





## Introduction

This report considers the collaborative arrangement between Edinburgh Napier University and the Institute of Advanced Management, India.

### United Kingdom (UK) Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

1 The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is a United Kingdom (UK) organisation that seeks to promote public confidence that the quality of provision and the standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded. It provides public information about quality and standards in higher education mainly by publishing reports resulting from a peer review process of audits and reviews. These are conducted by teams, selected and trained by QAA, and comprising academic staff from higher or further education institutions.

2 One of QAA's review activities is to carry out quality audits of collaborative links between UK higher education institutions and their partner organisations in other countries. In 2008-09 QAA conducted audits of selected partnership links between UK higher education institutions and institutions in India. The purpose of these audits was to provide information on the way in which the UK institutions were maintaining academic standards and the quality of education in their partnerships. The reports on the individual audits will be used in the preparation of an overview report on the collaborative arrangements for the management of standards and quality of UK higher education provision in India.

### United Kingdom (UK) Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) - April 2008

3 In April 2008, QAA invited all UK higher education institutions to provide information on their collaborative partnerships in India. On the basis of the information returned on the nature and scale of the links, QAA selected for audit visits ten UK institutions with links in India. Each of the selected institutions produced a briefing paper describing the way in which the link operated, and commenting on the effectiveness of the means by which it assured quality and standards. In addition, each institution was asked to make reference to the extent to which the link was representative of its procedures and practice in all its overseas collaborative activity. Institutions were also invited to make reference to the ways in which their arrangements met the expectations of the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)*, particularly *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, published by QAA in 2004.

4 In October/November 2008, one of three audit teams visited each of the selected UK institutions to discuss its arrangements in the light of its briefing paper. In January/February 2009, the same team visited the relevant partner organisations in India to gain further insight into the experience of students and staff, and to supplement the view formed by the team from the briefing paper and from the UK visit. During the visits to institutions in India, discussions were conducted with key members of staff and with students. The audit of Edinburgh Napier University was coordinated for QAA by Mr W Naylor, Assistant Director, Reviews Group. The audit team comprised Ms Ann Kettle and Mr Philip Lloyd (auditors), with Mr W Naylor acting as audit secretary. QAA is particularly grateful to the UK institutions and their partners in India for the willing cooperation they provided to the team.

### United Kingdom (UK) Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) - India

5 In India, responsibility for higher education resides with the Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resources Development. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the national body responsible for granting recognition to all higher education qualifications; it also regulates the use of university title. Constitutional responsibilities for education are shared between the national parliament and state legislatures. Both can authorise the establishment of universities, public or private, while the national government can grant 'deemed university' status to an institution on recommendation from UGC. Degree awarding powers are vested in universities, but

there are also numerous colleges that offer the degrees of universities to which they are affiliated. Colleges may be categorised as public or private based on their ownership; however, funding arrangements blur the distinction because of the self-financing activities of public institutions and because private institutions may receive government aid. The number of private institutions has grown in recent years and these tend to offer more employment-orientated programmes than their public counterparts; some award qualifications through collaboration with foreign institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is one of several bodies established with responsibilities in particular subject areas. The remit of AICTE is broad and includes engineering and technology, business and management, hotel and catering management, architecture and town planning, pharmacy, and applied arts and crafts. AICTE introduced regulations in 2005, under which foreign institutions imparting technical education are required to obtain approval from AICTE for their operations in India. There is currently no legal framework for recognising qualifications awarded by foreign institutions on the basis of programmes delivered entirely in India. The so-called 'Foreign Providers Bill', which would introduce such a framework, has been the subject of parliamentary debate, but has yet to reach the statute books.

in partnership with other institutions remain unchanged. The University, therefore, considers the partnership with IAM to be representative of its approach to overseas collaboration.

