

Final Report:
**Enhancing frameworks for assuring the quality of learning and
teaching in university offshore education programs**

2010

Lead Institution:
The University of Western Australia

Partner Institutions:
Curtin University of Technology
University of the Sunshine Coast

Project Team:
Winthrop Professor Thomas O'Donoghue (Team Leader)
The University of Western Australia
Winthrop Professor Anne Chapman
The University of Western Australia
Associate Professor David Pyvis
Curtin University of Technology
Professor Tania Aspland
University of the Sunshine Coast
Dr Ian Melville (Research Officer)
The University of Western Australia

<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the provision of education to overseas students constituted Australia's sixth largest export earner (Universities Australia, 2009: 3). Offshore education is a growing component of this activity. By 2007, the number studying offshore was 149,625, with the top five source countries being Singapore, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong and Vietnam (Australian Education International April, 2009: 1).

Programs are delivered offshore through a number of models, including 'twinning', 'franchised', 'online' and 'moderated' programs, along with various combinations of these. Concerns have been raised regarding the quality of these programs by key players, including the Australian Government, Universities Australia (previously known as the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee), individual universities, and the National Tertiary Education Union representing the collective views of lecturers involved in delivery.

The project which is the substance of this report can be viewed as a response to such concerns. In particular, it was conceptualised as a response to a call of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST now DEEWR) in 2005 for a national quality strategy for offshore education that would improve communication with stakeholders and lead to an improvement in quality, including quality in learning and teaching.

The specific purpose of the project was to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning in offshore education programs of Australian universities by addressing the following three objectives. Each of these is now considered.

Objective No.1: To compile a database of international and national policy documents, empirical studies and quality assurance frameworks relating to such programs.

The database which was compiled is located at:
<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks/database>

The references which comprise this part of the project have been divided into thirteen libraries. These represent a significant cross-section of the literature regarding the involvement of Australian universities in offshore education. All universities are involved to a greater or lesser degree in international activities, with such activities being addressed using various terms including 'international', 'internationalisation', 'transnational', as well as 'offshore'. Also, various definitions of these terms are put forward from time to time. For example in 1997, The Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) describes transnational education as follows:

Transnational education...denotes any teaching or learning activity in which the students are in a different country (the host country) to that in which the institution providing the education is based (the home country). This situation requires that national boundaries be crossed by information about the education, and by staff and/or educational materials.¹

¹ Global Alliance for Transnational Education. *GATE Certification Manual*. Washington, DC, 1997, p. 1. Jones InternationalTM transferred ownership of GATE^R, founded in 1995 by Glenn R. Jones, to the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) in 2003.



Furthermore, amongst the various terms, those of 'transnational'; and 'offshore' tend to be used most often.

The libraries reflect not only the importance of internationalisation generally to Australian universities, but also its importance as a world-wide phenomenon, in which there is considerable competition between countries and individual universities.

Each of the libraries is preceded by a brief introduction regarding its usefulness. They are arranged as follows:

Libraries	Items
1. Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) This library consists of AUQA reports on individual universities (39) regarding their International Transnational/Offshore activities. They have been arranged alphabetically by State/Territory and University. Full reports can be accessed at: http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/universities/ or by activating the hyperlinks by using Ctrl + Click. Reports are available in either Word or PDF. Follow-up reports are not available for all universities and vary in their format.	
2. Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) formerly Carrick Institute. Renamed The Australian Learning and Teaching Council in 2008 (ALTC).....	1
3. EDU-COM.....	23
4. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).....	34
5. IDP Australia.....	59
6. The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE).....	23
7. The Australian Department of Education International (AEI) and The Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).....	22
8. Universities Australia. Formerly the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee.....	24
9. The Observatory on Borderless Education.....	32
10. The World Bank.....	12
11. General Library: Books, Book Chapters and Reports (54); Articles (185); Conference Proceedings (13); and Video Recording (1).....	253
12. Unpublished Theses.....	26
13. University Policies Referable to Offshore/Transnational Activities This library consists of numerous selected documents/links referable to offshore/transnational activities of Australian Universities (39), both public and private regarding the involvement of staff in course delivery and organisation. Also, some material can be found in documents relating to international activities and internationalisation generally in documents intended mainly for students.	

The libraries should provide academics, administrators and students involved in transnational learning and teaching with a wide variety of sources, both primary and secondary to guide them in their work.

Objective No.2: To conduct an empirically-based qualitative study of the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on the delivery of such programs across the range of models which operate.

The resulting case studies are located at:
<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks/case-studies>

Ten case studies were undertaken within the qualitative tradition of social science research. The aim was to investigate the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on the delivery of offshore education programs of Australian universities across a range of models. They provide rich portrayals of the findings at each of the sites investigated.



Particular emphasis is placed on 'giving voice' to the stakeholders interviewed. Also, a set of principles was developed from each case study to guide those concerned with quality assurance for transnational teaching and conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally.

The corpus of data was produced by pursuing the following three main research questions:

- i. What are the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on what constitutes a quality university off-shore program, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?
- ii. What are their perspectives on the issues involved in the delivery of quality university off-shore programs, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?
- iii. How do they 'respond in the light of their perspectives to' the various issues that arise for them in providing quality university offshore programs, with particular reference to learning and teaching?

The case studies will be of value to 'policy makers', 'administrators', 'teachers travelling from Australia' and 'locally-based tutors'.

