simple things which are to do with partnership development. It's just like, you know, sometimes you just want somebody to map a curriculum and say, yeah, that's fine. Like this very simple stage and everything. Oh you had like an hours meeting trying to persuade someone and just saying... really. Could they have not done it in this time? But then perhaps that's me being a little bit naive as well..."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Partnerships Manager

"...how do institutions actually develop their international strategies? Who are the main stakeholders and what the perceived benefits of these strategic international alliances?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"Yeah. So, [Head of International], just been working on writing it all up. In terms of partnerships, we would look at... What kind of risk we want to expose ourselves to. So do we want to keep going out and building franchises or do we want the students coming to the main campus? What do we think's better for the students? Obviously it's more time consuming for everybody if you've got 15 franchises with very low numbers. It also makes them not viable quite a lot of the time in terms of the financial aspect. And we have to making sure that the meeting, the minimum numbers that we've agreed at the very outset with the RSI one (financial report). So at the moment we've kind of looked at

do we want more students on the campus or do we want? More campus locations with partners. And that's been done in conjunction with the schools. And also with PVC.

Simon (Interviewer)

"... what do you think the main risks are involved in international partnership development?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"Biggest ones, probably the reputational damage if it goes wrong. And then financial. The last thing any of us want to do is set a partnership up that that isn't going to work. And sometimes it can be kind of driven... It's really important that we get this established, but if it's not going to work, we need to be honest with ourselves right at the outset. And it's also getting buy in from staff in the schools. So your Schools great. You'll help with anything. Some of the other schools, the staff are a little bit more standoffish... In terms of wanting to make things work.

Simon (Interviewer)

"We can see reputational damage and financial risk as being the major, major drivers behind the risk element. When it comes to actually creating the partnership from scratch. You feel as though it's a systematic approach across the institution. In other words, targeting specific markets and then people go out and try and find them. Or do you think it's more driven by individuals, knowledge and experience in relationships in the past?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"I think at the minute it's the latter. So it's driven by individuals in the institution. It'd be better if we knew the markets we wanted to go into and exactly what we wanted to do."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So given what you've just said... If a potential development opportunity comes from, say, an academic member of staff. Do you feel that sometimes you need to reject it off hand straight away because they don't know the legal

implications? Or what is possible in an institution? Is that something that happens much?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"We try to scope it out with them first to try and work out exactly what it is they're doing or wanting to do and then give me information about what is allowed and what's not allowed and where we're getting that information from. So we work quite closely with the Department of International Trade"

"So where we get an academic that goes, I want a franchise this programme in China. That's kind of pull him down off the ceiling and go. That might not be possible. But what we could do is something like this..."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

How much are you directly involved with international strategy development of the university?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"I'm involved with it to the extent of the global citizenship side, so our international strategy covers recruitment, partnerships and international opportunities, international opportunities also kind of covers internationalization at home as well. So I've been feeding into that and I know that we did have a strategy document... but ended last year or something and it's being reviewed at the moment and I must admit, when I first saw the first one I thought I was being asked to edit it. I didn't think it was complete... And I still don't even think I kind of wonder about the value of it anyway, like we go to all of these things to put a strategy together... And strategies are all very well, but like if you don't tell anybody about them."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So do you think that is a fundamental flaw that they're not communicated across..."

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Yeah, absolutely. And I think, I mean it's a problem across many UK

universities, but I think I I've been fortunate to work at other ones where it has been a lot more... Yeah, in the in the general comms like, you know, whether it's weekly updates or the message from the VC. So I think our strategy is, is good, it's solid. But it's not taken seriously because it again, it feels like a bit of a rubber stamp kind of job. Oh, we've got to have an international strategy... But then we're just not going to tell anybody about it. is it? It's like you've got to be in the know to know. But what's the point of kind of including all the things on global citizenship on student mobility, all the things I'm passionate about? What's the point of having them in and then? Not telling staff."

Simon (Interviewer)

So when it comes to the international strategy, then who would you say are the main key stakeholders in in putting it together?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Yeah. In putting it together. so in it will obviously come from international office usually...but it's still so involved with schools, particularly from a recruitment perspective, because if you're talking about numbers and targets, so each part of the strategy has got to have, you know, we expect either 100% of our undergraduate students to go overseas in their second year or we expect to have 7000 students come into the Business School or whatever. So it's got to involve the schools as well. But I think it's...International office and Schools and Senior management and people like the VC. And Pro VC international as well... there should be a quote. It should be beautifully marketed. Yeah, that's less about strategy that's more about the beauty, but that's important too."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... how the institutions develop their own international strategies and what are the perceived benefits of strategic alliances? Have you ever been involved in any of the consultations leading up to...?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"Not lately. No. I may have been in the past, but certainly not, not now. Now I

would just get told there's a there's a partner would be up and running. And I would just be told... It's just on the Grapevine."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So from your perception, who would you believe are the main stakeholders then in in that process in developing new...?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"In the process, at the moment I would probably say it's probably very high up the chain. I think it will probably be the Associate Dean International, and maybe the Deputy Dean. I think in the school, I think because I don't even think now link tutors would be involved to that level. I could be wrong... They might just be, they might just be approached when they when we've got the partner."

"I'll give you an example of that ...it was a partner we had in the past that never really got many students, it dwindled out, phased out. The partnership was dissolved and the partnership was, I don't know, what's the word you use - closed it and then low and behold two years ago there were back with the promise of loads and loads of students and didn't happen."

"So nothing would have made any difference. But you know ... there was no communication. I was gobsmacked when I saw the partner."

Simon (Interviewer)

"...about the main benefits of for the institution engaging with these international partners... do you think it affects things like global branding, accreditation, Research..?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"I think the partner benefits more than we do ... you can see it you know when, especially in Sri Lanka, you know you'll see it as you're going along, all the billboards outside if I think the partner gets more than the university does."

“... there could be opportunities for collaboration between academics... You know in the university and the partner there must be some international research that they could do... Well, I'm not saying they don't do it, but you know, I don't see any evidence of it.”

Simon (Interviewer) - UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Do you do you know if there is a formal policy on international strategy development?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Imagine there's one in some documents somewhere, but as tutors we are not really clear if it exists or what it is... But no, I don't know what it is.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Are you aware of how your institution develops its international strategy?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

Who do you feel the main stakeholders are when people are developing international strategies?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

To the International Office and the associate Deans from all the, you know, schools in the university. Associate Dean for instance, for the Business School may consultants or solicit for our ideas if they wish to but when it comes to their strategy I don't think are, we are involved. I don't think so.

Link Tutors and all those people in the Business School, who had something to do with international projects. We used to have you know meetings whereby we do that. Associate Dean and they would deliberate discuss one or two things but that is I wouldn't say that it's a strategy because that is something that has been done from above and bring it to them to you down then we discuss the way forward so that's the way I look at it.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you? Do you know what your institutions international strategy is at the moment?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Since the pandemic, I think everything is off. I don't know, but for what I can tell you is our strategy is to recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit from international level.

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Academic

“...do you know how our institution develops its international strategy?”

UK - Academic

“I don't I make assumptions and I don't know whether that's something you want to hear about. ...I presume like the business with the MSc students and the numbers spiking. I mean, it didn't take a lot to get from we potentially will see high numbers of international students because American and Australian borders potentially weren't as amenable to them. So I assume somebody is looking at and analyzing where these students coming from and potentially thinking about regionally within their locations.”

“I'm not sure that the consultation necessarily is what it could potentially be.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“... how do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders and what are their perceived benefits of strategic international alliances. So are you aware of how your institution develops its international strategy?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“No.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“No. Do you feel that it's a planned thing?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“I'm sure it will be planned, but I think the plan is going to be largely led by the individual who's responsible for that. And having been here for quite a long time, I've seen these individuals come and go up. So the plan changes, I think obviously with Associate Dean International, but we've had recently she was very keen on developing these international partnerships and creating these international partnerships. And I think a lot of the international partnerships that we've got the moment it down to this. ... One individual, largely, and now she's not here anymore. And we're maintaining these partnerships, but I don't. I don't know how centrally organized the anyway we see regimes in the Business School come and go. So I don't know how consistent the strategy is or whether a new regime comes in. New leadership comes in and it's out with the old strategy in with the new, but I'm sure it is planned, but I don't know how consistent it is and how long term strategies are?”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So overall, what do you consider as the main benefits of institutions engaging in international partnerships? And again, it can differ depending on the relationship you're talking about?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“ I've always got these partnerships, relationships with the partnerships where I'm module leader always tend to forget them when you ask me a question like that. ... So the main benefits from me, I'm talking about the Spain partner is the opportunity to bring benefits to students you know that international experience, that opportunity for residential opportunity for learning from a different culture, different perspective... the opportunity for a good student experience as well. So for me, the benefits of Spain are all about bringing amazing things for students learning and experience.

“...When you're talking about the partnerships, we've got formal agreements, words and they run our modules and then we run our programmes as a risk or like any franchise, there's a risk of damage to the brand and reputation. There

is a financial risk if you look at someone like Switzerland. If they decide that they will franchise from somebody else, which short notice, then as a financial risk there that that could cause us financial problems.”

“But when I think about the Spain relationship The risks are nominal. Absolutely can't think of any. They're very, very supportive they're very understanding. We know we know what each other wants and how each other works, and if they can do something for us, they will. If we can do something for them, we will. It's a very good relationship so very, very few risks with this Spain partnership. From my point of view.”

Discussion

From the interviews it is clear that the *UK – Head of International Office* has direct involvement in developing the University's International Strategy although it is stated as being a sub-strategy. It is evident that considerable discussion goes into formulating the strategy at a senior level. It is also evident that although the strategy exists it may not be disseminated to the people who need to know it. The *UK -International Partnerships Manager* has input into the strategy development from the partnership side and therefore has a significant contribution to its development. Risk and financial constraint are clearly a major consideration and acknowledgement is made to the fact that individual academics do still propose new partnership developments. This does pose the question whether ad hoc developments are factored into the strategy? The *UK -International Opportunities Manager* does have impact into the strategy development but raises concerns that it is not communicated effectively across the institution. She also raises concerns that having seen the previous strategy document (see Appendix F) that it was not complete. Effective dissemination is clearly an issue that is being raised in relation to communication across the institution.

From the perspective of the School, the *UK - Partnerships Administrator* does not feel as though there is any input to strategy development citing a clear example from previous experience of a failed partnership. The *UK – Link Tutor*

Malaysia states that he does not know if a strategy document exists or how it is developed. The *UK – Link Tutor Ghana* expresses concern that the link tutors have no involvement in strategy and simply comply to directives. Equally his perception is that the primary focus is on recruitment as opposed to partnership development. The *UK – Academic* again refers to the recruitment market and raises concern about the level of consultation. From the perspective of the *UK – Academic Spain/Finland* he places importance on the changing nature of the senior management and the influence individuals have on the direction of development. This raises concerns of how long any given strategy will last. He also relates to differing forms of partnership where the risk for development may be different in respect of the nature of the partnership.

It seems evident that at an institutional level there is a clear understanding of international strategy development and the proposed direction of development. There still remains concerns at the senior institutional level that communication of the strategy is not as effective as it could be. This becomes evident when discussing strategy development at a School level. From observation that previous international plan (see Appendix F) was neither disseminated nor discussed. Direction for development was given by the Associate Dean International in conjunction with the School executive with all potential developments escalated through the school senior management.

RQ2 - What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Head of International Office

“ What role do you think Cross cultural relationship management plays with partnership development?

UK – Head of International Office

“I would say on a scale of 1 to 10 - 10. Because, you know, in a way, sometimes there's like very, very simple things that you have to think of. Like, if you're working in a... dominantly Muslim country. You don't really want to schedule things on Fridays, you know. ..that is a very, very important level... that's something that you need to totally be aware of because if you don't you're not going to get very far at those communications. And I think that is the same into how we even develop programmes and even those relationships that you have to get to that point of discussion and agreement, let alone even get into an agreement as well, really... So yeah, I would say, yeah, really, really important.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you think that cultural awareness plays a role for the people that are involved in the initial discussions?

UK – Head of International Office

“I think... I want to say yes to the to the most... for the most part. I'm just trying to think I just think within own team, I would say there is a lot of cultural understanding. I think just cause of partly who we thought about really and it's going back to this mentioned it earlier is it is it your job or is it just an add-on part of your job? Does it always filter through? To operations you know within schools, you know, even how you do your admin and you know stuff like that, probably not always ... Unfortunately, universities always have quite a strong culture bureaucratic culture for one of a better word, sometimes as well, which isn't even appreciated of your UK family life like, you know, like international

working practices. You know, we're very... Monday to Friday, particularly for the most part in universities."

"So I think it's interesting, we don't do any particular training on it or anything like that which is perhaps that's a bit of a gap sometimes as well, because we talk about it when the students, when we're sending them out as well, don't we don't talk about it with our own staff."

"I think the other problem as well is we don't have or dedicate enough time to some of these projects as well in a way... You know, we got to do better on that, really."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Partnerships Manager

"... what role do you think culture plays in international developments?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"Yeah. It can be very difficult. China's great example. They work completely differently. So they like to ... meet face to face and they like to do things over food. Quite a lot of the time when I'm going, this is just a nightmare because you want to have all the information to hand. Can't take all that to a dinner. I'm trying to get them to have conversations is quite difficult with some of the Chinese partners that we've got. It does help if you've got somebody in the country. That can have the conversations with more can be in the room with them while you trying to have the conversations."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Is this something that you've just picked up through experience or is it something that's given to you as training?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"It's just picked up through experience."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Do you think training would be valuable?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah and no. You can't. You can't offer training for everything. And I think in the roles that we have you have to have a bit of common sense. And you have to be able to try and read how the room is. And what's going well and what's not going well? And I think that's part of the relationship management side of it... And it's more of a common sense thing."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

"... what role do you think culture plays within your role and what you do?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"A lot, yeah ... the culture of the staff members, in particular the approach of the staff members and within that within the university and within that within the general national culture."

Simon (Interviewer)

"If you're setting up a new partnership and it's in a faraway country that has a very different culture. Is that problematic or is that seen as a benefit or...?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"I think it it's not necessarily problematic. It means that you just have to adjust your expectations, because I think it's like anything with anybody really, regardless of whether it's somebody in The UK or Gabon, or whatever people work in different ways, the there's no, there's no set way. There's some countries that will take an age to get back to you. There's some countries that will email you by 8:00 o'clock to demand a response because you've not emailed them yet. And so there is kind of... Just having getting into cultural kind of understanding is really important. Different countries operate in different ways. Different people operating in different ways."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Is that something that you've just picked up from your own personal experience or is that something that's positively encouraged as like a development program training, etc?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"The former for sure. I think from my living, working, studying in however many different countries and just dealing with people over the past 20 years, that's just something that I've kind of learned to understand and not to get upset about it. I've seen so many cases where colleagues, at their current higher education institution will get really annoyed if they're... like, I emailed them last Tuesday and they've not responded. And I'm like, well, you know... It's just what it is and I think you just have to be... Yeah. Understanding. Doesn't always work the way that things work in the UK."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So do you think from that perspective sort of cultural sensitivity training or cultural awareness training would be a benefit to people?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Absolutely, absolutely...I would say it should be more... in an ideal world, I would love that to be within my domain because I could wax lyrical about cultural difference. Just to understand a little bit more... I have kind of toyed with the idea of having some kind of outgoing preparation how to deal with different cultures, but I'm not resourced enough to be able to do that and it's above my pay grade to be fair."

"... I think the whole of the university would benefit from that kind of thing... We're kind of missing a trick if we don't have cultural modules and that fits back into the international strategy as well, like all staff should be trained, equipped to deal with different cultures"

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... what role does culture play in the relationship with the partners, so in other words, I have you noticed any cultural differences between the partners and the UK that that maybe potentially be a positive or a negative?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... the big thing is the is their feast days and their High days and holidays and I remember the Malaysian partner. And I remember when we went out to see

them Just as there we were about to start and that was one of the things they mentioned because Malaysia had three different cultures, there was Chinese, there was Malay, there was Indian, I think, and they all had their own feast days. So they were worried in case you know, they might have to move assessments. They might have to start early, start later. They also were heavily regulated because this is one thing I've noticed with some of the partners. They're heavily regulated by their qualifications and their country.

So even though they are following ours. They have to be mindful of theirs."

"...and in reality, they're perfectly within the rights we, always said we'd be flexible and all it needed is the module leader there to our module leader here and come to an arrangement but some people here are not. You know, they're not respecting the other partners culture."

Simon (Interviewer)

"As you've said about holidays feast days, ..do you think people are actually aware of it or they're actually offered any formal training."

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I wouldn't say a formal training... And yeah, I think after this year there should be more emphasis..."

"The best way of resolving issues is to talk and to meet. Because I remember the Swiss partner back in the day. In the beginning that that was a little bit like the emails that were having now the big long emails and whatever. But as soon as we met with them it's much easier."

Simon (Interviewer)

"...You mentioned earlier that you had some potential difficulties with one of the institutions, Ghana? About them not really recognising what was being asked of them. Do you think that potentially could be a cultural difference that they work...?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"it could be because when I went out there It struck me as being a very laid back culture. Very, very much laid back. He like even on the day that we went to meet to meet them. And you know, like the half of them didn't turn up the, you know, they arrived in late, they were on their phones, they were way whatever. Now, you know we wouldn't do that.

Malaysia is completely different; Malaysia gets everything right. Don't want to be making mistakes, you know, very conscientious. Ghana. they're very happy, aren't they? And then I don't think they realize the importance of what we're asking them to do. Like they never tell us when students withdraw no matter how many times I've told them. And then you come to an exam board and you've got four or five students you've known marks for, and you go back and you say, oh they left. And again I say you must let us know because you know they get invoiced for those students, then they refuse to pay because the students are not there. So then our finance team, because I got one today, our finance team then have to organise a credit for them. So I don't know how you, I mean, you know.

So you know, instead of sitting down with them and saying, well, you know this, this is a would be OK in Ghana, but you know you must follow the rules and regulations that we've set down."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

"...how much do you feel as though the challenges are or the potential is or the benefits are from the different cultures that we engage with for you as a link tutor working with Malaysia... ?"

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

"I think the partners are willing to be flexible. They're willing to listen. They're willing to be guided... and they're open. And recently with some issues with Malaysia ...for example a simple thing would Malaysia and their religion and public holidays and the system structure. There has been a lot of backlash and I've had to send emails over and over and I've said it to you and other

people. Listen, why are we so fixated about exam period and week or two weeks ... So we want to dictate to them and even at the faculty level, I've had faculty telling me why and they following our exam date. Does it impact the integrity of the exam? If not, well, why are you forcing it? And I've had faculty forcing things... The partners are willing to appreciate our culture. But we're not trying to appreciate this and I mean that's just one example, right. And we could learn from them. ... but we are fixated in telling them this is how we do things, and you need to do it.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“Do you think there would be value in training people?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Of course, because in any type of business you have to do that if you're going to expand internationally, you need to prepare your cultural mindset to be flexible, adaptable, and this is exactly what I'm saying. I have been seeing the pushback even from The UK Business School faculty.”

“So this is the thing when McDonald's learns McDonald's USA learns from McDonald's Malaysia from McDonald's, you know, Africa, they learn they take the best practice.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“Are you aware of different cultural models that potentially could be used to support training development?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Yeah, of course. If you want to look at IB or Hofstede or whatever. They are models, Trompenaars, etc... but we don't have any formal plan. And so how could we even think about having, you know, really having a modelling... How should we systematically examine potential or existing partners and informing staff? So really.”

“So basically the need that so in terms of link tutor we need... A kind of standardized formalized system and part of that system has to be that cultural

orientation, which.. Anybody who working internationally for any company, they have to do it and education is the same thing, but we don't have that. As I said earlier, we teach things where we don't practice any of them, whether it's marketing operations. You know, we don't practice any of those things... but we want to follow up business model of profit... but we not following the other things.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“... what role does culture play in international relationship in the relationship with the partnership? “

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Culturally, I think. There has not been any significant issue from the university, that or destination that are franchising our programs 'cause the education system is similar to the UK at the education system. But they are used to you know, doing things in the old fashion way... Paper and pen.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... are you personally aware of any cultural difference models, any academic theories? And if so, do you use them in any way, shape or form to help you with your role?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. I understand some of these cultural dimensions'... I know how to relate to them... for instance, looking at the power distance where the institution this, the culture there? ... So when the time I go visit the students, I can tell that they are very, very quiet. Yeah, I have to jokingly. You know, you're bringing my culture here in and jokingly, you know, try and what you feed them to talk, you know, to ask questions and all those things. And it's very, very difficult because as far as they are concerned, they cannot challenge me or, you know.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... given the relationship with the country that you're link tutor that that's quite clear. If somebody was somebody else was to take that role, do you think they

would have a problem with the cultural difference if it was a UK national, for example?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“Yeah, because just students who go quiet and maybe just... again that person will not know how to get them to talk or whatever because I understand the reason why they've gone quiet, so I tried myself. 'cause. I know that's my culture and that's how I I've been a living up till now after today as I'm talking to you. There is still there but I try to shake it, but it's still there. It's still have still got it still. It's embedded ... it's in my in my veins in that ... I know how they are I try, you know, to get in there trying to get them to talk, but sometimes they don't. Even if you talking to students about Staff Student committee meeting students, you tell me Yeah, experiences will get their perspective modules or whatever. The teachers she did, they are very, very quiet. They don't want to say anything. And by me, I sure in them that look whatever you tell me is confidential and nobody will know. So tell me. Because it's for your own good. You know, I tried to come in there before it. Maybe one or two. Somebody will pick them up and say something but besides that, they will bury everything. They won't say a word.

... unlike here that students will stand up and tell you straight away in their face which is acceptable ...

When we had the international projects and if used to take students to different destinations with students from 3/6 different countries. And you see that students from the UK, they're calling me [First name] and I see student from Belgium. They will be shocked. They'll be shocked. They say you shouldn't. Do you see that? They are shocked why she shouldn't call me. Call the teacher by their first name. And whereas they called their teachers Mr Mr, Mr and here we go. And that's culture. I'm used to it by the students from the other countries. They couldn't comprehend why students should call the teacher by the first name they couldn't comprehend.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... were you at any point offered any cultural training before you took on any of these roles?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“Not a formal culture per se, but luckily for me I had taken a module, international hospitality management which had a big chunk on culture... cross cultural management and all those things were embedded in the module. So I got to know how different people from different cultures behave. And I had the I just more or less after I had my own set of ideas.”

UK - Academic

“...I think there's understanding that we can learn and bring into our own teaching and like that, you know, with that conversation that I had with our colleagues in Bahrain when I did the diversity week this semester, I talked to them about that and explained to them about why, you know, this taught content, you wouldn't necessarily get it on an international perspective and it and it was interesting....”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“... the original 3 universities, obviously The UK University, one of them Spain and Finland, partly because the cultures were so different and that would maximize the learning opportunity for students. And we saw the direct impact of that in the day to day classes when Finnish, Spanish and The UK Business School students were together, there have been massive differences and people were trying to work each other out a lot. I'm trying people trying to understand each other. They were communication problems not just with language.

But in terms of attitudes, the Finnish were always quite quiet. Spanish started off quite quiet ... The British students who had the English medium who are leading the way, but towards the end, how people would come, all the groups, all the students would come... understand each other a lot more and there would be more cohesive. So culture does play a big role from my point of

view, because one of the reasons you want to go abroad and take students abroad is so they can learn from different perspectives, from the management side of running joint modules and working with partners.

Culture does play a role. You have to understand the way that other people work. And again we notice and we've probably got several anecdotes of the different ways of working for in Spain and in Finland and in the UK, and you have to understand that and it's for me it's, it's one of the great..."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Do you feel that that has an impact when you're dealing with the other Partners that you work with."

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"To be honest, not at all, because this is very much process that you just have to go through with them. There's no relationship, there's no in depth discussions. It's just, you know. Box ticking almost Blackboard site to set up a meeting. Here's the assignment you send me the moderation. There's no real discussion or development or any relationship."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Are you aware personally have any models of cultural difference?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"I am aware of them, I don't use them. But I think what the benefits they bring is that they just give you this underlying understanding that cultures do differ. You need to think about the ways they differ. I suppose I'm subconsciously, you know, I would revert back to Hofstede and think about, you know, uncertainty and power distance, individualism and things like that. I don't necessarily directly apply it. But it gives me this understanding. There are different facets of culture that influence the way that you behave. And there's no better or worse way of doing things. It's just different. You need to take them into account and appreciate them. Be patient with them. Accept them."

Simon (Interviewer)

“ So in that respect I'm looking at some of the models that are quite generic. Do you think this is more focused on the individuals that you're actually working with and the development of that team to make it so effective. So if your work for the example that you set of Spain, do you think that the reason why it's successful is because through time you've developed a team that you're working with who understand each other even though you're from different cultural backgrounds?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah. I'd say that 100%... We've been working together for a long time. I think any in the beginning of the relationship with Spain, I think we were trying to work each other out. We are trying to understand each other but to be honest with my background is quite international anyway and I lived. I lived in Spain, so I understood the culture even before we started a relationship with them. So I think that my past has helped me understand and get used to that culture even before we started a partnership with Spain.”

Discussion

The *UK head of international office* clearly believes that culture it's very important citing some examples of where the difference has practical implications. She further states that she believes her own international team have cultural understanding and appreciates the bureaucratic level of the UK and how this may impact on international partners. She further discusses the benefits of cultural training but equally appreciate that there is not enough time to dedicate to this. *The UK international partnerships manager* cites specific examples of where culture can be problematic in developmental discussions and highlights that her own cultural awareness is developed through experience. That said, she does not believe that training is necessarily a direct requirement. *The UK international opportunities manager* has a strong belief that cultural awareness is clearly important. Again, her own personal awareness is based around experience as opposed to any formal training. She clearly advocates the need for staff training in this area.

From a school perspective the *UK partnerships administrator* highlights issues that have occurred with respect to different cultural holidays. The partnership with Ghana is given as an example of where cultural difference can potentially cause some issues in communication. She further advocates the potential benefits for training. The *link tutor for Malaysia* expresses some frustration with the UK institution in relation to its inflexibility in understanding the cultural needs of the partner. He further emphasises the importance of training in this area and has an awareness of some of the cultural models available. The *link tutor for Ghana* does not perceive a major cultural problem with the partnership but as he states he is from Ghana. He clearly states that there are cultural differences citing examples of encouraging students to speak up in meetings. From his other roles working with European institutions he sees a clear cultural difference and express it as a valuable learning experience for the students. Again his cultural awareness is based on his own personal experience as opposed to any formal training. The *UK academic* indicates that there is shared learning to be had and potential benefits for all parties. The *UK academic for Spain and Finland* discuss the benefits for students in learning in a cross cultural environment citing some of the specific differences in the cultures. In relation to his academic role as a module leader he feels there is no impact on the relationship. He further express the importance of long term relationship development and understanding the cultural differences.

From the participant observation perspective, no formal training is offered to staff working in the international environment. Informal discussions are held when colleagues are to interact overseas, but this is usually in respect to recruitment activities. The appointment of the link tutors is partially based on their previous international experience so the direct need of training at that level is perceived as minimal. From the interviews there is a clear understanding that culture does have an impact on the relationships and further development across all levels should be supported.

RQ 3 - How are new international developments managed and supported?

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Head of International Office

“How are new international developments managed and supported?... Do you think it's down to individuals creating partnerships or is it an overarching strategy..? Or do you think it's down to individual academics coming up with ideas and ...”

UK – Head of International Office

“I think it's a mix, if I'm honest, to be honest with you because I think you have to over have an overarching of you know this is where we want to be placed as a university in terms of this is where our main investment is because you know, even if we had unlimited resources, we wouldn't be able to do everything anyway because even you know large scale institutions can't do everything well.... You have to have what is your brand and what you're going to be good at and... You know, and that doesn't mean that, unfortunately, some subject areas some disciplines are, you know, in a way, but better than others or, you know seen as can have that brand more than that... And I think that that so I think it's important to have that framework... And at the same time you need faculty members to buy into that and also to be able to develop at that level as well, really, because at the end of the day, the particularly those at subject level, you know, not always, but you hope mostly you know how they're subject area is developing, they might not always know how that can be applied to a day to day kind of operation in a different country and what it's worth then ... And so it's a I'd say it's a bit of a shared approach.

But I think that that is outside the framework and I don't know how it would get the overarching support. If you see what I mean, it might be something somebody have to do on their own and they could either do it in secret or the Dean might have a pet project because they want to do it as well.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Partnerships Manager

*“How are International developments managed, maintained and supported?
...is there a formal process for creating a partnership?”*

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“ So everything that we do has to go through the collaborative provision policy. And the reason for that is having different people signing off so that different people have taken a view on that partnership and whether it will succeed or it won't succeed. So it's never just on one person.”

Simon (Interviewer)

And that goes through a series of stages committees.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“Yeah. So which first of all be looking for buying from the school and sign off from the school and also finance so that they're on board with that business case side of it. And then we'd be looking for academic approval.... From ADNPC so that that'd be like, you're Deans approval. or your ADA. So I appreciate that there sometimes involved in your school executive group, but some in some of the schools are not.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“ so you got the academic side of... Will it work? ... is a value to this from the students perspective... And the other side of it, the legal and the financial due diligence etcetera that is...”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“Yeah, and all of the quality assurance side of it as well”.

Simon (Interviewer)

“So that that's you working on that alongside the quality assurance office in the university. So there's lots of checks and balances made at a certain stage in the process before it can move on to the next one to say that this is viable. This is academically beneficial and then we can move on from there ...where do you think are link tutor comes in in this?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"For me, Simon, this should be in place at the very start. That's where we need ...they're the ones that know the programmes... they'll be the people that will know if that can work on that programme or not. And it's always better to have it there and then at the start, rather than getting all the way through the academic approval and then going. Yeah, that won't work. We need to change it to this... "

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

".. when you've got the partnership, how are they manage, maintained and supported?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"...Probably maintained it in terms of email check-ins every couple of weeks at key points of year, particularly around nominations, there will be more email traffic...maintained as in going to visit them and just checking in and in some cases like extending it to LinkedIn or Facebook"

Simon (Interviewer)

"... do you have any kind of quality assurance mechanisms that you use or you have to use to when you're considering partners and...?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Yeah, when we're setting up setting up a new partner, this is something that I'm doing at the moment is each one has to have like a new business profile, which looks at... who they are, who they were accredited by what national kind of accreditation they have, what health and safety provisions are in place... which partners they have, what their research kind of strengths and maybe weaknesses are what programs they run. UG, PGT, PGR. How many students there are, how many staff there are. And what kind of welcome provision so it covers a wide range of different things and it also kind of looks at, you know where there's gaps in in our own kind of partner offer."

Simon (Interviewer)

“When it comes to looking at a new partner, is that driven centrally or is that through personal relationships between people in faculties?”

UK - International Opportunities Manager

“It's a good question. I don't have an exact number on the split. I think there are some kind of more engaged people within the schools that want to set up things occasionally. It's because a partner approaches us and says, you know, we want to set something up. I will also... So yeah, good people in the schools that do want to do things, but not necessarily always possible, partners that want to do things with us, but where there's no interest. And I also want to manage the current relationships that we have. So whether that's kind of expanding the current partnership or just saying that it's dead or whatever. In an ideal world, it should be the schools...”

“...I think unless you've got the academic synergy like everything else, you can kind of work around it...”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Partnerships Administrator

“...how are the international developments are managed, maintained and supported, do you know if there's a formal process for creating a partnership?”

UK - Partnerships Administrator

There is but I wouldn't be involved in it. But there is one.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Do you know, do you know if there are specific colleagues assigned to that role?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

“Initially I would imagine it sits with the Associate Dean International. I think they would be the person who would instigate the partnership for want of a better word, or you might get somebody in the Central Partnership team might somehow know of a partner. So obviously I would assume that that's where they go to the Associate Dean International.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“OK, so from that do you do you feel as though it's primarily driven from the senior management as opposed to individuals suggesting...?”

UK - Partnerships Administrator

“Well, I think in the past we had, I think, a lot of our partners came via word of mouth from academics. I think in the past, in the school, a lot of our partners have come from academics.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So do you think now new partnerships are being driven more as part of a strategy from the senior management?”

UK - Partnerships Administrator

“No. I would say no.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“... potential developments, is this through your own personal network of contacts ..?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Yeah. I have said it in the past and in fact right now I'm trying to, I have had contacts just early days or just pre covid wanting to establish contacts and I've been speaking to the recent the AD now trying to get meetings because they are actually pushing back. Now try using me trying to get into to establish something with The UK Business School and the idea is not moving fast. Not Fast enough, there's no formal process of how this is done other than be send them an email and he acknowledged whether he's willing to have the meeting.”

“they are asking me for documentation like how do we go about establishing partnerships are the potential things they can do, whether it's exchange of staff, faculty, students, the nature of how we do it for degree programs...they have been asking me for specific information you know whether it's like... Do

we have templates or Memorandum of understanding? How do we go and I don't know. And we haven't received training on this.

Simon (Interviewer)

“So do you think the link tutor should be integral from the very beginning of the process?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Yeah, from what I'm here in recently, I don't know if this is room or what. The ADI said no one is going to travel. He's the one going to be doing the traveling so, so why should I do it in the 1st place? Why should I take my personal contact and hand it to you on a platter and then when we go to one of these town halls, congratulations AD for establishing this relationship, you know? Whereas if it's congratulations to so and so who is in new link tutor, he or she is the one that established this partnership, OK.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“Do you feel as though the university has a direction that it wants to go, in other words, it's got a designed plan of where we should grow and develop and what areas in the world we should be exploring. Or is it purely down to the individuals?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“Yes, it's ad hoc... but I don't know at the UK University... They're not letting us know... So there's no planning or we are not involved in the planning... You know, like I haven't had a proper conversation with the ADI about this. It's just emails. Or XXX, just do this. XXX, just do that. Right and .. I wonder. Why am I going to waste my time and energy back and forth with these things?”

“Yeah. So the ambiguity there doesn't really make sense.. Other than... You just interested in building the school, but why do I want to build School and the School not giving me back anything?”

Simon (Interviewer)

“Who do you think the main stakeholders are within this? I mean, you're

working with the administration.. Do you feel as though there is a kind of synergy between that with your role as a link tutor or is it...?"

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

"No. As I said earlier, there's.. there's no clear understanding of who we need to be interacting and engaging with when it comes to international partnerships..."

Simon (Interviewer)

"from a strategic point of view. What do you think the main risks are involved in partnership development.? to the institution... to the partner?"

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Well I think... Because I said earlier, it's pure financial for The UK University. I think The UK Business School is not concerned about risk. Because I think that the thinking if we can get the money and we can get the money if things don't work, we just ditch the partner. And I don't think they're thinking long term from a branding perspective. And how that will be received?"

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

"... this is a this is a \$24.00 question, right? The formal process of reaching the partnership more or less for as far as I know, it's using their links, yeah, well they know and then trying to talk to friends in different institutions.

Because apart from Bahrain, Bahrain, maybe you could have been done officially from the International Office, but for Sri Lanka, I know for sure, like I was set up by one of my one of my colleagues... and Malaysia to I don't know who which colleague of ours who had contact there. ..more or less... the Gucci style contacts. But the rest are by the individuals who set up again.. Liaise with their international office and the Dean of International ... and then take it from there.

...The Rural Tourism.. .First, on invitation from our Finnish partners... international conference tourism... Something instigated by myself and my colleague. Nobody told me to do that. I came up with an idea. International conference, tourism and that even let you another project that we did, but I

developed with a good colleague of mine, which was there - Gastronomic heritage tourism. “

UK - Academic

“... I don't know much about them, but I do know they exist. And so a million years ago, when XXX was the programme lead, I think there was some discussion about a partnership that never actually got off the ground. And I remember seeing some of the documentation and quite a lot of it was around, like, categorizing risk and who, you know, student numbers. So it was a lot of quite a lot of the functional... The functional purpose of it and kind of who's responsible for what, who's responsible for what in column or payments? And so I understand that there's like it because it's not a procurement process, but there is some kind of form filling ... Like for example you come to SLT (Senior Leadership Team) for approval one and you might come to SLT for approval two and approval three and they may get knock backed for different reasons and but never haven't presented one myself I don't feel very confident I know there's something I don't think they just do it on a handshake and the back end of a packet of fags while maybe they do but you'd hope not.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“Do you know if there's a formal process for creating a partnership?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“I'm sure there is, but I don't know what it is or who does it.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“ Do you know if there are you aware if there are specific colleagues assigned to the initial development and what their roles are?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“So the initial development, I know there are colleagues assigned to maintaining the partnerships and relationships, but I'm not sure... someone who it is that goes out and finds the partnerships and from the Spain example that was me. From the Franchise examples. I don't know who goes out and picks them.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... related to Spain and the other partners that you're involved in, are you offered any specific training in dealing with international partners?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No, nobody's ever mentioned that.

Simon (Interviewer)

“and do you know if there is a formal mechanism for how quality assurance is guaranteed?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“The partnerships that we run programs and that franchise, our programmes, that's all vetted that I'm sure the partners are vetted in advance by the partnerships team at the university, I'm sure that the procedures are vetted by QMO. So. Yeah, that will definitely be, , procedures and policies in place.”

“...Spain is a completely different thing. They were from my point of view, there are so many more opportunities with Spain. This is as far as I'm concerned, this is a permanent relationship based on this personal relationship that I have built up with X and Y and Z and so on. So whenever we want to do something international we always have an opportunity to collaborate with them, whether it's another intensive program, whether it's a progression agreement, whether it's Dual award, you know they're always there as a permanent opportunity.”

Discussion

When discussing new partnership development the *UK – Head of International Office* appreciated that there is a mix between how these new developments occur, some are from individuals and others are more systematic. She emphasises the importance of new developments being relevant to the institutions overarching aims but is aware that academic do play a key role in new developments and expresses concern that anything outside the framework may not receive the support. From observation with the exception of one institutional agreement with Bahrain, all the current partnership have been

derived from personal contacts. The *UK -International Partnerships Manager* discusses the formal process for new developments citing the sequence of committee approval required before a new partnership development can be signed off (see Appendix G). She also emphasises the importance of the link tutor being involved from the very conception of the development. From observation, link tutors in the School are only appointed once the partnership is up and running, therefore have no contribution to new partnership developments. The *UK -International Opportunities Manager* stresses the importance of applying suitable check on new partners. She further discusses the importance of schools having engagement with new partners and that the administration side of the partnership can be managed but academic synergy is key to success.

From the School perspective the *UK - Partnerships Administrator* believes it is individuals that drive new developments as opposed to a strategic decision. The *UK – Link Tutor Malaysia* highlights the frustration that establishing a new partnership is expected but not suitably rewarded. He also expresses concern that there is no apparent communication channels for support with partnership development. The *UK – Link Tutor Ghana* also discusses his experience of partnerships being set up by personal networks. The *UK – Academic* clear states that she is not aware of the process but is hopeful that is done in a structured manner. The *UK – Academic Spain/Finland* again is unsure of the process but from his own experience, he has developed all the partnerships he is involved with himself. He further emphasises the importance of strengthening these relationships to aid potential new developments.

From an observational perspective there is a desire from the institutional management to move towards a more focused and structured approach but, new developments are still being brought forward by individual academics through their network of contacts.

RQ4 - How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?

The interviews followed the main theme of how existing partnerships are maintained through the life of the partnership with differing emphasis placed on partnership visits, quality assurance and academic procedures discussed at differing levels.

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Head of International Office

“Within the partnerships. How much time do you personally spend visiting partners?”

UK – Head of International Office

“It would be minimal I think. What would be the most important thing depending on the partner, you would want different levels of engagement at different points as well. So always go with what the perfect if you had perfect resources, perfect time, perfect money, it's like what would you want to do? You know you'd want your VC to also to visit at least once a year and then you'd want operations people to be visiting vice versa or at least one in one out once a year as well.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“How often do you think somebody like a link tutor should be visiting a partner in a year?”

UK – Head of International Office

“I think at least once a year... So for example somewhere where the link tutors based that The UK University but teaching students that are overseas, you know it's more beneficial for that tutor to go over because they've got more people to see. But then I think it's vice versa, those staff that you're interacting with as a link tutor to come over, I think that's important as well.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So definitely some face to face interaction?”

UK – Head of International Office

“Definitely, definitely. Because I think that everybody knows that... You can gain more that way as well, and a lot of these things are built on personal understanding.... And why wouldn't you want to do that as a link tutor?”

Simon (Interviewer)

“.. how would you ideally see a partnership being managed?”

UK – Head of International Office

“... I don't want to go for a dictatorial approach, but there's some things that are probably a bit red lines than other things. ..Malaysia is a good example ... they've got Ministry regulations that they need to meet. So if we can't meet them, how come? ... sometimes that does mean a bit of compromise on what the guidance for want of a better word is but you're only going to be able to know what those compromises are and come to that compromised by the bonds being informed to be honest with you know so you do you need a bit of both ... I think it's important to go off tangent a little bit sometimes.”

Simon (Interviewer) to International Partnerships Manager

“So once you've got a partnership developed. It's gone through the process and everything like that. What's your view about the maintenance of the partner? Where does the roles and responsibilities lie with?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“ So this is this is this is a really good question. So we sent out a bit of a survey last year to find out where everybody thinks things sit... So it's you and I'm going. I can't see Agresso (Finance system) to see how much money's come in from the partnership. I could tell how many students with that and what we should have had, but I can't see the detail. So it's kind of trying to tie everybody in for me. I think you're finance manager in the schools really important because they'll be able to tell you if you're getting what you should be getting from the partnership financially and whether you can afford to keep running it. Yeah, joint boards of studies will be able to tell you academically whether it's working. And if there's anything that we need to be concerned

about. You should also be getting feedback from external examiners. ...As part of the exam boards... And all the moderation ... we're still trying to tie all these pieces together. It's almost like a jigsaw puzzle and everything so far off each other at the minute. And it's kind of trying to make people have conversations that are going. It's really shouldn't be this difficult. So we're trying to work more with the finance managers to say, right, we've just had this intake at this partner and this is how many students you should be invoicing for... and therefore then it's kind of then remembering to let us know that invoices have been paid or not paid, so I'm forever chasing X we're going have all the invoices been paid that you've sent out. Is everything working for you?

Then we'll be speaking to [link tutors] to hear about is everything working academically within the within the partnerships, if you had anything back from joint boards of studies, obviously we don't, we don't kind of we don't, we don't attend them and we don't need to from the partnerships team. It's really an academic conversation. And your school admin perspective as to whether they're getting everything that they need to be able to process the students through the system...I want to say 18 months off having something that works pretty well.

...It's having that kind of balance on it.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

“So the account management side from the school, how important do you think that takes on as a role ...?”

UK - International Opportunities Manager

“I think it's a really important role. but I think at this university it's just not taken seriously. I think there's a few individuals that really account manage very well ... but then also workload, the people that are being appointed to do what I see is a very important role are giving like 17.5 minutes a week or something that is not sustainable for a sustainable international strategy, it just doesn't work quite that you need dedicated people whose role is specifically, you

know, and maybe it's 50:50 in terms of workload just to accommodate because you cannot have a he can't maintain a relationship with the partner overseas and deal with all of the promotion as well as you know, doing admissions, doing social media, doing all of the other things, it's just not possible and I think so It's the institutional lack of a strategy and it's also a school level, just not really recognising quite how important it is."

Simon (Interviewer)

"...from your own personal perspective, how much time do you get to spend actually going and visiting partners?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"I'd say probably a month out of every year in total"

Simon (Interviewer)

"What kind of level of importance do you place on being able to go and visit a partner?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Massive... Massive I think just in terms of the relations like you can have and I do it as much as I can, you know, have online check-ins kind of thing, have a remote meeting. But I think just being able to either see them ... To actually go and see them in person. I think that really cements the relationship...I think actually showing that dedication as a university to actually go and visit them. That it's like going to see a friend. Isn't it? Like, if you've not seen a friend for however many years he popped down to Brighton and visit them for a couple of days and it really invigorates the friendship and partnerships are essentially just they are friendships in a way just on a professional level."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... looking at the management, the maintenance, Who do you think the main stakeholders are once a partnership is established?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"The partnership team. I think [UK Partnership Manager] and her team, I think."

There are way more involved than they ever were... And they've made it easier for partners now to register. And I think [UK Partnership Manager] being [UK Partnership Manager] just persisted until she.. cause there is a culture in the university at the moment is if you want something you know, you are told no. And you have to try and find a way around it until they say yes. But initially when you ask for stuff like even with those CRN's and there's a lot of stuff in the early years I asked for and I got a point blank, no, out of scope."

Simon (Interviewer)

"... Do you know how quality assurances is guaranteed when we're talking about the partners, the franchise partners?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... it's the initial due diligence that they do. And then when they when they satisfy themselves that it's a, they're seeing their finances, they've seen their and then there's the accreditation visit or the validation visit."

Simon (Interviewer)

"... participant in things like Joint Board of Study, Staff Student committees, do they fit into that process?"

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... but they are standard questions... It depends on what you mean by quality assurance. I mean, you know, one of the things honest is they look at external examiners reports, but the way our external examiners reports are set up, they're very generic. Like the external could be commenting on a module god knows where it's wrong because the report won't say."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

"...how do you feel the maintenance of the partnerships work?"

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

"Yeah. In this everything is ad hoc...we need to have a joint board of study. And you know these things, that's it... so I think that there's again we should have a checklist of things that besides having a joint board of study of things

that we should be systemic, systematically be looking at reviewing at and I don't know if it exists, but I'm not aware... Of the range of things that I should be seeing, or if the school has it, because if we want to look at partnerships and maintain and partnerships... How do we go about maintaining partnerships? What are they integral things we need to be on top of?

Right. Yeah. We need to be on top of management of the modules and make sure the right. But what else and I think there has to be far more, but I don't think it exists or if it exists, it hasn't been communicated to us what are those range of things we should be looking at and... Because things are so informal. and no incentives. Why should I be putting in more work anyway?

Right. Why can't I be putting in more work and write, and the WAMS (Workload Allocation Model) are getting less every year or, you know, so... Basically, that's it, yeah"

UK - Academic

"...I deal with three or four different institutions. So they're not all going to sing from the same hymn sheet for me. But I wonder whether that would be part of the articles of the relationship. So we expect as a minimum that you will provide The UK Business School grade feedback to students and if you're not, then you're reneging on your relationship ...

I know what that there are link tutors and a couple of times I've hit it so like [UK - Link tutor Ghana] for example. He's been helpful in that area. I wasn't getting any response from the partner and I involved him in the discussion.

... but. I don't ever hear from him about the modules that are happening on my programme or that I'm teaching, and that's not just him. Do you know? It's just that that's just an example. And for other colleagues can be kind of a bit complicated, So there's like a complicated way to store your assessments and I mean it's just like it just feels like, Oh my God, it's just another job to do and that can be quite frustrating. But again, don't really hear from them day to day... So there's there is a method to the madness in the background."

"It's so inconsistent across the piece. So I have a really great relationship with my opposite number at Bahrain and we work really well together. There's always like little like and stumbles throughout the term, but where we have a really good open communication, at least I'd like to think that there is, but that's not to say if somebody else took over the module tomorrow that we wouldn't go back to zero and start again with that relationship, and some a good email relationship with Sri Lanka, although, there's been instances where the consistency in terms of things like their feedback to students hasn't been at the level that I would have wanted it. And it's so it's not that it's become contentious. ...there's definitely been some instances where it's been more problematic than I would have expected. I think the kind of day today of setting up the content and opening up the assessment areas and talk them through the assessment, that's pretty straightforward. And I am always quite mindful that I'm not in the classroom. So they're delivering my material, but they're delivering their interpretation of my material ... So I'm relying on them having the subject knowledge and also having the experience and sometimes the wherewithal take either, research it themselves, or to check with me, and I'm not sure that that happens very well. In fact, I know it doesn't happen very well. We don't do that, and certainly not to the level that I think would be beneficial for the international students and definitely with the Swiss partner, we don't really have any involvement with them at all."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"Typically how much time do you spend either visiting them or communicating with them? How does a relationship work as far as contract?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"It's hard to answer that one. A couple of reasons why it's hard? Because they're obviously different times a year, I mean we when we go across their [Spain] ... about 6 weeks before we're speaking to X and Y a bit more, but you get to like June, July, August. And you know, we don't really certainly from a work perspective, we don't get in touch at all. The other reason it's

tricky to answer 'cause we're not visited in three years, so we've not had to set it up and go and visit and so on. So it's tricky one to answer."

Simon (Interviewer)

"And reverting back to the other partnerships that you're involved with. Have you visited any of those or..?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"No. We send some emails, you know, pick up documents that they've sent on a teams site or by email."

Discussion

The *UK – Head of International Office* believes that visits to a partner is important especially in relation to the link tutors. With respect to management, she appreciates that a dictatorial approach is probably not the best approach but equally there are conditions that need to be met, therefore a compromise solution is favourable. The *UK -International Partnerships Manager* stresses the importance of the finance manager in the maintenance of the partnership especially with respect to viability. She expresses frustration over the lack of communication likening it to a jigsaw puzzle. The *UK -International Opportunities Manager* highlights the importance of managing the partnership but discusses the issues surrounding workload allowance and the lack of strategy at an institutional and School level in recognising the importance. She further emphasises the importance of visiting partners to maintain the relationship. From the documentary analysis the workload allocation has systematically reduced during the period of this research for non-substantive roles (see Appendix A for the current workload). Note, the workload points are expressed as a value nominally out of 100 i.e. 5 workload point equates to 5% of an individual's workload for the calendar year.

From a School perspective there is significant confusion where individuals with specific roles discuss lack of communication around processes, having to find ways around situations, lack of incentive, reduction in workload allocation, and inconsistency between different partners.

From an observational perspective, through discussions with both the administration and the academic link tutors, there is considerable frustration with the lack of support and guidance where needed. Individuals do feel that they are 'on their own' when it comes to decision making. There is an overarching feeling of lack of communication and support.

RQ5 - What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels? Q5

UK – Head of International Office

“ I think one of the main ones is that models that don't quite fit kind of thing. Do you know what it means? So we've got like a particular, you know if I say to you franchise, you know what it means, but if you say to it in a different country, it might have a different meaning or all the all the aspects of it don't quite fit. ... And then it comes to recognition. So things that how things are delivered aren't recognised as well and we've had this at The UK Business School all the time... you've got this split site PhD that works perfectly one year and then something will happen and the Middle East ... I suppose I'm thinking more broadly UK level, we think that we've got the brightest and the best education system. It doesn't translate perfectly to other places.

So you know, that's like... really, really challenging and... I think that we have to just be a bit mindful that things aren't always going to be the same and they're not going to fit into this box that we want them to fit in. There needs to be a little bit of slack either way, kind of thing.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Partnerships Manager

“What do you think the barriers that institutions face for international developments that could be a national, international or even at an individual level?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“Biggest one is having you link tutor in place at the right time because there's nothing worse than somebody trying to pick it up and going I still don't know what that is. This is what do you need me to do with it. But being involved right from the start, you understand why we're doing it and you've got that buy in from that person. I don't think there's enough time given to that role. I think for what we need them to do.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So do you think that this is communicated to the link tutors what their role and responsibility should be?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“No. I don't think it is.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So maybe there is some confusion with link tutors duties about what they're primary function is?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... given your period of time that you're working and I'm thinking about barriers again, do you think some of the barriers have reduced through time as you've gone through working with the existing partners that we've got and also with a view to developing new ones?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“I think it's easier than what it was, but I think that that's because your level of knowledge builds up over time. So obviously when I first started this role, I'd come straight in from admissions. So new people around the university in a new how admissions worked and how you got people through registration but I have no idea of what of what the school functions were. And how things like.. Moderation processes assessment boards, what impact they have. If a partner misses them.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So did you have a handover when you took on your current role?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“No.”

Simon (Interviewer)

"And if you were, for whatever reason, to leave your role now, do you feel there is sufficient policies, procedures, processes in place that the next person taking over would be able to take it away immediately and continue?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"No."

Simon (Interviewer)

"No, so there's still a lack of..."

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"Yeah."

Simon (Interviewer)

"it's very much still down to the individual to use their initiative to make the contacts, develop the networks and the process ..?"

UK - International Partnerships Manager

"Yeah. But I think that that will always be the case because... Everybody has different working ways and... relationship building... And you're not going to get on with everybody... There's a lot of ego stroking with mine..."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

"... what would you class as the main barriers ... it can be at national level, institutional level or even a personal individual level?"

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"At a team level, we are under resourced so that has an impact at an institutional level. There's not enough international strategy embedded into the culture. So it's not promoted as well as it can be. From a national level, we are the governed by an inept administration... You can put that in as you can put my name by that one... who really have no foresight or clue what they're doing in terms of mobility programs and you know, the whole saga of Turing and the challenges and the fact that actually as opposed to being part of Global Britain and levelling up and all of that sort of thing, I think it's actually

hammered our relationship relations with partners... Because of the insecurity like again it comes down to the comms having an international strategy with an institution, you should be promoting it, making sure that everybody is aware having an international strategy as a UK government... Should make sure that not only are the is the UK universities aware, but also having a comms plan to make sure that you know globally it's understood as a workable program even though it might not be yet."

"I don't think [the UK University] is alone in how it deals with internationalization... I've spoken to a lot of people in the sector who are in similar positions, who are also in one to two man teams. And you know it's an issue and buy in. We'll talk about buy in so much because so many in the sector have just not getting the buy in from senior management. There are some great universities and I'm not listing them because we're not putting them down those names anyway. But there are some really good ones that have great ideas. They might not necessarily follow through, but they have great ideas. But I think [the UK University] .. It's still in the kind of toddler stage of International Development, I want us to be like a mature adult about this and actually know what we're doing. And when I look at other partners or when they send things through like a partner sent through something stay about, you know... Some online conference that they've got going on in September or whatever and they're looking for international collaboration and another that's doing an interdisciplinary workshop or whatever. And I always forward that to the schools and be like, here's an example of like the great stuff that other people are doing. And I can't see how bloody positive, how more bloody positive I can be."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Partnerships Administrator

"... what barriers the institutions face either a national, institution or an individual level."

UK - Partnerships Administrator

"I know one of the barriers for Malaysia is they're heavily regulated by their MQA. So every time we make a little change that we think insignificant doesn't

really matter. They really struggle with it. You know, and we don't respond quick enough to help them ... “

“So I don't think when we're making changes to our programs we're not letting the partners know well in advance... and where we're telling them too late. And, I mean that caused problems for everybody.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“... what do you think are the biggest barriers that we face moving forward?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“I think it's a culture issue, first of all.. Because there's a vacuum, there's a power vacuum or a vacuum between leadership and... I would say link tutors in this case, right? That we're not involve really involved in the process. I think when we have these meetings is really to tell us things. And we just report issues, that's it is. Tell us things and we report issues. OK. But we not really involved in the integral decision making or co creating that decision making and the lack of the systems and motivations is a is a critical thing.

... incentive and obviously they get it in salary and then other things are workload points and so on. We don't have that. As I said, we're just messengers... I'm a messenger to give information.. or to do the dirty work and somebody else get the recognition, to be honest.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“So from your perspective, what are the barriers, if any, the institutions face in partnership development or have faced in partnership development so far?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“..as an institution to start the partnership process with ... It's a big hurdle. 'cause, you have to find. You have to have somebody within. So that is a barrier. The another barrier is we have to find that institutions that we partner with should be a reputable institution.”

Simon (Interviewer)

"And again, do you think that's down to the individual to forge those relationships?"

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, , as far as I know now, mostly individuals forge those relationships. But then the individuals to would do their own background check about the institution because you don't want to go and bring an institution which he said, uh, of bad reputation today university I mean you that you are damaging your own reputation yourself. So again. Then the individual will have to do this or background check on this institution that they want to forge in the partnership with.

So that is another thing that this. Yeah, we do. And then I'm not very a another barrier that we have as I can say is that I don't know 'cause sometimes most decisions were taken without consulting the link tutor. And it makes life a bit difficult. See, so everything should be run through the link tutor so the link tutor will be kept abreast of whatever is happening."

UK - Academic

"Then you know with that end of module activity and I don't believe that they do things like evo metrics. So why aren't we gathering that feedback, other things that potentially we could improve our relationship, improve our service and from the students perspective because even though it's for me, it's less about their relationship with their partner, it's about the student experience of the student who's attending the partner. And I'm not necessarily sure that we think in that way... maybe there's a piece of work around putting yourself into the international students shoes rather than thinking about how frustrating your relationship is with the partner, if that makes sense. So yeah, I mean, things could be absolutely slicker, more efficient. Better economy is scale. I think where I'd start to get really concerned about support is if those partners scaled up. I think if we were talking about three partners, I can just about manage that. If we were talking about 10, I'm not sure that I'd feel as confident that I have my eye on the ball with things."

Discussion

The *UK – Head of International Office* feels that the UK University is applying models that do not fit all of the international environment with evidence that important factors such as academic recognition are not factor in enough. From observation it is evident that although the relationship is a partnership, the UK University still places itself in the lead role and is less willing to 'bend' to the requirements of the partners. The *UK -International Partnerships Manager* places importance on the link tutor role but acknowledges that the understanding of what their role actually is, is not appreciated. There is also concern that it remains down to the individual in post to make things work effectively. The *UK -International Opportunities Manager* emphasises the under resourcing as an issue, and also the lack of a communicated strategy. Changes in the international environment has just increased the workload with no additional support or understanding of the issues. From observation working closely with the international opportunities team, they are a team of 2 people, who have to promote and complete all the administration for both staff and students engaging in international mobility across the University. They have minimal support from schools as the school support role is workloaded at approximately 5% of the year, this includes all mobilities involved in bilateral agreements such as the dual awards in Finland.

From the school perspective issues around lack of communication, lack of control or 'power vacuum', lack of incentive, lack of recognition, lack of consultation and the work involved in setting up and maintaining new partnerships. From an observational perspective, the issues surrounding workload, recognition, control and responsibility are always at the forefront of discussions. These issues frequently manifest themselves when workload is being allocated each year. The Associate Dean International does not have line management control over the link tutors and administrators – this is controlled by their respective subject area managers, so there is potential for competition of workload.

RQ 6 - What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?

The initial section of this discussion focused on staff motivation from their personal perspective and also the motivation provided by the institution.

UK – Head of International Office

“I think that I think it's kind of like, well, why did you start? And then why do you stick with it? I'm going to sort of answer it that way, if that's OK. And so really, why did you start with this? It was almost like kind of like, why not? And that's how you kind of ended up there. I suppose that's how I ended up there. Really. ... initially working overseas, just that just seemed the right thing at the right time. ... Really after finishing, I was freelancing for a while, so it was like, oh, I feel like I've retired and then I've come into like a normal job. That's how weird it is ... There's generally there's a nice culture within universities.

Well, though you do work really, really hard, you can actually talk about random things at random times. Go to random lectures, go and see exhibitions, things that are getting involved in campus life ... From that sort of like outside point of view, I think that's really nice. And that's the same from an international context as well. I think there's almost nothing better than trying to work out when you're in a meeting, how you should behave, or how people should behave. ... And in that angle, you know, why do we come from different angles at different things? Why are we thinking things in different ways? And really it's like that always goes down to geography and history. Really. And that kind of that is in the essence. So I think that's where my sort of interest lie. So I think that that would be why we why I'm in the position I'm in I think, but yeah, and I think combining that with kind of like quite commercial skills is, you know makes me a lot makes me a good find I think,,,”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... staying with motivation and what motivation do you get from the

institution? If you think about recruitment as one side, partnerships as the other and the mobility.”

UK – Head of International Office

“ So from the institution, so now we're talking from The UK University angle basically, OK, I see this as a bit of a long term project if I'm honest, to be honest. Really. I think when I first came here previously I'd worked in smaller institutions and stuff had sometimes like a little bit more niche like you know working within an arts liberal arts basis institutions very, very different. The UK University is broad range comprehensive”

“...I've been working in this role over the years, the more I work particularly at regional level as well because connecting regionally, connecting internationally is really, really important so... That's really exciting and I think that I think that's what that's part of the motivation. And I always say that as well as, say, oh, I think it's a long term project, you know... Step small wins are really good.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... I know you work with the different faculties ... what is the staff motivation in the faculties for engaging with international activities.

UK – Head of International Office

It's varied and sometimes sometimes there's zero engagement... I think it's if it's part of their job like this, and if it's a very, very definite part of their job. I think that's the clear motivation is something that they kind of chosen to do. I think that if it's something that's an add-on, sometimes you get people that are generally really interested in and well, you know, we'll do everything because they've got like a genuine love, genuine passion.. see the actual overall benefits... And that's good. Not saying that they're always rewarded in the best way, but that's kind of like what happens really. And I think that from my point of view, you tend to work with people that have got that as well because otherwise there's a lot of barriers as well to it. It's almost easier to answer ... What are the challenges and what are the barriers?”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Partnerships Manager

“what motivates you to do what you do?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“Obviously, the wages, the wages are a factor... but I actually enjoy the work. I like solving problems and being able to make things work.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

“...what motivates you to work in the international environment?”

UK - International Opportunities Manager

“Somebody tried to tell me the other day that if I wanted to succeed, then I should consider other options and this is a precursor to say that I would never not work in international.”

“... my motivation is to make sure that people understand how important it is and how we are a global network a global world of employment of, you know, studies of, of everything. Everything is in connected with it. It is interconnected. I think for me, in terms of this university in particular, the motivation is ... the levelling up and the social mobility and the fact that, you know, I've worked at other universities where money is not being an issue and they have already had that kind of global experience. But at a university... That's kind of a widening participation university. There's an extra kind of motivation there to actually make sure that students understand ... what the world is like outside and, and it's about languages. It's about culture. It's about just understanding... and I think that kind of goes to stopping wars. “

Simon (Interviewer)

“... in a way it's a selfless personal motivation cause you want other people to experience the things that you've kind of experienced yourself.”

UK - International Opportunities Manager

“Absolutely...I think it's just really important for me to be able to pass that on really just totally passionate about it despite the operational side”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... So what do you think the institution does to motivate you to do this?”

UK - International Opportunities Manager

“They pay me... And there are some individuals that are really, really good.”

“... this position, this team is in place for a reason, but sometimes I just feel like it's kind of nominal. It's a, it's a rubber stamp kind of thing like, oh, we've got to do this, but I don't think the university really recognises what we do actually do... So I spend a lot of emotional energy just raising a my own profile and the profile of what we do.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“How much respect do you think you get from the institution as the opportunities team?”

UK - International Opportunities Manager

“Not as much as I would like. I think we are well liked obviously, but I think in terms of respect and actual action... I think it's limited and I think that's really it's really sad... “

“.. When I worked at XXX, we had 27 different schools... but each school had a dedicated exchange coordinator and I don't quite know what their workload it was, but we didn't have to go and do promotions to them. We had 600-700 students wanting to go overseas because they're exchange coordinator had done their job properly, whereas here it's more centrally governed whereas we have to... do the promotions more we have to actually ask to promote? And I think if a staff member had a really good relationship with a particular university, they'd be chatting and saying, you know, we'll get 15 students to you because I've already talked to them and they're interested kind of thing... But it it's kind of left up to central... And it shouldn't be like that.”

UK - Partnerships Administrator

“I think we made the best of what we've got. We do a good job regardless of, you know what's above us, so to speak and like I mean I say this to you, but

you know I'd love to see someone else doing what I'm doing. You know, I really would, I would love to say achieve what I've achieved, but sadly no recognition. And that's, I think probably, yeah, no recognition for like really for and I mean you know people used to say well you get paid so that's your recognition fine fair we I know we do but you know when you look around at other people and you know they've been rewarded for doing a lot a lot less but there is no recognition but the end of the day I only do it to make life easy for me and to make the partnerships work.”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“I think there's a big vacuum between what the leadership maybe wanted and we are actually at the bottom. So you know there's... So we don't really know what's going on until somebody just comes and tells us, hey, yeah, this is the new direction we go in. And they've direction might be right, but they haven't consulted us and we might actually know. So it's like the frontline staff is the ones who really know what's going on. And they should be feeding that information back to management. And I think that's not the case right now at The UK University.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Ghana

So could you please describe your knowledge and experience in international activities?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

It goes along way back. When I started going to Bulgaria or recruitment activities. ... I started going to Nigeria and then going for recruitment activities and then going to Mauritius, and then partnership activity Mauritius as well ... but then the school turned the partnership down. ... link tutor for Recruitment and Partnership in Africa.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. And does that role still exist?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“No. It's gone.. It doesn't exist anymore. 'cause now I'm only link just for one institution that we got partnership agreement with.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... I'm just thinking about other partnerships you may have been involved with in the past?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“Yeah, we've had partnership with ...the Erasmus projects again, I was coordinator for two projects, one international conference, tourism and other was Gastro Tourism. And the partnership consisted of Finland, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Belgium, and Portugal... we took students to those places with their destination rotated yearly from one institution to the other. But everywhere we went all students got together. Work together and students - put into groups culturally and intentionally put into groups so that they will learn from each other, each other's culture. And one thing I can tell you and watching our learn was that students were so happy to learn other cultures and, in some instances, when they're programme came to that end. That one could see students, actually crying that you were leaving their, you know, friends for the two weeks they are missing them and what they come back, some of them keep having a long life friendship with some of the students that they've met. Those places to we got a long life friendship with all the teachers that we had.

...the Lithuania counterpart has helped us so much with additional work for just cultural exchange and that is not the Erasmus. This is something to do with international project that we set again. We set it for our students and the host institution always welcome as give best free facilities to use.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“What is your main motivation and does it differ between the three (roles)?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“The motivation for the link tutorship or purely based on a partnership that we go 'cause as I originally come from Ghana and I got I wanted to give

something back.” “... so the International team, they had tried to get into Ghana... but the culture of Ghana was different, they couldn't penetrate, they couldn't get nowhere”

“And then coming through the module leadership role for the impact this again, that's just modules that I teach and I lived in Manchester, in The UK University anyway. So when we have a franchise agreement with institutions wherever they are and they are delivering my modules.

“... I became the module leader there as well. So that is an automatic rolled out. You have to fulfil. I enjoyed that as well because again it gives me the chance to talk to the module leaders in those respective institutions. And then now I'm listening to them and look at the module and see what could be done...”

Simon (Interviewer)

“ You are clearly doing a lot of work to make sure that it works well, is that through your own professionalism or is that through other forms of motivation?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

“Not just professionalism... above board is you have to be satisfied with whatever you doing. As a professional we have to make sure that you act accordingly to the norms to the rules and everything but then at the same time, you are motivated to do something then motivation is there. The element of motivation is there that you want to do their best and you want to do their best for your students at the same time, the best for their franchise students as well. So it's both ways you want to do your best for everybody, and that's what that's the motivation element.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... so to support your motivation as an individual, does the school support you well within that module leader role?”

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah ... I've got to workload for being the module leader or for the institution. Each institution that they deliver my module and get some element of workload for that item.

Simon (Interviewer)

So how much importance do you feel your role is for the so the link tutor role?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Is very, very important because. Whatever happens, the satisfaction of the students.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect and pulling you back to the partnership you said with Finland etc... is your motivation different for that. And where did that direction come from?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

"I had huge motivation for doing that. The motivation was from the students own account. Students own review 'cause at the end of every project or the students participating students... Who said? Oh, XXX, I wish this program never stops because I've had a good experience coming here. I've learned a lot about different people and their country that you took us to. There will be no way I would have travelled to that country or the city per say. But bringing us to this particular city I will come again and again and truly I've been there twice after the after the Project has gone there on her own with friends. As tourists. love the place and all it was down to the Erasmus trip."

UK - Academic

"...to be honest, it was imposed in the beginning because it was this is your module, you're going to lead it and here are your partners. And you know, there was no consultation in that. What I have an issue with is It's the moral

thing of, you know, we partner with an international partner, but I don't have the time to deal with them to get them to a level ..."

"I'm not incentivized to do it ... certainly not from a reward or you know and like compensation perspective and I think I you know understanding about different cultures and you know there's so there is like a personal benefit and personal growth from it."

Simon (Interviewer)

"... considering your own personal motivation for engaging with the partnerships. What do you feel your motivation is for working with the Spanish partner?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"It's a student experience for sure. I'm trying to make sure the students have its international experience opportunity to come. Consider things from different cultural perspectives and also to make it highlight of their degree. This is a fun learning experience."

Simon (Interviewer)

"And based on that, then do you feel as though that the relationship is designed by yourself?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Absolutely, yeah. 100% This is created, generated, maintained by me. But in fact, when we started this project, we were told it would never work. But the leadership at the time 15 years ago, but we tried it anyway. We persisted and 15 years later, we still doing, we're still working with the Spanish partner?"

Simon (Interviewer)

"So as far as the actual orientation of the partnership goes in relation to the school do you say it's a kind of a symbolic thing for the school, or is it a more transformative thing that relates to the students and the growth and development of the programme?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“I don't feel that the school and the leadership in the school really recognise the significance of the International program that we run, I don't think it's really celebrated as much as it could be. I don't really engage too much in shouting about it and trying to promote it the school. I think they have a low level appreciation for it, some appreciation, but it's a low level appreciation they they're willing to support with funding. That's not insignificant. OK, that's 15K a year.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“Relating to the work that you do with the other partners about what motivates you to work with Malaysia, Switzerland and Bahrain?”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“I'm just obliged to do that somebody else has decided that we will be working with these partners. We will be, there will be teaching our modules. So as module leaders, we are directed to come just to do the work that relates to them. We have no option in that, it's it is a burden. We do get workload points for it, but points are fairly insignificant, so we're just told to do it.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“ So would you probably say it's financially driven by the school, very much a business led activity.”

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

“Yeah, this is I think this is just to make money and for prestige possibly for accreditation.”

Discussion

From observation throughout the duration of the research it is evident that the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation is of significant importance. This primarily manifests itself in the appointment process. The responses primarily focused on self-motivation, institutional motivation, reward and recognition.

The predominant responses focused on self-motivation and enjoyment of the role. Other considerations are the impact that they can make on other peoples lives – sharing their experience and knowledge to help people develop. Alongside this, financial reward and professionalism came through strongly. There is also indication that some colleagues may not be as strongly motivated which can lead to frustration. A lack of leadership in some cases reduced the motivation. When considering the responses from the *UK – Academic* it is clear that the motivation is minimal. This finding is significant in that the majority of the academic staff in the Business School share modules with franchised partners, and if the motivation is not there, then this could potentially lead to issues down the line. Those colleagues who deal directly with international partnership students i.e. *UK – Academic Spain/Finland* and *UK – Link Tutor Ghana* clearly demonstrate that their motivation comes from engaging with the partner and the students whereas their role as academic module leaders with the other franchises “is a burden”.

RQ7 - How effective is the support and communication?

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Partnerships Manager

“So the last bit is really about the communication, the support from your particular roles...if you imagine you're looking up to the university senior management, but also looking across to the academics and down through all the forms of administrative support... Do you feel as though it's effective?”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“Nope.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“But you would say it's probably one of the major problems.”

UK - International Partnerships Manager

“Yeah, And the best example I can give you for that is shape of the academic year. The fact that decisions are made at the top and... Somebody might

send an internal communication but then that's not discussed at exec level to then be fed down to the different director areas? So we're in a position now where we're trying to work out what the partners are doing. And that's kind of... falls onto me and we're going - I can't have these academic discussions...I don't know how this is all going to fit in. I don't teach on the programme. It's really difficult."

"And we've kind, we've kind of tried to bring the link tutors in. So we wanted a meeting... With all of the link tutors across the university and there's 40 odd of them... And it was like, no."

"I'm going... do I then need to go and tell them what's happening with each of their partners? And I'm going. I'm copying them in in communications because they need to know that we're writing out to them if they're having conversations, and we're having conversations, we're all going across wires."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - International Opportunities Manager

"The final section is support and communication... "

UK - International Opportunities Manager

"Yeah... I think it's just like having things on the staff hub (intranet). If you have a look on the staff hub, is there anything international there like yeah, that you might be able to click onto international and Regional Development Directorate, but unless you know what that is in the 1st place and you wouldn't go there... So that poses a real issue for me and the there's no... I can't remember the last time I've seen anything about international "we're very proudly international... why are we"? What are you doing about it? I think the one time somebody did tell me that if I wanted people to say things, I should tell them things to say... I shouldn't have to go that far... senior is setting international strategy... They should be also setting the comms."

"... if you can focus on one particular aspect of your university, then you can focus on another as well... So I feel like the concentration is just too much with other people."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK - Partnerships Administrator

“So in relationship to what you do, how effective do you feel is the support and communication how much support do you feel you get to begin with to be able to do your role?”

UK - Partnerships Administrator

“And well, I would probably say initially I got very little support. I think initially the, you know the part that there was resentment. And I think and particularly with the Swiss partner in the early days. They needed the assessments and they asked for them three weeks in advance ... which is, you know, is reasonable request and at the time my professional services colleagues, some of them were responsible for getting the assessments... I really did struggle to get them from them. And there was like it was a real barrier. And even my line manager didn't support me. And that was no, I mean it's changed now, but that was awful.”

“You know that was then. And like even now. Even at like if a request comes in, whether wherever it comes into in the university, whether it's admissions, whether it's if it the Swiss partner, they won't even read it, they'll just send it to me.”

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“... as a link tutor... you're dealing with the partnerships office, you're dealing with other broader areas of the university like the Quality Enhancement Office (QEO) and things like that. Do you feel as though they know what your role is?”

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

“No and vice versa. I don't think they know what my role is and I don't know what their role is either. So I think there's a need for formal link tutor training, like real training to understand how clearly defined the rules are, responsibilities, who we need to interact engage with. I only know by asking fellow colleagues and say, well, how do you deal with this? How do you deal with that? Right. And I see the person title and I wonder why they asking me

this question or should they be asking me this question and then when I have issues I have to go and find out to from colleagues who do I speak to in in the admin team because we haven't been trained on this or there's nothing documentation or system for us to follow for certain issues. This is who you need to go to. For issues you direct me to you know your unit head for example or you know so there's no clarity in that. So I just try to scramble and do what I have to do."

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

"... communications .. fine, because their support officer, I don't want to mention the person name has been very great. He's very efficient, is very professional. And she, oh, keeps me informed with whatever is going on and copies me in every communication. So every communication that is going to and from the franchisor and the franchisee I'm aware of."

"My role as the link tutor again. I'm going back, back, back, back in the day. I wasn't alluded to the partnership agreement. I didn't know what the partnership agreement entailed, Nothing. I didn't know it. I was just floating, you know, doing this. But no, unbeknown to me that there were some, you know actual points that their partnership actually agreed on. And it came to me that their partner was not achieving that particular targets that were set. But I wasn't aware till later on when I became aware of and I, as I'm saying, that maybe they're costing from the university, and the question from their partners, to lead to the number of intakes that they should have. But from my own perspective If you are setting up in a business. Setting up in the business and we are all businesspeople. You have to start gradually before you grow. You cannot just go in there one day. The first years I'm going to hit this number of students that he is not feasible. In that case, if I had known from the day one ... as I was talking to the link tutor and the Dean, I would have been mentioning and I'll be focusing and highlighting to them to look."

"Training is very, very important for all, in international activities we have to have a training session. They will tell us exactly what is expected of

everybody through. There should be a training is done 'cause without prejudice and with no respect to my former boss. There was no training. I mean it. Sometimes you didn't know what to do. I remember one time somebody from QEO and the Interim Dean or interim head of International actually had a session of training for Link tutors regarding and that is the only session that to me I've had. So again, there should be some training and maybe refresher, refresher training."

UK - Academic

"I think our administrative function or quite good at communicating. So I'll get to know even if I don't read the email and then inevitably I don't and it's a big rush at the last minute. So like XXX, I'll say maybe in mid-December or The Ghana partner is running principles of HRM. So I think I'm given enough notice to know that this is something that's on the horizon. I think it's a little bit more blurred when it comes to things like moderation."

Simon (Interviewer) to UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"...do you feel that in your role there is affective support and communication ... so if you take support for example, do you feel as though you're supported in what you need to do when it comes to the international partners?"

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

"Franchise point of view ... I'm not proactive about those relationships. I just do what I'm required to do."

"Spanish... in some ways I don't mind the low level of support because we are fairly autonomous and independent and you know we get the financial support that we need, which is all I really ask if the school. I suppose some recognition in terms of you know, reputation on also workload points would be useful when we're setting up bigger modules that involve collaborative work with obviously partners. But. Yeah, you know, we don't. I don't feel like I need a huge amount of support from the school other than paying the bill."

"I think from my point of view, I would appreciate understanding a bit more about what the benefits of say Malaysia partnership are because I seem to do

a lot of work and when you find out there's two students on the module over there. You think why am I doing this? So I think communication of the benefits of these franchises would help motivation. I think if you are working with international partners and you're doing a lot of the work off your own back then It would be good if that was recognised that there were some points available for international collaborative work. In the past we have had extra workload points for running modules with international partners, but that went with the person who gave us the points when she left. That system broke down. So I think, yeah, some recognition for the work we do that that should be improved upon."