## 10.2.2 Institutional strategies for internationalisation

11 In its Briefing Paper, Napier stated that its Strategic Plan, with the development of the University's international focus as one of its key aims, had shaped its approach to collaborative partnerships. In respect of international collaboration, the Strategic Plan envisages working with partners overseas to develop new programmes and articulation routes to bring international students to study in Edinburgh. An International Strategy, developed from the Strategic Plan, set out specific international strategic aims and more detailed targets for overseas collaboration. Napier also recognised that international collaboration was important for its contribution to the financial sustainability of the University and its ability to invest further in the development of its activities in the UK and overseas.

12 In the context of these institutional strategies, Napier creates, maintains and develops collaborative partnerships with reference to a set of principles, some of which apply specifically to international activities. In general, Napier undertakes to ensure through partner evaluation and due diligence that there is a consonance between the mission and values of the University and the proposed partner; to acknowledge and accept that it is responsible for the quality and academic standards of all awards made in its name; to acknowledge and accept that all students registered for awards made in Napier's name are registered students of the University and receive appropriate information and consideration; to ensure that there is sufficient specific academic expertise in the University to create, foster and develop any academic collaboration; to ensure that the academic partner is able to provide an appropriate learning experience for students following Napier awards; to ensure that it responds positively to the *Code of practice, Section 2*.

13 Principles which apply specifically to international partnerships include setting out the respective responsibilities of the faculties and the International College (see paragraph 15) in the creation, operation and development of international partnerships; ensuring that Napier has an appropriate understanding of the culture of the countries in which it operates and the legalities of such operation; ensuring that its academic partners are in good legal, academic and financial standing; ensuring that the language of transaction with partners is English; ensuring that the language of instruction and assessment of programmes is normally English; designing particular processes, and introducing appropriate safeguards, where the language of instruction and assessment is not English. To date all programmes have been delivered and assessed in English only.

14 A further set of principles informs the operational processes related to the establishment and maintenance of collaborative partnerships and include ensuring that the processes reflect an appropriate balance between faculty-level and university-level responsibilities; ensuring that levels of authority and decision-making reflect the acknowledged risks to business processes and institutional reputation inherent in partnership working; designing processes which maintain appropriate rigour and safeguard Napier against risks; ensuring that partnership development can be undertaken in a flexible manner which responds to the demands of the particular market; ensuring that all partnerships operate with an appropriate business plan which defines its financial viability and sustainability; ensuring that there is an appropriate separation between the processes related to academic approval of programmes and the processes related to the business and financial aspects of partnership.

15 In October 2006 Napier created the International College by merging its International Office, which was hitherto responsible for the support of international students and some aspects of their recruitment, with the Overseas Programme Support Unit in the Business School, where most international collaborative activities, including the partnership with IAM, are based. The International College works with all the faculties and schools within the University and provides support for overseas programmes during set up and delivery.

16 The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Development) has institutional responsibility for all international activities, including overseas collaborative provision. This responsibility includes convening the Collaborative Partnerships Committee and line-managing the Dean of International Strategy and Operations. The Dean, who heads the International College, undertakes institutional liaison with senior staff of international partners and is required to approve all business cases and collaborative agreements. The Associate Director: Academic Enhancement is responsible for the management and operation of the Collaborative Partnerships Committee and programme validation and first cohort review. At faculty level, executive responsibility for international activities is usually held at associate dean level. At school level, the head of school is responsible for the leadership and resourcing of the programme, including the provision of staff development in the partner institution.

17 The Academic Board is the University's primary academic body with responsibility for overseeing the overall planning, coordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the institution. Academic Board delegates responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement to Quality Committee. In 2006 the Quality Committee established a Collaborative Partnerships Committee in recognition of the growing strategic and operational importance of collaborative provision. Collaborative Partnerships Committee's remit includes: developing procedures and policies for the development, approval and review of collaborative partnerships; ensuring that University procedures and practices meet both internal and external quality assurance requirements, specifically the *Code of practice*; developing and monitoring the progress for the identification and management of risk in relation to partnerships; maintaining a strategic overview of current partnerships to ensure that arrangements are working satisfactorily and that quality assurance and enhancement arrangements are appropriate; making recommendations to Quality Committee on the development of the Quality Framework and associated processes in relation to collaborative partnerships. The members of Collaborative Partnerships Committee include staff from those areas of the University with responsibility for collaborative provision, including the International College, the faculties and Quality Enhancement Services.