Objective No.3: To develop a framework to guide those concerned with:

- **quality assurance for transnational teaching by Australian universities; and**
- **conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally.**

The framework is located at:

<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks/principles>

The libraries and the case studies were analysed in order to develop a framework to assist Australian universities to:

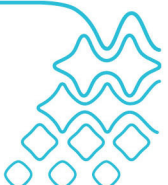
- enhance existing frameworks aimed at *assuring the quality of learning and teaching* in offshore Australian higher education programs;
- inform the design of *professional development programs* for key stakeholders which are aimed at maintaining their professionalism in the delivery of quality learning and teaching in university offshore education; and
- inform the activities of the major players charged with *developing policy* for quality university offshore programs, particularly in relation to providing quality learning and teaching.

The framework addresses three main areas: 'welfare', 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy'. Furthermore, it is directed at four specific groups: 'policy makers', 'administrators', 'teachers travelling from Australia' and 'locally-based tutors'.



The website is organised into three parts, each of which corresponds to one of the three objectives outlined above:

- Regarding the first objective, a set of 'libraries' is provided.
- Regarding the second objective, ten case studies are presented which focus on the lived experiences of key stakeholders involved in delivering programs, namely, administrative staff, both on- and offshore, offshore lecturers and 'local tutors'. Also, a set of principles was developed from each case study to guide those concerned with quality assurance for transnational learning and teaching, and conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally.
- Regarding the third objective, a framework is provided to guide those concerned with quality assurance and those conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally. This was developed from cogitating on the content of the libraries and the sets of principles developed from each case study it addresses. Three main areas are addressed: 'welfare', 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy'. Furthermore, the framework is directed at four specific groups: 'policy makers', 'administrators', 'teachers travelling from Australia' and 'locally-based tutors'.



PURPOSE

The purpose of the project was to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning in offshore education programs of Australian universities by:

- compiling a database of international and national policy documents, empirical studies and quality assurance frameworks relating to such programs;
- conducting an empirically-based qualitative study of the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on the delivery of such programs across the range of models which operate; and
- developing a framework to guide those concerned with:
 - quality assurance for transnational teaching by Australian universities; and
 - conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally.

RATIONALE

In 2008, the provision of education to overseas students constituted Australia's sixth largest export earner. (Universities Australia, 2009: 3). Offshore education is a growing component of this activity. In 2003, Australian universities were offering 1,569 offshore programs, with more than 70% of them being located in China (including Hong Kong), Singapore and Malaysia (AVCC, 2003). More than 100,000 students were studying offshore with Australian universities in 2005 (Nelson, 2005). By 2007, the number studying offshore had increased to 149,625 with the top five source countries being Singapore, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong and Vietnam (Australian Education International April, 2009: 1). Sensitive to the grave responsibilities which accompany this scenario, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) committed itself to the principle that "the provision of education services to international students, both onshore and offshore, by Australian universities, brings with it the ethical commitment that quality education be provided and that value be given for the investment made by international students" (AVCC, 2002: 1). This point had already been made by two of the project team in 1994 (Aspland & O'Donoghue, 1994: 60) in one of the very first international publications on Australian universities' obligations to ensure quality learning and teaching in the supervision of overseas students.

The existence of a variety of delivery formats within Australian offshore higher education complicates the issue. Presently they include 'twinning', 'franchised', 'online' and 'moderated' programs, along with various combinations of these. On this, Pyvis and Chapman (2004), have pointed out that different delivery formats used by Australian universities may exert their own individual effects on the quality of offshore education. Inconsistency of quality across the sector has also been noted. For example, the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee Report into Australian higher education declared that "fears about the poor quality control in some offshore arrangements appear to be well-founded (2001: 353). Also noteworthy is the fact that while the AVCC's 'Code of Practice' makes a commitment to the provision of quality education offshore, there is no general set of principles which can be used to enhance the standard of quality assurance frameworks for the Australian university sector as a whole. In addition, the



Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), which has the remit to audit the offshore operations of Australian universities, recommended that institutions need to exercise better quality control to maintain “consistency of academic standards and quality of teaching and support between off-shore and on-campus programs” (Martin, 2003: 26). Offering his observations on this, the Director of AUQA concluded that “institutions would benefit from a transnational teaching and learning quality assurance plan” (Woodhouse, 2004: 1).

Of particular importance in the development of any such plan is the need to take account of the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on the delivery of such programs across the range of models which operate. Not to do so, would be to ignore a wealth of practical knowledge which has the potential to contribute greatly to improving the quality of learning and teaching. Equally significant in this regard is the work of those educationalists who, for quite some time now, have recognised the importance of paying major attention to key-stakeholders’ perspectives when developing quality education programs (Fullan, 1985; Fullan & Stiegelbaur, 1991; Hargreaves, 1993). Particular emphasis is placed in their work on the need to focus on those who are responsible for formulating policy, and on those responsible for teaching program units and other aspects of program provision, since their perspectives influence greatly what actually takes place in the learning and teaching process. The Federal Government in Australia reiterated this principle in arguing for a national quality strategy for offshore education that would improve communication with stakeholders and lead to an improvement in quality, including quality in learning and teaching (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005). The project being reported here is significant in that it directly targeted this concern.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The project was undertaken in 3 stages:

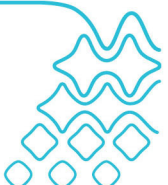
Stage One: Document Study

Three significant document-collection and analysis tasks were undertaken:

1. Compiling a database of international and national policy documents relating to offshore education programs, with particular reference to learning and teaching;
2. Compiling a database of international and national empirical studies (quantitative and qualitative) relating to offshore education programs of Australian universities, with particular reference to learning and teaching;
3. Compiling a database of selected quality assurance frameworks relating to offshore education programs, with particular reference to learning and teaching;

Stage Two: Qualitative Empirical Study

An empirical study within the qualitative tradition of social science research was undertaken to provide:



1. a set of case studies providing rich portrayals of the findings at each of the sites to be investigated, with particular reference to 'giving voice' to the stakeholders interviewed; and
2. a set of generalisations from the case studies to inform practice.

