



Setting up IT Programme Relationships with Overseas Providers

Tony Herd, Shankar Santhiram

Otago Polytechnic
Dunedin, New Zealand
Tonyh@tekotago.ac.nz

Institut Teknologi Informasi, Melaka, Malaysia

The formation of a close working relationship between educational institutions in different countries has many mutual benefits.

- ◆ Opportunities for staff and student exchanges that enhance international perspectives on the IT industry and education.
- ◆ Access to a larger pool of human resource and expertise in an area of common interest
- ◆ Marketing potential that leads to growth in both institutions.

Otago Polytechnic and the Institut Teknologi Informasi (ITI) have worked together in the delivery of undergraduate IT programmes since 1998 and are currently looking to extend this relationship to joint delivery of the Otago Polytechnic Bachelor of Information Technology. Delivery is designed to allow middle income Malaysian students to gain some experience of life in New Zealand while completing their undergraduate qualification.

In its criteria for potential partners, Otago Polytechnic looks for:

- ◆ A similar profile to Otago Polytechnic, i.e an emphasis on vocational education,
- ◆ A match of programmes with Otago Polytechnic, ie there should be a degree of common interest of programme content and level
- ◆ A high level of English language in the partner country and institution,
- ◆ A recognised Federal or State Authority that monitors academic quality.

New Zealand quite rightly needs to protect the reputation of its educational good name and similarly, Malaysia requires the guarantee of quality education for its citizens. Both the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and its equivalent, the Lembaga Accreditasi Negara require their own requirements to be met and indeed have a Memorandum of Understanding relating to joint ventures of the kind that is being proposed. To minimise the concerns that arise on both sides, it is proposed that Otago Polytechnic appoint an Academic Director in Melaka, who will monitor standards not only in the degree, but also in ITI's underlying Diploma and Advanced Diploma.

The normal difficulties of dealing with lawyers, financial controllers and quality assurance organisations are multiplied when two groups in different countries are involved, and a joint venture such as the one proposed requires much patience as well as commitment on both sides.