18 At faculty level, the Faculty Quality Committee is responsible for the oversight of the operation of academic partnerships and reports to Collaborative Partnerships Committee on the quality and standards of programmes offered with those partners. The Faculty Quality Committee makes an annual report to Collaborative Partnerships Committee on each programme and makes recommendations on the appointment of external examiners to the Associate Director: Academic Enhancement, who acts on behalf of the University Quality Committee. At school level, the School Quality Committee is responsible for reviewing external examiners' reports and acting on any issues which they raise.

19 A dedicated section of the University's Quality Framework deals with collaborative provision and includes guidance and regulatory requirements on development, approval and operational processes and procedures. Quality Enhancement Services is responsible for the provision of advice and guidance to the Quality Committee and also plays a role in the development and dissemination of policies and procedures related to quality assurance and enhancement. Following a suggestion in the *Enhancement-led institutional review* report, published by QAA in 2006, that there would be benefit in a critical analysis of the components of the Quality Framework, Collaborative Partnerships Committee undertook a revision of approaches to partner evaluation, and programme approval, monitoring and review and a consolidated set of principles and processes was approved and came into operation at the beginning of the 2008-09 session.

20 The partnership with IAM was developed and approved under the processes current in 2006. On the basis of discussions with staff and scrutiny of documentation, the audit team concluded that Napier's executive and deliberative structures and revised policies and procedures formed a robust platform for its overseas collaborative partnerships, including any expansion of activity in India. The team identified the sets of principles informing collaborative partnerships as a positive feature of the University's approach to overseas collaborative provision.

## Section 2: Arrangements for establishing the link

### 2.1 Background to the partnership

21 The relationship between Napier and the IndiSmart Group pre-dated the link with IAM. An Institutional Review was carried out on two IndiSmart colleges prior to the validation of the MBA (India) in 2003. Internal and external assessments were conducted as part of due diligence to determine the suitability and ability of the partner to deliver the programme and the review concluded that both colleges were suitable.

22 When the partnership with IAM was proposed, further scrutiny was undertaken, chiefly to re-affirm and re-validate the evidence collected in 2003. Senior staff from Napier's School of Marketing, Tourism and Languages (one of three schools within the Business School) visited the IAM campuses in Kolkata and Goa in January 2006. They inspected classrooms, libraries, computing facilities and student accommodation and met academic and support staff and students. Teaching and student support were found to be of an extremely high standard and administrative, computing and library facilities were reported to be satisfactory. A risk-assessment matrix was completed based on assessments, following the 2003 Institutional Review and the 2006 visit, of the ability of the partner to deliver the programme in terms of organisational structure, human and physical resources and quality assurance procedures.

23 In May 2006 an external academic assessor visited IAM to provide an external view about the Institute's ability to deliver the programme. The assessor's report concluded there was sufficient evidence that the majority of staff were more than capable of delivering the programme and that, although academic facilities varied from campus to campus, there was in the main an effective level of academic support for undergraduate programmes up to year three. There was, however, need for investment in library resources. It was confirmed that IAM was approved by AICTE. According to the Briefing Paper, following approval of a business plan by the Director of Finance, Napier was able to confirm that IAM was of good academic standing, financially stable, in a position to contract legally with the University, and that it had the appropriate academic infrastructure to support student learning.

24 The audit team heard that strong personal ties between Napier's Principal and the Head of the IndiSmart Group, who is also the Chief Executive of IAM, underpin the partnership, and that, even under its current procedures, Napier would not require a full partner evaluation for the establishment of a new programme with an existing partner. With this reassurance, and following a scrutiny of the documentation, the audit team concluded that the University had been appropriately thorough in establishing the partnership.