The corpus of data was produced by pursuing the following three main research questions:

- iv. What are the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on what constitutes a quality university off-shore program, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?;
- v. What are their perspectives on the issues involved in the delivery of quality university off-shore program, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?; and
- vi. How do they 'respond in the light of their perspectives to' the various issues that arise for them in providing quality university offshore programs, with particular reference to learning and teaching?

The concepts central to these 3 main research questions are defined as follows:

Perspectives are the conceptual maps which participants use in order to make sense of the world.

Key Academic Stakeholders are:

1. academics at the individual university level who are involved in the formation of policy for the delivery of Australian university offshore programs and associated units;
2. academics who teach units within offshore programs of Australian-universities; and
3. academics involved in the design, moderation and coordination of offshore programs and associated units for Australian universities, but who do not necessarily teach offshore.

Offshore Programs are programs of Australian universities delivered to students located overseas.

Theoretical Framework

As indicated above, the empirical study undertaken in this part of the project was located within the qualitative tradition of social science research. The three central research questions in the study have their theoretical basis in a particular branch of this tradition, namely, the social theory of 'symbolic interactionism'. This theory is appropriate for underpinning projects aimed at generating rich data of the type sought here (O'Donoghue, 2007: 21-25). Its central tenet is that in order to understand social reality, one has to study how individuals see, define, interpret and consequently respond to situations in the world around them.



The three central research questions are based on two core concepts within symbolic interactionism, namely, 'perspectives' and 'respond to'. By elaborating as follows on the meaning of these concepts it is possible to break down each of the three research questions further in order to facilitate data gathering:

A '**perspective**', the core concept in the first two research questions, is defined as a framework through which people make sense of the world (Woods, 1992). 'Frameworks', in this sense, have the following interrelated components (O'Donoghue, 2007: 38):

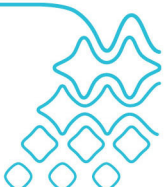
1. participants' intentions and the reasons they give for having these intentions;
2. participants' strategies for realising their intentions and the reasons they give for utilising these strategies;
3. the significance which participants attach to their intentions and strategies, and the reasons they give for this; and
4. the outcomes which participants expect to result from their actions and the reasons they give for this.

'**Respond to**', the central concept in the third research question, is intimately related to the concept of 'perspectives' and the social theory of symbolic interactionism. It is a concept aimed at capturing the fundamental notion within that theory of the interdependency between the individual and society; one cannot be understood without an understanding of the other. The view of the individual is of somebody who is a 'manager of', who 'deals with', or who 'responds to' her or his own environment (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Thus, the task of the researcher operating out of such an approach is to uncover participants' "patterns of action and interaction" over a defined period of time by investigating:

1. participants initial actions in relation to a situation arising out of their perspectives on it;
2. changes, if any, in participants' perspectives arising out of responses to their actions; and
3. changes, if any, in participants' actions arising out of changes in their perspectives.

Guiding Questions

This investigation undertaken was of the "unfolding, emerging or open-ended" (Punch, 2000: 23-25) type. The use of in-depth, open-ended questions was necessary to explore, probe and push new questions to be asked so that the researchers could become very familiar with the situation at hand. Such in-depth, open-ended questions were developed by constructing a matrix for each of the 3 main research questions. One such matrix is outlined below for the first major research question: *What are the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on what constitutes a quality university offshore program, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?* It will be noted that the questions on the vertical axis relate to the component parts of the concept of perspectives, while the horizontal axis outlines the broad set of areas for exploration regarding the quality of learning and teaching.



	Range of outcomes?	Teachers / students groupings?	Prescribed content?	Prescribed methods?	Assessment approach?	Personal welfare issues?
What are their intentions (with reasons) re:						
What are their strategies (with reasons) for realising intentions re:						
What significance (with reasons) do they attach to:						
What outcomes (with reasons) do they expect from:						

A set of in-depth interview questions (Punch, 2000: 27) was developed for each cell of each matrix, with particular emphasis on questions regarding the quality of learning and teaching. Similar matrices, and associated in-depth interview questions, were developed for each of the other two major research questions in this stage of the study.

The Selection of Programs and Participants

An extensive list of possible programs was compiled. From this list 10 programs were selected for study. Selection was made in light of the following classification of 'types' of modes of delivery:

Twinning programs:

Programs of Australian universities offered partly or fully offshore with the involvement of an overseas partner. Students generally have the same material, lectures and examinations as those at the onshore campus;

Franchised programs:

A local offshore institution delivers Australian university programs;

Moderated programs:

A local offshore institution teaches its own programs with quality assurance provided by an Australian university. The Australian university then offers 'advanced standing' to graduates of the local program;

Offshore campuses:

An Australian university establishes a campus offshore where local and Australian staff are hired to deliver programs, and onshore staff also may teach for periods; and

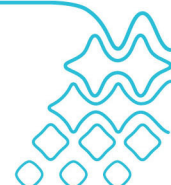
Online programs:

Programs are delivered through the internet, with support from Australian onshore staff and sometimes from staff employed overseas.