Discussion

From the responses there is clearly some areas in need of development with support and communication. These areas are key to the organisation and where problems are highlighted they should be addressed as a priority. The *UK -International Partnerships Manager* clearly indicates that these are one of the biggest issues facing the institution. She relates this primarily to the institution senior management level and discusses how it creates problems all the way through the process. The *UK -International Opportunities Manager* also places responsibility for the lack of communication on the institution senior management. The *UK - Partnerships Administrator* states that she got very little support in the beginning and even resentment and indicates that the situation is still ongoing. The *UK – Link Tutor Malaysia* highlights that there is a lack of understanding of the different roles in the institution and who should be doing what. He further discusses the lack of documentation to support the role and the lack of training provided. The *UK – Link Tutor Ghana* is complementary about the support he receives but does indicate that communication of some specific information has caused the partnership issues in the past. He also emphasises the need for training. The *UK – Academic Spain/Finland* does not concern himself with the communication issues with the franchises as he states “ ...I just do what I am required to do”, this differs when discussing the partnership with Spain where he is happy to be autonomous as long as the

funding is made available. He further discusses the need for more understanding of the value of the franchise partners to help improve his motivation and some appreciation of how this work is recognised. From an observational perspective, the academic staff involved in the module leadership of the partner programmes are not consulted on the requirements, they are expected to complete all the processes involved in running the module as part of their day to day workload. This can become problematic when new colleagues join the institution and no support or training is provided.

4.8 International Partners - Findings

A full transcript of all interviews can be found in Appendix I

Participant Background

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“ my main role is to enable the institution to acquire more international students and to provide our students with opportunities to travel abroad. To make that happen, we tried to develop programmes for the students that come here, and we also am so that they feel better and they don't find their cultural class classes so, so big, and then we also try to train the ones going abroad so that their experience can be more fruitful or they know what to expect basically.”

I've been working at the university at the International Office for 16 years now. I started because I well before that I was a teacher of languages, German, English and Spanish for people who were unemployed. ... I had like 2 weeks in which I didn't work anyway. So then in those two weeks I was employed by the university and they said it, this will be only for four months. .. they just said can you stay for a bit longer and well here I am 16 years later... I've studied translation studies, which means I needed to travel already and meet other cultures and get to know other cultures, not only the languages, but the cultures to be able to translate correctly or interpret correctly. I also did the master in multicultural methodology of the English language in multi cultural contexts, because I also I like the being in the education environment and the multiculturalism attracted me a lot.

I've been in touch with many cultures as much during my life as I could. And yeah, being at the International Relations Office to start here meant for me a lot and I thought it would be great because I thought I could help people from other countries. It's also very satisfying because I help our local students who want to go abroad and then they come back with. So maybe those people could never afford to go abroad or could never have, could have never met anyone from abroad if they hadn't been abroad. So when they come back and

they tell their experiences and everything is really satisfying for me too. So Yes. So I think it's a job that I really that really fits me and obviously the university environment is great here and also the conditions that the university offers ... Quality wise, compared to Spain are really good."

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

"The main activities we have been doing activities of exchanging students... We also apply and got and IP intensive project - Intensive program. Of for the Erasmus. And then we had a project where a student from... Each institution, including another Finnish university, so there were three universities and we were sending... Each year, one of the universities was the host of the project, so the other two.. Universities move with... around 15 student from each university move to the host university, and then we had a project where they have to analyze destinations. ... Analysis of the destinations of different destinations... In the country of the host university... We also had... An agreement for exchanging students in the Masters. The Master in Management in Spain and I think in The UK University, the UK Business School, it was called Global Management.... And so we had exchange of students either in the Degree and also in the in the Masters... And I think these three main activities."

Simon (Interviewer)

So just a little bit of context about yourself, how many years, for example of international activity experience have you got?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

".. a long experience, because at the beginning I was the only one who was the responsible of exchanging students at the Faculty of Law and Economics. So now I think we are like 30 people involved in the exchange of a students through the Erasmus program. But 25 years ago, I was the only one... that was in charge of... coordinating all the exchanges of students, so I was the responsible of exchange of students... Of law economies, business, finance, human resources, the way all I so... Experience for more than around 26-27 years because I never stop... I mean, I was the leader at the beginning and I

never stop working with this... Erasmus program so. So I think I long experience."

Finnish – Senior Academic

"... in University [in Finland] 18 years."

"I've been teaching international student groups for all these years. I've been developing designing courses, modules, study modules for these students, and of course cooperating with international colleagues in UK in Spain, in Portugal, in Germany. Well, in Europe for the most part... I've been organizing some conferences, international conferences as well... Maybe that's the most important tasks."

Simon [Interviewer]

"...I know from my experience of working with you that we did the intensive programmes. What, what did they involve? What were they? What were they like? What's the experience of doing the intensive programmes ?"

Finnish – Senior Academic

"... we started out... I think it was 2006 already we started talking about this intensive programmes or intensive programme and visited each other get familiarized ourselves with each other, our cultures, our study programmes and of course the people involved. And then we came up with the focus of the intensive program which was cultural exchange, and the aim was to do research on different destinations. Tourist destinations in three different countries, Finland, UK and Spain and then develop Touristic activities in those destinations and analyze those activities and also develop some new ideas for the activities in the certain destinations. And then we had a big groups of students involved, 20 student per university. So 60 students were carried along in the different country each year that we did it for 10 years. So it was kind of a massive project for myself and I learned a lot about the organizing things, learned a lot of the culture.. Working culture... In different universities, How do we do things... It was eyes opening and I got a lot of experience of that... And the cooperation... And it was really important for me to see how

we are actually and really able to be part of the development in these destinations and our students were really keen on working in this development work analyzing and at the destinations and then coming up with the ideas of new products or new ideas, how to develop the destinations and... I was so glad to see the local authorities or the public sector or people the local people involved in these projects that how happy they were about our work and they got all these fantastic ideas and research reports from the students... So all in all, it was something big and important to happen for all parties, for us as teachers, for us, as universities for the local destinations for these students, I think they got valuable experience as well and will always remember this work.”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“... my title is actually the deputy principle as well as ... directors of studies. So I'm overall in charge of the academic part of the institutions, so overall ... in charge of all the schools that we have here which include the Business School, the IT school, Tourism, General study.... my experience in the higher educations are actually not that wide. But you know, I started off... as a part time in in another college before I join [the Malaysian Institution] and this is a college where I have been working for since 2007. Yes. So yes, I started off as this ... before moving on, our administration part. So where I, you know, I become a HOP which we call the head of program and then progressed to head of school before I you know, come to this current positions... It is also dealing with for example some external stakeholders like for example in Malaysia for whatever programmes that we offer we need to get approval from the authority which is MQA. So we need to liaise us a lot with them. You know a documentation wise to get approval. Yes. And of course, ... as the company expanded, we start to have collaborations like for example, our collaborations with [the UK University]. Then I have to also deal with in terms of MOA, MOU and aliasing with our partner institutions in terms of I know make sure that we can work smoothly.”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“ My role between [the UK University] and [the Ghanaian University] is to liaise all the activities like a basically I form as the focal point... Issues that need to be related to solve for that had to be put in unknown so that if there are any things that I have to add up - I add up, if some of the later is have challenges that goes beyond the capabilities and I have to step in, especially when it comes to the blackboard issues and other staff that are beyond their capability. Basically also work on the blackboard. I mean setting that, I mean date of submission, review dates and other stuff. I also I mean I present [the UK University] in Ghana in many ways just to make sure that the activities run smoothly so that's my role.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... So who are your primary contacts in [the UK University]?”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“Yes. [Link Tutor] and [Partnership administrator].[Partnership administrator] is very nice, very responsive. I mean when issues... Immediately get it sorted out... having to, I mean, she has been the backbone of most of the thing. I mean, the success of the [the UK University] [the Ghanaian University], she has been the backbone.”

“... I started my early days working in [Industry] ... I work with one Ghanaian company. Then I moved to [another company]... By the way, I worked as a senior officer.... [discussion on career history] ... Then I moved to [the Ghanaian University]. So [the Ghanaian University] is my first University that I start teaching after a long period within the industrial and the world. So yeah. So I've had about 10 to 20 years working with the multinationals.

“... I worked as academic. If initially I wasn't adjunct lecturer there for about a year or two, then when my appointment was affirmed, that was when I started working with [the UK University].

Swiss – Senior Manager

“Well, the title is Deputy Dean. Well, I think really the main goal is back up to

the Dean... the entire activities of the college... I teach on several modules. I'm tutor on several modules, I do marking, but I also get involved in other things like malpractice helping set up new programmes and pretty much everything that the Dean would do.

In international environment in education only started when I met the Dean of [the Swiss Institution]. That's not quite true. I did a I did my MBA But I went to Harvard Business School.- 1975 to 77, but my... most of my professional career was in consulting... Mainly it's sort of I got an engineering background engineering first degree. We used to do a lot of consulting for chemical firms, for example, competitive intelligence and that involved international travel, visiting sites to competitors... but it didn't involve any education. The only education broad was that was the MBA. And then... I don't remember exactly what probably about... 16-17 years ago through the colleague would be my first boss. My first job was in Switzerland my boss there, who was a brit I met, the Dean. The Dean had a small... I guess you call it a college, but it wasn't really. They used to run... two week short courses in things like law or intellectual property, things like that. And he wanted to build it more up into his school... And you know, my colleague XXX ...and XXX set up an MBA program for [the Swiss Institution], so that was about... probably I got involved 16-17 years ago.

Discussion

The interviews show a wide range of international experience both from and industry background and within Higher Education. The *Spanish – Senior institutional Manager* studied multicultural studies prior to her role and developed through time into her current position. Both the *Spanish – Senior Academic Manager* and the *Finnish – Senior Academic* have been involved in international activities for an extensive period of time and have been involved in multiple projects. The *Malaysian – Senior Manager* developed into his current role through the traditional academic route and is now responsible for all international partnerships in the institution. The *Ghanaian – Senior Academic* entered Higher Education from an industry background working in various

multinational companies. The *Swiss – Senior Manager* has extensive experience and hold a key role in the institution with respect to their international partners. All the participants are the key points of contact for the UK Business School and work directly with the UK participants.

RQ7 - What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?

Simon (Interviewer) to Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“... What's your personal motivation for working internationally?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“That's a very good question, and personally I think it was just... I was convinced of the importance of the international relationships for mainly for the students, so I think this provides the students a big experience that I think... I'm even I'm talking with the students. Once they did the exchange, they always say the same thing, that this has changed their life. They have opened their minds and I think this was very good for them. So I think it was my motivation. I would say it was just... To help students to open their minds and to be more, I don't know... more creative, more international to see that there were other things than just the own territory”.

Simon (Interviewer)

“And then from an institutional point of view, as you said, you began this international activity 27 years ago, did they provide you with any motivation to actually engage in these activities?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“To be honest, I don't think so... And from institutional point of view... Just, they give me some recognition like I don't know. I don't know how to say this in English, just ‘Very well done. Well done, ‘. Well done’. And but I'm OK. But there wasn't. no recognition of all the effort that I did mainly at the beginning. Now I think everything is more or less... Routine. The activities they share routine and there is they have been programmed and now it's very easy for the exchange of students. But at the beginning it was hard work and I don't think I receive an official recognition by then, no.”

Simon (Interviewer)

So you mentioned earlier that you engaged in these international projects?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“...This was an intensive program that was approved by the European Union. So it was... Completely different to the... Exchange of Erasmus students.

Simon (Interviewer)

“So focusing on that, what was your motivation for joining in with that at the beginning and maybe the middle and maybe the end?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“At the beginning I think because it was... Yes, curiosity what was going on? And then, because it was good fun, I mean, I enjoy doing participating in in this. Project and he was good fun... And also.. It was a reason to travel to go... We'll do another other countries...I think it was fun. And it was just and the motivation... Also... I would say the satisfaction that we had, we, the students, that they... They enjoy very much the project. They learn a lot... And they... Work with other colleagues from other universities... And it was really nice to see how they create these International relationship”.

Finnish – Senior Academic

“... In the beginning, when I started long, long time ago... I had no experience at all and then. I was actually forced to take courses that I got involved in international things, students and partners and everything, and luckily I went there without any doubts I'm happy I did that and during the years... I have.. been into these things deeper and deeper and got excited about everything because I want to know more about people, cultures, different ways of doing things. So I think I have developed... to very open direction and I'm fluent now with people coming from different backgrounds, different cultures and as I was before, so my mindset has changed a lot during these years.”

Simon [Interviewer]

“... I remember the first visit and it kept the same for a while, but you came with XXX. And she was a very experienced colleague. Is that was that purposeful decision by your institution to have you paired with somebody of that level of experience?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“Yes, it might have been that, but also that XXX was I think she had been as an international coordinator in our organization those days. And somehow when I came to [the Finnish University] was the one who took me in warmly... So XXX was the first person to ever talking to me.”

Simon (Interviewer) to Malaysian – Senior Manager

“... about your own personal motivation ?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“... for me basically I feel that there's a motivated in the sense that I'm... helping... I feel that if I'm able to help people that I feel happy. So that's why I know you know, as a head not normally. Of course for me as a deputy principal, I am also supporting my principle and I remember my principle also mentioned that as a head actually you are how should I call it your role is to provide support to your subordinate because at the end of the day they are also supporting you. So you have to make sure you are able to support them before they support you. So in this role, I feel that motivated because every day, of course I would take, you know that our staff need anything ...But when they come to me means that they maybe they have problems they are not able to do it. So I'll be quite motivated if I feel that I can help them to solve you know the problems. ...I'll be seeing students that, for example, who are who might have problems like for example at the end of every semester, we do have exams and assessments and obviously there are some weak students. So where they might need some counselling. So this is where I would step in with a head of school and head of program to see how we can help the students.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“ So your motivation comes from the satisfaction of helping people?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, correct, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

"...you mentioned before that your direct boss sort of suggested to you that your role is to support other people and do you feel as though you are given a good strong support and motivation yourself in your role to do what you need to do?"

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

Does the does the institution help you to do your job? Did they give you the freedom, the flexibility, you know?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

"Yes, yes, I would say my boss is actually .. is give the freedom to the subordinate, you know, to, to perform the task that he supposed to do. But of course on the other hand it is also subject to how much confidence that he has in us. If he truly have confidence, they're obviously he will be totally... hands off, but otherwise you know she expects us to actually report to her quite closely of what we are doing. And I think for my boss, I think her because of the market situations now and because of competitions and so on, I think he is very much a more concerns about the marketing expect. So of course on the academic part I think things tends to be a little bit more structured so I think... He give me a more freedom, you know, to do what I have to do. But of course, at the end of the day, she expect me or wants me to actually report to her what I do. Yes."

Simon (Interviewer)

"I mean it's a very strong leadership style... but that idea that you give autonomy to the people who are doing the majority of the work. But then with that autonomy comes the need for reporting that they need the confidence to know that everything is fine."

Malaysian – Senior Manager

"Yes, it's correct. Yes, yes, that's right. That's right. And of course because

our as you know, uh, our institution is not that big. So I think she, she know what is going on and she would like to know because for my boss she is also the sort of the founder because she started the institutions so she would like to know more or less you know more or more like a hands on person she would like to know everything, yes.”

Simon (Interviewer) to Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“...so very much self driven, self motivated to do this work. Do you feel as though your institution, [the Ghanaian University] gives you much motivation to work with international partners?”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“Yes. People like me would... I mean a lot of work experiences working with different type of managers and different type of people and we hardly get demotivated by people's action. the goal becomes your objectives... we set up a target. You have to meet the target. So basically, I don't see obstacles... I really don't see obstacles when I'm working. I have to get over it and just get it done. So you always have to find ways of getting over it and getting sorted out. ...I have a lot of freedom.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... motivation for doing it, it's really easy generally about the enjoyment of doing the job?”

Swiss – Senior Manager

“It's about that, but it's about money, to be honest, to be frank. I enjoy a lifestyle that if I just... I'm past retirement date. So if I'm just living off my pension and life style would dramatically decrease... But the money is important. But I do enjoy it as well. I enjoy the flexibility. I can pick it up, put it, put it down when I like... Because it's a distance learning organization, you know, we're all... Pretty much all working from home and always have been even before covid... It's just suits, suits my approach and I get up early... I work for two or three hours and then do other things that I want to still work. It just fits my, my, my nature, I guess.”

“... in terms of management, it's still very small. You know we there's a group of probably... Half a dozen list we get involved in all decisions and it's still going very close knit... approach knit to it. So yes, it's still fun.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... do you find that is a real benefit that you just working in a very small team?... That kind of nature of it?”

Swiss – Senior Manager

“Yes, I think so. I mean it's I my first job was with a... Smallish International consulting organization and I left after about three years, came back to the UK and worked for a big company. And then I did my MBA and then I went back to a big company, But after a couple years... But I just didn't enjoy working in a big company. .. You know, I didn't enjoy the time.. Frankly, a lot of it is XXXX you know, a waste of time. And I had this opportunity to join up with my first boss as part of the UK. Well, only two of us, European American consulting firm. It was a risky venture. If you like, you know, leaving a the salary to an uncertain future. But I just felt it fitted me better with you. But nothing that's been true for everything I've done since. So, small environments are where I thrive”

Discussion

There is a clear theme that motivation is driven by the student experience either via exchange experience or as part of the franchised programmes. The enjoyment of the role is also highlighted as a key source of motivation. Self development is highlighted as a theme, getting to understand different cultures more and develop as an individual. Responsibility is also highlighted in that many of the staff are given a large amount of autonomy to conduct their roles. Financial gain is also highlighted alongside professionalism and working in international teams. From observation, all the participants are highly motivated and have great experience. They are very interactive when decisions need to be made and always enthusiastic about new development. They play a key role in the relationship with the UK University, appreciation of this primarily comes

from those who work directly with them. From a UK senior management level the relationships are assumed to work well based on the individual contacts, and the responsibility to maintain the relationships is based on the work of the link tutors.

RQ1 - How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“... theoretically we have two meetings a year. ... we talk about issues and I can tell the VIP people how that would affect our students or the international students or how I think that something could be changed or could be done .. But like it's a big panel of people, so it's not only me a lot of people talking about that. I think they take my advice into consideration because they basically because they don't have the experience or they are not face to face with students and they don't... Well, you know, it's always they think things that are good in theory, but then in the, in the practice maybe they wouldn't work or they wouldn't be able to be implemented at all. So yeah, I think I feel heard if that's what you mean.”

“... internationalization strategy is made by the vice rectorate, and we are one of the offices that the Vice Rectorate is responsible for... our office plays a big role in that internationalization strategy, which is basically, well, trying to boost internationalization at home, trying to make more and more people from the administrative services like me or more PHD's and lecturers to go abroad to and to visit other partner universities or. So yes, it plays a very important role in the in the internationalization strategy. So yeah, we do many things.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“If I asked you to produce your international strategy now, could you do that?”

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“Yeah, I can send it to you. We have an international strategy in which I think it's only four pages long, but three of those four pages are task in the International Office. So yeah, there is a there is a document.

The thing is that sometimes that helps me because when we want to boost the mobility within Europe... lecturers or other people like me, sometimes I

just see them in the cantina and I said, well, nobody's has applied for these funds. Can you apply the don't you want to go abroad something and they say like oh no, my boss wouldn't allow that. Or do you know my boss? I don't think he would find it correctly or something. So then I can write an email to bosses and say hello look how this important is in our internationalization strategy that director has signed please send these among your employees because. it's really important that they get a bit more of interest.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“The next question was, who do you perceive as the main stakeholders in the strategy development? Is this a top down approach from the vice rector etc?”

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“Most of the work is done in this office so and they also hear us. So then they also listen to us. So I think yeah, it's from up to bottom obviously but yeah, but everyone is involved and yeah.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“From your general experience, how important do you feel that International Development are to your institution? Do they have a major part?”

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“I don't think it's a major part right now, but. It's a big part of what the university acquires, and we're always asked to for the ranking part and all that. We are always a good one of the stakeholders in that too. And they always ask us about how we went, how we were doing last year in the last years and so on. ... Even though it's improving, but we're still very local and well, you see most of our students are from [the region] or the nearby towns yet. And even though we are expanding a bit and we are getting new partners and get having more students coming in. We attend international fairs and then we attract some other students mainly from South America in our case and it's expanding. But I don't think it's like a really big thing or I don't think it's the main goal right now ...”

Simon (Interviewer) to Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“... how does your institution develop its international strategy. So are you aware of any kind of formal system for producing an international strategy that your institution?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“Well, if there is a plan, I don't know it. I mean, I know they organize different kind of activities. Like they organize teaching for... A couple of American universities that they bring, teachers and students... But I think they are like isolated actions. I don't. I don't think that there is a plan, a strategy behind. I mean they just propose to do international activities, but not within an umbrella of a plan.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So if I were to ask you to can you produce a document that is your strategic plan for your institution, could you do that?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“Maybe not me. I mean, I suppose that the Vice Chancellor... Who's in charge of the international relationships? I suppose he will have one plan, but... I don't know.

Simon (Interviewer)

“.. You mentioned the Vice Chancellor. Are there any other people in this kind of structure that come together to talk about developing what they're going to do internationally?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

We have an international office... And where they I would say they are in charge to organize, to give support... For all the international activities that... That are organized by the by the Vice Chancellor. They all the things, all the ideas that they have. They are operated through the International Office. There's an office where there are several people working there.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... from your experience, do you feel as though international developments when they happen when they actually happen come more from individual faculty members saying I've got this potential partnership, this idea? Is it done by individuals or is it done strategically?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I would say that it's more done by individuals the individuals that bring some contacts and then they say, OK, we can do this... And then from the International Office, they give the approval, say, OK, you can you can do it. That's it. Yeah. Perfect. So and this is... This will be inside our... International strategy. Internationalization strategy, yeah, but... I don't think they are ideas pushing from the Vice Chancellor to do them. It's more from individuals who have contacts and then they propose to do something with... with these other international Universities or people, yeah”

Simon [Interviewer] to Finnish – Senior Academic

“...how the institutions play out a strategy if they have one an international strategy?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“Yes, we do... they repeat it every once in a while... They. Yes, I know it and internalization is one of the main aims in our strategy. But nowadays we discuss what does it really mean and there we have different aspects and different opinions, even what it means to different people.”

Simon [Interviewer]

“Can you give me an example of the different opinions?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“Yes... Some teachers or some even departments, think that international working is teaching in English. That's it. That's international, but, for example, IB, we think that it's a lot more than that. Of course, it's knowing, knowing the cultures, knowing and getting to know people coming from different cultures and really design our courses accordingly... And it's also that that we have an

interest to learn from each other. We have interest to visit each other... And for the students, those skills that they are able to manage in international world and we apply international research reports, bring in the international... Information or knowledge from different fields so. It is... A global village that we live in, that's what we think.

...we have many partner universities who send students to us and we sent... our students there so, Yes, it really important exchange. So we can learn from each other as universities and from our students, they tell us experiences, so we know what is happening there in the other universities. And then when we visit those universities, we get to know more what they are doing. So it's really important and enhancing this cooperation and international cooperation.”.

Simon [Interviewer]

“...I recall from the intensive programmes that was one of the desired outputs that when the programmes when that funding finished that we actually progress and become self-sustainable... And make it in the same things and I think the dual award sort of did that to a certain degree?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes... Yes, indeed. And that's the real working, I would say international working. So what's the point of just staying here, only speaking English and that's it doesn't go anywhere.

Simon [Interviewer]

“... So when it comes to things like these developments are you are you involved or can you get involved or is it really done through committees that that you just get told what the new strategy is and what direction you're going to move into?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“... of course we have... Then our own strategy or own plans or ideas in our department... Not only the [Finnish University] level, that's the general strategy, but we have our own and in International Business I am part of our

team. So I participate discussions, what shall we do, what are new ideas or .. things could be done to develop our international working. So yes, partly I'm involved."

Simon [Interviewer]

"... do you think that's a typically Finnish thing to make sure that everybody's has a say that everybody's involved in the final decision making, is that a cultural thing for Finland?"

Finnish – Senior Academic

"Nowadays, yes, I think our working culture has changed towards that everyone can say it's not only the boss who is telling you what to do, so it's getting better I think yes, we can. We can discuss and share things, yes."

Simon [Interviewer]

"...this is probably a question that's not that easy to answer, but from an institutional point of view, do you think that [the Finnish University] is driven by financial gains? Is that a change in environment or is it more altruistic, it's more student centered - student driven?"

Finnish – Senior Academic

"Yes, I know that, these years maybe within five years, our financing has changed a lot and now we are in a situation that we need to gain money, finance our work more and more by ourselves so... our former finance mostly came from the Ministry of Education... And now? Not anymore. So we all the more we need to pay attention to... Work hard on ideas how to finance our work, our university. So... Money talks and I'm not so happy with this direction cause it's the teacher... One single teacher has to start working on this finance searching and try to find out what to do."

"... I know that our Ministry of Education and Culture just recently... said that we need to get more international students because Finland needs more employees .. And universities need paying students.. That is, if I'm honest, that's the way... it used to be free completely and it I think it's been only for... Maximum three years that we have had paying students in... So that's quite a

new thing for us and that's why the teachers are not worried about the resources and quality and all that more work and the same salary, new challenges and... A little bit afraid of being left alone... our supportive Offices. You can say the International Office and study.. What is it? Study, Council office or something? They are closing down so they are not helping us anymore. So we don't know what to do in this new situation and It is stressful, so totally new situation for us and no support available."

... It is really, really different and I don't know if I like it or.. No, I don't like it and I would like to do my job better... At the moment I am highly motivated. So far so good, but the small dark cloud is hanging on there."

Simon (Interviewer) to Malaysian – Senior Manager

"... do you play a major role in the strategy development of looking at new partnerships and things like that that you know the driver from [the Malaysian Institution] is it are you involved with that kind of strategy level discussion?"

Malaysian – Senior Manager

"Not at as of now... for example our how we end up our partnership with [the UK University]. Actually it was through some kind of what they call this introductions at a party and it was... we managed to introduce to our principal. So Doctor XXX was more less. But of course, once we get into like for example introduce into introduce with [the UK University], then I will come in, yes. So in that sense it is strategically is not I'm not so involved, yes".

Simon (Interviewer)

"I fully understand and so in in the case of [the UK University] then it was really through somebody's personal contact?"

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Contact yes, yes, correct ...But of course, overall we know that we want to look for a partner. And we feel that it is good to have UK as partners yes, because that will make set a slightly different from other local institutions because before that actually we had a partner with a local institutions but the

experience wasn't good and therefore we decide you know we should focus on a UK partners."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So the at the strategy level, yes, there is a direction which is partner with the UK. But when it comes to actually which partner, it's more down the individual contact?"

Malaysian – Senior Manager

"Yes .Yes, correct".

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

"No, no, I do not. These things are done at the higher level and just transcend to us for us to execute. So basically I'm at the execution level however... for instance say if they had to be new introduction of new programmes like now that we're working out hard for us to get a DBA started...Because it is a private owned university, so you know that when it comes to private owned university we don't have a lot of bureaucracy as compared to the public university. So that makes things work faster and much more quickly."

Simon (Interviewer)

"... from that point of view with your senior managers, do they seem to be laying down a strategy for you. We need an LLM, etc. And then is it down to you to find them?"

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

"Yes, definitely. That's how I do. I just have to rely on my contact and other stuff so that we can get this sorted out."

Simon (Interviewer)

"So what from the [the Ghanaian University] point of view, what do you think are the main benefits of engaging in the international strategy?"

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

"Yeah. We also look at the financial aspect of it. Basically if you as a private own university, even though we have the image as being the most as the

most important thing to look at, we also look at like how beneficiary would be able to recoup money invested into the program because we need to pay later X we need to, I mean it's investing with the need to do a lot of things and the [the Ghanaian University] is also... a Christian university is one of the Christian universities in Ghana and basically it is not solely dependent on money and sometimes we do that for, I mean just to assist the public... So I am, yeah. So even though we have money, we have financial benefit as one of the objectives that does not become the paramount. And so if you want to look at how much [the Ghanaian University] charge as compared to other universities that run other foreign programmes since because University charge way, way down compared to other universes ...”

Simon (Interviewer) to Swiss – Senior Manager

“... when it comes to developing [the Swiss Institution], I'm thinking really now about its strategy and how it has grown, how much involvement have you had in that and what are the kind of things that you've considered and thought of and developed?”

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes. Well, I'd say that a lot of involvement, originally we had our own ideas... It would, it would be developed by my colleague... He did some work initially on... [the UK University] program but eventually you got kicked off by XXX because... I mean, he would basically tell you this is what it said. Look, it's crazy that the six week module, it's crazy to be giving people assessments after three weeks. You know, it's ridiculous. Whereas [the Dean] would say, look, you know it's take or leave it... You don't go to a set of MacDonald's franchises, start cooking, sandwiches or something, you know, you got to do what they do... So eventually he quit.

But... He said that the first thing and we got students, it was it wasn't. It was approved by Switzerland. That can't on where we operated... but it wasn't validated. So in Germany for example, you could have put the initials in MBA after your name... And we thought about getting validated and we considered the possibility of getting an American organization to validate this and I think

The Dean heard about Wales offering validated programmes ... That was an easier route to go, so that's the direction we went in to... It started to take off.

And, we grew, we grew quite dramatically ... we got a little bit concerned... Because whales were starting to get quite a bad reputation, they sort of validated it. Anything there... We offered an MBA, but there are other two or three other organizations that offer Wales MBA's who's quality we didn't do was to start to scratch, and yet people could get that MBA. Cost would be lower, the certificate would look the same and so we would. We found this unfair competition and started to look around to other organizations.

We talked to a lot and at that time it was this is only we're still a little bit of a question mark, I think to some people and then eventually we just sort of bumped into [another UK University], and so on.. one program with them and that we're building went from there then we... picked up [additional UK University] and eventually [the UK University], so it was it was. I wouldn't call it planned. It was opportunistic to a great degree. It's looking for growth as much possible.... So yes, you know, I think... We've always wanted, well, when I say we, I mean really, it's [the Dean] and his brother. They own the college and so they take the final decisions. “

Discussion

The *Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager* has clear input into their strategy development and actively employs the strategy to meet its aims. She acknowledges that international developments are not a key driver in the institution at this time. The *Spanish – Senior Academic Manager* is not aware of any plan but understands that these developments are managed by the rectorate and the international office. He also acknowledges that international developments come from individuals as opposed to from a formal international strategy. The *Finnish – Senior Academic* is fully aware of her institution's strategy and it is discussed openly within the institution. She also expresses concern that the educational landscape is changing with the introduction of fee paying students and the closure of some of their support offices. The *Swiss –*

Senior Manager has been highly involved in the development of the institution. From observation, the Swiss partner is a distance learning provider, it generates students from a global market and invest considerable funds into marketing and virtual learning environment technology. Developments in relation to strategy (from the UK Business School perspective) have primarily been adding new programmes to their portfolio. The *Ghanaian – Senior Academic* and *Malaysian – Senior Manager* acknowledge that they are not involved in strategy development but are instrumental in implementing it. From observation, as the partners are current they have all been through a process of reapproval and therefore are not key to the UK strategy other than maintaining the quality and growing the student numbers where appropriate.

RQ2 - What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“... obviously, we also attract ‘similarish’ cultures ... to ours. That's why I was telling about the South American students, which obviously not only cultural and historical reasons but also language wise... they tend to be more comfortable here with us. Our challenge is to get very far away cultures because our culture, our, our university or our city is not as diverse as some UK cities as you know we still have a long way to go. For example, I I asked my rector like 15 years ago. If we could have a type of Prayer room, like any culture or something because I thought it was important, because otherwise I was seeing the students from very far away cultures maybe washing their feet in the basin or something, which is for them is the right thing to do, and maybe for our culture, a bit shocking to see that, but it hasn't happened. And I mean the prayer room thing. Obviously we are supposed to be a country with no religion or religion shouldn't affect every day, issues or organizations and so on. But it does because we don't have a multiplayer prayer room, but we do go home for Easter so in the end, in the practice we are some kind of religiously orientated.

So I think there's a long way for us to get to attract those far, far away cultures that for us are really far away, not so much for the UK, because I've been there and luckily you, you have every type of culture there so, so and you think of everything because when I've visited your university or others university, other universities in in England, they all have these Counsellors or prayer rooms or something that can make a student feel a bit more at home or a bit to make it a bit easier for students to when they encounter this clash.

So that's still an issue, but still because we have to like report to the EU, European Union to say that we are trying to integrate students, we do workshops here in the office when they arrive, we do multicultural workshops so ... it's like a training course. Well, they cannot come obviously it's not

obligatory, but they it's not compulsory, but most of them do and we see culture from different scopes and we tell them what they can expect from the Spanish culture and all that.

So we tried to integrate everyone, but as I say, there's still a long way to go for far away cultures and it's much easier for a French student who lives for hours from here by car to integrate with us than for a person who lives in Vietnam or I don't know Malawi or whatever”.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you there would be any value in multicultural training for staff.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“Yeah, I think I think that's a an added value that we all should have because maybe the students are going to be most of the time in international groups, sometimes or with peers, like other classroom classmates that are more or less the same age, same background, even if they're from different countries, but they will also need to go at some point to the healthcare center here on campus. They will have to go to maybe they lost their password to get into to log in into the account or something, and then they need to go to the computer science service and If they, if those people had more... we're more competent in, in the country, cultural issues, they will be much more sensitive. And more just aware that there are different ... And so I think it's really important to for those people to get some education or some training on that we have in the past... some people have come to the university to give us some classes on intercultural issues, but then only the people in the International Office have ended up going to those. But it was open to all of us, but still only our people went to and maybe some of them because we made them go. We made them go. But I can. It's really important that maybe just one person who is at the entrance of a building just to tell where every classroom is or something.

To talk to people is a really, really important. So I think if everyone, every little person in the university had this training or it would be much easier for

students and for us to recruit students and to have students more at ease here and more at home feel make them feel at home here. It would be nicer, yeah.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... are you are you personally aware of any of the cultural models that exist in the world. Theoretical academic cultural models that describe cultural difference and the way you should approach people.”

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“... yeah, because I did this masters course in Multiculturality and I've basically had to prepare things for students sometimes if for those workshops and then yeah, I know a bit about that and I can... We can tell students more or less what the general People in Spain would be like, even though sometimes it's not like that, so yeah It could. Cultures can be more time oriented or task oriented in which Spaniards are we are more task oriented and maybe if we In the middle of doing an action, we meet a friend or something. We live room for that friendship or for that conversation, and then we keep on doing something, even though we know the deadline is going to expire. But for us, maybe that conversation is more important than actually the task.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“ So when you're dealing with international partners, let's say for example, the international projects that we've run between Finland. Can you imagine the challenges of the different cultures and how that was approached... for the academics that were involved with it, how do you think they managed that? “

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“I think they managed really well because, well, I remember having students from all type of background In those in those programmes not only from different countries, but they you could see they were and they came, maybe. I mean, they're nationalities were different to the universities they belong to.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... do you do you feel from the point of this research that, that, that level of importance should be placed at a higher level than maybe it is.”

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“Yeah, it should. It's very, very important because there are so many issues that maybe.. that are important for, for every person, for each student, and they feel included too. “

Simon (Interviewer) to Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“ So when you've been working on these projects, have you come across any cultural differences that have made things challenging or more interesting?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“...we have suffered some cultural differences that sometimes they were funny and others make things difficult ... I think every country has its own way of doing things.. And when you work with people from other nationalities you discover these differences and sometimes you have to be... I don't know how to say this but... And... In Spanish, we say you have to use your left hand. I don't know if this is in English. So sometimes you have to be flexible and... empathetic, trying to understand the point of view of the of the others, and obviously every country has its own traditions... His own timetable.. ... And different hours for having dinner... for the duration of the meetings? I think... I remember one day in a meeting and... From another nationality they say that it was time for lunch and just they got up and say they left the room and went for lunch.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... do you think training would be valuable if they're going to go and do a project with a partner from another culture?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“Yeah, I think this that would be nice to have this kind of training and trying to understand better the traditions for the idiosyncrasy of the other countries, that will be helpful for their successful international project, yeah”.

Simon [Interviewer] to Finnish – Senior Academic

How did you find the cultural differences between the different places?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, at the beginning I found out how different systems we have in our universities about assessment... Basically it is the same but the output is very different. We have very different scales. The grade grading systems that's, that's the thing. So it was really nice to learn about how you do it... The idea is the same, but the outcome and output grading is different."

Simon [Interviewer]

"And did you find working with the Spanish and the English.. difficult or easy? Or was it something that you really needed to pick up as you went along?"

Finnish – Senior Academic

"What was it in the beginning?... The way of working... I don't think there was anything that I was worried about or wondering or it was pretty much the same as we do here... Maybe the Spanish way of working is a little bit different to us that they want to... or they do the daily working in a different way, different schedules, so they have longer... Working hours in the... afternoon or evening and we start early morning. Yeah, that's the thing. I remember. Spanish colleagues were horrified to wake up early in the morning and be in the classroom at 8:00 o'clock or 9:00 o'clock. It was terrible for them. And we were wondering. Oh, we thought 10:00. O'clock not 8:00 o'clock in the morning. That was different. But funny. Yes, and... They had this, they were more peaceful or calm... They didn't rush... Like I think the Finnish Teachers, they go around and they rush a lot and UK.. Side you are... In the middle... Yeah... You. Yes, you are in the middle."

"...So I always thought that we are a really good team because we have all the options... All the possible options."

Simon [Interviewer]

"... that builds it really nicely. I mean do you think that working in that small group over such a long period of time was one of the main benefits for your

own personal development, you know, for the development of the programme but getting to know everybody are working in that small group.”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“Yes, definitely so.. I learned a lot from these different people and also the students played a significant role in in this group... Not only the teachers and the staff members, but also the students.”

Simon [Interviewer]

“Do you actively use or within your team. Use cultural models to explain things to students and staff about different countries and where they you know how they will react and things. Is that something that you are conscious of in your working life?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“Yes, I'm conscious of that... subconscious. I don't do it regularly, but yes, we discuss these things with colleagues... different teachers have different opinions and because of cultural different cultural backgrounds, then we discuss and we... try to find out the solution and then we bring in the different aspects of different cultures and we are a multicultural group of teachers. So every teacher has something to say... and that's a really good thing that then somebody knows, hey, that's a good way to react when something happens, somebody can say and help. And we share information.”

Simon [Interviewer]

“... there's no kind of formal training that you go through to understand cultural difference as a as a member of staff?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“No, at the moment we don't have and I think we never had. That's actually something I discussed with my boss today.. earlier today. I brought it up that maybe we should have... Some training for this... It might help us a lot... But not yet”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... the kind of cross cultural nature of the relationship ...Do you think that we pay enough attention to your cultural requirements? The difference is that you have in Malaysia to what we have in [the UK University], maybe national holidays, religious festivals, these kind of things. Do you think that's taken into consideration enough?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“I think there is a minimum impact for me, except since it mentions I think lately they did ask us, especially in terms of this setting of exam date, because I think in the past we were quite flexible in terms of I know when to do the exam, but I understand recently I think especially the accounting and finance the program, they are very strict in terms of ensuring that our you know... The exam date should uh coincide with, you know in in the in the one when it happens in UK. So therefore only recently I start to be aware of these things and they start to ask me about, you know, public holiday whether is it a state or whether is it a religious or whatever so but so far I think I don't have I I'm OK with that I don't have major issue with that”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... if you were to leave your job tomorrow and somebody took over, do you think they would find it as easy as you do to manage?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“For them, perhaps you know they might feel that, you know. Maybe that the [the UK University] as a university, there are maybe more dominating and are less accommodative and you know, they want the way that is that mean they just want us to comply. They might feel this is because this is the when, when, when I talk to my head of programmer as this is some of the feedback, you know that they tell me why not I become firm. You know I want this rather than try to comply with what you know [the UK University] is asking ...yes because for me like I mentioned my I feel that what is more important is for me to be able to complete the task that we are supposed to do rather than do if I can accommodate... And you know I will try to do that, you know. Yes, yes.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“But do you find it frustrating that that potentially [the UK University] is not flexible to your needs and?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“Sometimes, sometimes like this, but of course I will rationalize it, you know? And why they have to do it so that that's why I have to explain to my staff... Yes. So at the end, I think they will buy the idea. But like I said, you know, usually people will not be happy if they will have to ask to change. We rather you know want one other people to change rather than we change, yes, correct.”

“... But I feel at the end of the day, I think this boils down to perhaps to communication sometimes many time I think because sometimes there is some miscommunications or we take we take things for granted and therefore we do not further clarify and that result in some problem.”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“I don't have any culture (issues) because I mean Ghana has been a British colony so often than not most of the things done in Ghana is almost done in the UK. I've been in UK ... so when it comes to Ghanaian and the British, the differences are not that much... “

Simon (Interviewer)

“... do you think training would be valuable from either the side of [the Ghanaian University] or from the side of [the UK University] so that we have a stronger understanding of each others cultures... Do you not think that's really a necessary requirement?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“But training training is, is very important because it I mean from where I came from the mining industry from the mining industry of which I've spent several years of the money industry training is one of the key tool that we use to build capacity irrespective of who you are you I mean from the MD to the labourer you need to be trained and that is done almost every year you are scheduled

to go for training... Every year, so training is very, very important because we tend to forget. But as you go for training and at the idea is reinforced of which becomes part and parcel of you. So I strongly believe that training is very, very important to understand. Both cultures. Training is very, very important. We cannot ignore training and that should be consistent... that should be consistent at least once in a year. That is good. That will help.”

Simon (Interviewer) to Swiss – Senior Manager

When dealing with international partners... either with individuals that you know and trust over time all working in a place systematic approach where you've got the different kind of cultures clashing. ...do you feel there is a cultural issue that you have to face at all with dealing with [the UK University] or any of your other partners really?”

Swiss – Senior Manager

“Yes. Sure. Yes, yes... Not really culture. I think it's more of an organization culture. You know, the fact that you have so many different layers in a university... And [the Swiss Institution], if we want to change something, it could happen literally within hours, you know, not only would the idea be changed that the website everything would have changed the site in the university, you've got to go through so many committees. It takes forever, you know? So that's one of the big issues.”

Discussion

Cultural awareness is highlighted as a key theme throughout the interviews. The need or desire for training is also shown as significant. Internal culture is also highlighted. As significant issue is that the medium of language in all the partnerships is English. All the franchise programmes are taught in English and any meetings held are also purely in English. The cultural difference cited by the Spanish and Finnish are clearly evident but seen as a positive aspect of the relationship, The franchise partnerships are aware of cultural differences between the countries (especially Ghana and Malaysia) and try to adapt to

ensure a successful relationship. The high level of bureaucracy of the UK institution is also highlighted as a theme.

RQ 3 - How are new international developments managed and supported?

RQ 4 - How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“Most of the times it's Professors or lecturers and letting us know about the possibility of a good partner for us. So The thing is that if those professors or those lectures have no contact with the International office that then they would they wouldn't even think of that possibility of establishing an agreement, but we found like for example, when I went to, I went to England a few years ago to visit some of the partners and then I I asked the lecturers to give me feedback about their relationship with that particular university. And then I found out that there was a really good link between our university that department specifically with the university, one of the two universities in XXX. So and it was like they were doing so many things together and we had no idea of that. ... And because of this special relationship they had we try to find a way to establish an agreement, let's say, so it's always not always, but most in most of the cases it's lecturers given us, giving us hints or giving us that to work with or to start with and then as I say, if they are involved in the project, I'm motivated and we are too, then then that can be a long lasting relationship for that specific agreement.”

“... for choosing partners, I think from my experience... The partnerships that work the best are the partnership in which a part of the personal parties involved in the sense that obviously, academically speaking, in must be great and very effective and both and universities will gain from that partnership.

But. Lecturers who already have lots of work to do lots of things to correct lots of research to do... and if they also engage in a Partnership, which is not only on a piece of paper because we have like thousands of partnerships in in, in

the piece of paper, but the ones that really work and the ones that we're really proud of are the ones that which lecturers also put a bit of their own.

... but I think... And as an international office, if we only had those papers, it wouldn't mean a lot. And so we tried to boost those collaborations which are, which also involve not only the papers and the signatures that were done 15 years ago were 20 years ago, but also the people...

... I wouldn't have said that before starting the job at the university thinking no, no partners have to be Partners who are brilliant in in the in these areas or something which also is a it's is a an added value of course but that that never works. If there's not the motivation of people to keep that going, like for example, well for from our side Partners should also not only involve just one thing, but not just one thing in the internationalization field, but also others like, in the case of the UK University, we've had a long partnership, and not only for the exchange of students, but also staff, exchange, visiting professors that have come here and we have been able to fund them and also. We've been in other projects together like the intensive programmes which lead to many other things, academically speaking, and administratively speaking. And that's what makes really a good agreement really reach a good agreement and really richer, I think.

Because as I say, if we exchange one student each year with another university and we get our student back, that's nice. So but if that extends to many other fields of for example, you were looking at the possibility of doing a double degree or a double degree program for the masters you share well, the masters you've got and that we've got here to the master management. That is quite that. You saw some similarities in so maybe... So that those type of things, even if it doesn't work out in the end or if it takes a long time to work out, that's the thing that I think that's the that's those are the really nice, the really good partners and the ones that need to be kept.

Some agreements, though, are more institutional oriented like our vice rector, our rector goes on a trip somewhere and they say oh within everything we've

done in this trip. Let's also let's also boost International mobility... So then we are quite sure that the agreement is going to be signed because if both rectors want to, obviously it's going to be signed... But then.

You know, sometimes... We see that OK is there is signed, it hasn't worked but it's signed you know so... And that's another possibility. Then another possibility is that when what I do is that when our lecturers or the staff we work at the university go abroad with a grant from us or with some PHD or something, we know where they're they've been to. And then we asked them how was your experience? Do you know we don't have an agreement with this university? Do you see any field in which we could collaborate together or something? Sometimes we don't get anything from that, but sometimes we are surprised that we do so. That would be the case that the International Office itself finds out if there's a need, or if there's a gap that we could fill with that university.... But the big part is the lecturers.”

The structure ones have never worked in the long run. So I really appreciate more the partnerships that involve a bit of... Uh, selfish to say that in the sense that as you said lecturers, you have so many more things to do in one day but that email a week or that phone call. A week or a month or a day means a lot for the for keeping that relationship going and wanting to do more things so they're structured ones are nice and maybe there are some, but they never last in the long run because there's no personal investment. “

Simon (Interviewer) to Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“...Is there a formal structure about how you manage these things as somebody appointed to manage a relationship?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“I think they we have the general financial help that they are from doing the stays in other universities... But there is no how can I say?... Probably from the institution they should organize and give more support... To certain kinds of relationships are going to say this... they should say, OK, this relationship with this university is strategic. It's important. So we are going to give you support to reinforce this relationship with this university, but this is not the

case. It's just where there are different options and every individual teacher he chooses which university, which country he wants to be to go... Yes, for his own interest and there is no... institutional strategies giving support to someone saying you have to go to this, see to this university, to this country.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... it kind of reflects what you were saying already that it's down to individual faculty people to implement that to begin the relationship and then a bit more support down the line would probably be helpful for them to manage the relationship, so if that individual faculty member left, would the relationship die?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“That's a very good thing... probably I think it will change a lot. I mean if the person who has the contact with another university, if he left the.. this institution... Yeah, probably they will be missing a lot of these background, I don't know.. you know.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... clearly you've mentioned about working on projects. The international project you mentioned. Do you feel as though there is a benefit of working with a small group of people to develop these things as opposed to a more systematic approach?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“Yeah, this makes things easier to organize to do things. I mean, if it was a big group... It will be more difficult to coordinate all the activities and at the end... If you are working with a small number of people... And you, you have more interaction with these people.. you will start to create a more fluent environment that helps to communicate freely with the others and from these... More free communication or easy communication. It's easier that they are more opportunities or more ideas to implement?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“... it was long time ago. And then those days we had to work alone. No

support from our institute. No. But now it's very different. Now we have learned a lot and developed everything. And people have changed and developed themselves. So now it would be different if it happened. Now. I think it would be totally different... But then we designed, developed, we made the choices and decisions all by ourselves, me and XXX.

Simon [Interviewer]

"... you were kind of finding the contacts through networks and things and then building them yourself. It was structured in a plan by the institution? to say we are going to do this, this and this.. ?"

Finnish – Senior Academic

"No, it was nothing from there, but the only support would what was better than we had the proper international office and they help with the practical things. But all the structures, contents, developing the program, it was our own business.... It depends very much on a person and you can practically decide yourself what is your level of being international

Simon [Interviewer]

No, that's absolutely great. I think you've covered... Most of the things the next set of questions really about the barriers that the institution might face, but I think we've covered that already with the change in economic climate and the way they.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, I think that's the most important what is happening and we don't know the consequences yet... Time will tell.

Simon [Interviewer]

Is there anything more that you'd you think is important that you'd like to add yourself just?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Umm, in our institution I would definitely pay attention to this... Support supporting people to get international cause now they do the opposite... They

take away all their facilities, they are demanding on us, but they give us nothing back. The one key issue in our strategy is this internationalization but at the same time... No resources, no support... So if I could decide I would really invest in this... In a different way.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“... one of the thing of course you'll be guided by these uh, the MQA because now I think they have quite a strict ruling like for whatever partners that we get overseas, they must fulfil certain ranking in terms of QS ranking... So I think that that is one of the main thing. But otherwise I think for us of course we look for partners who are actually who, who are genuinely interested in providing good educations to the students. I think that is what we are the most important things that we look for.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“More of a developmental thing that you're supporting your students as opposed to purely a financial consideration?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“Yes, yes, it is more, but because like I think I can't recall my, my, this visions and missions. So it's actually it's more like you know to provide opportunity for students who are you know who actually are entitled to pursue a higher education because as you know in in Malaysia especially for the non bumiputra they might have some disadvantage because in terms of entering into public university. So some of them actually they might be result wise they might be good but because of the system they could not get into the public university... And even if they get into public university sometime, they might not be able to pursue the field that they want. So for us, we would like to provide opportunity for these people... And then and this is actually, it is exemplified in terms of the students that we receive, I think I mentioned to you before most of the students that we receive, actually they need some kind of financial aids.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“Who are your main points of contact? How does the actual day-to-day operation work for you?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“so of course it depends on the partner university. But in this case, so far I think the one partners that we are working closely with is actually [the UK University]. So for me that the main person that I would deal with, of course it would be a more frequent, it would be persons like [Link tutor Malaysia] who is the link tutor.. And then of course sometime, I will also be dealing with, [Associate Dean].

And then, ... what do you call this administration? I would be dealing with [Partnership administrator]. Yes, yes. And then for the partnerships, you know, I will be working with [Partnership manager]. And these are the three people. Normally I keep in touch with closely.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... do you feel as though that works well as a process having that small group of people that you just dealing with rather than us give you a list of things that you must do?”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, correct. Correct. Yes, yes, it is better. But unless of course if I get a response that I want, then I would just contact these people. But sometime if I don't get some response. So for example I don't get I talked to let's say a XXX, but I think there's no response then I would forward the mail include the in the in the link and copy to for example [Partnership manager]... And hopefully someone will catch on and reply to me.

Simon (Interviewer)

“That do you do you find that when you do need to get responses that people actually understand?.. The reasons that that you know the importance of what you're asking are... is that a bit of a challenge to make people understand

how important this request is. If you've got some issue with MQA that you need [the UK University] to... you know, demonstrate something.”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“... I think in relations to MQA the the requirements by the regulators. I think I don't have major issues with the information I need from [the UK University]. There are quite supportive and in fact they are they. They are quite helpful, you know, whatever we request normally they will, they will, they will do their best to actually help us. But on the other hand it is only the administrative part, because I think maybe sometime it deal with the different people that are sometime it that certain issues are still not solved. You know until now I think I one of these I think maybe I shared with you before is the the enrollment, the registrations of our students in two days are the Blackboard system. sometime it take a bit longer than we would like to.”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“ For me personally, I think that I mean getting a new partner... And you have a lot of risk. Basically some of the risks. I'll get the things out of control... and you might be detected by the partner and have things we need to be done... and you wouldn't get full control of activities and another risks and when the partner may decide to end the contract, apparently without even letting you know about of which would that mean will one way or the other.

... I mean have bad image on your reputation and other risks that you also look at when it comes to franchise, it all depends on the type of franchise and relationship, what I just want with or two ways. So if you go to for a franchise and your partner can also choose an and I'm a competitor within the same encroachment or the same environment it I one way or the other you realize that you are shot on the foot... And so we, we I see these things as some of the challenges and it's one of the challenges is something partners becomes inflexible... I mean flexibility is needed after we had gone through 1,2,3 years.... and sometimes partners want to stick to the status quo or and which does not benefit the growth of the partnership of which I currently I think we

experience in, and we desire that things could be done faster to enhance the partnership.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So in that respect, you feel as though they're bureaucracy laid down by [the UK University] is the bit heavy?”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes. Yeah, say [the Ghanaian University] is basically a private institution. So we desire things could run faster... Anything that you do, I mean one way or the other, I'm impact on our chances of getting competing with the public university... OK, so if... Institutions like those in Africa, basically in Africa and some of the bureaucratic things are reduced to make things faster. It helps.

It helps and it also increased trust and Improve relationship.. And that is what I strongly believe. I think we can put in place.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“...following up from that, how effective do you think the communication and support is you get with [the UK University] with working not just with [Link Tutor] and with [Partnership administrator], but when you want to do a new development, how effective do you think that is? Is a difficult process or is it...?”

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“No, it's it is. It's quite cumbersome. Very cumbersome. The British are very bureaucratic, so I know that, yeah, that's the way they do things. But sometimes things need to need to take things or we need to take issues in their own perspective. You know one perspective, so if you if you are, if you're dealing with... an Irish fine. If you're dealing with the Finland, fine, but if you are dealing with people from Africa then you can. You can take them through the same bureaucracy. You would have to know that the culture and how I you know that we also... with these partners in France.. that's how we survive. So if that's going to be beneficial and you have to be able to speed up the things through the issues here and there... What time it will be ironed out?

So I sometimes the bureaucracy that I find it very difficult, or which I said we have some, we have two or three programmes that we needed sorted out and it's running to two years and we still not sorted out."

"Now when it comes to [the UK University], they are not dictatorial, basically hadn't been in it because with the franchise we asked to go within the course content, which I believe that we have to maintain those modules... And we can add our own modules to enhance it, but not move away from it. So with that, I don't think that [the UK University] have been very dictatorial on. You know as long as the franchise is giving and just moving, it moves smoothly and everything is well done. Yeah. But to get it done or to get the module or to get let's say to get a new module on board, yeah you have to go through the bureaucracy. Everything is successful because I've been a coordinator for the past 3-4 years now... and I don't think we have had any challenge."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Again this is your own personal perspective. Do you feel as though working with quite a small knit group of people such as [Link Tutor] and [Partnership administrator], etc, as your kind of close working team is more beneficial than just following a systematic approach of... rules that you must follow?"

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK, so I think, yeah. So when you get a focal point that you work with it is, I mean it just helps. ... it is the most important way to get things done. If I had to go through the process, I may get frustrated. But if I should get a point of contact like [Partnership administrator] of which I know when I get to [Partnership administrator]. [Partnership administrator] was kind. It's my. I mean my work for me then that is very good. That's very good. It is my pleasure here because I have a I mean I'm the head of department for the acting head of department for the Logistics and Supply Chain. And I'm also working as a coordinator and I.. do a lot of a lot on the program design and other stuff, so you realize that it will get your point you need... someone that you can just offload some of the burden to and you will carried out. So I think

as you said that that that's very good. Just having few people to get in touch with is very good."

Simon (Interviewer)

"... just following on from that, do you feel as though things have improved over time as you've got more familiar with the people?"

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes, very, very it has improve I think currently [the UK University] has learned a lot from us - we have also learned a lot from [the UK University], [the UK University] had understood, I mean our system of working... Because, yeah, and we have also understand ... the system of working. Initially it was a little bit frustrating because it was pushed here back and back and forth, back and forth, but now it isn't. So yeah."

Simon (Interviewer) to Swiss – Senior Manager

"Between [the UK University] and [the Swiss Institution] but be as critical as you want, how do you feel that that relationship works as far as the day to day operational side of things are concerned, working with [the partnership administrator], working with myself or the.. ?"

Swiss – Senior Manager

"I think it works very well and we had issues in the past with things like malpractice... we would create a case and we send it off to [the UK University] and it was like to sending it to a black hole."

Yes. And I had big session virtual session with [previous ADA] probably... At least two years ago... And he was going to get it all put together and make sure it will work... and nothing didn't get any better, didn't change...

It's just frustrating people would email us to say you sent a zip file. We need the individual files, you know? Well, unzip it. But you know, some things, some things, you know, it's like computer said, no, you know, you have to be following stuff to the letter ...

We were expecting a big battle because we need to follow everything, but [the UK institutions quality office] were brilliant in the space of I don't know, half an hour we got the whole thing sorted. It's now completely automated and it's working very well. So I think it's all comes down to the individuals. You know, with the [previous ADA], we got nowhere .. despite a lot of words. But with [the UK institutions quality office], even though I was expecting the fight it just went amazingly well."

"...so it comes down to individual characters."

Simon (Interviewer)

"...Sticking to that kind of same theme when you came across [the UK University] and started working with [the UK University], was it kind of what you expected was the level of bureaucracy and the slow movement problematic?"

Swiss – Senior Manager

"Well, yes. I mean, we soon found out with any university there's a big level of bureaucracy. I think that was the same. We solve it. But I think we were quite impressed with... [the UK Business School Dean] and the [Previous Vice Chancellor] ... they were very quick to respond and they came across to Zurich quite quickly to talk with us... I think what's always impresses when people come to us... I mean, it's not an ego thing ... it's just an indication if you like... that the partner's taking it seriously."

Discussion

A key theme that can be derived from the discussions is that individuals are the main source of new developments. Emerging from this concept is that developments with personal investment are more likely to succeed than one generated at a management level. It is also highlighted that where developments are generated from individuals it can be difficult to gain support for the project. The negative side of this approach can be that if the individuals involved leave the institution the partnership links are at risk of breaking down.

Another emergent theme is that working in small international groups makes delivering projects more likely to succeed. The role of the link tutor is also highlighted as a positive practice along working directly with the administration and partnerships manager. Bureaucracy is also highlighted as an issue especially for the private institutions who have the flexibility to drive new developments quickly.

RQ5 - What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?

RQ7 - How effective is the support and communication?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“...because this is a public university, we are guided by the national rules and we have to abide to the not only the national rules but also the Valencian region rules and then The university rules and everything is slow.... sometimes is difficult to, and those rules are changeable, but it's really slow, so sometimes we think of a way to do something or we see another university doing something that's great and that could work for us. But it takes 5 to 7 years to implement it here with us or it never happens because it's not allowed because it breaks this rule or something that we find out during the way when we've already worked for two years ... but because it's public money and then we have to obviously abide to the rules. So sometimes that could be a.. That could be a bit of an obstacle as I see in other universities who are much more independent, they have their own Money and they can spend it however they want, so then they can obviously give much more to the International Development.

The other, the other obstacle maybe.. sometimes staff are not very motivated so... as I said before, lecturers should be motivated, of course, but. I can still see that even if they don't get many incentives, they are much more dynamic and they are much more ...So as I say, I can still find many more lectures that are quite dynamic and quite wanting to learn, wanted to do many different things at the same time... But sometimes it's not the reality for people who work in offices.so it's like that's an obstacle, I think in our university or other Universities in Spain.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“... do you think there's anything you could do to motivate the administrative staff more?”

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

“No, I think if they... Basically a good awareness of what another culture is and If they were also, I think there's a personal satisfaction that when you find it. Like you don't mind working that extra mile for something you think is going to make other people happy or is going to make you happy or is going to be a bit of improvement for the university. But maybe sometimes you don't see it. It's like one person says, Oh no, you tell me what Excel spreadsheet, I need to do and that's it. You know, it's like they don't, really see how much that the spreadsheet could help the university or could help the International office, or could help achieve some goals that... And I don't know. I don't know. I wish I had the answer.”

Simon (Interviewer) to Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“What barriers do you think your institution faces about broadening out its international activities? What do you think of the main issues? It can be a national level, it can be an institutional level. It can be an individual level”.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“I think the barriers, , the rector that we have now see is very concerned about the internationalization, at least this is what she always say in all her presentations... And... What barriers do we have? I mean, there are some barriers which are related to our own culture. I mean, in our territory there is a strong link to all the things that are from our territory, I don't know. Like, OK, all of us, we know that we should use other languages. But at the same time the university also wants to reinforce our own language, which is Valenciano.

So they address... If if they want to do international activities, which mainly are in English, so and they address a quantity of money for that... There is people who always say that, OK, we have also to address money for all the activities that are developed in our own language, which is Valenciano.

So, controversy there? The maybe this will be one of the barriers, the other I don't know, maybe it's the predisposition of people of going abroad to travel sometimes it's not easy to find the teachers who want to go abroad.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“So do you think they're motivated to do it or there's it's just there's nothing there to...”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

“I don't think they are too motivated to go abroad, no.”

Simon (Interviewer)

“.... I'm just thinking that a national level cause when you're trying to set up a new program, let's say a Masters degree. Do you need to get authorization from your national government to do it? You don't have autonomy, you don't have control?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

We need the approval of the Government of national government for all the things that we do with what we call the official studies, official studies, either the of degree or master. So from the and this takes a long time to get the approval for any small change... that we want to do in, in our studies. So this is also a big barrier.

Simon (Interviewer)

“... support and communication. So do you feel as though what, how do you feel the level of support is you get for engaging in international activities and how well do you feel as though the whole idea, you've touched on it already, these things are communicated down as an importance or priority for you to engage with. So is the communication good? Is the support good ...?”

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah. Yeah, but they think it's more the motivation of the teachers to do it... I don't see the support from my institution to give continuity to all these international activities, I mean I think is more Individual motivation...

... the directors that they always say that it's important to internalize internationalization... And but they don't give you big support. Yes, when you have any idea of anything they say. Yeah. Yeah. OK. OK. But how are you

going to do it? Yeah. OK. Maybe you could help us somehow. But this is not the... But you know, we all have the budget. They are closed. So maybe for the next year we can study this possibility. But this is not... Really helpful, I would say..."

"...I think one of the interesting points will be to have clear strategy... But giving priority to certain activities and assigning people to each one of these activities or tasks... All these activities should be programmed. I mean what I feel now is that all the actions are very dispersed. There is no channel that puts all these actions together, the they are they are dispersed ... If you are lucky and some of these actions go in the same direction that that you want. So I think it should be more organized from the top saying, OK, these are the activities that we want to do. This is where we want to get and we are going to give responsibility to this, this and these persons... Yes, to organize it better until you get the final objective, yeah."

Simon (Interviewer)

"...I'm referring back to The UK Business School now. With any experience you got from working with the other partners, do you feel The UK University as a good partner as opposed to some of the others that you work with? Could we improve the way we do things?"

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

"I think The UK University is, in my personal opinion, from the universities I've been working... I think it it's one of the best where and I think it depends, as all the things, they depend on the people who are behind... So I always have received a big support from the people from The UK Business School, maybe more than from other universities where I found more difficulties to try to do other things."

Finnish – Senior Academic

"If people lose the connection like a... like a little bit it has been happening now. We have new people coming in, new teachers to new staff members that I have never met before and there will be long time that I'm going to meet, if

ever. So I have no personal connection or contact to some people... I think , that is a problem then... and we don't know and we can't share the collective ideas or collective promises or agreed methods collective methods to use if everyone is doing alone and... It's scattered everywhere. Then it's not a good thing at that might cause some misunderstandings and the moral also, because we are not sharing things... “

Simon [Interviewer]

“...has that been impacted more because of the pandemic. Do you think the pandemics are the role to play in that or do you think that would happen anyway?”

Finnish – Senior Academic

“... it was mostly because of that. But now I think it will continue, even though we would get back to almost normal... Because of the pandemic, I think this way of working is still continuing... Even so, Corona was over and that is causing this isolation and losing connection. Yes, we have a lost our offices. We don't have offices anymore, so I'm working at home because of that I can't stand this noise and anything, so I don't meet new people when staying at home and... That's the way it is.”

Malaysian – Senior Manager

“... I think, ... areas that which I think can be improved on maybe in terms of this the involvements of the partner in terms of what you decide to do because normally what happened now is the for example [the UK University] really decide what to do and then it is just.... Pass on to us about rather than involve us in why you decide to do this... Before coming to that conclusion, added the decisions. So I think that can be improved on....”

Simon (Interviewer)

“...I think that is a is a very good point to make and I think moving forward that is something that needs to be considered an awful lot more because I do feel as though maybe not a cross cultural issue, but an internal cultural issue that decisions are made very much at a local level without really too much

consideration of the impact... on the people like yourselves of that may affect. So I think that's one that you need to keep pushing."

Malaysian – Senior Manager

"Because our status is a college... what do you call this? consciously? subconsciously we assumed, you know whatever there is done by the university, they must have been well tested. You know it, it must be actually yes. So even though we are not happy, we were just feedback and we just try to comply so. But after talking to you so I maybe I learned a thing or two for example perhaps I need to be more persistent and push it harder, you know.."

"I think at the end of the day... just not communication we need to have more communications and how shall call it more open in the sense you know, open to new idea so as to solve things rather than thinking it is a troublemaker."

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

"... with the support, it's where maybe I may have to step in, you know, when it comes to support, we look at so many issues and advertising tools. That's support from [the UK University] and when it comes again I've, you know, Ghana per say basically we all want to like the student would want to feel that they are with [the UK University]. So we need something like 7 years. I mean each batch of students should get some form of souvenirs being given out from [the UK University]. So like for instance when we have a meeting every and every students expects in some form of the gift from [the UK University]. You know, you know our culture. I mean that, that, that that's that. That's it. That's the Ghanaian culture...you can't do away with gifts. So that mean immediately person getting enrolled, he's looking for what? What am I getting from [the UK University] today?.. I yeah, basically. And we don't get that support from [the UK University]."

Simon (Interviewer)

"Did you did you used to get it?"

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

"... We used to get it so and that that has been the challenge that has been a

challenge that we are fixing and I think I spoke with [Link Tutor] that [Link Tutor] anytime we are come and get us some gifts at least that means some souvenir is nice souvenir so that these students will take them home now what this does is this. They're proud of it... [the UK University] gets known in Ghana. And that enhances the franchise. OK so... And these are some of the support that come from me. But when it comes to Technical Support such as... I'm getting the materials and other stuff from the university student getting to challenges and being supported. That one is done very well."

Simon (Interviewer)

What barriers do you think the institution faces now? This can be a national level. It can be an institutional level or it can be an individual level.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Basically, the barriers we face is that of them, you know, kind of has it on accreditation process that they should take...

... So basically because of the different academic accreditation bodies, we all have different form of accreditations. So it's it goes back forth back forth before it's accredited in Ghana. So Ghanaians we want you to add more. So we have to add more and but we have to maintain the structure from [the UK University] because that is that's the delivery. So we do that."

Simon (Interviewer)

"OK, so you're adding an additional material to the program for your requirements?"

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

"Yes, we have to add some materials... to the requirements of each have been working on one now that's like completed this morning. We're trying to accredit the purchases and supply procurement, logistics and supply. So that's why I'm and also that the other barrier we do have is and the transferring of funds... And sometimes also... And in that is... You know the banking system our bank is seen as a number barrier. We do have and getting the pound sterling... getting the pound sterling.

...I didn't know if [the UK University] can make this. I mean, provide cedi account with paying the cedi accounts and make it easier for the students. That could be a very fantastic initiative by [the UK University]. “

Simon (Interviewer)

Has [the UK University] responded to you?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

“... we haven't talked about it at all. We haven't. Yeah, but this is an internal issue that we have not been liaising with [the UK University]”

“... if I want anything improved. As I've said earlier... The speed at which our demand would have to be processed, of which I give example as the new modules that we want to introduce... that that is the most important things that I want improved... “.

“I also want to say is once again [the UK University], we need to reduce their bureaucratic approach... That need to be done and need to be done. I know that some of some of the issues would have to go through the bureaucracy. ... but when it comes to issues like, I mean getting new programmes and working on new programmes , I think [the UK University] should be flexible... Because if you're treating [the Ghanaian University] as an extension of your campus and some of these things should be handled, I mean faster actually that's what I believe.”

Simon (Interviewer) to Swiss – Senior Manager

“... the next question we've talked a bit about the communication and support and you seem to be quite happy with that as what you get from [the UK University] and what do you think moving forward are the main barriers that we're facing as a partnership... do you think there is anything significant?”

Swiss – Senior Manager

“Well, money, I don't think is a problem. I mean I don't have any issue. And the Dean will say things like, well, you're saying in the last meeting, you know the number of students has been down a bit. We haven't been able to give

some sort of discounts we did before and I'll notice this would XXX before she would very quickly say, well if there's an issue with... we can reduce what we're doing here. She's very responsive to money issues, which I think is great and normally we don't take them up ... she's been very responsive on that. Well... I know with... we did talk a couple of years or so ago now with people from another faculties construction, something in construction.

And their system was so rigid... I think they only had... Three entries a year, whereas we need a rolling approach because students can come in at any time, and the fact that you have these six week modules that the lot easier, they can come in halfway through the terms.

Yes, the institutions have to be flexible to the different market needs of distance learning students said they don't want to start just in September. They want to start at any time... And if you if they don't, they lose interest and they'll go off to another provider. And [the UK University] I think could be very good at adapting to that. I think it's worked very well. “

Discussion

It is evident that national rules and regulations governing the overseas institution are important factors that need to remain at the forefront of the partnerships. Appreciation of the conditions imposed on the partners need to be clearly understood and defined, enabling the UK institution to be understanding of the constraints and timeframes for any new developments or changes to the structure of the partnership. A shared issue is that staff motivation for engaging in international activities can be problematic. Cultural difference is also a potential issue where an institution is governed by rules and regulations that reflect their own culture and are difficult to transfer or understand fully by the partner institution. A clear strategy is also highlighted as an issue associated with appropriate support where needed. Another issue raised is communication, in that changes made by the UK institution are done unilaterally without consultation. From observation, although there may be no option other than to make changes to maintain regulatory standards, these

should be discussed with the partner at the earliest opportunity. Accreditation support is also highlighted as an issue. From observation, a considerable amount of resource is spent contacting external bodies on behalf of the partner to guarantee attestation of awards and support accreditation of the programmes. The UK University is viewed as a good partner with limited criticism other than the slow pace of change related to the perceived bureaucracy.

4.9 Thematic Analysis

From the findings above the following themes have been identified. The themes have been identified across all stakeholders. Where a theme is specific to the UK institution it has been highlighted as appropriate.

Each theme is identified under the specific research question but is not mutually exclusive to the overarching aims and objectives.

How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?

Number	Theme
1	Institution level staff have a clear understanding of how international strategies are developed
2	Dissemination of the International strategy is problematic
3	Lack of input to the international strategy is a problem (Academics and administration UK institution)
4	Financial considerations are perceived as the main benefit (Academics and administration UK institution)
5	Academic and operational staff are not aware of a strategy (UK Institution)

What role does culture plays in the relationship management of the partnership.?

6	Cultural awareness is an important factor in managing relationships
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7	Cultural awareness is gained by experience
8	Training is deemed as very important
9	Cultural differences are important for the staff/student experience and should be embraced

How are new international developments managed and supported?

10	New international developments are primarily created by individuals
11	International developments are predominantly maintained by small teams with academic synergy working together
12	Institutional management look towards systematic development rather than individual projects.

How are existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?

13	Small teams working together are most effective
14	Face to face visits are seen as important
15	Workload reward is not sufficient (UK Institution)
16	Support and communication is problematic across all levels (UK institution)
17	Bureaucracy is a barrier

What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?

18	Flexibility to partners needs with respect to national regulations
19	Acknowledgement of the importance of the link tutor role (UK Institution)
20	Increased support (UK Institution)
21	Increased staff motivation for engagement in International opportunities

What level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?

22	All staff involved in the relationships are highly experienced
23	Strong working relationships have been developed through the life cycle of the partnership
24	Self-motivation, development and professionalism are key drivers for successful relationship management
25	Financial reward is a motivating factor with respect to reward
26	Lack of Leadership can lead to demotivation
27	Lack of support from other colleagues can lead to demotivation
28	Insufficient communication can lead to a lack of motivation
29	Student experience is a key driver to motivation

How effective is the support and communication?

30	Clearer consultation processes and improved communication
31	Lack of support and recognition of the work involved in international partnerships
32	Clearer understanding of the roles/work involved in international partnerships

4.10 Analysis of the Theoretical Framework model

Following the discussion of the results in the previous section the diagrammatic representation of the theoretical framework model (Figure 4) needs to be revisited. This will enable identification of the key findings in relation to the model. Following on from the analysis, the model can be revised and related to the literature review, and all the primary data (interviews, observations, and document analysis) and appropriate conclusions and recommendations drawn.

Initially the individual entities will be addressed followed by the linkages between them and a new model can be developed based on the finding of the research. Identification of differing partnership agreements will also be addressed in each section i.e Franchise agreements, Dual Awards, collaborative partnerships (including student mobility).

4.10.1 Stakeholders



In the context of this research the definitions of executive staff and operational staff are as follows;

Executive Staff – Staff in both the UK Business School and the Partner Institution who primarily have responsibility of strategic decision making. These can be classified as Senior Institutional staff or Senior Academic staff with responsibility for International Strategy Development, Implementation, and Maintenance. Senior Faculty/Institutional Managers and/or Academics.

Operational Staff - Staff in both the UK Business School and the Partner Institution who primarily have responsibility for the successful Implementation and Maintenance of the partnerships' programmes and developments. Operational Staff can be involved in strategic decision making depending on the institutional management. Link Tutors, Faculty Academics, Administrators.

4.10.2 Cultural Difference

Cultural Difference

Cultural awareness and understanding are overarching themes which cut across all aspects of cross cultural partnership development in Higher Education. It is key in all forms of international partnership agreements. The findings highlight four main themes; Cultural awareness is an important factor in managing relationships, Cultural awareness is gained by experience, Training is deemed as very important, and Cultural differences are important for the staff/student experience and should be embraced. As an overarching theme the primary linkages will be through the stakeholders and will impact on all aspects of the process through International Strategy Development, Implementation and Maintenance. Given that the findings state that awareness is gained through experience, training is also highlighted as important. This clearly becomes a factor for less experienced staff new to international developments.

4.10.3 Leadership in HE agreements

Leadership in HE agreements

Leadership is highlighted throughout the findings, the main areas can be summarised as communication, support, and recognition. The key themes identified from the interviews are; clearer consultation processes and improved communication, lack of support and recognition of the work involved in international partnerships, lack of input to the international strategy is a problem, clearer understanding of the roles/work involved in international partnerships, in addition; financial considerations are perceived as the main benefit, academic and operational staff are not aware of a strategy, Institution level staff have a clear understanding of how international strategies are

developed and dissemination of the International strategy is problematic. The leadership style adopted can be closely related to the partnership agreement and the experience/hybridity of the teams involved. For example, a laissez-faire style may be adopted where there is a hybrid team working on an ad hoc project, as opposed to a franchise agreement at with an established institution, therefore situational leadership is required. The differing approaches and styles will discussed further in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter The linkages cut across all aspect of the process and have a direct impact on motivation, strategy development, and to a lesser extent implementation and maintenance.

4.10.4 Education Systems

Education Systems

Differing education systems stand alone in the theoretical framework model. Each country has it own governance systems and regulations. A clear understanding of the needs of the individual partners systems is required by both parties to ensure for successful development and implementation. The key theme arising from the interviews is: flexibility to partners needs with respect to national regulations. This can be achieved at the partnership agreement/contractual level, but a working knowledge of the systems by the key stakeholders in the partnership is essential. These issues cut across all forms of agreement and may include staff/student mobility schemes i.e. Erasmus+ (EU) and Turing (UK) where funded mobility is part of the agreement for example the Finland/UK Dual Award. The linkage is primarily development and implementation and to a lesser degree maintenance. All stakeholders are involved in this process.

4.10.5 HR policies in HE agreements

HR Policies in HE agreements

Human Resource policies in Higher Education agreements stands together in the framework model with Staff Experience & Knowledge and Staff Motivation in HE agreements. From the findings it is clear that these concepts are interlinked and form a function the hybrid nature of the teams working on individual partnership agreements and relate to all partnership agreements. Differences can occur when individual staff lead on a more ad hoc development where the key stakeholder in the initial stages already has an existing relationship with the partner. The main themes from the interview questions are; All staff involved in the relationships are highly experienced, Strong working relationships have been developed through the life cycle of the partnership, Self-motivation, development and professionalism are key drivers for successful relationship management, Small teams working together are most effective, Workload reward is not sufficient. These findings do not stand alone under the banner of human resource implications and staff selection and must be considered in conjunction with linkages to Experience, Knowledge and Motivation as a function of the whole team. This furthers the concept of hybrid teams working together across institution and will be discussed in more detail in the conclusions and recommendations chapter.

