

Title: **The Contribution of Professional Recognition to International Partnerships in Higher Education**

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

1. recognise the relevance of the UKPSF in creating a shared vision for the partnership project
2. identify the pragmatic issues involved in developing recognition provision with international partners
3. relate their own experiences and expectations to those elaborated by the presenters

Session Outline

The last two decades have seen a rapid rise in the internationalisation of western higher education (Bennel & Pearce, 2003). A transnational education (TNE) model common in the UK has been the franchise arrangement whereby a UK institution accredits or validates an overseas provision with its own degree branding, the model to which this initiative relates. Analysis by Heffernan and Poole (2004) of the factors leading to success or failure of such arrangements points to the importance of establishing a shared vision, trust and mutual benefit at an early stage. This supports the growing recognition that focussing on the financial benefits alone does not necessarily lead to a long-term successful partnership. Further, investigation by Healey (2013) reveals a 'messy' picture of institutional motivations of which financial gain may not be as clear as generally supposed. He also identifies the potential for rich staff development for the UK partner under the right conditions. Similarly, Hill et al (2014, p.953) note that "there is a danger of TNE constituting solely an award-granting exercise rather than a learning experience". The context for this initiative therefore lies in Sheffield Hallam's aim for a balanced, co-operative and mutually developmental approach to partnership.

Although there are a number of UK universities offering HEA recognition to international partners through accredited taught routes (postgraduate certificates) we are unaware of the extension of recognition pathways for experienced practitioners. This in itself sets up a telling anomaly whereby international partner staff may be positioned as inexperienced or novice alongside UK staff new to teaching; yet the collaboration is unlikely to have been validated were it to be largely taught by inexperienced staff. This discussion paper addresses an international pilot initiative between two institutions, Botswana Accountancy College and

Sheffield Hallam University, to recognise partner staff for HEA fellowship through its own internal recognition panels. It will focus on the perceived and actual challenges faced by both parties and will reflect on actual and potential academic development of staff from both institutions.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

The format proposed consists of a brief overview of the scheme and the recognition offer followed by some discussion questions for participants to consider; after each question we will examine the participants' viewpoints and then report on our own findings for comparison. This structure is illustrated below:

Time in minutes	Activity	We will report on and illustrate:
5	Background	Sheffield Hallam TALENT framework: practice pathway; Botswana offer
15	Q1 What would you expect the cultural differences to be between the UK and an African country in terms of teaching and learning practice? Consider both pedagogical and professional factors (ie classroom and academic practice).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botswana partner expectations and what they found • UK partner expectations and what they found; • Similarities and differences in practitioner response to UKPSF
15	Q2 What organisational benefits can be achieved by each partner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAC: strategic aims for the partnership and the role of HEA fellowship within this • SHU: strategic aims for collaborative provision and for the TALENT cpd framework
10	Q.3 What challenges might you face in implementing cpd internationally?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time zones • Infrastructure • Multiple actors: assigning responsibilities
5	Questions from participants	

References

- Bennell, P & Pearce, T. (2003). The internationalisation of higher education: exporting education to developing and transitional economies. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 23, 215-232.
- Healey, N. (2013). Why do English Universities really Franchise Degrees to Overseas Providers?. *Higher Education Quarterly*. 67 (2), 180-200.
- Heffernan, T & Poole, D. (2004). "Catch Me I'm Falling": Key factors in the deterioration of offshore education partnerships. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. 26 (1), 75-90.
- Hill, C, Cheong,C-K, Leong, Y-C & Fernandez-Chung, R. (2014). TNE - Trans-national education or tensions between national and external? A case study of Malaysia. *Studies in Higher Education*. 39 (6), 952-966.