The models outlined above are 'pure types' and there is significant overlap between them in reality. Five programs were selected in the first instance, each corresponding as much as possible to each 'pure type'. This was followed by a selection of 5 more programs, each representing a variation on each 'pure type, a combination of 'pure types', or a variation on a combination of 'pure types'.

The following criteria also applied in program selection:

- i. ensuring variation in programs in terms of academic areas;
- ii. ensuring variation in programs in terms of university types providing them;



- iii. ensuring variation in programs in terms of countries of focus; and
- iv. ensuring variation between undergraduate and postgraduate programs (and within the latter including some 'research' degrees alongside the more usual 'course-work' degrees).

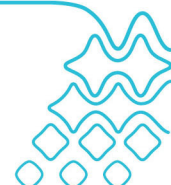
Selection of participants in relation to each program was guided by a desire to cast as widely as possible for a variety of perspectives and situations, rather than by selecting a random sample or choosing a sample that would be representative of the total population of possible participants (O'Donoghue, 2007: 56-61).

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984: 76) were used as the primary means of data collection. During the interviews as themes arose they were pursued with the participants in a 'lengthy conversation piece' (Simons, 1982: 37). At an early stage, the research partners decided which partner would be given responsibility for approaching which on-shore Australian universities to ascertain those willing to be involved in the project. This resulted in off-shore programs in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore being investigated. It was considered essential when each approach was made to a possible-participating institution that it be done in such a manner that if participation were agreed to, it would be in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. The partners believed that this was executed successfully in every case.

The involvement of the research partners in the various case studies was as follows

1. A program offered by a school of information studies in a regional university in Australia and an offshore provider in Hong Kong
(research conducted by USC personnel)
2. An M.Ed. degree-program offered at a private school in Singapore and taught by a graduate school of education within a faculty of education at a 'sandstone' university
(research conducted by UWA personnel)
3. An M.Ed. degree-program offered in Singapore through an arrangement with a philanthropic society in Singapore
(research conducted by UWA personnel)
4. An MBA degree-program offered in Singapore through an arrangement with a philanthropic society in Singapore
(research conducted by UWA personnel)
5. A moderated program (advanced standing) in Malaysia for a Bachelors Degree in Commerce
(research conducted by UWA and Curtin University personnel)
6. A Mass Communication program at an offshore campus in Malaysia
(research conducted by UWA and Curtin University personnel)
7. A Communication Skills program offered at an offshore campus in Malaysia
(research conducted by UWA and Curtin University personnel)



- 8 & 9 Two IT undergraduate degree-programs involving an Australian university in partnership with a Chinese university
(research conducted by UWA and Curtin personnel)
10. An IT program offered by a metropolitan university in Australia in partnership with a private education provider in Hong Kong.
(research conducted by University of the Sunshine coast personnel)

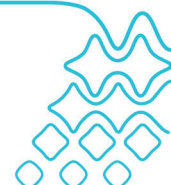
Two rounds of interviews were undertaken in relation to each program. One round was at the Australian university site with the relevant academic stakeholders and the other at the offshore location with the relevant academic stakeholders. Prior to the first round, the selected participants were contacted by telephone to briefly discuss the study. A total of 20 interviews were undertaken, 10 on-shore and 10 off-shore. Each interview was recorded using an Olympus digital voice recorder. With a 128MB memory providing approximately 54 hours of recording time, this not only provided high quality recordings but an effective and efficient way of progressing the interviews in a non-intrusive manner. Field notes were also taken.

Data Analysis

The data from the interviews was transcribed for analysis. This analysis involved three major types of coding, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992). These coding procedures were applied flexibly and in accordance with the changing circumstances throughout the period of data gathering and analysis. Diagrams and detailed notes of ideas about the data and the coded categories were used to assist in analysis. Standard safeguards were utilised to ensure that the research is authentic, trustworthy and credible.

The logistics of the process were as follows. Professor Aspland recorded, transcribed and interpreted the interviews which she conducted. Associate Professor Pyvis and Winthrop Professor Chapman worked as a team; and Winthrop Professor, Tom O'Donoghue and Dr Melville working as team also, with all their interviews being transcribed by Dr Melville. Geographic considerations were at the root of the different approaches with Professor Aspland located in Queensland, while the remaining four team members were in Western Australia. When all transcriptions were completed, Dr Melville compiled them and then circulated all the case studies to the partners for analysis. Although it took several months to complete the analysis, the approach was a one and presented the opportunity for the sharing of insights and experiences. The partners were keen to ensure that, as far as possible, that the anonymity of the universities involved and of the programs and participants, could be maintained. To this end, the titles of the programs were slightly re-worded to ensure anonymity also. Finally, the Team Leader reviewed all ten case studies, with the final 'product' being ratified by the research partners before being 'posted' on the website of the Graduate School of Education within the University of Western Australia.

This study has uncovered the necessity for Australian universities to take particular notice of the realities of offshore provision from the perspectives of the practitioners. While there is no doubt that the policy/procedural documentation provided by Australian universities needs to be constantly revised (and in the main most are), it is essential that they be informed on a regular basis by the critical insights of the practitioners. To do so would be to take cognisance of the view that offshore deployment should be regarded as a partnership involving the practitioners, their employing university and the offshore partner. Whether or not the relationship should



be equal is another matter, but the exercise, it is argued, should be one of collegiality, with an ever-watchful eye on the minutiae of the lived experiences of all involved. The case studies elaborate on the areas on which participants offered particular insights, namely, pedagogy, curriculum and welfare.