4.10.6 Staff Experience & Knowledge

Staff Experience & Knowledge

Staff Experience & Knowledge is one of the key drivers in successful cross cultural relationship management and has an impact across the whole ecosystem. It encompasses all aspects of staffing from the Executive staff through to Operational staff and has an impact on HR policies and Motivation. The main themes identified from the interviews , although not exclusively, are; All staff involved in the relationships are highly experienced, Strong working

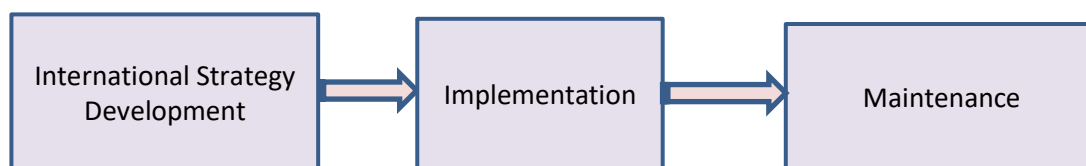
relationships have been developed through the life cycle of the partnership, Self-motivation, development and professionalism are key drivers for successful relationship management, Cultural awareness is an important factor in managing relationships, New international developments are primarily created by individuals, International developments are predominantly maintained by small teams with academic synergy working together. This again points to the hybrid nature of the teams at both institutions being established from groups of experienced staff in the field. Clearly this is not always possible as new staff become involved and therefore the need for training is essential in all areas and becomes a function of leadership and HR policies. Staff Motivation links closely to this area.

4.10.7 Staff Motivation in HE agreements

Staff Motivation in HE agreements

Strong motivation is essential in area of business life and is complex in its nature. In this research the motivation relates to engagement in International Higher Education agreements. The key themes from the interviews are; Self-motivation, development and professionalism are key drivers for successful relationship management, Financial reward is a motivating factor with respect to reward, Lack of Leadership can lead to demotivation, Lack of support from other colleagues can lead to demotivation, Insufficient communication can lead to a lack of motivation, Student experience is a key driver to motivation. These themes are not the only findings directly related to motivation other themes from the findings such as; Acknowledgement of the importance of the link tutor role (UK Institution), Increased support (UK Institution), Increased staff motivation for engagement in International opportunities can all be seen as factors that impact on motivation. This area is essential for successful cross cultural relationship developments and will be explored in more detail in the conclusions and recommendations chapter.

4.10.8 Strategy Development, Implementation and Maintenance



The 3 main elements of International Strategy Development, Implementation and Maintenance are the key processes identified in Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education. As such all other functions feed into them. They form a linear process beginning with the International strategy and move through the lifecycle of the process. These elements were separated in the conceptual framework as the literature is fragmented. Following the critical review of the literature a consolidated model can be created encompassing all these elements into one process. The key themes identified from the interviews are as follows.

International Strategy Development

Institution level staff have a clear understanding of how international strategies are developed, Dissemination of the International strategy is problematic, Lack of input to the international strategy is a problem (Academics and administration UK institution), Financial considerations are perceived as the main benefit (Academics and administration UK institution), Academic and operational staff are not aware of a strategy (UK Institution), Flexibility to partners needs with respect to national regulations, New international developments are primarily created by individuals, and Institutional management look towards systematic development rather than individual projects.

From the participant observation and document analysis consideration at this stage of the process also include Academic, Financial, and Legal due diligence. Alongside the due diligence process, ethical considerations and alignment of values and beliefs are also essential. These all come together to support the evaluation of a potential partner and ultimately estimate the level of risk.

Implementation & Maintenance

Once a partnership has been selected and has been approved through the various committee structures, the next stage is the implementation of the agreement. The implementation strategy should encompass all aspects for the future of the partnership including maintenance. This involves all staff and varies depending on the form of agreement. The key themes identified from the interview are; Cultural awareness is an important factor in managing relationships, International developments are predominantly maintained by small teams with academic synergy working together, Small teams working together are most effective, Face to face visits are seen as important, Workload reward is not sufficient (UK Institution), Support and communication is problematic across all levels (UK institution), Bureaucracy is a barrier, and Acknowledgement of the importance of the link tutor role (UK Institution).

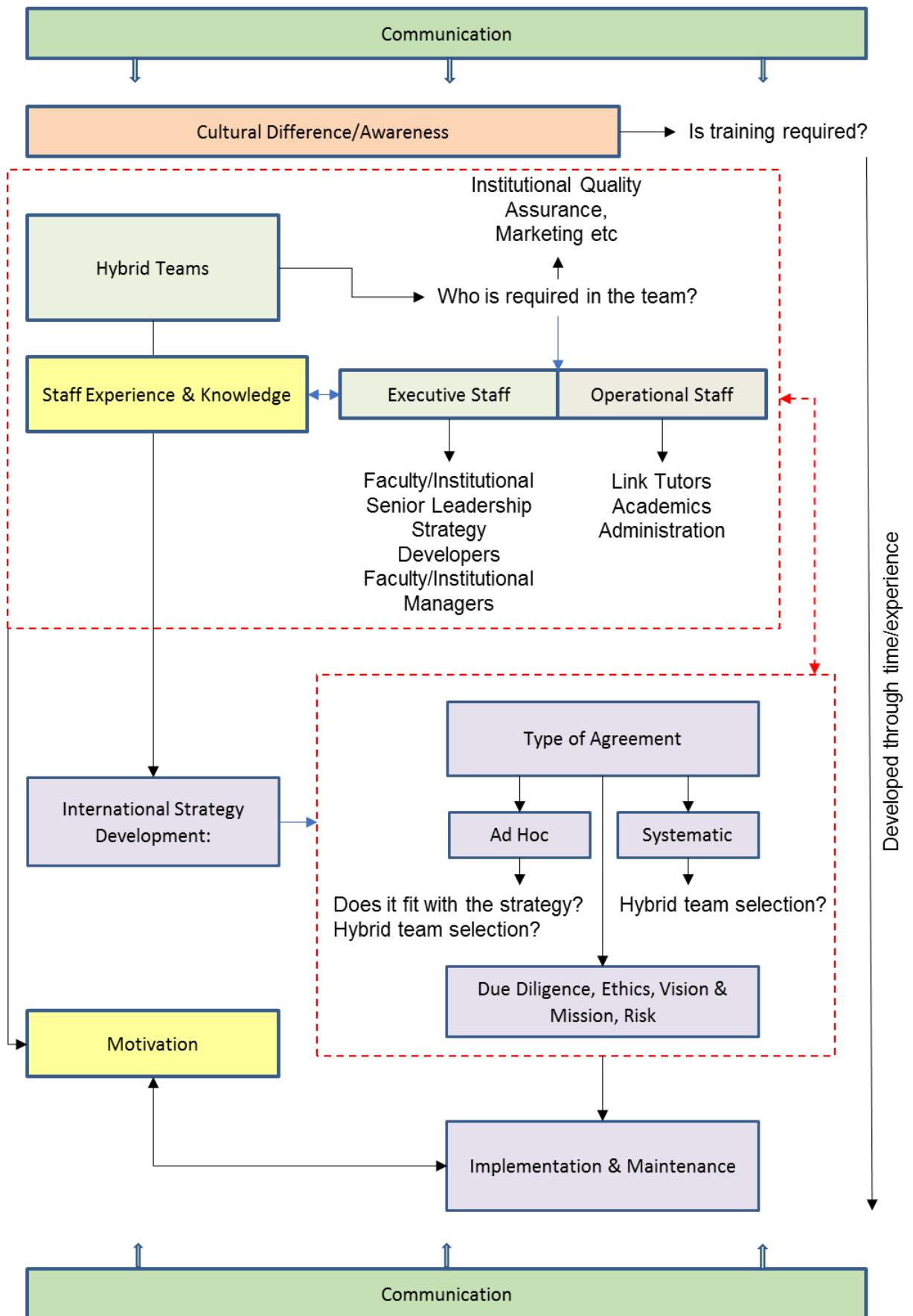
From the participant observation and document analysis there are clearly defined process that must be undertaken to ensure successful implementation and maintenance of the partnership. These include setting up various joint committees such as Joint Boards of Study, Staff/Student committees, quality assurance reviews, partnership renewals, staffing policies, marketing etc. When considering credit bearing agreements, all of these processes must be in place and maintained by the partnership team but often involve other departments with the institution such as marketing, and quality assurance teams. Effective communication and support is essential through the lifecycle of the agreements.

4.11 Review of the Theoretical Framework model

This chapter initially related the research aim to the research objectives and research questions. The key findings from the research questions in relation to the interviews, participant observation and document analysis were then

presented. Thematic analysis was then conducted on the findings to produce 32 key themes. The original theoretical framework model was then interrogated against the themes. A revised theoretical framework model can now be produced to identify the main stakeholders, processes, and linkages between them. This model can then be utilised to unify the current theories in the field and the findings of the case study to draw appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

Figure 12 - Revised Theoretical Framework Model



4.11 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented the primary findings of the research from the interviews, documentary analysis and the participant observation. The thematic analysis has drawn some key areas for discussion. The theoretic framework model was then analysed in relation to the key themes drawn from the findings. The model was then revised based on the findings. The following chapter will address the emergent themes and relate them to the models established from the literature review and relate them to the overarching aims and objectives and the revised theoretical framework model to draw conclusions and recommendations on the research.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 5 - Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The following chapter will evaluate the findings of the research in relation to the aims and objectives reviewing the theoretical framework to identify key areas of interest. Relationships to the models examined in the literature review will be related to the findings of the case study and any generalisable recommendation will be made.

5.2 Statement of Research Aims and Objectives

Research Aims

To evaluate critically the stakeholder perceptions of factors impacting the effectiveness of cross-cultural international relationship management in global Higher Educational partner Institutions and analyse the impact on International strategy development, management, implementation and maintenance.

Research Objectives

1. Evaluate international academic strategic alliances in relation to partner selection, purpose, boundaries, value and maintenance; identify the key stakeholders and drivers.
2. To investigate the approaches to strategic relationship development in the UK and Partner institutions.
3. To evaluate the role culture plays in relationship management of the partnership.
4. To explore the effectiveness of implementation strategies in the institutions.

5. To evaluate the importance of staff knowledge, experience and motivation in the institutions.

5.3 Relationship to the Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework (Figure 4) was devised to relate the research objectives to the specific entities and process involved in the ecosystem of cross-cultural international relationship management in higher education based on an embedded single case study (multiple units of analysis) for a UK Institution. The entities were seen as the key drives in the development of the relationships (both internal and external) and the associated process related to the effectiveness of the system with an overarching theme of Cultural difference.

The theoretical framework highlighted several key entities, namely;

- Education systems
- Leadership in Higher Education agreements
- Human Resource Policies in Higher Education agreements
- Staff experience and knowledge
- Staff Motivation in Higher Education agreements

The processes these entities related to were;

- International Strategy Development
- Implementation
- Maintenance

The key stakeholder in the system were identified as;

- Executive staff

- Operational staff

In the context of this research the definitions of executive staff and operational staff are as follows;

Executive Staff – Staff in both the UK Business School and the Partner Institution who primarily have responsibility of strategic decision making. These can be classified as Senior Institutional staff or Senior Academic staff with responsibility for International Strategy Development, Implementation, and Maintenance. Senior Faculty/Institutional Managers and/or Academics.

Operational Staff - Staff in both the UK Business School and the Partner Institution who primarily have responsibility for the successful Implementation and Maintenance of the partnerships' programmes and developments. Operational Staff can be involved in strategic decision making depending on the institutional management. Link Tutors, Faculty Academics, Administrators.

The theoretical framework was interrogated utilising the research questions derived from the research aim and associated research objectives. The following sections will relate the themes derived from the semi-structured interviews, embedded participant observation and document analysis. The finding generated 32 themes.

Each theme will be analysed and related to the research objectives/questions and the findings of the literature review.

In relation to the research question **How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?**, the following themes emerged.

Theme 1: Institution level staff have a clear understanding of how international strategies are developed.

Theme 2: Dissemination of the International strategy is problematic.

Theme 3: Lack of input to the international strategy is a problem (Academics and administration UK institution)

Theme 4: Financial considerations are perceived as the main benefit (Academics and administration UK institution)

Theme 5: Academic and operational staff are not aware of a strategy (UK Institution)

From the findings (Theme 1) it is clear that at an institutional level of senior management the participants were directly involved in the development of the international strategy, this is evidenced by the responses of the UK University institutional Management (UK – Head of International Office, UK - International Partnerships Manager, and the UK -International Opportunities Manager) also by the Swiss – Senior Manager and the Finnish – Senior Academic. It is also clear that at the UK institution the dissemination and communication of the strategy is very poor or not existent (Theme 2 & 5). Input into the strategy is also weak across the majority of the institutions (Theme 3) which potentially could lead to lack of motivation. Across the UK institution finance (Theme 4) seems to be the biggest driver for international development be that either through recruitment or partnerships. From the literature Pucciarelli and Kaplan (2016) Identify the challenges faced by the higher education sector as providers of high quality public education and highlight and place university management and academics at the core of this activity whereby managers must act as leaders but must also balance prestige driven and market driven logics embedded in co-creation. Further, the concept of co-creation and collaboration is highlighted by Caruana & Montgomery (2015:16) where they suggest that academics and students have 'yet to find their voice' when considering transnational Higher Education developments. This is further discussed by Henderson, Barnett & Barrett. (2017) who discuss the challenges for higher educational professional staff. The consideration that transnational education is a considerable growth area requiring both professional staff and academic staff to develop rapidly to meet the challenges of the market. They further emphasise the necessity for clear organizational practices, due diligence,

stakeholder management, quality assurance, financial investment, decision making, commercial and legal support and significant adaptation and management. Clearly these themes highlight key issues for successful development, where decisions are made at a senior level without significant consultation and dissemination.

When considering **what role culture plays in relationship management of the partnership?** the following themes were identified.

Theme 6: Cultural awareness is an important factor in managing relationships

Theme 7: Cultural awareness is gained by experience

Theme 8: Training is deemed as very important

Theme 9: Cultural differences are important for the staff/student experience should be embraced

Across all the participants culture is seen as a high priority (Theme 6). This is demonstrated by examples throughout the interviews. That said, it is clearly evidenced that cultural awareness is developed through experience (Theme 7) as opposed to any formal training. Training is highlighted as a key concept throughout yet it is not delivered at any of the institutions (Theme 8). As the medium of language is English it is easy to assume that the stakeholders have a clear understanding of what is being asked. Although not a generalisable theme it is clear from the interviews that there have been some instances where cultural differences may have had an impact on processes. The Malaysian partnership works well (by all the requirement matrix for reapproval) but cultural differences are still evident in that the need to comply with the perceived hierarchy. According to Hofstede, a Power Distance score of 100 indicates “... *that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organisation is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. Challenges to the leadership are not well-received.*” In addition when considering

individualism “...a score of 26 is a collectivistic society. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the “member” group, be that a family, extended family or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount and overrides most other societal rules and regulations. Such a society fosters strong relationships, where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivistic societies, offence leads to shame and loss of face.”

Similarly with the Ghanaian institute “Ghana scores high on this dimension (PD score of 80) which means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.” This can lead to communication issues in that, from the Ghanaian perspective, the UK institution may be asking an open question but the response may be limited and not fully expressing their concerns. This is manifest with the UK link tutor for Ghana who openly admits that as a Ghanaian he still maintains these cultural traits.

The Spanish and Finnish partnerships which have direct mobility of staff and students show clear evidence of culture being a challenge, certainly at the early stages of the relationships. Although they are challenges, they are considered as key learning experiences for both staff and students and something to be embraced not feared (Theme 9).

From the literature, Bovill, Jordan, & Watters (2015) place emphasis on the challenges faced by academic staff when considering transnational developments and teaching, they highlight the use of Hofstede's cultural dimension model to emphasise the challenges faced. In addition according to Babichenko (2006) suggests that, of all the forms of distance (geographical, social, cultural, and psychic) that influence the development and successful maintenance of cross-cultural relationships, it is psychic distance is the most important. Where according to Hallén and Wiedersheim-Paul (1984) discuss the importance of the National (Country) level, the Organisational (Corporate) level and the Individual (Personal) level. Ambos, Leicht-Deobald and

Leinemann (2018) indicate that from their studies, “country-specific international experience, formal education, and a match between managers’ first language and the language of the target country reduce psychic distance perceptions... and in contrast to conventional wisdom, managers’ international and overall work experiences do not seem to have any effect on their distance perceptions.” This stands in contrast to the findings but may be specific to Higher Education as opposed to traditional international business practices.

To relate this to Higher Education it is important to understand that the individuals involved in the international development have high personal motivation for cultural interaction. This is supported by Warwick & Moogen (2013) who describe a similarity within international faculty staff where pockets of international activities are often driven by faculty members who have a specialist interest in international developments. In addition, Signorini *et al* (2009) further highlight a key area of concern in that “Hofstede’s model does not take into account the flexible and challenging nature of culture and his model is not able to reflect cultural changes in the new global context of HE” (Signorini *et al.* 2009:262). Aligned to this thinking, they adopt a micro-culture stance whereby individual areas of activity and the individual’s characteristics have a more profound effect on the experience than simply nationality or geopolitical constructs. Davies (1995), Turner and Robson (2007), Warwick and Moogen (2013), highlight the principle that pockets of international activity will exist within institutions and these relate to individuals interests and can come in the form of ad hoc international developments and those purely with an enthusiasm for international activities.

When considering **how are new international developments managed and supported and how existing partnerships maintained throughout the life of the partnership?** the following themes were identified.

Theme 10: New international developments are primarily created by individuals

Theme 11: International developments are predominantly maintained by small teams with academic synergy working together

Theme 12: Institutional management look towards systematic development rather than individual projects.

Theme 13: Small teams working together are most effective

Theme 14: Face to face visits are seen as important

Theme 15: Workload reward is not sufficient (UK Institution)

Theme 16: Support and communication is problematic across all levels (UK institution)

Overwhelmingly the responses indicated that new international developments were created by individuals as opposed to a formalised strategy (Theme 10). And there is evidence that the senior institutional management would prefer to follow a more systematic approach (Theme 12) to enable resources and support to allocated in a formalise manner. The institutions in the case study primarily follow a more ad hoc approach to internationalisation as described by Davies (1995) and Van Dijk & Meijer (1997). By considering the Internationalisation cube (Table 5) and analysing the participant response and observational research, the UK institution could be placed at the lower end of the matrix where internationalisation could be perceived as a marginal policy with limited support (one-sided) and predominantly implemented on an ad hoc basis. This concept allows for internal reflection and ultimately could aid growth and development. All the factors involved in this research would add to this model to support development. A clear (communicated) strategy including support, and an understanding of the nature of the developments (currently ad hoc) would help to enhance the intuitions internationalisation profile. Knight (2015c) acknowledges that although more institutions are moving towards a more centralised International office and policy environment, and thus moving away from the ad hoc approach and getting closer to a more planned strategy, there are still considerable barriers to surpass. She further notes "...that the previous barriers of lack of senior management commitment, policy and finances are being superseded by lack of expertise of the international offices, interest and involvement by faculties and significantly the lack of

international/intercultural experience of staff. These gaps highlight the need for cross cultural management experience/expertise and significant human resource development at all levels of international policy/implementation activities.”

Another clear theme is that international developments are predominantly maintained by small teams with academic synergy working together (Theme 11 & 13). This is clearly evident from the findings of the interviews and observations. Each stakeholder group works in small hybrid groups to enhance the relationship. This supports Borys and Jemison (1989) hybrid concept in that “organisational arrangements that uses resources and/or governance structures from more than one existing organisation”. They focus on 4 main concepts that can be transferred to Higher Education international development.

- the breadth of hybrid purpose and the claims and plans that it legitimates,
- the permeability of hybrid-partner boundaries and the resources and obligations allowed to cross them,
- the interdependence of partner operations in the value creation process and the complexity of the arrangements required to manage it, and
- the nature of the hybrid's stability mechanisms.

This is further supported by Eckel and Hartley (2008) when considering Academic Strategic Alliances, highlighting a number of propositions to enable effective partnerships, namely;

- By selecting familiar partners who have common ambitions and objectives rather than partners that might maximise a particular outcome, institutions establish a set of shared values that allows for easier reconciliation of disruptive differences.

- Recognising the inherent tensions between the interests of the individual partners and the collective was a key factor influencing organisational resilience and stability.
- Effective partnerships require a personal commitment built on ongoing face-to-face interaction rather than watertight policies and procedures. (Theme 14)
- The more alliances are able to create a shared identity, the greater a chance that conflict will be diminished.

Further to this Wilson (1995) highlighted an extended list for buyer seller relationships by looking at the list several key areas can be viewed as transferable to Higher Education in relation to the hybrid concept of small teams with academic synergy working together (Theme 11). From the list (Table 1) the following can be related to the findings: Commitment, Trust, Cooperation, Mutual goals, Adaptation, Structural, and Social Bonds.

Theme 15 indicates that the workload reward is not sufficient within the UK Institution. This is evidenced by the observational research over the period in that the number of roles and workload allocation has reduced significantly over the period. This can lead to significant demotivation and a lack of commitment to the School for developing new projects, this is evidence by the UK link tutor for Ghana specifically and the constant changes in strategy is reflected by the UK Academic Spain/Finland. The lack of support and communication (Theme 16) is problematic across all levels in the institutions and is highlighted across all the participants.

When considering **what are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?**, the following themes were emergent.

Theme 17: Bureaucracy is a barrier

Theme 18: Flexibility to partners needs with respect to national regulations

Theme 19: Acknowledgement of the importance of the link tutor role (UK Institution)

Theme 20: Increased support (UK Institution)

Theme 21: Increased staff motivation for engagement in International opportunities

The bureaucracy of the UK education system is a common theme with the partners, but equally the systems in place in the partner institutions are equally as complex. From observation, there is a clear need for training to understand the complexities of each country's national authorities to enable clear understanding of what can and cannot be achieved and also what the timescales are likely to be (Themes 17 & 18). Themes 19 and 21 are consistent across the UK institution participants and a need for clear recognition is required to maintain motivation. The partner institutions also consider Theme 21 as significant and there can be resistance to engaging in international activities especially if there is no evident recognition or reward. Support (Theme 20) is common across all the institutions and is a key area for improvement.

One of the critical areas for this research is **what level of importance is given to staff knowledge, experience and motivation?** And **how effective is the support and communication?** The following themes were identified.

Theme 22: All staff involved in the relationships are highly experienced

Theme 23: Strong working relationships have been developed through the life cycle of the partnership

Theme 24: Self-motivation, development and professionalism are key drivers for successful relationship management

Theme 25: Financial reward is a motivating factor with respect to reward

Theme 26: Lack of Leadership can lead to demotivation

Theme 27: Lack of support from other colleagues can lead to demotivation

Theme 28: Insufficient communication can lead to a lack of motivation

Theme 29: Student experience is a key driver to motivation

Theme 30: Clearer consultation processes and improved communication

Theme 31: Lack of support and recognition of the work involved in international partnerships

Theme 32: Clearer understanding of the roles/work involved in international partnerships

Several of the emergent themes can be grouped together under knowledge, experience and motivation, and related to perceived importance or reward. These equally can be linked to support and communication as an overarching theme across all areas.

When considering knowledge, experience, and motivation it is evident that all the participants were highly experienced, extremely knowledgeable and highly motivated. The motivation manifests itself in several ways in that some staff were self-motivated, some motivated by professionalism, some by the experience, and some by development. Although Knight (2015) discusses the lack of senior management commitment, and lack of expertise of international offices, the level of interest, involvement and lack of international/intercultural experience by faculty members. This research contradicts the findings in that expertise, interest, and involvement of the participants in this study is clearly evident. But the issue remains that the lack of communication, management support and recognition are the major factors when considering the level of importance given to staff knowledge, experience, and motivation.

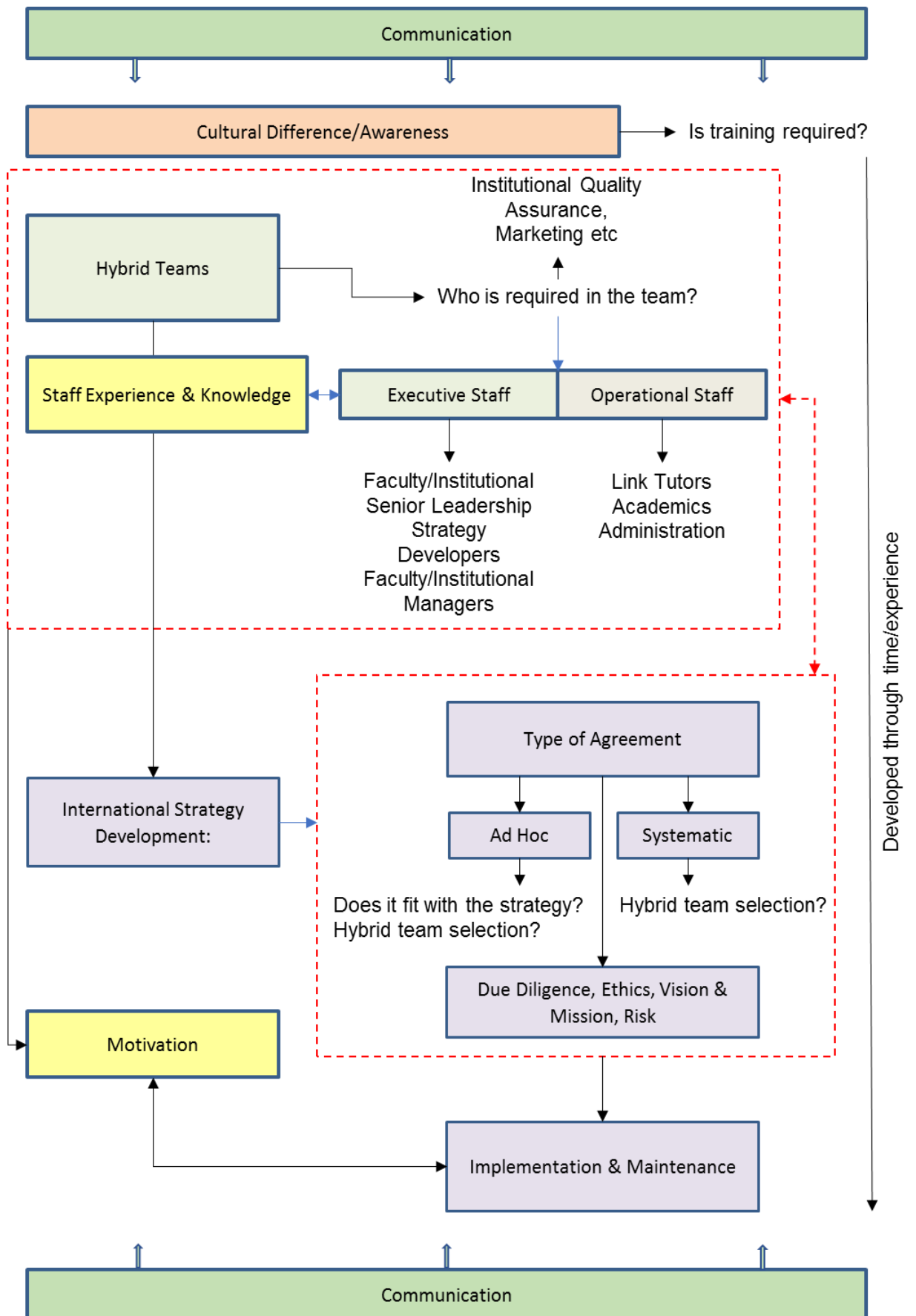
5.4 Summary

The theoretical framework (Figure 4) allowed for investigation into the main entities and processes in the case study. By adopting a critical realism approach to the case study and employing a critical case sampling techniques the aim of the research has been addressed.

Aim: To evaluate critically the stakeholder perceptions of factors impacting the effectiveness of cross-cultural international relationship management in global Higher Educational partner Institutions and analyse the impact on International strategy development, management, implementation, and maintenance.

A full evaluation of the stakeholder perceptions has been conducted by semi-structured open ended interviews, embedded participant observation and supporting documentary analysis. The factors impacting the effectiveness of cross-cultural international relationship management in global higher education partner institutions have been identified and analysed. The impact on International strategy development, management, implementation, and maintenance have been analysed, and through thematic analysis, the key areas of interest have been identified and related to the current academic theory and models. The research objectives have been met through a combination of critical literature review, participant observation, documentary archives and interviews with the primary stakeholders based on a series of research questions. Following the critical review of the literature and the findings of the primary research a revised theoretical framework model was developed to support these finding and further the development of a single unified framework to support cross cultural partnership development in Higher Education. The emergent framework for cross cultural partnership development in Higher Education can be seen in Figure 12 below. The framework will form the basis for generalisable recommendations to support future developments and enable further research to be conducted to develop a single transferable unified framework. The framework will be reviewed with reference to the conclusions drawn and discussed, and suitable recommendations made.

Figure 12 - Revised Theoretical Framework Model




5.5 Recommendations

Although following the case study methodology generalisability is not designed for direct transferability, given the nature of this case study, recommendations will be made applicable to this case. It is proposed that these recommendations can be adopted and used as a 'best practice guide' for other institutions to evaluate in similar situations.

Initially, each entity in the revised framework will be discussed and the associated linkages explained. From this evaluation a unified 'best practice guide' will be produced highlighting the key issues at each respective stage of the process. For this research, the 'lead institution' is classed as the institution who initiates the partnership and the 'partner institutions' are the institutions involved in the agreement. For example, in a franchise agreement the UK University is the lead institution or franchiser and the partner Institution is the franchisee.

The following sections propose recommendations based on the revised theoretical framework model

Communication



Communication

From the findings, communication has been proven to be an essential area across all processes and will take different forms from the initial stage of institutional strategy development and dissemination, partnership selection, cultural awareness, agreement type, team selection, motivation and Implementation and maintenance. Communication will be classed as either internal to the institution or as a two way process involving the lead and partner institution. Communication strategies must be reviewed as an ongoing developmental process including all stakeholders from a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspective.

Cultural Difference/Awareness

Cultural Difference/Awareness

Cultural difference and awareness has been highlighted a key area for development in partnership agreements. The findings demonstrate that the sample in the survey primarily gained cultural awareness by experience. This is a valued attribute and should be considered when selecting an appropriate team to manage the partnership agreement. This cannot always be the case as new staff join the institutions and experience staff leave. Succession strategies should be put in place where possible, and training offered across all levels where required. It is important to note that as with communication this is a two way process, where training with the partner may also be required to understand the lead institutions culture. Within the field of cultural difference there are several important factors. Firstly, where the countries culture dictates certain governance rules. These would be country dependant, and could range from national or religious holidays, standardised academic years e.g some counties do not work on Fridays), country specific specialised modules, changes in the curriculum to suit market needs of the country (e.g. using specific accounting software that is the norm in that country) and creating inclusive assessments that are applicable across countries, and country specific quality assurance bodies and their associate requirements i.e. Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA). These form the initial stages of partnership agreements and should be included from the outset.

Secondly, with respect to relationship management, cultural awareness may take the form of understanding the differences in cultures with respect to professional etiquette, social norms, hierarchy structures, power distance, communication, language etc. Each will be country specific, and therefore either experiential knowledge of these differences, or training is required. These concepts are essential across all process throughout the lifecycle of the agreement.

Hybrid Team selection

Figure 12 groups several areas in relation to hybrid team selection and link directly to staff experience and knowledge (including cultural awareness), International strategy development, and further have an impact on motivation. Internal communication is a key factor in these relationships and also relate to the type of agreement required (i.e. ad hoc or systematic). International Strategy Development will be reviewed in a separate section but has direct linkage to the Hybrid Team selection and the Type of Agreement undertaken.

When considering Hybrid Team selection several concepts must be addressed to answer the question; Who is required in the team?

Each institution will have its own governance structure and will vary accordingly. To generalise the main roles required in Hybrid Team selection several assumption will be made. Each institution can identify a team of 'Executive Staff' and 'Operational Staff'.

As stated earlier;

In the context of this research the definitions of executive staff and operational staff are as follows;

Executive Staff – Staff in both the UK Business School and the Partner Institution who primarily have responsibility of strategic decision making. These can be classified as Senior Institutional staff or Senior Academic staff with responsibility for International Strategy Development, Implementation, and Maintenance. Senior Faculty/Institutional Managers and/or Academics.

Operational Staff - Staff in both the UK Business School and the Partner Institution who primarily have responsibility for the successful Implementation and Maintenance of the partnerships' programmes and developments. Operational Staff can be involved in strategic decision making depending on the institutional management. Link Tutors, Faculty Academics, Administrators.

Linked to these teams, institutional level departments should also be included from the outset but may not form part of the Strategy Development, Agreement Type, or the Implementation and Maintenance. These departments will have a key role in the initial stages of the development through due diligence and quality assurance mechanisms. For example, departments with responsibility for Quality Assurance, Finance, Admissions, Marketing and Legal requirements should be included. The roles each department and Institutional/Faculty staff have will be proposed later in the 'best practice guide'. Figure 12 highlights a feedback loop between Hybrid Team selection and Type of Agreement, this is to demonstrate that the type of agreement may dictate the formation of the team for that particular agreement type.

International Strategy Development

International Strategy Development:

International Strategy Development (Figure 12) shows direct links to Hybrid Teams and Type of Agreement. The findings of this research highlight the main issues in this area. There are differences of opinion from the interviews in relation to the level of involvement in strategy development and also how the strategy is communicated. At an institutional strategy level, the key stakeholders will be the institutional leadership team e.g. Vice-Chancellor, pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Faculty, and their associated representatives. Strategic developments are the role of the senior leadership of the institution but opinions can be sought at an operational level from the individual faculty representative. This should create a feeling of co-creation and involvement in the direction of the institution. The 'best practice guide' will propose consultation methods to foster co-creation and feed into the decision making process of the senior leadership via the faculty representatives. Communication of the strategy should also be made clear and available to all, this can also be discussed at a faculty level once the strategy is implemented.

Type of Agreement

Type of Agreement

The type of agreement is initially accepted or rejected depending on its alignment with the overarching International strategy. Given a clear understanding of the institutional strategy potential agreements can be considered and progressed. From this research, international agreements can be either systematic, in that they are design to fit within the institutional strategy or ad hoc, where individual propose new developments. For example, the strategy may include the development of franchise partners in Africa, if this is the case then the potential agreement can automatically move onto the next stage of the process. If the development is ad hoc, in that, it is not designed into the overall strategy, it needs to be reviewed and measured on its perceived value. The importance and level of ad hoc developments is evident in the findings of this research and should be evaluated at a strategic level aligning to the concepts highlighted in models such as the internationalisation continuum and the internationalisation cube. This will vary across institutions as they may place higher or lower importance of these differing types of developments.

Given a potential agreement is aligned with the strategy, vision and mission, then the process of hybrid team selection can begin. This may differ from agreement to agreement with key staff begin selected based their experience and involvement in the agreement. E.g. for an ad hoc development it may be key that the primary stakeholders are the staff who instigated the proposal and who already have working networks in place with the institution. The team can therefore be built around them for future developments and maintenance. For a more systematic agreement the team may be built around staff who have knowledge of the agreement type (e.g. Dual Award, Franchise etc) and/or country specific experience. Once the team is in place the process of due diligence with respect to Legal, Financial, and Academic reviews can be conducted and a risk assessment produced. Alignment with the institutions Ethical standpoint should also be conducted at this stage.

Motivation

Motivation

Staff motivation is highlighted as a key area throughout the research. By allowing involvement in the co-creation of the institutional strategy, proving effective communication/support, creating suitable reward structures, and providing development opportunities motivation can be monitored within and across teams. From the findings, motivation comes in many forms with examples given relating to student experience, working in international teams (creating social bonds), and autonomy where applicable. Self-motivation and professionalism is also highlighted and is a key driver to hybrid team selection and ultimately successful development, implementation and maintenance of partnership developments.

Implementation and Maintenance

Implementation & Maintenance

The implementation and maintenance of the agreement is fundamentally driven by the nature of the partnership agreement and will differ across the range of agreement types. As discussed previously, there are formal mechanisms for quality assurance that form a part of the agreement and are monitored throughout the lifecycle of the agreement. These are the primary functions of the hybrid teams at both the lead and partner institutions. At this stage the requirements of the agreement should be clearly defined and the respective stakeholders know the roles they are required to undertake. These vary depending on the agreement and are highly dependent on the nature of the teams, the communication/support strategy, and the quality assurance mechanisms in place. Given developments in technology and the greater familiarity with on-line communication tools, the communication/support strategy must be considered as suitable for all parties involved in the agreement, including face-to-face meetings and student consultations where possible.

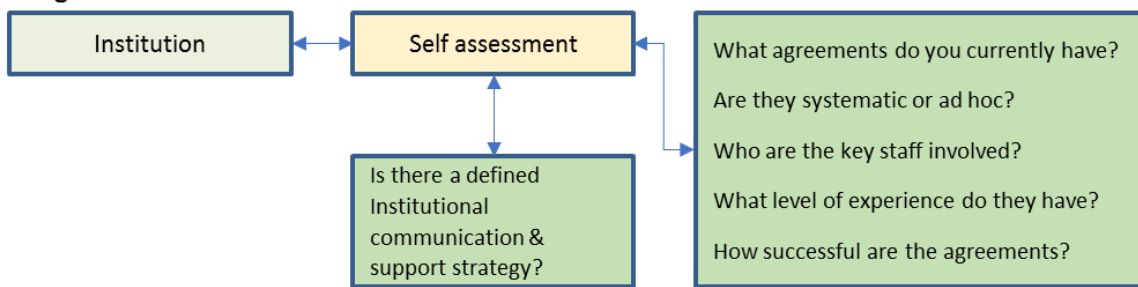
5.5.1 Development of a 'Best Practice Guide' for Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education

Following the conclusions drawn from the findings of the research and the revised theoretical framework, it is possible to propose a 'Best Practice Guide' for Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education. The guide is designed to unify the theories explored throughout the research and combine the findings, and conclusions and recommendations to enable other institutions to review their current practices and consider the factors impacting their international partnership development approaches.

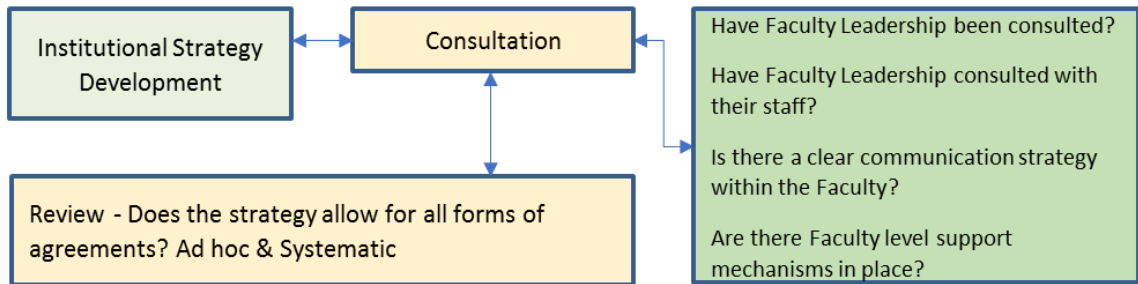
The guide (Figure 13) will propose the key areas for consideration at the appropriate stages and further pose a series of questions for self-evaluation.

Figure 13 - Best Practice Guide for Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education

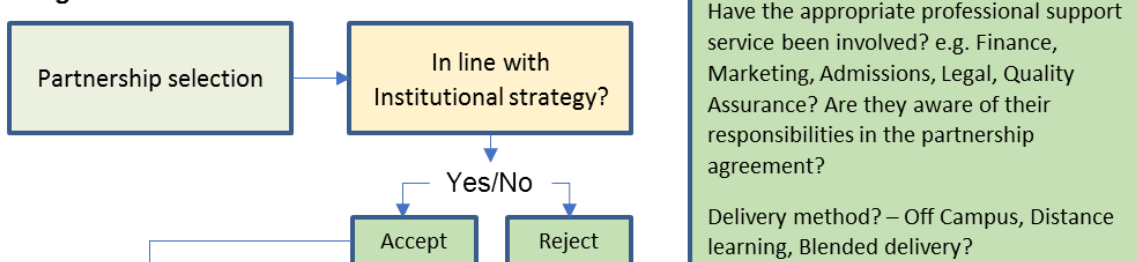
Stage 1



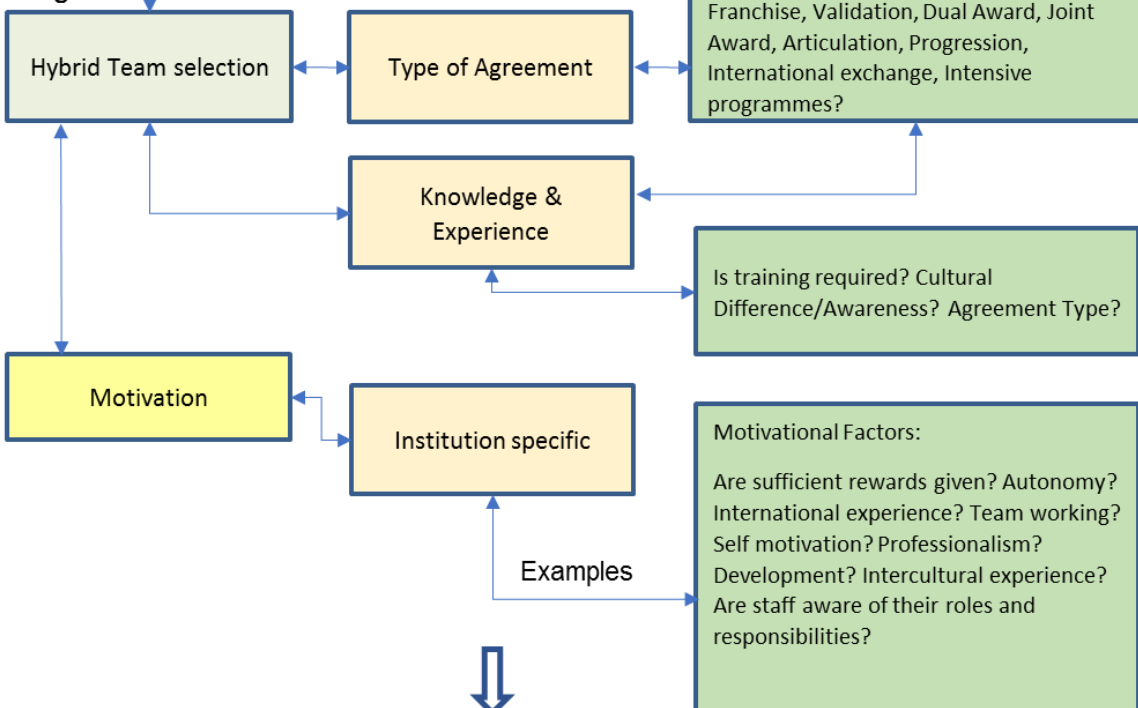
Stage 2

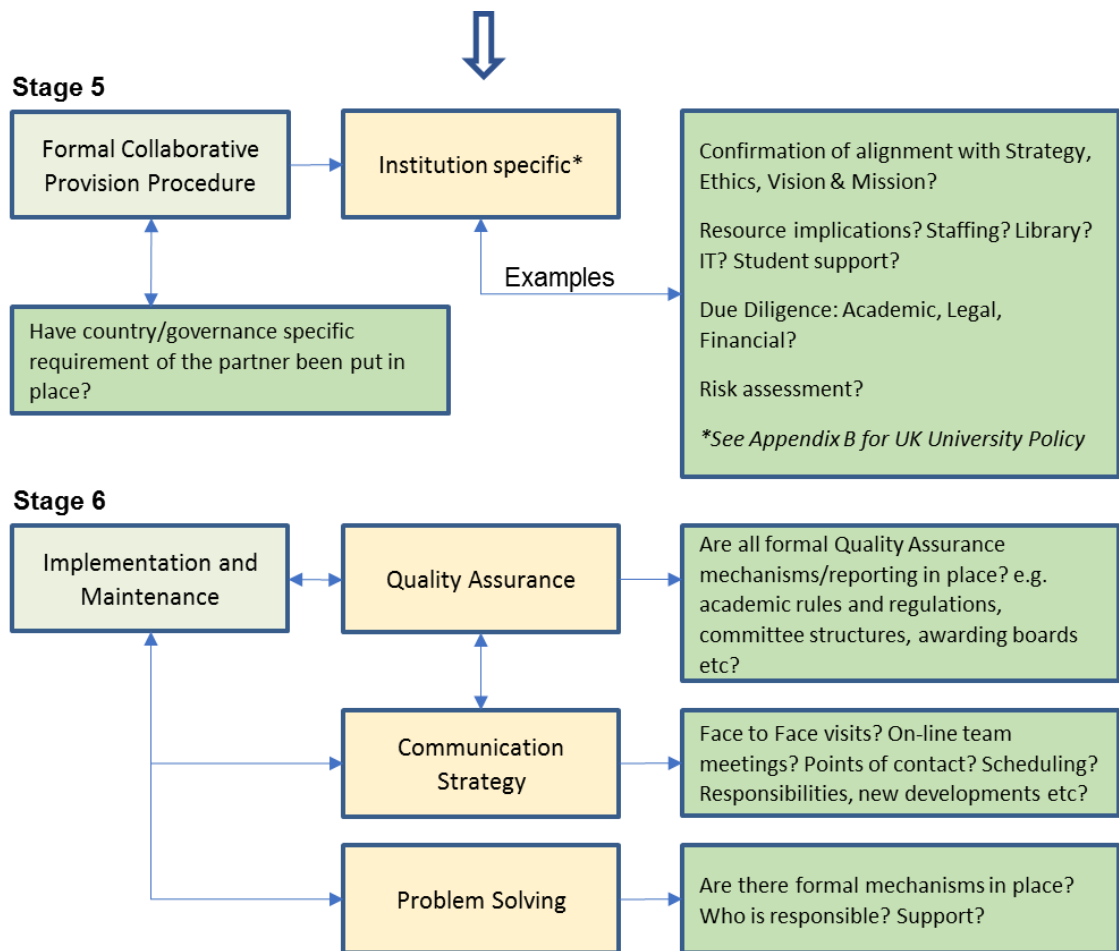


Stage 3



Stage 4





5.5.2 Evaluation of the Best Practice Guide for Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education

The guide has not been designed as a 'one size fits all' set of recommendations, but more as an initial reference point for self-evaluation. Every Institution will have formal processes, policies and procedures in place for partnership approval, but the guide recommends a series of questions to test if all the processes are working effectively. It has been demonstrated through this case study that strategies are in place and formal mechanisms exist (document analysis) but are not necessarily fully understood or communicated.

The findings from the literature review, interviews and participant observations indicate that improvements can be made across all areas. By combining Figure 12 - Revised Theoretical Framework Model, and Figure 13 - Best Practice Guide for Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education and unifying the theoretical models from the literature in conjunction with the primary data analysis from the case study, it is possible to analyse and evaluate differing institutions' approaches to International partnership development, implementation and maintenance,

In conclusion, cross-cultural partnership development in higher education is a complex ecosystem. The findings show that it is highly dependent on a comprehensively communicated strategy defining clear purpose, boundaries, and value. The level of staff knowledge, experience and motivation is critical to success and should be recognised. The approach to international developments should be clearly defined with allocated support and communication assigned before conception. Further to this, an appreciation of the differing cultures need to be at the forefront of any partnership to enable successful development, implementation, and maintenance throughout the life cycle of the relationship.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

By its nature, case study research focuses on either single cases or multiple embedded cases of study. For this study, an embedded single case design (Multiple Units of analysis) approach was adopted. As stated previously this allows for the institutions to be analysed at an individual level under the same parameters and then cross analysed as a replication design. Replication design was built into the theoretical framework with acknowledgement that the framework will need to be modified as the analysis is conducted. By allowing for this modification, generalisation can be made to adapt to new models or cases. The decision to select multiple units of analysis was dictated by the principle that there is an assumption of literal replication between cases, in that

each institution has the same or similar outcomes from the same or similar processes and entities. These principles have enabled a level of remodelling, and generalisations to be made. This said, the case study approach has only evaluated a single Business School and five of its associated partner institutions.

As stated in the methodology chapter, by adopting purposive critical sampling, an understanding of the sample size and the limitations of this technique must be appreciated. Saunders (2015: pp297) acknowledges that given the nature of non-probability purposive sampling especially when considering semi-structured interviews the “validity, understanding and insights that you will gain from your data will be more to do with your data collection and analysis skills than with the size of your sample”. As case study research requires multiple sources of data (semi-structured interviews, observation, document analysis etc) then the sample size will be dictated by the aims, objectives and research questions. The cases were selected to represent the diverse nature of partnership agreements and were at geographically different locations.

A further perceived limitation related to the sample size could be the decision to not employ Computer Assisted Qualitative Content Analysis (CAQDAS) software. Should the research be developed further to a larger population then CAQDAS should be adopted as a recommendation.

Yin (2009:p14) when discussing traditional prejudices of case study research states “... the case study is a distinctive form of empirical inquiry, many research investigators nevertheless disdain the strategy.”. He further discusses the perceived lack of generalization case study research creates but further states “How can you generalise from a single experiment?” discussing the need for multiple experiments to produce the same results in different environments.

Propositions for expanding this research to a more transferable form will be discussed in the next section - Scope for further research.

5.7 Scope for Further Research

As the research followed an exploratory case study strategy, it is now possible to expand the study. The case study approach could be developed to evaluate the revised theoretical framework model (figure 12) to a wider sample of institutions with differing agreement types. This would further the reliability of the findings and, as stated in the limitations of the research, by adopting CAQDAS would aid the thematic analysis.

As qualitative analysis techniques were adopted for this study and themes have been developed from the findings of the interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, it is possible to expand the research to a more mixed method approach including quantitative analysis. The best practice guide for Cross Cultural Partnership Development in Higher Education (figure 13) produced a set of self-evaluation questions. By continuing to adopt purposive critical case sampling, multiple institutions could be approached to self-evaluate their international partnership development processes and procedures. By employing a mixed method approach each institution could evaluate the partnership agreements they currently have and how they were developed. Initially by document analysis, and by interviewing the key stakeholders responsible for partnership development, a profile of the agreements held by each participating institution could be generated (strategy development, ad hoc, systematic, how successful etc?). All staff involved in international activities could then be asked to complete a questionnaire on their perceptions of the policies and procedures to ascertain the effectiveness of the strategies. By surveying multiple institutions across different countries it is then possible to analyse each institution independently and then across institutions in all of the key areas. This could potentially lead to identifying the main key themes for development in the field of cross cultural international strategy development, implementation, and maintenance.

A further advantage to employing a mixed method approach is it is possible to eliminate the need for embedded participant observation as thus reduce the time required to generate the results.

Further areas of future research could be to explore the key themes developed through this study such as internal culture and the impact it has on partnership relationship development, the impact of motivation on staff productivity, staff development policies on cultural awareness, communication strategies, and international (hybrid) team selection processes.

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Appendix A – Role descriptors (Amended)

Workload Allocations & Non-Substantive Role Descriptors 2019-20

The University's *Academic Role Descriptions and Expectations of Academic Standards* contains information about the expectations and responsibilities associated with the following roles: (redacted)

The Manual defines a **non-substantive** (NS) role as follows: “A non-substantive role is a set of tasks and responsibilities which does not have a corresponding impact on salary or grade, but which may attract a workload balancing allocation and which plays a vital part in the successful operation of the University. As stated above these roles may be combined with others. These roles may additionally be used by the role holder to demonstrate professional development or to support a case for progression to a different substantive role.”

It also includes information about the workload points associated with each substantive and non-substantive role.

Agreed Workload Allocations (2019-20)

TRAC	Role	Suggested allocation (Units)	
GA	Associate Dean International	80	
TA	PG Programme Leader	5-15 Depending on student numbers/deliveries	
TA	UG Programme Leader	Varies according to student numbers 15 points as a base then 5 points for each additional 100 students (rounded down).	
TA	Module Leader	5% of the allocation given to the module.	

Enterprise
International & Regional

TA	International/Regional Link Tutor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swiss: 30 • Malaysia: 15 • Ghana: 5 	5-30 Dependent on relative complexity, number of programmes, students and risk level.	
	International Exchange Tutor 3 posts – Law, F&A & Business	5	
TA	Directorate International Lead (one per Directorate)	10	

Role Title: Directorate International Lead**Main Purpose of Role**

To work with the Associate Dean International, Director and Directorate staff to facilitate and support the implementation of the School's International Strategy

Key Accountabilities or Duties**The role holder is required:**

- To contribute to the leadership and management of the Directorate in developing, monitoring and achieving operational objectives relating to international recruitment
- To lead the development of trans-national education, working and research in the Directorate
- To provide advice and support to staff in internationalising curricula across the Directorate
- To develop, monitor and report on international student placements
- To develop, monitor and report on international student experience and international retention
- To develop and support International Link Tutors
- To develop and maintain international partnerships with appropriate external organisations
- To support international student recruitment
- To support international staff mobility
- To represent the Directorate internally and externally on international issues
- To ensure adherence to Home Office UKVI requirements
- To lead on Erasmus activity within the Directorate
- To undertake any other activities commensurate within the role

Role Title: Associate Dean/Head (International)

Reports To: Dean of School

Main Purpose of Role

To work with the Dean of School, the relevant PVC and relevant functions of Professional Services in order to ensure alignment of the School International Strategy with that of the University's Strategic Plan and initiatives.

Key Accountabilities or Duties

Team Work

- To contribute to the strategic work of the School Executive to develop, monitor and review the Schools International Plan and to oversee its implementation in respect of its strategic objectives
- To liaise with the relevant professional departments to assure effective implementation of the plan in respect of student recruitment partnerships and student life
- To work in a team with the Associate Deans/Heads International and assure the development and delivery of a distinct yet complementary International Strategy for the School which aligns with the University's Strategic Plan,
- To engage with and participate in the University's PDR process as reviewer and/or reviewee, as appropriate

Policy and Planning

- To work with School staff on the implementation of academic aspects of the International Strategy and issues related to international activity including engagement with overseas alumni
- To set, monitor and review appropriate KPIs for international activity within the School Strategic Plan and align them with the wider university KPIs in learning and teaching, research & innovation and enterprise and engagement
- To assure that international student recruitment activity within the School is aligned with the Academic Plan, working closely with the relevant professional departments
- To work closely with the ELT programme to ensure the highest levels of conversion of students at undergraduate and postgraduate status

- To be proactive in seeking potential partnership and curriculum development opportunities that complement the School's International Strategy, working closely with the relevant professional departments

Quality Assurance

- To engage proactively with professional bodies in the international arena and seek accreditation and recognition of School programmes
- To ensure that all international activity is underpinned by processes which assure the highest level of academic quality, standards and enhancement
- To ensure the operation of the University's agreed quality assurance mechanisms

Resources

- To advise the Dean of School on the appropriate level of resourcing required to support international activity

Liaison and Coordination

- To represent the School internally on committees relevant to international activity
- To promote and identify cross School collaboration with other Associate Deans/Heads International
- To represent the School externally in relation to international activities and events, including leading delegations to overseas institutions and the hosting of international visitors in the School
- To work with the Associate Deans/Heads International, Student Life, The Library and Student Administration on reviewing, enhancing and monitoring the international student experience and the performance of the School against its strategic aims
- Liaise with the Students Union, communicating regularly to ensure partnership working on all aspects of the student experience
- Liaise with the School Operations Manager to ensure appropriate provision of administrative support

Role Title: Lecturer

Reports to: Director of Directorate

Purpose of the role

To develop and deliver high-quality teaching material across a range of modules or short programmes. To contribute to the planning, design and development of programmes. To engage in scholarly activity and undertake high quality research.

Key Accountabilities or Duties**Teaching and Learning**

- Design teaching material and deliver either across a range of modules or within a subject area
- Supervise student projects, including, where appropriate, PGT, field trips and placements
- Identify areas where current provision is in need of revision or enhancement
- Contribute to the planning, design and development of course and curriculum objectives and material, in collaboration with Student Information Directorate to ensure accuracy of central databases
- Set, mark and assess work and examinations and provide feedback to students
- Act as personal tutor to a group of students

Research

- Undertake individual or collaborative research projects of relevance to the School/University
- Extend, transform and apply knowledge acquired from scholarship to learning, research and appropriate external activities
- Identify external sources of funding and develop or contribute to funding bids – research, knowledge transfer and engagement grant applications
- Promote graduate studies by contributing to the supervision of postgraduate research students
- Write or contribute to publications in peer reviewed academic journals or disseminate research findings using other appropriate media

- Make presentations at conferences or exhibit work in other appropriate events, participating in dissemination and engagement activities to contribute to knowledge base of area of expertise, maximise policy, media industrial or community impact of research

Leadership, Management and Engagement

- Take a lead in own area of expertise, act as mentor for less experienced colleagues
- To engage with and participate in the University's PDR process as reviewer and/or reviewee, as appropriate
- Lead and co-ordinate the work of other staff to ensure module, programme, enterprise or research project is delivered to the standards required
- Co-ordinate colleagues to ensure student needs and expectations are met; act as leader of module or programme, or of significant sections of a programme
- Plan, co-ordinate and implement research programmes or engagement projects; organisation of external activities such as student projects, field trips and industrial placements; manage or monitor research or engagement budgets and ensure effective use of resource; organise administrative duties
- Support colleagues with less experience and advise on personal development; train/advise on own area of expertise where appropriate; coach and support colleagues in developing research
- Collaborate with external organisations such as industry, public sector, charity and local community groups

Role Title: International Academic Exchanges Link Tutor

Main Purpose of Role

This role is undertaken by an academic to manage students' international academic exchanges and international exchange links in the school.

Key Accountabilities or Duties

Internal Collaboration responsibilities

- Collaborating with the relevant international officers to set international agreements
- Consulting with the Associate Dean (Academic) and the Associate Dean (International) to ensure that academic practices for international exchanges are in alignment with University policy
- Informing programme leaders, tutors and administrators about students on exchange
- Collaborating with other link tutors for international academic exchanges at the University to support visiting students and to share information and practices for mutual benefits
- Collaborating with Student Life to address matters related to the exchange students' experience
- Distributing information to the school's staff for staff exchange and other collaborative opportunities abroad with partner institutions
- Advising on the possibility of potential joint programmes with links

External Liaison responsibilities

- Managing the portfolio of links of the school and evaluating links performance
- Making decisions on links' scope of agreements
- Visiting partner and potential partners, maintaining and develop relationships
- Evaluating opportunities for development of new links according to the school strategy
- Evaluating compatibility of programmes with partner universities' programmes
- Hosting visitors from partner universities

Student Support responsibilities

Incoming exchange students:

- Preparing and updating an international programme handbook with possible available modules and their syllabuses to facilitate study choices
- Responding to enquiries from potential international students
- Evaluating student's applications and making decisions on applications' acceptance
- Considering and approving students' learning agreements
- Welcoming students in the school and providing information to students
- Acting as a personal tutor for the incoming exchange students
- Attending the incoming exchange students' exam boards as their 'programme leader'
- Liaise with Student Life and The Library where appropriate and signpost students to these services as necessary

Outgoing exchange students:

- Promoting the opportunity to study abroad to the school's students
- Providing students with information on partner universities and the exchange scheme
- Selecting students to study abroad according to their academic records and references from their personal tutors
- Informing students about the application process
- Guiding the students on the choices of their modules abroad
- Ensuring that students fulfil the University's requirements in order to obtain the necessary credits to progress in their studies
- Converting transcripts of records' marks into University's marks according to agreed conversions

Role Title: Link Tutor International

Main Purpose of Role

To develop and manage international partnership activities for the School established under formal collaborative partnership agreements. This role provides direct support to the School's Associate Head International on the development, delivery and reporting on international partnerships to facilitate planning/review of international partnerships in the context of School international plans.

Key Accountabilities or Duties

Internal collaboration responsibilities:

- Support the School Associate Head International and Head International Partnerships in the identification, scoping and development of new international partnership proposals
- Ensure the development and delivery of international partnerships meet the requirements of the University's collaborative partnerships policy and procedures
- Liaise with School and Central Services staff to ensure all international partnerships and collaborative arrangements meet the requirements of University's Scheme of Academic Governance, quality assurance and approval processes
- Work with relevant colleagues to co-ordinate completion and submission of documentation on partnership to School and University level committees as necessary
- Contribute to internal marketing and promotion of the School's international partnerships portfolio to encourage student and staff participation in the activities under the partnership
- Collaborate with School International Academic Exchanges Tutors, Commercial Partnerships Tutors and Placement Tutors to establish and develop consistent, effective practice in the management of international partnership activity

External liaison responsibilities:

- Participate in international partnership scoping, development and partnership review exercises, including visits to current/prospective partners and the hosting of reciprocal visits to X
- Facilitate review and monitoring activities relating to specific international partnerships and the ongoing development/renewal/closure of partnerships
- Acting as 'first point of contact' for international partner contacts with responsibility for relationship management for specified international partnerships

Student Support responsibilities:

None – but regular liaison with International Academic Exchanges Tutors and/or Placement Tutors will be required for partnerships involving student exchange and/or international work placements

Reporting, Evaluation or Regulatory responsibilities:

- Ensure appropriate monitoring and reporting processes on international partnerships are in place to support review and reporting through the Associate Dean/Head International
- To ensure all partnerships are compliant with the University's Scheme of Academic Governance and relevant external regulatory requirements. (See internal collaboration responsibilities above)

Relevant Policy and Procedure:

- X University Scheme of Academic Governance and those committees responsible for (international) collaborative provision arrangements for teaching and learning, research and innovation and academic engagement – specifically CPPARC.
- International Partnerships Handbook

Source: Academic Role Description Manual v1.8 UK University, June 2016

Role Title: Programme Leader

Main Purpose of Role

The key responsibilities of a programme leader are to:

- Manage the day-to-day delivery of the programme
- Ensure a positive student learning experience
- Monitor, review and enhance programme content and delivery

Key Accountabilities or Duties

Preparation

- Ensure that all aspects of the programme comply with the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes

- Ensure that relevant module and programme specifications are maintained
- Ensure that the programme learning outcomes are fit for purpose and that module learning outcomes are aligned to them
- Identify staffing needs and work with relevant colleagues to allocate staff to modules on the programme
- Ensure that programme and module amendment, including the introduction of new modules and any consequent resource/staffing needs, is appropriately considered at School level and is carried out in line with the University's Programme Design, Approval, Amendment and Withdrawal Procedure
- Produce the Programme Handbook in electronic format, in line with the requirements of the University
- Maintain the programme BlackBoard site
- Liaise with administrative staff over the provision of information needed to feed into central timetabling, and check that workable timetables are produced and distributed to staff and students as needed
- Liaise with administrative staff to ensure the programmes are appropriately administered
- Liaise with administrative staff over the scheduling of meetings of the board of study/programme team, the staff-student committee and the module/programme board of examiners
- Engage in recruitment/marketing activities in relation to the programme in conjunction with appropriate colleagues

Delivery

- Ensure the policies and procedures of the University are implemented in the delivery of the programme
- Facilitate student registration on the programme in conjunction with appropriate administrative staff (at regular start points and for late-registering students)
- Co-ordinate and participate in the student induction process, liaising where appropriate with relevant colleagues, support services and agencies (e.g. Student Life, The Library, police, health service, Students Union, international society)
- Lead board of study/programme team meetings and report on key programme issues to relevant colleagues

- Contribute to the staff-student committee and report on key issues to relevant colleagues
- Liaise with the secretary in the production of appropriate papers (agendas, minutes, etc) for meetings of the programme team/board of study, staff-student committee
- Respond to student queries relevant to the programme where these have not been satisfactorily resolved elsewhere, and ensure the general orientation of students through the programmes
- Monitor student participation, working with relevant colleagues as appropriate
- Ensure that the requirements of students with Student Support Plans are met
- Liaise with other schools as appropriate in relation to jointly run programmes
- Where a member of staff is unavailable for teaching, whether this is planned or unplanned, liaise with Director of Directorate regarding suitable cover
- Liaise with Students Union regarding the recruitment process for student representatives
- Ensure student representatives have been selected for their role and trained by the Students Union within the designated time frame
- Maintain positive, regular communication with student representatives, responding to issues promptly

Assessment

- Liaise with appropriate administrative staff to ensure all examination/assessment issues for the programme are managed and executed appropriately
- Recommend individuals for appointment as external examiners to the Dean of School
- Liaise with administrative staff regarding contact with external examiners
- Ensure that all relevant information is available for the consideration of module and programme boards of examiners
- Attend module and programme boards of examiners where the modules/programme are considered

Evaluation and Quality Assurance

- Produce the Programme Action log in line with the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement report in conjunction with the programme team

- Lead Periodic Programme Review and Re-approval in line with University procedure
- Receive comments from external examiners and ensure that recommendations are implemented where appropriate
- Monitor student progress, achievement and retention
- Monitor suitability and availability of learning resources including library resources
- Monitor the currency and relevance of the programme curriculum
- Monitor the financial health of the programme in collaboration with appropriate colleagues
- Determine a schedule of student evaluation in line with University requirements
- Receive reports arising from student evaluation and ensure that appropriate follow-up actions are implemented (including in liaison with other schools)
- Ensure engagement with Library and colleagues on programme developments and reviews
- Ensure that the University Equality and Diversity statement is reflected in the programme specification and is fully integrated into the delivery of the programme
- Raise any significant issues or concerns regarding the programme, staff or students with the Dean of School or their nominee
- Contribute to the development of school operational plans in relation to the programme and as required

Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

Where programmes have or are seeking professional body accreditation, the programme leader is responsible, in conjunction with the Associate Dean (Academic) and appropriate academic and administrative staff, to act as a representative of the University with the professional body to ensure the programme meets the needs of the approval panel.

Note: For some larger courses there may be additional roles which break down the programme leader roles and responsibilities on a year by year basis (e.g. programme leader, year 1 BSc (Hons) Nursing)

Appendix B - Policy Statements

3.1 The Academic Development and Partnership Committee (ADPC) has authority from Senate for institutional oversight of the strategic and business case(s) for all proposed collaborative provision activity to ensure consistency with University strategy.

3.2 The Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQAC) has authority from Senate for institutional oversight of the academic standards and quality assurance mechanisms for all proposed collaborative provision activity to ensure consistency with University policy.

3.3 A collaborative arrangement is normally approved for a five-year period and will require re-approval prior to expiry of this period.

3.4 A full risk assessment and due diligence of any proposed collaborative arrangement will be undertaken as part of the initial approval and will be reviewed at appropriate intervals as determined by the relevant professional service e.g. finance, legal etc. This will include a detailed analysis of all the financial implications inherent in the proposal, risk management, continuity and contingency planning, legal and policy compliance and the partner's alignment with the University's culture, ethics and values. The

University must also satisfy itself that staff engaged in the delivery of the programme are appropriately qualified and trained for their role.

3.5 Financial and/or legal due diligence may also be carried out on existing partners where there have been material/significant changes or where the Partner or local environment has previously been designated as high risk. Academic due diligence may also be carried out on existing partners where there has been material/significant changes.

3.6 The University has a proportionate approach to approving Collaborative Provision depending on the status, size and location of the partner, in addition to the language, level and amount of academic credit involved.

3.7 The University does not permit the advertisement of any programme involving Collaborative Provision until ADPC has approved the partner. At this point the programme can be advertised as 'subject to approval'. When the programme(s) have been approved, full advertisement can take place.

3.8 The University does not permit recruitment to any programme involving Collaborative Provision until the partner and programme(s) have been approved and the agreement has been formally signed by both parties.

3.9 The University expressly prohibits the practice of 'serial' or 'sub' franchising - i.e. the practice whereby provision franchised to a partner is, in turn, franchised to a third party – except with its express written permission.

3.10 English Language is the sole permitted medium for the delivery and assessment of Collaborative Provision except where, in limited circumstances, the learning outcomes are explicitly related to competence in languages other than English.

3.11 The following types of arrangement that are covered by UK Quality Code are outlined below

- Franchise;
- Validation;
- Dual awards;
- Joint award (both taught and PhD);
- Articulation;
- Progression;
- Off- campus delivery of a taught programme (including flying faculty and online learning with elements of partner support);
- PhD Without Residence (Off-site PhD) or other postgraduate research awards;
- Split- site PhD or other postgraduate research awards;

The University has grouped the arrangements into two types: Collaborative Partnerships and Academic Partnerships. Section 4 provides a typology of these different types of arrangements, together with the key characteristics of each.

3.12 There may also be other activities, not specifically mentioned here, that need careful consideration under this procedure, as there may be implied responsibility for standards and/or learning opportunities.

3.13 The Quality and Enhancement Office (QEO) will maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of all collaborative provision that is covered by this procedure.

3.14 The School will appoint an appropriately qualified link tutor for every programme or discipline area of Collaborative Provision.

3.15 Visits to and from the partner are an important feature of the University's management of Collaborative Provision. Normally there would be two visits in the first year of operation and

then minimum of one annual visit. The frequency of the visits may vary according to the nature of the collaboration. The nature of the visits will cover areas outlined in the visit template report which will also capture actions to be followed up through the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure (PMEP) (see section 11).

4.0 Typology

4.1 Collaborative Partnerships

4.1.1 Franchise: Is an arrangement by which the University approves a partner to deliver part or all of one (or more) of its approved programmes. The University retains responsibility for the programme content and assessment. There may be instances where part of the programme is franchised to a partner and the remaining part is delivered by the University (e.g. 1+2 or 2+1 arrangements).

4.1.2 Validation: Is an arrangement by which the University approves a module or programme developed and delivered by another organisation and approves it as being of an appropriate standard and quality to contribute, or lead, to one of its awards. The University will only validate programmes in a subject that the University itself offers or in which the University has expertise.

4.1.3 Dual award: Is an arrangement under which two institutions together provide programmes leading to separate awards (which may be at different levels) being granted by both. Each award has its own set of criteria and learning outcomes and the student does not therefore have to satisfy the requirements of all degree-awarding bodies. The student may receive only one qualification if they do not meet the separate criteria or learning outcomes for the second qualification.

4.1.4 Joint award: Is an arrangement under which two or more awarding institutions jointly approve and deliver a programme leading to a single award granted by both, or all, institutions.

4.1.5 Jointly delivered programme: Is a programme delivered or provided jointly by two or more organisations, irrespective of the award (whether single, joint, dual/double or multiple). It refers to the education provided rather than the nature of the award.

4.2 Academic Partnerships

4.2.1 Articulation: Is an arrangement where the University approves all, or part of, an external award from another institution as providing specific credits towards a XXX programme. Guaranteed entry to XXX with advanced standing will be granted to applicants who demonstrate appropriate successful achievement on the external programme. In entering into an articulation agreement, the University does not underwrite the quality of the external award

but has verified that the curriculum and standards will prepare students for entry with advanced standing.

4.2.2 Progression: Is an arrangement with another provider which allows individual applications to be considered for direct entry to a named progression route. In entering into a progression agreement, the University does not underwrite the quality of the external award but has verified that the curriculum and standards will prepare students for entry (with advanced standing where appropriate).

4.2.3 Off Campus Delivery of taught programme: Is an arrangement which involves use of an external organisation's premises and facilities to support the delivery of a XXX taught programme by XXX staff who retain responsibility for teaching and assessment. Staff from the external organisation may be appointed to provide, technical or pastoral support to students. This may include support for blended or online delivery.

4.2.4 PhD Without Residence (Off-Site PhD): Is an arrangement that may involve the use of another institution's premises and facilities to support the delivery of a XXX PhD programme by XXX staff who retain responsibility for assessment, evaluation and examination of the thesis. A local supervisor may be appointed to provide support to candidates who will be briefed on XXX regulations and requirements.

4.2.5 Split Site PhD or other postgraduate research award: Is an arrangement is where an individual candidate or a cohort may register for a XXX PhD award or other postgraduate research award and undertake study at both XXX and another approved location of study. A split site candidate should normally spend the equivalent of at least one third of the minimum duration of this period of study at XXX. A local advisor will be appointed to support candidates studying through a split site arrangement.

4.2.6 Erasmus+ Inter-Institutional Agreement: Is the EU's flagship education and training programme, enabling student study and traineeship opportunities within the European Union or European Economic Area. Erasmus+ also promotes transnational cooperation projects amongst universities and enterprises. Study placements are reciprocal and are based on the principle of credit transfer. Erasmus+ also offers opportunities for staff mobility to both teaching and professional services staff.

4.2.7 International Exchange: Is the opportunity offered to students to study outside Europe. Study is on a reciprocal basis. Attachment may be to standard or bespoke programmes and results in credit transfer.

4.2.8 Study Abroad: Is the opportunity offered to EU and international students to study at XXX for either one semester or a full year programmes.

4.2.9 Further guidance is available in related documentation listed in Section 14 and Section 15 Appendix 2 Typology Table and approval routes.

5.0 Collaborative Provision Procedure – Approving a partnership

5.1 The procedure and guidance recognises the diverse nature of Collaborative Provision and the need for a proportionate and tailored approach towards the assessment and management of risk. For example, approval involving larger amounts of credit, at higher levels, will be considered as greater risk. Collaborative Provision with institutions outside the UK and outside of the HE sector will also be considered greater risks.

5.2 The Collaborative Provision Procedure has two stages which are designed to ensure that the University adopts a strategic approach to Collaborative Provision and that appropriate levels of resource are committed to such activities.

Stage 1: Initiating a new Partnership proposal

5.3 Collaborative and Academic Partnerships as defined in Section 4.0 must obtain Stage 1 approval from the relevant School Executive (SE), confirming that the proposal aligns with the School's strategic and operational plans and that there are resources available to develop the proposal and progress it through the approval procedure. (see Related Documentation for the Stage 1 form and initial risk assessment form).

5.4 The International Operations Group will review international proposals where stage 1 has been considered for initial assessment against the University's strategic priorities and approval to undertake due diligence and site visit (if required). IOG will also consider student numbers and costings agreed with the partner prior to submission to ADPC. The International and Regional Development Directorate (IRDD) will consider initial UK proposals and provide advice to Schools.

Stage 2: Business Case Approval (Strategic fit, Due Diligence including academic due diligence of the proposal)

5.5 The Business Case approval procedure (See Related Documentation for Stage 2 form) takes into consideration the institutional strategic fit and business case within the context of the University's Strategic Plan and ensures that due diligence has been completed and signed off prior to consideration of the academic case.

5.6 Due diligence will be undertaken to inform Stage 2 and includes the financial, academic quality, legal and ethical due diligence as a minimum. In addition to completion of the initial risk assessment proforma, the due diligence procedure will ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place to manage risk.

5.7 Due diligence will consider academic quality of the proposed partner including its quality processes, management and organisational structures, physical and learning resources. It will also ensure that the appropriate quality assurance processes are in place between the School and the proposed partner to safeguard the University's academic standards as well as the experience of students on a programme leading to University award or credit.

5.8 As part of the due diligence, consideration a partnership site visit may be required which will take the form of an independent assessment of the proposed partner (see criteria in 5.11).

5.9 The site visit (which is part of the University's due diligence process) is intended to ensure that the partner is aligned with the University's Vision and Mission and has in place appropriate learning resource, including student support, and appropriate quality systems.

5.10 The site visit will be conducted by a minimum of two members of staff and will normally include a member of QEO or IRDD. If appropriate, additional professional service staff may be in attendance.

5.11 Criteria to be considered in establishing whether a site visit is required or not include:

- the status of the proposed partner institution (for example, whether the partner is publicly or privately funded, whether it is a degree awarding body),
- whether it is a new or existing partner,
- its experience of HE Collaborative Provision and
- the risk level of the proposed provision.

5.12 Student Exchanges, off campus delivery of a taught programme (including flying faculty provision) and articulation/progression agreements do not require formal partnership site visits.

5.13 ADPC approves a new partner and grants Stage 2: Business Case (Strategic fit and due diligence) approval. This is done without prejudice to the outcome of the later quality assurance stages of approval.

5.14 ADPC may identify areas for discussion at the forthcoming PARP.

5.15 ADPC approval applies to the collaborative partner in its entirety or as specified in the Memorandum of Agreement (e.g. where the collaborative partner has a multiple locations).

6.0 Collaborative Programme Approval

6.1 Following Stage 2 approval by ADPC, the home School(s) is responsible for bringing the Collaborative Provision Programme(s) through the approval process in accordance with the University's Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal Policy.