### 2.2 Programme approval

25 Programme approval followed the preliminary visits by members of the School of Marketing, Tourism and Languages in January 2006. A scrutiny document was considered in April 2006 by a faculty panel which included members from another faculty. The proposal was allowed to proceed to validation on condition that more detailed information was provided about IAM, its status within India, its organisational structure and its ability to work effectively with Napier in the delivery of the programme. The scrutiny document and the panel's report were made available to the external academic assessor before his visit to IAM in May 2006.

26 The report of the external academic assessor informed the full validation event which took place in May 2006, with three external assessors on the panel. The validation process identified risks in several areas including demand, delivery, operational support, library and IT facilities, plagiarism and finance. The programme was approved indefinitely, subject to nine conditions being met and consideration given to four recommendations. First cohort review (see paragraphs 38 to 42) was expected in the 2006-07 session, followed by quinquennial review in 2010-11.

27      One of the conditions of validation was the clarification of the relationship between the



## Section 3: Academic standards and the quality of programme

### 3.1.1 Management

33 The formal arrangements for the day-to-day management of the programme are laid out in the collaboration agreement and the programme validation document. There is a programme leader and module leaders in Napier and a programme leader for both of IAM's campuses in Kolkata and Goa and their respective duties are set out in the validation document. The main academic line of communication is between the programme leaders in Napier and IAM. The International College has responsibility for all administrative processes. Delivery of the programme is supported by a dedicated programme administrator in the International College and a programme manager for the two campuses in India. The Napier programme leader is responsible for the management and operation of the programme, including convening the Programme Board of Studies and student-staff liaison committee, and for liaison with the partner and the International College on day-to-day operational issues.

34 The administration of records involved in the admission, enrolment and registration of students is shared between the partners. IAM tutors are required to maintain records on individual students and to report monthly to the IAM programme leader on the basis of those records. Napier's programme administrator is responsible for the maintenance of records of student performance.

35 Students have access to the same support services provided for all full-time students at IAM; these are regarded by the partners as comparable with those at Napier. Both partners recognise their duties of pastoral care of students. The IAM programme leaders are the first point of contact for students seeking support with pastoral issues, while individual module leaders deal with academic problems. Napier staff make themselves available for consultations with individual students during their visits to India. Students whom the audit team met confirmed the accessibility and helpfulness of the staff of both institutions in offering academic and personal support.

36 The programme team employs several mechanisms to collect and analyse feedback from both staff and students. IAM tutors complete a feedback report at the end of each module for discussion at the Programme Board of Studies. Students complete anonymously a module evaluation questionnaire at the end of each module and a programme evaluation questionnaire at the end of the session. Analyses of the questionnaires are prepared for discussion at the Programme Board of Studies. The report of the first cohort review (see paragraphs 38 to 42) noted that student feedback from questionnaires had been positive and there was evidence that suitable responses had been made to issues students had raised.

37 There is a student-staff liaison committee which reports to the Programme Board of Studies. The first cohort review report noted that, despite the active engagement of students with staff, participation in student-staff liaison committees at both campuses was low and recommended that the programme team should consider how it might be improved. In response, the programme team explained that Indian cultural norms militated against students expressing their concerns directly to staff. Meetings were, however, run formally and students encouraged to make their views known; the audit team noted from committee minutes that during the 2007-08 session students were more confident in expressing their views in front of staff. The students whom the audit team met at IAM gave examples of matters raised at meetings of the student-staff liaison committee and confirmed the constructive nature of the responses they received from IAM.

### 3.1.2 Monitoring and reviewing programmes delivered

38 Napier's arrangements for monitoring and reviewing programmes delivered on its Edinburgh campuses also apply to collaborative programmes, with the additional requirement of a first cohort review. The Briefing Paper explained that first cohort reviews are usually scheduled during the first year of operation of a new collaborative programme in recognition of the fact

that collaborative partnerships often raise issues that need to be tackled at an early stage. When the programme was approved in May 2006, the review was expected towards the end of the 2006-07 session but it was delayed until after the completion of the first year chiefly, according to the Briefing Paper, to allow fuller consideration of available evidence, including the first report of the external examiner. The audit team heard that, following the successful outcome of the first cohort review, Napier had decided to delay all the first cohort reviews of new collaborative programmes until after the end of the first year.