Stage Three: Development of Principles

The database produced in Stage One and the findings of Stage Two were utilised to develop a framework to guide those concerned with:

- i. quality assurance for transnational teaching by Australian universities;
- ii. conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally.

The Relationship with Other Work/Research in the Area

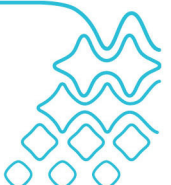
The provision of quality higher education for international university students located offshore is a priority of the Australian Government (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005). In recent years the need for quality frameworks for programs for this cohort has been argued strongly in various forums, including in the literature on Australian offshore higher education (IDP, 2000: 130). The response of most Australian universities has been to develop policies for the quality assurance of their own offshore programs (Woodhouse, 2003). In addition, all of Australia's 38 public universities are signatories to the AVCC's document entitled Provision of Education to International Students: Code and Guidelines for Australian Universities (AVCC, 2002). To deliver on such codes and guidelines, however, is not an easy task, although the Federal Government is continuing to try to develop associated frameworks (DEWR, 2005). This project complements such efforts. It is significant and innovatory; no project has been undertaken to date with the intention of enhancing current frameworks aimed at assuring the quality of teaching and learning in offshore Australian higher education by investigating the professional concerns and practical realities of those involved in design and delivery across a comprehensive range of teaching and learning modes. In addressing this deficit the project may also contribute to the consolidation, expansion and internationalisation of Australian universities.

This is not to overlook the fact that a small number of studies have been conducted aimed at investigating the experiences of Australian academics who teach transnationally. Significant amongst these are the works of Dunn and Wallace (2006), Feast and Bretag (2005), and Galvin (2004). Also, the NTEU (2004) has highlighted some concerns of a large number of participants about the constitution of quality in offshore education, including the quality of learning and teaching. These indicate that there is now an urgent need for a much more systematic investigation of the type reported here, aimed at harnessing academics' perspectives on quality in Australian offshore higher education, particularly on the quality of learning and teaching. The need is reinforced by the conclusion of IDP (2000) that a review of studies indicates that universities would do well to ensure staff consultation at all stages of the delivery of offshore programs in order to ensure the quality of the student experience.

It also appears that no significant projects have been undertaken outside Australia which have attempted to distil positive insights and practical knowledge of a pedagogical nature from the perspectives of these key stakeholders involved at the most immediate level (particularly those teaching programs) in attempting to provide



quality offshore learning and teaching. The importance of addressing this deficit is heightened when account is taken of the fears being expressed internationally that the World Trade Organization's (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) will erode the opportunities for academics to contribute their views in meaningful ways to quality frameworks (Marginson, 2003; Education International, 2005). In this regard, the contention of various international educational organisations, most notably UNESCO and the OECD, that the contributions of academic staff to educational quality determination are "indispensable" (UNESCO & OECD, 2005), is highly significant.



DELIVERABLES

The deliverables consist of three components and are to be found at <http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks>. The three components are as follows:

- a. Data Base
- b. Case Studies
- c. Framework to assist in quality assurance

The principal content of each of these is now outlined below.

a. Database

The references which comprise this part of the project have been divided into thirteen libraries. These represent a significant cross-section of the literature regarding the involvement of Australian universities in offshore education. They deal with this phenomenon under a variety of terms, including 'international', 'internationalisation', 'transnational', as well as 'offshore'.

The libraries reflect not only the significance of internationalisation and offshore educational provision to Australian Universities, but also their significance as worldwide phenomena, with considerable associated competition between countries and individual universities.

Libraries	Items
1. Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) This library consists of AUQA reports on individual universities (39) regarding their International Transnational/Offshore activities. They have been arranged alphabetically by State/Territory and University. Full reports can be accessed at: http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/universities/ or by activating the hyperlinks by using Ctrl + Click. Reports are available in either Word or PDF. Follow-up reports are not available for all universities and vary in their format.	
2. Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) formerly Carrick Institute. Renamed The Australian Learning and Teaching Council in 2008 (ALTC).....	1
3. EDU-COM.....	23
4. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).....	34
5. IDP Australia.....	59
6. The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE).....	23
7. The Australian Department of Education International (AEI) and The Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).....	22
8. Universities Australia. Formerly, the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee.....	24
9. The Observatory on Borderless Education.....	32
10. The World Bank.....	12
11. General Library: Books, Book Chapters and Reports (54); Articles (185); Conference Proceedings (13); and Video Recording (1).....	253
12. Unpublished Theses.....	26
13. University Policies Referable to Offshore/Transnational Activities This library consists of numerous selected documents/links referable to offshore/transnational activities of Australian Universities (39), both public and private regarding the involvement of staff in course delivery and organisation. Also, some material can be found in documents relating to international activities and internationalisation generally in documents intended mainly for students.	



The database can be located at:
<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks/database>

b. Case Studies

The interviews which resulted in the case studies were conducted by the research partners and the research officer using the questions below as guide.

The case studies are located at:
<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks/case-studies>

Research Questions

- (i) ***What are the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on what constitutes a quality university offshore program, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?;***

Please comment on the way, and the extent to which, the involvement of staff involved in offshore programs impacts their professional and personal lives and which might directly impact upon the quality assurance of the programs in which they are involved both 'on' and offshore:

1. How are academic staff chosen?
2. Is there an induction program for academic staff? If so, who manages this and what form does it take?
3. Are participating staff required to accept contractual obligations with regard to outcomes? If so, what are they?
4. Have approaches been made by offshore providers to employ local academic staff?
5. What do you think the 'pros' and 'cons' would be of appointing local academics in both the short and longer term?
6. How is the performance of academic staff managed?