6.2 The Programme Approval Review Panel will normally be held at the partner and would be held in line with the Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal policy. The panel will normally involve an external member; this could be the external examiner for an existing programme or an external advisor for a new or validated programme.

7.0 Formal Agreement

7.1 An appropriate Agreement (wherever possible using a Legal Services template) must be prepared for each proposal, including one which is being renewed or extended, at the start of Stage 2 of the approval process. All significant areas should have been agreed with the Partner prior to the Stage 2 submission to ADPC.

7.2 A final draft should be agreed with the partner and made available as part of the academic case documentation for the Programme Approval and Review Panel (PARP) and should only be signed after the academic case approval process is complete.

7.3 Prior to signing on behalf of the University, and in parallel with the approval process, the Agreement(s) must be approved and signed off by Legal Services.

7.4 The authorised signatories of Agreement(s) must be the Vice Chancellor (or nominee) on behalf of the University and the Principal or other duly authorised Officer, on behalf of the partner institution.

7.5 Students must not be registered or enrolled on any programmes offered through Collaborative Provision until after the agreement has been approved and signed by both parties.

7.6 Signed agreements are held by Legal Services.

8.0 Collaborative Provision - Extension

8.1 Where a School wishes to extend an existing collaborative partnership by, for example, approving delivery of another programme, they must complete the two-stage process i.e. stage 1 - sign-off by the relevant School Executive for consideration at the next IOG (for international only) and then stage 2 approval by ADPC.

8.2 Following approval of the Collaborative Provision Extension by ADPC, the home School(s) is responsible for bringing the Collaborative Provision Programme through the approval

process in accordance with the University's Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal Policy.

8.3 Where a School is seeking to extend an existing collaborative arrangement with a higher qualification level, a new area of study or a specialised and complex area of study, it is anticipated that a visit would be required for the programme approval stage.

9.0 Certificates and Records of Study

9.1 The University retains authority for the awarding of certificates and issuing of transcripts.

9.2 The transcript will normally record the name and location of the collaborative partner involved in the delivery of the programme. Any exceptions approved will be reflected in the formal agreement with the partner.

9.3 In the case of dual, multiple or double awards, the University certificate and transcript will refer to the existence of the other partner(s) and make it clear that they refer to the completion of a single, jointly conceived programme.

10.0 Withdrawal/Termination and Contingency of Agreement

10.1 The University is responsible for ensuring that students registered on a Collaborative Provision programme are enabled to complete their studies in the event that the University or a partner withdraws from an agreement or is no longer able to fulfil their responsibilities as stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement.

10.2 Contingency costings and arrangements must be included in the proposal and the Memorandum of Agreement.

10.3 Programme withdrawal is governed by the Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal Policy. (see related docs)

10.4 Where a partnership is to be withdrawn/terminated, the appropriate documentation should be completed by IRDD, in liaison with the XXX School, to ensure academic standards and the quality of experience are maintained for remaining students.

11.0 Collaborative Provision Monitoring and Review

11.1 The University is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and review of all Collaborative Provision.

11.2 Collaborative Provision will be monitored and reviewed through processes that are consistent with, or comparable to those used for the University's own provision.

11.3 Annual Monitoring will be undertaken for all taught and research collaborative programmes (see related documentation - Programme Monitoring and Enhancement policy (PMEP) which will facilitate the identification and sharing of best practice.

11.4 For taught programmes, a Periodic Programme Review and Reapproval (PPRR) will be undertaken on a five year cyclical basis following original approval of the programmes.

11.5 For taught programmes, a Joint Board of Study (JBoS) will be established to cover collaborative programmes that will oversee the ongoing quality assurance and management of the provision. The constitution and Terms of Reference of Joint Boards of Study are detailed in the Scheme of Academic Governance (see Related Documentation).

11.6 The operation and management of external examiners for collaborative programmes is governed by the University's External Examining for all Taught Programmes Policy and through the Code of Practice for PGR Programmes.(See Related Documentation).

11.7 An interim review of programmes offered at a collaborative partner may be instigated based on outcomes from PMEP and would normally take place in the first or second year of operation.

12.0 Collaborative Provision – Review and Re-approval

12.1 A formal review and re-approval of the partnership will be undertaken in the year prior to the renewal of the formal partnership agreement

12.2 The review and re-approval process will ensure that:

- The collaborative provision continues to have the support of the School;
- The rationale for the collaboration remains valid;
- The collaboration remains appropriate in the context of the University's strategic plan;
- The partner institution retains the appropriate academic, financial and legal status;
- The business case remains valid;
- The collaborative provision continues to deliver appropriate quality, standards and learning opportunities.

12.3 The process for the re-approval of a collaborative partner will follow the two stage processes of School Executive and Business Case approval to reconfirm the intention to continue with the partnership and will refresh the business case and due diligence accordingly.

12.4 The review of the academic programme(s) is subject to the University's Programme Design, Approval, Amendment, Review and Withdrawal Policy.

13.0 Approval and Monitoring of Information and Publicity Materials

13.1 It is the University's responsibility to maintain control over the accuracy of all public information and publicity relating to Collaborative Provision.

13.2 Information for students and stakeholders must be clear, accurate, fit for purpose and trustworthy.

13.3 All promotional materials for Collaborative Provision devised and used by the partner institution must be designed in keeping with the University's corporate identity and approved by the Directorate of Marketing and Student Recruitment prior to their use.

Appendix C - Joint Board of Study – Minutes of Meeting

XXX Business School and XXXXXX

Joint Board of Study – Minutes of Meeting

Date:

1. Welcome – XXXXX Link tutor (Chair)

Attendance and apologies for absence.

Chair of Examination Board:

Partner Representatives:

XXX Representatives:

6. Minutes of Previous meeting.

None

7. Actions/Matters Arising

None

Action: XXX (JBS/date/01)

Action Partner ((JBS/date/02))

8. Programme operation, organization and management

To receive and consider a report on the operation and organization of the programmes:

XXXXX (list programmes)

Comments by programme (can be by exception)

Action: XXX (JBS/date/03)

Action Partner ((JBS/date/04))

9. Student experience actions

Student experience and feedback to be included here and arising actions.

Action: XXX

Action Partner

10. PMEP/APME

Programme monitoring and enhancement procedures to be discussed (additional actions from those that need to be captured above and beyond the above)

Action: XXX

Action Partner

11. Module Review

To receive and consider the following Module Review summaries/reports:

. Action: XXX

Action Partner

12. Staff – Student Committee

a) To receive the minutes from staff/students committee

Action: XXX

Action Partner

13. Student Voice

Discussion of work being done to include Student Voice by the partner.

Where possible student input into this.

Action: XXX

Action Partner

14. Student performance

Report or discussion on Student performance

Action: XXX

Action Partner

15. Student recruitment and retention

To receive an update on forecast number for entry 2020/21

To receive an update on retention (attrition rates) by partner and any appropriate actions

Action: XXX

Action: Partner

16. Staffing

To receive an update on the academic staff recruitment

(Are link tutors seeing and approving academic appointments and repository of CVs held in school)

Action: XXX

Action: Partner

17. Library/subject resources

To receive an update on the academic staff recruitment library and subject resources

Action: XXX

Action: Partner

18. AOB

Agree date and any additional agenda items for next meeting:

19. Date of next meeting

Action Log

Action:	Description:	Owner:	To be completed by:	Update:
JBS/date/01				
JBS/date/02				

Appendix D – Staff Student Committee – Agenda

XXX Business School and XXXXXXXX

STAFF STUDENT COMMITTEE

Apologies

AGENDA

1. Minutes from the previous meeting and matters arising
2. Report from the Programme Leader
3. Student Experience
 - a. Students to report on their experience, with reference to teaching, assessment, feedback, academic support and non-academic support
4. Academic Support, Student support and Personal tutors
 - a. Review the support available and take-up
5. Learning Resources
 - a. Review resources available and receive updates from central teams, particularly IT, blackboard and the library
 - b. Report on good and bad experiences
6. Consideration of Module Reviews
 - a. Presentation of summaries of all module reviews not previously reported on. T1 modules in T2 and T2 modules the following T1
7. Improvements to the Programme
 - a. Planned changes to the course
 - b. Adjustments made as the result of feedback logged in the PAL
8. External Examiners
 - a. Highlights from the External Examiners report or information about past and planned visits
9. Student Achievement
 - a. Report of outstanding achievements by individuals to include placements and awards.
10. Any other Business
11. Date and time of next meeting

Appendix E – Mission and Vision Statement

Mission

Transforming Lives. Stimulating Discovery. Realising Potential

Through teaching, learning, research and enterprise, we harness the skills, imagination, and enthusiasm of our staff and students to work in partnership with large and small enterprises across the public, private and charitable sectors to change people and communities and deliver lasting economic and social benefit.

Our Vision

By pioneering exceptional industry partnerships, we will lead the way in real world experiences preparing students for life

Our vision makes a bold statement with cross-sector 'industry' partnership linking the University's heritage and future aspirations. It is ambitious yet designed to be firmly rooted in real world experience. The aim of 'preparing students for life' provides a compelling unifying purpose. In short the vision explains what we want the University to be, how, and why.

Appendix F – International Delivery Plan (Amended)

INTERNATIONAL DELIVERY PLAN
2017/18 TO 2020/21

15 September 2017

Introduction

This document outlines the key activities that we are, and will be undertaking to improve our global impact and reputation, increase our overseas income, and provide global citizenship opportunities for our students, which will help them achieve their academic and career potential. By the end of this plan, we will have increased our non-EU recruitment to [the UK University] from a diverse but sustainable set of target markets and have larger and growing collaborative provision with reputable partners. We will maintain links with the EU post-Brexit through continued collaboration and exchange activity and through supporting our EU staff base.

Background

Internationalisation is a priority in the majority of UK universities for a number of reasons. In the current climate of UK demographic decline of 18 year olds, international students provide an additional source of students, contributing to the sustainability of higher education. The presence of international students on campus provides academic benefit through alternative world-views in the classroom and is vital for the provision of many postgraduate courses and research where UK student numbers are insufficient to support them alone. Inter-cultural experiences through a variety of avenues on- and off-campus increases the cultural agility of UK students which is a positive attribute for employability.

Trans-national education also contributes to sustainable income and provides a source of students who are unable or unwilling to come to the UK but who seek to access UK higher education because of its world-leading reputation. Through partnerships with international institutions, TNE can also lead to increased global reputation and enhanced access to research funding and research students.

TACKLING OUR CHALLENGES

In recent years, the UK government has introduced a number of policy interventions and legislation that threaten all universities. Our single, strategic priority is to deliver against the ICZ agenda, which should see us successfully through this period of increased competition and economically driven government policy.

The international market is huge, and a small proportion of that market would both help secure our sustainability and deliver significant benefits to our reach, reputation and impact. There are more students on UK transnational education programmes than in the UK and this number continues to rise while international student recruitment to the UK has been static. However, there are challenges and opportunities due to the instability in the global economic and political environment:

BREXIT	The impact of Brexit on EU student numbers and research funding is likely to be considerable but the UK may become more attractive in some markets if it becomes a cheaper option thought weakness in sterling.
IMMIGRATION & VISA POLICIES	Negative publicity on UK immigration policy and further visa restrictions may have a detrimental effect on student numbers coming to the UK.

SECURITY RESTRICTIONS	Challenging security environments overseas may limit our ability to engage comprehensively in certain markets. Perceptions of the UK as a safe destination will similarly affect international student recruitment.
CURRENT REPUTATION	League tables and TEF positioning will affect our attractiveness as a student destination, recipient of sponsored students and partner institution.

Our International Delivery Plan aims to respond to these external challenges by demonstrating how we will engage with those beyond the UK border to deliver education, research and enterprise, with a particular focus on our four industry collaboration zones:



To be sustainable, to make a real difference – *to become unstoppable* – we need to be international in our outlook, with a global reputation for industry-relevant pedagogy and research. Over the time of the Plan, deliverables will be prioritised 1-3 to indicate which third of the Plan they will be in play, taking account of other dependencies and capacity.

To support the University Strategy, we have three international aims:

GROWTH & DIVERSITY	We will develop sustainable and diverse student recruitment pipelines working with partners where appropriate, by creating a compelling international offer, professionally delivered, that is targeted to selected markets
GLOBAL IMPACT	Focusing on our chosen Industry Collaboration Zones, we will work alongside partners where appropriate, to align our curriculum, research and enterprise strengths to international industrial strategies, skills shortages and global challenges
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP	Using our international understanding and relationships, we will create opportunities for our students and staff to develop their cultural agility and improve their employability and experience.

GROWTH AND DIVERSITY

To achieve growth and diversity we will ensure that we have a proportionate and **appropriate presence in each market**, and refocus our existing activity so that **we recruit more cost-effectively**. This will be enabled by having a **responsive curriculum** that meets local needs, where applicants and students receive a **professional, quality experience**. The changes we will make that will result in growth and diversification are listed below:

**RECRUIT
COST-
EFFECTIVELY**

If we spread ourselves too thinly we are unlikely to achieve sufficient reward for our efforts. To ensure that we can recruit cost-effectively we will:

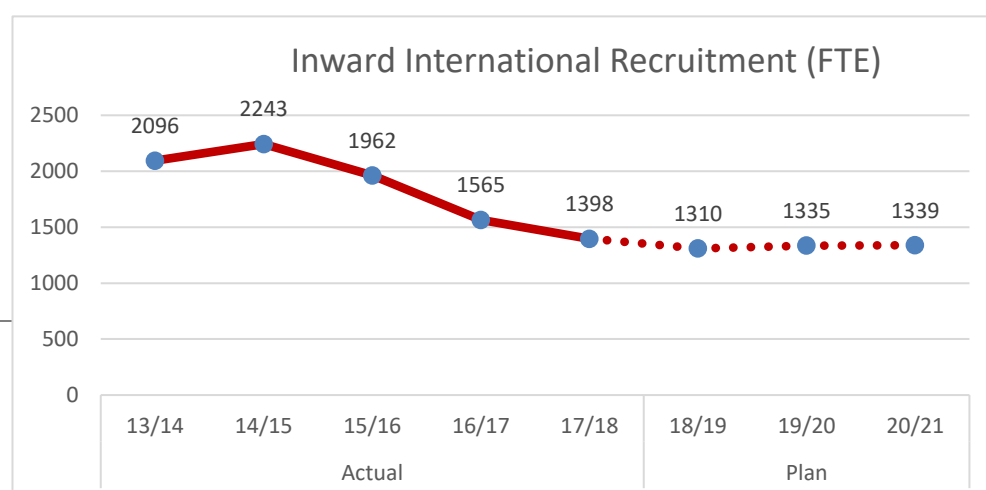
- Create meaningful, sustainable growth from a defined group of markets and broaden the geographical reach of our recruitment (see Appendix 1)
- Monitor the success of agents, partnerships and recruitment initiatives on an annual basis, taking into account political and economic factors and adjusting market activity as appropriate
- Use our resources effectively in target markets to build sustained engagement and seek future market diversification through enhanced digital marketing until such time as resources allow full market entry
- Engage with our international alumni in priority markets to act as ambassadors
- Leverage the relevant resources of the GMCA to build on our reputation.

Key deliverables:

- Have a robust and effective agent performance and incentives policy (*International Office – Priority 1*)
- Develop and implement digital marketing plans for specific emergent markets, based on industrial intelligence (*International Office and MER – Priority 2*)
- Develop an international alumni engagement plan to work with and motivate influential alumni in identified priority markets (*MER and International Office – Priority 1*)
- Ensure application processing for international students is timely (*International Office and Admissions – Priority 1*)

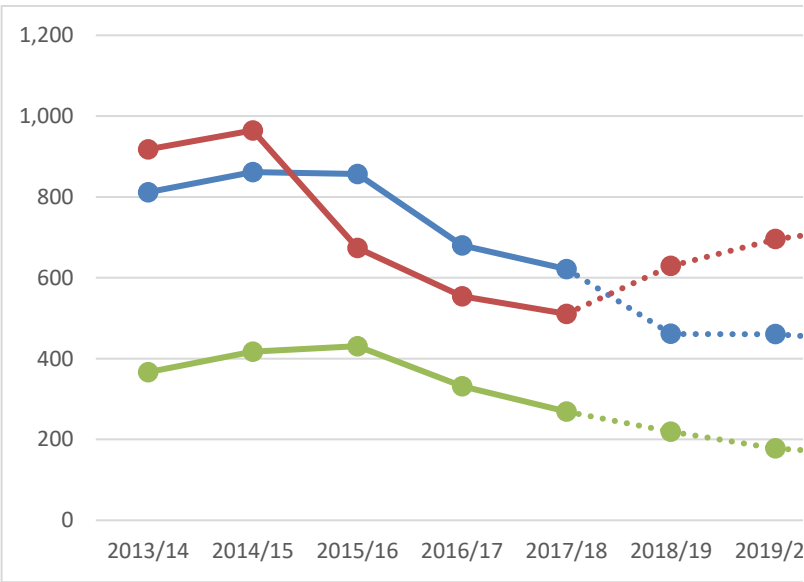
These actions will result in sustainable growth from a diverse market base, while protecting our Tier 4 status and reputation.

Fig. 1 International student numbers on campus (FTE & excluding single modules)



Source – Qlikview and 2018/19 Student Number Plan

Fig. 2 International student numbers on campus by type



Source Qlikview and 2018/19 student number plan

**APPROPRIATE
PRESENCE
IN EACH
MARKET**

To create or strengthen our presence in each market, without undermining our existing operations both in the UK and elsewhere, we will:

- Develop partnerships that can deliver reputation, scale and sustainability or answer particular niche skills requirements in our markets;
- Prioritise quality partners that are able to work with us in the delivery of programmes rather than investing either capital or significant human resource ourselves.

Key deliverables:

- Identify and proactively target new potential academic partner institutions within priority markets (*International Office full review by September 2018 and thereafter in annual planning*)
- Review our costing mechanisms to ensure sustainability of new TNE partnerships is robust and subject to appropriate review (*PVC IRP, Finance and QEO – Priority 2*)

**DELIVER A
RESPONSIVE
CURRICULUM**

Whilst having an appropriate presence in each market is necessary, we also need to have a compelling offer that is responsive to the needs of the market. Hence we shall:

- Develop programmes that are responsive to international demand
- Work with partners in mutually beneficial relationships to create different entry routes to a [the UK University] degree in response to international needs
- Develop our capability to deliver distance and blended learning underpinned by the ICZ-ready curriculum design principles of [the UK University] Curriculum+.

Key deliverables:

- Ensure new programmes developed in Schools maximise their attractiveness to international students through market research, e.g. appropriateness of programme names and relevance to markets (*International Office, MER and Schools through portfolio review in 17/18 – Priority 1*)
- Develop demand-led flexible points of entry to [the UK University] programmes where (*Schools – Priority 2*)
- Ensure that creation of ICZ-ready curricula can be translated into an international context (*PVCs Student Experience and IRP with Associate Deans Academic and ICZ Directors – Priority 3*)
- Ensure robust procedures within Schools for the ongoing management of collaborative programmes (*PVC Student Experience and Associate Deans Academic – Priority 3*)

**DELIVER A
PROFESSIO
NAL,
QUALITY
EXPERIENC
E**

Creating a positive experience for our applicants and students will increase the likelihood of them recommending us in the short-term, and also as a future alumni ambassador. To develop this we need to:

- Ensure all qualified international students can access entry to XXX efficiently and effectively;
- Ensure the experience of international students on XXX programmes is positive, resulting in word of mouth recommendation.

Key deliverables:

- Conduct the International Barometer Survey, identifying and acting upon areas for improvement of the international student experience *(2018 with action plan in areas identified from the outcome)*
 - Evaluate the applicant journey and speed of turnaround for an international student applicant and identify any necessary process improvements, particularly through One Digital Campus initiatives with costed solutions where appropriate *(International Office and Admissions in 2017/18 cycle – Priority 1)*.
-

GLOBAL IMPACT

To develop our global impact, we will need to use our **global perspective** to enhance and **develop our industrial intelligence**, helping to identify opportunities for growth that we can meet directly through a new **global delivery infrastructure**, or by working alongside **global delivery partners**. The changes we will make to affect our global impact are detailed below:

**DEVELOP
OUR
INDUSTRIAL
INTELLIGENCE**

We need to identify where our ICZ activity, research, enterprise and curriculum strengths align to international industrial strategies, skills shortages and global challenges.

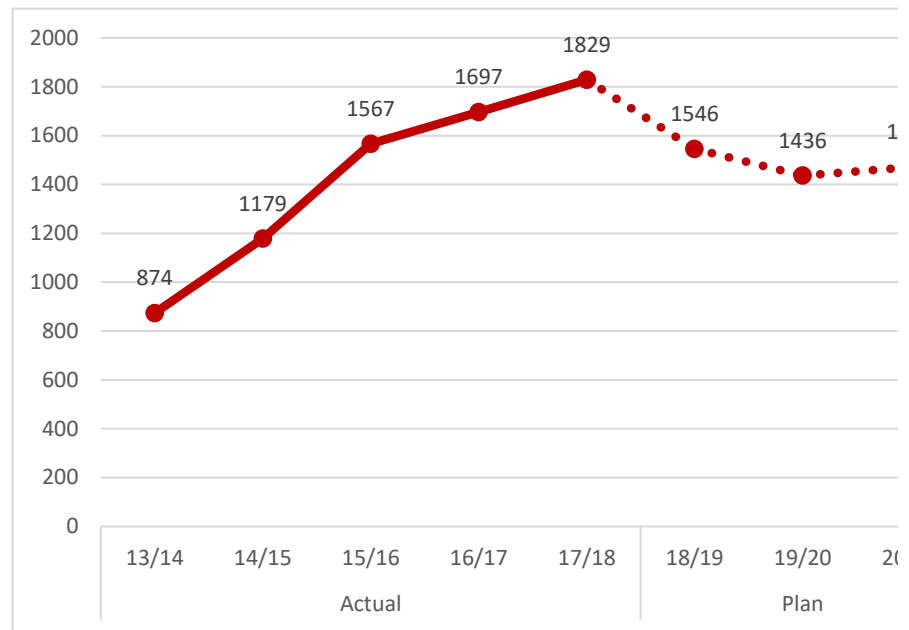
To gain this industry intelligence, we will work with our national partners that have international presence to create industry links that have value to the students and the University in line with the ICZ agenda. We will extend our ICZ activities in the UK to locations where our institutional links coincide with the presence of our UK industry partners and their local supply chains to create international ICZ presence.

Key deliverables:

- International industry intelligence integrated into annual market strategies with recommendations for development. (*International Office and Schools – Priority 1*)
 - Mapping of major ICZ partners' international activity and capacity for international collaboration (*ICZ Directors/ key account managers – Priority 2*).
-

CREA TE A GLOB AL DELIV ERY STRU CTUR E	<p>As we identify new opportunities, we need to be able to deliver, at quantity and quality. To do this we will need to deliver both from [the UK University] and in-country. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use digital technology (One Digital Campus) to enrich the experience of our international students studying off-campus by increasing their access to learning materials and connecting them to on campus experiences • Seek high quality international educational and commercial partners that are able to work with us to co-deliver our curricula, and employ the pedagogical approaches to real-world learning sitting within [the UK University] Curriculum+ to offer industry-relevant teaching that is regionally informed; <p><i>Key deliverables:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our curriculum design has embedded digital flexibility and develop digital capacity in delivery in [the UK University] and in-country (<i>PVCs Student Experience and IRP – Priority 1</i>) • Ensure staffing models recognise and resource appropriately focused TNE delivery and encourage academic engagement. (<i>VCET and Schools – Priority 1</i>)
ATTR ACT GLOB AL DELIV ERY PART NERS	<p>Working with partners can help us reach markets that we would not be able to do by ourselves. Hence, we shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select partners that have the ability to add value to the educational experience of our students through ICZ-related activity • Develop a network of high quality international academic, business, industrial and community partnerships that facilitate joint funding bids in our priority research areas. <p><i>Key deliverables:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise collaborative partnerships processes to include ICZ readiness and increase robustness in partner selection (<i>QEO - Priority 1</i>) • Review information flows to ... staff on potential partners and international funding to ensure those academics aligned to our research priorities are able to take full advantage of appropriate opportunities which will result in an increase in internationally co-authored papers and research bids. (<i>ABDO and Research and Knowledge Exchange – Priority 3</i>)

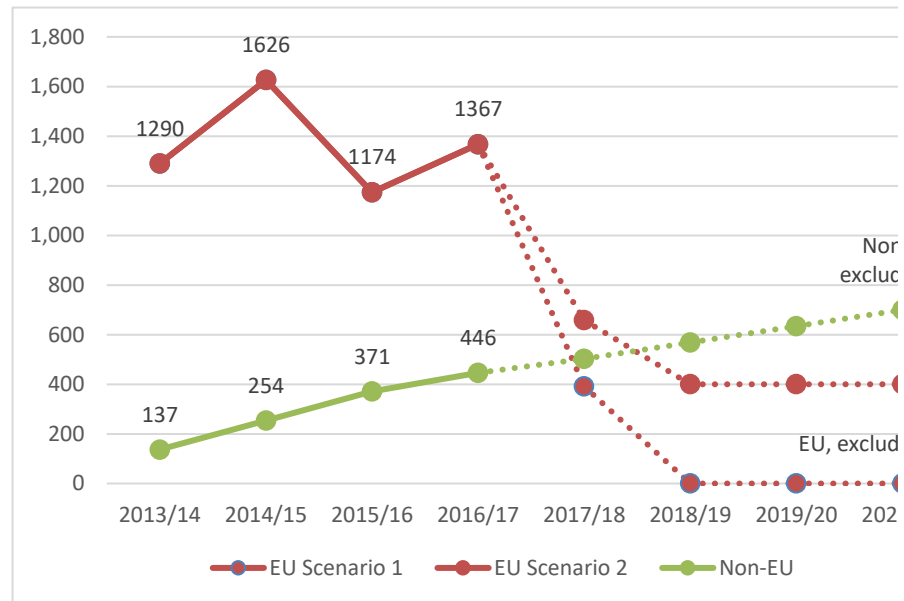
Fig. 3. Target total student numbers on TNE programmes (FTE and excluding single modules)



Source Qlikview and 2018/19 student number plan

Brexit presents a major threat to our international research income. We anticipate that we will not be able to participate in EU programmes after 2019. There may be some arrangement where we are able to access funding as a partner country and the UK government may develop further UK funding streams but we anticipate a decline in EU research income to be offset to a greater or lesser extent by UK research income.

Fig.4 International research and enterprise income (in £ thousands): two scenarios shown for EU income



HAVE A GLOBAL PERS PECTI VE

We cannot profess to be a global university whilst being insular in our outlook and we seek to attract the best academic staff regardless of their country of origin. We will:

- Ensure our talent attraction and retention activity supports international staff.

Key deliverables:

- Provide appropriate support for EU staff during the Brexit period to maximise staff retention (*PVC IRP, HR and Internal Communications - Develop ongoing support programme for EU staff and communicate legislative changes pre-and post-Brexit – Priority 1*).
- Review our talent attraction procedures to ensure they support the recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified international staff (*HR and External Communications – Priority 3*)

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

To enhance our students' global citizenship, we will enhance our formal **student exchange** approaches, as well encouraging alternative opportunities for our students to gain **international experiences**. Our planned deliverables that will achieve these outcomes are shown below:

ENHANCE STUDENT EXCHANGE	<p>The opportunity to study elsewhere provides memorable and beneficial experiences for our students and enhances future employability prospects. Despite current challenges, we shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review our exchange partnerships during the Brexit period to ensure opportunities continue to be available and seek ways to enable a larger proportion of students to take up international opportunities by breaking down barriers of finance, location and confidence and highlighting the employability benefits of cultural agility; <p><i>Key deliverables:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review exchange partnership arrangements and processes to identify popular options and barriers to uptake with costed recommendations (<i>International Office and Schools – Priority 2</i>) Seek new exchange partnerships where there is proven demand from XXX students (<i>International Office and Schools – Priority 2</i>) Ensure flexibility within [the UK University] Curriculum+ to allow study abroad (<i>PVC Student Experience</i>).
ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES	<p>New experiences bring new perspectives, which can increase the personal confidence and ambition of our students and help them achieve more of their potential.</p> <p>Research by Universities UK has shown that, nationally, there is a correlation between outward mobility and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in educational attainment (80% getting a 1st or 2nd compared with only 74% for those without an international experience); Increase in graduate level jobs (76% of those with an international experience getting a job, compared with only 70% for those who did not). <p>This difference is particularly pronounced for widening-participation and BME students. E.g. graduates from more disadvantaged backgrounds who were mobile during their degree earned 6.1% more, and those in work were more likely to be in a graduate level job (80% compared to 75%) than their non-mobile peers.</p> <p>We shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer a wide variety of international experiences to [the UK University] students in the UK, including opportunities for

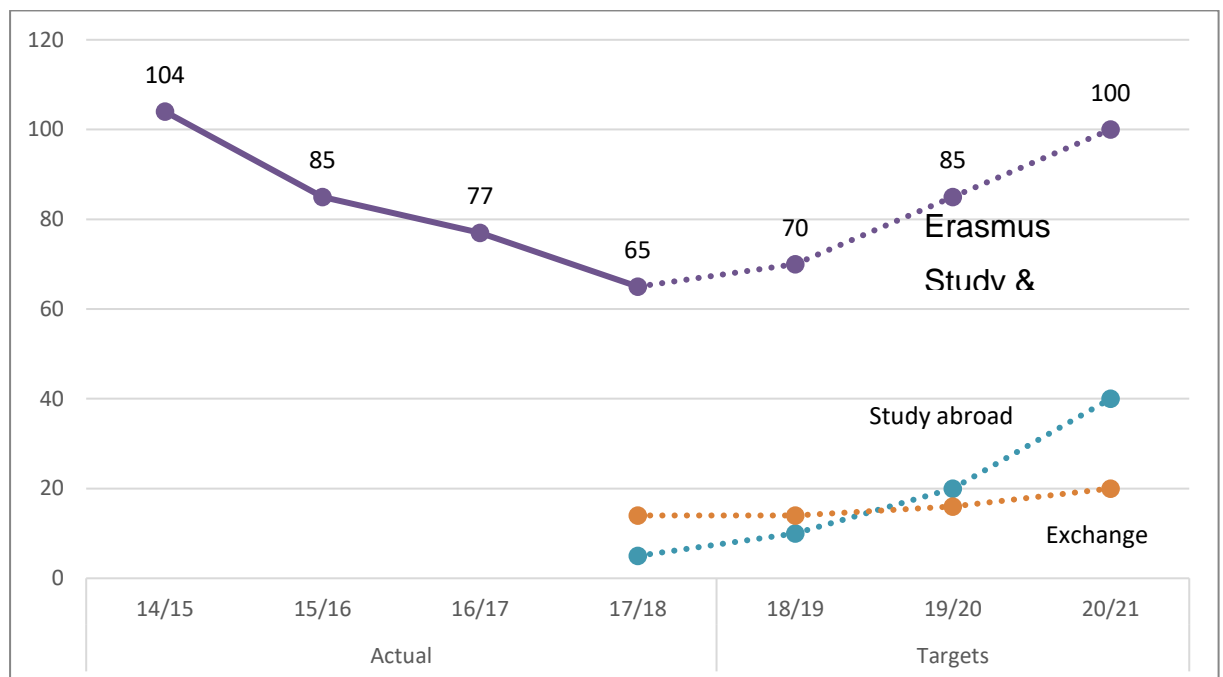
-
- exchange, short-term cultural experiences, language acquisition, international mentoring and volunteering abroad;
- Give [the UK University] students the opportunity to build global citizenship values that enhance employability and the ability to express these attributes.

Key deliverables:

- Review, refresh and communicate international experience opportunities through [the UK University] Curriculum+ (PVCs IRP and Student Experience – Priority 3)
-

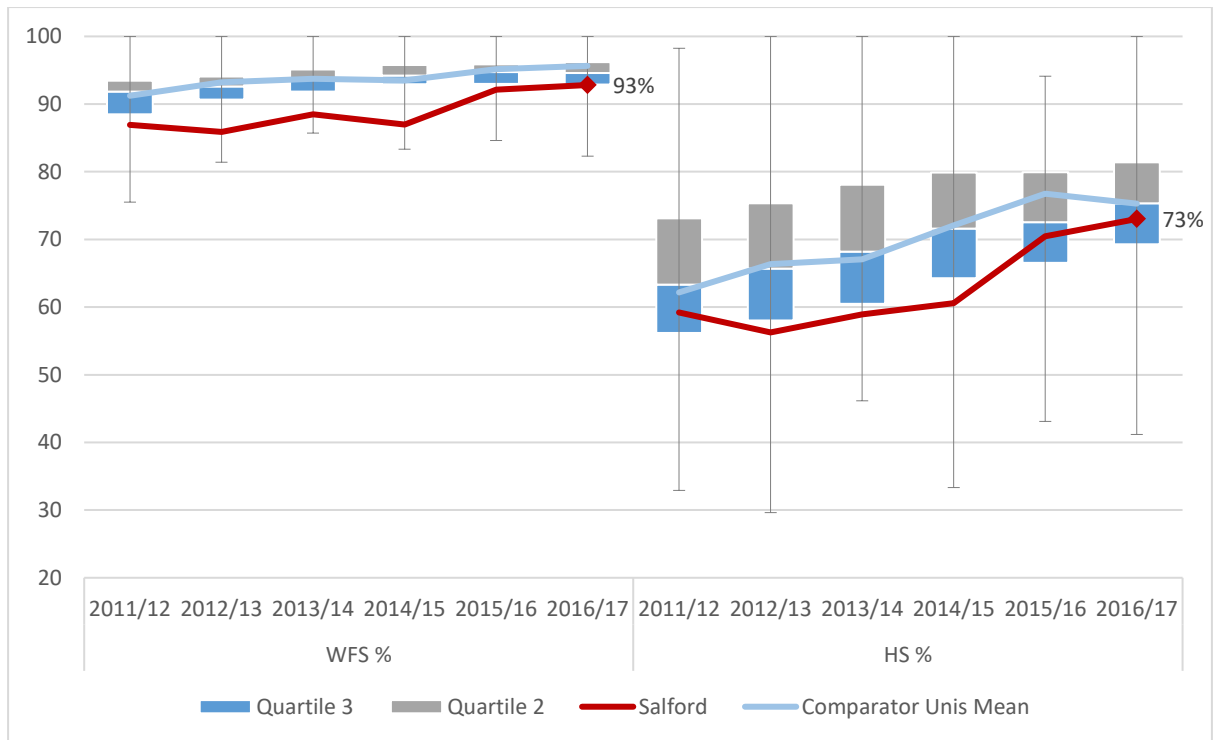
These efforts will lead to improvements in mobility and employability:

Fig 5. Outward-bound student mobility (Erasmus)



Source – Banner & IRD

Fig 6. Employment and further study (relative to the sector)



Source – Destination of leavers from Higher Education

SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS

In order to ensure the necessary skills to deliver the strategy are in place, there will need to be closer working relationships between the recruitment staff of the International Office (within MER) and the International Partnerships staff (in ABDO). To this end, the International Partnerships team will become part of the International Office as of 1 October 2017 and the full team will move to ABDO under the PVC International and Regional Partnerships. As of summer 2017, the International Partnerships team is carrying significant vacancies but this gives an opportunity to revise roles to ensure the necessary skills and expertise are in place to enhance support to Schools and contribute to specific market strategies by having greater integration with the international recruitment staff.

A new International Operations Group has been formed in summer 2017 which meets monthly, comprised of PVC IRP, Associate Deans International, the Chair of the Collaborative Provision Committee and relevant Professional Service members. This group acts as the gateway for new international academic and enterprise partnerships, monitors scholarship spend and effectiveness, agrees market strategies and monitors partnership performance. This is intended to facilitate greater coordination and expertise and remove barriers to effectiveness.

MARKET PRIORITISATION

Tier 1 markets and regions are those where [the UK University] already has a track record in recruitment and our offer matches demand but there is further potential and sustained resource is needed. Currently the only significant TNE partnerships are in Malaysia and Sri Lanka, but there is potential in both Tier 1 and Tier 2 markets to develop this significantly due to local skills deficits and industrial strategies such as Thailand 4.0, ASEAN free movement of labour and underperforming HE provision. Tier 1 is characterised by having new student intakes in [the UK University] of over 40 per annum (currently China and Malaysia slightly are below this) and where in-country provision is possible, a target of 500 students per market concentrated in 5 partners or fewer.

Tier 2 markets will need further development with the intention of moving them up to Tier 1 performance in either direct recruitment or TNE during the period of this plan. Across both tiers there is the opportunity to leverage direct recruitment through TNE arrangements such as articulations.

Other markets not mentioned here will be considered either niche for a particular School and therefore not centrally resourced or not a current focus unless there is a significant opportunity with minimal resource requirement needed. Annual review of targets will allow for future diversification once there is capacity and the justification to resource this.

TNE activity will focus on articulation, franchise and validation arrangements and occasionally flying faculty where this is sustainable and does not affect the home student experience. Blended learning will be used as institutional digital capabilities increase. We will not seek to enter into arrangements that require significant capital investment outside the UK e.g. joint venture branch campuses.

Tier 1 Markets

Market	TNE priorities	Recruitment
China		
India		
Gulf, Egypt, Jordan		
Malaysia/Singapore		
Sub-Saharan Africa		

Tier 2 Markets/Regions

Market	TNE priorities	Recruitment
North America		
SE Asia excluding Malaysia		
Hong Kong		
EU		
Sri Lanka		
Columbia, Peru		

INDICATIVE ICZ Priorities

ICZ	Markets	Key Priorities
Digital and Creative		
Engineering and Environments		
Health, Wellbeing and Society		
Sport		
Business		

Appendix G – Partnership stage one form

For consideration at SEG and in the case of international partnerships IOG

	School(s) (Identify lead school if appropriate)	
	School Sponsor/Proposer (e.g. Dean, Associate Dean)	
	Proposed Programme Title(s) (including final award)	
	Academic Lead for Programme (e.g. Programme Leader, Academic Link Tutor)	
	IRD Lead (e.g. International and Regional Development Officer)	
	Partner Name and Country	
	Type of Education /Business Provider (e.g. FE, HE, private, state-funded, university, college, company)	
	Type of Partnership (See CP Procedure ⁽¹⁾)	<p>Tick all relevant boxes:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Franchise</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Joint Award</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dual Award</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Validation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Progression Agreement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Articulation Agreement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Off Campus Delivery</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Off Site PhD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Split Site PhD</p>
	Projected Student Numbers (minimum and maximum projected numbers for a forecast of three years)	
	Partnership Status (Confirm whether this is a new partner to ... If not then give details.)	<p><input type="checkbox"/> New</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Existing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extension/Amendment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Re-approval</p> <p><i>If you have ticked extension or re-approval please provide date of original approval below:</i></p> <p>Date:</p>

	Brief outline and rationale for Proposal including alignment to School and University Strategic Vision <i>(In the case of an extension or re-approval, please provide an overview e.g. student numbers to date, progression information and financials.)</i>	
	Identify the key benefits of the Proposal	
	Identify initial risk assessment <i>(State risk level)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
	Identify key potential risks of the Partnership, their likelihood, impact and mitigation. <i>(Factors to be considered include location of Partner, tax implications of working in this country, level of risk of bribery, corruption, slavery or human trafficking, Partner's level of previous HE and collaborative experience, scope of collaboration, non-delivery by the Partner, etc.)</i>	
	Does this country feature on the financial sanctions list? https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-sanctions-regime-specific-consolidated-lists-and-releases	
	UK/International Partners <i>(Has the organisation collaborated with, or is it currently collaborating with, any other UK /International organisations? If yes, please list.</i>	
	Potential impact on existing partnerships. <i>(does the University already operate/or has is operated in this location) If yes, please list and include relevant schools.</i>	
PROGRAMME PROPOSAL		
	Programme Status	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing
	Mode(s) of Study <i>(Indicate those applicable.)</i>	Tick all relevant boxes: <input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Distance Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Part-Time <input type="checkbox"/> Blended Learning
	Programme Delivery Details <i>(Indicate proposed commencement dates)</i>	

	Entry Requirements (Indicate standard entry requirements.)	
	Language of Study (If language is other than English, please provide a rationale.)	
	Variation from approved awards (Will the proposed delivery vary from the programme as delivered at ...? provide a brief outline of any variation)	
	Are there any requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) to be taken into consideration? (If so give details.)	
	Are there any specific in-country requirements which would affect the proposed Partnership? If so give details. (e.g. Government requirements or Quality Assurance Agency restrictions.)	
	Estimated Financial Considerations of the programme (Include either RSI1 or financial statement depending on partnership typology, tax implications must be considered)	
	Confirmation that estimated financial benefits have been agreed by finance Signed: Name: Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	
	School Executive Group (SEG) has confirmed that:	
	•	
	•	
	•	
	Comments, Recommendations, Observations of SEG.	
	Approved by Dean of School (or Nominee) on behalf of School Executive Group	
	Signed: Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	

	International Operations Group (IOG) (International Partnerships Only)
	Conditions, Recommendations, Observations of IOG.
	<p>IOG to confirm here (with rationale) whether a site visit is required. <i>(Criteria to be considered in establishing whether or not a site visit is required include: the status of the proposed partner institution; whether it is a new or existing partner; its experience of HE Collaborative Provision; its approach to ethical and legal compliance within its business and the risk level of the proposed provision.)</i></p>
	Proposed source(s) of funding for the site visit:
	Approved by International Operations Group
	<p>Signed:</p> <p>Name: Click or tap here to enter text. Date: Click or tap to enter a date.</p>

Appendix H – Pilot Questionnaire

Demographics & RQ5

Which institution are you from?

How would you describe the partnership? PG/UG franchise etc, Dual Award, Intensive programme etc

Please describe your level of knowledge and experience?

What is your role in the partnership? Please describe your main activities?

Senior Management? Link Tutor? Academic? Support/Professional services? Project leader?
Other?

Please describe your main activities within the partnership?

What is your personal motivation for engaging in the partnership?

If multiple roles – does your motivation differ between partnerships and why?

How important do you feel the partnership is and why?

If multiple roles – does the importance differ between partnerships and why?

Nationality or Ethnic identity?

Typically, how much time do you spent visiting the partner per year?

RQ1 - How do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders, and what are the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances?

How does your institution develop its International Strategy?

Who do you perceive as the main stakeholders in strategy development?

Overall, what do you consider as the main benefits of Institutions engaging in international partnerships?

What do you think are the main risks involved in partnership development?

RQ2 – What role does culture play in the relationship of the partnership?

Are cultural differences a factor in partnership development, implementation, and maintenance?

Have you come across any examples of where cultural differences have caused an issue in the relationship?

Are you aware of any models to describe and inform Cultural difference? for example the work of Gert Hofstede?

Do you use them to aid relationship development?

RQ3 & RQ4 – How are international developments managed, maintained and supported?

How are international developments managed, maintained, and supported?

RQ5 – What are the barriers the institutions face at national, institutional and individual levels?

What are the barriers (if any) the institutions faced in the partnership so far?

If applicable, were these successfully resolved? By whom?

Has the relationship improved over time? If so, how?

RQ5 – How effective is the support and communication?

In relation to your role(s) How effective is the support and communication?

If this could be improved, what changes would you make?

Summary

In relation to any other partnerships outside of this partnership; how would you compare them?

Any further comments?

Appendix I – Full Transcripts of interviews - all participants

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Simon (Interviewer)

So basically, the interview will be broken down into 5 main sections with questions in each. So the first one really is a little bit about demographics and also about your own personal motivation.

The next section is about how do the institutions develop their international strategies. So in this case, the UK Business School, what role does culture play in the relationships with the different partners and how do international develop how our international developments, sorry, managed, maintained and supported and Section 5 is, what are the barriers the institutions face and how effective is the support and communication?

So we shall begin. So for the record, you're from the UK Business School. So basically, how would you describe your role?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I'm the lead administrator for all the partnerships within the school.

Simon (Interviewer)

So every international partner comes through you... So within the partners that you manage, are there different types of partnerships, are they categorized into primarily franchises?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

They're all franchise. So it's our material. Our QA process is everything the partner just literally teaches our materials and then we have one which is a new partner that is not a franchise. So it's affiliated I think not sure the correct term where it's their material.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So the ones within the focus from the franchise side from my perspective would be for you, Malaysia, Ghana and Switzerland.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. And they're all franchises.

Simon (Interviewer)

So when we're when I'm asking the questions, you may want to refer to say in Ghana or swiss. This is the case because what I'm one of the things I'm trying to do is identify if there are different issues between different partners.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you may want to answer the question multiple times.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

But different partners, OK, so just some demographic details. So how long have you been working in the international environment?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And since 2014, so eight years.

Simon (Interviewer)

We're looking at eight years, so you're well experienced in that.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Well, all the partners. And we've only had them since 2014.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

So nobody else has done this role. It was a new role created for me.

Simon (Interviewer)

Right. So you are actually key in the development of all the partnerships from the absolute beginning. OK, that's brilliant.

Simon (Interviewer)

So can you just describe as best as you can your main day-to-day duties? I know this may take a long time to go over, but what are your main responsibilities within that role? What kind of things do you have to do?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And well, the communication with the partners. So there is daily either teams, messages or emails. I would say not a day goes by when I don't engage with a partner. You've got prep and for example boards, so all that goes with that you've the registration of the students, Blackboard sites and it all sort of merges in and you know you can be doing all that in one day.

But the communication is probably the biggest one. Where they'll email you, you know you'll see an email first thing in the morning. Because the majority of them are ahead of us, so by the time I log on there even nearly finished another halfway through their day, so you know, I don't know from one day to the next, you know, way although I'm I plan things get, you know, sprung upon you... react when the partners asking the question or a student... And Yeah. So Good communication.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. That's great. So within that, who do you liaise with within the Business School?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Within the Business School I will liaise with my other colleagues who are looking after the programmes that run at the partners cause the programmes are identical. I liaise with them some link tutors depending on the on the issues and I could be liaising with your associate Dean academic student experience. Module leaders and whoever I need to whoever need to liaise with, to do my job, but a wide range of people.

Simon (Interviewer)

And do you find that you have to take quite a level of responsibility in making the decision on who you actually contact?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And in the majority of cases, I I probably have to make the decision myself.

Yeah, some people you contact are better than others.

Well, in a in you know, some in some instances your you're presenting them with the solution.

Well, you need their say so to go ahead with it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Is that something you find quite frequently that you you're turning to work out the answer from your experience?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

It's yeah, I worked out the solution before I approached the person.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so that's quite a level of responsibility.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's great. So moving on from that and the next section within this part is really about your own personal motivations doing the job that you do. So do you get any self motivation for doing it or is this a something that you have to do just purely because?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

No, it's a challenge. I like it. It's a challenge. Over the last 7-8 years made significant improvements. I've liaised with the wider stakeholders, our central services, because initially it was an us and them. So it's much easier now that I've made friends with them. So we have changed a lot of things. You know with regards to the Swiss partner where they have lots and lots of students

and lots of. I streamlined all their course reference number CRN numbers to make it easier.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Oh, the motivation. The motivation. Yeah. No. Yeah. No, I am motivated by it because although it can be frustrating at times, there is a sense of achievement when you've, you know, you you've gone you when you solved a problem.

Simon (Interviewer)

Sure.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And, you know, I've had to liaise with QEO QMO, the quality management and then a lot of occasions and I've just gone directly to them.

And you know, go back to your further question, your earlier question. It's easier for me to go directly to them than to go through the proper channels because I know what I want. And by the time if I go straight to queue, they'll listen to me and they'll do it. Whereas if I go, you know, if I go the correct way, I won't get what I need.

And yeah, I have made, I think what was to sit down and write at all. It is completely different to when I took it over.

Even down to the Swiss one. And you know, initially that was a one year program. And then we realized that they weren't really finishing in one year. So we got it extended to three and that was me. You know, I had to go through the proper channels and then we realized that, you know what? They weren't finishing it in three years. So it's now 5.

So all of that took time, but it just makes it easier.

Simon (Interviewer)

So given that example that you're talking about, you're clearly referenced the fact that you use our proper channels, but you're having to identify the problem in the first instance.

And then you begin that process of moving it through the proper channels. Is that a relatively straightforward thing to do?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah. And well, because I'm so close to it and other people wouldn't see the problem.

Or the people wouldn't know there was a problem. So I'm with this, you know, every day. So I know when there's a problem that I need to get fixed.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so keep it on that subject. I'm I'll introduce a term called a hybrid

relationship. So in other words, what I mean by that is you work with a relatively close knit group of people at both the partner and your home institution.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is that the most effective way that you see it working that you're actually just dealing with a small group of people together, who know you who you know them and you know the systems as opposed to following a linear?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

It's they. They are quite complex partners, partnerships and the systems we work with aren't that good, they're not really user friendly, so you've got to go in and find a way around them and you know.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Trying to think of the role she had the quality administrator though in the school who in inverted commas responsibility for that, you could argue, would have sat with her or them. The role is no longer there now.

So I would have just wasted my time even going in that direction so it was easier for me to go to where I could get the problem sorted. Because they didn't understand it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect. As again, just staying with motivation, does it differ between partner to partner? Do you have better working relationships with some rather than others or is it very equal?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I've good working relationships with all the partners. I yeah, I I have good working relationships. Some are better than others. And you know the Swiss partner in my opinion, will always follow The UK University, our lead, and they'll do what we want them to do as long as we tell them. The Ghana partner tends to go off on their own tangent and you end up having to reign them back in. And not just me. But you know academics as well. And the Malaysian partner, they're a little bit like the Swiss partner, they will do what we asked them to do. The Ghana one can be tricky.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, that's great. I'll probably come back to that a little later, but no, no, thanks for that. That's that's really good.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

How important do you feel the partnerships are and why?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Say that again.

Simon (Interviewer)

How important do you feel the partnerships are to the institution?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And I think they are important because they.

I suppose it's because they're all international. It probably fits our international portfolio.

We could probably do more with them than we do. We could probably use them more.

And the typical, you know, would be the Swiss partner and the residential that we have.

We have a captive audience for a week of highly successful, motivated Business people, managers, etcetera. But we've never really, we've never really capitalized on them. We could have done.

If we didn't have them, I mean, one of the partners is lucrative financially.

Which I think that's what we are looking for now? Sort of negate the other ones. They might be making money because one of them is.

As to whether we would still retain the other ones.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so there is a little bit of an imbalance.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

There's an imbalance, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, but there's there seems to be from what you're saying, a driver for it being very financially beneficial for one.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

A good partner, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And they're not so financially beneficial.

But the others? Do you think there's any other benefit that comes from the other partners? They're not so financially beneficial ones?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

For being honest, I mean, somebody else might tell you another. I, I would say no.

You know, looking at it like, we're not really getting anything from. The other partners, really.

Other than that, I think they're getting more from us, an awful lot more from us than we're getting from them.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. So again, just ready to summarize for you and my clarity. So some of the partners that are not necessarily financially lucrative, they get to award but they get to run a UK degree and therefore they're attracting more students into their institution. Yeah. So for them it's a good kind of marketing.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah. Hmm, more beneficial for them than it is for us, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you think I mean, you've mentioned before about the alumni kind of idea events with the residential, do you think there's much work that goes on with the other partners as far as things like collaborative research is concerned, things like that?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Hmm.

I'd probably say no.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I think it from where I am from, from where I am? I mean there could be module leaders collaborating with Malaysia collaborating with Ghana, but I don't see any evidence of it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect. Thank you very much for that indeed. And one final one really on that level. How much time or what opportunities have you been given to visit the partners?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

At the at the start of my tenure, I did very well.

Anytime there was a new partner, the Swiss partner was already there when I started, although there was no one doing the administration for it, but it was there and up and running.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Am the other two partners the all the other partners I have been able to go to them at the beginning of the partnership when it was all signed, sealed and delivered and that was beneficial.

You know, I'll be it. You're only there for a couple of days, but it was an opportunity to meet them.

And then with the Swiss partner, I went regularly probably once, maybe twice a year.

And that is beneficial, I mean there is a perception that I would be seen as not senior enough to be to be you know going to these places or meeting these people. But at the end of the day I am on this, you know, 36 1/4 hours a week. I'm liaising with them the whole time so you know it, it is. It was beneficial to have met them in the first place. Because you just got a picture in your mind. You saw them. They, you know, the majority of those people are still there, you know, in these partners.

I only ever got to them once with the exception of Swiss. The exception of the Swiss one.

Simon (Interviewer)

I appreciate what we've just gone through a pandemic, so travel has been difficult, but are there any plans moving forward for you to visit the partners again?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Again, My role would be seen as not senior enough to be gone out visiting.

Simon (Interviewer)

So in a way, you think the visits now are primarily more strategic level visits rather than operational level visits?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Who knows?

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I would very much doubt that I would ever be going to going to a partner going forward.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. And flipping back to the motivation, was that what motivating factor for you that you were actually invited and you got to meet the partners?

For your own personal.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And it wasn't a motivating no, it wasn't motivating. It was just it was, it was beneficial.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I mean the fact that I don't go now probably doesn't really matter because I think it would be nice to, but I think you know with the pandemic has come teams. So you do see them at the at the Joint Board of Studies which you know, when the past I wouldn't have because it was always the link tutor that went to the Joint Board of study. Whereas now with the advent of teams, not for all the partners cause it don't get invited to all the joint forces studies, but certainly the ones that I do get invited to, you can see them. Albeit virtually.

So it's not the end of the world that I don't go over, but it was nice and it it's more beneficial at the start of the partnership.

Simon (Interviewer)

But even now you see, with the advent of teams and the new online way of working that it, it's actually helping.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Teams is helping with absolutely helping with the partners. Yeah, for in my opinion.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that that's great. And it leads me on quite nicely what you're saying there into the next section, which is how the institutions develop their own international strategies. Yeah. And also within that, what are the perceived benefits of strategic alliances.

Have you ever been involved in any of the consultations leading up to?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Not lately. No. I may have been in the past, but certainly not, not now. Now I would just get told there's a there's a partner would be up and running.

And I would just be told. Its just on the Grapevine.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So from your perception, who would you believe are the main stakeholders then in in that process in developing new?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

In the process, at the moment I would probably say it's probably very high up the chain. I think it will probably be the associate Dean International.

And maybe the deputy Dean. I think it in the school, I think because I don't even think now link tutors would be involved to that level. I could be wrong.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, now.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

They might just be, they might just be approached when they when we've got the partner.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I mean it. I I give you an example of that and I won't mention the power it wasn't an international partner, it was a partner we had in the past that never really got many students, it dwindled out, phased out. The partnership was dissolved and the partnership was, I don't know, what's the word you use closed it and then low and behold two years ago there were back with the promise of loads and loads of students and didn't happen.

Simon (Interviewer)

And was that the same group of people that instigated the original?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

No.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

They, they depart, left or gone on to pastures new, so would have been the new the new one. Yeah.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

So there was no. I mean, nothing would have made any difference. But you know I wasn't. You know, the there was no communication. It was just how I mean. I must admit, I was gobsmacked when I when I saw the partner.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that's perfect. Great example. Thanks.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

The next one really is about the main benefits of for the institution engaging with these international partners and what I'm thinking here is around some general key areas. Do you think that the actual students are considered at this point?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Who? Who's who's students?

Simon (Interviewer)

The partner students.

00:25:53.020 --> 00:26:02.590

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah, yeah, I'm sure they are. Because when they do the due diligence when the partnership, when the going through all the all the need to do to set the partnership up.

They want the students at the partner college to have a similar experience to the on campus students.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. No, that's good. I'm do you think it affects things like global branding, accreditation?

Research.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I think the partner benefits more than we do think the partner can with the you know, with the UK university you know you can see it you know when, specially in Sri Lanka, you know you'll see it as you're going along, all the billboards outside if I think the partner gets more than the university does.

Simon (Interviewer)

And the university potentially could benefit. But we're not really going down that road.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

It depends. Yeah. there could be opportunities for collaboration between academics.

You know in the university and the partner there must be some international research that could do.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Well, I'm not saying they don't do it, but you know, I, you know, don't see any evidence of it.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, that that's perfect. Then what do you think the main risks are involved with setting up a new partnership?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I presume the university has all the necessary steps to ensure that that everything is above board and you're relying on the honesty of the partner. They give they give minimum numbers to of the numbers. Students at the partner can enrol. But they don't necessarily follow up when they don't.

And it can be reputational risk. You know, we have had external examiners and criticize our partners.

Because of the standard of the work, the this you know because bear in mind we give them access to the partners blackboard sites and you know they did say at one of the exam boards that we are risking our reputation with some of these partners.

Because you're you're taking them all on trust. Really.

But you don't know, regardless of, regardless of what they show you at the initial in the initial part.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah, it's reputational risk, I think because you don't know what the partner is doing.

I mean, I saw when one of the visits to Ghana, when they visit prior to that, they've gone out to do the, what do you call it? The validation, whatever and the rest and the the pictures that came back were the great and the good, you know. And it was in a lovely.

Kind of. I don't know. Lovely venue, shall we say? But when we went out for the visit, the great and the good were nowhere to be seen. And we were in a completely different part of the of the University of the College, whatever they called.

Yeah, we have had instances where they're not doing what they're supposed to do. We like, you know, we tell them about how to do moderation, and you must do this, and you must do that.

And then when it comes to, we realize they haven't done it properly.

Are the are the students somehow have got marks?

But there's nothing on Blackboard, so I think they're the risks.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

That's really, really good. So you see a financial risk for some partners. But the big one is reputational risk.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Reputational risk and as I say, one of the externals did point it out, you know.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's great. It leads me on nicely to the next set of questions, which is what role does culture play in the relationship with the partners, so in other words, I have you noticed any cultural differences between the partners and the UK that that maybe potentially be a positive or a negative?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And well, the big thing is the is there feast days and their High days and holidays and I remember the Malaysian part. And I remember when we went out to see them Just as there we were about to start and that was one of the things they mentioned because Malaysia had three different cultures, there was Chinese, there was Malay, there was Indian, I think, and they all had their own these days. So they were worried in case you know, they might have to move assessments. They might have to start early, start later. They also were heavily regulated because this is one thing I've noticed with some of the partners. They're heavily regulated by their qualifications and their country.

So even though they are following hours. They have to be mindful of theirs.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And that has caused that has been tricky.

And we we assured Malaysia that we would take their holidays into account and we do.

And we take them into account when we're setting the exams. But what I've noticed lately is people are forgetting this.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And I have had problems, particularly this academic year with certain tutors kicking off because Malaysia are submitting a week late. And they're going everywhere, complaining. And then, you know, big, long emails and. And in

reality, they're perfectly within the rights we, we, we, we we always said we'd be flexible and all it needed all it needs to be is the module leader there to our module leader here and come to an arrangement but some people here are not.

You know, they're not respecting the other partners culture.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, that's absolutely perfect. I mean on that, I mean it's a really good point. I mean, do you think people should be trained on this when they actually regardless of what their role is within the relationship with the partner, do you think there should be some training provided to them to actually let them understand some of the main principles about that culture?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

As you've said about holidays feast days, these kind of things you think people are actually aware of it or they're actually offered any formal training.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I wouldn't say a formal training. I think the closes we kinda get to is the partner provides their calendar at the beginning of the year.

That is shared with the link tutor, who shares it with the module leaders, but the emails not always read.

And yeah, I think after this year the there should be more emphasis.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

You know, we've had it. You know, we, we've, we've now got one at the minute with exams on the Friday for another partner which is not one of these partners who.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And Friday, is there a weekend?

If we've only got a, we've only got a week to do the exams.

And if you take Friday out, you're only left with four days.

And a lot of the accommodation in the university has changed, so it wouldn't be a case of scheduling first, second and third years in one exam because we, the university now doesn't have the capacity for that.

The big venues that we were used in the past are gone. They're no longer so.

Not obsessing, but you know the students at the UK institution are suffering, so to speak, because they might end up with an exam too, you know, morning and an afternoon one, whereas they wouldn't have if Friday could have been used. But the other solution to that is separate papers.

There's there a reluctance to ask academics to prepare two papers.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. it's perfect. And just from your own personal experience, are you aware of any Cultural models that exist that could help.

With potentially dealing with partners if you're not, it's perfectly fine to say no.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And what do you mean?

Simon (Interviewer)

There's been a lot of academic research on cultural difference between different cultures across the world, and they define kind of general characteristics of how a culture would behave in certain situations. Are you familiar with any of these?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Not really. I mean, you know, from my perspective, it's more about the days that a partner can't submit an assignment or do an exam. There might be a week where you know there's a like Malaysia have ... They have them. What do they call them? They've special Malaysian modules that they have to do. I think it's just. It's just given take. It's just work because the one thing I have noticed, well, the one thing I've always done from day one is it's a partnership. It's not. It's not UK telling them this is what you must do, it's a partnership.

The best way of resolving issues is to talk and to meet.

*Because I remember the Swiss partner back in the day. In the beginning that that was a little bit like the emails that were having now the big long emails and whatever. But as soon as we met with them
It it's much easier.*

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect.

You mentioned earlier that you had some potential difficulties with one of the institutions, Ghana.

Simon (Interviewer)

About them not really recognising what was being asked of them.

Do you think that potentially could be a cultural difference that they work?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And it could be it could be because when I went out there.

It struck me as being a very laid back culture.

Very, very much laid back. He like even on the day that we went to meet to meet them. And you know, like the half of them didn't turn up the, you know, they arrived in late, they were on their phones, they were way whatever. Now, you know we wouldn't do that. So I think.

Yeah, I think.

Malaysia is completely different, Malaysia's get everything right. Don't want to be making mistakes, you know, very conscientious. Ghana. they're very happy, aren't they? And then I don't think they realize the importance of what we're asking them to do. Like they never tell us when students withdraw.

No matter how many times I've told them.

And then you come to an exam board and you've got four or five students you've known marks for, and you go back and you say, ohh they left.

And again I say you must let us know because you know they get invoiced for those students, then they refuse to pay because the students are not there. So then our finance team, because I got one today, our finance team then have to organise a credit for them. So I don't know how you, I mean, you know. You know the link tutor for Ghana.

Given that, that's where he's from, probably he would be best placed to Inform them, shall we say?

But in a nice way, not in a, you know. You know what I mean.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, not that's absolutely perfect.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

So you know, instead of sitting down with them and saying, well, you know this, this is a would be OK in Ghana, but you know you must follow the rules and regulations that we've set down.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's that's perfect.

So I'll move on to the next part.

So this is really about how the international developments are managed, maintained and supported. OK, so do you know if there's a formal process for creating a partnership?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

There is. I know. Yeah, there is. But I wouldn't be involved in it. But there is one. There is like a many stages.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Do you know, do you know if there are specific colleagues assigned to that role?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I would assume that it would set width again in the school.

Initially I would imagine it sits with the Associate Dean International.

I think they would be the person who would instigate the partnership for want of a better word, or you might get somebody in the Central Partnership team might somehow know of a partner. So obviously I would assume that that's where they go to the associated in international.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so from that do you do you feel as though it's primarily driven from the senior management as opposed to individuals suggesting.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Well, I think in the past we had. I think a lot of our partners came via word of mouth from academics.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And I'm sure Susantha was instrumental in CIPM.

So it came, it would have come from him. I want to say Ghana must have somehow. The link tutor must have had a hand in that.

Malaysia have, I've heard different. Yeah, I think in the past, in the school, a lot of our partners have come from academics.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

That is, that has gone to the associate Dean academic and said.

But I'm not so sure that's happened that is happening now.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you think now new partnerships are being driven more as part of a strategy from the senior man?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

No.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I would say no.

Simon (Interviewer)

Are there any new international partners that you're aware of at the moment?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

They keep mentioning something in Hong Kong, but I've I've never seen.

Of no, and it doesn't even seem to be what I'd call a traditional partnership. It looks like one year.

And as I say, I wouldn't hear about that until you know, until it's all signed, sealed and delivered.

But I don't think it's top of their strategy at the moment.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, brilliant. So if moving away from the initial development, looking at the management, the maintenance.

Who do you think the main stakeholders are once a partnership is established.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

In the school.

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, and wider university.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

the partnership team. I think XXX and her team, I think.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

There are way more involved than they ever were.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I think, they've made they've made good in roads with the registration.

XXX. And they've made it easier for partners now to register.

And I think XXX being XXX just persisted until she cause there is a culture in in, in the university at the moment is if you want something you know, you are told no.

And you have to try and find a way around it until they say yes. But initially when you ask for stuff like even with those CRN's and there's a lot of stuff in the early years I asked for and I got a point blank, no, out of scope.

Simon (Interviewer)

Referring back to what you're saying before. So it's still people find that a solution and presenting it.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yes. Yeah. Oh yeah.

I know XXX now, who's got what she's calls the partners portal. We never had that before.

but that was her persisting.

Yeah. And I think if you know if there wasn't people like Lindsey and I, and I'm sure there are others, you know, we we'd still be, I'd still be operating, you know, the way we were in 2014.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. So it's not kind of leads me into the next one. Do you know how quality assurances is guaranteed when we're talking about the partners, the franchise partners?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

But again, it's the initial due diligence that they do. And then when they when they satisfy themselves that it's a, they're seeing their finances, they've seen their and then there's the accreditation visit or the validation visit.

I suppose all you're left with then is ensure is moderation and when it comes to example ours is moderation and then.

Yeah, because otherwise, you know, that's really that, that's the only way we have of knowing that they're meeting our requirements.

Simon (Interviewer)

You you mentioned earlier about being a participant in things like Joint Board of Study Stuff, student committees, do they fit into that process?

For the quality assurance.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Umm, but there's there's standard questions.

It depends on what you mean by quality assurance. I mean, you know, one of the things honest is they look at external examiners reports, but the way our external examiners reports are set up, they're very generic.

Like the the external could be commenting on a on a, on a module god knows where it's wrong because there is report won't say.

Simon (Interviewer)

So there are formal mechanisms such as the Joint Boards of study, etcetera. You have a standard fixed agenda that's basically passed down from top down. The we need to comply, but they don't necessarily.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Some is a local level and then there are desktop reviews.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And XXX does them. Desktop reviews, so like partnerships up and running two years. So she'll do a desktop review. And then there's the five year review which.

So I suppose that's an opportunity to have a look and say.

But apart from that, because I know with Ghana I know the desktop review Jane did through up quite a bit.

Simon (Interviewer)

Umm.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Of like problems.

Simon (Interviewer)

And do you think that the main stakeholders are involved in that desktop review such as yourself, the link tutor?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

There were involved in it in the sense where asked for information.

And we, I know with the Swiss one rather than the five year we were involved because we went to the meeting because they had a meeting and there was people from Switzerland there and there was thinking you were there. I was there.

You know you're good and you're bad partners who want to a better world, but there seems to be reluctance to get rid of a partner, shall we say.

Simon (Interviewer)

And the other experience of getting rid of a partner.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Well, we closed one in Sri Lanka, didn't we?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Because they just weren't, they just weren't fulfilling the numbers.

And but it took us a long time. We still we still we've we still have one student there.

Yeah, there is a. Yeah, there is a reluctance, I mean, and even the Sri Lanka one who we gave undergrad to and we ever got any more than six students.

They reluctantly, reluctantly finished it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. that's perfect. So moving on to the next section, you've probably answered a lot of this already in some of the previous ones. So you know maybe fairly quick, this one focusing on what barriers the institutions face either a national institution or an individual level. So if you take a national level, are there requirements from certain countries that the university needs to be aware of?

Aware of to comply to an institutional level, other issues that you're aware of that that cause problematic situations and then at an individual level, are we choosing the right people to talk to the right people?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I know one of the barriers for Malaysia is they're heavily regulated by their MQA.

So every time we make a little change that we think insignificant doesn't really matter.

They really struggle with it. You know, and we don't respond quick enough to help them with their.

You know, we ended up in a situation a couple of years ago where we moved on with new programmes , but because we hadn't informed them in time that we were changing our programmes , they ran their own. They ran the old ones.

For, you know, and that caused enough flow problem. So I don't think when we're making changes to our programmes we're not consultant not we're not letting the partners know well in advance.

And where we're telling them too late.

And, I mean that caused problems for everybody.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

You know A cause problems with our module leaders because they were delivering modules that didn't run anymore at the UK and we've a tendency to rush things, rush changes through and it has implications for the partners.

Although it isn't what it isn't one on your list, but the other partner, the Malaysia partner they're having none of. None of our changes. They want to be informed well in advance.

Even simple little things with Malaysia, where we might have changed the title of a module, we did something with a module and all they wanted was a simple letter.

And explaining why we were making the changes, but obviously the letter had to come from somebody senior, which is, which is, you know, I couldn't have written the letter and God loved them. It was battered from pillar to post before someone would write the letter.

Simon (Interviewer)

So following up on that, given your position does this come down to you?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Well, I did end up with one of them having to literally do it.

This had been the second request and the first. Sorry, the second instance, different modules and the first one had been resolved. They got their letter. And then the second time it came around, nobody would sign the letter. So I ended up adapting the original letter.

And then literally just sending it to who should have signed and just saying, well, you just sign this.

And they did. But then the then it happened a third time, different module and I don't believe it ever got signed.

Simon (Interviewer)

No.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Is like simple little quick wins and you can appreciate you can appreciate Malaysia. They want to do everything correctly. And for the sake of a signature, we're holding them back.

Simon (Interviewer)

Now, that's great that that kind of covers national institution and individual level perfect and it is a significant barrier.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So in relationship to what you do, how effective do you feel is the support and communication how much support do you feel you get to begin with to be able to do your role?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And well, I would probably say initially I got very little support. I think initially the, you know the part that there was resentment.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

And I think and particularly with the Swiss partner in the early days.

They needed the assessments and they asked for them three weeks in advance.

And in advance of the delivery of the module, which is, you know is reasonable request and at the time. My professional services colleagues, some of them were responsible for getting the assessments. And I really did struggle to get them from them. And there was like it was a real barrier. And even my line manager didn't support me. And that was no, I mean it it's it's changed now, but that was awful.

You know that was then. And like even now. Even at like if a request comes in, whether wherever it comes into in the university, whether it's admissions, whether it's if it the Swiss partner, they won't even read it, they'll just send it to me.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you're managing the process.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Absolutely, yeah, they were. I will get the email and I'll look at it and I'll think Oh my God, you could have answered this.

It would be. It would be a simple straightforward question, but because these are Partners it came to me.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that's kind of a bottom up approach to you in your role when you get something, how easy do you find it is to get authorization to do these things?

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

If you've got pass it up the chain.

To get authorization to do something you've got, you've come up with a solution to a problem, for example, and then you need to get authorization to implement it.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah, that's probably not a problem.

Because I've come up with the, UM, well, it depends now, doesn't it? In the past I would have said no. In the past I would have had no problem.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

You know, here's the problem. Here's the solution and it would have been OK fine. And there's a few barriers at the minute. There's a few barriers. Yeah, at

the minute where I know something is working and people are desperate to change it.

And they will probably succeed in changing it.

And I will. I mean one example and again it's not a partner is the moderation for both there's a perfectly acceptable one there at the minute and Someone senior has changed it.

Now I'm looking at it and thinking well. It's not my responsibility now moderation anymore, so it doesn't really affect me, so I'm not going to argue with, but that is an example something that's working and I'm probably gone off in the tangent now, but Yeah, I'd say no.

I mean, half the time, I don't even go to them.

You know, if I see a problem if I can solve it and as long as it's legal.

I'll just go with it. I won't even bother them.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

But I think the one thing that annoyed me last year was the was the pandemic and the residential when there wouldn't cancel it. It was perfectly obvious we couldn't hold it. And you know, but. But that was a decision I couldn't make. That was beyond me.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, I know. I understand that. I mean, I can imagine if you've got, say, the changes, big wholesale changes in programmes and they're going to impact on the partner, then that has to be implemented. I mean, is that a problematic situation?

When they go, I know they go through periodic programme reviews sometime.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Oh yeah, and well, I'm hoping. I'm actually hoping, hoping hoping that I I kind of get involved in that. Because I've seen. I've seen where that went wrong and I and I I didn't realize when they changed. I and I naively thought that they were making whole scale changes to the program. And you know, who am I to dispute that? You know, it was a review. It was a refresh or whatever. But I found out later that they didn't make the whole scale changes. They just changed the name of a module. And that caused me problems. Because, you know CRN's etcetera. Yeah, you just get wiser.

Simon (Interviewer)

Right. Well, that, that boils down to communication. So you if you're not involved in the process, then you don't have the opportunity to communicate your perspective.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So things that are happening at maybe a higher level?

Simon (Interviewer)

Brilliant. Perfect. That's great.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that's basically the end of it. It's just a if there's anything else you want to add that you don't feel as though you've covered in the Interview that is important.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

No, no, no. Let me think. Do you think there's we missed anything? Do you?

Simon (Interviewer)

You can always add more later.

UK - Partnerships Administrator

I mean it. It's I, think we made the best of what we've got.

We, we do a good job regardless of, you know what's above us, so to speak and like I mean I say this to you, but you know I'd love to see someone else doing what I'm doing.

You know, I really was. I would love to say achieve what I've achieved, but sadly no recognition.

And that's, I think probably, yeah, no recognition for like really for an I mean you know people used to say well you get paid so that's your recognition fine fair we I know we do but you know when you look around at other people and you know they've been rewarded for doing a lot a lot less but there is no recognition but the end of the day I only do it to make life easy for me and to make the partnerships work.

Simon (Interviewer)

I will stop the recording now.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Simon (Interviewer)

Everything is anonymous. You can have a transcript if you request one. That's fine. Just let me know and you can get a transcript to the final version. But basically, the interview will be broken down into 5 main sections. The first section is a little bit of demographic detail about yourself and your own personal motivations. ..the second part is how do institutions develop their international strategies? The third is what role does culture play? So that's cross cultural relationship management in the relationships and then the fourth point is how international developments are managed, maintained and supported. And the final part is what do you think of the main barriers the institutions face and how effective is a support and communication?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that's OK. OK, so the first point, and really this is just part of the demographic things. How would you describe your role within the institution?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I'm primarily partnership managing across UK and international partners across a wide range of typologies. Uh, everything from progression agreements, right the way through to franchise?

Simon (Interviewer)

And within that, who are you liaising with mostly with them is situation.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

So within the institution, it'd be ADI, or associate Dean Internationals associate Dean.

Ohm's Deputy Dean's quite a lot .. And... Pro vice chancellor yeah.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So just reflecting to yourself so clearly you're doing a senior role within the institution, you know, developing, managing these partnerships. How would you describe your level experience in in international? As such, how many years have you been working in this kind of field?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

In this role about four years, but before that, working in admissions with international students.

Uh, probably about 15 years in that.

Simon (Interviewer)

So quite extensive experience within that. Yeah. And within within your role, do you get much support as a as a team that you work within?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Yeah. So it goes from my line manager there line manager and then their line manager and then also got a small team that's supporting ourselves. We do work quite a lot with the recruitment teams. So both UK and international. And we've recently we do like outreach workshops with UK around how we can support those guys to support the schools. So they're in charge of bringing students in at level 4, and we would support with Level 5 and level 6 with progressions and articulations.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Do you work with anybody? You mentioned ADI's and deputy deans. Do you with people like link tutors in the faculty?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So for each for each for each of the partnerships, there should be a link to you to designated within each of the schools. And so we would work with them. Uh, as and when needed with your school. It's quite a lot of the time. It's the ADI that I'll manage that side of it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. And administration wise within the schools?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yep. So we're working with link administrators. So for your school XXX?

Simon (Interviewer)

And what kind of relationship is that? Is that very formal processing thing or is that more open?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

It's very open, so when XXX is having difficulties, she'll come towards on whenever we're having difficulties, will run things past. XXX, as to how it can work better.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. That's great. So do you find as with time... working with it with the schools you create like a your own personal network of contacts that you need to liaise with and what how would that typically develop?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. So when I first started in the role, it was a kind of working with XXX, quite a lot of the time to to work out what has happened with the partners,

what's in train with the partners and where schools want to go with, like the ADI. So trying to find the background off XXX and then where we want to go with the ADI.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, brilliant. Do you feel as though that that improves with time as you go through different things.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Some sometimes it it does with some of them and others are still a little bit standoffish. Both in that that's primarily where we've had issues with the partners. So we've closed quite a few in Sri Lanka. So we've closed IHE and CIPM don't look like they're doing too well at the minute. So we're trying to confirm with them that they can meet the minimum numbers that we need them to meet in order for it to be.. A viable partnership?