39 The first cohort review took place in autumn 2007. A review team of three internal members was appointed to evaluate the programme, in line with the programme validation document and the collaboration agreement. The team reviewed a sample of relevant documentation and met with members of the programme team at Napier and with IAM staff and students in Kolkata and Goa. The team was satisfied that the academic standards and quality of the programme were secure and that staff in Napier and IAM were working effectively in partnership to ensure the quality of the learning experience. A number of areas of good practice were identified, including the proactive

Napier using agreed appointment criteria; curricula vitae are submitted to, and retained by, the University. Although the first cohort review team found that all IAM tutors met the criteria set for appointment, it highlighted that a number of staff teaching on the programme, particularly in Goa, had not been formally approved by Napier before they started teaching; this had happened when staff had left unexpectedly. According to the Briefing Paper, following the first cohort review report, new procedures had been implemented to ensure that the Napier programme leader approved all new appointments in advance of teaching. During the audit visit it was confirmed that the curricula vitae of all IAM staff involved with the delivery of the programme had been approved.

44 The validation document contains the arrangements for staff development in terms of the specific requirements of the programme. This form of staff development takes place during the biannual visits of the Napier programme leader to Kolkata and Goa. Topics covered include: assessment; extended academic writing; reducing plagiarism; and familiarisation with the University's systems, policies and strategies. IAM tutors are provided with tutor module guides which include teaching materials and assessment guidelines. They also receive individual support from Napier staff by email and face-to-face meetings on such matters as contextualising teaching material and the pastoral care of students. A visit by the IAM programme leaders to Napier took place in April 2008 and involved attending lectures, tutorials and a meeting of the programme board of studies. On their return the programme leaders had disseminated their experiences at a staff development workshop. In addition, IAM has its own comprehensive staff development programme and Napier has provided free places for IAM staff on its Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. At the time of the audit visit, six IAM tutors were enrolled and the first was expected to complete in the summer of 2009.

45 The first cohort review report recognised that the first year of the programme had been '...a steep learning curve', with IAM staff adapting both to new approaches to learning and teaching and to working with new requirements. The review team, however, found ample evidence of regular communication between staff at IAM and Napier on the full range of learning, teaching and assessment matters. Additional help had been provided by a visit from a member of Napier's Department of Educational Development to support IAM tutors in understanding the University's philosophy of learning, teaching and assessment. In general, the tutors whom the first cohort review team met in Kolkata and Goa spoke highly of the guidance and support provided by their colleagues in Edinburgh. The audit team had the opportunity to meet the Kolkata programme leader and a group of IAM tutors who confirmed the breadth and quality of the guidance and support provided by Napier staff.

46 In the view of the audit team, the area of staff development is indicative of the harmonious relationship between the partners. The regular visits by Napier staff facilitate effective communication on matters of quality and standards. In addition, the provision of free places on the Postgraduate Certificate is likely to enhance the quality of the teaching provided by IAM tutors. The audit team, therefore, identified the frequency and usefulness of visits by Napier staff to IAM as a positive feature of this partnership.

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47 Applicants for year three of the degree programme must have successfully completed the first two years of IAM's Diploma in Hospitality Administration which has been accredited as offering 240 credits at SCQF levels 7 and 8. The audit team heard that Napier staff attend interviews of applicants for IAM's Diploma to tell them about the degree course. Applications from students with equivalent qualifications from other Indian institutions are considered individually. The IAM programme leaders in Kolkata and Goa carry out an initial screening of applications which may include an interview. Completed application forms are sent by courier to Napier with the final responsibility for approving admission resting with the Napier programme leader. Offer letters are sent from the University and forwarded by IAM to the applicants. IAM ensures that students admitted to the programme complete matriculation forms which are sent to Napier. On receipt students are enrolled and provided with a University student matriculation card.