- (ii) ***What are their perspectives on the issues involved in the delivery of quality university offshore programs, with particular reference to quality learning and teaching?***

Please consider existing programs and the way in which they were implemented:

1. Please describe the interactions (onshore/offshore) which resulted in the establishment of existing programs.
2. If there was pressure to establish programs where did this pressure come from and how did it manifest itself?
3. In your view, what factors constitute a viable program?
4. In what way do you think your Faculty/School benefits from its involvement in these programs?
5. In what way do you think your Faculty/School is disadvantaged from its involvement in these programs?
6. On what grounds would you consider your Faculty/School withdrawing from some or all of its offshore activities?



7. How confident are you that there is congruity of outcomes between similar/identical onshore/offshore programs?

(iii) *How do they respond in the light of their perspectives to the various issues that arise for them in providing quality university offshore programs, with particular reference to learning and teaching?*

1. What are the requirements relating to student entry into offshore courses/units?
2. Are these the same for 'local students'. If not, how are they different and why?
3. Are you aware of any pressure to maintain, increase or reduce entry into courses/units. If yes, where has this pressure come from and what reasons were given.
4. What courses/units do you currently teach offshore?
5. Are these courses/units, taught in your 'home' Faculty/School?
6. Describe the course/unit structures taught offshore.
7. Describe the way in which these courses/units are similar to, or different from, courses of a similar nature taught within your Faculty/School?
8. How were the structure and content of the offshore courses/units units determined?
9. How are course materials conveyed to students?
10. Do offshore students have input into the structure/content/assessment of courses/units? If so, to what extent?
11. Describe the way in which students are assessed?
12. To what extent are these different to or similar for on-campus students?
13. Can you identify any problems you have experienced regarding assessment and explain how these might have occurred?
14. What provision does the School/Faculty have for student feedback?
15. To what extent are the cultural sensitivities of offshore students considered in the structure of courses/units?
 - a. Is there a mechanism for resolving cultural problems identified in courses/units. If there is, please explain how it operates?
16. Who 'drives' issues relating to cultural issues?

The resulting empirical studies were constructed within the qualitative tradition of social science research. The aim was to investigate the perspectives of key academic stakeholders on the delivery of offshore education programs of Australian universities across a range of models. They provide rich portrayals of the findings at each of the sites investigated. Particular emphasis is placed on 'giving voice' to the stakeholders interviewed. Also, a set of principles was developed from each case study to guide those concerned with quality assurance for transnational teaching and conducting professional development programs for those working transnationally.

The case studies are as follows:

Case Study No. 1 and Principles

A case of a program offered by a school of information studies in a regional university in Australia and an offshore provider in Hong Kong;

Case Study No. 2 and Principles

A case of a program for a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree offered at a private school in Singapore and taught by a graduate school of education within a faculty of education at a 'sandstone' university;



Case Study No. 3 and Principles

A case of a program of a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree offered in Singapore through an arrangement with a philanthropic society in Singapore. The degree is taught by a school of education within a faculty of professional schools in a 'sandstone university' and is awarded by the university;

Case Study No. 4 and Principles

A case of a program for a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree offered in Singapore through an arrangement with a philanthropic society in Singapore, the degree being taught by a school of business within a faculty of professional schools in a 'sandstone university' and awarded by the university;

Case Study No. 5 and Principles

A case of a moderated program (advanced standing) in Malaysia for a Bachelors Degree in Commerce;

Case Study No. 6 and Principles

A case of a Mass Communication program at an offshore campus in Malaysia;

Case Study No. 7 and Principles

A case of a Communication Skills program offered at an offshore campus in Malaysia;

Case Study No.8 / Case Study No. 9

A case of a twinning agreement involving two programs where there is cross-credit of half their units in relation to two degrees. The programs are delivered by one information technology department in an Australian university awarding a Bachelor of Information Technology majoring in Information Technology Management in partnership with a Chinese university awarding a Bachelor of Science and Technology;

Case Study No. 10 and Principles

A case of a program offered by a metropolitan university in Australia in partnership with a private education provider in Hong Kong.

c. Framework to Assist in Quality Assurance

The framework is located at:

<http://www.education.uwa.edu.au/research/frameworks/principles>

The libraries and the case studies were analysed in order to develop a framework to assist Australian universities to:

- enhance existing frameworks aimed at *assuring the quality of learning and teaching* in offshore Australian higher education programs;
- inform the design of *professional development programs* for key stakeholders which are aimed at maintaining their professionalism in the delivery of quality learning and teaching in university offshore education; and
- inform the activities of the major players charged with *developing policy* for quality university offshore programs, particularly in relation to providing quality learning and teaching.



The framework addresses three main areas: 'welfare', 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy'. Furthermore, it is directed at four specific groups: 'policy makers', 'administrators', teachers travelling from Australia' and 'local based tutors'.

Not all of the principles apply to all types of programs. What we recommend, however, is that regardless of the model, time should be taken to consider each principle and ask if it applies. If the answer is in the affirmative then there is need to spend time deliberating on the implications for:

- a. quality of learning and teaching;
- b. curriculum design; and
- c. policy development.

TRANSFERABILITY OF THE FINDINGS

'Transferability of findings' refers to the extent to which the approach/outcomes are amenable to implementation in a variety of institutions or locations.

Individually and collectively, the three principal deliverables should be of interest to universities throughout the world involved in off-shore provision. Rather than being concerned with how university bureaucracies, or students, respond to the issues and challenges of offshore provision, the focus is very much on those delivering provision at the 'coal face'.