So some of the link tutors, it is still a little bit standoffish. Others like yourself a brilliant you can come to where you can have a conversation, you can go away and work out what you need to do. To be able to help them to manage that little bit better.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's great. So so in a preferred environment you like that that closed it group within one partnership that you can go to and get straight answers from basically.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Reflected on that, then is it? Do you feel it's very much processed driven or is it more let's just manage a situation as and when we come to it?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No, I think it's every, every, every partner is different. Setting them up is quite... Kind of clunky... And we have to follow the due diligence processes that we have... But when it's actually established and we've got a contract in place... Every, every partnership is managed differently... So be for instance will have a lot more contacts across the four schools than what any other partnership I work with. They demanded quite a lot of time.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's absolutely great. I mean, it leads me into a a little bit into the next section, which is about your own personal motivation. I mean, what what motivates you to do? What do?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Obviously, the wages, the wages of factor.

Umm, but I actually enjoy the work. I like solving problems and being able to make things work.

Simon (Interviewer)

And do you feel that it's predominant because it's international or would that be the same within your?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No, because you UK, UK is exactly the same. So obviously as things develop, so some of the partners we've had for quite a long time. And the relationship has changed, people involved in it and where we're making recommendations that we need to change, typology, say. I arrangements so that they better reflect the needs of the university. a kind of balance out the partnership. Some of the partners... have had quite a good ride... And we haven't been... Getting our part of the partnership we're running around like headless chickens, but we're not actually getting anything out of it apart from a headache. So trying to change the way that we work with some of the partners is crucial.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so let you know from that a little bit. Then do you feel as though the institution, the universities motivation is really developmental or is it financial or is it branding? What do you feel as though the institutions motivation is for international partners?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

If we look THE BAHRAIN UNIVERSITY... That I think's one that I've had most involvement with, that I think is developmental. It's trying to change not only the education, but also the culture ..Within the country now we have had some objections to people not wanting to work with THE BAHRAIN UNIVERSITY... Because of, like human rights issues in the country... for me that one is developmental. Yes, it's fine. I'm sure we're getting money in.

We have minimum numbers in the contract, but we're actually trying to make an impact in that small country.

Simon (Interviewer)

And you said that was different for some of the other partners? So if you're predominantly think of franchise, the franchise model, somebody like the Swiss partner, would you say that that is predominantly financially driven? From your perspective.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I think so, yeah. But it says it's kind of online. It's global. You know, actually impacting in just one area. Yes, quite a lot of the students will come from Africa regions.

It's more about how our THE SWISS PARTNER deal with them, whereas with THE BAHRAIN UNIVERSITY the relationship is quite different.

We are. We are trying to... In some way support their staff to develop themselves to be able to... Run an institution.. and it is still, for me, it's still in that developmental stage.

Simon (Interviewer)

But you would definitely single that out as being different to the majority of the other partners within the institution.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep. OK, now that's perfect. That's great. And again, I know you work with lots of partners, but. On a yearly basis, how much time do you spend actually physically visiting the partners that say outside of pandemic?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I only do two or three trips a year. For me, it's more important for the link tutors to have that relationship with the partners because that's an academic to an academic level. I can do quite a lot of my stuff on teams if it's more the process stuff does, it doesn't need me to take money from the university to go and fly to them to tell them what they need to send to different people in the university that can be easily done on teams.

Simon (Interviewer)

But do you find in the initial stages of the development it's valuable for you to physically be there in the and in some negotiations?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Being around for the negotiations. Yeah, but that doesn't always have to be face to face.

there are ongoing conversations. It's not like you go out to a partner and you're set up within two weeks. Some of the conversations are going on for perhaps 2-3 months.

It just to kind of get to an initial point where you can say yes, this is valuable.

Because it's about building that relationship with people, which is why would rather have rather than it just being my team. Having people from the school that are going to be working with those partners as well. Because while we're all building that relationship, the trust is building. But as if I go and I can promise the world, but it might not academically be possible. And the same way, if an academic goes in and promises the world, it might not necessarily work.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, not as perfect. I'll probably come back to that later cause some of the questions you're answering already that come later on which is, you know, it's really good to see. So the next sort of stage of this is how do institutions actually develop their international strategies? Yeah. Who are the main stakeholders and what the perceived benefits of these strategic international alliances? Now, let's say you may have covered some of this already.

So how do how does the institution develop its international strategy, do you know?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Yeah. So, [Head of International], just been working on writing it all up.

Uh in terms of partnerships, we would look at... What kind of risk? We want to expose ourselves to. So do we want to keep going out and building franchises or do we want the students coming to the main campus? What do we think's better for the students?

Obviously it's more time consuming for everybody if you've got 15 franchises with very low numbers. It also makes them not viable quite a lot of the time in terms of the financial aspect.

And we have to making sure that the meeting, the minimum numbers that we've agreed at the very outset with the RSI one.

So at the moment we've kind of looked at do we want more students on the campus or do we want? More campus locations with partners. And that's been done in conjunction with the schools. And also with PVC.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that would be a representative from the school, typically the ADI, I would guess. Provost Chancellor [Head of International] has head of international and regional development.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yep.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yourself. Anybody else involved? in it?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Elena for Recruitment aspects.

Simon (Interviewer)

Oh, the recruitment side of it.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah, because quite, quite see these kinds kind of a join.

Uh. With ours, because we might say.

While we've got progressions and articulations, but to promote them it's better for the recruitment team to be going into those markets and presenting what the University of The UK University is. So either an academic from the school or one of the actual team in the central service.

Simon (Interviewer)

So this is a crossover between recruitment and partnerships. You know we're supporting the partnerships by physically going out and promoting them.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

In that respect, do you know if that happens much?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

It doesn't at the moment, but that is the plan. So we've just recently set up a progression in, well, an articulation in Dubai. So that's with XXX University in Dubai. And the idea there is will include the XXX University of Bahrain, XXX University in Dubai and ourselves. So the students. Because when the same program in Bahrain or at The UK University, they could go to either.

Simon (Interviewer)

Alright, OK.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I bought. I've obviously, the recruitment team will be traveling through Dubai a lot more than what me and my team would... So the idea is that they can go in and give presentations on what the UK University is and also Bahrain staff can go out... And speak about what the University in Bahrain is.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is there a training plan behind that for the recruitment staff and the staff in Bahrain, etcetera?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Well, yeah, because they have they have, they have worked together before. So it'd be out who would be going out from Bahrain., And he's been doing recruitment events for both The UK Business School and British University of Bahrain.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Next, next question really lead leading on a little bit, but what do you think the main risks are involved in international partnership development?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Biggest ones, probably the reputational damage if it goes wrong. Umm. And then financial. The last thing any of us want to do is set a partnership up that that that isn't going to work. And sometimes it can be kind of driven... It's really important that we get this established, but if it's not going to work, we need to be honest with ourselves right at the outset... Umm. And it's also getting buy in from staff in the schools. So your skills great. You'll help with anything. Some of the other schools, the staff are a little bit more standoffish... In terms of wanting to make things work.

Simon (Interviewer)

We can see reputational damage and financial risk as being the major, major drivers behind the risk element. When it comes to actually creating the partnership from scratch. You feel as though it's a systematic approach across the institution. In other words, targeting specific markets and then people go out and try and find them. Or do you think it's more driven by individuals, knowledge and experience in relationships in the past, etcetera?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I think at the minute it's the latter. So it's driven by individuals in the institution. It'd be better if we knew the markets we wanted to go into and exactly what we wanted to do. So that's what we're trying to do with Vietnam. So we know that trying to set up something similar to be THE BAHRAIN UNIVERSITY in Vietnam isn't going to work because it won't be allowed, whereas we can work with institutions to help them develop their curriculum for the first two years and then bring the students across to the UK for the second two years.

Simon (Interviewer)

So would you say the specific strategies for you like or typologies that you would address for different markets when you look at the picture so?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah, yeah, yeah, because it depends. It depends on what is and what isn't allowed. So like franchising in China is a big no, no.

Then the financial implications of having a joint institute are a joint program are quite a quite tie in because you've got your staff resource having to do at least 1/3 of teaching. Uh, and then you've got to make sure that you get in the minimum numbers coming over for that last year to try and make it worthwhile.

Simon (Interviewer)

So given what you've just said... If a potential development opportunity comes from, say, an academic member of staff. Do you feel that sometimes you need to reject it off hand straight away because they don't know the legal implications? Or what is possible in an institution? Is that something that happens much?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

We try to scope it out with them first to try and work out exactly what it is they're doing or wanting to do and then give me information about what is allowed and what's not allowed and where we're getting that information from. So we work quite closely with the Department of International Trade.

I'm so at the moment we're working quite closely with staff in Hong Kong. Just try and get site visits done. Uh, because obviously we can't travel to Hong Kong and it's unlikely that we'll get into the country this year. But we don't want to keep partners on hold for that for that amount of time. And we also work quite closely with them in China. Rules change all the time, and different provinces have different rules. So where we get an academic that goes, I want a franchise this programme in China. That's kind of pull him down off the

ceiling and go. That might not be possible. But what we could do is something like this.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. I fully on board with you on that one.

OK, So what we're going to change direction a little bit now and again this may be something you know more of or less of, but what role do you think culture plays in international developments? Does it create opportunities or does it bring more barriers? I'm thinking really here about cross culture where we're talking about using a far away partner and their culture is really different to ours.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. Yeah, it can be. It can be very difficult. Ohh. China's great example. They work completely differently. Uh, so yeah, they, they work completely differently. So they like to do... And they're like to meet face to face and they like to do things over food. Quite a lot of the time when I'm going, this is just a nightmare because you want to have all the information to hand. Can't take all that to a dinner. I'm trying to get them to have conversations is quite difficult with some of the Chinese partners that we've got. It does help if you've got somebody in the country. That can have the conversations with more can be in the room with them while you trying to have the conversations. Language is also another barrier. Because English might not be the first language. And you've got somebody translating it. Things get lost in translation all the time.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Is this something that you've just picked up through experience or is it something that's sort of given to you as training?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

It's just picked up through experience.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, I do think that's the same across the board. Pretty much. Yeah. Do you think training would be valuable?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah and no. You ever know because you can't? You can't. You can't offer training for everything.

And I think in the roles that we have, you, you, you have to have a bit of common sense. And you have to be able to try and read how, how the room is. And what's going well and what's not going well? And I think that's part of the relationship management side of it... And it's more of a common sense thing.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I mean there are there are models of cultural difference out there, theoretical models. Are you familiar with any of these? No. OK. So you can categorize certain cultures by.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

These are readily available. You know, these are established bits of research and but a lot of them do eventually focus down to the importance of the individual. So from what you've just said, you think even though you will know there are some cultural differences with China to Peru, to Brazil, to Ghana.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's kind of down to the resourcefulness and knowledge and experience of the individual when they're opening up negotiations.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

That that's absolutely perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. So we'll move on to the next section. Our international developments managed, maintained and supported. And again, you may have already addressed some of these in your previous answers.

From your perspective, and I appreciate you know this more than most, is there a formal process for creating a partnership?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. So everything that we do has to go through the collaborative provision policy. And the reason for that is having different people signing off so that different people have taken a view on that partnership and whether it will succeed or it won't succeed. So it's never just on one person.

Simon (Interviewer)

And that goes through a series of stages committees.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. Yeah. So which first of all be looking for buying from the school and sign off from the school and also finance so that they're on board with that business case side of it. And then we'd be looking for academic approval.... From ADNPC so that that'd be like, yeah, you're Deans approval. Uh, or your ADA?

So I appreciate that there sometimes involved in your school executive group, but some in some of the schools are not. And it's kind of getting that different viewpoint.

Simon (Interviewer)

Umm, so you got the academic side of... Well, kind of. Will it work? Will it work? Academic .. is a value to this thing from the students perspective.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I we try, we try, we try to building the students perspective is it is it right for them. Can they? Can they do what we're asking them to do? And obviously a lot of that relies on the partner. Knowing the students that there going to be recruiting to the programmes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Perfect. And the other side of it, the legal and the financial due diligence etcetera that is.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah, and all of the quality assurance side of it as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that that's you working on that alongside the quality assurance office in the university. So there's lots of checks and balances made at a certain stage in the process before it can move on to the next one to say that this is viable. This is academically beneficial and then we can move on from there. Brilliant.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

I think you've mentioned really the people that are assigned to that role as we go through, where do you think are link tutor comes in in this?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

For me, Simon, this should be in place at the very start.

That's where we need a they're the ones that know the programmes .

And they're the ones that know if he's going to be any difficulties with anything, people can go. Oh well, I don't want to do that. That module in that order, but they'll be the people that will know if that can work on that program or not. And it's always better to have it there and then at the start, rather than getting all the way through the academic approval and then going. Yeah, that won't work. We need to change it to this... It's met in the partner about it's messing people in the school about it's not needed... It'd be far easier if that was the first person, so we're kind of trying to push in that anything that we're taking forward now, we're actually working with academics. Which in some schools is easier than others.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect.

So once, once you've got a partnership developed. It's gone through the process and everything like that. What's your view about the maintenance of the partner? Where does the roles and responsibilities lie with?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. So this is this is this is a really good question. So we sent out a bit of a survey last year to find out where... Everybody thinks things sit... Because every just goes well, it's partnership. So it's you and I'm going. I can't see a grosso to see how much money's come in from the partnership. I could tell how many students with that and what we should have had, but I can't see the detail.

So it's kind of trying to tie everybody in for me. I think you're finance manager in the schools really important because they'll be able to tell you if you're getting what you should be getting from the partnership financially and whether you can afford to keep running it. Yeah, joint boards of studies will be able to tell you academically whether it's working. And if there's anything that we need to be concerned about. You should also be getting feedback from external examiners. ...As part of the exam boards... And all the moderation stuff... I we're still trying to tie all these pieces together.

It's almost like a jigsaw puzzle and everything so far off each other at the minute.

And it's kind of trying to make people have conversations that are going. It's really shouldn't be this difficult. So we're trying to work more with the finance managers to say, right, we've just had this intake at this part, no... And this is how many students you should be invoicing for... X is brilliant. Because she will chase for that. Show me where to get the details so I can I can put it all in the invoice. Right. OK. And then she'll invoice, and therefore then it's kind of then remembering to let us know that invoices have been paid or not paid, so I'm forever chasing X we're going have all the invoices been paid that you've sent out. Is everything working for you?

Then we'll be speaking to Y to hear about is everything working academically.

Within the within the partnerships, if you had anything back from joint boards of studies, obviously we don't, we don't kind of we don't, we don't attend them and we don't need to from the partnerships team. It's really an academic conversation.

And your school admin.. Perspective as to whether they're getting everything that they need to be able to process the students through the system.

Yeah, that's all I can think of.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, that's absolutely perfect. I mean, so it's kind of a working progress and it's it.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

And I I think I think we're probably... I want to say 18 months off having something that works pretty well.

Simon (Interviewer)

So in your dream world, you'd have like a timeline flow chart. Responsibility feedback loops, all these kind of... Nice things everybody can understand and.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yep.

So that so that we know we know when like joint boards a study of took place. And we can, you know, these like central pool of where the Joint Board of study minutes are so that we can go in and go, everything's cracking the Ghana partner. It's great with THE SWISS PARTNER This this issue was The Malaysian partner. Is that going to impact on any other partner if we change the process here does that impact on anybody else?

It's having that kind of balance on it.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, so managing it is difficult without the information which I suppose is an obvious statement, but getting the information is not that easy necessarily. No, that's absolutely brilliant. You mentioned some of the things like Joint Boards study staff, student committees and that's kind of the quality assurance mechanism.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so again, this is moving on to not far from the end.

What do you think the barriers that institutions face for international developments that could be a national, international or even at an individual level.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Bigger biggest one is having you link tutor in place at the right time because there's nothing worse than somebody trying to pick it up and going I still don't know what that is. This is what do you need me to do with it. But being involved right from the start, you understand why we're doing it and you've got that buying from that person. To be able to do what they need to do. And I don't think personally, I don't think there's enough time given to that role. I think for what we need them to do. Every partnerships, different the size of

the partnerships is very different. At the minute, it feels like we're just giving one lump and going everybody's getting that.

But if you managing THE BAHRAIN UNIVERSITY, it's completely different to trying to manage CIPM, which is only small, or if you manage in our THE SWISS PARTNER, it's huge. There's lots of. There's lots of. There's lots of different programmes . There's lots of different conversations that as a link tutor, you would need to have ... across the school and across the different programmes and modules.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you think that this is communicated to the link tutors what their role and responsibility should be?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No. I don't think it is.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, I mean there are there is a role descriptor for the link tutor, but I don't think it's been looked at up for a long time.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I don't think it is at all.

Simon (Interviewer)

So maybe there is some confusion with link tutors duties about what they're primary function is.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

You've already mentioned things that are kind of national level where you've got different constraints from different countries about what you can physically do and what you can't do. Those are identified at a relatively early stage, so.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah... I'd like to think so.

Simon (Interviewer)

Institution wise, you do the due diligence. So again, institutionally everything should be acceptable, yeah.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Umm. I mean given your period of time that you're working and I'm thinking about barriers again, do you think some of the barriers have reduced through time as you've gone through working with the existing partners that we've got and also with a view to developing new ones?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I think it's easier than what it was, but I think that that's because your level of knowledge builds up over time. So obviously when I first started this role, I'd come straight in from admissions. So new people around the university in a new how admissions worked and how you got people through registration but I have no idea of what of what the school functions were.

And how things like.. Moderation processes assessment boards, what impact they have. If a partner misses them.

Simon (Interviewer)

So did you have a handover when you took on your current role?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

And if you were, for whatever reason, to leave your role now, do you feel there is sufficient policies, procedures, processes in place that the next person taking over would be able to take it away immediately and continue?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, so there's still a lack of.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Communication and effective kind of support in that respect to for people, it's very much still down to the individual to.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

use their initiative to make the contacts, develop the networks on and the process do you feel?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

But I think I think I think that that will always be the case because... Everybody has different working, working, working ways and... Relationship building... And you're not going to get on with everybody.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's an interesting debate, but I think your particular role is far more complicated than some others in the institution. I think some things do have a kind of standard process that they follow.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. Yeah, there's a lot of, there's a lot. There's a lot of ego stroking with mine...

Simon (Interviewer)

So the last bit is really a about the communication, the support from your particular roles. I imagine this is more about if you imagine you're looking up to the you know the university senior management, but also looking across to the academics and down through you know all the forms of administrative support, if you like.

For want of a better word... Do you feel as though it's effective? I think you've answered most of this already.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Nope.

Simon (Interviewer)

But you would say it's probably one of the major... Problems.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah, yeah. And the best example I can give you for that is shape of the academic year. The fact that decisions are made at the top and... Somebody might send an internal communication.

But then that's not kind of discussed... at exec level to then be fed down to the different director areas? So we're in a position now where we're trying to work out what the partners are doing.

And that's kind of... Kind of fall into me a mighty and we're going. I cant have these academic discussions...I don't know how this is all going to fit in. I don't teach on the programme. It's really difficult.

Simon (Interviewer)

Then yeah, no, no, I'm. I'm with you.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

And we've kind, we've kind of tried to bring the link tutors in. So we wanted a meeting... With all of the link tutors across the university and there's 40 odd of them... And it was like, no.

I'm going... do I then need to go and tell them what's happening with each of their partners?

And I'm going. I'm copying them in in communications because they need to know that we're writing out to them if they're having conversations, and we're having conversations, we're all going across wires.

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean it's a perfect example that the shape of the academic, the new shape of the academic year, I mean within that presumably you have to take

account, not you directly, but the institution is taking account some of the cultural differences. So in other words, they've got different holidays, religious festivals, etcetera. How's that fed back through? Are you aware of any process?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

We've kind of rolled out to all the partners and it was a bit of a... Can you tell me that you've had a look at the academic calendar? And can you tell me you're aware that teaching starts a week earlier in September? And can you tell me that you're aware it starts two weeks earlier in January?

Because I think quite a lot of it's been lost. So we've sent the academic calendar out and said can you speak to your link tutors and then nobody spoke to anybody. So we've then had to follow up with another email going. These are the changes you need to be aware of them. Are you aware of them and can you tell me you're all right with them and if you know why are you not?

So it's been quite a... Talk not like a harsh email, but you know a I need you to confirm everything. If you have you read it all.

Kind of like a survey ticket tick there. Do this. Do that. And I'm like, don't like being bossy with, though we've got, we've got, we've got to work with them. And for me it a partnership is two way. If we're changing something, we need to make sure that they're OK with it. And if they're not, what do we need to do to make it work?

Simon (Interviewer)

No, I mean again with the shape of the year thing, I mean that's this is discussions that have been had in the school at certain levels. You know, after it's been decided, admittedly, but then how effective do you think it will work now? At no point did I come across conversation about partners during that, that whole thing. This was purely about the face to face.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah. So me and me and W have been kind of pushing that from a QEO and partnerships point and saying... they really need to be involved. For me they should have been involved at the start.

When that, when that? When that first communication went out to say we what we was doing but it was kind of a we don't actually know what we're just going to change the shape of the academic year.

It was like, what is it? But where's the information on what it's going to mean.

Simon (Interviewer)

That, and what other skills decided themselves? How are they going to?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

How would they? How would they going to manage the programmes ? So how is how is business management going to be run and what partners have

we got with business management and do we want to speak to them all at the same time or do we want to speak to them individually as separate partners? What then happens if we then end up with three different ways of managing them? Nobody wants it, everybody wants it all to be managed one way.

And great if it can be. But there's going to be a lot of sticky conversation. Still, I think we've got one at 12 o'clock

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so I'll kind of cut it down a little bit because I know obviously you're pressured. It's a long, big question and you can come back to me later if you think about anything. But if you were Queen of the world what would you do to improve things?

And you don't have to answer it now, but you can have a ponder and...

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I think the first thing I'd want to be doing is getting that relationship with the link tutors, right? Obviously some of them have been doing it a long time. And I don't want it to feel like somebody saying you're not doing it right. but having a set this is this is what we expect from a link tutor. These are the conversations that you're going to be needed to be involved in.

And some of them are not going to be really nice conversations. There are tricky things that need discussion sometimes. In particular way, you've got an issue you have to you have to be able to manage that. And not kind of let it fester.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, you referred to the point earlier that you don't think they're giving an adequate amount of time.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

No, I don't think they are.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. And you think?

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Because I think, I mean if you if you think that you're doing... You kind of ..for me the roles more of a liaison role. So you're looking after a partner. So I'll say if you said the Swiss one... There's a number of different programmes . How do you know that that partner's got everything that they need to run that program? How do you know that they've got all the assessments?

How much time does that take? If you've got 18 programmes running at the partner compared to 1 program at a partner? It's very different.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's incredibly difficult and you're fundamentally relying on the systems that exist within the school to make sure that these things happen, and I think as

we all know, through experience that they don't always happen. And so a lot of the time you're fighting fires.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And that's, you know, always a kind of catch up situation to make sure that the modules being delivered on Monday where assessments, who's the programme leader, we don't have one.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

These kind of things, you know, that's, that's where the school...

UK - International Partnerships Manager

I mean, I've just had a partner that's missed, I think 3 or 4 exam boards because there wasn't an external examiner in place.

And it's kind of.. When's that going to happen? Because these people have done everything that they need to do... and submitted everything. We've had a look at the work, but now we need external to look at it and there's nobody who will use it and who's responsible for setting that up?

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, the schools and at the end of the day, but that's a perfect example because at the end of the day that is on campus face to face and it is partners, you know it's a modular level and the modules are run within subject groups and the subject group lead has a responsibility to make sure that everything's in place now. That's where you're relying on other systems. So from your perspective, you have to put a lot of faith, I would imagine in the schools to make sure that their processes are right to effectively run them... At a distance without necessarily that complete level of control that you've got on campus.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And it's important that you can rely on that and that's not necessarily happening.

UK - International Partnerships Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Well, thank you very much. If there's anything that, yeah, I mean, if you think of anything you want to add it, then do it. I'll stop the transcript now.

UK – Head of International Office

Simon (Interviewer)

So if you're OK, then we shall begin... the first real thing is just a little bit about yourself. So how would you class yourself as far as your knowledge and experience of working in international is concerned? In other words, how many years etcetera.

UK – Head of International Office

Quite a few years, I think now as well, so. So I guess going back to my CV, I think that I, you know, I predominantly came from a marketing background. I suppose that was kind of like my thing, marketing and PR backgrounds and then via teaching English got to international recruitment. So you know that was kind of like that was what the journey was. I think after I came back from Japan and found out you could work in universities, I thought, oh, this is quite good. You know, working, there's a marketing angle. Working with students is quite nice. But still quite salesy for want of a better word, and that was not really liked in universities at the time. So I think from 2007 so.

That's quite a while now, isn't it, really? Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah. 15 years. Yeah. Yeah. So you're very well experienced.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

UK – Head of International Office

Like this? Sorry, I'm sorry. I'm. Yeah. Yes or no answers. It's fine.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, no, no, no, please say as much as you want. Just to build on that. So you worked overseas yourself as part of your career development.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that was probably when I was like, a little bit younger. Not that young, though, to be honest with you. I think in the 20s, thirties and stuff. So yeah, like, lived in Japan for two years and Thailand for a bit as well. So just more of a sort of travelling, but then, you know, working in schools, teaching English as well and stuff. And then obviously in these roles travelled pretty extensively. And to be honest with you less so now, which is nice. you know, as you get older like this and stuff, it's fine when you're younger, but yeah, it gets a little bit more time over a year older.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, OK. I can live with, I can totally understand that.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Now this one, you'll have to condense cause I know you've got an extensive role, but what would you describe as your main roles within the institution?

UK – Head of International Office

OK. OK. So it's really looking after international recruitment, incoming students, developing partnerships, so off campus students as well. And then mobility, which is a different audience, UK students going out, it's the prime audience there.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. And within your role with the partnership development, how does that fit in with your day?

UK – Head of International Office

OK. I would say the split between recruitment, partnership, development and mobility, it's probably a bit more geared towards recruitment cause there's more students there and that's the quick win basically then partnership development that's more with a bit of a long term. So that's identifying and scoping institutions perhaps within what our overall strategy is. So what are our priority markets and how does that work really so not knowledgeable about absolutely everything but we always can find people that are as well, and making those kind of links and then the mobility piece does include partnership development that that's my involvement is a little bit more minimal in that I would say as well as gain the same thing it's like is that fitting in with our overarching themes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you very much. And so moving on just to yourself, what's your personal motivation for engaging in international activities that I know you've had 15 years, so you might be digging into the depths of your memories?

UK – Head of International Office

Then stop and. Ohhh, my gosh, I don't know.

I think that I think it's kind of like, well, why did you start? And then why do you stick with it? I'm going to sort of answer it that way, if that's OK. And so really, why did you start with this? It was almost like kind of like, why not? And that's how you kind of ended up there. I suppose that's how I ended up there. Really. And stuff, which was just... You know, initially working overseas, just that just seemed the right thing at the right time. You know can absolutely think of anything else to do at that point and stuff. Really after finishing I was freelancing for a while. So it was like, oh, I feel like I've retired and then I've come into like a normal job. That's how weird it is and stuff like this really. And then it was like it was universities working with is always like, really, really nice. There's always going. There's generally there's a nice culture within universities.

Yeah. Well, though you do work really, really hard, you can actually talk about random things at random times. Go to random lectures, go and see

exhibitions, things that are getting involved in campus life but not from a student point of view. From that sort of like outside point of view, I think that's really nice. And that's the same one from an international context as well. I think there's almost nothing better than... Trying to work out when you're in a meeting, how you should behave, or how people should behave. You know kind of things, which is kind of, you know, some people might find that a bit uncomfortable with, you know, not that interesting. But I kind of find it really interesting. And in that angle, you know, why do we come from different angles at different things? Why are we thinking things in different ways? And really it's like that always goes down to geography and history. Really. And that kind of that is in the essence. So I think that's where my sort of interest lie. So I think that that would be why we why I'm in the position I'm in I think, but yeah, and I think combining that with kind of like quite commercial skills is, you know makes me a lot makes me a good find I think so, but I think.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, I will. I 100% agree, 100% agree.

I mean, I mean, flipping it a little bit from them, but staying with motivation and what motivation do you get from the institution? I mean, if you think about recruitment as one side, partnerships as the other and the mobility.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah. OK. So from the institution, so now we're talking from The UK University angle basically, OK, I see this as a bit of a long term project if I'm honest, to be honest. Really. I think when I first came here previously I'd worked in smaller institutions and stuff had sometimes like a little bit more niche like you know working within an arts liberal arts basis institutions very, very different. The UK University is broad range comprehensive.

Uh, and I think there is. There's quite a lot of internal challenges that we do things differently, but not always in the right way. So I always think there's things to clear up before we can keep going and stuff. So that's why I see it as a long term project because I just think the opportunities of how we can raise our institution that is pretty, quite WP, quite, quite reasonable based as well to be honest with you, not that many people, if you have a chat with in London... Not many people will be able to talk to about The UK University, talk about Manchester, yeah, and they would just certain degree. But you know and that's where the opportunity is, you know and I think that's where you can bring more benefits and the more that I've been working in this role over the years, the more I work particularly at regional level as well cuz connecting regionally, connecting internationally is really, really important so... That's really exciting and I think that I think that's what that's part of the motivation. And I always say that as well as, say, oh, I think it's a long term project, you know... Step small wins are really good.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, perfect. I mean just as a general thing, when you considering partnerships specifically, what do you think the drivers are they financial, are they about the

brand of the university or they about the student experience, how would you classify them?

UK – Head of International Office

OK.

I there's a couple of things here. One, I always think that people have different definitions of partnerships as well. So I don't know if you want to clarify that first. And then I could say what I think as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Let's start off with the franchise.

UK – Head of International Office

OK. So institutional based partnerships mainly. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. OK. So the question was about the benefits. Is it economic, is it widening, geographical reach and stuff? I think sometimes it depends who you speak to within the university as well. From my side, I think there is a little bit of a mix as well... If I'm honest, I think from our institutional wide, we have seen it from a bit more of an economic focus and I don't know if that's always correct really because... You're never going to earn loads and loads of money by doing it this way. Like let's, let's be honest and stuff, you know, unless you go to like real retail numbers and stuff which you know there are little bit of THE SWISS PARTNER but not really to be honest with you. So I'd say what we think it is of what it actually is sometimes different as well. We should be able to tick a number of different boxes, really economics should be one of them, but it's more about global reach, global impact, who you alumni going to be in like 5-10, fifteen years time.. That will be a really amazing measure. Is there the disciplines that we've got or the work that we, the themes that we work on, are they actually a benefit to where we want to implant them, whether it's franchise or teaching or a different kind of model? And I think that should be a motivation. So it's like sort of knitting together really what we can give and what... and what other people need and vice versa as well. I think the work in a better way where it is that mutual backwards forwards as well and you know particularly if you can kind of like share not just students coming in and out, but actually you know what is that overall knowledge sharing as well so yeah, that's probably mumbling quite a bit, but there's quite a lot of things to unpack there.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah. No, no, it's fine. But we'll move into strategy development in a little, but it's just getting a general overview of where it is. And I mean from your perspective, I know you work with the different faculties, how, how do you feel from your perspective? And it's purely your own personal one what the staff motivation is in the faculties for engaging with international activities.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, that's a great question.

Simon (Interviewer)

its your personal opinion.

UK – Head of International Office

It's varied and sometimes at... Engaging with Sometimes there's zero engagement, which makes you things are zero motivation. If I'm honest, can you just clarify the question just one more time?

Simon (Interviewer)

From your personal perspective, how do you feel? Engage with engaging with faculties? What do you feel as though the faculties, motivations are and it can be across the board from the academic staff, through to the senior leadership team, etc.

UK – Head of International Office

OK.

I think it's if it's part of their job like this, and if it's a very, very definite part of their job. I think that's the clear motivation is something that they kind of chosen to do. I think that if it's something that's an add-on, sometimes you get people that are generally really interested in and will, you know, we'll do everything because they've got like a genuine love, genuine passion. See the actual overall benefits... And that's good. Not saying that they're always rewarded in the best way, but that's kind of like what happens really. And I think that from my point of view, you tend to work with people that have got that as well because otherwise there's a lot of barriers as well to it. It's almost easier to answer .. Yeah, yeah. What are the challenges and what are the barriers.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, no, that's perfect. I mean, well, it'll dip in and dip out this.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, I think so, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

As you go through so, so don't worry about answering everything first time every time.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Within the partnerships. How much time do you personally spend visiting partners? Do you spend any time at all?

UK – Head of International Office

And that's a that's a difficult question considering Ireland got a visiting anyone for two years. But let's put those to aside because I think that's an unusual situation really.

I think it would be... It would be minimal I think. What would be the most important thing depending on the partner, you would want different levels of engagement at different points as well. So always go with what the perfect if you had perfect resources, perfect time, perfect money, it's like what would you want to do? You know you'd want your VC to also to visit at least once a year and then you'd want, you know, operations people to be delivered to be visiting vice versa or at least one in one out once a year as well. I think from my side it's been... where we've been starting things up really and everything and I think that's probably how we operate, not sure saying it's the right way, but that's probably how we have been operating. It's like you know, we open up opportunities and then you know the schools need to kind of like take them on and keep them going when it's kind of like business as usual kind of thing. So you know whereas I would take a step back going on for that ongoing development because that's kind of somebody else's... role, I suppose in that sense, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And then now I'm fully with you and that makes absolute sense to me.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I'm going to follow up on that in a bit though, if you don't mind.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, these are great questions. I love them. Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm not letting you off the hook that easy.

So, so from your perspective.

Probably your role perspective as opposed to your personal perspective. How often do you think somebody like a link tutor should be visited in a partner in a year?

UK – Head of International Office

I think at least once a year.

But depending on what it is, if it's something like an exchange, I think it's good that if there is that you know, if somebody comes, you can somebody goes kind of thing you know what I mean. And even if even if we're working on something where we're not. So for example somewhere where the link tutors based that The UK University but teaching students that are overseas, you know it's more beneficial for that tutor to go over because they've got more people to see. But then I think it's vice versa, those staff that you're interacting with as a link tutor to come over, I think that's important as well.

In the perfect world, I think because there's more students there, you'd almost want 2 visits over there or their one visit over here over a period of time over

one year. That would be too much, but I think that's what we should be aiming for, to be honest with you.

Simon (Interviewer)

So definitely some face to face interaction.

UK – Head of International Office

Death. Definitely. Yeah, definitely. Because I think that everybody knows that... You can gain more that way as well, and a lot of these things are built on personal understanding. Going back to that conversation that we, you know, one of your earlier questions is like, oh, when you're sitting in the room and you can actually see people and work out behaviours of a little bit better. You understand people a lot more then and stuff. And why wouldn't you want to do that as a link tutor?

Yeah. Why would you? Students want to see? Yeah, yeah, like there.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, I understand. I mean, obviously like we're constrained by resources, which is quite understandable. But yeah, you know in a like you say it's sometimes easier to look at the ideal to situation.

UK – Head of International Office

Absolutely. Then then work your way down. Isn't it really? Unfortunately, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I'll move on from this a little bit now and really move into the idea of strategy development.

UK – Head of International Office

Yep.

Simon (Interviewer)

So how does I'll say the UK University as a university develop its international strategy?

UK – Head of International Office

OK, so at the moment we work on five year plans. I suppose there's the best way to do it and this is a good time to talk about it because I've got the thing I've been looking at it today as well because I'm coming through that period. So really there's certain things that people that you have to get right with the strategy of what people want to know. First of all, everyone wants to know about countries, markets. You know what I mean? You don't like where you're going to go? They whistle. they're kind of favourite thing on the map.

But it doesn't work like that because it's like, yeah, you know, what has we're developing, what do we want to do is more important and what we can offer is more important and then it's kind of like that matching exercise really. So, you know, we're developing our strategy over a five year period and over this time it needs to link into what the university wants to do as well. So we need to be aligned with that overall arching strategy. So that's been quite interesting as

well because there are some challenges there. But remind me about that and I'll get back to it.

And stuff so you know you've got this, you've got this process we work on like 3 themes.

Which is, uh, cut. Well, got to kind of remember what they are now. Global impacts, growth and growth and diversity which we want to get like over 10,000 new international students on campus by 2027. So that's kind of like that we can measure that quite easily with the number and stuff think global impact which is the partnership one to be honest with you because we want to get at least 5000 new off campus students over that period.

Umm, which I you know, I think we will get these like you know what I mean, I think that will look at it at half time and up the numbers. You know, yeah, yeah. And then we've got like a global citizenship strand, which is about the kind of like the opportunity for our students that I kind of mentioned. So you can see how that fits into kind of like the three different areas of our work as well. What we've also done is that we've looked at... We've looked at the themes where the university wants to grow, so whether that's, you know, healthy living, creative and resilient communities, we've been talking about that quite a lot, you know, so those kind of like industry 5.0, so all those kind of like areas and it's like, OK, if we if our university is building up strength and expertise in those areas, how can we take that internationally and develop it as well because that's what our overall brand is. It's like how can we enhance our brand kind of thing and then we've got like... You know four areas that we always have to sort of check off really and one is just making sure we're doing things efficiently and which is really important because people always ask about cost and that's one of the restraints that we have and making sure that we're effectively in line with the universities priorities, which I thought about making sure that it's the student experience. So basically feeding into ESS and then the 4th one, which is sort of we didn't have this over the last period of plan, which is... currently sustainability, sustainable sustainability aware? Basically because one that's the thing that's running through all education, you know, we as universities need to be kind of like the driving force in climate change, net zero and whatever that means, you know, so whatever that means, that like at highest affiliate level, but also sort of some of the basic operations that we do. So This is why you get questions like do you need to travel all the time now you don't like this and stuff which comes up... Like this comes up with me too, but that didn't come up before and so yeah, so that's kind of like how we've been developing, but I'd say the, the important things to bring out is you know, what do they offer the university and then where do we want to go rather than where do we want to go and then what can we offer them.

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean, just pulling you back to the sustainability one and it this may feature

or it may not, but do you think people may be tempted to use that green card as an excuse for saving some money and not sending people?

UK – Head of International Office

Yes. Absolutely yes. Like this 100% silent and stuff and which means that it's almost like another level of... Argument that you have to have or another. No. Sorry. I'd say it another level of justification that it has to be for into it. I think it's a fair enough ask though, because it is a really interesting when I'm speaking recently to people, they're saying like all young people, what they're getting more interested in, I don't think is every young person, but it was quite a good insight. It's like ohh. As they're going through their future careers, they'll... You know... It's about like doing something that's worthy to you now rather than actually doing something that's like work loads and loads of money because nobody can loads of money anymore. I think that's part of it and do something where you're so you're feeding into your environment and you're protecting your environment as well. And I think that kind of rings true in young people, particularly in the UK, or vote it records and stuff and how they're kind of like aligning politically. So I think that when we talk about sustainability and where we throw these ideas around... It's not about just, you know, getting on less planes. It's also about, you know, can you enhance educational opportunities. So for example, we're talking about partnerships, can we deliver something half of it online and then half of it overseas as well and almost double up the number of students that we could potentially be serving over that period and haven't got answers to all these questions yet as well. But these are the things that over the five year period we will be... Sort of developing as well. Really. And you know, might not have got to the right end of the journey by then, but we would have cracked into it, I think as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that's great.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? I think it is interesting.

Simon (Interviewer)

It is very interesting. I mean, I'll, I'll, I'll pull you back because you said call me back on this, but when you're actually developing the strategies, you're talking at different levels. So presumably is Vice Chancellor Pro, Vice Chancellor levels through to the faculties and things and the different discussions that you have.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, yeah, that's a good one because I level with it. I always feel that have we had enough discussion, but sometimes you can have too much discussion as well if you're honest. So I think that I think that on this latest iteration it's been... Partly... And how do you say a bottom up approach and partly a bottom down approach? I think really this is probably me making a bit of

excuses as well so, but I don't mind saying so. For example, it's like, you know, the corporate strategy is being refreshed, hence we need to work on, we need to work on the international sort of sub strategy. OK great to the from that high level that's what they you know they need to make sure that that's included nor provide stuff. So that's what they need to include... You know, and then it's kind of like developing that along with the faculties, schools as well.

And I think interestingly, I don't know if this is useful for your field work or not. I think that we've had lots of consultation at school and ADI, you know that kind of like level and obviously working directly with the Pro Vice Chancellor and Student experience as well because student experience that's kind of like his area. So I think we've covered up quite a lot of that area. I don't know whether we've the Deans have always had that information fed... Down and fed up as well, and then fed wider, I don't know, but how many people do really want to get involved? I don't know. That's I suppose that's one of the things that, you know, I always think that all we're doing and you can't always keep everybody happy when you're developing a strategy, but it's like, well, you just got to be clear, this is what we're going to deliver. This is how we're going to do it.

Simon (Interviewer)

And then linking that into the schools cause it's a case study about the Business School.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you feel that filters down through the schools to the actual operational staff who are implemented in these decisions?

UK – Head of International Office

Probably not, to be honest with you, because I've been in meetings as well. You know, sometimes schools have been like, oh, I didn't know that kind of thing really.

Umm, so I don't think.

No, no, like this. Can I say no, this and stuff. But I also want to come back. It's like ohh also. How much? How much do you want to? I think sometimes... That might sound a bit meaning, but sometimes I think that... We could be a bit too democratic sometimes as well, in a way. It's like, you know, all, you know, my job is to do this. Everyone's job. What separate jobs and stuff. And then, you know, by consulting with them, sometimes you're asking them to do part of your job for you, really. And I know it totally influences them. So you do have to have that in mind, but that's why you do schools, give you people to represent their decisions. And I think that there has to be kind of like those processes... And communication channels, for want of the better words in process in the different schools as well. I'm not putting everything back on them, but I sought of as well if you know what I mean.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. I mean, it's one of the important key points for me, this idea of communication and support. So looking to you, it's very clear and easy to understand that direction. But the filtering down of it seems to one of fights you know that's very difficult... it's something that I've picked up from talking to the link tutors and things you know you ask if there is a strategy and they said well there is one, I don't know this.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, yeah, I agree.

Yeah. And I think that.

Ah, I mean, this isn't about the Business School, but it probably it might be a helpful kind of antidote or antidote is not the right word. Antidote.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's an injection.

UK – Head of International Office

Say for example it's like.

And in this meeting that was called about online learning that they've been knew really what was all about. And then it was going on for The UK University are interested in this course, this course this course including one of the courses that the program leader who happens to do a lot of international work as the professor in in the C school was in there and he was like, I've got no idea about response was like I didn't know that and stuff like this. And I think that you know that... Probably has more of an effect on somebody who's looking after a course than it would on me. Who, you know, sees things a bit more on broadly online learning. Yeah, this is never all my fault. This is never going to take off the ground, you know, probably got a couple of years between. We can make that offer. There's lots of other things going on kind of thing. And but I can see where they are.

Missing links for whatever better words, I think that can be problematic.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so I'm going to turn it on its head a little bit and you've spoken about the kind of top down approach to strategy development. We've also said that it is kind of primarily bottom up as well of understanding what people can do. Do you feel?

UK – Head of International Office

Yep.

Simon (Interviewer)

The culture within the institution is more of a individual members of staff like you just said. This professor in C.

They have their own developments that they perhaps want to explore or they're not aware of what's going on somewhere else. Do you think it's down to individuals creating things like partnerships or is it an overarching strategy and therefore we will go into this area and we will develop franchises or whatever? Or do you think it's down to individual academics coming up with ideas and ...

UK – Head of International Office

I think it's. I think it's a mix, if I'm honest, to be honest with you because I think you have to over have an overarching of you know this is where we want to be placed as a university in terms of this is where our main investment is because you know, even if we had unlimited resources, we wouldn't be able to do everything anyway because even you know large scale institutions can't do everything well. It's not in my mind it's not possible. You have to have what is your brand and what you're going to be good at and... You know, and that doesn't mean that, unfortunately, some subject areas some disciplines are, you know, in a way, but better than others or, you know seen as can have that brand more than that, that stuff. And I think that that so I think it's important to have that framework... And at the same time you need... Uh faculty members to buy into that and also to be able to develop at that level as well, really, because at the end of the day, the particularly those at subject level, you know, not always, but you hope mostly you know how they're subject area is developing, they might not always know how that can be applied to a day to day kind of operation in a different country and what it's worth then. So it's kind of that... Framework is. This is probably what's you know we could sell and within the region, you know what works, franchises don't like everywhere. You know, that kind of thing... And so it's a I'd say it's a bit of a shared approach.

But I would, I would say it's not helpful if you've got and you know you've got somebody that's working on something very, very specific that might, you know, go off on attention or something. Now that might be great and this should be... You know, in the perfect world, there should be some areas area too... Develop that. But I think that that is outside the framework and I don't know how it would get the overarching support. If you see what I mean, it might be something somebody have to do on their own and they could either do it in secret or the Dean might have a pet project because they want to do it as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, no.

I think we keep it on the subject. Do you think that's the way you used to be?

UK – Head of International Office

I've got absolutely no idea like...

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, it's all good.

UK – Head of International Office

I don't know. I think that I think timing wise it's been very slow over the last two years just because of everything that's happening in the world. And I think going forward... If I'm honest, I like to think that OK... And not all areas, it's going to be very different. It's like OK, you know, we know we run a in the and how the world's working and how you know we as a... country as well, you know, interacting with different countries. I think that you know that has a real aspect on it as well. So you know we know that there's free trade agreements being signed with India. That's one of the priorities. We know there's lots of flows of students coming in and out. We know that they want to upgrade their education system. You know, they've got workflows, development needs and some of the areas that we could help. So you know so do you think that's an important country and something country on all levels as well you know even if we were a research institution as well we wanted to bang out... then there as well. But you know what I mean, that's a good thing, so.

so for me.

That kind of like ohh, this is where we're going. You know, this is where we're going or you know, this is where we can focus. I think it's really important.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, I mean it. It fits in perfectly to what I'm researching because.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

There's one model called the Internationalization Cube, it looks at the difference between systematic approaches and ad hoc developments, and it's a level of communication is the third dimension in that tool of, of the kind of ideal institution being the one that has a very systematic approach, which is what you're describing... but allows for ad hoc developments that communication level is built-in. Now this is the ideal. So if you imagine that's block one.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah. Got a way to go? Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And the others are kind of, yeah, we've got a lot of ad hoc and we're making them work and we kind of got our strategy that's we're focusing on this particular thing because of this reason and this reason and blah blah blah. But you know, the communication isn't quite there yet. So you know, you know, somewhere down that matrix, we are somewhere along that.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, it's interesting. That's very interesting.

Simon (Interviewer)

So it's kind of, you know, yeah it is, it is interesting. It's kind of well different people have a lot of different opinions if you want to say that.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

I think so, and I think they could change over time, you know, opinion could change over time. Well, what kind of you think works and stuff?

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean, at the end of the day, I suppose what I mean, this is again my personal motivation.

But I've done a lot of work in the past that I would kind of classes altruistic education. In other words, it doesn't make it any money, but it creates a great student experience and it really creates a bond with the partner institution that you're working with. So the things like the intensive programmes that we used to run long learning with Erasmus, you know, that was half a million quid came into the university over a period of time. It's just for the student experience, you know, and you can't argue with that, but... given a systematic strategy approach, it would have probably be rejected. Don't waste your time. We want to focus. In fact, the Dean of the school at the time said. Why are you messing around with this? Where our target market is China and India?

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, that's fair enough, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Now this is a long time ago. You know, unless half a million quid later, there weren't really complaining and got research publications. We've got, you know, free access to their facilities and things that we do all the time nowadays. So there is there is a mix.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah, that makes, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

But then it said I'm going off piste. I'm just talking about myself.

UK – Head of International Office

That's good because we were developing and we're developing this international scorecard as well and this is a bit off piece as well. But you know that third section in the strategy, global citizenship and that OK, how can we measure this and if it was available my team that's OK just could just measure the number of people who go on a mobility because we know we can count that really easily. But it's a bit more complicated than that so... but we've got an idea that that or we can do it at course level and you know just have all these measures that we can kind of like tick off. Does everyone in this course have opportunity to do field work for example you know the example that you

taught and stuff and everything and just try and make a real real simple measure. First of all that it doesn't take many people's time but actually gives us a little bit of a starting point and stuff. So yeah, I'll share that with you as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

So let's shift it from that. We can come back to anything as you want that I'm conscious of time for you because we both can talk... Move on to the idea of culture.

So I'm really stinking thinking about partnerships now. So what? What role do you think Cross cultural relationship management plays with then partnership development. How important is it to making it successful?

UK – Head of International Office

Umm, I would say... On a scale of 1 to 10 - 10.

To be honest with you and cross cultural relationship management can do we do we do it in a more formal way or is it something that we hope people know about as we go along? I'm just sort of thinking through as we go..

Simon (Interviewer)

That's the next question.

UK – Head of International Office

If they say alright, OK.

Because, you know, in a way, sometimes there's like very, very simple things that you have to think of. Like, you know, if you're working in a... dominantly Muslim country. You don't really want to schedule things on Fridays, you know. You know, things like this or you know how you know. And that is a very, very. You know.

Important level, but you know very day-to-day level, that's something that you need to kind of like totally, totally be aware of because if you don't you're not you know, you know you're not going to get very far, you know, and stuff at those communications. And I think that is the same into how we even develop programmes and even those relationships that you have to get to that point of... You know, getting to a point of discussion and agreement, let alone even get into an agreement as well, really... So yeah, I would say, yeah, really, really important.

Simon (Interviewer)

So if you're thinking about starting up a partnership for like a franchise, let's just do a franchises as an easy example.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you think that cultural awareness?

Plays a role in that and the people that are involved in the initial discussions, in other words.

Do they have an appreciation of how their system of culture works? Is that an important factor? I mean, I know it's an important factor, but do you think that's transferred to the colleagues that we work with and how they approach things?

UK – Head of International Office

Umm.

I think... I want to say yes to the to the most... for the most part. I'm just trying to think I just think.

Within my, my within my own team, I would say there is a lot of cultural understanding. I think just cause of partly who we thought about really and it's going back to this mentioned it earlier is it is it your job or is it just an add-on part of your job? And I think that that's I think that allows sort of quite... Makes a sort of difference really. Does it always filter through? To operations you know within schools, you know, even how you do your admin and you know stuff like that, probably not always the great because.

Unfortunately, universities always have quite a strong culture bureaucratic culture for one of a better word, sometimes as well, which isn't even appreciated of your UK family life like, you know, like international working practices. You know, we're very... Monday to Friday, particularly for the most part in universities, you know, This is why I'm sitting in empty room on a Friday, you know, and stuff so... I think that in a way you I think it's a mixed across the university that's sorry, that's a real random random roundabout answer.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, it's a difficult question. I mean the to put it in context, I mean, are you aware of different models of measuring culture, you know academically, you know, there are theoretical models you can look at a country and you can easily identify that there will be more responsive to authoritative power than others.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And I is that something that you personally are yourself when you're talking to people or do you rely on people's own personal experience and is that part of the recruitment process for you so?

UK – Head of International Office

Ohh I don't know. I think that you know... Part of your experience, you know a lot about the countries that you've worked in or worked with or interactive with, you know, in the past, which is quite a lot, you know, and stuff... you know less about Europe than I do about everywhere else, which is interesting.

So I think it's interesting, we don't do any particular training on it or anything like that... And stuff, which is perhaps that's a bit of a gap sometimes as well, because we talk about it when the students, when we're sending them out as well, don't we don't talk about it with our own staff.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah.

UK – Head of International Office

Which is interesting... And you can make faux par sometimes I think. I think it's always.

An anecdote I.. I'm not.. Yeah... And that, you know, there's a photo that really summed up like the difference in just about how I just thought, oh, we're failing at this particular area. It was when, remember.. and say she went out to China on a trip and stuff. And you know what it's like in China? It's like, you know, there's lots of people there. So you go in the meeting as 700 people. So there is literally, like, a meeting. And there was, like, and they sit on each side and stuff. And then on the Chinese side, there was, like, about seven or eight people. And on Abigail side, she's there as like, a single person on her own and everything. Partly because we as a university cannot afford to send more than one person at some stage.

UK – Head of International Office

Do you know? I think, yeah. I think the other problem as well is we don't have or dedicate enough time to some of these projects as well in a way.

Which I don't know if that's a university thing. I don't know if that's a The UK University thing and stuff, but you know, there should be a bit more slack in the system to be able to do everything that you can do, but do it well, you know, even if it means doing fewer things. And I think that... I hear them. I just thought I think about things like that. Even like, you know, before you're a region, a meeting or something, you know, you should be able to. It goes a long way. You know, if you've got Chinese delegation coming in, it goes a long way of making sure that you've got, you know, the table set up in the same way and you know, name tags and just like, you know, just small things like that. They take a little bit of time, but sometimes we don't even build stuff like that into it as well, let alone... You know, debrief, you know, after you've come back and stuff like this. And I think it could be a British thing as well, to be honest with you. We do have quite a little bit of a bad reputation in the sector of always like all saying that we're going to do things and then just not doing them and stuff. And I think that. So I don't know if that's British education... You know, we got to do better on that, really.

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean it, it is a big challenge. I mean it's something, I mean, I personally have just self taught you know fully like I imagine you are and everybody else just through their own personal experiences of through their life, you know, before the career and understanding that cultures are different and they're good, you

know that you understand it a lot of benefits to be had from....From actually engaging with different cultures.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Yeah, but I think... I think I mean, you're right. We're talking about sort of going back a bit. Sorry to time, but talking about strategy development, it's almost like... International is a sub strategy. It's not a strategy. You know what I mean? It's part of something else. So you know, I think that's part of... A lot of my work internally is... Internal PR, I suppose more for one of the better words and stuff and just trying to get everything to the top of the list and everything and it's really hard. It's really hard, especially especially I'm really simple things which are to do with partnership development. It's just like, you know, sometimes you just want somebody to map a curriculum and say, yeah, that's fine if you know what I mean. Like this very simple stage and everything. Ohh you had like an hours meeting trying to persuade someone and just saying... really. Could they have not done it in this time? But then perhaps that's me being a little bit naive as well, you know.

Because... I know. I think it's because it's the long game as well. Do you know what it mean? It's, you know, you start something. And I always say it's a one in seven chance kind of thing. You know, getting something sorted and everything so... I think, yeah. And then in two years, this probably is the UK University. They're, I don't know if it's appropriate to say as well. It's like cuz even though Simon, you've been here a long time, I feel I've been here a long time, but there's a lot of changes that happen over two years or it has in the past as well. Perhaps it is, perhaps we're hoping that it will settle down so... You know, if you've got somebody that's not a if we haven't gone overarching framework and we're not working within an overarching framework, it's like in two years, who knows what's going to sort of happen and stuff like that. So that makes it a little bit difficult as well. I like to think that... I like to think there were a bit past that, but then there's nothing wrong with change or, you know, going for other things you know there's nothing wrong with that as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's an important point that you make and it is very key to what I'm researching in the fact that you either have a structure that that people can pick up and move on with. or you run the risk of when you change management structures, you change staff that everything is start from scratch again.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah. And this goes back to the point of I think that some people like going back to their old, perhaps British. I know, you know, this might be a generalization, just not good at delivering. You know, they like having meetings and talking about it, but actually doing the operational stuff. Sometimes people either don't like doing it or they do it and it's not recognised kind of thing as well thought of things. So yeah, this is an interesting area as well, Simon.

Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

You want one of the interesting points is the administrative support you know because you've got this strategy, you know the top down approach and then you got the bottom up, which is how do the admin cope with it, you know changing CRN's banner ID, all things to fit in and to be honest, without the admin being on the ball with that, it would all collapse... for them. It's a nightmare. You know, there's this new direction comes in and it's like.

UK – Head of International Office

What do I do? Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

What's the change in the assessment strategy for this is that our THE SWISS PARTNER and THE IRISH PARTNER and The Ghana partner or is that just at The UK Business School and what's our lead in time to change it for the partners? And if we considered what they're going to do, you know?

UK – Head of International Office

Oh, oh God, Simon im so sorry..

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, no, no, I mean, I'm kind of almost forcing you into the next question, which is whether it will very near the end.

Yeah. OK. So the next one really is about the barriers.

UK – Head of International Office

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, and this could be national ones. So I'll give you an example just to set the ball rolling. So with the partner that we've got in Malaysia, they have basically a year lead in time to make any changes if there's significant and they have to get approval and at The UK University, we seem to think that we can just do whatever we want and that'll be fine. So what do you think of them.. And I mean that's just an example. One example, a national level, but institutional level and an individual level, what are the big barriers that you think when you're talking about partnerships primarily?

UK – Head of International Office

OK. I think one of the main ones is that models that don't quite fit kind of thing. Do you know what it means? So we've got like a particular, you know if I say to you franchise, you know what it means, but if you say to it in a different country, it might have a different meaning or all the all the aspects of it don't quite fit kind of thing and stuff. So I'd say that that is like... That's where you thought come a cropper. Go into this like, oh, you know, we'll only get one in seven things off the ground. You know what I mean and stuff and everything. So I think that that's got to be the key and... And then it comes to. I suppose this... Recognition recognitions is that the right word is that the right word as

well. So things that how things are delivered aren't recognised as well and we've had this at The UK Business School all the time. You know what I mean. You just think that Oh yeah, you've got this split site PhD that works perfectly one year and then something will happen and the Middle East is the most important one. But that isn't it. It'll just like, you know, I don't know how you've got away with it kind of thing for this amount of time and stuff.

So although we, I suppose I'm thinking more broadly UK level, we think that we've got the brightest and the best education system. It doesn't translate perfectly to other places. Nobody understands that in authoritarian mainly authorities.. you have to have the... You know is the degree accredited, you know, attested. It's like, you know, I didn't even know what that was, you know, like this. I didn't know that what I was. Yeah, it's true, isn't it? It's like, what does that mean, you know, and stuff. So. So I think that those are like they're kind of like critical kind of thing. They're really critical. And then you get kind of... Spikes in you know we set things out. We're very... I think that we as the university and I don't think this is just The UK University, you know, we've got like our price points and you know... generally, they follow a pattern. Price points go up in line with inflation, you know every year and stuff and we kind of like expect that kind of thing to be working in the same kind of light way constantly throughout the life cycle of a partnership with a partner that's working in a completely different economy that can come crashing down at any second like Sri Lanka this moment. It's just like it's in a terrible, terrible state. You know how we expect them to get any money out of there when they can't even buy food and medicine because they can't get anything into the country.

So you know, that's like... You know, really, really challenging and... I think that we have to just be a bit mindful that things aren't always going to be the same and they're not going to fit into this box that we want them to fit in. There needs to be a little bit of slack either way, kind of thing.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's understandable, it's very difficult and national level. I'm going to cut things shorter for you and hopefully one of the main points of the research is from your perspective, how would you ideally see a partnership being managed? Would you like it to be a closed nit group of people working together that that keep it going or would you like to see it more as a formulaic structured approach.

UK – Head of International Office

What's a formulaic structured approach?

Simon (Interviewer)

These are policies and procedures and it's irrelevant about if you agree or disagree, you just follow them. So in other words, in developing and maintaining and supporting and communicating with a partner, let's take Malaysia for example.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

It is it, dictatorial. Or would you prefer to see.. A bond being developed and other things spinning off from it or whatever, and I'm leading you my question and I shouldn't.

UK – Head of International Office

Yeah. Then I know I think I'd like to see a bit of both, if I'm honest. I don't want to go for a dictatorial approach, but there's some things that... You know, I'll probably a bit red lines than other things. Do you know what it means and stuff? And I think so. And the same from the other side as well. Malaysia is a good example is like you know they've got... Ministry regulations that they make need to meet. So if we can't meet them, you know, how come? Why we why we. You know, we shouldn't even be in it should be to be honest with you and stuff. So. And sometimes that does mean a bit of compromise on what the guidance for want of a better word is but you're only going to be able to know what those compromises are and come to that compromised by the bonds being informed to be honest with you know so you do you need a bit of both I don't think that. You know, I think it's important to go off tangent a little bit sometimes.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Simon (Interviewer)

What is your role within the institution?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

So my role within this institution is the International opportunities manager within an international opportunities team and part of the wider International office that also covers recruitment and partnerships. My role specifically is to manage incoming and outgoing ability with the focus on outgoing mobility and essentially to equip our students with the Skills awareness, global citizenship, intercultural fluency and everything that they need really to succeed once they graduate from the university. And we play into the General International Office in terms of... Liaising with external bodies. And so whether that's students, some other universities or whether it's the universities themselves. And we'll so in terms of the partnership side of our team will have to deal with lots of things like contracts and you know... Agreement templates and things like that, which could be quite time-consuming as you know.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, absolutely. So if you have to split it roughly in your head, how much would you say goes on liaising with students and how much goes on liaison with the actual partners?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I think for me, I'm blessed to have at least one team member because XXX deals a lot with the students, so although you know today I have been getting involved as well, mine is my role is more kind of probably... 70% dealing with either partners and schools as well. So the students is one thing and that's ... You know the assistance role within the team. My role is more kind of from the senior side dealing with the partners, dealing with the schools and also the external funding bodies as well, which are a huge part of what we do, particularly with things like Turing or Erasmus.

Simon (Interviewer)

So internally dealing with the schools, how does that manifest itself? What does that look like?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

That is mainly to do with things that they haven't done properly or at all. So for example, in terms of outgoing students, it would be related to promotions and allowing us time to promote... Global citizenship international opportunities in clash and then following on from that for outgoing students, really supporting them and choosing modules at the partner universities. And sometimes a lot of my kind of X will generally deal with that, but then I'll tend to have to follow up. If one school in particular not yours, another UK University School has not done what they meant to do. So there's that and they also that's also in terms of incoming students as well in terms of you know the modules available for students joining us. Obviously, the partners have to be bilateral balanced or

whatever, so you have to take in what we're sending out. Schools also liaised with them in terms of the actual partnership agreements. And so for example, when I want to make an agreement, either renew it and extend it to institutional wide or whether you know a number of queries coming through at the moment saying they want to set up a new partner in Spain or in Norway or whatever.

So a lot of liaison there and then just generally just trying to keep up with trying to keep schools engaged in some way, which is a challenge. And supporting them with staff mobility as well. I guess that's the other thing which I'll admit I've not been very good at.

Simon (Interviewer)

When it comes to looking at a new partner, is that driven centrally or is that through personal relationships between people in faculties?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah.

It's a good question. I don't have an exact number on the split. I think there are some kind of more engaged people within the schools that want to set up things occasionally. It's because a partner approaches us and says, you know, we want to set something up. I will also... So yeah, good people in the schools that do want to do things, but not necessarily always possible, partners that want to do things with us, but where there's no interest. And I also want to manage the current relationships that we have. So whether that's kind of expanding the current partnership or just saying that it's dead or whatever. In an ideal world, it should be the schools, because they've had a they've met somebody at a conference in Fiji or wherever that would be nice. And they've actually talked about the modules and they've talked about the synergies kind of thing, but that doesn't seem to happen as much limited, it's limited.

Simon (Interviewer)

You would say that that is probably the right way to do it as opposed to...

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I would say that that's the right way to do it, because I think unless you've got the academic synergy like everything else, you can kind of work around it. And I know it can go the other way as well where you know you'll get 2 academic members of staff chatting at a conference going. Yeah, we'll set up a partnership. I'll. I'll send you the agreement by Tuesday. And they've not thought about any other aspects. But in a way, I'd kind of prefer that level of enthusiasm, just that they actually wanted to do something. Where is it this UK higher education institution.. It's not often the case... It's not often the case, but ideally, yeah, that's where it should come from, where you know, because that means the... If a school is putting forward an idea for a partnership, then they're more likely to account manager as well as opposed to leaving it to the central team.

Simon (Interviewer)

So the account management side from the school, how important do you think that takes on as a, as a role in the background? Almost, yeah.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I think it's a really important role. I think it's a really important role, but I think at this university it's just not taken seriously. I think there's a few individuals that really account manage very well and they have really good. There's one example in your own school... But you know where? You know, there has been things going on and there is a really good relationship between the colleagues, but a lot of the time... It's just left to us to kind of navigate and I appreciate if it's like an institutional wide kind of agreement who whose name do you put on it, but there should be in, in my mind this should be a global kind of enterprise where you know you studying architecture, OK. So we've got a partner in in Australia.

And they're in direct contact. The meeting at conferences they are doing online collaboration. They're doing joint research, you know, citations and all of that sort of stuff... And that benefits them... But I just don't think that that's the case. It is a lot of other universities as far as I'm aware... But not necessarily this one.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Do you think that's driven.. by a lack of support from the university.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I think it's two things. It's a lack of general international kind of agenda strategy. We I mean we do have an international strategy but it's not pushed forward at any stage like there's no comms about international strategy and it's really not embedded in our day to day kind of thing. I think we're very much focused on the local and the financial as well. I mean, I think in many cases in many UK universities, it is about the cash cows for recruitment side. But I think it's also to do with workload... I think it's it. It's lack of strategy being... Promulgated for want of a better word?

And but then also workload, the people that are being appointed to do what I see is a very important role are giving like 17.5 minutes a week or something that is not sustainable for a sustainable international strategy, it just doesn't work quite that you need dedicated people whose role is specifically, you know, and maybe it's 50:50% in terms of workload just to accommodate because you cannot have a he can't maintain a relationship with the partner overseas and deal with all of the promotion as well as you know, doing admissions, doing social media, doing all of the other things, it's just not possible and I think so It's the institutional lack of a strategy and it's also a school level, just not really recognising quite how important it is.

Simon (Interviewer)

Fantastic. I'll come to strategy a little bit later, but that's brilliant. What you said already.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

If you were to describe yourself, what would you say is your level of experience? Knowledge? How long have you been working internationally, your past history?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Working at the [the UK University] , four years and one day as of yesterday.

And but being in international started working International Office in 2003, so nearly 20 years. So entire career 5 universities all within the International Office in some respects, well, all within an international context, i.e being overseas in Belgium and that's always with being within an international environment. So yeah, understand a lot about what the kids need, what the schools need, what the centres need, what the partners need. And in theory, how it should all line up?

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. I mean, that leads me really nicely into the next question, which is your own personal motivation. So what motivates you to work in the international environment?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Somebody tried to tell me the other day that if I wanted to succeed, then I should consider other options and this is a precursor to say that I would never not work in international.

Umm, basically my motivation is to make sure that people understand how important it is and how we are a global network a global world of employment of, you know, studies of, of everything. Everything is in connected with it. It is interconnected. I think for me, in terms of this university in particular, the motivation is and I'm completely passionate as you know. But the motivation is all about the kind of, even though I'm quoting the government here and I hate myself for it. But the levelling up and the social mobility and the fact that, you know, I've worked at other universities where money is not being an issue and they have already had that kind of global experience. But at a university... That's kind of a Widening participation university. There's an extra kind of motivation there to actually make sure that students understand what the light, what the world is like outside and, and it's about languages. It's about culture. It's about just understanding. And I think that kind of goes to stopping wars. And I know that's a bit of a farfetched kind of thing, but I kind of feel that the more that you understand the world and can operate in it, given that so many companies are, you know, globally owned or they operate on a global scale... That that really helps. Just being able to talk to people and be nice and to raise your confidence and to get a better degree and to get a better job and yeah, and to travel because it's nice.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. I'm with you 100%. I'm so, I mean it, it is a personal motivation, but in a way it's a selfless personal motivation cause you want other people to experience the things that you've kind of experienced yourself.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Absolutely. And I think, you know, I grew up obviously I am middle class now, but I grew up even though I live in XXX, but I do grow up on a Council estate in the early days kind of thing. And I think if it wasn't for my parents then I wouldn't have had those opportunities. So I think it's just really important for me to be able to pass that on really just totally passionate about it despite the operational side.

Simon (Interviewer)

Extremely admirable.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

And I see it's more of a national endeavour as well. So you know UK University is the 5th, it won't be the last... Umm, you know when my work here is done? When I think that things are in a decent enough place to pass on to somebody else, then then I'll do it.

And when I went more money as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that's right. Well, again, that leaves me on perfectly. So what do you think the institution does to motivate you to do this?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

They pay me... And there are some individuals that are really, really good.

Sometimes. I mean, that's more in a they're just lovely to work with as opposed to general motivation. My motivations personal, I think it's, I think my manager, her manager... His manager, whatever... Nobody really tells me what to do, but then they do obviously, but it is very much about my own personal motivation. I think I probably set more of my own kind of targets and goals than would ever be set for me, primarily because you just don't understand what I do.

So yeah, that's it, I mean. This position, this position this team is in place for a reason, but sometimes I just feel like it's kind of nominal. It's a, it's a rubber stamp kind of thing like, oh, we've got to do this, but I don't think the university really recognises what we do actually do... So I spend a lot of emotional energy just raising a my own profile and B the profile of what we do.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's perfect. I mean, I'll just follow on from that a little bit. I'm gonna flip onto strategy in a short while and cause that kind of ties into that a lot... But from your own personal perspective, how much time do you get to spend actually going and visiting partners?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

COVID aside, obviously that's been a couple of years.

I'd say probably a month out of every year in total. So going to Nassau in the US and Canada for two weeks would normally go to Norway for one week, EAIE for one week. And maybe another partner, so maybe four or five weeks out of the total year. Umm. But obviously I think that will change going forward once we have less money for through Erasmus.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you think that will reduce?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I think that might reduce it unless the university comes up with some... other way of funding, because we don't quite know, like there's no funding through Turing... The staff mobility... Unless his exceptions to kind of go and check out wheelchair provision in Uganda or whatever, but it'll be limited I think so after May 2023. Who knows.

Simon (Interviewer)

Umm, So what? What kind of level of importance do you place on being able to go and visit a partner?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Massive... Massive I think just in terms of the relations like you can have and I do it as much as I can, you know, have online check-ins kind of thing, have a remote meeting. But I think just being able to either see them at one of the... Either European conference or the North American one... or, another one further afield. To actually go and see them in person. I think that really cements the relationship. I mean it's nice to be able to see them in person anyway at a conference, but I think actually showing that dedication as a university to actually go and visit them. That it's like going to see a friend. Isn't it? Like, if you've not seen a friend for however many years he popped down to Brighton and visit them for a couple of days and it really invigorates the friendship and partnerships are essentially just they are friendships in a way just on a professional level.

Simon (Interviewer)

Absolutely. I mean you you've answered that perfectly. I'm gonna follow up on that because I know it's not always possible. You know there are resource restrictions. What she your normal kind of channels of communications with partners?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Normally email I'd probably say about 80% through email to be fair.

In extremist, it's usually if there's a particular issue to be dealt with that we'll have a an online meeting. I do try and do it just with catchups a couple of partners in particular. So bear in mind I've got about 50 Erasmus partners and

maybe another 30 non Erasmus and International Exchange, there's a couple of partners that I would just call for a general chat, but usually it's because of a specific issue... Umm. And the rest is yeah, email and then those few occasions where we can actually visit in person. But it's like the same thing as like if you're working in an office with somebody... If you're able to chat to them... It's just the ideas that come out. Like if you just passing them and you just you know... Something might happen... And I feel like sometimes if it's an online meeting or an email... It's a bit. Yeah, stayed, isn't it?

Simon (Interviewer)

You got an agenda and you see it through to the end and just want some truths. And it's over, yeah.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah... Yeah, but it's not the general ideas and the excitement magic kind of side.

Simon (Interviewer)

So. So I did say I'd come to. I will come to it. Strategy Development, international strategy development.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

How much are you directly involved with international strategy development of the university?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I'm involved with it to the extent of the global citizenship side, so our international strategy covers recruitment, partnerships and international opportunities, international opportunities also kind of covers internationalization at home as well. So I've been feeding into that and I know that we did have a strategy document. That's my list coming through, but ended last year or something and it's being reviewed at the moment and I must admit, when I first saw the first one I thought I was being asked to edit it. I didn't think it was complete... Umm. And I still don't even think I kind of wonder about the value of it anyway, like we go to all of these things to put a strategy together... And strategies are all very well, but like if you don't tell anybody about them.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you think that is a fundamental flaw that they're not communicated across...?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And I think, I mean it's a problem across many UK universities, but I think I've been fortunate to work at other ones where it

has been a lot more... Yeah, in the in the general comms like, you know, whether it's weekly updates or the message from the VC.

So I think our strategy is, is good, it's solid. But it's not taken seriously because it again, it feels like a bit of a rubber stamp kind of job. Ohh, we've got to have an international strategy... But then we're just not going to tell anybody about it. is it? It's like you've got to be in the know to know. But what's the point of kind of including all the things on global citizenship on student mobility, all the things I'm passionate about? What's the point of having them in and then? Not telling staff.

Simon (Interviewer)

So when it comes to the international strategy, then who would you say are the main key stakeholders in in putting it together?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah. In putting it together. so in it will obviously come from international office usually... Umm, but it's still so involved with schools, particularly from a recruitment perspective, because if you're talking about numbers and targets, so each part of the strategy has got to have, you know, we expect either 100% of our undergraduate students to go overseas in their second year or we expect to have 7000 students come into the Business School or whatever. So it's got to involve the schools as well. But I think it's... Yeah, international office and schools and senior management and people like the VC. And there should be a pro VC international kind of figure as well... Which yeah, there should be a quote. It should be beautifully marketed. Yeah, that's less about strategy that's more about the beauty, but that's important too.

Simon (Interviewer)

About the partnerships that you've already got and the potential for future partners and what do you consider the main risks are involved in either developing a new partner on maintaining...

UK - International Opportunities Manager

OK, couple of things here I guess... Risks... Risks of its one sided and I think that's the balance that we have to have. That's why we have to have the buy in from the schools in terms of promotion. But a lot of the partners that we've had over the past few years have mainly wanted to send us students.

And I think there has been talk here about getting them to promote to our students and I'm like that's not our job. That's the job of the schools. So I think the risks are... putting something in place, signing an agreement where which basically allows lots of students to come in but doesn't send students out, and it's a risk to our students because they're not getting anything out of it. Other risks are mainly to do with health and safety and kind of ethics of countries that we send students to, and I think a lot about that kind of thing where they're just today had a student that's meant to be going out to the US in September... And they've been a shooting at the university where they were going... So you know it, it's kind of the whole pastoral side as well, like the is the country safe, is the partner ethical... What kind of experience will gay man

get? What will it? What kind of experience will the brown woman get? What? You know, all of those kind of angles, I think, are really, really important as well. And then I know that universities are pretty much we are generally quite ethical. But if you're sending students to a country where... their experience is not going to be good then... that's a risky partnership.

Simon (Interviewer)

I know there's been a lot of changes with Turing coming in and things like that, but do you think there's a potential for financial risk as well?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah... Not so much for financial risk unless there's... thinking from an insurance perspective like, I always go back to health and safety because I think it's really important and I really want to avoid any kind of Daily Mail article. But if something happened to on any one of our students while they were overseas and they didn't have, there wasn't insurance or public liability. That's the risk finance other financial risks from Turing perspective are, I think it's just the risk that we might not get funding... It's not guaranteed like yes, the UK government says 110 million for the next three years.

What happens after that? And it just means that the partnerships are kind of put in jeopardy because you can't really commit to sending students out there... Umm. So yeah, I think that that's potentially risky going forward. I'd like to see a much more... Yeah, permanent arrangement where we were guaranteed funding.

Simon (Interviewer)

The next section then you've touched on this a little bit, but what role do you think culture plays within your role and what you do?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

A lot, yeah... I think... Yeah... the culture of the staff members, in particular the approach of the staff members and within that within the a university and within that within the general national culture.

Umm... It's what you mean by culture really, before I start.

Simon (Interviewer)

Well,. OK, I'll, I'll take it to one extreme. If you're setting up a new partnership... And it's in a faraway country that has a very different culture. Is that problematic or is that seen as a benefit or...?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I think it's not necessarily problematic. It means that you just have to adjust your expectations, because I think it's like anything with anybody really, regardless of whether it's somebody in The UK or Gabon, or whatever people work in different ways, the there's no, there's no set way. There's some countries that will take an age to get back to you. There's some countries that will email you by 8:00 o'clock to demand a response because you've not emailed them yet. And so there is kind of... Just having getting into cultural

kind of understanding is really important. Different countries operate in different ways. Different people operating in different ways.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is that something that you've just picked up from your own personal experience or is that something that's positively encouraged as like a development program training, etc?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

So yeah... The former for sure. I think from my living, working, studying in however many different countries and just dealing with people over the past 20 years, that's just something that I've kind of learned to understand and not to get upset about it. I've seen so many cases where colleagues, at their current higher education institution will get really annoyed if they're... like, I emailed them last Tuesday and they've not responded. And I'm like, well, you know... It's just what it is and I think you just have to be... Yeah. Understanding. Doesn't always work the way that things work in the UK.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you think from that perspective sort of cultural sensitivity training or cultural awareness training would be a benefit to people?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Absolutely, absolutely.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that cuts across both within your domain and also within the faculties.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I would say it should be more... in an ideal world, I would love that to be within my domain because I could wax lyrical about cultural difference. But I'm not an academic and I think in other institutions they have had more culturally specific modules, whether it's for incoming students in terms of, you know, get to know XXX or get to know wherever.