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encountered problems in accessing it. It was anticipated that increased student awareness and the anticipated improvement in access to anti-plagiarism software would continue to reduce the number of cases of plagiarism. The audit team was informed that several cases of plagiarism had been detected in the 2007-08 session and had been dealt with according to Napier's policy on academic misconduct. There had been a further visit from the school's academic conduct officer at the beginning of the 2008-09 session before the first assignment was due. Staff and students whom the audit team met at IAM confirmed the effectiveness of the prompt response of the University to the cases of plagiarism and collusion detected in the first year of the programme.

53 After examining the available evidence, the audit team confirmed the view expressed in Napier's Briefing Paper that it does not underestimate the seriousness of academic misconduct and that its academic staff have the skills and determination to continue tackling the problem. The audit team encourages Napier to continue to exercise vigilance in this area.

## **External examining**

54 IAM has no responsibilities in relation to the appointment or function of the external examiner or the administration of the external examining system. The external examiner for the programme is appointed according to standard Napier procedures and duties are allocated in line with a policy of ensuring that the external examiner is the same for all modules. In view of the scale of the partnership and its potential for growth, a second external examiner was appointed in 2007-08 and responsibilities reallocated while ensuring that there was a common external examiner for any given module, regardless of the delivery site.

55 The audit team scrutinised the external examiner reports for the first two years of the programme. Both reports were comprehensive in scope and drew attention to similar issues. Both external examiners praised University staff for 'developing the teaching teams in Goa and Kolkata' (2006-07) and in 'upholding the academic quality of the Napier brand' (2007-08). Both also

58 Napier has sole authority for the issue and control of award certificates and transcripts

## Conclusion

64 In considering the partnership, the audit team identified the following positive features:

- the sets of principles informing collaborative partnerships (paragraphs 12 to 14)
- the comprehensiveness and clarity of the collaboration agreement (paragraphs 31, 32)
- the effectiveness of first cohort review (paragraphs 38 to 41)
- the frequency and usefulness of visits by Napier staff to IAM (paragraphs 43 to 46).

65 The audit team also identified the following points for consideration by Napier as the partnership develops:

- continuing to ensure that IAM staff are kept fully informed of marking criteria and are provided with detailed feedback on their marking from module leaders (paragraph 50)
- continuing to exercise vigilance with regard to academic misconduct (paragraphs 51 to 53)
- keeping under review the achievement levels of IAM students and monitoring the impact of measures taken to improve the academic skills of students progressing on to the programme (paragraphs 55, 57)
- following the guidance in the *Code of practice* and ensuring that the name and location of IAM appear on transcripts (paragraph 58).

66 The audit team considered that the University was operating the partnership with due regard to the advice in the *Code of practice*. Where the team found that aspects of the University's practice could be improved in the context of the *Code*, these are identified in the main report and among the points for further consideration.

67 The audit team considered the Briefing Paper helpful in explaining the genesis of the partnership and developments in the delivery of the collaborative programme. In conclusion, Napier reflected that '...there were some aspects of the first year of operation...which constituted a learning curve for staff and students, with the partner needing particularly to adapt to new methods of teaching and learning'. The findings of the audit confirm the view of the University that the ways in which issues were dealt with by the programme team, together with the formal device of the First Cohort Review, has enabled it to manage its responsibility for the academic standards and quality of the collaborative programme properly. Although there have been recent changes in the way in which it operates its overseas activities, Napier considers that the fundamental principles of the ways in which it operates in partnership with other institutions have not changed. Against this backdrop, the findings of the audit would also support a conclusion of confidence in Napier's stewardship of academic standards and oversight of the quality of the student experience in its overseas collaborative provision.

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The University welcomes the very positive report on the collaborative arrangement with the Institute of Advanced Management, India, and the positive features identified by the audit team. It is particularly pleasing that the principles the University uses to inform all collaborative partnerships, the frequency and usefulness of visits by Edinburgh Napier staff to IAM and the effectiveness of the first cohort review are highlighted.

The University is grateful to the audit team for their constructive comments and is already addressing the points identified for consideration: work is ongoing to further involve IAM staff in good practice in assessment; the development activities to mitigate against academic



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