With regard to deliverable one, the libraries constitute a resource for all involved in transnational education. They can be drawn upon by key stakeholders to give them an appreciation of the overall context within which they work, its evolution, and common issues and concerns, along with those which are unique to particular situations and settings.

With regard to deliverable two, the case studies should be instructive to all involved in transnational education. Anyone reading them can draw upon them to assist in clarifying one's own position, to provoke thought about issues that might not have occurred to one so far, and to consider how one's own situation can be improved.

With regard to deliverable three, the frameworks are offered to all individuals, organisations and institutions involved in transnational education to be trialed by them in their own situation with the aim of enhancing quality assurance for transnational teaching by Australian universities. They are also offered to them as being worthy of informing the design of professional development programs for those working transnationally.



DISSEMINATION OF THE PROJECT OUTCOMES BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

The project outcomes are made available nationally and internationally through the website which has been produced. This website is hosted by the Graduate School of Education (GSE) within the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Australia. The GSE will maintain the website until 31 October 2011.

The outcomes have been disseminated both nationally and internationally, as follows:

National

Presentations:

DATE	ORGANISATION AND LOCATION	CATEGORY	PRESENTERS
04/05/2009	University of Melbourne , Centre for the Study of Higher Education	Presentation	W/Prof. Anne Chapman and A/Prof. David Pyvis
04/05/2009	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology , Learning and Teaching Unit	Presentation	W/Prof. Anne Chapman and A/Prof. David Pyvis
05/05/2009	Monash University (Caulfield Campus) , Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning	Presentation	W/Prof. Anne Chapman and A/Prof. David Pyvis
21/05/2009	Edith Cowan University Staff involved with policy making and delivery of international education	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland
22/05/2009	Murdoch University , Networks Enhancing the Scholarship of Teaching (NEST)	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland and Dr Ian Melville
27/05/2009	The University of Western Australia , Teaching and Learning Research Colloquium	Presentation	W/Prof. Thomas O'Donoghue A/Prof. David Pyvis, Dr Melville
12/06/2009	Flinders University , International Studies Unit. Also attended by a small group of interested staff from the University of South Australia	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland
15/06/2009	Tabor Christian College , Adelaide Staff hosted by the Principal	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland
01/07/2009	Australian Teacher Education Association , Albury	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland
12/07/2009	Adelaide University i. Executive Dean, Faculty of the Professions ii. Dean of Education	Discussion Discussion	Prof. Tania Aspland Prof. Tania Aspland
20/07/2009	Adelaide University , Staff, Faculty of the Professions	Seminar	Prof. Tania Aspland
23/07/2009	Edith Cowan University Associate Deans of all Faculties, a number of administrative and academic staff involved in international affairs.	Workshop	Prof. Tania Aspland
18/08/2009	University of Canberra Meeting of staff from the University of Canberra, Australian Defence Force Academy, Australian National University and ACU.	Presentation	W/Prof. Thomas O'Donoghue Dr Ian Melville



DATE	ORGANISATION AND LOCATION	CATEGORY	PRESENTERS
28/08/2009	Queensland University of Technology (With representatives from QUT, University of Queensland and Griffith University) Staff involved with policy making and delivery of international education	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland
04/09/2009	The University of Technology Sydney Staff involved with policy making and delivery of international education (representatives from University of technology Sydney, Charles Sturt University, University of new South Wales and University of Sydney)	Presentation	Prof. Tania Aspland

National: Conveyed by Email

An email was sent to the organisations and people and indicated directly below. Each email consisted of a brief introduction to the project, a flyer containing information regarding its purpose, outcomes, project team members and the location of the website.

Organisation	Person Contacted	Number
Members of Universities Australia	Directors of International Offices were emailed individually by title and name. A list of these officers is located at: http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/database/report.asp?a=show&committee=285 They were also requested to forward the email to Heads of Staff Development Units within their universities	38
National Tertiary Education Union Branches	A list of NTEU officers was located at: http://www.nteu.org.au/bd . Each of these officers was emailed individually	43
	TOTAL	81

International

Members of the project team also disseminated information about the project while attending various events overseas. This international dissemination did not draw upon the funding provided by the project. The events attended and the presenters are shown below.

Date	Organisation and Location	Category	Presenters
05/05/2009	Divine Word University , Madang, PNG University staff	Seminar	Prof. Tania Aspland
20/06/2009	Institute of Education, London Dr Leith Krakouer and colleagues,	Seminar	W/Prof. Thomas O'Donoghue
1-4/07/2009	16th International Conference on Learning , Barcelona, Spain <i>Quality teaching and learning in Australia university transnational education</i>	Presentation	W/Prof. Anne Chapman
1-4/07/2009	16th International Conference on Learning , Barcelona, Spain <i>Protocols for quality enhancement: Transnational education delivery</i>	Presentation	A/Prof. David Pyvis



FACTORS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE APPROACH

All deliverables were achieved. This was facilitated by:

- a. all of the research team members working successfully together on various projects over a number of years;
- b. the project leader, Winthrop Professor Thomas O'Donoghue, being an experienced project leader as indeed are the other project team members, Professor Tanis Aspland, Winthrop Professor Anne Chapman and Associate Professor David Pyvis;
- c. the commitment and expertise of the team's Research Officer, Dr Ian Melville;
- d. the willingness of the Graduate School of Education (GSE) within the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Australia to develop and host the project deliverables on the GSE's website.