Just to understand a little bit more... I have kind of toyed with the idea of having some kind of outgoing preparation how to deal with different cultures, but I'm not resourced enough to be able to do that and it's above my pay grade to be fair.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, I'm funny with you. So. So you're aware of the cultural models that exist, you know, Hofstede and things like that. And, you know.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Not specifically by name, just by kind of practice, not theory, but I think the whole of the university would benefit from that kind of thing. And we've got things on what GDPR. We've got things on bribery.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

We're kind of missing a trick if we don't have cultural modules and that fits back into the international strategy as well, like all staff should be... Trained, equipped to deal with with different cultures.

Simon (Interviewer)

So again, this is coming really, I suppose, back to your day to day job more than more than strategy level or cultural level? And when you've got the partnership, how are they manage, maintained and supported?

Just take a typical partner. If there is such a thing.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Typical partner. I'll talk about. Yeah, partner in the US. Probably maintained it in terms of email check-ins every couple of weeks at key points of year, particularly around. Umm. Either incoming or outgoing nominations, there will be more email traffic. And then, yeah, maintained as in going to visit them and just checking in and in some cases like extending it to LinkedIn or Facebook, even that might be going a bit too far. But I think it is just. Yeah. Looking out for them, treat treating them as human beings, because that's what we should do with everybody, I think, and not just being all about the business like you know, how is the COVID situation affected you? Are you OK? You know, do you have updates from your family kind of thing like depending on the type of relationship. But I think it's just balancing the personal with the professional.

Simon (Interviewer)

I suppose on a much more formal side, do you have any kind of quality assurance mechanisms that you use or you have to use to when you're considering partners and...?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah, when we're setting up setting up a new partner, this is something that I'm doing at the moment is each one has to have like a new business profile, which looks at... who they are, who they were accredited by what national kind of accreditation they have, what health and safety provisions are in place, health and safety, again, which partners they have, what their research kind of strengths and maybe weaknesses are what programmes they run. UG, PGT, PGR. How many students there are, how many staff there are. And what kind of welcome provision so it covers a wide range of different things and it also kind of looks at, you know where there's gaps in in our own kind of partner offer. So for example, if it's one for a very particular subject like film studies or whatever, then we'd look at that. So they're quite they can be quite detailed... Umm. And also in theory involving a site visit as well, just so you can actually check out the health and safety. I worked at another university where they had a partnership and I think there's been a few deaths actually over the past 20 years, but there was there was a partner in China where the accommodation wasn't structurally secure and yeah... I won't go into the details, but it wasn't good from that perspective.

Simon (Interviewer)

So thinking of that then from a student's journey, if you like... Are you relatively confident that the student journey is safe and secure and a good experience? Is that part of the consideration when you're looking at this?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah. In terms of partners or in terms of students specifically?

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, it's the partner. It's a student embarking to go off on and go in and go to the partner so...

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yep... Yeah, I think the student journey from the point of nomination to the partner, that's relatively smooth for the most part, it depends on the partner. Some partners just have one person in their team, and that means that there's delays kind of thing. But for the most part, once the student is nominated to the partner University, they get all of the information... Umm, I would like to provide extra support from a pastoral sense in terms of just making sure that they actually know what they're getting themselves into... and whether it's a particular ethnicity... Umm, sexual identity, all of that sort of stuff. But really they are Grown Ups as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

And so, I mean, you've covered a lot of these already, but what would you class as the main barriers for you at the moment and art can be at national level, institutional level or even a personal individual level?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

At a team level, we are under resourced so that has an impact at an institutional level. There's not enough international strategy embedded into the culture. So it's not promoted as well as it can be. From a national level, we are the governed by an inept administration... You can put that in as you can put my name by that one... Umm, but who really have no foresight or clue what they're doing in terms of mobility programmes and you know, the whole saga of Turing and the challenges and the fact that actually as opposed to being part of Global Britain and levelling up and all of that sort of thing, I think it's actually hammered our relationship relations with partners... Because of the insecurity like again it comes down to the comms having an international strategy with an institution, you should be promoting it, making sure that everybody is aware having an international strategy as a UK government... Should make sure that not only are the is the UK universities aware, but also having a comms plan to make sure that you know globally it's understood as a workable program even though it might not be yet.

Simon (Interviewer)

100% I will. I will flip you back and test your memory now.

Don't worry if you can't remember, it's not a problem, but... Clearly you must feed into the things like the Erasmus impact reports.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

We do the Erasmus so each Erasmus project would do a final report at the end.

Simon (Interviewer)

Umm. And they feed into the bigger Erasmus impact report that's I think it's published every five years.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Potentially, yeah. So there'll be stuff that's produced by the European Union. Yes so the final reports will undoubtedly feed into that... Umm Universities UK international also do a number of reports that are kind of similarly talk about mobility at a UK level. I think we will filter it into it, not directly as such. But I think the European Commission Erasmus is the biggest success story of the EU. I mean, seriously, it's so, so good. And they have countless resources and literature available. So I have every confidence that would be brilliant. Yeah... Because, yeah, they tend to report back on however many years. Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Focusing on the individual level, because we've discussed a little bit about how having close knit relationships are quite beneficial to making partnerships successful.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is there anything that you would do?.. To change that, if you could if you had the power.

It could be training, it could be more resources, it could be pay, it could be.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

But yes to training, not necessarily for me. Yes, to pay for me, but more training for internal members of staff, like staff across the schools. I think if I had the power... Umm, which I try to a certain degree, but the schools would really just understand that... You know those partnerships, so they should be jointly kind of managed central and school level... So if I had any magic powder, I would make sure that every partner had a dedicated person regardless. I mean, if it's school specific. Yeah, you can't expect somebody from journalism to cover music, but just be there as a point of contact in for exchange coordinators to actually coordinate exchanges... That would be that. That would make my life. Yeah, so much easier.

Simon (Interviewer)

Much easier, and that really is kind of an institutional problem, isn't it? I mean, I know you've mentioned it before, but how much? How much respect do you think you get from the institution as the opportunities team?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Not as much as I would like. I think we are well liked obviously, but I think in terms of respect and actual action... I think it's limited and I think that's really it's really sad... Umm. Then yeah, don't really know how much I can do there, and unless there's some kind of high level intervention... That says this is actually really important guys.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you feel, so you're kind of pushing and pushing and pushing and pushing?

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Pushing and pushing. Yeah, and send out countless emails. There's one or two individuals that are really, really good, so I'm not gonna diss them at all. And it's not to say that itself is completely bad. It's not, but... 80% is not proactive. When I worked at XXX, we had 27 different schools, I think or 28. The numbers don't necessarily matter, but each school had a dedicated exchange coordinator and I don't quite know what their workload it was, but we didn't have to go and do promotions to them. We had 600-700 students wanting to go overseas because they're exchange coordinator had done their job properly, whereas here it's more centrally governed whereas we have to... do the promotions more we have to actually ask to promote? And I think if a staff member had a really good relationship with a particular university, they'd be chatting and saying, you know, we'll get 15 students to you because I've already talked to them and they're interested kind of thing... But it's kind of left up to central... And it shouldn't be like that.

Simon (Interviewer)

The final section was support and communication, but I think you've probably covered that in pretty much everything that you said really.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah... I think it's just like having things on the staff hub. Like if you have a look on the staff hub, is there anything international there like yeah, that you might be able to kind of click onto international and Regional Development Directorate, but like... Unless you know what that is in the 1st place and you wouldn't go there... So that poses a real issue for me and there's no, I can't remember the last time I've seen anything about international "we're very proudly international... why are we"?

What are you doing about it? I think the one time somebody did tell me that if I wanted people to say things, I should tell them things to say... I shouldn't have to go that far... I've senior is setting international strategy... They should be also setting the comms.

I feel like whoever has got the strings kind of thing to the VC. I feel like those subjects are more... local based or, you know lots of focus on individual faith kind of issues or individual gender identity issues and I'm not negating that's not important. But if you can focus on one particular aspect of your university, then you can focus on another as well... So I feel like the concentration is just too much with other people.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's basically it. It's only if you have any other comments you would like to add.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

Yeah. No, I think I've pretty much covered it. Basically, I don't think [the UK University] is alone in how it deals with internationalization... I've spoken to a lot of people in the sector who are in similar positions, who are also in 1-2 man teams. Umm. And you know it's an issue and buy in. We'll talk about buy in so much because so many in the sector have just not getting the buy in from senior management. There are some great universities and I'm not listing them because we're not putting them down those names anyway. But there are some really good ones that have great ideas. They might not necessarily follow through, but they have great ideas. But I think [the UK University] 's .. It's still in the kind of toddler stage... Of International Development I want us to be like a mature adult about this and actually know what we're doing. And when I look at other partners or when they send things through like a partner sent through something stay about, you know... Some online conference that they've got going on in September or whatever and they're looking for international collaboration and another that's doing a an interdisciplinary workshop or whatever. And I always forward that to the schools and be like, here's an example of like the great stuff that other people are doing. And I can't see how bloody positive, how more bloody positive I can be.

UK - International Opportunities Manager

I'll be interested to see the final results.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Simon (Interviewer)

The first section is basically about some demographic questions and some questions about your motivation towards the international activities that you are engaging in. The second section is about how do institutions develop their international strategies.

The third section is how does culture play a role in international partnerships?

And the 4th one is how international developments are managed, maintained and supported.

And the final section is what do you feel the barriers are within institutions and how effective is the support and communication within them?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

OK, OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

So 5 main questions. So demographically you're from the UK institution.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

OK alright.

Simon (Interviewer)

So how would you describe the partnership that you're involved with? In other words, uh, they post graduate undergraduate. Anything like that. Are they in your current role as potentially at link tutor? And do you do any other work with any other partners at the same time for different things?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

But at the moment, the partnership Agreement is based on post graduate Programme delivery Which you have four distinct programmes that Your partner is delivering out as we speak... I I'm always in contact with the Partners... Well, I said more or less as a liaison officer... Trying to bring their cases to the coordinator, at the Business School. Let's see, we've got problems that can't be resolved quickly because as I haven't got the resources to solve some of the problems, for instance, IT and all those things, I have to refer them to IT, office for them to help them and resolve something like that for them.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so you have a named role and responsibility with this specific partner.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, because I said, link tutor, I'm more or less the main person who is the liaison activities between the two partners. Yeah. So I'm the main person.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

But everything comes through me sometimes or goes to One of their support officers within the school To help them without but always copy me in always, let me whatever is going on. I know exactly what is going on a daily basis. Some issues come directly to me or there's go to their support officer who is more or less in a position to deal with such issues quicker than I could, so that's how it is. But everything that goes on to, I'm aware that I'm always captured the loop.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you. And your partnership that you're the link tutor far is in Ghana.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you do any other roles within the school that doesn't relate to that particular role to are you a module leader where you have to work with other partners?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Oh. Yeah, I'm yeah. OK,

Three different partners... Sr Lanka, Malaysia and Bahrain, that I am the module leader for some of their modules that are delivered within these institutions again, I mean direct contact with their Module leaders in those institutions for the running of those modules and more or less, I make sure that I manage those modules that are delivered in there.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So we can basically separate out in between 2 main roles, one being your link tutor with institution in Ghana. and a module leader for three other different partners, OK.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

4 Yeah, that's correct. That's correct. That's great.

Simon (Interviewer)

So as we go through the questions and could you please help me by identifying which area you're talking about. So in other words, you may

provide one answer for your link tutor roll. It may be a different answer for your role as a module leader.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
OK.

Simon (Interviewer)
Yeah, depending on what the question is.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
OK, that's fine.

Simon (Interviewer)
So could you please describe your knowledge and experience in international activities? How long have you been working in an international environment for example?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
I've been working international environment for 8 to 9 years.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
It goes along way back.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
When I started going to Bulgaria or recruitment activities.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
And when I started going to Nigeria and then going for recruitment activities and then going to Mauritius and then partnership activity Mauritius as well by which everything was set, but then there's the school turned the partnership down. For whatever reason I'm not.

I managed to setup a partnership with one of the leading business schools in Mauritius.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
Yeah, good. And that's just for the link tutor ship or for their recruitment. That's the partner.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana
Oh, as their link tutor for Recruitment and partnership in Africa, that was purely link tutor.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

For recruitment and partnership in Africa.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. And does that role still exist?

No. It's gone.. It doesn't exist anymore. 'cause now I'm only link just for one institution that we got partnership agreement with.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so, so the partnership, you're the potential partnership you were talking about in Mauritius?

Mauritius - were you directed to do that. or was that just your own.

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UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No, no, no, no, no, no. Dean of international and then the International office.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

It's at the main international office I was the lead Coordinator for Africa that for partnership and recruitment for Africa in the International Office.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

So I went through that person to go to that to do that Partnership

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

But it was turned down by the Den Dean of school. For whatever reason, I don't know.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. No thanks for that. And I'm just thinking about other partnerships you may have been involved with in the past.

Simon (Interviewer)

For example, partnerships with Finland?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, we've hacked partnership with when we had the Erasmus projects

again, I was coordinator for two projects, one international conference, tourism and order was Gastro Tourism.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

And their partnership consisted of Finland Bulgaria. Lithuania Belgium Portugal.

Which is why it's six. Yeah, I think, yeah. Yeah. Six. Yeah. Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. And that differed in its nature to the other work that you do currently.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. Yeah, that was, yeah, those modules were actually embedded in the Curriculum.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Do exam, so do as high assessment for those modules which we took students to those places with their destination rotated yearly from one institution to the other. But everywhere we went all students got together. Work together and students - put into groups culturally and intentionally put into groups so that they will learn from each other, each other's culture. And one thing I can tell you and watching our learn was that students were so happy to learn other cultures and, in some instances, when they're programme came to that end. That one could see students, actually crying that you were leaving their, you know, friends for the two weeks they are missing them and what they come back, some of them keep having a long life friendship with some of the students that they've met. Those places to we got a long life Friendship with all the teachers that we had.

After today, as I'm talking to you, I've got some people in looked away near that more or less they become friends that I go there every year in and year out.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

And the Lithuania counterpart has helped us so much with additional work for just cultural exchange and that is not the Erasmus. This is something to do with international project that we set again. We set it for our students and the host institution always welcome as give best free facilities to use.

Give us free.

Uh, I guess because you come and talk to our students and you see that culture, that bonding was so good, so important for our students experience.

Simon (Interviewer)

perfect. That leads me on quite nicely to the next section where the next question in this section, which is about your own personal motivation for engaging in international activities.

Simon (Interviewer)

And again reflect on the three now main activities that you do, so your link tutor roll your relationship with things like the Finland and Belgium.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

And also your role as a module tutor. So what? What is your main motivation and does it differ between the three?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

The motivation for the link tutor ship or purely based on a partnership that we go 'cause as I originally come from Ghana and I got I wanted to give something back.

And I know Ghana students want to study. That is. Yeah, they want to study constantly, but they don't have their money.

Money was an issue or money is still an issue.

So having partnership in Ghana they paid at least 1/4 of the fees.

And they could still get the certificate from The UK University .

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

franchising.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that's a franchise agreement, yeah.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

I agree. Yeah. So that just that the most, that's the motivation for link tutor.

Simon (Interviewer)

And again if I can ask on that one - was one of your main motivations to give back to that society. Was that a decision that you made yourself and introduced it to the UK university or were you directed?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No. OK. OK. So in so. International team, they had tried to get into Ghana.

Yeah, but did the culture of Ghana was different, that they, they could, they couldn't penetrate, they couldn't get nowhere.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

So when I became the link tutor for recruitment and partnership in Africa.

Besides giving something back to Ghana again in my remit was to try and establish something. establish, a partnership or franchise agreement in Ghana, and did again and I think I was able to knock some doors. And I was able to get and due to some of the institutions that we're talking about, actually I had two situations in Ghana who Actually interested in No 3, not 2/3. And that was the Presbyterian University. Ghana Institute of Management. and then there The Ghana partner university. I actually had three institutions were interested.

So that was part of my role and I at a I've got them in. But The Ghana partner were so keen.

Once we had agreement with The Ghana partner, would you didn't want to go back and have another agreement to further universities you wanted to focus and pay attention to only one institution for a while. cause we didn't want to have a conflict of interest in anyway. So that is why I had potentially three institutions who wanted to know partner version, half a franchise agreement with this.

So that was the motivation was one to go there to help and two being again and I was able to and that is culture comes in here. Yeah, being again and I was able to. You know, get people to open doors for me and they were open to discussion and you know.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Everything that went on and they decided to come up and align themselves with The UK University, even though other universities in Ghana or in the UK are also trying to get a foot in there.

I was lucky that I had at least three good institutions who wanted to partner.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thanks. So it's a little bit of a mix in that case if you would agree that there was some direction from the university.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So and some from yourself.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, yeah.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. And then coming through the module leadership role for the impact this again, that's just modules that I teach and I lived in Manchester, in The UK University anyway. So when we have a franchise agreement with institutions wherever they are and they are delivering my modules.

Yeah, I become the module leader there as well. So that is an automatic rolled out. You have to fulfil. So yeah. And well, I enjoyed that as well because again it gives me the chance to talk to the module leaders in those respective institutions. And then now I'm listening to them and look at the module and see what could be done, because as much as I am the module leader, everything is being delivered here.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

I tried to make sure that what they are delivering in the respective country.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Actually aligns with.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

The culture and everything that they can, they can use examples in that country, not examples from UK or the West, to align the teaching with their contexts of the country that they are in.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Part that the theory is the same.

The theory is the same but.

Yeah, examples and illustrations and explanations could use their in country context.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you feel from a motivation perspective then for that, for the module leader role?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

You are. You are clearly doing a lot of work to make sure that it works well, is that through your own professionalism or is that through other forms of motivation?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Not just this professionalism, because as a professional you have to make sure that we have everything you do.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

Above above above board is you have to be satisfied with whatever you doing. As a professional we have to make sure that you act accordingly to the norms to the rules and everything but then at the same time, you are motivated to do something then motivation is there. The element of motivation is there that you want to do their best and you want to do their best for your students at the same time, the best for their franchise students as well. So it's both ways you want to do your best for everybody, and that's what that's the motivation element.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so I'll keep it on this subject for a little while, if you don't mind, but so to support your motivation as an individual, does the school support you well within that module leader role?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah Oh, Oh yeah. I've got to workload for being the module leader or for the institution. Each institution that they deliver my module and get some element of workload for that item. Besides that, that is it. That is all it is because that's it. That's all. That's right.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

No, that's absolutely perfect. Thank you very much.

Simon (Interviewer)

So how much importance do you feel your role is for the so the link tutor role?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Is very, very important because.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Whatever happens, the satisfaction of the students.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

At the partnership institution, their status faction of the teachers are there partnerships. Institution should always be paramount.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

And at the same time.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

I have to make sure that. Whatever they do at the partnership institution to alliance with The UK University's rules and regulations. Yeah. So that is something that I have to make sure that.

They do everything - like they're having the same certificate from The UK University, as The UK University students, so everything that they do there that should align with what The UK Business School students will be doing.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect and pulling you back to the partnership you said with Finland etc words, your motivation different for that. And where did that direction come from?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

I had huge motivation for doing that. The motivation was from the students own account. Students own review 'cause at the end of every project or the students participating students.

Review their project, which is a mandatory from there, Organization, which is Erasmus. Sorry, they're not the European Union.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

So again, going through all the reviews, the service that is carried out and their responses that students give.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Makes me feel happy that students are, you know, I've taken students somewhere, not only The UK Business School students by students from other institutions. They tell that they are actually happy going on that project. There are very, very, very, very happy and coaching from a previous student.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Who said? Oh, Michael, I wish this program never stops because I've had a good experience coming here. I've learned a lot about different people and their country that you took us to.

There will be no way I would have travelled to that country or the city per say.

But bringing us to this particular city I will come again and again and truly I've been there twice after the after the Project has gone there on her own with friends.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

As tourists. love the place and all it was down to the Erasmus trip.

Simon (Interviewer)

Was that primarily your instigation? I was that something that you were directed to do as part of a strategy.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No, that that was. The rural tourism. First, on invitation from our finished partners.

By that international conference, tourism.

Something instigated by myself and my colleague. Nobody told me to do that. I came up with an idea. International conference, tourism and that even let you another project that we did, but I developed with a good colleague of mine, which was there - Gastronomic heritage tourism.

And that colleague who knows more about that project that the colleague did that project with myself.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'll try and interview them at some point.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Now that's great. Thanks very much for that..

Simon (Interviewer)

I'll try and break it down into sort of fairly straightforward questions for this one in your link tutor role, how often? How frequently do you actually visit the partner?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Uhm, OK.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Previously.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

I could say that I will always visited them.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yearly.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Sometimes she could be two times in a year, depending on what I go to Ghana to do. Sometimes I go to Ghana on my own as on holiday.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Dean of International Business School.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Will pay for me to stay at your hotel in Accra.

To visit the Partner.

Have a Staff Student Committee meeting with the students and half a JBoS with the.

The staff as well. So again, sometimes could be twice, but basically it was right. But since then and with the COVID, uh, having been having been everything is done online.

OK. So given that one with your role as a module leader, do you get to go and visit any of those partners?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No, no dot, dot, dot. There's no, no, no, no, no, no, no. That has never been thought of before. That has never, ever, ever come up before. Never.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that communication is email and online.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Email. Yeah. Email blast never come. And again in with those. Partners, everything goes through other link tutor. Which we have a link tutor for Sri Lanka and a link tutor for Malaysia and a link tutor for Bahrain. So that's how it is. If anything that's it. But as module leader I've never had the opportunity to visit and they want those institutions.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so I'm when you were doing the projects that were instigated through yourself and Finland, how often did you go and visit those people?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, we question more or less we meet yearly, but at a different destination.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. at different destination.

So that's, that's how it all worked out. But we saw each other. On a yearly basis.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you. So I got to move on to the second section of this now. I think you've covered a lot in the first section, so I may skip some of the additional questions.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

And so this question is primarily about how do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders and what the perceived benefits of strategic international alliances. So with that in mind.

Simon (Interviewer)

Are you aware of how your institution develops its international strategy?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, now that's perfectly fine. Who do you feel the main stakeholders are when people are developing international strategies?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

To the International Office and the associate Deans from all the, you know, schools in the university.

Associate Dean for instance, for the Business School may consultants or solicit for our ideas if they wish to but when it comes to their strategy I don't think are, we are involved. I don't think so.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

We used to have, I think, monthly meetings,

00:28:53.100 --> 00:29:00.490

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Link Tutors and all those people in the Business School, who had something to do with international projects. We used to have you know meetings whereby we do that. Associate Dean and they would deliberate discuss one or two things but that is I wouldn't say that it's a strategy because that is something that has been done from above and bring it to them to you down then we discuss the way forward so that's the way I look at it.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you? Do you know what your institutions international strategy is at the moment?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Since the pandemic, I think everything is off.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

I don't know, but for what I can tell you is our strategy is to recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit, recruit from international level.

I don't, I don't know.

Simon (Interviewer)

*So is it fair to say that you would consider what you perceive as the international strategy to be primarily financially focused?
As opposed to more altruistic Student experience focused.*

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Don't forget that all situations are more or less businesses. Everybody, all situations are businesses forgot doing this where institutions were charitable organisations now It's pure, pure business. So the focus is predominantly on income.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

And then when it comes to the altruistic points maybe looking at our students,. International exchange. Again, that is something that is there.

I think the university or the Business School is strongly advertising.

And I'll tell you trying to motivate students to go on this and international exchange. So maybe this is one of their strategies now . I know someone who used to be there.

The coordinator for the international.

I don't know the person very well, and again that person was doing his best to get students to go abroad.

I think that's just part of the strategy. I can say that that is part of the student, the university strategy, but that does not bring in income to be honest. That is not that is not yet on the income stream but to enhance students experience while they're still learning, and most students who go on trips for cultural exchange.

Yeah, yeah, I'm there. Shouldn't have been on the exchanges. They come back and they are... They feel happy, they feel happy. They've learned the challenge, that they've learned something they've learned.

Peoples culture and how respectful they are for the cultures that they've actually experienced.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, fantastic. So what do you think the main risks involved in international partnership development from your perspective?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

The main risk could be The institution not following the guidelines of the parents or their main provider. This one is not the franchisor.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Procedures that SOP that the franchisor has set in place 'cause if anything goes wrong.

It affects the franchisor as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Sorry.

Simon (Interviewer)

What do you mean by SOP?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Standard of operation.

Simon (Interviewer)

Thank you.

Simon (Interviewer)

So can you think of any other risks associated with that as a as a link tutor potentially?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. I mean, yeah, of course. Yeah, anything that could damage the reputation of the franchisor.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

it's risky.

Yeah, anything at all that can damage their reputation or their franchise.

Yeah, yeah. I think that to me, that's the main risk. That's the main risk.

That we always have to adapt this what in my role as a link tutor. I'm always, you know, mindful of the way.

Did the franchise, the franchisee appraise and what are they are in line with what is happening at The UK University?

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thanks. OK. So I'll move on to the next section now if that's OK. And this is predominantly about what role does culture play in international relationship in the relationship with the partnership? You've answered a lot of this already.

But are you aware of any cultural differences within part partnerships with an eye for the implementation or the maintenance that you've come across that have either been advantageous I'll cause problems?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Culturally, I think.

There has not been any significant issue.

From the university, that or destitution that are franchising our programmes 'cause the education system is similar to the UK at the education system.

I will say this is culture, but then the way they do things, for instance here everybody is got, you know that I T and all those things there is not culturally per say.

But they are used to you know, doing things in the old fashion way.

Paper and pen.

I think all this is now being resolved 'cause we are trying to get them To do this online.

Which now even they will set up Admissions portal that they can upload their Admissions directly to hold on to their portal instead of before sending this pressure to our admission office. For now, admissions office going to populate the admission banner and all those things. Now everything down from the partners. But then apart from that there, although I don't see any significant Cultural issues that I can identify.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. it's perfectly fine. I mean, you've identified something there that you're saying there's a big driver to moving online. So is that particularly an issue with Ghanaians with their infrastructure as opposed to if it was a partnership in the USA, for example?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

So and some of them aren't they live outside the city where there Modules are delivered, so they travel into the city at the weekend, so all lessons are held on Saturdays.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Maybe because of the Internet difficulties and everything to they can that can hamper their, you know, progress one there outside the city.

In the rural areas you that's where they came from.

The Internet connectivity is very, very, very difficult, but then they all work. They have to do is use their mobile phones first. But you cannot use mobile phones to study. But so far they've managed. So I think they may be when they come to the city they come on the Friday, stay there on their Sunday and maybe do most of their work. I don't know how he's done by day, they've been working hard.

Simon (Interviewer)

And that's great. Thanks. relating still back to culture, are you personally aware of any cultural difference models, any academic theories? And if so, do you use them in any way, shape or form to help you with your role?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. I understand some of these cultural dimensions', we're not in that culture. I know how to relate to them.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Course for, for instance, uh looking at the power distance where the institution this, the culture there?

If there leader is talking or whatever, there's so bored, listening carefully and without interrupting and all those things. So I know. So when the time I go visit the students, I can tell that they are very, very quiet. Yeah, I have to jokingly. You know, you're bringing my culture here in and jokingly, you know, try and what you feed them to talk, you know, to ask questions and all those things. And it's very, very difficult because as far as they are concerned, they cannot challenge me or, you know.

Say some gender. Maybe I'll be offended or whatever, but besides that, Yeah, I know when I understand. And so it because of that I coming straight away and I try to break the ice, try to get them to motivate them to just talk and I tried to be free with them so that they know that you're talking to a fellow human being, not to wear a mini God. You know something?

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's great. So I mean, that's clearly given the relationship with the country that you're link tutor that that's quite clear. If somebody was somebody else was to take that role, do you think they would have a problem with the cultural difference if it was a UK national, for example?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. Yeah, because just students who go quiet and maybe just. Yeah, again he that person will not know how to get them to talk or whatever because I understand the reason why they've gone quiet, so I tried. I tried myself. 'cause. I know that's my culture and that's how I I've been a living up till now after today as I'm talking to you.

There is still there but.

I try to shake it, but it's still there. It's still have still got it still.

Simon (Interviewer)

Still impact?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

It's embedded in my you see it's in my in my veins in that. Yeah, so, yeah. But because I know how they are I try, you know, to get in there trying to get them to talk, but sometimes they don't. Even if you talking to students about staff, Student committee meeting students, you tell me Yeah, experiences will get their perspective modules or whatever. The teachers she did, they are very, very quiet. They don't want to say anything. And by me, I sure in them that look whatever you tell me is confidential and nobody will know. So tell me. Because it's for your own good. You know, I tried to come in there before it. Maybe one or two. Somebody will pick them up and say something but.

Besides that, they will bury everything. They won't say a word.

Or like here, unlike here that students will stand up and tell you straight away in their face which is acceptable and then, yeah. Question culturally again.

When we had the international projects and if used to take students to different destinations with students from 3/6 different countries.

And you see that students from the UK, they're calling me [first name] and I see student from Belgium. They, they, they they will be shocked. They'll be shocked. They. Yeah, they they say you shouldn't. Do you see that? They are shocked why she shouldn't call me. Call the teacher by their first name. And whereas they called their teachers Mr Mr, Mr and here we go. And that's culture. I'm used to it by the students from the other countries. They couldn't they couldn't comprehend why students should call the teacher by the first name they couldn't comprehend.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that that's perfect. I mean were you at any point offered any cultural training before you took on any of these roles?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Not a formal culture per se, but luckily for me I had taken a module, international hospitality management which had a big chunk on culture.

Yeah, cross cultural management and all those things were embedded in the module. So I got to know how different people from different cultures behave. And I had the I just more or less after I had my own set of ideas.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you very much. OK, so 4th section now.

Simon (Interviewer)

So this one really relates to how important and our international developments managed, maintained and supported. And again, you've probably addressed a lot of these questions in your previous answers. So we'll, we'll keep it down to as minimum as we can. So looking at that, do you know if there's an formal process for creating a partnership?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Ah, again, this is a this is a \$24.00 question, right?

The formal process of reaching the partnership more or less for as far as I know, it's using their links, yeah, well they know and then trying to talk to friends in different institutions.

Talking to different institutions.

And see if you would be interested in partnering with us. that's just what I know of, but not that somebody will come up and tell you that. Let's go. And such a partnership here or there or there. Because apart from Bahrain, Bahrain, maybe you could have been done officially from the International Office, but for Sri Lanka, I know for sure, like I was set up by one of my one of my colleagues.

Yeah, and Malaysia to I don't know who watch now means is one of a colleague of ours who had contact there. He more or less so Hey, the Gucci style contacts.

Or contacts. That's what I know. And as I'm saying, Bahrain will be different.

Was set up, you know, formally action in college by both run by The UK Business School and there whoever. So that is completely different.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

But the rest are by the individuals who set up again.. Liaise with their international office and the Dean of International.

Just and then take it from there.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Perfect. No, that's that's absolutely great. I mean, you've already alluded to the certain of the key stakeholders. So you've got the link tutor, you've got things like the Joint Boards of study that you run, the staff, student

committees that you run all of the internal processes, moderation verification from your tutor. And do you deal much with administration?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ah, administration.

Yes. So if this if you would turn this as an administrative work, that's fine, but.

All students from.

00:47:42.960 --> 00:47:45.090

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

The franchised institution who have no got prerequisite Qualifications to come to The UK Business School to do the program, so for program I have to look at the app., Work experience.

And see whether they merit the criteria that The UK Business School is looking for.

So that is something that I do frequently, all works all the time, every year, every year intake. I do something like that.

Yeah, even this year, this year, I've done about four or five.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So moving on to Section 5.

Simon (Interviewer)

And these are barriers that may be institutions may face at a national institution or individual level. So from your perspective, what are the barriers, if any, the institutions face in partnership development or have faced in partnership development so far?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

No, an institution or two to start the partnership process with is another. It's a big hurdle. Yeah. 'cause, you have to find. You have to have somebody within.

Yeah. So that is a barrier.

The another barrier is we have to find that institutions that we partner with should be a reputable institution.

Simon (Interviewer)

And again, do you think that's down to the individual to forge those relationships?

00:50:08.450 --> 00:50:15.230

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, , as far as I know now, mostly individuals false forge those relationships.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

But then the individuals to would do their own background check about the institution because you don't want to go and bring an institution which he said, uh, of bad reputation today university I mean you that you are damaging your own reputation yourself. So again. Then the individual will have to do this or background check on this institution that they want to forge in the partnership with.

So that is another thing that this. Yeah, we do. And then I'm not very a another barrier that we have as I can say is that I don't know 'cause sometimes most decisions were taken without consulting the You know that link tutor.

And it makes life a bit difficult. See, so everything should be run through the link tutor so the link tutor will be kept abreast of whatever is happening.

Especially within the International office.

But for instance, there was a I was talking to somebody from somebody who is not designated to look after their situation that I'm there link Tutor for.

When giving me a story from something, then.

Which? I didn't understand that two countries in Africa.

Checking the same type of o, level or A level in the respective countries. It's called the West Africa Examination Council. In Nigeria is same thing. But then I was told that students from Nigeria will a University degree don't have to show their English proficiency qualification but student from Ghana have to.

But previously I was told that students from Ghana. Did not need to? Because if they're happy university degree, they didn't need to show in the English proficiency qualification. And it came from somebody there, which is a bit confusing, but that that said, OK, that's fine. OK. So that's another thing that I will have to look into. But as I'm saying that everything that goes on, if there's any conflict conversation or anything critical. Yes, you always kept keep me abreast. Let me know what is going on, so that if I'm talking to their partners and know exactly what I'm telling them, but I don't want to tell them something different from what the schools is proposing.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. I mean, the next part of the questioning and it's very near the end now it is it's about effective communication and support. So I think you've highlighted one issue there where somebody is not keeping you up to date with different policies that they're imposing on the partnership as they should really be keeping you in the loop as you are the main source of contact.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

But how generally, how do you feel communication is? Is it something that could be potentially improved?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Not so far, no this.

A scenario that I've just given you came to light recently only about 3 days ago when I was talking to the person who is designated to look to look after other institution in Ghana about.

Besides that.all communications have fine, because their support officer, I don't want to mention the person name has been very great. He's very efficient, is very professional.

And she, oh, keeps me informed with whatever is going on and copies me in every communication.

So every communication that is going to and from the franchisor in their franchisee I'm aware of.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect. So if there is anything that could be improved, what changes would you make if you had the authority?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, because you see as much as.

I'm not trying to say that there may be the the, the we should spend money or whatever.

I know that online. Activities are good. This is where the world is coming to. But ideally, sometimes face to face two is very, very important.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you'd like to see more face to face?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. So if now that. Yeah. Because sometimes. Yeah, it's nice to go there. The students who are there physically with them talking to them and they are talking to you.

And I'm talking from my own personal experience that when the time I've been there with the students after the session, you see students coming to me.

Asking me questions they want to do further their degree with a doctorate or whatever, whatever.

And you see that you know, the bone starts to gel from that from the moment we see that you go there and talk to them, meeting with the head of school, the Dean and some of the teachers face to face in the boardroom style discussion again.

You get a lot done or lot out of them. And then there are a lot out of me. Rather than doing this online.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

And I'm in and I'm talking to somebody who has joined this online before with me.

And that person will vouch me whether I'm telling the truth or not.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, thank you. Thank you. So really that's the end of the interview, but is there anything based on what we've discussed during this that you'd like to add? Any further comments?

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah, because uh.

My role as the link tutor again. I'm going back and this is going back. Back, back, back, back in the day. I wasn't alluded to the partnership agreement. I didn't know what the partnership agreement entailed, Nothing.

I didn't know it. I was just floating, you know, doing this. But no, unbeknown to me that there were some, you know.

Actual. Points that their partnership actually agreed on. And it came to me that their partner was not achieving that particular targets that were set. But I wasn't aware till later on when I became aware of and I, as I'm saying, that

maybe they're costing from the university and the question from their partners to again maybe lead to that number of intakes that they should have.

But from my own perspective If you are setting up in a business. Setting up in the business and we are all business people. You have to start gradually before you grow. You cannot just go in there one day. The first years I'm going to hit this number of students that he is not feasible.

Simon (Interviewer)

So to clarify that there was a target number set.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

and you weren't made aware of it at the time.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. Well, I didn't know how to do it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so that could be a lot more transparent.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Yeah. Yeah. So that we saw that in. In that case, if I had known from the day one.

Well, as I was talking to the link tutor and the Dean, I would have been mentioning and I'll be focusing and highlighting to them to look.

We need to try as much as possible to achieve, at least. We should get somewhere closer to the target. Yeah, I hope, I hope. I hope my responses will be beneficial.

UK – Link Tutor Ghana

Training is very, very important for all, in international activities we have to have a training session.

You have to have the training. They will tell us exactly what is expected of everybody through. There should be a training is done 'cause without prejudice and with no respect to my former boss. There was no training. I mean it. Yeah, Sometimes you didn't know what to do. Yeah, yeah. And I I remember one time somebody from QEO and the Interim Dean or interim head of International actually had session of training for Link tutor regarding

and that is the only session that to me I've had. Yeah. So again, there should be some training and maybe refresher, refresher training.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you very much.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so the interview basically is going to be broken down into five sections. You may know the answers to some questions you may not know the answers. You know, it's perfectly fine to say I don't know. No idea. The sections. Basically. The first one is going to be just a little bit of demographic detail about yourself and your role and also your own personal motivation for the role. The next section is how do the institutions develop international strategies.

The third one is what role does culture play in the actual partnership? The relationship that we've got with them, the next section, how international developments are managed, maintained and supported. And then the final section is what you feel as the barriers that the institution face and also some discussion on the support and communication that that you get.

Simon (Interviewer)

And they'll be anonymized as well. So to start off with, then what do you what is your major role within international activities?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

International activities or linked tutor?

Well from a link tutor perspective, I think just I'm the mainly in zone or contact.

And to make sure there is efficient communication in terms of our policies, procedures, expectations and meeting what the partners need and then if the partners have issues or problems and so on, it is our responsibility to actually take the lead to, to make sure that it's directed to the right people or personal admin in within the Business School to get it sorted. Umm yeah, so the mainly is all I would say is the role in terms of.

As a faculty member and involvement in international, I don't think there's any established or clear plan of how we as faculty can contribute. Obviously we have conversations in, in staff meetings and unit meetings and so on.

But I think there's a need for more formal integration of faculty to be able to contribute. For example, I have had over the last couple years 2 personal networks, people in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and so on, reaching out to me are potentially wanting to establish relationships and questions about that a bit formal, informal feedback of how you proceed so.

Simon (Interviewer)

So for things like those potential developments, this is through your own personal network of contacts etcetera you you've created and do you feel as though that that's listen to you know the people take pay attention to?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

I well, I mean I have said it in the past and in fact right now I'm trying to, I have had contacts just early days or just pre covid wanting to establish contacts and I've been speaking to the recent the AD now trying to get meetings because they are actually pushing back. Now try using me trying to get into to establish something with The UK Business School and the idea is not moving fast. Not Fast enough, there's no formal process of how this is done other than be send them an email and he acknowledged whether he's willing to have the meeting.

I they are asking me for documentation like how do we go about establishing partnerships are the potential things they can do, whether it's exchange of staff, faculty, students, the nature of how we do it for degree programmes . And I think it's more fill out you go talk to people I talk to you. I'll talk to another colleague. I'll speak to people to find out well how do we do this and they have been asking me for specific information you know whether it's like ... Do we have templates or Memorandum of understanding? How do we go and I don't know. And we haven't received training on this.

So it's a very big grey area for me. I don't know how to proceed, so I'm trying to talk to the AD, trying to talk to colleagues how you deal with this in the past. Yes, so there's it's not really clear. So I think the potential country will because there's no formal system, how we deal with a range of things, building international relationships, whereas actual partnerships with degrees or faculty exchanges and so on. Well, at least if it exists, I'm not aware of it, so ...Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'll come back to that if you don't a little bit later cause that's part of the kind of structure of what we want to talk about just a little bit about yourself just to set the scene.

How much experience have you got in working internationally in any kind of field?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Ah, my international experience prior to The UK Business School Is not working in partnerships, but simply because I have taught internationally

whether it's online or as a visiting faculty and so on, where there is a online in the US online and face to face in, in, in Europe and even in Asia as well. And as in terms of my personal background, I'm from the Caribbean. I studied in the Caribbean, but I also studied in the US, the UK... Hong Kong and so on. So I for me, I have an interest in international, all things international, international travel, learning about other cultures. So I saw the opportunity not only to get... More experience outside of faculty role in the university, but an opportunity to probably engage with different cultures, possibly travel, which it doesn't seem this is going to happen anytime again from some of the rumours I've heard that is probably going to be the purview of our leader AD in the future. I don't know but yeah. So yeah, I just want you know and I appreciate all the cultures. I am. I'm from a multi ... have a multicultural background, so I appreciate, you know, interacting and engaging with different countries, cultures, etcetera.

Simon (Interviewer)

the next section of this was really about your motivation and I think you've covered a lot of that already in what you just said. So it's your, your primarily, it's a, it's a personal motivation through your life, your experiences.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah, yeah, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

Somehow, do you? Do you feel as though you get motivation from the school or the university?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

None honestly, to, to be honest, is just a personal motivation. There's no understanding of how this might be useful in building your career, or really your contribution, or even some feedback on your potential contribution. You know how this works, but for example, me for the past few years I I said I have some contacts in the Indonesia, Thailand, etcetera Vietnam reaching out to me and... The feedback I've been getting is there. Yeah. OK. So you could establish relationship, but it does nothing for you.

There's no recognition, there's no hope. You know, formal. OK, so you have made a contribution. In fact, there's probably no guarantee that I help establish a Vietnam connection type, that it could be just given to someone else. So what is the personal motivation for me to establish this?

Uh, you know and I and I see in other schools, like I, I do work for 'another' University internationally.

And their link tutors. Those are really have more significant..Rules. They even call them directors. Of course, I know Coventry is far bigger than we are, but

there's a progression... Administrative or leadership progression that they have.

That I wasn't just. It's just a vacuum, to be honest. It's just a title and there's no sort of potential growth. From what you doing now, so there's no more. Actually, there's no motivation for me to reach out to any of my network.

Right. Why am I doing it? I don't know. I am honest. As I say, it's totally personal and nothing that the university incentivizes or motivates or directs for this to happen.

Simon (Interviewer)

100% I understand it.

Do you think as a university or as a Business School that their motivation is driven by financial gain or is it about development? Is it about improving our international portfolio or brand?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yep. from inside or the potential partner.

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, from the from the university, the UK University side.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Ah, well, I think I think, to be honest, from the university of what's perspective is purely financial. And as all things financial, they don't really consider the individuals who have helping facilitate and brothers. Umm. And maybe if you want to say when it comes to recognition, it was only the the the person, not the top, where there is a AD in this case or the international lead or whatever the case may be. These are the people who actually will be recognised for any progress, whereas the people lower down the feeder system who are actually the ones who are establishing the networks like like I have or you probably have over the years and... One other link, 2000 so on.

There's nothing to come out of it really, other than postal, postal, motivation, drive and and just being appreciating your personal contacts and so on.

You know, so I think it's purely financial they and when we think about not only partners, when we think about students coming in.

I just think they come in the figures, whether is our case. See the numbers, you know and what it means to the bottom line. And we see in the pandemic the last two years which have been singing in our unit meetings up to yesterday, the university doesn't care the quality of students they recruit. It's just about money.

Right. And they're not thinking about the backlash that has on faculty. So yes, it's just money. Motivation, actually, I think.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. So from your role as a link tutor, how much time or how much

opportunity do you get to go and visit the partners? So typically over a year period to get to visit them much.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Well, So what? The last few years with the Irish partner and then the last the none have never visited any other partners.

And I think that is integral and very important that just even if I want to make an analogy... Because of COVID.

University. Are thinking? If you're going to conference, you could go to a conference online. Why do we need to give you money to travel?

But the relationships that you cannot establish online. Then if you go to a conference in person and it's the same, it's the same thing when it comes to partnerships. You cannot build a proper foundation for the partnerships. If you do not meet people. If they don't come here or you don't go to them and I think that is integral and important, but I don't think 'UK' has any formal policy.

Of OK, this is a link tutor's role. Why are we the link tutor if the the your boss is the one who's actually going to to meet them, well then there's no need for a link tutor, right? If we had the ones really doing the interface. Yeah. So I haven't visited any partners.

I that wasn't really a motivation for me, picking up the role... But it will be a nice incentive.

OK, to know what? Yeah, I so as I was alluding to Thailand, I have contacts. Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia? Why? Am I going to do this if they're just going to take the role and give it to other people? Right. And I think for example it Coventry, my understanding is that when you do establish these relationships, it automatically falls within your responsibility and purview. And I've had experience. I've travelled over the last few years, several times to to Malaysia and Dubai and so on in, in an external examiner role. And I have to deal with their link tutor. Yeah. And then link tutor is physically there.

Simon (Interviewer)

Right.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah, I've been to Dubai 8-9 days Singapore. I mean, not Singapore, Malaysia, 10 days, seven days and the link tutor is there the entire time.

Right. So when it comes to even what we do remotely In terms of dealing with modules, reviews, etcetera.

Some schools they send their link to those their directly to engage with the admin staff with the faculty. Do you know who you're working with? Yeah, we I haven't had the benefit, and I don't think I will ever have the benefit at the UK University, of engaging with people like that. And I could see how I can see how important this is because I see the link tutors who I interact with in

Malaysia and Dubai and so on, the relationships they have with the partners from being physically present, which I know cannot happen by the computer, yeah, so.

Simon (Interviewer)

Given all those challenges then, and I mean obviously with your relationship with Malaysia, for example do you have a kind of a close knit group of people that you just work with all the time and try to build that relationship?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah, I mean I the people, yes, like four or five of them that normally when we have the joint boards and so on they will be there. So I know them, but I could... See that meeting them and interacting with them like how I see as I see the other schools I work for, I could see how it could significantly back relationship. So put I could see the potential there with the partners, the willingness of the people. But there's only so much you can do to really establish trust and our relationship online. You know, this is this is is potentially challenging. So I could see... The potential, basically there's potential. I mean, why haven't I gone to THE IRISH PARTNER? THE IRISH PARTNER has, you know... It's right there, you know and.

You make an assumption from far. For example, understanding and going to see the resources up front, what they're using, their limitations or potential strengths that they have, and so on that we can rely on but you can't rely on it through the computer. Again, you know it's only on site visits could help. So I think this school, if we really want to build this international partnerships.

There must be some independence because I say I've been doing external examining for about 4-5 years now for all for other UK institutions and their partners.

Right. So I've been traveling to meet other UK institution partners.

And there's a stronger, higher level of independence at the link tutor has.

In terms of Link tutor responsibilities, I know they do a lot more than we do than I do.

But then they empowered to actually do the things so... So then there's a motivation and drive to pick up the the responsibilities. Currently, there's no reason why I should want to do more for THE IRISH PARTNER. Why I should want to do more for Malaysia, give myself more work. For what reason, right? So there's no formal thing to say, and I know there have been saying that for a while. We need to look at exactly what the link tutor role is. Yeah, there's some little documentation, but I don't think it is clear enough or we are actually empowered.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Do you feel following on from that that structure within the university, so you're dealing with as a link tutor, obviously the administration within the business skill, but you're also dealing with the partnerships office, you're

dealing with other broader areas of the university like the Quality Assurance Office and things like that. Do you feel as though they know what your role is?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

No and vice versa.

I don't think they know what my role is and I don't know what their role is either.

So I think there's a need for formal link tutor training, like real training to understand how clearly defined the rules are, responsibilities, who we need to interact engage with. I only know by asking fellow colleagues and say, well, how do you deal with this? How do you deal with that? Right. This whole a palace you as well recently I have done quite a few APELs in the past.

But now it seems as though there's a new officer, someone who is engaging with apel or some for some partners there. As a apel person, but others there's not. And so it doesn't seem to have any clear system on why. I don't know if it's friendship. They hire somebody, give somebody a job. To be honest, I gave this is anonymous, so I could say, I don't know if you, you know, you, you just want to create a role for somebody. So you say, yeah, let's get them this partner because.

Uh, I think they're bigger partners are do have apel officers or whatever the case may be. So I don't understand how it works. So yeah, clearly I don't know what the rules are. Honestly, I only act when I get emails.

And I see the person title and I wonder why they asking me this question or should they be asking me this question and then when I have issues I have to go and find out to from colleagues who do I speak to in in the admin team because we haven't been trained on this or there's nothing documentation or system for us to follow for certain issues. This is who you need to go to.

For issues you direct me to you know your unit had for example or you know so there's no clarity in that. So I just try to scramble and do what I have to do.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's perfect. That's absolutely great. I mean, it leaves me out quite nice, quite nicely to the next section, which is about international strategy development. Do you do you know if there is a formal policy on international strategy development.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Imagine there's one in some documents somewhere, but as tutors we are not really clear if it exists or what it is.

I just think as I was saying that my person that works me talk to me and I just go and talk to whoever is the international lead or AD or whatever.

But no, I don't know what it is. And as I said, there's incentive.

Yeah, there's no incentive or motivation to say, listen, let's go out and grow this. Let's go out and grow potential partners. And if you do, this is what the contribution is. It could be even financial as well. You know that if you mean that if you bring in a partner, listen, we're going to give you a one off payment, right? Because why this is going to create money for the university for years. Why? Why shouldn't you say, listen, I'll give you £2000. We because you're bringing a partner.

Well, he's going to generate 10s of thousands over the years, right? I don't know if that's what other schools do, but there must be a clear pattern incentive of. Well, well, why should I do this for The UK University?

Why? Why should I bring in other partners? That's just giving me, for example, the ADI sending me back and forth to do this. Find out that why am I doing that if?

Somebody else is going to get the link tutor role for that potential partner except right.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you do you think the link tutor should be integral from the very very beginning of the process?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah. I mean, from what I'm here in recently, I don't know if this is room or what that.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

The ADI said no one is going to travel. He's the one going to be doing the traveling so, so why should I do it in the 1st place? Why should I take my personal contact and hand it to you on a platter and then when we go to one of these town halls, congratulations AD for establishing this relationship, you know?

Whereas if it's a set up, congratulations to so and so who is in new link tutor, he or she is the one that established this partnership, OK.

So yeah, that is. I think there needs to be some clarity on that, because how do you grow because the AD is not the one really grow it, it's is the feeder as the lower people are the ones who are really are going to establish and of course the AD or the leader can also established partnerships.

But as his job .. Right. Is it my job to go and find other things to hand other faculty to leave, right? So as I say for my observation, the last four or five years in traveling for other universities?

There's a...Reward system, whether it is you get the role... Or you're financially compensated for establishing partners. I think these things are exist in other universities, but there's a grey cloud or, well, I shouldn't say there's a cloud. There's nothing really in The UK Business School to say... Yeah, let's grow these international partners.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you feel as though the university has a direction that he wants to go, in other words, it's got a designed plan of where we should grow and develop and what areas in the world we should be exploring. Or is it purely down to the individuals?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yes, it's ad hoc is if whoever comes up and say, hey, you know, if it's ad hoc in, in terms of international potential partner comes to the UK Business School and say listen we're interested or come through one. So faculty or someone, there's no plan of again I I would look at Coventry because Coventry is really big in this international partnerships. They are very strategic in where regions and where and why they're seeking out certain regions.

There's actually, from my understanding, research of why they're going into certain countries and regions, right. I just like other normal businesses, will think about international expansion.

But I don't know that the UK University. What do you if they're doing it? They're not letting us know.

So there's no planning or we are not involved in the planning.

You know, like I haven't had a proper conversation with the ADI about this. It's just emails. Or Sean, just do this. Sean, just do that. Right and .. I wonder. Why am I going to waste my time and energy back and forth with these things? This is not my responsibility. My responsibility is the THE IRISH PARTNER and Malaysia.

Yeah, there's nothing to come out of Vietnam for me. Why am I trying to establish this Vietnam thing? Yeah. So I think when the time comes, I'll say, OK, could I throw my hat in? Could I get the role? But other people apply as well.

Yeah. So the ambiguity there doesn't really make sense.. Other than... You just interested in building the school, but why do I want to build THE UK BUSINESS SCHOOL and THE UK BUSINESS SCHOOL not giving me back anything?

Simon (Interviewer)

Who do you think the main stakeholders are within this? I mean, you're working with the administration with QEO .. Do you feel as though there is a kind of synergy between that with your role as a link tutor or is it?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

No. As I said earlier, there's.. there's no clear understanding of who we need to be interacting and engaging with when it comes to international partnerships, as I say, I only act when I get emails, and then I wonder who is this person actually, right. I you know, I I have to ask a questions. Ohh. Why? Why? They contacted me. But this is not my responsibility. They shouldn't be

contacting me and even a lot of the people in admin, QMO and whoever else they even writing me clueless.

Right. So the cluelessness is in both directions, actually. Yeah, sure. Sean, who is responsible for this? Well, you should be telling me. You you, the admin staff. I'm a faculty, right? I'm a faculty. No, you are the admin staff. You should know the rules, responsibilities, etcetera. So on both sides. I don't think when it comes to international partnerships and other things, but international partnerships, we focusing on people in QEO and other individuals, like when we dealing with language stuff right, they don't know who to go to.

The Sean is this your responsibility?

Right. Uh. And I'm like, no, I don't know. I've never done this before. So. And I think it's just again, an ad hoc for want of a better word. We just outing fires when things arise, but there's no system and I don't know what Switzerland is doing when certain things come up versus when things come up in THE IRISH PARTNER. So there's no sharing of information.... You know, to be honest, we have these international meetings every Wednesday or Thursday or whatever, and I don't see the point of it, to be honest, because the real things we need to talk about not really being discussed, we just outing fires and there's meeting ends.

Simon (Interviewer)

Well from a a kind of strategic point of view. What do you think the main risks are involved in partnership development.. to the institution... to the partner?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Well I think... Because I said earlier, it's pure financial for The UK University.

I think The UK Business School is not concerned about risk.

Because I think that the thinking if we can get the money and we can get the money if things don't work, we just ditch the partner. And I don't think they're thinking long term from a branding perspective. And how that will be received? For example, if things go wrong with the partner in Vietnam, call that good impact other potential partners in Vietnam, right? And because these many of these decision countries have 10s of 1,000,000 right of population, so and they're big so.

We could be in different parts of the country and and but If the brand because from my understanding Coventry brand is well built not because they are high ranked university simply because they are UK university.

OK, but they have used the UK University tag to build that network to build at Brand out of something very strategic, right? So I don't think so for this. Thinking about the risk.

There are risks. Obviously. We can get a bad name if we don't establish things effectively.

Or we could get a a thing, but I think the university is just thinking from a financial point of view that's the only risk not getting enough money.

We're driving enough revenue from international partnerships.

Risk for the partners. I don't know if the partners don't really have a risk because they have lots of other UK institution options.

So we are the ones that actually to lose out. We are actually far behind the game.

Right. And if we want to catch up, we need to have a formal plan, which I don't think we have or is not being shared with the link tutors or faculty.

All right, and this should be communicating listens. Let's go out there. All of you studied your PHD's. Different parts of the world. Wherever. Let's use your personal networks. Here's the incentive. And this is our plan. And also it's like how we teach in the classroom leadership needs to sell the vision or communicate the vision to all levels vertically charter organization. Everyone needs to be on the same page. But I think there's a big vacuum between what the leadership maybe wanted. And and we are lost actually at the bottom. So you know there's... So we don't really know what's going on until somebody just comes and tells us, hey, yeah, this is the new direction we go in. And they've direction might be right, but they haven't consulted us and we might actually know. So it's like the frontline staff is the ones who really know what's going on. And they should be feeding that information back to management. And I think that's not the case right now at The UK University.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm going to shift direction in a little bit and talk about culture.

So this is cross cultural you know, working on international environment, I mean how much do you feel as though the challenges are or the potential is or the benefits are from the different cultures that we engage with for you as a link due to working with Malaysia and THE IRISH PARTNER that they're massively different cultures. Do you do you come across any significant issues that you need to address?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Umm well, I think from a cultural perspective, well looking taking in the culture from culture perspective, I think I think the partners, at least the ones I work with.

And everything maybe more The Malaysian partner than than THE IRISH PARTNER. Actually, I would want to see THE IRISH PARTNER is more like the UK. So let's look at Malaysia. I think the partners are willing to be flexible. They're willing to listen. They're willing to be guided, they will right, and they're open. And recently with some issues with Malaysia, I see this stick with that. We want to actually force... All values onto the partners.

Or not appreciate for example a simple thing would Malaysia and their religion and public holidays and the system structure. There has been a lot of backlash and I've had to send emails over and over and I've said it to you and other people. Listen, why are we so fixated about?

Exam period and week or two weeks and whether it's exactly The UK University, no, we need to appreciate that the people that they have their holidays etcetera, which they probably don't control. So we want to dictate to them and even at the faculty level, I've had faculty telling me or Sean why and they following our exam date. Does it impact the integrity of the exam? If not, well, why are you forcing it? And I've had faculty forcing things... Regarding exam dates and I say is it a problem if it's leaked? No, there's no problem. So why are you trying to change things right? So I think from a... The partners are willing to appreciate our culture. But we're not trying to appreciate this and I mean that's just one example, right. And we could learn from them. I have learned a lot as an external examiner. Going physically and spending 6, 7, 8 days, yeah, with the year by going exact external examiner role. But I could see how the link tutors learning and they could learn how they're doing things but you can't. Again, you can't do that from the computer. You can't learn it because it's just emails. We do it and these kind of things right so... There's a lot of things in in, for example, what it is the universities I go to in Malaysia... That we if, if The UK Business School was dealing with that, we could learn from them... Right. But we are fixated in telling them this is how we do things, and you need to do it.

Simon (Interviewer)

So from that perspective, I mean thinking about the culture, again, you, you brought up some really good examples where you're kind of having to intervene because you've developed a knowledge of that culture where it's, let's say operational systems, administration etc are not aware of that cultural issue. So part of your role is basically describing the cultural difference to the operational people to get them to understand it.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Do you think there would be value in training people.. About cultural difference and if we're opening up a market in Peru or Malaysia or China or India or Africa or whatever?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Of course, because in any type of business you have to do that if you're going to expand internationally, you need to prepare the your... Your cultural mindset to be flexible, adaptable, and this is exactly what I'm saying. I have been seeing the pushback even from The UK Business School faculty.

Of no, this is the way we do it and they must follow it right and... I think of, of course, then partners need to follow things.

The standards, but if it's not compromising as standards, we should be flexible.

Yeah. Once it's not compromising the standards of the level of education or, you know, the degree and ethics and that kind of thing. Well then we should be flexible. But I've seen in meetings in the past several months that this is not the case... This is not the case within The UK Business School and certainly we need cultural sensitivity training.

Right, because people are not appreciating it as at the send emails and actually two weeks ago I said I've sent communication about this already. Why? Why you're raising this is a issue again, we've already made a decision.

But the problem is that was a ad hoc decision.

So this is the thing when McDonald's learns McDonald's USA learns from McDonald's Malaysia from McDonald's, you know, Africa, they learn they take the best practice.

Right. And they also learn the negative things as well. So it's not repeated elsewhere.

What that is not done in our current international partnership, because I don't know what's happening at THE SWISS PARTNER, obviously, yeah, things come out in our meeting and so on, but it's not formalized and we don't know how to deal with it.

I might hear you say something more THE SWISS PARTNER.

Yeah, and then say ohh maybe that apply, but it should be more formal.

And how we deal with it? Not. Ohh, yeah. Simon said this or Michael said that. No, we don't have that system and process. So we not learning. But that's the thing we.

All the all the studies is about. Let's get the numbers.

However, we get the numbers, we don't care about the quality of the students. We don't care about consistency between partnerships. Let's just get the numbers.

Simon (Interviewer)

But that's perfect. I mean it's it, it's a serious issue and you know I'm fully behind you with it. I mean just shifting it... And remember I'm talking to lots of different people. Are you aware of different cultural models that potentially could be used to support training development? In other words, if we're going into a new culture.

We could look at different things like how they view authority etcetera.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course I be. If you want to look at IB or Hofstede or

whatever. Yeah, they are. They are models, Trompenaars, etc... that... Well, yeah, but we don't have any formal plan. And so how could we even think about having, you know, really having a modelling... How should we systematically examine potential or existing partners and informing staff? So really.

Yeah, Sean, you're going with this is Malaysia or you see that sort of exchange as well where I think we talked about it in, in, in recent meetings that... Sometimes it's good, actually might be with the one of the other schools I work for is important for... their people, whoever we listen with the come here and vice versa.

Right. And I think it's important to establish whether it's once a year, twice a year, you go to the partner. This is very important. This on the ground together understanding and feeling for how things are working and that's part of the cultural exchange. Right. But that being said, I think... It's the universe you just wanted. OK, Sean, you're the link tutor for Isle in Ireland.

Have some sort of education go on some sort of training to say, listen, you need to see the differences between the UK and Ireland because they do exist even right or The Malaysian partner and Asia and the UK. And how does that impact your role and so on. So basically the need that so in terms of link tutor we need... A kind of standardized formalized system.

And part of that system has to be that cultural orientation, which.. Anybody who working internationally for any company, they have to do it and education is the same thing, but we don't have that. As I said earlier, we teach things where we don't practice any of them, whether it's marketing operations. You know, we don't practice any of those things.

Yeah, I think as a university, but we want to follow up business model of profit... Right.. We followed the business model for profit, but we not following the other things.

As whole businesses operate.

Simon (Interviewer)

That. No, that that's perfect. I'm conscious of time for you, 'cause. I know you got things you need to do, so I'll just jump on a little bit. You've covered most of this already, but it's more about if you want to add anything more. So we've looked at kind of have the strategy exists or doesn't exist. How how do you feel the maintenance of the partnerships work? Is that just down to you as a link to?

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah. In this everything is ad hoc. There's not. Besides, we need to have a

joint board of study. And you know these thing, that's it. There's is up to. It's up to me. What I feel to you know.

Umm, so I think that there's again we should have a checklist of things that besides having a joint board of study of things that we should be systemic, systematically be looking at reviewing at and I don't know if it exists, but I'm not aware... Of the range of things that I should be seeing, or if the school has it, because if we want to look at partnerships and maintain and partnerships... How do we go about maintaining partnerships? What are they integral things we need to be on top of?

Right. Yeah. We need to be on top of management of the modules and make sure the right. But what else and I think there has to be far more, but I don't think it exists or if it exists, it hasn't been communicated to us what are those range of things we should be looking at and... Because things are so informal and no incentives. Why should I be putting in more work anyway?

Right. Why can't I be putting in more work and write, and the WAMS are getting less every year or, you know, or the so. So yeah, so... Basically, that's it, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. So I think from what you're saying, there's a a generic standard which are typical things like joint boards of studies and Staff student committees, that's how we measure the quality assurance we've got external examiners that review the students work.. Samples of the students work. But beyond that, there is no real...

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah, yeah. And even that I don't even understand. We don't even know what is going on as linked tutors regarding these things, you know, like, yeah, there's some sort of when there's an exchange of emails between admin and yourself, but...I see, as I say, when I go to Malaysia for other universities and Dubai, I'm spending a whole week with the link tutor.

As external examiner, I have never met external examiner related to all partners.

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, I don't think they know. You know, it's they. They just got a formal set of scripts and some Marks and paths feedback. It doesn't say if they're better good indifferent so.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

And that's the other thing. As I said, there's high a high level of interaction with linked internal externals and so on because they are the ones who are actually doing that quality assurance for us.

It should we be at, I'm not sure, but you could see that they're stronger relationships from my experience from other higher education institutions in

how they manage it, and it's more strategic Coventry is definitely strategic. I think for sure is strategic, you know and how did the deal they partnerships.

And as I say, I've seen the dubai and and Malaysia and so on.

And It shows that they're more serious in the process.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, it's perfect to me in one of the models that I'm looking at, is all about that. It's a talk, our systematic developments. It also ties into communication and management structures and how we are actually interact internally as well as with the partners. So it's a, it's really clear from what you're saying what's coming through that definitely. I mean, I'll, I'll, I'll jump ahead a little bit because I am conscious of time for you. And what do you think are the biggest barriers that we faced.. Face moving forward.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

I think it's a culture issue, first of all.. Because there's a vacuum, there's a power vacuum or a vacuum between leadership and... I would say link tutors in this case, right?

That we're not involve really involved in the process. I think when we have these meetings is really to tell us things.

Yeah. And we just report issues, that's it is. Tell us things and we report issues. OK. But we not really involve... in the integral decision making or shipping and Co creating that decision making and the lack of the systems and motivations is a is a critical thing. Why should I put out extra energy that honestly? Because I have seen again, I'm sorry, just focus on other partners that I've worked with other universities... But.. There are different levels of linked tutors as well.

Or so I know. There's some people. Yes, they have. They are linked tutor for a single partner or they're the director for the Asia.

Their director for Middle East, their director for Africa and other linked tutors fall under them, so there's a progression part where there as well.

You know that, you know, uh incentive and obviously they get it in salary and then other things are workload points and so on. We don't have that. As I said, we're just messengers.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, none of that. Absolutely perfect. I mean, to be honest, one of my final questions was your personal experience working outside of The UK Business School and you you've expressed that very, very clearly. So don't apologize for referencing Coventry things you know that's perfect.

UK – Link Tutor Malaysia

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I could see how other universities are actually have a

structure and motivation and incentive listen because one of the one of the guys I know he went from during the few years because the external examining role is 4 years, right? So I've seen people progress... From just being one country to the region and I'm just a link tutor for THE IRISH PARTNER my or whatever. I'm just. That's what it is. I'm a messenger to give information. Right or to do The Dirty work and somebody else get the recognition, to be honest.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Simon (Interviewer)

The interview is going to be broken down into five sections

Demographics and motivation.

How do we institutions develop their international strategies?

What role does culture play in the relationship?

How international developments and managed, maintained and supported?

What are the barriers between institutions face and how effective is the support and communication?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

So my first question is, which institution are you from? The UK Business School.

Simon (Interviewer)

So again, the next question then how would you describe the partnership that you're involved in?

Postgraduate undergraduate, a franchise or Jewel award, intensive programmes .

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

we've got all these partnerships, so I don't know which one you're talking about.

Simon (Interviewer)

Which one were you directly involved with?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Ah.

Simon (Interviewer)

In your role as an academic.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Spain.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you don't do any marketing or moderation for any other partners.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Ah, yeah, yeah. OK, so uh.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
Malaysia.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
Bahrain.

Simon (Interviewer)
Right.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
THE SWISS PARTNER.

Simon (Interviewer)
So these are shared modules where the partner that you.

Simon (Interviewer)
direct involvement in what capacity is it writing of assessments?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
Right, so I'm the module leader for modules that are taught in these partnerships and these partner universities.

Simon (Interviewer)
OK. And what are the main activities of doing that particular?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
Spain's a different animal because what we do there is we take students across on your work with the university who host us.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
Uhm, but the module leadership from modules taught in other places. I need to coordinate the module Blackboard site, then module teaching and learning content, and the assessment. And I also need to moderate the assessments from their students.

Simon (Interviewer)
so you mentioned Spain, So what is the Primary relationship with Spain?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland
Originally it was a European funded intensive program which would bring students from Finland, Spain and The UK Business School together to work on a module.

The funding died. Since then we have been working with them on a fairly informal basis to take our students across to the town that the university is in to run a module and we are hosted on informal Basis by the local university and Two of the academics that we have a good relationship with.

Simon (Interviewer)
OK, perfect. So when I'm asking questions further on, you may want to

identify if this is about moderation etc. In the relationship you have with those partners or if it's the completely different one which is Spain?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

OK, alright.

Simon (Interviewer)

As we move forward, so just looking at yourself, what's your previous level of knowledge and experience in internationalization? How many years have you been working and then international basis?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

That would be stretching back probably now 15 years.

Simon (Interviewer)

15 years. Yeah, totally. So you are quite well experienced.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So considering your own personal motivation for engaging with the partnerships.

Simon (Interviewer)

What do you feel your motivation is for working with the Spanish partner.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

It's a student experience for sure. I'm trying to make sure the students have its international experience opportunity to come.

Consider things from different cultural perspectives and also to make it highlight of their degree. This is a fun learning experience.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

And based on that, then do you feel as though that the relationship is designed by yourself?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Absolutely, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

100% This is created, generated, maintained by.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. So in other words, as far as the relationship with the, the Business School is concerned, you were the main driver for setting up this partnership.

As opposed to the university asking you to do it.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Well, I, I mean obviously, yes, it was entirely me.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

But in fact, when we started this project, we were told it would never work. But the leadership at the time 15 years ago, but we tried it anyway. We persisted and 15 years later, we still doing, we're still working with the Spanish partner.

Simon (Interviewer)

Excellent. So as far as The actual orientation of the partnership goes in relation to the school do you say it's a kind of a symbolic thing for the school, or is it a more transformative thing that relates to the students and the growth and development of the program?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I don't feel that the school and the leadership in the school really recognise the significance of the International program that we run, I don't think it's really celebrated as much as it could be.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Like uh, I don't really engage too much in shouting about it and trying to promote it the school.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I think they have a low level appreciation for it, some appreciation, but it's a low level appreciation they they're willing to support with funding.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

That's not insignificant. OK, that's 15K a year.

. Simon (Interviewer)

OK, no, that's perfectly fine. That's great.

Simon (Interviewer)

Relating to the work that you do with the other partners about what motivates you to work with Malaysia, Switzerland and Bahrain.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I would just obliged to do that somebody else has decided that we will be working with these partners. We will be, there will be teaching our modules. So as module leaders, we are directed to come just to do the work that relates to them. We have no option in that, it's it is a burden. We do get workload points for it, but Points are fairly insignificant, so we're just told to do it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. So would you probably say it's financially driven by the school, very much a business led activity.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah, this is I think this is just to make money and for prestige possibly for accreditation.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you.

Simon (Interviewer)

So relating to the partners, the partner such as THE SWISS PARTNER etc that you just described.

And how important do you feel that that partnership is and why?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I think we've got some partnerships that are important THE SWISS PARTNER.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

The from a financial perspective generates a lot of revenue for the school.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Uh, we we benefit from that revenue. We would not sure if we rely on that revenue, but that's certainly important for some of the other partners. I'm not sure how much we benefit from them. I mean I've got modules that are taught in partner university in Malaysia where there's two students on it. So there's a lot of work generated for.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Possibly tiny financial benefits, so some of the partnerships I'd say are important and some are less important.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, thanks. Sounds great. I think. Do you think you've covered that with Spain as well the importance of them as a partner?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No, I don't think I have answered that for Spain because Spain is a completely different thing. They were from my point of view, there are so many more opportunities with Spain. This is uh, as far as I'm concerned, this is a permanent relationship based on this personal relationship that I have built up with X and Y and Z and so on. So whenever we want to do something international.

We always have an opportunity to collaborate with them, whether it's another intensive program, whether it's a progression agreement, whether it's Jewel award, you know they're they're always there as a permanent opportunity.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you.

Simon (Interviewer)

And and keeping on to Spain.

Simon (Interviewer)

Typically how much time do you spend either visiting, visiting them or communicating with them? How does a relationship work as far as contract?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

It's hard to answer that one.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

A couple of reasons why it's hard? Because they're obviously different times a year, it's more or less. I mean we when we go across their or their full time in about 6 weeks before we're speaking to X and Y a bit more, but you get to like June, July, August. And you know, we don't really certainly from a work perspective, we don't get in touch at all. The other reason it's tricky to answer 'cause we're not visited in three years, so we've not had to set it up and go and visit and so on. So it's tricky one to answer.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, and that's fine. And reverting back to the other partnerships that you're involved with.

Simon (Interviewer)

Have you visited any of those or?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No. We send some emails, you know.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Pick up documents that they've sent on a teams site or by email.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Well, uh, probably email each partner maybe in total per year.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

4,5 or 6 times.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

When there is work to be done for our module.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, thanks. Now it's perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

So moving on to the second area, which is primarily how do institutions develop their international strategies, who are the stakeholders and what are their perceived benefits of strategic international alliances. So are you aware of how your institution develops its international strategy?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No.

Simon (Interviewer)

No. Do you feel that it's a planned thing?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I'm sure it will be planned, but I think the plan is going to be largely led by the individual who's responsible for that. And having been here for quite a long time, I've seen these individuals come and go up. So the plan changes, I think obviously with Associate Dean International, but we've had recently she was very keen on developing these international partnerships and creating these international partnerships. And I think a lot of the international partnerships that we've got the moment it down to this.

One individual, largely, and now she's not here anymore. And we're maintaining these partnerships, but I don't. I don't know how centrally organized the anyway we see regimes in the Business School come and go.

So I don't know how consistent the strategy is or whether a new regime comes in. New leadership comes in and it's out with the old strategy in with the new, but I'm sure it is planned, but I don't know how consistent it is and How long term strategies are?

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's that's perfectly fine. I mean, the next question really is who do you perceive as the main stakeholders in strategy development. But I think you've actually answered that in your previous response.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Right.

Simon (Interviewer)

So overall, what do you consider as the main benefits of institutions engaging in international partnerships? And again, it can differ depending on the the relationship you're talking about?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah, I mean, I've always got these partnerships, relationships with the partnerships where I module leader always tend to forget them when you ask me a question like that. You know, you asked me about the benefits of a partnership. I will think about that. The partnership. But I have a good relationship with and I do a lot of work with and I think there's a lot of opportunities for from. So the main benefits from me, I'm talking about the Spain partner is the opportunity to bring benefits to students. You know that

international experience, that opportunity for residential opportunity for learning from a different culture, different perspective.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

On the opportunity for a good student experience as well. So for me, the benefits of Spain are all about bringing Amazing things for students learning and experience.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. OK. What do you think of the main risks involved in developing new partners?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Uh.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Thinking about the two different types

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

When you're talking about the partnerships, we've got formal agreements, words and they run our modules and then we run our programmes as a risk or like any franchise, there's a risk of damage to the brand and reputation.

There is a financial risk if you look at someone like Switzerland. If they decide that they will franchise from somebody else, which short notice, then as a financial risk there that that could cause us.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Financial problems?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

But when I think about the Spain relationship.

The risks are nominal. Absolutely can't think of any.

Uh, they're very, very supportive. they're very understanding. We know we know what each other wants and how each other works, and if they can do something for us, they will. If we can do something for them, we will. It's a very good relationship so.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Very, very few risks with this Spain partnership. From my point of view.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Thank you. So moving on to the next section and this is primarily about the role culture plays in the relationship with the partner. So do you feel that cultural differences are a factor in partnership development?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

In partnership development

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, the ongoing development of a partnership, for example, not necessarily from the instigation.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Well, it's interesting you say that because the instigation we.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Shows that the original 3 universities, obviously The UK University, one of them Spain and Finland, partly because the cultures were so different and that would maximize the learning opportunity for students. And we saw the direct impact of that in the day to day classes when finished Spanish and The UK Business School students were together, there have been massive differences and people were trying to work each other out a lot. I'm trying people trying to understand each other. They were communication problems not just with language.

But in terms of attitudes, the finish were always quite quiet. Spanish started off quite quiet and turned it to be there. The British students who had the English medium who are leading the way, but towards the end, how people would come, all the groups, all the students would come.

What I understand each other a lot more and there would be more cohesive.

So culture does play a big role from my point of view, because one of the reasons you want to go abroad and take students abroad is so they can learn from different perspectives, from the management side of running joint modules and working with partners.

Culture does play a role. You have to understand the way that other people work. And again we notice and we've probably got several anecdotes of The different ways of working for in Spain and in Finland and in the UK, and you have to understand that and it's for me it's, it's one of the great

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you feel that that has an impact when you're dealing with the other Partners that you work with.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

To be honest, not at all, because this is very much.

Process that you just have to go through with them. There's no relationship, there's no in depth discussions. It's just, you know. Box ticking almost Blackboard site to set up a meeting. Here's the assignment. You send me the moderation. There's no real discussion or development or any relationship.

Simon (Interviewer)

Are you aware personally have any models of cultural difference?

Measuring the cultural differences, and if so, do you use them? Do you apply them when you're working with partners?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I am aware of them, I don't use them. But I think what the benefits they bring is that they just give you this underlying understanding that cultures do differ. You need to think about the ways they differ. I suppose I'm subconsciously, you know, I would revert back to Hofstede and think about, you know, uncertainty and power distance, individualism and things like that. I don't necessarily directly apply it.

But it gives me this understanding. There are different facets of culture that influence the way that you behave.

And there's no better or worse way of doing things. It's just different.

You need to take them into account and appreciate them. Be patient with them. Accept them.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So in that respect I'm looking at some of the models that are quite generic. Do you think this is more focused on the individuals that you're actually working with?

