



Promoting higher quality

*The Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education*

Enquiry into allegations by NATFHE concerning aspects
of the management of University of Derby degree
programmes delivered through INTER College, Israel

Report of enquiry team

27 JULY 2000

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Executive summary

At the request of the University of Derby (the University), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has undertaken an enquiry into four specific allegations made by NATFHE about the way the University's link with INTER College, Israel has been operated in respect of degrees in business and management.

The enquiry has found as follows:

- ***Allegation 1: 'The Deputy Academic Registrar - Israel appears to have deliberately failed to ensure the relevance of Israeli students' entry qualifications for an undergraduate one stage 'Top-up' degree despite constant reminders from managers in DBS'.***

This allegation has no foundation.

- ***Allegation 2: 'Some Israeli students have been granted a BA (Hons) degree in less than 12 months'.***

This allegation has no foundation.

These students in some cases possess NO PREVIOUS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

This allegation has foundation in respect of one student.

- ***Allegation 3: 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management appear to have ignored and latterly changed the DBS requirements for translation and moderation of Israeli students' course work on the grounds of cost'.***

This allegation has no foundation.

'To-date no examination scripts have ever been translated or moderated by DBS staff'.

This allegation is well-founded.

- ***Allegation 4: 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management have pressured DBS staff to pass sub-standard dissertations on an ongoing basis'.***

This allegation has no foundation.

The enquiry has found evidence of weak practice elsewhere in the link, particularly relating to the management of admissions in 1997 and 1998. It has also come to the general conclusion that the link with INTER College, in respect of its programmes in business and management, was established without sufficient care and prudence, and until 1998 was managed in a way which did not secure the quality and standards of the programmes and associated degrees.

Since 1998 the security of quality and standards has improved, as a result of both the University's own efforts and the regulatory framework put in place by the Israeli Council for Higher Education.

Introduction

1 This is the report of an enquiry undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the request of the University of Derby (the University) into allegations made by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) against the University in respect of aspects of the University's operation of two of its degree programmes in business and management which are provided in association with INTER College, Israel.

2 The allegations consisted of 13 summary statements, under the heading **Brief Details**, of alleged malpractice by the University, for which NATFHE stated that it had 'evidence, both in written (*memoranda etc*) and anecdotal form (*statements from members involved*)'. These were accompanied by a document entitled **A Detailed Chronology** which gave an extended account of the events summarised in the **Brief Details** document.

3 The allegations were first referred to QAA by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in late March 2000 with a request for comments. As the allegations offered only one side of the story QAA invited the Vice-Chancellor of the University to respond to them. The University provided an immediate written response. In the light of this QAA reported to the DfEE that:

- five of the 13 allegations related specifically to the conduct of the University in relation to conditions imposed by the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) as part of its procedures for licensing, under the terms of Israeli law, foreign higher education institutions operating in Israel. QAA considered that these were matters for the CHE to pursue if it wished to do so as they related to a foreign legal jurisdiction;
- two of the allegations appeared to QAA to be principally a matter of internal relations between the Derbyshire Business School (DBS) and the University's central administration, and as such were unlikely to be of sufficient moment to warrant external investigation (but see paragraphs 55-66);
- two of the allegations appeared to QAA to be insufficiently precise to merit investigation;
- the remaining four allegations were sufficiently specific and potentially serious enough to lead QAA to believe that they could cast doubt upon the integrity of the academic quality and standards of the relevant programmes and awards and should therefore be investigated.

4 Having reported these views to DfEE, DfEE subsequently forwarded to QAA further documents that it had received from NATFHE which were part of the evidence referred to in paragraph 2 above. These confirmed QAA in its view that there was a prima facie case for further investigation.

5 QAA has no powers of its own to initiate individual enquiries of this sort. It can only undertake them if it is invited to do so by the institution concerned. In this case, following discussions between DfEE and QAA on the one hand, and QAA and the University of Derby on the other, the University invited QAA to undertake an enquiry into the four allegations already identified by QAA. The terms of reference of the enquiry are listed in the annex to this report. These terms of reference have been formally agreed with and approved by the University.

6 In February 1998 QAA undertook an audit of the University's link with INTER College as part of a visit to Israel, in which it reviewed the links of seven UK universities. Many of the events which are discussed in the present report occurred after that visit, or had not come to light at the time. Amongst other points for consideration, the audit report highlighted the need for the University to exercise considerable caution in the further expansion of the link.

7 This report is structured in a way which provides a minimum amount of necessary background information about the University, DBS, and INTER College, and the links between them; it recounts the key events to which the allegations refer; it analyses relevant factors that surrounded the events; it discusses each allegation in turn; and it presents the findings of the enquiry team. The team makes one recommendation.