Throughout, the team members worked closely with each other and communicated frequently by email and in regular face-to-face meetings to discuss issues arising as the project progressed. Also, W/Prof. O'Donoghue and Dr Melville met nearly every week to review and plan. Furthermore, members of the team, both individually and collectively, sought opportunities through their professional networks to enhance their work on the project.

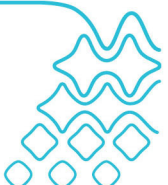
One area which required considerable planning was organising interviews both in Australia and overseas. Diplomacy was critical to the outcomes. The interviews were conducted using a series of 'open-ended' questions as a means to stimulate discussion rather than direct it. This strategy proved to be very productive as it permitted participants to take the discussion in whatever direction they thought appropriate, while enabling the interviewer to redirect the discussion, if required. All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed by the Project Officer.

Conducting face-to-face interviews is an expensive exercise. However, it became very clear that it was a worth-while approach since it provided an opportunity to experience first-hand the conditions under which the programs were provided, as well as facilitating valuable exchange of ideas.

LINKS BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND OTHER PROJECTS IN THE ALTC STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

There is a number of links between our project and others undertaken on behalf of the ALTC. They are as follows:

- Learning and teaching in offshore locations as it relates to the experiences of staff involved in planning and delivery was an area of investigation for our study. In this regard two other reports are also of interest, namely, the *Peer Review of Teaching in Australian Higher Education* by The University of Melbourne and University of



Wollongong (2009), and Higgins' (2009) project, *Promoting Learning and Teaching Communities*.

- Effective leadership is clearly an important element in the success of offshore programs. Our framework identifies the need for administrators to be closely involved in the development of operational and strategic planning of such projects. The studies by Harvey et al. (2008), Bennett et al. (2008), and Jones et al. (2009) provide further insights into leadership generally in higher education which could inform offshore education.
- The results of a project by Percy et al. (2008) *The Contribution of Sessional Teachers to Higher Education*, provides valuable insights into the experiences of sessional teachers, as does our study. It is not unusual for sessional teachers to provide offshore education and Percy's study provides another lense through which to view their contribution.

RELATED ALTC REPORTS

Bennett, L., Tasker, C. & Whitton, J. (2008). *Leadership for Implementing Improvements in the Learning and Teaching Quality Cycle*.

Harvey, M. & Fraser, S., (2008). *Leadership and assessment: Strengthening the Nexus*.

Higgins, D., (2009). *Promoting Learning and Teaching Communities*.

Jones, S., Ladyshevsky, R., Oliver, B., Flavell, H. (2009). *Leading Courses: Academic Leadership for Course Coordinators*.

Percy, A., Scoufis, M., Parry, S., Goody, A., Hicks, M., Macdonald, I., Martinez, K., Szorenyi-Reischl, N., Ryan, Y., Wills, S., & Sheridan, L. (2008). *The Contribution of Sessional Teachers to Higher Education (Red Report)*.

University of Melbourne, & University of Wollongong (2009). *Peer Review of Teaching in Australian Higher Education*.



RESEARCH PARTNERS

The Investigators

Winthrop Professor Tom O'Donoghue is Professor of Education at The University of Western Australia. He has a BA, MA (NUI), MEd (Trinity College Dublin) and a PhD (NUI), and since 1992 has been engaged in research in the field of international education. His focus has been primarily on qualitative research methods and their use in understanding (a) aspects of the experiences of overseas' students (particularly from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong) studying in Australian universities, (b) teachers' work in Australia, and (c) the experiences associated with education in different contexts (particularly Ireland, Papua New Guinea and Australia) and in various time periods.

Winthrop Professor Anne Chapman is Professor of Education at The University of Western Australia. She has a BEd (Hons) (Murdoch) and a PhD (Murdoch). She is directly involved in policy and course design and delivery of UWA Graduate School of Education's international courses. She is involved in all of the School's Masters and Doctorate programs delivered offshore in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia. She has a substantial research agenda in the field of 'Internationalisation and Education'. She has conducted extensive research into how international higher education students in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Mauritius experience studying for a degree delivered 'offshore' by Australian universities.

Associate Professor David Pyvis is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Media, Society and Culture at Curtin University of Technology. He has a BA (Murdoch), BEd (Hons) (Murdoch), and PhD (Murdoch). He has, for the past five years, been researching how international higher education students studying in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia experience 'offshore' education delivered by Australian universities. His work has drawn attention to the impact of different and evolving modes of offshore delivery on student experience and therefore on the quality of the education being provided. He has also identified relationships between modes of offshore delivery and particular kinds of culture shock.

Professor Tania Aspland is a Foundation Professor in the Faculty of Science, Health and Education at The University of The Sunshine Coast. She has a BA BEd (UQ), MEd (Deakin) and a PhD (UQ). She has developed programs for such offshore contexts as Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Vietnam and Canada. She is currently engaged in research activities in a number of key areas of scholarship including teacher education, thesis supervision of international students, productive pedagogies in higher education, and higher education curriculum studies.

The Research Officer

Dr Ian Melville had a distinguished career in secondary education before completing his PhD at The University of Western Australia (UWA) in 2006. He also holds a BA (UWA), DipEd (UWA), GradDipBus & Admin (Curtin) and an MEd (Deakin). His research interests include the history of education and issues relating to the management of secondary schools, especially leadership and policy development and analysis. He has been employed as a consultant in a number of projects within the Graduate School of Education at UWA since 2004. His contribution to this project has been greatly appreciated by the researchers. His wealth of experience in education, and the meticulous manner in which he managed the research program, has enabled it to be progressed efficiently and effectively.



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