Simon (Interviewer)

And the development of that team to make it so effective. So if your work for the example that you set of Spain, do you think that the reason why it's successful is because through time you've developed a team that you're working with who understand each other even though you're from different cultural backgrounds?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah. I'd say that 100%.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

We've been working together for a long time. I think any in the beginning of the relationship with Spain, there were some I think there were some, you know, we were trying to work each other out. We are trying to understand each other but to be honest with my background is quite international anyway and I lived. I lived in Spain, so I understood the culture even before we started a relationship with them. So I think that my past has helped me understand and get used to that culture even before we started a partnership with Spain.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

Thank you very much for that. So I'm going to move on to the next section

now, which is how our international developments managed, maintained and supported.

Simon (Interviewer)

So some of these you may be just answering. You don't know. That's perfectly fine.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you know if there's a formal process for creating a partnership?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I'm sure there is, but I don't know what it is or who does it.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Do you know if there are you aware if there are specific colleagues assigned to the initial development and what their roles are?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

So the initial development, I know there are colleagues assigned to maintaining the partnerships and relationships, but I'm not sure.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

someone who it is that goes out and finds the partnerships and from the Spain example that was me.

From the Franchise examples. I don't know who goes out and picks them.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, no, that's perfectly fine. I suppose related to Spain and the other partners that you're involved in, are you offered any specific training in dealing with international partners?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No, nobody's ever mentioned that.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. And you know if there is a formal mechanism for how quality assurance is guaranteed?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

The partnerships that we run programmes and that franchise, our programmes, that's all vetted that I'm sure the partners are vetted in advance

by the partnerships team at the university, I'm sure that the procedures are vetted by QMO.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

So. Yeah, that will definitely be, , procedures and policies in place.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Thanks. No, that's great.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I'm just considering now the next area which is potential barriers. Institutions may face either a national, institutional or individual level.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you feel that you're faced many barriers, if any when dealing with this partnership and partnership developments.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

What is the franchise? Partners? No, not, really.

In in doing anything with that, I'm just told to do certain tasks to maintain those partnerships.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

From the Spain partnership barriers.

Certainly when we were running bigger projects with them.

We were not really allocated workload points.

For the tasks, these were big. This sort of big module that required a lot of preparation.

A lot of organization and we would just allocate to the same workload points at any modules that was taught and running The UK University. So we would have to do a lot of the work ourselves off our own back as a back as a labour of love. There are obviously financial barriers up because there's a cost involved, but the university has been business school's been very supportive of that.

So really it's just a recognition and support from the school about how much work is involved in sort of setting up and maintaining these relationships.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm do. Do you feel that the relationships have improved over time?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

My relationship with the Spanish partner.

Simon (Interviewer)

But the Spanish partner, for example, yeah.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Oh yeah.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah, definitely know it has come.

Certainly. You know, we've got a very good professional relationship, but we you know, we become good friends, we can rely on each other. We will go above and beyond to help each other professionally or personally. So yeah, it's a very strong relationship that sort of transcends university these days.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect. Thank you. So the final section, how effective is support and communication?

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you feel that in your role there is affective support and communication measures if required, so if you take support for example, do you feel as though you're supported in what you need to do when it comes to the international partners?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Franchise point of view, yes. I'm not proactive about those relationships. I just do what I'm required to do.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Spanish.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Yeah, in some ways I don't mind the low level of support because we are fairly autonomous and independent and you know we get the financial support that we need, which is all I really ask if the school. I suppose some recognition in terms of you know, reputation on also workload points would be useful when we're setting up bigger modules that involve collaborative work with obviously partners. But. Yeah, you know, we don't. I don't feel like I need a huge amount of support from the school other than paying the bill.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Yeah, that that's fine.

Simon (Interviewer)

From your perspective If the whole system could be improved, what changes would you make?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

Explain to me what you mean by the whole system.

Simon (Interviewer)

By talking about the communication, the way the strategies are managed, developed, do you feel as though you would particularly change anything.

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

I think from my point of view, I would appreciate and maybe I've not been listening, but I would appreciate understanding a bit more about what the benefits of saying Malaysia partnership are because I seem to do a lot of work and when you get some you find out there's two students on the module over there. You think why am I doing this? So I think communication of the benefits of these franchises would help motivation.

I think if you are working with international partners and you're doing a lot of the work off your own back then It would be good if that was recognised that there were some points available for international collaborative work. In the past we have had extra workload points for running modules with international partners, but that went with the person who gave us the points when she left. That system broke down. So I think, yeah, some recognition for the work we do that that should be improved upon.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, well, that's fine.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Thanks very much. Is there any further comments you'd like to add?

UK – Academic Spain/Finland

No, no, I can't think of any.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Well, thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

UK - Academic

Simon (Interviewer)

The interview will be broken down into 5 main sections. So the first part is about yourself. Some basic demographics, but not personal ones and also some of your motivations. The second part will relate to how institutions develop their international strategies. The third section is about the role of culture and cultural difference within international partnerships. And then the next section is about how they are developed and maintained and basically managed following on from that is the section on barriers that we may face with International Development and then basically a section on how we support and communicate issues around them.

UK - Academic

Right. Yeah, sounds good.

Simon (Interviewer)

You're from The UK Business School.

UK - Academic

Perfect.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's how I'm from what you're currently doing, but then your job role and what partnerships are you involved with?

UK - Academic

Yep. So I teach on post graduate and undergraduate programmes that have modules that have partners who are delivering the same module and you want me to list them.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, please.

UK - Academic

Yes, I am smart post grad and I teach on the MSC HRM and on the module is resourcing for high performance and that is has an international partner where THE SWISS PARTNER Ghana, Sri Lanka and at undergrad At undergrad I have a teach out of a Level 4 module with Bahrain and so that's uh principles of HRM. And that's also on teach out At, Ghana as. Well, although it didn't run because they don't think they'd recruited in the January round. So it looked like it was going to happen and then it didn't at the end. And but that's been my experience pretty much throughout the majority of my undergrad and postgrad taught content and has been at least one or more partnerships with an International University and then everything that comes with that.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Thank you. No, that's absolutely brilliant.

Simon (Interviewer)

As a general thing for this as well, and it's just about you as much as what you're currently doing, how much international experience do you feel as though you have?

UK - Academic

Sure.

Very little, really. And so I've never taught at an institution outside the UK directly, so I've prepared content and materials, which some variances. And so, for example, on resourcing for high performance and some of the content we focus on the professional body in the UK, but we then term that in the information for THE SWISS PARTNER in a much more generic way because we're conscious that it's not necessarily relevant to many of the students, and then similarly with Sri Lanka, for example, will develop content that recognises their Institute of Personal Development as opposed to the UK based one. I, but as far as teaching experience is concerned, mine is bounded really by the UK. I don't have taught experience internationally.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's absolutely fine. And how long have you been working with these partners approximately?

UK - Academic

Five years, maybe at most 5. Four. Yeah. 2018 onwards. Yeah. So coming up to five years.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. No, that's great.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so you're saying your role is primarily as an academic working on modules and sharing it with the partner. What directly does that involve with for, for you as far as running the modules concerned?

UK - Academic

Yeah. It's so it's so it's inconsistent across the piece. So I have a really great relationship with my opposite number at Bahrain and we work really well together. And I say that really well together. There's always like little like and stumbles throughout the term, but where we have a really good open communication, at least I'd like to think that there is, but that's not to say if somebody else took over the module tomorrow that we wouldn't go back to zero and start again with that relationship, and some a good email relationship with Sri Lanka, although, there's been instances where the consistency in

terms of things like their feedback to students hasn't been at the level that I would have wanted it. And it's so it's not that it's become contentious. It just like I've helped back letting them release marks until they've developed the feedback so that it's more in line with the kind of feedback that our students would get. And simply because it's really important and we've had feedback from external examiners that it's just not been to the level that they would have been happy with or expect to stay. And I think probably we over egg is in the The UK Business School module. So it makes there's look much more stark and. But yeah, there's definitely been some instances where it's been more problematic than I would have expected. I think the kind of day today of setting up the content and opening up the assessment areas and talk and then through the assessment, that's pretty straightforward. And I am always quite mindful that I'm not in the classroom. So they're delivering my material, but they're delivering their interpretation of my material and we've never had time as a subject group to have you know, even if it is teams that we, we have discussions that you know when I'm talking about reward for HRM, statins, what I'm talking about is XY and Z. So I'm relying on them having the subject knowledge and also having the experience and sometimes the wherewithal take either, research it themselves, or to check with me, and I'm not sure that that happens very well. In fact, I know it doesn't happen very well. We don't do that, and certainly not to the level that I think would be beneficial for the international students and definitely with THE SWISS PARTNER, we don't really have any involvement with them at all.

Simon (Interviewer)

So it varies between the partners and.

UK - Academic

Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, some relationship seems to be working very well. Some seem to be working not so well.

UK - Academic

Yeah, yeah. Or it's just that it's more fragmented. I think in in the ones that you know where we don't kind of have that really open dialogue at the beginning of the term and that, yeah, I I find that that that tends to cause problems further down the line.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, I'll probably come back to that a little bit later if that's alright.

UK - Academic

Yeah, sure.

Simon (Interviewer)

So the next part really is about your own personal motivation. What motivates you for engaging with the partnerships? OK, now, as I say, this can be, you know, a rather difficult question in somewhere in some respects because of the activities that you do. But do you feel as though you do it about your own personal wants to actually engage with international partners. Or is it something that is more prescriptive?

UK - Academic

Yeah. And so, to be honest, it was imposed in the beginning because it was this is your module, you're going to lead it. And here are your partners. And you know, there was no consultation in that. What I have an issue with is It's the moral thing of, you know, we partner with in, in, in international partner, but I don't have the time to deal with them to get them to a level that I think is absolutely I could be really confident that what they're, you know, they're not, they're not going to get me in the room. And I'm not saying that I'm the right thing. But if I'm the one who's overall responsible for the integrity of the module, I think it would benefit much more if we had. 'cause it 'cause it's not even about it being like geographically closer, but they are quite remote to some extent and it relies on the module leader here and there to really develop that relationship. And again it comes back to time, it does and I would much rather be able to run sessions with international partners and do with some justice because their students are paying fees and are they really getting the The UK Business School experience.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep.

UK - Academic

Whatever the The UK University, experience is supposed to mean but Are they getting that level of quality? So I have. Yeah. I think it's a bit morally bankrupt to have a partnership. And I'm not saying that The UK Business School do this, but generally I think it's it's morally bankrupt to have a partnership take money from the partner and then then take money from the students and they're not necessarily get in the equivalent, the equivalent level of quality.

Simon (Interviewer)

So a lot from your motivation side is motivational. As a professional academic to really do the job.

As best as you can, you're not. You're not incentivized.

UK - Academic

No, no, I'm not incentivized to do it in. That will certainly not from a reward or you know and like compensation perspective and I think I you know understanding about different cultures and you know there's so there is like a personal benefit and personal growth from it. I understand a lot more now about the higher education landscape in the Middle East and how they deal with. So for example on one of one of my modules we talk about protected characteristics and about your sexual orientation being a protected characteristic as a very difficult subject for a tutor in Bahrain to have that discussion with their students against the backdrop of their political and legal structure. So we talked about how that might be framed, and it wasn't about censoring the content, but it was about being acknowledging and being sympathetic and respectful of the culture and not just imposing in my well.

If that makes sense, I mean, to be fair, when we teased it all out, really.

It was more about I encourage in diversity of thought rather than protected characteristics because they don't exist in that environment, but we found a way around that to present that content, but in a way that was respectful to the culture.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's really, really interesting. I mean, one other questions later, but I'll bring it in now. It's is did you get any training or support and development on the fact that you are going to be?

UK - Academic

Sorry.

Simon (Interviewer)

Supporting programmes delivered in countries such as Bahrain.

UK - Academic

No, no, that's like, I mean, as opposed to some extent my practice background and recognise you know I dealt with a lot of expatriate workers in my part in my professional practice. So I kind of understood the kind of not geopolitical, but like the the cultural nuances in the Middle East in a not quite to the extent of Bahrain. And but you know that was kind of prior knowledge that I brought with me to the discussion rather than anything I mean.

For example, the whole an issue in SHR Lanka around the Tamils and you know it's not wholly dissimilar to what goes on in Northern Ireland, but I wouldn't necessarily expect somebody to ask me about what happens in Northern Ireland if they're going to study in Ireland, if that makes sense. But I think it would be useful to understand the context politically and economically and you know, on it. I don't, I don't, I don't really know it.'cause, we're not

going to get cultural immersion, are we were not not at this distance and certainly not in a longitudinal enough way to really understand that. But I think some element of that needs to be part of a partnership arrangement, but again, it comes back to time, doesn't it? The time and the cost and the resource.

Simon (Interviewer)

It does, but potentially we do have quite a long leading town before we start running with a new international partner and there is expertise within the university to support that. So that's something definitely a good, very good observation.

UK - Academic

Yeah. Thanks.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's good stuff. I mean it kind of moves away slightly, but still really on motivation. I mean is how important do you feel the partnerships are and why?

UK - Academic

And. So I guess you look at it through two lenses. Don't. you. So you look at it through their income lens and obviously some of our partnerships are very important, for example or THE SWISS PARTNER partnership. So my experience of that in terms of the numbers of students who study MSC, Human Resource Management as a part as opposed to the numbers of master students, although that's changing and who's who would study in the UK context. So I can see from a commercial perspective by the partnerships might be important.

UK - Academic

But I think it's also important from a reputational perspective, why wouldn't international partners want to work for us or work with those? And I would find that unusual in in institution I would question. You know, you know what's the problem? Why? Why aren't you working with international partners so? I think there's understands that we can learn and bring into our own teaching and like that, you know, with that conversation that I had with our colleagues in Bahrain when I did the dirt diversity week this semester, I talked to them about that and explain to them about why, you know, this taught content, you wouldn't necessarily get on an international perspective and it and it was interesting. It was good. It was that kind of we talked about their kind of the difficult things that you can't talk about in the room. So it was good for my teaching practice. Well, I think largely it'll be income generating led. I mean, certainly for something like THE SWISS PARTNER, I can see why it has become somewhat of a barrier that also we are going through we Kathy and and and the team are going through the PARP for MSA, HRM and we wanted to look at a hybrid model for evening delivery because we recognise that

students are very busy and don't have, you know, a day every week that they can come to university.

So we proposed a hybrid model and but it was rejected on the on the basis of it could, it could be perceived to be in breach of our contractual arrangement with THE SWISS PARTNER. So it's not always great. It's just there are times when potentially it could be a barrier.

Simon (Interviewer)

how much time do you spend visiting the partner per year?

UK - Academic

NoNE.

Simon (Interviewer)

Don't. And what do you find is the most effective form of communication then, as she can't see them face to face?

UK - Academic

Teams or email teams, really.

Simon (Interviewer)

And is it predominantly email with most of the partners just?

UK - Academic

Yeah, yeah. So email for, like, day-to-day comes and then teams for discussion.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect. OK. So the next section is about international strategy development. OK. So again, you may know more, you may know less. Yeah, but do you know how our institution develops its international strategy?

UK - Academic

I don't I make assumptions and I don't know whether that's something you want to hear about.

Simon (Interviewer)

Please do, yeah.

UK - Academic

And so I presume like the business with the M SC students and the numbers spiking. I mean, it didn't take a lot to get from we potentially will see high numbers of international students because American and Australian borders potentially weren't as amenable to them. So I assume somebody is looking at and analyzing where these students coming from and potentially thinking about regionally within their locations.

UK - Academic

Are there institutions that we could work with?

UK - Academic

I presume it will have things to do with how much income can be generated based on the strength of the economy and the country so.

UK - Academic

And would we necessarily, would we have a partnership at Russia at the moment? I mean, apart from the obvious?

UK - Academic

But given how poorly performing the Rupal is would, would we want to do that, and would it be too risky and thinking about things like the risk factor in terms of our reputation? And would we set up a partnership with Myanmar? Maybe not.

UK - Academic

But then we went into the Iranian market and there were lots of raised eyebrows about why, you know, they're human rights and.

UK - Academic

Yeah, and legacies from from, you know, terrible things that have happened for in, in human rights and whether that was appropriate and appropriate market. But somebody made that decision. And I'm not necessarily sure how well it's ever consulted on with staff. So nobody ever said to me now that we're thinking about opening a satellite in Galway. What do you think? You know, there's there's never been anything like that. And I wonder if that's not asking the question 'cause, you don't know the answer.

UK - Academic

Are you don't want to know the answer or I've never been asked because my name is never been on anybody's radar for that, which I wouldn't necessarily expect it to so.

UK - Academic

I'm not sure that the consultation necessarily is what it could potentially be.

Simon (Interviewer)

But you also do a role as a programme leader.

UK - Academic

I do, but I'm going to teach out CMDA role.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK 'cause, I've just.

UK - Academic

So we don't recruit fried, so none of those modules are known as our degree apprenticeship students are impacted by that.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's just I was thinking if I was trying to identify who the major stakeholders are in the process, you would imagine that a programme leader would be one of those.

UK - Academic

Yeah, absolutely. I mean I I guess it's about, you know, we have to think about as well about.

UK - Academic

If somebody said to me that they were going to set up an A partnership with a university in Armagh, I would probably feel like I couldn't give an objective view on that because I've grown up in that political landscape and have a view that.

UK - Academic

Probably isn't as objective as other people, so it's people being sensible enough to self censor if they need two as well because like that sometimes we ask the question don't we, and actually what we're looking for is confirmation rather than disagreement. And but you'll choose the people you want to speak too far that.

Simon (Interviewer)

So the next question I think you've answered a lot of this out, which is really about what do you think of the main benefits for the institution from, you know, developing international partnerships. I think you've covered those. And would you think it would be fair for me to say that when we're looking at franchises that you feel it's primarily financially driven?

UK - Academic

Now, if given my limited knowledge of how the process works, that's definitely my assumption. It's whether or not there's any. You know there's any teeth to it. But yeah, on the basis of limited knowledge, I would assume it's financially driven. I'm not aware that it it would be, or what else it could be.

Simon (Interviewer)

And what do you think of the main risks involved in developing some of these partners?

UK - Academic

Well, I guess. So a partner is going to come and show the best, you know, it's like your first day isn't actually coming. You show all the best to yourselves and Oh my God, we're going to be able to recruit 75,000 students. And of course it's like Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding. And then of course, they recruit two students. So there's potentially a risk in terms of the return on investment. And the economy is scale needs to be considered. The economy is scale as well in terms of the academic workload, so. If you have 10 partners, that's quite different to managing 3. And it, you know, that kind of risk of overburdening individuals who potentially are already running super modules for example. So maybe a bit of pushback from the academic community and from professional services. How well is that resource to and you know as the administrative burden increased by more of the partnerships that you have.

UK - Academic

I think the risk there's potential reputational risk. I mean we are what are we, a trans inclusive university, but we partner with it with a country who don't believe trans is a thing and would.

UK - Academic

Possibly execute you for being trans and I think.

UK - Academic

I don't know if it's.

UK - Academic

Ignorance, maybe. Or maybe not. Not willful ignorance, but ignorance, because it's not shoved in their faces that our student community don't know that we do, that I don't understand why we don't get more crap from the student union about some of our partnerships, and whether that's again, do they really know what they are? Do they understand them and potentially cross disciplinary reputational issues? So.

UK - Academic

And like that whole, you know where you could have two African countries in civil war, for example, and acoustics might be working with one government and the business school gets into a partnership with the other. How how do we navigate that and or do we navigate it? And?

UK - Academic

If we don't, should we do that and do we get enough expertise? I I have no answer for any of those questions, but potentially they could be areas of risk and I don't think is there any other kind of risk.

UK - Academic

Yeah. So reputational financial, student experience.

UK - Academic

Yeah. Yeah, I think that's probably it, really.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, that's that's great. No thanks very much. The next section really was about culture, but I think you've discussed this pretty much in depth already and some really good examples, to be honest.

UK - Academic

OK.

UK - Academic

Oh, right, OK. Oh, that's good.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, no, no. It's absolutely brilliant. I mean, do one thing I'd say is working with people in the different institutions. Do you feel as though you do create a rapport with those people or is that very minimal? You do, yeah. And and does that give you a kind of confidence and benefit that you could potentially develop things further with them?

UK - Academic

Oh yeah.

UK - Academic

Yeah.

UK - Academic

I guess I kind of think that they're a bit like myself, that they don't necessarily have any clout as far as any of it is concerned. So I suppose if somebody in Bahrain said to me or we're thinking, you know, oh, I was targeting a staff meeting and somebody was saying about an MSC in HR and we're going to, you know, we're we're we're thinking about parenting with the University of Sunderland, I'd be like, Oh no, hang on a second. We've got a HRM, SC here and it's like fit for purpose and ready to go.

UK - Academic

So I'd probably let somebody know that that conversation happened, but it

would be as an A by product of a functional discussion rather than the purpose of the discussion.

Simon (Interviewer)

No.

UK - Academic

And.

UK - Academic

Yeah, I think that that's, I suppose I kind of think.

UK - Academic

You know, we're kind of the grunt workers and we're getting on with the module. We're not really involved in anything that has any kind of clout at all, really.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, that's that's absolutely perfect. Yep. Thank you very much. So the next one is about international developments, how they're managed, maintained and supported. So again, you may know responses to this, you may not know.

UK - Academic

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Uh, are you aware that there are formal processes for creating a partnership? Do you know much about them?

UK - Academic

And so I don't know much about them, but I do know they exist. And so a million years ago, when Francine was the programme lead, I think there was some discussion about a partnership that never actually got off the ground. And I remember seeing some of the documentation and quite a lot of it was around, like, categorizing risk and who, you know, student numbers. So it was a lot of quite a lot of the functional.

UK - Academic

The functional purpose of it and kind of who's responsible for what.

UK - Academic

Who's responsible for what in column or payments? And so I understand that there's like it because it's not a procurement process, but there is some kind of light form filling and it it's got to go to.

UK - Academic

Like for example you come to SLT for approval 1 and you might come to SLT for approval two and approval three and the mate you may get knock backed for different reasons and but never haven't presented one myself I don't feel very confident I know there's something I don't think they just do it on a handshake and the back end of a packet of Fags while maybe they do but you'd hope not.

Simon (Interviewer)

Now that that's. That's brilliant. I mean, do you know much about the role of the link tutor and how that affects you? Does it affect you?

UK - Academic

And so.

UK - Academic

Yes, I know what that there are link tutors and.

UK - Academic

A couple of times I've hit it so like [UK - Link tutor Ghana] for example. He's been helpful in that area. I wasn't getting any response from the partner and I involved him in the discussion.

Uh, not helps but. I don't ever hear from him about the modules that are happening on my program or that I'm teaching, and that's not just him. Do you know? It's just that that's just an example. And for other colleagues.

Can be kind of a bit complicated.

So there's like a complicated way to.

Store your assessments and I mean it's just like it just feels like, Oh my God, it's just another job to do and that can be quite frustrating. But again, don't really hear from them day today about how the relationships go away in or. Yeah. So generally I know there and I guess if like I don't know, oh there was so there was a problem with in, an assessment at [Sri Lanka] a couple of years ago and XXX got involved in it.

UK - Academic

Yeah, I mean, they were there. They were there. I know they're there. That's probably the most diplomatic way to say.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, no, that's that's absolutely fine.

Simon (Interviewer)

I don't worry. It's it's kind of some of the answers that I was expecting.

UK - Academic

OK. All right. Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So there's there's there is a method to the madness in the background.

Simon (Interviewer)

Again, so the next section really we're getting close to the end. It was really about the barriers, but I think you've discussed some of the barriers already, but maybe if there's anything else that you can think of of what barriers we may face in any partnerships or anything you face so far?

UK - Academic

Yeah.

UK - Academic

Yeah. I mean, if we could get like consistency, but then you're dealing with like I deal with three or four different institutions. So they're not all going to sing from the same hymn sheet for me. But I wonder whether that would be part of the articles of the relationship. So we expect as a minimum that you will provide The UK Business School grade feedback to students and if you're not, then you're reneging on your relationship with those did or I don't know that we necessarily get down to.

UK - Academic

The minutiae out of that kind of level of detail, because I I'd imagine it's probably implied contractually, but then what do these the university have to?

I'm not saying that they should sanction partners because they don't think that that should happen, but I think we should ask ourselves about the integrity of the degree or the the masters. If not everyone is, you know, got it so difficult 'cause you don't want to, you don't want to disadvantage students, but I've never heard of a partner, Graduation being withheld because the quality of their delivery.

I I don't know. I don't know if people go out to Bahrain and places and do QA checks. I don't know if any of that happens. I I don't know. So maybe there a gaping hole. Or maybe that's sewn up tighter than a ducks. As I I don't know.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's not us perfect answer and again it's kind of what I was expecting as as well. So it's working well from my perspective.

UK - Academic
OK.

Let's.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm so again just read out into those those partners at the you work with. Really. How well do you feel as though you're supported and how well do you think things are communicated? I think you've answered a lot of this already.

UK - Academic

Yeah, I think our administrative function or quite good at communicating. So I'll get to know even if I don't read the email and then and inevitably I don't and it's a big rush at the last minute. So like XXX, I'll say maybe in mid December or The Ghana partner is running principles of HRM. So I I think I'm given enough notice to know that this is something that's on the horizon. I think it's a little bit more blurred when it comes to things like moderation.

Simon (Interviewer)

Uh.

UK - Academic

Then you know with that kind of end of module activity and I don't believe that they do things like evo metrics. So why why aren't we gathering that feedback, other things that potentially we could improve our our relationship, improve our service and from from the students perspective because even though it's for me, it's less about their relationship with their partner, it's about the student experience of the student who's attending the partner. And I'm not necessarily sure that we tank in that way.

Uh-huh.

UK - Academic

And and I don't. I don't. I don't know why we don't. We don't, but maybe and and maybe there's a piece of work around putting yourself into the international students shoes rather than thinking about how frustrating your relationship is with the partner, if that makes sense. So yeah, I mean, things could be absolutely slicker, more efficient. Better economy is scale.

UK - Academic

I think where I'd start to get really concerned about support is if those partners scaled up. I think if we were talking about three partners, I can just about manage that. If we were talking about 10, I'm not sure that I'd feel as confident that I have my eye on the ball with things.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. That's great.

Basically, it's the final question. Do you have anything further to add?

UK - Academic

Yes.

UK - Academic

No, no, I mean, I guess if there's anything to come out with this stuff, I'd hope that you know the kind of recommendations that you make are you presumed or about service improvement or about improvements on partnership relationships and maybe you know if you can get it in front of somebody who has a bit of clout in that university that's in the northwest.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's brilliant. Thank you very much. I'll stop the recording now.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Simon (Interviewer)

So basically it's going to be broken down into 5 main sections. The first section is going to be predominantly about a little bit about you and your own personal motivation. And also potentially some of the motivations that you are given from your institution, the next section is how do institutions develop their international strategies? The next one is, what role does culture play cross culture within relationship development? Yeah. The next one is how are these international developments managed, maintained and supported? And the final one really is about the barriers that the institutions face or your institution faces and how effective do you feel support and communication is? OK, so I will remind you of all of these things as we as we go through. First of all, I mean from your working relationship with The UK University... And what the main activities that you've done ... With the Business School.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

The main activities I.. we have been doing activities of exchanging students... We also apply and got and IP intensive project. Yeah. What's it called? Intensive program. Yeah. Of for the Erasmus. And then we had a project where a student from... Each institution, including another Finnish university, so there were three universities and we were sending... Each year, one of the universities was the host of the project, so the other two.. Universities move with... around 15 student no 14 student from each university move to the host university, and then we had a project where they have to analyze destinations. They had to look... Students had to look for resources and then they did a SWAT... Analysis of the destination of different destinations... In the country of the host university, I'm I think most of... We also had... And agreement for exchanging students in the master.

The master in management in in Spain and I think in The UK University, the The UK Business School, it was called Global Management... Umm. And so we had exchange of a students either in the degree and also in the in the Masters... And I think this three main activities so I think, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's absolutely great. So just a little bit of context about yourself, how many years, for example of international activity experience have you got?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Woof along experience, because at the beginning I was the only one who was the responsible of exchanging students at the Faculty of Law and Economics. So now I think we are like 30 people involved in the exchange of a students through the Erasmus program. But 25 years ago, I was the only one... that was in charge of... coordinating all the exchanges of students, so I was the responsible of exchange of students... Of law economies, business, finance, human resources, the way all I so... Experience for more than around 26-27 years because I never stop... I mean, I was the leader at the beginning and I never stop working with this... Erasmus program so. So I think I long experience.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah, that sounds like extensive experience. Have you done much in international collaborations with research projects and things like that?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

No, really, we about research... Umm, we are we have been been... Very lucky and I think we only did no, but I I wouldn't say I wouldn't highlight any research... Positive results with the with the with exchange.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, that's perfectly fine. So going on from that then.. Talking a little bit about motivation. What's your personal motivation for working internationally?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

That's a very good question, and personally I think it was just... I was convinced of the importance of the international relationships for mainly for the students, so I think this provides the students a big experience that I think... I'm even I'm talking with the students. Once they did the exchange, they always say the same thing, that this has changed their life. They have opened their minds and I think this was very good for them. So I think it was my motivation. I would say it was just... To help students to open their minds and to be more, I don't know... more creative, more international to see that there were other things than just the own territory.

Simon (Interviewer)

Well, perfect.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

But I would say you was to support the students. If I had to make a summary... To support the students to give, to provide them with a more global view of the world.

Simon (Interviewer)

And then from an institutional point of view, as you said, you began this international activity 25 -26-27 years ago, did they provide you with any motivation to actually engage in these activities?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

To be honest, I don't think so... And from institutional point of view... Just, they give me some recognition like I don't know. I don't know how to say this in English, just very well done. Well done, rafa. Well done. And but I'm OK. But there wasn't. No..recognition of all the effort that I I I did mainly at the beginning. Now I think everything is more or less... Routine. Uh. The activities they they share routine and there is they have been programmed and now it's very easy for the exchange of students. But at the beginning it was hard work and I don't think I I receive an official recognition by then, no.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you mentioned earlier that you engaged in these international projects?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Mm-hmm.

Simon (Interviewer)

Was that separate to the exchanges in that respect?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

No, I mean, what's the same the, the, the exchange of students.. Was within the Erasmus project Erasmus program.

Simon (Interviewer)

But when you mentioned that you were doing work with Finland and with The UK University, that's a different type of project.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

This was different. Yeah. This was an intensive program that was approved, approved by the European Union. So it was... Completely different to the... Exchange of erasmus students.

Simon (Interviewer)

So so focusing on that, what was your motivation for joining in with that at the beginning and maybe the middle and maybe the end?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

At the beginning I think because it was... Yes, curiosity what was going on? And then, because it was good fun, I mean, I enjoy doing participating in in this. Project and he was good fun... And also.. It was a a reason to travel to go... We'll do another other countries.

Yeah, I think I think it was fun. And and it was just and the motivation... Also... I would say the satisfaction that we had, we, the students, that they... They enjoy very much the project.

They learn a lot... And they... Work with other colleagues from other universities... And it was really nice to see how they create these International relationship. Uh yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So I'm I'm flipping a little bit back to the institution again.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Umm.

Simon (Interviewer)

From your perspective, do you see your institution as being predominantly, say financially driven or student experience driven? How would you see the management of international activities at an institutional level. Is there a key driver that's one way or the other.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Umm, sorry I didn't understand the question.

Simon (Interviewer)

For example, for in my institution, we're very much financially driven. So we go out across the World recruiting international students because they bring in lots of money.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Uh-huh.

Simon (Interviewer)

As opposed to focusing on relatively small projects which give students international experience.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Uh-huh.

Simon (Interviewer)

What would you say? Spain is .. would you place them? Are they financially driven or not?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I wouldn't say they are financially driven. No, I would say it's more motivation from the students than... the tuition. I I wouldn't say they have contributed financially with this project, you know.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's perfectly fine. Every institution has a different approach.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Well, yeah.

OK. Yeah. Perfect then.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I suppose the difficult question, but how important do you feel developing these relationships international relationships are? Is that a priority or secondary?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

This is I mean if it's a priority, I think all the universities, all these situations... When you go to talk to them, they always say that they want to be more international. They want to internationalize all their activities. But then when you OK and what are you going to do and then is? Umm, we don't know. Umm, we want to be more international. OK, but you have to give support for this... And in the end, I don't think there is this commitment for... For being more international, I don't know.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, that's that's perfectly fine. Just again, from your own personal experience, how much time do you get to spend travelling overseas to visit partners? Typically, in a year well.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

How many? How many? Uh. 2/3, 3-4 weeks per year per year.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so that's quite a reasonable amount of time.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Umm.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. And you, you get free choice of who you go to visit.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah, free choice. And I will choose the same place, right? Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

A good partner is a good partners. That's all you can say. So I'm going to shift on to the next section a little bit now and and this again is from your own personal experience, but this is primarily about how does your institution develop its international strategy. So are you aware of any kind of formal system for producing an international strategy that your institution?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

No. If I'm conscious of... Any actions that from from our institution they are doing... To increase the internationalization you mean or...

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Did they have a plan?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Well, if there is a plan, I don't know it. I mean, I know they organize different kind of activities. Like they organize teaching for... A couple of American universities that they bring, teachers and students... But I think they are like isolated actions. I don't. I don't think that there is a plan, a strategy behind. I mean they just propose to do international activities, but not within an umbrella of a plan? I don't know.

Simon (Interviewer)

So if if I were to ask you to can you produce a document that is your strategic plan for your institution, could you do that.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Maybe not me. I mean, I suppose that the vice Chancellor... Who's in charge of the international relationships? I suppose he will have one plan, but... I don't know you.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, no, no. It's a perfectly fine. Don't worry. I mean, you've mentioned several things. You've got, you've got exchanges, which presumably you have an international office that that you work with to to support those kind of things.

Who else? You. You mentioned the Vice Chancellor. Are there any other people in this kind of structure that come together to talk about developing what they're going to do internationally.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

We have an international office... And where they I would say they are in charge to organize, to give support... For all the international activities that... That I organized by the by the Vice Chancellor.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. OK, let's.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

They all the things, all the ideas that they have. They are operated through the International Office.

There's an office where there are several people working there.

Simon (Interviewer)

So looking at it from two different perspectives, though I say you've got the vice chancellor at working with the International Office. So they're making decisions on what direction maybe the institution should go. But from your experience, do you feel as though international developments when they happen when they actually happen come more from individual faculty members saying I've got this potential partnership, this idea? Is it done by individuals or is it done strategically?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I would say that it's more done by individuals the individuals that bring some contacts and then they they say, OK, we can do this... And then from the International Office, they give the approval, say, OK, you can you can do it. That's it. Yeah. Perfect. So and this is... This will be inside our... International strategy. Internationalization strategy, yeah, but... I don't think they are ideas pushing from the Vice Chancellor to do them. It's more from individuals who have contacts and then they propose to do something with... with these other international Universities or people, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So given given that... clearly you've mentioned about working on projects. The international project you mentioned. Do you feel as though there is a benefit of working with a small group of people to develop these things as opposed to a more systematic approach?

So in other words, when you're working with Finland and with the UK, as there are a close knit group of people that work together to make these things happen.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah, this makes things easier to organize to do, to things. I mean, if it was a big group... It will be more difficult to coordinate all the activities and at the end... If you are working with a small number of people... And you, you have

more interaction with these people.. you will start to create a more fluent environment that helps to communicate freely with the others and from these... More free communication or easy communication. It's easier that they are more opportunities or more ideas to implement?

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. I mean at leads me on quite nicely to the next section, which is about a little bit about international culture. So when you've been working on these projects, have you come across any cultural differences that have made things challenging or more interesting?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah. I mean, yeah, this is obviously you, you we can we have suffered... Some cultural differences that sometimes they were... They were funny and others make things difficult, but yeah, obviously the different... I think every country has its own way of doing things. Umm. And when you work with people from other nationalities you discover these differences and sometimes you have to be... Umm, I don't know how to say this but... And... In Spanish, we say you have to use your left hand. I don't know if this is in English.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, looks like sense makes sense.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Makes sense. So sometimes you have to be flexible and... Empathetic, trying to understand the point of view of the of the others, and obviously every country has its own traditions... His own timetable.. Umm... And different hours for heavy lines for having dinner... Umm for the duration of the meetings? Yeah, I think... I remember one day in a meeting and... From another nationality they say that it was time for lunch and just they got up and say they left the room and went for lunch.

Simon (Interviewer)

Makes it quite challenging.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

So yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Given that cultural difference perspective, I mean, not necessarily for yourself, because I think you've gained lots of experience over time. If it was a new colleague, do you think training would be valuable if they're going to go and do a project with a partner from another culture?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah, I think this that would be nice to have this... kind of training and... trying to understand better the traditions for the... idiosyncrasy of the other .. of the other countries, that will be helpful for their successful international project, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Are you are you personally aware or do you use any of the cultural difference models?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

We don't have models. You mean courses of cross cultural management.

Simon (Interviewer)

Right.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I have to say that maybe this is 1 handicap, but we don't have... In our degrees, I mean the ones that are now more like a economy business, tourism, finance, we don't have a model of cross cultural management. And I think that will be interesting to have one model... Of that, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

You could broaden it out to the staff.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's, that's brilliant. OK. So I'll move on to the next section. I am conscious of your time.

So the next one really is more about once you've established a relationship, a partnership, etc, about the management of the maintenance and the kind of ongoing support so.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Umm.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is there a a formal structure about how you manage these things as somebody appointed to manage a relationship?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I think they we have the general... financial help that they are from... doing the stays in other universities... But there is no how can I say?... Probably from the institution they should organize and give more support... To certain kinds of relationships are going to say this... Probably from the situation they should say, OK, this relationship with this university is strategic. It's important. So we are going to give you support to reinforce this relationship with this university, but this is not the case. It's just where there are different options and every individual teacher he chooses which university, which country he wants to be to go... Yes, for his own interest and there is no... Uh, in the institutional strategies. Giving support to someone saying you have to go to this, see to this university, to this country.

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. I mean it it kind of reflects what you were saying already that it's down to individual faculty people to implement that to begin the relationship and then a bit more support down the line would probably be helpful for them to manage the relationship, so if that individual faculty member left, would the relationship die?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

That's a very good thing... Umm probably I think it will change a lot. I mean if the person who has the contact with another university, if he left the.. this institution... Yeah, probably they will be missing a lot of these background, I don't know.. you know.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, the history, yeah. That's obviously fine. Absolutely great. So the next one and again, I'm moving on. We're doing quite well.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah. OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

What barriers do you think your institution faces about broadening out its international activities? What do you think of the main issues? It can be a national level, it can be an institutional level. It can be an individual level.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Was barriers. Mm-hmm. I don't know. I I I I.

I think the barriers, uh, the rector that we have now see is very concerned about the internationalization, at least this is what she always say in all her presentations... And... What barriers do we have? I mean, there are some barriers which are related to the our own culture. I mean, in our territory there is a strong link to to all the things that are from our territory, I don't know. Like, OK, all of us, we know that we should use other languages. Hmm. But at the same time the univercity also wants to reinforce our own language, which is Valenciano.

So they address... If if they want to do international activities, which mainly are in English, so and they address a quantity of money for that... There is people who always say that, OK, we have also to address money for all the activities that are developed in our own language, which is Valenciano.

So, controversy there? The maybe this will be one of the barriers, the other I don't know, maybe it's the predisposition of people of going abroad to travel sometimes it's not easy to find the teachers who want to go abroad.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you think they're? They're motivated to do it or there's it's just there's nothing there to.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I don't think they are too motivated to do to go abroad, no.

Simon (Interviewer)

Absolutely perfect. I'm just thinking that a national level cause when you're trying to set up a new program, let's say a Masters degree. Do you need to get authorization from your national government to do it? You don't have autonomy, you don't have control.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

We need the approval of the Government of national government for all the things that we do with what we call the official studies, official studies, either the of degree or master. So from the and this takes a long time to get the approval for any small change... that we want to do in, in our studies. Umm. So this is also a big barrier to for... To change anything of ours.

Simon (Interviewer)

So if I came to you and said I've got this amazing idea for a double degree.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

It would be a problem.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah, we need to get the approval from the ministry of Spain.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, that's that's absolutely great.

Again, it's really institutional level, this one, but support and communication. So do you feel as though what, how do you feel the level of support is you get for engaging in international activities and how well do you feel as though the whole idea, you've touched on it already, these things are communicated down as an importance or priority for you to engage with. So is the communication good? Is the support God leading to your own motivation to go and do it?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Yeah. Yeah, but they think it's more the all motivation of the teachers. Umm to do it... I don't see these support from my institution to to give... continuity to all these like international activities, I mean I think Is more Individual motivation... For any reason that anyone can have just to to keep working on these International activities will say.

Simon (Interviewer)

So do you feel as our it's almost like a fight to get these activities up and moving or is it easy?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

No. I I wouldn't say it's a fight because... They from I was from the bosses of the university, the directors that they always say that it's important internalize internationalization... And but they don't give you... big support. They. Yes, when you have any idea of anything they say. Yeah. Yeah. OK. OK. But how are you going to do it? Yeah. OK. Maybe you could help us somehow. But this is not the... But you know, we all have the budget. They are closed. So maybe for the next year we can study this possibility. But this is no... Really helpful, I would say.

Simon (Interviewer)

No, absolutely perfect. So if you were the rector of THE SPANISH PARTNER. What changes would you make?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

In order to promote International activities.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I think one of the interesting points will be to have clear strategy... But giving priority... To certain activities and assigning people to each one of these activities or tasks... And Umm but ..All these activities should be programmed. I mean what I feel now is that all the actions are very dispersed. There is no... there's no channel that puts all these actions together, the they are they are dispersed and is just it depend on the casualty. If you are lucky and some of these actions go in the same.. direction that that you want. So I think it should be more organized from the top saying, OK, these are the activities that we want to do. This is where we want to get and we are going to give responsibility to this, this and these persons... Yes, to organize it better until you get the final objective, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Now that, that's great. I'm referring back to The UK Business School now. This is a very last question.

With any experience you got from working with the other partners, do you feel The UK University as a good partner as opposed to some of the others that you work with? Could we improve the way we do things?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

I think The UK University is, in my personal opinion, from the universities I've been working... And I think it it's one of the best where and I think it depends as all the things they depend on the people who are behind... So... I always have received a big support from the people from The UK Business School, maybe more than from other universities where I found more difficulties to try to do other things.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So that's basically it. Any other further comments you would like to make in this context?

Spanish – Senior Academic Manager

Anymore comments? No, I would appreciate... these interview I say thanks for the person who thought that this I could be one of the interviews for this research.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager
Simon (Interviewer)

Basically it's going to be broken down into five sections. The first one is basically a little bit about your demographics and your own personal motivation for engaging in international activities. The second part is how you develop your international strategies. The third section is about what role culture plays. So cross cultural relationship management or you manage that and the 4th one is how these developments are basically managed, maintained and supported. And the final part is, what are the barriers that the institutions face and what is the communication channels and the level of support.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

OK. But will you ask me each question 11 by 1 later, OK. Yeah, because I try to remember the first ones, but then all right, good.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, that. So let's begin.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Perfect. Thank you,

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm could you describe to me what your main role is within your institution?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, my main role is to enable the institution to acquire more international students and to.

To provide our students with opportunities to travel abroad.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

With that, with that, with public funding and then to make that happen.

To make that happen, we tried to develop programmes for the students that come here, and we also am so that they feel better and they don't find their cultural class classes so, so big, and then we also try to train the ones going abroad so that their experience can be more fruitful or they know what to expect basically.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so from what I'm getting from what you're saying, and please say if I'm wrong, it's a two parts to this one is actual international recruitment.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you do you actually proactively look for students from overseas?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

We don't really have a an office for international recruitment in the university.

Uh, because it's a public university in Spain, it's a bit tricky because students pay really low fees and they are subsidized by the Spanish Government.

That is the Spanish people, so I don't think the university is seeking to recruit many international students, as you would maybe, I think as you can universities do they have normally a whole office devoted to that or they travel a lot in in order or they have their headquarters in England. And then they've got different agents or other universities across the globe to recruit students. We don't work like that. And I don't know if it's because it's a public university or it's just because.

How their Spanish system is organized, I'm not sure about other Spanish universities, but I don't think it's much different from this one. So obviously this university attracts students, which is what the vice directors want and what the institution wants to.

And to help internationalization and everything, but I don't think the main goal is to recruit many international students, but I think the goal is to allow as many students in as possible so we can become a bit more international and at the same time the those Incoming students allow our students to go abroad too, so it's a win win situation in a in the end, without having to be expensive for any of the of the parties, that's what. How I see it from my point of view, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's absolutely perfect., it's a great answer. And you, you are 100% right, cause obviously the UK universities do massively promote international activities. I met a Spanish representative by the way in Beijing.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

All right, many years ago.

Seeing a word in Spanish or if they have no idea of the Spanish culture, so it could be in some cases in very in a very low percentage, but it's not that they're going to massively want be wanting to come here and learning Catalan or Spanish. Do you know what I mean?

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

It's more. Yeah, you're your the institution in reality is more prone to attract.

Many time but different types of students, because if they've learned English, they already know a bit of the English language culture.

And English is spoken all over the world, and if If not, they will want to improve it so then maybe they do a gap year in which they learn a lot of English in the UK and then they start studying. But that's a reality that's not very Umm.

developed here yet, or maybe won't come. I don't know. Who knows?

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Honestly. I'm just a little bit about yourself. How long have you been working in the international environment? What kind of things are you been doing?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, well, I've been.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

I've been working at the university at the International Office for 16 years now.

And well, I started because I well before that I was a teacher of of languages, German, English and Spanish for people who were unemployed. So they wanted to boost a bit their careers by getting a bit more of the language and then maybe they could be .. They could find a better job or something so... And that's what I did before and then I.. I had like 2 weeks in which I didn't work anyway. So then in those two weeks I was employed by the university and they said it, this will be only for four months. So never think that this is going to be longer because it's not going to be... and then I thought, well, four months in a university, it's nice because I have that experience and because I my daughters were little then I thought, well, let's see.

If that can boost up with my career or not, but I can always go back to the teaching, you know? So that's what I thought. And then the last day that that those when those four months were about to expire, they just said can you stay for a bit longer and well here I am 16 years later, so now I've got... Umm, in in June I got my senior position and also yeah, like a fixed job. So I'm very happy to be here.

I've studied translation studies, which means I needed to travel already and meet other cultures and get to know other cultures, not only the languages, but the cultures to be able to translate correctly or interpret correctly.

I also did the master in multicultural methodology of the English language in multi cultural contexts, because I also I like the being in the education environment and the multiculturality attracted me a lot. And then I ended up in the office. Uh. But what also helped me is that from when I was very little, I I was always, always very... A curious and interested in other cultures, my

parents used to take me camping. We for holidays here in like 10 kilometers away from Castillon in Benicassim. So but it makes you know this area and it makes a big difference. A big difference. So if you're in custody and you see nobody from abroad, if you go to benicassim, then Oropesa or even if well if you go to other like Benidorm it's even bigger but like in our case we could go to benicassim and then you can see different cultures and different people so .. I remember already when I was very young, being in, even if we couldn't communicate with each other, I was always trying to...

Hang out with people from abroad of my age, even if we didn't understand each other just by gestures or I didn't even know what country they were for. From because back then I didn't even know how to read plate numbers or something, so it was very if, you know, always curious about that. And then I've had students at home, as much as I I've been able to do like I've had students in my family one for nine months from Germany, I've had Saharan students to at home for a for a summer one from the US.

I've been in touch with many cultures as much during my life as I could. And yeah, being at the International Relations Office to start here meant for me a lot and I thought it would be great because I thought I could help people from other countries.

It's also very satisfying because I help our local students who want to go abroad and then they come back with. So maybe those people could never afford to go abroad or could never have, could have never met anyone from abroad if they hadn't been abroad.

So when they come back and they tell their experiences and everything is really satisfying for me too. So Yes. So I think it's a job that I really that really fits me and obviously the university environment is great here and also the conditions that the university offers ... Quality wise, compared to Spain are really good.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. I mean, clearly from what you're saying now, I can feel the passion. And then the next set of questions was about your own personal motivation. But I think you've already covered this..

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Clearly from what you said you have a personal drive and motivation that that has come from yourself. You do you feel that the university is on the same level as the way you're thinking? Do they support you in that kind of way? Are they more driven by?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Financial aspects.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

More than financial aspects, political aspects.

Umm, it's difficult. As I said before I mentioned it, it's difficult.

It's difficult. As I said, it's difficult to attract students.

When sometimes, Umm Catalan is boost it a lot or is promoted a lot here which I'm a I love languages so I don't want of course I want Catalan to exist and I speak Catalan with my family and everything and I do lots of. I've read lots of I've read in Catalan in my career. So in my studies I studied in Catalan too and everything. So I love the language, I love all languages basically. But yeah, I think. I think sometimes it's a bit of an obstacle when students from abroad want to come here because it's not only they have that they have to know some Spanish, but to be able to choose anything and for us to be able to offer everything that the university has to offer.

That's a barrier for. Well, maybe that was for the last question, sorry,

That's a political barrier that we find is not so much about money, because this is a public university and sometimes you can see they're not at all thinking about making money or, but it's about political issues like that that happened here and maybe from your country's monolingual point of view is not so understandable, but here it's it's like a reality that we live every day with and even though it's really nice too. So we have to find a balance to cope with that issue too, that obviously I I I don't know what the solution is, but it would be nice to maybe if they could think of changing things a bit or making things a bit easier for students or something.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, I mean I I I'm fully on board with what you're saying and I know it's it is more of a bigger political issue because I remember when I first started doing Projects with your Dean and people like that and his drive was to a lot of the studying to be taught in English.

And there was other people arguing that no, no, no. Should be. Well, not Catalan, but Valenciano so hope that that even that sort of segregation between languages.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Well, everything's delicate, so it's not nice to. I mean, when you have to be so careful about what you say, what time you use.

Even though you love that language and I'm a speaker of that language and everything, it doesn't sound right to me. It's like I'm sometimes. Umm, sometimes it annoys me a bit because I think things are easier or more natural

Even though I'm saying this only 18% of of tuition is in Catalan or Valenciano, so both terms are the same for me, but not for other people but... And so even though even though we are trying to promote Catalan, only 18% of the tuition is in that language, but still well, you've been here. So everything's written in that language, so I think the only political thing that I would think that is is not isn't is not according to my own beliefs, but obviously... Well, we have a like commissions in which we can talk about the issues or tackle issues that arise throughout the year.

Basically, that's such a a massive, important issue that if we tackle that, we never do. So if we tackle that... First, we have so many other issues that and this would take so long that I don't think we would finish or we would get to any conclusion so.

I don't think they don't hear me or us as an office in that in that sense it's just that we just keep with the university guidelines and we try to make do with them so.

Yeah, maybe in the future. I'll, I'll say something in those commissions.

Simon (Interviewer)

Personally I had some difficulties cause we tried to do a progression agreement or an articulation agreement for an MSC Management with the Business School and there were there were quite a lot of issues and alongside the language there was a serious point because the minimal numbers of students that were speaking English the tutors may be drifted into speaking their natural language, and it caused some issues for us, yeah.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah. Exactly, that's exactly. That's also another, yeah.

Actually, some of the subjects are announced or are publicly announced that they are going to be in Spanish either in Spanish or in Catalan, or in English. So then we can be quite sure to tell students.

Take into account that if you don't speak English, you won't be able to go into this class. Take into account that if you don't speak Spanish, you won't be able to get into this class. Take into account that if you don't speak Catalan, you won't be allowed to, but then we found that that also because a bit, maybe the our culture is a bit more laid back.

Lecturers, if they're main public, speaks a different language than they just change and they don't think it's a big issue. But maybe that could be a big issue because maybe there's that one student from a from a partner university

who maybe doesn't speak up in the classroom, but then go to their university and say, look, this is what happened to me in Castellon.

And I was assured that I was or we signed an agreement in which I was going to be in this class, which was going to take place, was going to be in English or in Spanish or in Catalan. And then I found out they it's not so maybe that could lead to the university not renewing the agreement. Maybe.

Simon (Interviewer)

The next one is really about the importance of partnerships and how do you value different partnerships that you've got across your range of responsibilities and you, you answered most of this already.

You know, if you were choosing partners... What would be your main criteria?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Well, for choosing partners, I think from from my experience, because I had never before working for the university, I would have thought of other objective. Sorry other.

The partnerships that work the best are the partnership in which a part of the personal parties involved in the sense that obviously, academically speaking, in must be great and very effective and both and universities will gain from that partnership.

But. Lecturers who already have lots of work to do lots of things to correct lots of research to do.

And if they also engage in a Partnership, which is not only on a piece of paper because we have like thousands of partnerships in in, in the piece of paper, but the ones that really work and the ones that we're really proud of are the ones that which lecturers also put a bit of their own.

We know they do it because they really like their jobs and they want that degree or that studies to develop into a more to have a more international scope or to recruit more students, whatever their motivation is, but I think... And as an international office, if we only had those papers, it wouldn't mean a lot. And so we tried to boost those collaborations which are, which also involve not only the papers and the signatures that were done 15 years ago were 20 years ago, but also the people so.

If we maybe I wouldn't have said that before starting the job at the university thinking no, no partners have to be Partners who are brilliant in in the in these areas or something which also is a it's is a an added value of course but that that never works. If there's not the motivation of people to keep that going, like for example, well for from our side Partners should also not only involve just one thing, but not just one thing in the internationalization field, but also others like Umm, in the case of the UK University, we've had a long

partnership, and not only for the exchange of students, but also staff, exchange, visiting professors that have come here and we have been able to fund them and also.

We've we've been in other projects together like the intensive programmes which lead to many other things, academically speaking, and administratively speaking. And that's what makes really a good agreement really reach a good agreement.

And really richer, I think.

Because as I say, if we exchange one student each year with another university and we get our student back, that's nice.

And but that's it. So but if that extends to many other fields of for example, you were looking at the possibility of doing a double degree or a double degree program for the masters you share well, the masters you've got and that we've got here to the master management. That is quite that. You saw some similarities in so maybe... So that those type of things, even if it doesn't work out in the end or if it takes a long time to work out, that's the thing that I think that's the that's those are the really nice, the really good partners and the ones that need to be kept.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's a lot of investment of your own personal time and you move away a little bit from your your job behind the desk.

That one of the concepts I'm trying to explore is this idea of a hybrid relationship where there is a small group of people working together on a project that make things go better.

So pretty much what you were just saying. So if you like me, X, Y and Z. You know, we we all talk together and we firefight problems and we promote activities, I mean.

Do you prefer that kind of relationship to a structured systematic one where you have delegated people during communication.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

The structure ones have never worked in the long run.

So I really appreciate more the partnerships that involve a bit of... Uh, selfish to say that in the sense that as you said lecturers, you have so many more things to do in one day.

But that email a week or that phone call. Uh. A week or a month or a day means a lot for the for keeping that relationship going and wanting to do more things so they're structured ones are nice and maybe there are some, but they never last in the long run because there's no personal investment. So and the

in our case, the economic economical investment from the university is not that much because as I said, it's a public university. So if there are no funds, there's no other way of paying or if there are funds they need to be justified and obviously publicly offered to different people who apply for them or something like that. So it's not such a big deal for a lecturer to be involved in one of those projects, economically speaking, or fine, you know.

So it always works much better if there's some kind of personal motivation in that, and that's never going to fail. And yeah, and then.. Yeah. So I don't think the structure ones would last in the long run so much as as a one with a personal investment would we used to have a double degree with a with two institutes in in France Institutes for engineering in France and they are like very, very famous institutes. Very the only brilliant people get in there. So we were really happy to have that.

To have that relationship, but that relationship when I started working here, it was like, oh, that's like the for the university, that's like the special program and something we're really proud of. We've done with these French universities, so we managed to find to those students had to take apart from this, their classes in French at the same time, which were subsidized by the university so that in two years they could acquire a good level and they could just finish their studies in France, let's say, right. So that was working perfectly, but when I start that was at first when I started here, that was going on and I thought, oh, that's like the elite here is like these double degree with each university and so on. But then I found out that it was one professor, one lecturer from there from France and one from here who were also close friends. And they made it happen. And no matter what they managed to change the regulations in their universities, talking to the international offices or whatever they did was always with that purpose in mind.

So one of those two people retired. So the other one just didn't want to keep being in charge of that. And then two different people knew people who are really are great people, too, and are really nice and invest lots of time in that too.

But not in that degree that used to be. So now we we can see it's not working that well even though 15 years ago it was like the best thing we could have and now it's not working and I think it's basically that if you if something's not working you don't change things because you don't have time or because you have other priorities, or because you say, well, we have other agreements. So if this is not working very well, we'll have others. So then that doesn't really fix things. And so I could see that in that one.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's a great example.

And it's it perfectly demonstrates that the need for that personal investment into these kind of projects.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, it's, it's, it's across the world, you know? Yeah. It's not unique to this. This happens everywhere.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm going to change direction now and I'm going to talk about strategy development. Clearly you are a significant role in the university that you work for.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Alright.

Simon (Interviewer)

On international strategy, how much do you get to feed into that?

Simon (Interviewer)

How much consultation do they have with you about developing the international strategy?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Alright, we have twice a theoretically we have two meetings a year.

To tackle this issue and to. But actually it doesn't really, twice a year it should be, which hasn't happened in the recent years, but at least maybe once a year. Yeah, we talk about issues and I can tell the VIP people how that would affect our students or the international students or how I think that something could be changed or could be done, yeah.

But like it's a big panel of people, so it's not only me, it's a lot, a lot of people talking about that. But yeah, I think they take my I think they take my advice into consideration because they basically because they don't have the experience or they don't. They're not face to face with students and they don't... Well, you know, it's always they think things that are good in theory, but then in the, in the practice maybe they wouldn't work or they wouldn't be able to be implemented at all. So yeah, I think I feel heard if that's what you mean.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you feel as though you have investment in the international strategy

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, we do.

Yeah, the internationalization strategy is made by the vice rectorate.

And we are one of the offices that the Vice Rectorate is responsible for.

And so, yeah, our office plays a big role in that internationalization strategy, which is basically, well, trying to boost internationalization at home, trying to make more and more people from the administrative services like me or more PHD's and lecturers to go abroad to and to visit other partner universities or. So yes, it plays a very important role in the in the internationalization strategy. So yeah, we do many things, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

If I asked you to produce your international strategy now, could you do that?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

It from my office is point of view from the universities any.

Simon (Interviewer)

The university.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is there a document that is your international strategy and is that shared with colleagues across the university?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, it is. I can send it to you. We have an international strategy in which I think it's only four pages long, but three of those four pages are task in the International Office.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

So yeah, there is a there is a document.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

I'll share it with you, but so The thing is that sometimes that helps helps me because when we want to boost the mobility within Europe.

lecturers or other people like me, sometimes I just see them in the cantina and I said, well, nobody's has applied for these funds. Can you apply the don't you want to go abroad something and they say like ohh no, my boss wouldn't allow that. Or do you know my boss? I don't think he would find it correctly or something. So then I can I can write an email to bosses and say hello look how this important is in our internationalization strategy that director has signed please.

Uh, send these among your employees because.

Yeah, be among your colleagues because it's really important that they get a bit more of interest.

That they get an experience abroad and then they bring back what they've learned or whatever. So yeah, it's.. I don't think it's so much spread within the university. But there is a document.

Simon (Interviewer)

You have the power to implement it. If you see fit.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Simon (Interviewer)

The next question was, who do you perceive as the main stakeholders in the strategy development? Is this a top down approach from the vice rector etcetera?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Most of the work is done in this office so and they also hear us. So then they also listen to us. So I think yeah, it's from up to bottom obviously but yeah, but everyone is involved and yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

From your general experience, how important do you feel that International Development are to your institution? Do they have a major part?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

I don't think it's a major part right now, but. It's a big part of what the university acquires, and we're always asked to for the ranking part and all that. We are always a good one of the stakeholders in that too. And they always ask us about how we went, how we were doing last year in the last years and so on. So I think we are there, but I don't think it's like a major thing right now for us. As I said, we're still very local.

Even though it's improving, but we're still very local and well, you see most of our students are from Castellon or the nearby towns yet. And even though we are expanding a bit and we are getting new partners and get having more students coming in. We attend international affairs and then we attract some other students mainly from South America in our case and it's expanding. But I don't think it's like a really big thing or I don't think it's the main goal right now or something like.

Umm, but I think some lectures just obviously because they are paid the same and they are.

They are not motivated, they go like ohh. I'm going to be paid the same, so why should I speak English in the class which is an effort for them all? Why should I prefer things in English? If so, I don't think it's like if it was a really main goal and a major thing they would invest everything in that so and they are not doing that. So I don't think it's a major thing. But but it's improving.

Simon (Interviewer)

The there's a lot of stress on academics to conform with policy and sometimes it's difficult to motivate them to do that, you know, and it's only motivation. That's brilliant. So the next thing is moving into culture.

OK, so thinking about your role in general? What do you think that the role culture plays into the developments that you've done. So in other words Is it more difficult in some cultures? Is it easier in others? Do you manage your in any different way?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, Umm, obviously, we also attract similarish cultures to us to ours. That's why I was telling about the South American students, which obviously not only cultural and historical reasons but also language wise we.

They tend to be more comfortable here with us.

Our challenge is to get very far away cultures because our culture, our, our university or our city is not as diverse as some UK cities as you know.

We still have a long way to go. For example, I I asked.

My rector like 15 years ago. If we could have a type of Prayer room, like any culture or something.

Because I thought it was important, because otherwise I was seeing the students from very far away cultures.

Maybe washing their feet in the basin or something, which is for them is the right thing to do, and maybe for our culture, a bit shocking to see that, but it hasn't happened.

And I mean the prayer room thing. Obviously we are supposed to be a country with no religion or religion shouldn't affect every day, issues or organizations and so on. But it does because we don't have a multiplayer prayer room, but we do go home for Easter.

So in the end, in the practice we are some kind of religiously orientated.

So I think there's a long way for us to get to attract those far, far away cultures that for us are really far away, not so much for the UK, because I've been there and luckily you, you have every type of culture there so, so and you think of everything because when I've visited your university or others university, other universities in in England, they all have these Counsellors or

prayer rooms or something that can make a student feel a bit more at home or a bit to make it a bit easier for students to when they encounter this clash.

So that's still an issue, but still because we have to like report to the EU, European Union to say that we are trying to integrate students, we do workshops here in the office when they arrive, we do multicultural workshops so ... it's like a training course. Well, they cannot come obviously it's not obligatory, but they it's not compulsory, but most of them do and we see culture from different scopes and we tell them what they can expect from the Spanish culture and all that.

So we tried to integrate everyone, but as I say, there's still a long way to go for far away cultures and it's much easier for a French students who lives for hours from here by car to integrate with us than for a person who lives in Vietnam or.. Ohh I don't know Malawi or whatever, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you there would be any value in multicultural training for staff.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, yeah, we've, yeah, I think I think that's a an added value that we all should have because maybe the students are going to be most of the time in international groups, sometimes or with peers, like other classroom classmates that are more or less the same age, same background, even if they're from different countries, but they will also need to go at some point to the healthcare center here on campus. They will have to go to maybe they lost their password to get into to log in into the account or something, and then they need to go to the computer science service and If they, if those people had more... we're more competent in, in the country, cultural issues, they will be much more sensitive. And more just aware that there are different realities that and that is not... And that everything's relative basically in life. And so I think it's really important to for those people to get some... education or some training on that we have in the past... some people have come to the university to give us some classes on intercultural issues, but then only the people in the International Office have ended up going to those. But it was open to all of us, but still only our people went to and maybe some of them because we made them go. We made them go. But I can. It's really important that maybe just one person who is at the entrance of a building just to tell where every classroom is or something.

They should also have some cultural awareness because as I say, it will be. It would make everything much easier for students. I remember I once knew a Japanese girl and I was learning Japanese back then, so we did this type of language exchange and when she ate her lunch she phoned me. So during lunch we could exchange a bit of our languages. I don't remember a lots of Japanese now, but back then no. But I'm telling you this because she said she found some of the people in Castellon a bit Racist, she said.

And I I was really sad to hear that because I know people, maybe. I mean, I'm sure people don't mean it, but just because they are not culturally aware that there are other realities that also work and that we're not the center of the world and that there are many religions, many many different ways of seeing the world.

Yeah, it maybe because they don't know that they just because I'm thinking of my parents, they were, they grew up in a very local environment and they've never been abroad or they've never.

And maybe they haven't met anyone from a very far away country in their lives so I can understand them because I know what their culture is and they would never mean anything wrong to they would never mean anything to do any wrong to anyone. But maybe the way you say that, or the way you.. even the way you look at people or the way I don't know you, you the sensitivity you have to.

To talk to people is a really, really important. So I think if everyone, every little person in the university had this training or it would be much easier for students and for us to recruit students and to have students more at ease here and more at home feel make them feel at home here. It would be nicer, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's great. I mean, are you are you personally aware of any of the cultural models that exist in the world. Theoretical academic cultural models that describe cultural difference and the way you should approach people.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Well, in my masters I remember I learned about. Well, I don't know if you mean that, but like some cultures are more time oriented and some others more less time, less time oriented or more task oriented. Do you mean that or yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like other thing. Yeah.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah. So yeah, because I did this masters course in Multiculturality and I've basically had to prepare things for students sometimes if for those workshops and then yeah, I know a bit about that and I can... We can tell students more or less what the general People in Spain would be like, even though sometimes it's not like that, so yeah It could. Cultures can be more time oriented or task oriented in which Spaniards are we are more task oriented and maybe if we In the middle of doing an action, we meet a friend or something. We live room for that friendship or for that conversation, and then we keep on doing something, even though we know the deadline is going to expire. But for us, maybe that conversation is more important than actually the task.

Simon (Interviewer)

I understand you completely. So when you're dealing with international partners, let's say for example, the international projects that we've run between Finland.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Spain and the UK.

Can you imagine the challenges of the different cultures and how that was approached? I know you're not 100% directly involved, but for the academics that were involved with it, how do you think they managed that? Was that just a lived in learning experience?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

I think they managed really well because, well, I remember having students from all type of background In those in those programmes not only from different countries, but they you could see they were and they came, maybe. I mean, they're nationalities were different to the, to the universities they belong to.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'll give you that. I'll give. I'll give you my example. We always made a joke that.

What it was basically around food. Yeah. So the finish get up in the morning.

Very early, they have lunch at 11:00 o'clock till 11:30.

And then they carry on working for the rest of the day. The Spanish like kind of got to lunch at 1:00 o'clock and expected two or three hours to have lunch. English 12:00 o'clock for an hour and then we carry on working. Now that that confluence of different cultures was a massive challenge to the people that were involved. And it was a, it was a learning experience for everybody, for the students, for the staff, for everybody involved. It was. It was direct conflict to a certain point.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Lunch.

That's true.

Simon (Interviewer)

You know, people were not happy and other people were very happy. And you know when when what we tried to do was In still that difference by moving them across nations in our so one year in Spain, this is Spanish culture live with it.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Umm Oh yeah, that's true.

Simon (Interviewer)

Is this is finished culture live with it? This is English culture, live with it and the students would take it. I mean do you do you feel from the point of this research that, that, that level of importance should be placed at a higher level than maybe it is.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, it should. It's very, very important because.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah, there are so many issues that maybe. Yeah, that are important for, for every person, for each student, and they feel included too. And they feel, yeah.

I think so. And also I remember as far as I remember also with the menus because maybe.

We were careful about pork and all those kind of thing that it's really.

That's just being aware of of the different cultures and so that even if obviously they they, they have to adapt to a because they're in a different country. So they have to adapt to a certain schedule. Uh.

Obviously in Spain you cannot have a. You cannot have lunch at 11. Even if you if you paid a lot of money, you wouldn't get it because it doesn't happen. It doesn't exist.

There's a Japanese restaurant here near the university where I like going lately, and they open at 8, but they don't serve food until 8:30. So if we've ever had anyone coming and we've taken them there no matter where they're from, like they open at 8:30, they start serving at 8 for the no matter what. What? What? So it's important that. But then also on the other side also take into account that some people could have these certain specific things that they're culture doesn't allow them to do. So. Then I think it's a bit of everything is adapting to the new to the new country, but also having into account some things that would make students feel a bit more at more at home.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

So how can you expect that that you wouldn't expect that or you would never get that in the UK in the UK because you're so used to different types of things, but here I think we still need to, uh, have a long way to go well in the canteens here lately we've had a vegetarian menu.

So there's always one vegetarian option in any in in one of the three contains and on campus now, which didn't happen 10 years ago. So that's a good.

Simon (Interviewer)

When you look at these international developments, these partnerships that you have be exchanges or whatever, how are they Developed, managed and maintained. So if you imagine from Ground Zero.

Who? Who starts off a new partnership with and then university?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Most of the times it's Professors or lecturers and letting us know about the possibility of a good partner for us.

So The thing is that if those professors or those lectures have no contact with the International office that then they would they wouldn't even think of that possibility of establishing an agreement, but we found like for example, when I went to, I went to England a few years ago to visit some of the partners and then I I asked the lecturers to give me feedback about their relationship with that particular university. And then I found out that there was a a really good.

I really really good link between our university that department specifically with the university, one of the two universities in Sheffield. So and it was like they were doing so many things together and we had no idea of that. So I think and after that because I visited them and I knew of that relationship. If I had known of that relationship, they wouldn't even well, maybe they would have spend some time with me, but I I'm sure nothing would have come out out of it. And because of this special relationship they had we try to find a way to to establish an agreement, let's say, so it's always not always, but most in most of the cases it's lecturers given us, giving us hints or giving us that to work with or to start with and then as I say, if they are involved in the project, I'm motivated and we are too, then then that can be a long lasting relationship for for that specific agreement.

Some agreements, though, are more institutional oriented like our our vice rector, our rector goes on a trip somewhere and they say ohh within everything we've done in this trip. Let's also let's also boost International mobility... So then we are quite sure that the agreement is going to be signed because if both rector want to, obviously it's going to be signed... But then. You know, sometimes... We see that OK is there is signed, it hasn't worked but it's signed you know so... And that's another possibility. Then another possibility is that when what I do is that when our lecturers or the staff we work at the university go abroad with a grant from us or with some PHD or something, we know where they're they've been to. And then we asked them how was your experience? Do you know we don't have an agreement with this university. Do you see any field in which we could collaborate together or something. Sometimes we don't get anything from that, but sometimes we are surprised that we do so. That would be the case that the International Office

itself finds out If there's a need, or if there's a gap that we could fill with that university so base. But the big part is the lecturers.

Simon (Interviewer)

That. That's brilliant. I mean it. It feeds into some of the theoretical models about systematic, systematic, and ad hoc development, so that that that's perfect. And it's it's kind of uniform across the way.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

All right, good.

Simon (Interviewer)

What barriers do you think that you face about developing this international environment that you are passionate about?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah. Well basically, I think as I mentioned before, because this is a public university, we are guided by the national rules and we have to abide to the not only the national rules but also the Valencian region rules and then The university rules and everything is slow.

Uh sometimes is difficult to, and those rules are changeable, but it's really slow, so sometimes.

We think of a way to do something or we see another university doing something that's great and that could work for us. But it takes 5 to 7 years to implement it here with us or it never happens because it's not allowed because it breaks this rule or something that we find out during the way when we've already worked for two years with that so. I think the the way our universities are working in, we're not very even though we are.

We would say we're quite independent, but because we're not.

And but because it's public money and then we have to obviously abide to the rules. So sometimes that could be a.. That could be a bit of a an obstacle as I see in other universities who are much more independent, they have their own Money and they can spend it however they want, so then they can obviously give much more to the International Development.

The other, the other obstacle maybe.

Sometimes also, uh stuff is not very motivated so.

An initiative staff, obviously, as I said before, lecturers should be motivated, of course, but.

I can still see that even if they don't get many incentives, they are much more dynamic and they are much more

So as I say, I can still find many more lectures that are quite dynamic and quite.

And wanting to learn, I wanted to do many different things at the same time. I wanted one thing.

And the best for their students, and so on. But sometimes it's not the reality for People who work in offices.

So it's like that's an obstacle, I think in our university or our Universities in Spain maybe that.

Simon (Interviewer)

I I don't think that's unique. I mean, do you think there's anything you could do to motivate the administrative staff more?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

No, I think if they... Basically a good awareness of what another culture is and If they were also, I think there's a personal satisfaction that when you find it.

You just don't mind. Like you don't mind working that extra mile for something you think is going to make other people happy or is going to make you happy or is going to be a bit of improvement for the university. But maybe sometimes you don't see it. It's like one person says, Oh no, you tell me what Excel spreadsheet, I need to do and that's it. You know, it's like they don't, really.

See how much that she is spreadsheet could help the university or could help the International office, or could help achieve some goals that... And I don't know. I don't know. I I wish I had the answer.

Simon (Interviewer)

I know. I wish I had the answer too. I I think it's time to recruitment at the end of the day and it's very rare that you find somebody that is self motivated that has a passion for understanding. International activities have been value not just for themselves but for other people so.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

So that's a rare breed of person when you find.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's it.

I think you've covered everything that you've done just as one final question relating back to The UK University.

How good do you think The UK Business School occupancy or other partnerships?

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

Well, there are very good.

And I got very good partner.

Not because it's you involved in it, but not only because it's you involved in it, not only because you're it's you involved in it, but actually our students demand England a lot to go abroad. So that's number one thing #2, as I said before the personal approach to each agreement makes a lot, and your university and my university have lots of and lots of links, not only academically, which obviously there are many academic links, but also personal ones, not only with lecturers but also staff or former students, or well, we've had a long tradition of working together for many, many years. I think it's 20 now or something like that. So I don't think we have any other partners that have been with us so long. And we've gone. We've been through a lot. It's like we have these funds. That's good it. Ohh, we don't have funds this year or we will try to make our way to have our students going there or your students coming here and that's what actually is a... Our relationship professional relationship in the end, so it's making things work. And we, as I say from our students point of view, when they come back from The UK University, they are really, really happy. Not only because it's a great university, academically speaking, which it is, but also because of the treatment they had there or the people they met and the possibilities they had, ones they were there. And we have tried to deliver a service a similar service to to the The UK Business School students who come here and we, we hope we've we're achieving it and we'll keep working on that.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. I'll thank you so much, Marga, I really appreciate it. I'm going to stop the transcript now.

Spanish – Senior Institutional Manager

You're welcome.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Simon (Interviewer)

An understanding of your perspective as one of the key people that work with, with [the UK University], OK, so basically it's five sections that I want to cover. The first one, it's a little bit of demographics and your own personal motivation for working in partnerships. The second part is how do the institutions develop their international strategies? Yep. The third one is what role does culture? By that I mean cross culture play in the relationship. The 4th one is how international developments are managed, maintained and supported. And the final one is what are the barriers that the institutions face and how effective is the support and communication?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK, that's OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

So within your relationship with [the UK University], what is your primary role?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK, alright. My role between [the UK University] and [the Ghanaian University] is to liaise all the activities like a basically I form as the focal point... Issues that need to be related to solve for that had to be put in unknown so that if there are any things that I have to add up I add up if some of the later is have challenges that goes beyond the capabilities and I have to step in, especially when it comes to the blackboard issues and other stuffs that are beyond their capability. Basically also work on the blackboard. I mean setting that, I mean date of submission, review dates and other stuff. I also I mean I present [the UK University] in Ghana in many ways just to make sure that the activities run smoothly so that's my role.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, perfect. So I imagine most of your role is based obviously working with your colleagues in Ghana, but you also work with colleagues in [the UK University]. So who are your primary contacts in [the UK University]? I know there's a link tutor.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes. [Link Tutor] and [Partnership administrator].

Simon (Interviewer)

And [Partnership administrator], yeah. You work much with [Partnership administrator]?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Exactly, yeah.. daily daily daily.

[Partnership administrator] is very nice, very responsive. I mean when issues... Immediately get it sorted out... having to, I mean, she has been the backbone of most of the thing. I mean, the success of the [the UK University] [the Ghanaian University], she has been the backbone.

Simon (Interviewer)

Thank you very much. I'm assuming that you're only run with [the UK University] - postgraduate on a franchise model.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yeah. Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

So a little bit about yourself .. how many, how much experience have you got working internationally like?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Really. OK. I started my early days working in [Industry] ... I work with one Ghanaian company. Then I moved to [another company]... By the way, I worked as a senior officer.... [discussion on career history] ... Then I moved to [the Ghanaian University]. So [the Ghanaian University] is my first University that I start teaching after a long period within the industrial and the world. So yeah. So I've had about 10 to 20 years working with the multinationals.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. No, that's great. Really, really, really good. I mean from that respect though, when you moved into [the Ghanaian University], did you go straight into working with partnerships or were you working just as an academic for a while?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

No, I worked as academic. If initially I wasn't adjunct lecturer there for about a year or two, then when my appointment was affirmed, that was when I started working with [the UK University].

Working with them multinationals really help my understanding of [the UK University].

Because I mean, with the multinationals, definitely we almost have the same power of working. I mean, we do things almost the same, so it helps me understand some of the issues and quickly how to respond to issues. And so I think that has really helped me.

Simon (Interviewer)

Excellent. So yeah, you're very well experiencing working internationally. That's brilliant. And I'm just gonna move on a little bit about your own personal motivation for working internationally. What what motivates you to do this kind of work?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

I wanted to become a consultant finally of which I'm working towards it. Other business now and it's it's basically consortium... But I know I wanted to establish my own business and my personal business, so I felt I needed a lot of experience not in one field, but various fields. So I used it. So basically when I was working in the, I mean in the industry, the maximum here is I I'm I

work for a company was four years... At least four years I would apply and move to another company so that the motivation was to be able to build that mean personal capacity so that I can deliver.

But no. Yeah. So moving on to the and the lecturing was as a result of, I mean the intensity working in the multinationals, you know, working with the multinational is quite demanding.

Very, very demanding...you have to work sometimes 24/7 together, especially on the minds.

And so I felt like enough is enough, and I've had enough. So I have to go and lecture, I mean, take on the somehow... duties that I little bit, I am not the taxes tax which are not so much hectic.

Yeah. And then I could also have time for myself to develop my personal goals and visions, so it doesn't. Basically, that is underlying principles for me going into lecturing

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So so very much self driven, self motivated to to do this work. Do you feel as though your institution, [the Ghanaian University] gives you much motivation to work with international partners?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes. People like me would... I mean a lot of... work experiences working with different type of managers and different type of people and we hardly get demotivated by people's action. The goal becomes your objectives... we set up a target. You have to meet the target. So basically, I don't see obstacles... I really don't see obstacles when I'm working. I have to get over it and just get it done. So you always have to find ways of getting over it and getting sorted out?

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. So you've got quite a lot of freedom to...

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yeah, I have a lot of freedom. Yes, even as I'm speaking with you, I'm at home working at working from home... Right. I go for lectures on Monday. It's then on Saturdays, especially when I have [the UK University] classes... And yeah, so it's on Mondays and Saturdays. So I have a lot of freedom and that also helps me because that helps me to achieve... I mean my goal, one of the goal or one of my basic goal for leaving the industry was to have enough time for myself.

Simon (Interviewer)

Thinking about the relationship with [the UK University] how do you think that is driven? do you think it's driven financially or for the reputation of the

university of the student experience.. what do you think it is that drives [the Ghanaian University] in your opinion?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

I think in reputation... and [the Ghanaian University] believe that I mean aligning itself with [the UK University], I mean increases. Yeah, reputation. And also they can create a market niche in the system. So [the Ghanaian University] value its relationship with [the UK University] of which we try so much to increase the packages that we have with the [the UK University], we even trying to have an exchange program with the [the UK University]. So I think they're driven. I mean what drives [the Ghanaian University] to have this partnership going is the ..Is there what do you call it the.. I would say is .. Is an image, is an image of [the UK University]. Yeah, that's really that. That, that that's a driving force.

Simon (Interviewer)

Do you think financially it's a beneficial partnership for you or does that get overridden by the reputation?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yeah, financially it is.

Financial it is...also realize that during the pandemic, I mean, there had been a lot of challenges, especially student. But even though there was a pandemic, we were still working very hard to get... A lot of people on board and I think I we also did very well when it comes to delivery...

Simon (Interviewer)

So you have to change to all online and all those things. Learn how to teach online.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yeah, yes. Yeah. But I think in Ghana, we did not teach online. We had personal contact with the students because the yeah, we didn't experience ... The other aspect of covid where people got sick, you know people, I mean, yeah. So I mean, we just had some few days of what we call it quarantine and lock down. So we just had a few days. And I'm telling you, they're very few days that they had a lock down out was very, very hectic for the whole nation. I mean nearly drive the economy. I mean drive their economy downhill... And so basically we had personal contact without our students and we've had it ever since the date.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Yeah, that's good. That's good. Have you ever visited [the UK University] are given the opportunity to come over to [the UK University]?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

I'll be very grateful for if I don't give if I've given the opportunity to come to [the UK University] and basically, yeah, I think I've been in UK. That was 2003. I came to UK, that was London.

If I'm given opportunity to come to [the UK University] without, that would be a nice opportunity. Nevertheless, we were working out to come for the summer graduation, but I think we have some few hitches because it was not well planned. So we have decided to postpone that. So given the opportunity, I'll be very grateful.

Simon (Interviewer)

Maybe. Maybe next year.

OK, so I'm gonna move on to a slightly different section now, which is about international strategy development. Do you have much involvement yourself in how [the Ghanaian University] develops its international strategy? who it works with, etc.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

No, no, I do not. These things are done... I mean at the higher level and just transcend to us for us to execute. So basically I'm at the execution level however... for instance say if they had to be new introduction of new programmes like now that we're working out hard for us to get a DBA started.

We want the same time, so we could we. I mean try and work it out and I have to just carry it out. So basically. Yes. Right.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Because it is a private owned university, so you know that when it comes to private owned university we don't have a lot of bureaucracy as compared to the public university. So that makes things work faster and much more quickly.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, that's great. I mean from from that point of view with your senior managers, do you they they seem to be laying down a strategy for you. We need an LLM, etcetera. And then is it down to you to find them?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. And is that a kind of do you rely therefore on your own personal network of contacts and things like that? Is that how you tend to.. Try and develop new things.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes, definitely. That's how I do. I just have to rely on my contact and other stuff so that we can get this sorted out.

Simon (Interviewer)

And So what from the [the Ghanaian University] point of view, what do you

think are the main benefits of engaging in the international strategy? You've said the image....what you say is number one. Is there any other benefits that you think come from you?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yeah. We also look at the, the, the financial aspect of it. Basically if you as a private own university, even though we have the image as being the most as the most important thing to look at, we also look at like how beneficiary would be able to recoup money invested into the program because we need to pay later X we need to, I mean it's investing with the need to do a lot of things and the [the Ghanaian University] is also... a Christian university is one of the Christian universities in Ghana and basically it is not solely dependent on money and sometimes we do that for, I mean just to assist the public... So I am, yeah. So even though we have money, we have financial benefit as one of the objectives that does not become the paramount. And so if you want to look at how much [the Ghanaian University] charge as compared to other universities that run other foreign programmes since because University charge way, way down compared to other universes that also to foreign courses and for.

Simon (Interviewer)

So you, you're supporting your local society, your local community.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK. Yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

I suppose stepping aside from that a little bit, but what do you think are the main risks involved in engaging with a new partner?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK... For me personally, I think that I mean getting a new partner... And you have a lot of risk. Basically some of the risks. I'll get the things out of control... and you might be detected by the partner and have things we need to be done... and you wouldn't get full control of activities and another risks and when the partner may decide to end the contract, apparently without even letting you know about of which would that mean will one way or the other.

Yeah, I it I mean have bad image on your reputation and other risks that you also look at when it comes to franchise, it all depends on the type of franchise and relationship, what I just want with or two ways. So if you go to for a franchise and your partner can also choose an and I'm a competitor within the the same encroachment or the same environment it I one way or the other you realize that you are shot on the foot... And so we, we I see these things as some of the challenges and it's one of the challenges is something partners becomes inflexible... I mean flexibility is needed after we had gone through 1,2,3 years.... and sometimes partners want to stick to the status quo or and which does not benefit the growth of the partnership of which I currently I think we experience in, and we desire that things could be done faster to enhance the partnership.

Simon (Interviewer)

So in that respect, you feel as though they're bureaucracy laid down by [the UK University] is the bit heavy a bit?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes. Yeah, say [the Ghanaian University] is basically a private institution. So we desire things could run faster... Anything that you do, I mean one way or the other, I'm impact on our chances of getting competing with the public university... OK, so if... Institutions like those in Africa, basically in Africa and some of the bureaucratic things are reduced to make things faster. It helps.

It helps and it also increased trust and Improve relationship.. And that is what I strongly believe. I think we can put in place.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. I mean, it's a question for me later, but I'll do it now. I mean, following up from that, how effective do you think the communication and support is you get with [the UK University] with working not just with [Link Tutor] and with [Partnership administrator], but when you want to do a new development, how effective do you think that is? Is a difficult process or is it?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

No, it's it is. It's quite cumbersome. Very cumbersome. Yeah, I know that the British are very bureaucratic.

The British are very bureaucratic, so I know that, yeah, that's the way they do things. But sometimes things need to need.. need to take things or we need to take issues in their own perspective.

You know one perspective, so if you if you are, if if you're dealing with... an Irish fine. If you're dealing with the Finland, fine, but if you are dealing with people from Africa then you can. You can take them through the same bureaucracy. You would have to know that the culture and how I you know that we also... with these partners in France.. that's how we survive. So if that's going to be beneficial and you have to be able to speed up the things through the issues here and there... What time it will be ironed out?

So I sometimes the bureaucracy that I find it very difficult, or which I said we have some, we have two or three programmes that we needed sorted out and it's running to two years and we still not sorted out.

Simon (Interviewer)

Moving on from that, staying in the same area, you mentioned culture as being a big challenge. I mean what, what I wasn't beyond the bureaucracy, what do you think are the cultural challenges you faced with working with the UK?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Ohh you see.

I don't have any culture because I mean Ghana has been a a British colony so often than not most of the things done in Ghana is almost done in the UK. I've been in UK and I think what's carrying children at their back as if they are in Ghana and yeah, so when it comes to Ghanaian and the British, the differences are not that much... Yeah, I mean this the differences between the British and the Ghanaian and the way we do things are not that much... It's just, it's just the language. but that while I was in UK felt comfortable... And I so but the only issue is there is a way of doing things getting things... Yeah, that's where the challenge is.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, not not fully appreciate. I mean, when you were talking about franchising you was you were talking about the different models of franchise. Do you feel as though from the [the UK University] perspective, we have very much dictatorial about what you should do and what you shouldn't do and what?

When you should respond, etcetera. All these kind of things.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Now when it comes to [the UK University], they are not dictatorial, basically hadn't been in it because with the franchise we asked to go within the course content, which I believe that we have to maintain those modules... And we can add our own modules.

Yeah, to enhance it, but not move away from it. So with that, I don't think that [the UK University] have been very dictatorial on. You know as long as the franchise is giving and just moving, it moves smoothly and everything is well done. Yeah. But to get it done or to get the module or to get let's say to get a new module on board, yeah you have to go through the bureaucracy. Everything is successful because I've been a coordinator for the past 3-4 years now... and I don't think we have had any challenge.

Simon (Interviewer)

Again this is your own personal perspective. Do you feel as though working with quite a small knit group of people such as [Link Tutor] and [Partnership administrator], etc, as your kind of close working team is more beneficial than just following a systematic approach of... rules that you must follow?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK, so I think, yeah. So when you get a focal point that you work with it is, I mean it just helps.

Can the very good point of contact is, is the most? I mean it is the most important way to get things done. If I had to go through the process, I may get frustrated. But if I should get a point of contact like [Partnership administrator] of which I know when I get to [Partnership administrator]. [Partnership administrator] was kind. It's my. I mean my work for me then that is very good. That's very good. It is my pleasure here because I have a I mean I'm the head of department for the acting head of department for the Logistics and supply

chain. And I'm also working as a coordinator and I.. do a lot of a lot on the program design and other stuff, so you realize that it will get your point you need... someone that you can just offload some of the burden to and you will carried out. So I think as you said that that that's very good. Just having few people to get in touch with is very good.

Simon (Interviewer)

Brilliant. I mean, just following on from that, do you feel as though things have improved over time as you've got more familiar with the people?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes, very, very it has improve I think currently [the UK University] has learned a lot from as we have also learned a lot from [the UK University], [the UK University] had understood, I mean our system of working... Because, yeah, and we have also understand stuff for system of working. Initially it was a little bit frustrating because it was pushed here back and back and forth, back and forth, but now it isn't. So yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yep, so it's improved with time. That's great. I mean, again, this is a bit more of a theoretical question, but when it comes to the cultural relationship management, are you personally familiar with any of the academic cultural models? About how to, you know, assess cultures, analyze cultures and then.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

But.

No, no, I cannot.

Simon (Interviewer)

There are different models out there where you going into a new country and you need to have a kind of understanding of their culture and that it can give you a general broad idea of how people view power, authority, all these kind of different levels and things like that. I mean from that perspective, given that you've said you're not aware, but what do you think training would be valuable from either the side of [the Ghanaian University] are from the side of [the UK University] so that we have a stronger understanding of each others cultures... Do you not think that's really a necessary requirement?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

But training training is, is very important because it I mean from where I came from the mining industry from the mining industry of which I've spent several years of the money industry training is is is one of the key tool that we use to build capacity irrespective of who you are you I mean from the MD to the labourer you need to be trained and that is done almost every year you are scheduled to go for training... Every year, so training is is very, very important because we tend to forget. But as you go for training and at the idea is reinforced of which becomes part and parcel of you. So I strongly believe that training is very, very important to understand. Both cultures. Training is very,

very important. We cannot ignore training and that should be consistent... that should be consistent at least once in a year. That is good. That will help.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I'll move on a little bit and then again, you've probably covered a lot of these anyway. So this is only just additional information really I'm looking at the management, the maintenance and the level of support that you get within the partnership... So do you feel that that works effectively the management, the maintenance and the support?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yeah, with the support, it's where maybe I may have to step in, you know, when it comes to support, we look at so many issues and advertising tools. That's support from [the UK University] and when it comes again I've, you know, Ghana per say basically we all want to like the student would want to feel that they are with [the UK University]. So we need something like 7 years. I mean each batch of students should get some form of souvenirs being given out from [the UK University]. So like for instance when we have a meeting every and every students expects in some form of the gift from [the UK University].

You know, you know our culture. I mean that, that, that that's that. That's it. That's the Ghanaian culture...you can't do away with gifts.

So that mean immediately person getting enrolled, he's looking for what? What am I getting from [the UK University] today?.. I yeah, basically. And we don't get that support from [the UK University].

Simon (Interviewer)

Did you did you used to get it?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

We used to. That's. Yeah, we forget it. Yeah. We used to get it so and that that has been the challenge that has been a challenge that we are fixing and I think I spoke with [Link Tutor] that [Link Tutor] anytime we are come and get us some gifts at least that means some souvenir is nice souvenir so that these students will take them home now what this does is this. They're proud of it... [the UK University] gets known in Ghana. And that enhances the franchise. OK so... And these are some of the support that come from me. But when it comes to Technical Support such as... I'm getting the materials and other stuff from the university student getting to challenges and being supported. That one is done very well.

Simon (Interviewer)

So it's more on the relationship development, the relationship bonding, where the support is kind of lacking... the academic side is is OK.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

It's OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Yeah, pretty OK. So moving on to getting closer to the end... What barriers do you think the institution faces now? This can be a national level. It can be an institutional level or it can be an individual level.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Basically, the barriers we face is that of them, you know, kinda has it on accreditation process that they should take... and you take have day to have the criteria of accrediting university. I mean a module or a program, and [the UK University] also follows the UK accreditation processes, so... the challenge we do have exactly course has been sent from UK to Ghana.

Kinda would have to....

Recording paused due to internet connection

Simon (Interviewer)

Sorry. So we were talking about the barriers.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

... So basically because of the different academic accreditation bodies, we all have different form of accreditations. So it's it goes back forth back forth before it's accredited in Ghana. So Ghanaians we wants you to add more. So we have to add more and but we have to maintain the structure from [the UK University] because that is that's the delivery. So we do that.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, so you're adding an additional material to the program for your requirements, yeah.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes, we have to add some materials. Yeah, to the requirements of each have been working on one now that's like completed this morning. We're trying to accredit the purchases and supply procurement, logistics and supply. So that's why I'm and also that the other barrier we do have is and the transferring of funds... And sometimes also... And in that is... You know the banking system our bank is seen as a number barrier. We do have and getting the pound sterling... getting the pound sterling. The student had to go through a lot of teeth. I mean challenge to get a pound sterling if they paid in cedi [Ghanaian currency]. They disadvantage that. By the time it wants to convert the cedi to pounds the cedi had depreciated as against the pound. The university is going to include a lot of losses. We couldn't also hedge because I mean it's very difficult for you to hedge... Because he couldn't hedge if it would hedge, couldn't hedge in the student would have paid somewhere a round figure over a period of time. Couldn't. Yeah, I didn't know if [the UK University] can make this. I mean, provide cedi account with paying the cedi accounts and make it easier for the students. That could be a very fantastic initiative by [the UK University]. Yeah, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Has [the UK University] responded to you?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Now basically we haven't, we haven't talked about it at all. We haven't. Yeah, but this is an internal issue that we have not been liaising with [the UK University] because I know because I deal with the student and I mean I know how difficult it is for the student, for them to get the pound. I mean I mean to sound to do payment.

And the other barrier? Yeah, I think this is a this this had a very few barriers that we have.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, none of that's absolutely fine and it's good to know.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Please let there even if it's .. I'll tell you if any come to come to mind. I will tell you.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, of course. Of course. I mean, again, this is really, you know, virtually at the end of it now and just about the communication, how effective do you think the communication is between yourself and [the UK University] dealing with whoever you need to deal with at whatever level is it? Does it work well or is it problematic?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

No, it works well. It works very well. I mean touch with ADI.

Of if there are issues that I have to get in touch with him, I write straight to him and just copy [Partnership administrator] and [Link Tutor] necessary. So I think what that that there's been any barrier and it comes to getting to any higher officer now there's no barrier... That's the more reason why I didn't say that these are barriers, yes, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Can you think of anything that you would like to see improved if you were the rector of [the Ghanaian University]

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Yes, if I want anything improved. As I've said earlier... The speed at which our demand would have to be processed, of which I give example as the new modules that we want introduce... that that is the most important things that I want improved... And maybe I T now because IT is IT. Sometimes I would, yeah. I would want to talk about IT issues because yeah, IT issues, IT so.

It's still to basically and the speed at which we want things done by itself is what I decide that we need to improve.

Simon (Interviewer)

Brilliant. That's perfect. So that's basically the end of it. The only final question is if you got any other comments that you would like to make based on what we've discussed?

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

OK... [the UK University]... should I mean do more modules mean should give room for more modules?

Because as long as they are new model that strengthen the bond and the bond between the universities, that image of [the UK University] and also looking ahead for exchange programmes of which it is on the table... Yes, we look nice and some lectures. Yeah. Coming over to [the UK University] to learn on hand... and how things are done... Though, I mean, we also doing our bit here. we have the opportunity to see what to see the classroom where they say lecturer lecturers and you observe how things are done.

OK. Yeah. Because I mean franchise and that you understand it's trying to duplicate exactly what is done and one section to the other in another environment or region. So I mean, if you have a franchise, if you have like a franchisee... And the franchiser to know work hand in hand, you end up realizing that it has been done, the work is going on well as my perceived from different angles and there could be some... areas that need to be ironed to get things done. So I think that opportunity should be given for lecturers at [the Ghanaian University] to travel to [the UK University] for even a week or two to observe how things are done, how preparation are done... and then come back.

I also want to say is once again [the UK University], we need to reduce their bureaucratic approach... That need to be done and need to be done. I know that some of some of the issues would have to go through the bureaucracy. For instance, we have one or two student who got to be got to go to go out who I mean indulge in academic misconduct they had to go through the process.

So, but when it comes to issues like, I mean getting new programmes and working on new programmes , I think [the UK University] should be flexible... Because if you're treating [the Ghanaian University] as an extension of your campus and some of these things should be handled, I mean faster actually that's what I believe.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's great. So thank you very much.

Ghanaian – Senior Academic

Thank you.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK. OK. Understood. Understood. OK, thank you. And I'm glad if I can be of help because so from this I will be talking more of course my feedback will be based on my personal experience and of course my, my experience, personal experience will also be more or less you know influenced by you know the feedback from you know the managements as well as the stuff that we have here. OK, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Absolutely. Yep, you're the prime point of contact and you're the experienced person in the partnership. So yeah. It's based on all of your collective experiences... So are you OK if I if I begin?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, sure. Sure. We should go ahead now, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

So what is your main role within your institution?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Maybe OK, actually my title is actually the deputy principle as well as the what do you call this? Uh, directors of studies. So I'm overall in charge of the academic... Part of the institutions, so I will over overall I how should I call I will in charge of all the schools that we have here which include the Business School, the IT school, Tourism, general study.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Yep. So one of your primary roles then is to liaise with your international partners.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, that's right, yeah.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, alongside of the work that you do purely within based on that, that's absolutely great.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Correct. Yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

Just a few questions about yourself... How would you describe your experience working in higher education... How long have you been working internationally, say or in higher education in general?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Uh, actually, my experience in the higher educations are actually how should I

call it? It's not that wide. But you know, I started off... Uh, as a part time in in another college before I join [the Malaysian Institution] and this is a college where I have been working for since 2007.

Yes. So yes, I started off as this uh. Academics and uh before moving on, our administration part. So where I, you know, I become a HOP which we call the head of program and then progressed to head of school before I you know, come to this current positions.

So my experience will be mainly into an academic sites you were involved in. Of course teaching delivery and then are in terms of what do you call this the admin side. It is also dealing with for example some external stake holders like for example in Malaysia for whatever programmes that we offer we need to get approval from the authority which is MQA. So we need to liaise us a lot with them. You know a documentations wise to get approval.

Yes. And of course, uh, it's over. The time as the company expanded, we start to have collaborations like for example, our collaborations with [the UK University] University. Then we have to, I have to also deal with in terms of you know MOA, MOU and aliasing with our partner institutions in terms of I know make sure that we can work smoothly.

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean the kind of the next part of this really is about your own personal motivation for doing it... I mean, what? What do you feel?... Motivates you to do it. What? What are the benefits for yourself? Do you enjoy doing what you do?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Uh, yes. But because for me basically I feel that, you know, there's a motivated in the sense that I'm... helping... For me, I'm not sure whether it is right or wrong, but I feel that you know if I'm able to help people that I I feel happy. So that's why I know you know, as a head not normally. Of course for me as a deputy principal, I am also supporting my principle and I remember my principle also mentioned that as a head actually you are how should I call it your role is to provide support to your subordinate because at the end of the day they are also supporting you.

So you have to make sure it's. You know you are able to support them before they support you. So in this role, I feel that motivated because every day, of course I would take, you know that our staff need anything. So what of course they will try to do it. But when they come to me means that they maybe they have problems they are not able to do it. So I'll be quite motivated if I feel that I can help them to solve you know the problems. OK. So similarly for all the you know nowadays of course I don't see... But my time in terms of teaching will be less, but rather on the other hand I'll be seeing students that, for example, who are who might have problems like for example at the end of every semester, we do have exams and assessments and obviously there are some weak students. So where they might need some counselling. So this is

where I would step in with a head of school and head of program to see how we can help the students.

Simon (Interviewer)

Brilliant. So, so your motivation comes from the satisfaction of helping people.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, correct, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

you mentioned before that your direct boss sort of suggested to you that your role is to support other people and do you feel as though you are given a good strong support and motivation yourself in your role to do what you need to do.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

Does the does the institution help you to do your job? Did they give you the freedom, the flexibility, you know?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, I would say my boss is actually .. is give the freedom to the subordinate, you know, to, to perform the task that he supposed to do. But of course on the other hand it is also subject to how much confidence that he has in us. If he truly have confidence, they're obviously he will be totally... hands off, but otherwise you know she expects us to actually report to her quite closely of what we are doing. And I think for my boss, I think her because of the market situations now and because of competitions and so on, I think he is very much a a more concerns about the marketing expect. So of course on the academic part I think things tends to be a little bit more structured so I think... He he he give me a more freedom, you know, to do what I have to do. But of course, at the end of the day, she she expect me or wants me to actually report to her what I do. Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean it's it's a very strong leadership style... but that idea that you give autonomy to the people who are doing the majority of the work. But then with that autonomy comes the need for reporting that they need the confidence to know that everything is fine.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, it's correct.

Yes, yes, that's right. That's right. And of course because our as you know, uh, our institution is not that big. So I think she, she she she know what is going on and she she would like to know because for my boss she is also the sort of the founder because she she started the institutions so she she would like to know more or less you know more or more like a hands on person she would like to know everything, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

The relationship that you've got with [the UK University] and do you feel that the international partnerships that you have are.. What would you say is the main driver? Is it financial? Is it image? Is it the brand of [the Malaysian Institution] that you want to enhance? What? What kind of factors do you think come in when you're considering partnering with other universities?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Of course, one of the thing of course you'll be guided by these uh, the mqa because now I think they have quite a strict ruling like for whatever partners that we get overseas, they must fulfil certain ranking in terms of QS ranking... I can't remember about this in terms of the QS ranking them as well visiting requirement. So I think that that is one of the main thing. But otherwise I think for us of course we look for partners who are actually who, who are genuinely interested in providing good educations to the students. I think that is what we are the most important things that we look for.

Simon (Interviewer)

More of a developmental thing that you're supporting your students as opposed to purely a financial consideration.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, it is more, but because like I think I can't recall my, my, this visions and missions.

Simon (Interviewer)

Right.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes. So it's actually it's more like you know to provide opportunity for students who are you know who actually are entitled to pursue a higher education because as you know in in Malaysia especially for the non bumiputra they might have some disadvantage because in terms of entering into public university. So some of them actually they might be result wise they might be good but because of the system they could not get into the public university... And even if they get into public university sometime, they might not be able to pursue the field that they want. So for us, we would like to provide opportunity for these people... And then and this is actually, it is exemplified in terms of the students that we receive, I think I mentioned to you before most of the students that we receive, actually they need some kind of financial aids.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

They are not, you know, from the, you know, in terms of, you know, uh, the wealthy are not the wealthy lot. So they most of them actually are on some kind of a government aids.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. No, no, that's absolutely perfect. And it it rings true across some of the other partners we have at [the UK University] as well where they're they're kind of mission for whatever is supporting that, that developmental stage for the students. So that that that's absolutely great. Not really really good. So when you're dealing with the partners like [the UK University].

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Who are your main points of contact? How does the actual day-to-day operation work for you?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK, so of course it depends on the partner university. But in this case, uh, so far I think the one partners that we are working closely with is actually [the UK University]. So for me that the main person that I would deal with, of course it would be a more frequent, it would be persons like [Link tutor Malaysia] who is the link tutor.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Right. Yes. And then of course sometime, uh, I will also be dealing with uh, [Associate dean].

Yes. And then, uh, for the uh, what do you call this administrations? I would be dealing with [Partnership administrator]. Yes, yes. And then for the partnerships, you know, I will be working with [Partnership manager].

And these are the three people. Normally I keep in touch with closely.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah, And do you do you feel as though that works well as a process having that small group of people that you just dealing with rather than us give you a list of things that you must do?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, correct. Correct. Yes, yes, it is better. But unless of course if I get a response that I want, then I would just contact these people. But sometime if I don't get some response. So for example I don't get I talked to let's say a XXX, but I think there's no response then I would forward the mail include the in the in the link and copy to for example [Partnership manager]... And hopefully someone will catch on and reply to me.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Yeah. that's perfect. I mean, clearly there are quality assurance processes that we have in [the UK University]. You've got MQA, you have to rely on.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

That do you do you find that when you do need to get responses that people actually understand?... The reasons that that you know the importance of what you're asking are is that a bit of a challenge to make people understand how important this request is. If you've got some issue with MQA that you need [the UK University] to... you know, demonstrate something.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK.

But but I think in relations to MQA the the the the requirements by the regulators. I think I don't have major issues with the informations I need from [the UK University]. There are quite supportive and in fact they are they. They are quite helpful, you know, whatever we request normally they will, they will, they will do their best to actually help us.

But on the other hand it is only the administrative part, because I think maybe sometime it deal with the different people that are sometime it that certain issues are still not solved. You know until now I think I one of these I think maybe I shared with you before is the the enrollment, the registrations of our students in two days are the Blackboard system. Sometime it take a bit longer than we would like to.

And of course, another issues is in terms of the semester planning because there is one. Again the issues that are the problem that I have and we will try to manage it because I think... In terms of their running the semester, we have 14 weeks and but in [the UK University] I think you only run on 12 weeks, correct? And therefore in terms of starting sometimes we we we have to start our semester early and sometimes you know it's in terms of the informations that we get we couldn't get we like to have it earlier because we start our semester started slightly earlier. So this is but of course this is case by case. I'm not saying it is across the board it is case by case because I do hear some module leaders are very helpful and informations are uploaded quite early, very early, in fact, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, it's a year by year challenge you know because you know sometimes the changes to the structure of the academic year only come to us very late and new teaching teams, new module teams, they come also very late. So even modules to teach. You've not taught it before and in August, late August and then they say oh, by the way, it also runs at Malaysia.

Forward planning is kind of a difficult thing because you got changes of people, retire, leave you know, new people take new roles.

I'm moving on a little bit now into the kind of cross cultural nature of the relationship.

That to me is one good example that that sometimes there are differences between the two different cultures that maybe are not necessarily at the head of the... partnership.

So if you if you consider an example like the shape of the year, the academic year. Do you think that we pay enough attention to your cultural requirements? The difference is that you have in Malaysia to what we have in [the UK University], maybe national holidays, religious festivals, these kind of things. Do you think that's taken into consideration enough?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

I think there is a minimum impact for me, except since it mentions I think lately they did ask us, especially in terms of this setting of exam date, because I think in the past we were quite flexible in terms of I know when to do the exam, but I understand recently I think especially the accounting and finance the program, they are very strict in terms of ensuring that our you know... The exam date should uh coincide with, you know in in the in the one when it happens in UK. So therefore only recently I start to be aware of these things and they start to ask me about, you know, public holiday whether is it a state or whether is it a religious or whatever so but so far I think I don't have I'm OK with that I don't have major issue with that.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's good. I mean generally do you think working with the UK institution is relatively easy when it comes to the cultural differences that we have our, our is it can it problematic there? Yeah.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, yes, yes, quite yes, quite easy, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

What did you say? That's down to your own personal experience... or can that be a generalization. If so, if you were to leave your job tomorrow and somebody took over, do you think they would find it as easy as you do to manage?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

You are asking whether if I live and then another person who come in, whether he will feel the same.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

For them, perhaps you know they might feel that, you know. Maybe.... That the [the UK University] as a university, there are maybe more dominating and are less accommodative.

And you know, they want the way that is that mean they just want us to comply.

They might feel this is because this is the when, when, when I talk to my head of programmer as this is some of the feedback, you know that they tell me why not I become firm. You know I want this rather than try to comply with what you know [the UK University] is asking ...yes because for me like I mentioned my I feel that what is more important is for me to be able to complete the you know the the task that we are supposed to do rather than do if I can accommodate... And you know I will try to do that, you know. Yes, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

But do you find it frustrating that that potentially [the UK University] is not flexible to your needs and?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Sometimes, sometimes like this, but of course I will rationalize it, you know? And why they have to do it so that that's why I have to explain to my staff... Yes. So at the end, I think they will buy the idea. But like I said, you know, usually people will not be happy if they will have to ask to change. We rather you know want one other people to change rather than we change, yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Yeah. No, I I, I fully understand. .. but dealing with different cultures from different places, they have very different points of view. So if I'm talking to a a partner in XXX, then they are very forthright. No, no, this is what we are going to do. And you have to comply with our method. You know, whereas you're more potentially more compliant that you, you want to see the end goal and you want to see it completed... And maybe it's it creates extra work for you, but you will. You will do the best to comply, whereas some will just say no. Stop. We're doing it this way. This is the only way that this will work, you know? So I maybe that's that could be embedded in the cultural differences from the UK potentially being quite dominant, dictatorial at times.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes. But but I feel at the end of the day, I think this boils down to perhaps to communication sometimes many time I think because sometimes there is some miscommunications or we take we take things for granted and therefore we do not further clarify and that result in some problem. So so like for example one incident happened recently was because of this again that the the the timetable for this examination... Uh, it happens that, uh, UK, I mean [the UK University] will conduct the exam one weeks, one week earlier than us... So as I plan the the the academic calendar, because I I remember in in the last experience that I understand there is a change because you want to start, I think the semester earlier because before I remember in the semester one the exam will happen after the Christmas... But now I think the everything the exam will be done before the Christmas. Yes, but I understand they allowed us sometime to actually adjust... And therefore, we, we agree that actually is from 2022-2023 that means September this year and therefore what happened previously is they say, you know, if the exam date is different, you know are they are OK as long as we don't have it earlier than UK. I think

because of the ACCA things. So if we have it later it should be fine... And therefore, we're because I see there's only one week different, I assume that is OK. So I do not highlight the things and but when it was subsequently, but I say actually this, these are our timetable, we have to have the exam a week later... So but at the insist that it cannot. But of course at the end they give me an option, I think they say you can actually choose to do the same date or you can do it later, but if you do it later, you might have the problem with this ACCA accreditation and this happens to be our accounting and finance.

Yes. So therefore it no choice at the end of the day, I have to adjust. You know my timetable and make sure it comply it. It happens at the same time as in UK.

So. So for me that that maybe is that you know because we for me I just assume that we will start only have to comply strictly starting September this year.

Because the same thing happened in the last semester. They allow us to actually do it one week later.

But but now, yes, so it it seems that the stance is more firm and even though they give me options. But you know the option will have some implications for my students, you know, in terms of accreditation.

Simon (Interviewer)

And so flipping a little bit now into your international strategy... do you play a major role in the strategy development of looking at new partnerships and things like that that you know the driver from [the Malaysian Institution] is it are you involved with that kind of strategy level discussion?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Not not in the how's your called it? Not at as of now, but because it even like, for example our how how we end up our partnership with [the UK University]. Actually it was through some kind of what they call this introductions at a party and it was... we managed to introduce to our principal.

So Doctor XXX was more less. But of course, once we get into like for example introduce into introduce with [the UK University], then I will come in, yes. So in that sense it is strategically is not I'm not so involved, yes yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. OK... I fully understand and so in in the case of [the UK University] then it was really through somebody's personal contact.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Contact yes, yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

It's an individually doesn't have a planned strategy. We're going to enter the UK market and let's choose somewhere to go and let's focus on this. It was more somebody knew somebody who put you in contact.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yeah.

Yes, yes. But of course, overall overall we we know that we want to look for a partner.

And uh, we we feel that it is good to have uh, you know, UK a partners yes, because that will make set a slightly different from other local institutions because before that actually we had a partner with a local institutions but the experience wasn't good and therefore we decide you know we should focus on a UK partners.

Simon (Interviewer)

perfect. So the at the strategy level, yes, there is a direction which is partner with the UK. But when it comes to actually which partner, it's more down the individual contact.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes. Yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. I mean that again, not that is echoed across all the other institutions that one of one of the pieces of my research is do we do things systematically or are we doing them based on individuals, knowledge, experience and contacts? So I that's ringing true across you know many of the partnerships that we have with [the UK University].

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Somewhere down the line, somebody knew somebody who knew somebody.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK... Correct, correct, yes. But on the other, of course on the program, because this I believe this is actually mutual, because it also depends on the partners that we try to work, whether they are also willing to work with us because I think there was one program that we did with this [the UK University], which is actually tourism and but because of MCO, I understand it was shelf or it was, I don't know what will happens to that tourism it is a it is still... offered or not offered, as I know it's not offered. Yes, so. So we will look.

So actually we were looking for a partner's university UK university partners to yes and I was going doing some kind of comparisons. So actually we called up another university. So we did meet up. But at the end it didn't work out because the particular university also have their strategy in that sense that they want to work with a lesser number of institutions but more in depth.

So it that but because we are working only for a program or one or two program which do not you know which do not work in a go in line with their strategy and therefore it didn't work out.

Simon (Interviewer)

So have you got a partner for tourism? Yeah, no.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Uh, in terms of UK no, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Fingers crossed for you because I I know when we met, I was trying to get the tourism on board for you and but tourism was always problematic in [the UK University] because the student numbers were going down and down and down. You know, I think it's very much... I mean clearly where your based tourism is a huge part of the industry.. based where we are tourism demand is limited.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

But here actually it's also quite challenging actually. I mean, uh, we started off quite well in terms of diploma in tourism, but the number I think is so especially now after the MCO, we find it quite a challenge, but the the only things that we see brighter side is actually the touring guide we start to have enquiry for the tourist guide.

Simon (Interviewer)

Alright, OK. So see. No, no, no, I mean not make sense. I mean you, you know, you you you're in a beautiful place and tourism is obviously a key part of it. I remember it fondly.

So I'm jumping between questions a little bit and I think we've covered the cultural differences and some of the challenges faced by that so much. And I think we've covered strategy quite well.

Operationally...how well do you think the partnership is developing, how it's managed, how it's maintained, how we support it generally? Do you feel as though things are working well or they could be improved?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

And I think it is. It is in, uh, improving and but of course like I mentioned, I shared with you just now some of the things maybe we can still further improve on but of course we understand that the constraint because like I mentioned, even though we want to, we would like to for example our students to be enrolled in the blackboard earlier. But of course on our part we also request [the UK University]... To allow us more time for recruitment, I think that is the balance we need to strike because I think we need more time for recruitment. Therefore, even after the semester start, we usually have another two weeks of recruitment. But I understand maybe [the UK University] is not correct. So [the UK University], the closing date will be much earlier. I think that's what explained to us why you know our students will be enrolled in

the blackboard, you know a bit later because we opened... for them to reopen for recruitment and close the recruitment later, yes, so. But otherwise if it would be perfect, if we can do it, you know, you know just how should technology wise is allows us to actually to to be able to do that you know have a longer recruitment period but at the same time administrations wise it should it should shouldn't create much problems for our students.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Yeah. No, I I, I I fully understand. I mean it's it is a challenge... I I appreciate and the the technology side is a challenge for everybody and putting in late registrations should be possible. You know, we still take my late registrations on our courses. It does have a knock on effect of students missing, you know, several weeks at the beginning of the program, etcetera. But it should be possible that I think maybe you need to be a bit more forceful.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

So yeah, maybe, yeah, but more forceful.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK, OK, I understand. OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Totality talk to [Partnership manager], she's your best...

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK, OK. OK. But I think otherwise. Otherwise I think, uh, another areas that which I think can be improved on maybe in terms of this the involvements of the partner in terms of what you decide to do because normally what happened now is the for example [the UK University] really decide what to do and then it is just.... Pass on to us about rather than involve us in why you decide to do this... Before coming to that conclusion, added the decisions. So I think that can be improved on... Uh, yes, this is what I think.

Simon (Interviewer)

Definitely. I mean with, with [Link tutor Malaysia] as the link tutor, you still run the joint boards of study.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

I I yes, yes, yes. Correct. Correct. Yes. And talking about the the Joint Board of study, I think there is one thing I remember about the report that APM or something is it a PM report is actually we haven't done this so far you know.

Yes, and and because I will ask for some training and uh.

At that point in time, the agreed that they will give us some kind of training, but because of MCO, they said that this process is not required now.

Simon (Interviewer)

Right.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Something like that is so until now we haven't done anything in terms of the training on as what to report is.

Simon (Interviewer)

I understand that it is problematic at [the UK University] for our even our own face to face courses and basically because of the pandemic... we changed a lot of the processes. or we suspended them? You know, that's easiest way to describe. So those kind of things were put on hold because everybody was busy trying to manage the new way of teaching and learning. And, you know, online delivery. And so those have been suspended for a while, but they will come... And then it will be a new conversation and then hopefully the training will come through.. but I'm fully understand what you're saying about not being directly involved in the decision making process... it is a problem and I agree it is a problem. I mean a partnership is 50/50. You know, you should have your say what happened.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes... Hmm. Hmm. Yes, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

So I I think that is a is a very good point to make and I think moving forward that is something that needs to be considered an awful lot more because I do feel as though maybe not a cross cultural issue, but an internal cultural issue that decisions are made very much at a local level without really too much consideration of the impact... on the people like yourselves of that may affect. So I think that's one that you need to keep pushing.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

You know, where it's officially minuted that you know, are there any new developments coming? Only changes to the academic year? Are there any changes to the quality processes, procedures?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Umm yes... But but in this regard I I'm not sure like for example the the the feedback for example in the Joint Board meeting that we feedback better, what is the what, what is, what do you call this, what what are the process after that you know will it go through some kind of... You know, evaluations or whatever, because I remember some feedback that we proved we gave but there seems to be like, no, no, no actions in that sense or there's no.... reply which we which we more or less like a expect you know because there is one thing perhaps again this is... a personnel I know in terms of this, we we remember we we we we we tried to give feedback example in terms of the assessment in terms of assessment for some people we notice the

assessments more or less is the same... You know for year in year, so we were just worried. I was students were just go to the passive people and just memorize that questions. So we did feedback to this, but it seems like it's not we are not sure whether has it been... Take a note of or something change or what's we? We are not sure. Yes, yes. But of course on the other hand we do know they try to do something like for example we do feedback like a especially in relations to accounting and finance. We notice especially the quantitative type of questions. Calculations are our students tend to do well because they tend to practice a lot and yeah. So we asked for some more qualitative kind of questions... And I think they are doing something about it. This one, I'm aware, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, I know. I mean I think it's just being persistent because yeah, there are mechanisms, but I'm not saying that they are great by any by any measure. You know, a lot of the time, things like joint boards of study are seen as a process driven thing rather than a developmental thing.

And so I can. It's just unfortunately keeping applying the pressure, you know, in those minutes they should be an action, an action named person. So in your case, it would be [Link tutor Malaysia], you know action this and then that will not disappear after it's until a response is given. So I think it's just a case of being persistent with that. I appreciate the difficulty that [Link tutor Malaysia] faces..

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, because he's facing the same challenges that we all do of escalating these things and getting some action on. So he may be trying but facing difficulties when it comes to actually get it change implement.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Because our status is a college... what do you call this? consciously? subconsciously we assumed, you know whatever there is done by the university, they must have been well tested. You know it, it must be actually yes. So even though we are not happy, we were just feedback and we just try to comply so. But after talking to you so I maybe I learned a thing or two for example perhaps I need to be more persistent and push it harder, you know..

Simon (Interviewer)

Just push the case forward you have... I mean we all face the challenges but we have to face them. You know it's one of those things that you do need to be persistent and keep putting the pressure on. [Link tutor Malaysia] has limited powers but he can escalate these to people with more power.

And say this is an issue we need to address this issue. You know, even if the answer is sorry, no, there's nothing we can do. At least you will have an answer to that. So yeah, yeah, I think that's that's probably the case.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK. OK, OK.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, quite close to the end actually. I mean, you've been incredibly helpful and I think you've you've, you've answered a lot of the questions that I had as we've gone through different conversations, so, so it's really good. I mean for you as a kind of summary at the end, what do you think the main barriers are for working in the partnership, you know ... you've addressed a lot of these already, but is there things that say are national level and institutional level .. or even an individual level where you're you're you're kind of conscious that things need to be solved. I know you've given something already... Is there anything else that you think that needs to be addressed?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

I think at the end of the day, all boys now, like I mentioned, just not communication we we need to have more communications and uh, how shall call it more open in the sense you know, open to new idea so as to solve things... Rather than thinking it is a troublemaker.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah. Yeah. I'm fully with you. I mean, do you still get regular visits from [the UK University] to people still come over?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

No, but of course I understand because of the MCO, they are not coming yet. Understand.

Simon (Interviewer)

Face to face.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, we we hope that the uh, you can be coming because anyway, talking about that, actually I'm inviting [the UK University], you know, perhaps any person would like to come over here and join us for our convocation.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

We we we will have our face to face convocations after the long delay it will be in August this year.

Simon (Interviewer)

Alright, OK.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, correct. I actually, I actually wrote to doctor, [Associate dean], but I haven't got any response from him.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah, I mean... Yeah, yeah, I would. Again, I just be persistent and then you know, raise it again. And I have you communicated that to [Link tutor Malaysia].

Malaysian – Senior Manager

I know 'cause I I just talked to [Associate dean]. Yes, perhaps I should keep [Link tutor Malaysia] on in the in the loop.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes.

Yeah, the the reason I say keep [Link tutor Malaysia] in the loop is that I mean, I won't leave. So I wasn't there, but then we have a meeting every sort of two, two to three weeks, which is where all of the link tutors have to give a report on the you know, the health of the partner etc and raise any issues that needed it. Now [Associate dean] is the chair of that meeting. So so if [Associate dean] is not responding to you.

[Link tutor Malaysia] can raise that in that meeting for him... you know there's an event in August. We would like a representative from [the UK University] to be there for our students. Can you look into it?

Malaysian – Senior Manager

OK. Yes. OK.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Dearly like to have your here also you know so that we can have maybe closer working relationship.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think I think it's key. I mean, the pandemic has been obviously very difficult. I think I think in a way communications, I've got a little bit easier for our international partners with everybody getting used to online.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes.

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Correct MS Teams in yes and so on. Yes, yes, correct.

Simon (Interviewer)

I you know what all getting a bit better in that respect, but I still think face to face and spending a few days... At least and get him to understand the environment. You know, when I when I'm at your students, I was amazed, you know, there were so polite and organized and structured. I know they're probably not like that in real life, but they were...

Malaysian – Senior Manager

Yes. Yeah... Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. But of course this maybe is a culturally different because I I also remind our students like you mentioned, maybe it's being polite. You see that there are polite but on the other hand it may be a bit what you call this... they are not so participative. They are not able to share their ideas and maybe language barriers there, some bad language barrier there.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK. Yeah. I mean, it's an ongoing challenge, but I mean it was lovely for me to meet them. You know, really. Ok so thank you for participating.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Simon (Interviewer)

So I'll just begin ... what is your main role in [the Swiss Institution]?

Swiss – Senior Manager

Well, the title is Deputy Dean. Well, I think really the main goal is... back up to the dean... the entire activities of the college... Do a lot of I teach on several modules. I'm tutor on several modules I do marking, but I also get involved in other things like... malpractice helping set up new programmes and I'm pretty much everything that the dean would do. He gets me involved as well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Perfect. Just a little bit about yourself and your kind of career history if you like. As far as working in an international environment in higher education, how long have you been at it?

Swiss – Senior Manager

In international environment in education only started when I met the dean of [the Swiss Institution].

That's not quite true. I did a I did my MBA But I went to Harvard, went to Harvard Business School. It's 1975 to 77, but my... Most of my professional career was in consulting... Mainly it's sort of I got an engineering background engineering first degrees. We used to do a lot of consulting for chemical firms, for example, competitive intelligence and that involved international travel, visiting sites to competitors... but it didn't involve any education. The only education broad was that was the MBA. And then... I don't remember exactly what probably about... 16-17 years ago.

Through the colleague would be my first boss. My first job was in Switzerland. my boss there, who was a brit I met, The Dean,

The Dean had a small... I guess you call it a college, but it wasn't really. They used to run... two week short courses in things like law or intellectual property, things like that. And he wanted to build it more up into his school... And you know, my colleague XXX ...and XXX set up an MBA program for [the Swiss Institution], so that was about... probably I got involved 16-17 years ago.

And so for a time I was doing some consulting and a little bit for [the Swiss Institution] and over the years until... Really, until five years ago, they still do consulting.... And then my colleagues in a small company, one retired, one delayed and we just sort of fizzled out.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK, that's an interesting story.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes. Yes, it is.

Simon (Interviewer)

It must have been quite good fun in the days when it was quite small and trying to.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Well, it still is really. I mean in terms of management, it's still very small. You know we there's a group of probably... Half a dozen list we get involved in all decisions and it's still going very close knit... approach knit to it. So yes, it's still fun. Yes, yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

I mean, I'll I'll stick on that theme if you don't mind. I'll jump between questions a little bit from the structure just as you as you're talking about things, but do you find that is a real benefit that you just working in a very small team?.. That kind of nature of it.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes, I think so. I mean it's I my first job was with a... Smallish International consulting organization and I left after about three years, came back to the UK and worked for a big company. XXX.

And then I did my MBA and then I went back to a big company, XXX. But after a couple years... But I just didn't enjoy working in a big company. .. You know, I didn't enjoy the time.. Frankly, a lot of it is XXXX with, you know, a waste of time. And I had this opportunity to join up with my first boss as part of the UK. Well, only two of us, European American consulting firm. It was a risky venture. If you like, you know, leaving a the salary to an uncertain future. But I just felt it fitted me better with you. But nothing that's been true for everything I've done since. So, small environments are where I thrive?

Simon (Interviewer)

No, I fully appreciate it. I mean, it's one of the things that's coming through very strongly by talking to people, this kind of idea.

And just to flip back to yourself then, and I've just a few questions about your own personal motivation for doing it, it's really easy generally about the enjoyment of doing the job.

Swiss – Senior Manager

It's about that, but it's about money, to be honest, to be frank. I enjoy a a lifestyle that if I just... I'm past retirement date. So if I now study, I'm just living off my pension and life style would dramatically decrease... We enjoy, for example in summer we take the whole family to a hotel. We stay there for 10 days. I just couldn't afford to do that, you know, fancy living off the pension. So as long as I can, I do it. But the money is important. But I do enjoy it as well. I enjoy the flexibility. I can pick it up, put it, put it down when I like... Because it's a distance learning organization, you know, we're all... Pretty

much all working from home and always have been even before covid... It's just suits, suits my approach and I get up early... Uh, I work for two or three hours and then do other things that I want to still work. It just fits my, my, my nature, I guess.

Simon (Interviewer)

No. Yes, it it sounds it's a lot nicer than working for a big university.

Swiss – Senior Manager

It's different certainly.

Simon (Interviewer)

I'm OK. So I mean, obviously you have really pretty much there from the conception of [the Swiss Institution] and when it comes to developing [the Swiss Institution], I'm thinking really now about its strategy and how it has grown, how much involvement have you had in that and what are the kind of things that you've considered and thought of and developed?

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes. Well, I'd say that a lot of involvement, originally we had our own ideas... It would, it would be developed by my colleague... Did you have a meet XXX?

Simon (Interviewer)

I didn't. No, no.

Swiss – Senior Manager

He did some work initially on... [the UK University] program but eventually you got kicked off by XXX because... I mean, he would basically tell you this is what it said. Look, it's crazy that the six week module, it's crazy to be giving people assessments after three weeks. You know, it's ridiculous. Where's [the Dean] would say, look, you know it's take or leave it... You don't go to a set of MacDonald's franchises, start cooking, sandwiches or something, you know, you got to do what they do... So eventually he quit.

But... He said that the first thing and we got students, it was it wasn't. It was approved by Switzerland. That can't on where we operated... but it wasn't validated. So in Germany for example, you could have put the initials in MBA after your name... And we thought about... Getting validated... And we considered the possibility of getting an American organization to validate this... And... I think The Dean heard about Wales.. offering validated programmes ... That was an easier route to go, so that's the direction we went in to... It started to take off.

And, we grew, we grew quite... dramatically without we got we got a little bit concerned... Because whales were starting to get quite a bad reputation, they sort of validated it. Anything there... Yes, and... We offered an MBA, but there are other two or three other organizations that offer Wales MBA's who's quality we didn't do was to start to scratch, and yet people could get that MBA. Cost would be lower, the certificate would look the same and so we would.

We found this unfair competition and started to look around to other organizations.

We talked to a lot and at that time it was this is only we're still a little bit... of a question mark, I think to some people and then eventually we just sort of bumped into Cumbria, and so on.. one program with them and that we're building went from there then we... picked up York and eventually [the UK University], so it was it was. I wouldn't call it planned. It was opportunistic to a great degree. It's looking for growth as much possible.

Simon (Interviewer)

OK.

Swiss – Senior Manager

So yes, you know, I think... We've always wanted, well, when I say we, I mean really, it's [the Dean] and his brother. They own the college and so they take the final decisions. And I talked to [the Dean] very the very early stage to say I'd be interested in equity, but he completely wasn't interested, but he made my package so attractive that it, you know, I said... I lost the fear that I had.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes, it's really interesting.... Sticking to that kind of same theme when you came across [the UK University] and started working with [the UK University], was it kind of what you expected was the level of bureaucracy and the slow movement problematic?

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes.

Well, yes. I mean, we soon found out with any university there's a big level of bureaucracy. I think that was the same. We solve it. But I think we were quite impressed with... Remember the names of South African guy... Yes. And the lady who used to ride horses, who used to be at XXX

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes. So you got [the UK Business School Dean] and the [Previous Vice Chancellor].

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes. OK. they were very quick to respond and they came across to Zurich quite quickly to talk with us... And we had a sort of warm introduction to XXX anyway, because she used to work at XXX.

And the some time [old colleague], who was the I think he was a maybe a Dean of some sort at XXX Business School. He used to be on our board. So we had a sort of warm introduction... And once we met things moved really fast. I mean, they were quite responsive. Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

That's good. And then you got [new ADI] stepping in from the school, so.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes, yes, yes, she was good, you know. Then she always. I think what's always impresses when people come to us... Yes. I mean, it's not an ego thing ... it's just an indication if you like... that the partner's taking it seriously.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Not just at your beck and call.. you know, we see this partnership not us and them, but clear partnership. I think at [the UK University] that we do get that sense you know I think certainly It's felt like a partnership.

Simon (Interviewer)

Now that that, that's really good.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

Between [the UK University] and [the Swiss Institution] but be as critical as you want, how do you feel that that relationship works as far as the day to day operational side of things are concerned, working with [the partnership administrator], working with myself or the.. ?

Swiss – Senior Manager

I think it works very well and we had issues in the past with things like malpractice... In the thing.. we would create a case and we send it off to [the UK University] and it was like to sending it to a black hole.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes. And I had big session virtual session with [previous ADA]

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes, sorry.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Uh, probably... At least two years ago... And he was going to get it all put together and make sure it will work... and nothing didn't get any better, didn't change...

It's just frustrating people would email us to say you sent a zip file. We need the individual files, you know? Well, unzip it. But you know, some things, some things, you know, it's like computer said, no, you know, you have to be following stuff to the letter or...

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes.

Swiss – Senior Manager

That's it. I lost. I don't know what to do. And then we had a meeting....

What was happening is that at one point I spoke to, [previous ADI] said, look, we've got all these cases building up, it's just not fair in the students. Is there a cut off time? I'm not sure she gave a clear answer that we we came to the conclusion together that after six months we would close the case

And following on from that and we had a meeting with [the UK institutions quality office].

And I was expecting a battle, to be honest... But XXX was amazing, basically it signed off because they said when your forms doesn't follow the structure. Yes, just detailing...and because of that, there's a risk that places that could be... Deemed as unfair because they haven't follow instructions, they would fail.

We were expecting a big battle because we need to follow everything, but [the UK institutions quality office] were brilliant in the space of I don't know, half an hour we got the whole thing sorted. It's now completely automated and it's working very well. So I think it's all comes down to the individuals. You know, with the [previous ADA], we got nowhere .. despite a lot of words. But with [the UK institutions quality office], even though I was expecting the fight it just went amazingly well.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes. Yes, yes, I've. I've worked with XXX for probably 30 years. We started off at roughly the same time. He's a very good guy. I mean, the thing for me personally, that that's frustrating about this is I was kept out of the loop of this.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes.

Simon (Interviewer)

This is where it gets frustrating for me, unless it's part of the kind of the bureaucracy.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes...Yes, it's going well. And I guess it comes down to the individuals. You know, XXX is very responsive. You're very responsive... ZZZ is very responsive so it comes down to individual characters.

Simon (Interviewer)

When dealing with international partners. And I think one of the lead ins to that is really this idea of working... either with individuals that you know and trust over time all working in a place systematic approach where you've got the different kind of cultures clashing. I mean, I think you've probably explained this already, but do you feel there is a cultural issue that you have to face at all with dealing with [the UK University] or any of your other partners really?

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes.

Sure. Yes, yes... Not really. Culture. I think it's more of an organization culture. You know, the fact that you have so many different layers in a university... And [the Swiss Institution], if we want to change something, it could happen literally within hours, you know, not only would the idea be changed that the website everything would have changed the site in the university, you've got to go through so many committees. It takes forever, you know? So that's one of the big issues.

And so really, as long as the person we're talking with... Can handle that effectively... On their side, things work well. I mean, we know the universities like that. It's just it's just frustrating.

Simon (Interviewer)

Yes. No, no, I'm. I'm fully with you. I mean, so it probably isn't your conception your sort of philosophy maybe. But from your Deans side from [the Swiss Institution], generally from the management of it, do you think it is primarily financially driven?

Swiss – Senior Manager

I don't think so for [the Dean]. It it's difficult to say I think... I think he just enjoys he's always enjoyed IT.

I mean, he's his vision and initially was to use IT to... make education more widely available. You know to people who otherwise wouldn't be able to receive it. He could retire tomorrow. You know, he could sell his own office to buy a company doesn't want to. So I think it's not just... I think money is an element of it, but I wouldn't say for him that really a driver... I mean, we've always had we see that what happens if he gets knocked over by a tram, you know?

That could be... a Question Mark for sure, but I'm sure we'll survive.

{confidential discussion}

Simon (Interviewer)

So we're moving through this quite quickly. So I'm pleased for you for that. And the next section is about new developments and also the maintenance and the support that's provided from [the UK University] etc to keep the programmes going. So do you feel as though there is enough room for development?

Swiss – Senior Manager

Yes, I think I just if you'd asked me 2 weeks ago, I might have been a bit more hesitant, but we had that we meeting last week... And we went through program by program really and talked about what was needed and individual modules. I think one of the issues have been... the modules inevitably very dependent on person involved... Because we are, we are franchised, we deliver exactly the module that you have.

But often the tools we get has been limited... And we'll get an assessment. So almost a day that it the module started... And it says things like... You can come and see your tutor at room 124 if you have any problems you know well, you know that's irrelevant. Well, you'll find this on Blackboard... So it hasn't been massaged if you'd like to make it [the Swiss Institution] and we end up having to do that like this time or we have to get back in contact with the person. So I think that is... Needing some improvement and I think that's going to happen...

{confidential discussion}

Simon (Interviewer)

So I'm getting quite close to the end, to be honest, really... I suppose the next question we've talked a bit about the communication and support and you seem to be quite happy with that as what you get from [the UK University] and what do you think moving forward are the main barriers that we're facing as a partnership... do you think there is anything significant.

Swiss – Senior Manager

Well, money, I don't think is a problem. I mean I don't have any issue.

And the Dean will say things like, well, you're saying in the last meeting, you know the number of students has been down a bit. We haven't been able to give some sort of discounts we did before and I'll notice this would XXX before she would very quickly say, well if there's an issue with... we can reduce what we're doing here. She's very responsive to money issues, which I think is great and normally we don't take them up ... she's been very responsive on that.

Well... I know with... we did talk a couple of years or so ago now with people from another faculties construction, something in construction.

And their system was so rigid... I think they only had... Three entries a year, whereas we need a rolling approach because students can come in at any time, and the fact that you have these six week modules that the lot easier, they can come in halfway through the terms.

Yes, the institutions have to be flexible to the different market needs of distance learning students said they don't want to start just in September. They want to start at any time... And if you if they don't, they lose interest and they'll go off to another provider. And [the UK University] I think could be very good at adapting to that.

I think it's it's worked very well. You know it's really issues self and seems to respond very quickly and effectively.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Simon [Interviewer]

Yep. So some demographic type questions and that takes us into a little bit of a discussion about your own personal motivation.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, of course.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yep. So as it's primarily about international activities, how long do you feel as though you've been working in an international environment, working with other institutions, et cetera?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, I think... I can count here all my years in in University [in Finland]. So it's 18 years.

Simon [Interviewer]

18 years? Ohh.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes.

Simon [Interviewer]

So very, very experienced.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, yes, I can say that.

Simon [Interviewer]

What are the kind of things that you've been doing on an international basis?... what kind of activities?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes. First of all, I've been teaching international student groups for all these years. I've been developing designing courses, modules, study modules for these students, and of course cooperating with international colleagues in UK in Spain, in Portugal, in Germany. Well, in Europe... For the most part... And I've been writing... Some articles... In English so that they are international... And what else could I say? Well, I think yes, I've been organizing some conferences, international conferences as well... Maybe that's the most important tasks.

Simon [Interviewer]

That sounds perfectly fine. I mean, clearly, I know from my experience of working with you that we did the intensive programmes , but but...

Finnish – Senior Academic

Ohh, that yeah. Separately. Yeah. I collected that as part of the cooperation. Yes.

Simon [Interviewer]

What, what did they involve? What were they? What were they like? What's the experience of doing the intensive programmes ?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah. Yes. OK, yeah... My experience... That was really, really.

Simon [Interviewer]

When did it begin? How did it begin? How did it develop? How did it grow?

Finnish – Senior Academic

OK, wait, we started out... I think it was 2006 already we started... Uh, talking about this intensive programmes or intensive program and visited each other get familiarized ourselves with each other, our cultures, our study programmes and of course the people involved. And then we came up with the focus of the intensive program which was cultural exchange, and the aim was to... do research on different destinations. Tourist destinations in three different countries, Finland, UK and Spain and then... develop... Touristic activities in those destinations and analyze those activities and also develop some new ideas for the activities in the certain destinations. And then we had a big groups of students involved, 20 student per university. So 60 students were carried along... in the different country per each year that we did it for 10 years. So it was kind of a massive project for myself and I learned a lot about the organizing things, learned a lot of the... culture?... Working culture... In different universities, how? How do we do things? It was eyes opening and I got a lot of experience of that... And the cooperation... And it was really important for me to see how we are actually and really able to be part of the development in these destinations and our students were really keen on working in this development work analyzing and at the destinations and then coming up with the ideas of new products or new ideas, how to develop the destinations and... I was so glad to see the local authorities or the public sector or people the local people involved in these projects that how happy they were about our work and they got all these fantastic ideas and research reports from the students... So All in all, it was something big and important to happen for all parties, for us as teachers, for us, as universities for the... local destinations for these students, I think they got valuable experience as well and will always remember this this work.

Simon [Interviewer]

How did you find the cultural differences between the different places?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, at the beginning... Uh, I found out how different systems we have in our universities about assessment... Basically it is the same but the output is very different. We have very different scales. The grade grading systems that's, that's the thing. So it was really nice to learn about how you... Do it... The idea is the same, but the outcome and output grading is different.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah. And did you find working with the Spanish and the English?.. Difficult or easy? Or was it something that you really needed to pick up as you went along?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Well, it's long time ago and now I know you so well that... What was it in the beginning?.. The way of working... I don't think there was anything that I was... Worried about or wondering or it was.. Pretty much the same as we do here... Maybe the Spanish way of working is a little bit different to us that they want to... Or they do the daily working in a different way, different schedules, so they have longer... Uh. Working hours in the... Afternoon or evening and we start early morning. Yeah, that's the thing. I remember. Spanish colleagues were horrified to wake up early in the morning and be in the classroom at 8:00 o'clock or 9:00 o'clock. It was terrible for them. And we were wondering. Ohh, we thought 10:00. O'clock not 8:00 o'clock in the morning. That was different. But funny. Yes, and... They had this, they were more peaceful or calm... They didn't rush... Like I think the Finnish Teachers, they go around and they rush a lot and UK.. Side you are... In the middle... Yeah... You. Yes, you are in the middle.

Simon [Interviewer]

I've found that very much, even with things like lunch breaks, we're in the middle, cause you doing very, very early, very briefly. The Spanish do it very late and very long.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah, yeah... Yeah, yeah, yeah.

That. Yeah. So I always thought that we are a really good team because we have all the options... All the possible options.

Simon [Interviewer]

I mean, I mean come into that builds it really nicely. I mean do you think especially thinking about it internationally that working in that small group over such a long period of time was one of the main benefits for your own personal development, you know, for the development of the program but getting to know everybody are working in that small group.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, definitely so.. I learned a lot from these different people and also the students played a significant role in in this group... Not only the teachers and the staff members, but also the students.

Simon [Interviewer]

A little bit more about yourself and you've I think you've addressed some of these issues already, but I'm thinking now about your own personal motivation to work internationally. Maybe before you started working internationally into where you are now as your motivation changed or is it dictated by external factors?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Well, yes, of course. In the beginning, when I started long, long time ago... Umm, I had no experience at all and then... I was actually forced to take courses that I got involved in international things, students and partners and everything, and luckily I went there without any... any doubts I'm happy I did that and during the years... I have.. been into these things deeper and deeper and got excited about everything because I want to know more about people, cultures, different ways of doing things. So I think I have developed... to very open direction and I'm fluent now... with people coming from different backgrounds, different cultures... and as I was before, so my mindset has changed a lot... during these years.

Simon [Interviewer]

100% I remember the first visit and it kept the same for a while, but you came with XXX. And she was a very experienced colleague. Is that was that purposeful decision by your institution to have you paired with somebody of that level of experience?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, it might have been that, but also that XXX was I think she had been as an international coordinator in our organization those days. And somehow when I came to [the Finnish University] was the one who took me in warmly... So XXX was the first person to ever talking to me.

And she was that kind of personality that I felt home with and safe with. So it was a natural move to go with XXX.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah. No, no, that's that's great. I mean that leads to be again on quite naturally into strategy... About the whole concept of really how the institutions play out a strategy if they have one and international strategy.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, we do.

Simon [Interviewer]

And do you? Do you know what it is? I'm not gonna ask you what it is, but do you know what? What it is quite clear to you what the strategy is for [the Finnish University].

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, I know they repeat it every once in a while... They. Yes, I know it and internalization is one of the main aims in our strategy. But nowadays we discuss what does it really mean and there we have different... Uh aspects and different opinions, even what it means to different people.

Simon [Interviewer]

Can you give me an example of the different opinions?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes... Some teachers or some even departments, think that international...

Working is teaching in English. That's it. That's international, but uh, for example, IB, we think that it's a lot more than that. Of course, it's Knowing, knowing the cultures, knowing and getting to know people coming from different cultures and really design our courses accordingly... And it's also that that we have an interest to learn from each other. We have interest to visit each other... And... for the students, those skills that they are able to manage in international world and we apply international research reports, bring in the international... Information or knowledge from different fields so. It is... A global village that we live in, that's what we think.

Simon [Interviewer]

that's a great great response. And I suppose that manifests itself in the dual award that you have in IB. where you've got different students from different countries coming to study with you.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Could you please repeat what was the question?

Simon [Interviewer]

The Dual Award in international business cause [the UK institution], obviously is part of the dual award scheme, but you're also partners I think with Munich and people like that where you, you run that, that student group as international students.

Finnish – Senior Academic

So you mean the?... Students are coming from these different partner universities, so... What? What they are like or?

Simon [Interviewer]

Well, no. Do you feel as though that that's a good idea? That's a that's a development... You know where the students are in?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes... Yes, of course, because we have many partner universities who send students to us and we sent... our students there so, Yes, it really important exchange. So we can learn from each other as universities and from our students, they tell us experiences, so we know what is happening there in the other universities. And then when we visit those universities, we get to know more what they are doing. So it's really important and enhancing this cooperation and international cooperation, yes.

Simon [Interviewer]

I'm just thinking from what you're saying of some departments thinking that teaching in English is internationalization, where it's actually working internationally.. and on that you at UG level, you know, you've got UG students moving around Europe and coming to you and everything and sharing that experience. I mean, I recall from the intensive programmes that was one of the desired outputs that when the programmes when that funding finished that we actually progress and become self sustainable... And make it

in the same things and I think the dual award sort of did that to a certain degree.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah.

Simon [Interviewer]

Certainly for the student perspective, yeah.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes... Yes, indeed. And that's the real working, I would say international working. So what's the point of just staying here, only speaking English and that's it doesn't go anywhere.

Simon [Interviewer]

That doesn't doesn't tick any box?

Finnish – Senior Academic

No, no.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah. So when it comes to things like these developments are you are you involved or can you get involved or is it really done through committees that that you just get told what the new strategy is and what direction you're gonna move into?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Umm, of course we have... Then our own strategy or own plans or ideas in our department... Not only the [THE FINNISH UNIVERSITY] level, that's the general strategy, but we have our own and in IB I am part of our team. So I participate discussions, what shall we do, what are new ideas or .. things could be done to develop our international working. So yes, partly I'm involved.

Simon [Interviewer]

I mean, do you think that's a typically Finnish thing to make sure that everybody's has a say that everybody's involved in the final decision making, is that a cultural thing for Finland?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Nowadays, yes, I think our working culture has changed towards that everyone can say it's not only the boss who is telling you what to do, so it's getting better I think yes, we can. We can discuss and... share things, yes.

Simon [Interviewer]

Perfect. that's absolutely great. Yep. So.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Right.

Simon [Interviewer]

I mean, from again, this is probably a question that's not that easy to answer,

but from an institutional point of view, do you think that [THE FINNISH UNIVERSITY] is driven by financial gains? Is that a change in environment or is it more altruistic, it's more student centered, student driven?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, I know that, uh, these years maybe within five years, our financing has changed a lot and now we are in a situation that we need to gain money, finance our work more and more by ourselves so... A former finance mostly came from the Ministry of Education... And now? Not anymore. So we all the more we need to pay attention to... Work hard on ideas how to finance our work, our university. So... Money talks and I'm not so happy with this direction cause it's the teacher... One single teacher has to start working on... this finance searching... and try to find out what to do.

Simon [Interviewer]

So is that is that driven is that? Does that manifest itself into things like franchising your degrees to other countries?

Is that the kind of thing you're looking at it, or is it more about getting more international students into the campus that are fee paying?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes.

Umm, I know that our Ministry of Education and Culture just recently... Uh said that we need to get more international students because Finland needs more employees .. And... universities need paying students.. That is, if I'm honest, that's the way.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah, yeah, but now that I mean, in the UK it's been that way for as long as I remember. You know it's that's just a normal part of day-to-day life. And we do invest time resources into doing that. You know, it's a it's a big.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah... Yes. So you know that, yeah.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah, we we know how it works. So we know the challenge is when it when it comes to fruition.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Umm.

Yes.

Simon [Interviewer]

I mean it. It's it's a very changeable environment and I think you need to be kept on board all the way down the line from your, you know, the policymakers if you like. But it was it was it only a few years ago probably

show my age now when you actually started charging international students cause didn't that used to be free?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Umm... Yes, it used to be free completely and it I think it's been only for... Maximum three years that we have had... Paying... Uh students in... So that's quite a new thing for us and that's why the teachers are not worried about the... Resources and quality and all that more work and the same salary, new challenges and... A little bit afraid of being left alone... our supportive Offices. You can say the International Office and study.. What is it? Study, Council office or something? They are closing down so they are not helping us anymore. So we don't know what to do in this new situation and It is stressful, so totally new situation for us and no support available.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah, that sounds quite worrying.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah, yes, yes it is.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah, it certainly would make you anxious,

Finnish – Senior Academic

It is really, really different and I don't know if I like it or.. No, I don't like it and I would like to do my job better... and really have the contact, the genuine contact with my students. And if that is all gone, I don't know what to do.

Simon [Interviewer]

So you so in that kind of motivation, there is a little bit of a fear that your motivation might drop if all of a sudden you're just told that you're a cog in the big wheel and you must do XYZ you know to to make it work.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, exactly. At the moment I am highly motivated. So far so good, but the small dark cloud is hanging on there.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah. Yeah, I I think unfortunately for you, it will cruise over quicker than you think. Because like I say, I can't remember a time when it's not been there. I've seen a massive increase.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Hmm hmm.

Simon [Interviewer]

And it does... It does really sort of impact on your day to day working life, yeah.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah.

Simon [Interviewer]

So I'm gonna skip on a bit cause we've covered quite a lot of the different things that we're... That I'm looking for... I mean one question you you've kind of mentioned this touch on it in different ways, but it's really about the importance of partnerships, the way that we run them, but also what do you think of the main risks involved and embarking on international projects or working with new partners? How would you perceive that?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Risks... I think it's difficult to think about any risks at this point, cause I think how we handled everything. There were no problems or no major problems as far as I know... Umm, I can only speak from the... For myself, for myself... But... Well, depending on... The partner... At the beginning, the trust you ..you don't know that partner at the beginning very well, so if you are not able to build trust... and you lose it... I think that is causing problems and if you have any doubts... That is this... OK. Or any kind of doubts.. Uh, there might be a risk that it's not going to develop as beneficial as it could be...

Simon [Interviewer]

But potentially, with the new landscapes, you know the dark cloud that that that's looming over, coming in. And do you think there's a risk to the general morale of the teaching teams in your institution? Do you think that.. Might have an impact... on the working day to day life, the motivation the happiness, you know the....

Finnish – Senior Academic

Umm, yes. If people lose the connection like a... Like a little bit it has been happening now. We have new people coming in, new teachers to new staff members that I have never met before and there will be long time that I'm going to meet, if ever. So I have no personal connection or contact to some people... I think... Uh, that is a problem then... And we don't know and we can't share the collective... Ideas or collective promises or agreed methods collective methods to use if everyone is doing alone and... It's scattered everywhere. Then. Then it's not a good thing at that might cause... Some misunderstandings and the moral also, because we are not sharing things... Hmm. Moral issues.

Simon [Interviewer]

has that been impacted more because of the pandemic. Do you think the pandemics are the role to play in that or do you think that would happen anyway?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Uh, yeah, it was mostly because of that. But now I think it will continue, even though we would get back to almost normal... Because of the pandemic, I think this way of working is still continuing... Even so, Corona was over and... And that is causing this isolation and... losing connection.

Yes, we have a lost our offices. We don't have offices anymore, so.... I'm working at home because of that I can't stand this noise and anything, so I don't meet new people when staying at home and... That's the way it is.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yep, Yep, I can totally empathize. It's very much the same.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, it happening everywhere.

Simon [Interviewer]

I'm gonna flip back to culture a little bit ... we get near the end.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah.

Simon [Interviewer]

Do you actively use or within your team. Use cultural models to explain things to students and staff about different countries and where they you know how they will react and things. Is that something that you are conscious of in your working life?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, I'm. I'm conscious of that subconscious. I don't do it regularly, but yes, we discuss these things with colleagues. If something happens, especially when something happens, for example students... Start to fight... Yes. Or when different teachers have different opinions and because of cultural different cultural backgrounds, then we discuss and we... try to find out the solution and then we bring in the different aspects of different cultures and we are a multicultural group of teachers. So every teacher has something to say... and that's a really good thing that then somebody knows, hey, that's a good way to react when something happens, somebody can say and help. And we share information.

Simon [Interviewer]

That's good, but there's no kind of formal training that you go through to understand cultural difference as a as a member of staff.

Finnish – Senior Academic

No, at the moment we don't have and I think we never had. That's actually something I discussed with my boss today.. earlier today. I brought it up that maybe we should have... Some training for this... It might help us a lot... But not yet.

Simon [Interviewer]

And was he quite responsive to that idea, to the like the idea?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yeah, he is always... For new ideas.

Simon [Interviewer]

We're getting close really to the end. I mean, the last sections I had was about how international developments are managed, maintained and supported. But I think you've touched on most of that already... Do you think from that kind of perspective you if you take for example the intensive program work that's been done, did you feel as though you got much support from your institution in doing it or did you have to do it all yourself or was it kind of structured and were you given time things like that?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, it was long time ago. And then those days we had to work alone. No support from our institute. No. But now it's very different. Now we have learned a lot and developed everything. And people have changed and developed themselves. So now it would be different if it happened. Now. I think it would be totally different... But then we designed, developed, we made the choices and decisions all by ourselves, me and XXX.

Simon [Interviewer]

Yeah. So very much in the in that way... It was kind of, I suppose, rather than a systematic approach. It is very much ad hoc in that you were you; you were kind of finding the contacts through networks and things and then building them yourself. It was structured in a plan by the institution? to say we are going to do this, this and this.. ?

Finnish – Senior Academic

No, it was nothing from there, but the only support would what was better than we had the proper international office and they help with the practical things. But all the structures, contents, developing the program, it was our own business.

Simon [Interviewer]

I mean, do you? Do you still feel as though a lot of the international work is driven by individuals, their own network?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes... Yes it is. It depends very much on a person... and... you can practically decide yourself what is your level of being international... But you can... you have a chance to choose your way.

Simon [Interviewer]

So you do have a certain degree of freedom.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Hmm.

Simon [Interviewer]

But freedom comes a kind of responsibility that you're gonna be managing it yourself to a certain.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes... Yes indeed. And I think what is happening in our team, we are all very

outgoing in that way that we want to do... International working. So nobody's hiding.

Simon [Interviewer]

No, that's absolutely great. I think you've covered... Most of the things the next set of questions really about the barriers that the institution might face, but I think we've covered that already with the change in economic climate and the way they.

Finnish – Senior Academic

Yes, I think that's the most important what is happening and we don't know the consequences yet... Time will tell.

Simon [Interviewer]

Is there anything more that you'd you think is important that you'd like to add yourself just?

Finnish – Senior Academic

Umm, in our institution I would definitely pay attention to this... Support supporting people to get international cause now they do the opposite... They take away all their facilities, they are demanding on us, but they give us nothing back. The one key issue in our strategy is this internationalization but at the same time... No resources, no support... So if I could decide I would really invest in this... In a different way.