The allegations

8 The four allegations that it was agreed should be investigated by QAA were as follows:

- **Allegation 1: 'The Deputy Academic Registrar - Israel appears to have deliberately failed to ensure the relevance of Israeli students' entry qualifications for an undergraduate one stage 'Top-up' degree despite constant reminders from managers in DBS'.**
- **Allegation 2: 'Some Israeli students have been granted a BA (Hons) degree in less than 12 months. These students in some cases possess NO PREVIOUS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS'.**

- ***Allegation 3: 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management appear to have ignored and latterly changed the DBS requirements for translation and moderation of Israeli students' course work on the grounds of cost. To-date no examination scripts have ever been translated or moderated by DBS staff'.***
- ***Allegation 4: 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management have pressured DBS staff to pass sub-standard dissertations on an ongoing basis'.***

The enquiry process

9 The enquiry was conducted through the scrutiny of documentation submitted by NATFHE and the University of Derby, and by discussions with key participants in the events which were the subject of the allegations. It was conducted by a team of two appointed by QAA. Both NATFHE and the University were invited to submit documents at any stage of the proceedings, and the team also asked for some additional documents. All documents requested were supplied by the University and by NATFHE, with the exception of one where the reference was inadequate for the University to trace it. In accordance with an agreement between NATFHE and the University, the team disclosed to both parties all documents that it received in the course of its enquiries.

10 The team visited the University on 19 and 20 June 2000 and interviewed 14 people individually, two on more than one occasion, as well as a group of three and another group of 10. One further interview was held at QAA's offices in Gloucester, because the interviewee was to be absent from the University during the period of our visit. Those whom the team interviewed did not give their evidence under oath.

11 Throughout its enquiries the team received the full co-operation of the University, of NATFHE and of all those it interviewed. The team wishes to place on record its thanks for the constructive participation of all those who took part in the enquiry

12 The enquiry team comprised Professor Robert Pearce, Professor of Law and Pro Vice-Chancellor, the University of Buckingham; and Mr Peter Williams, Director of Institutional Review, QAA.

Aspects of the enquiry

13 The subject of the enquiry was complex. It involved an examination of events which took place up to three years ago, in two countries, and required a considerable understanding of formal and informal

regulatory and administrative arrangements within the University. The task was made more difficult by the fact that the team received two largely contradictory accounts of what had occurred, and in one instance three different accounts of events. These accounts may have represented differing perceptions or memories of the same situations, or may have been a deliberate attempt to mislead the team. Those who provided the accounts or spoke in support of them frequently had a surprisingly clear recollection of matters of detail given the length of time which had elapsed since the events in question. Even when presented with differing interpretations of events, in most cases they refused to change their views in any particular.

14 It was also clear to the enquiry team that for various reasons there was considerable personal hostility and mutual distrust between some of those interviewed. On occasion the team felt that it was being asked to adjudicate between two parties in dispute with one another. This was not the purpose of the enquiry. But because of these circumstances, and given the limited time and apparatus available to the team in its examination of the allegations, on a number of significant matters the team has been unable to come to a conclusion beyond reasonable doubt. All the team's findings have therefore been framed on the basis of a balance of probabilities.

INTER College

15 INTER College is a commercial enterprise created in 1996 by a consortium of three Israeli private educational organisations for the purpose of running franchised programmes from the University of Derby. It was originally based at a campus owned by EFAL Seminar in Tel Aviv, which is a public college owned by the United Kibbutz movement. In 1999 it moved to purpose built headquarters premises at Derech Hashalom, Tel Aviv. Teaching by INTER College is delivered through local study centres around the country, the number of which has been restricted to six since 1999 by the CHE. The University was in discussion with the consortium for some time prior to its formation, although the Vice-Chancellor was himself not involved in the preliminary negotiations that led up to the agreement to establish the link and franchise an MEd. He involved himself only when the potential of the project to become an institution-wide initiative became apparent. Since then he has taken a continuing personal interest in the link, which has expanded considerably since its formation, and which since 1997 has also provided programmes franchised from the DBS. Plans to expand further into areas covered by other schools of the University were put on hold following legislation by the CHE in 1998. Although starting from modest beginnings, the College has grown rapidly to keep pace with the large numbers

of students registered for the Derby programmes. In April 2000 there were some 6,400 students registered for University of Derby degrees at the College. By the same date 2,980 students had graduated from Derby programmes provided via the INTER College link.

16 At the time of its establishment few of the owners or senior managers of INTER College had any substantive experience of the values, traditions, methods or expectations associated with higher education in the UK. One of the constituent bodies had been involved in franchise operations with some British higher education institutions, but its principal purpose was 'to promote academic exchanges and the migration of students between Israel and the UK higher education system'. Although those involved had long experience in the Israeli educational world, and some of them are eminent academics in their own right, they came to the project with a background of Israeli custom and practice which is very different from that of the UK, and in some ways not entirely congruent with it. In developing its link with INTER College, the University of Derby was in effect assisting in the establishment from scratch of a new college, comparable in many ways with a major private college of higher education in the UK, operating in a language which very few of the University's staff understood, relying almost entirely on locally appointed part-time teaching staff, in a country with different educational traditions and a politically charged environment. Within 12 months of the first franchise being established, the College was entrusted with the day to day management of the University's degree programmes and the higher education of over 1,000 students. In the absence of a significant permanent University presence in the College, which would, of course, be unusual in a franchise, the capacity to control this operation, other than through formal events, was severely limited. By any reckoning this was a formidable undertaking. Much of the responsibility for first level decisions was placed in the hands of INTER College's managers who admitted, at an Approval Panel meeting in October 1997, that 'the development of the liaison with the University of Derby had meant that INTER College had had to learn a lot of new things', although the speaker 'was confident that they would adapt as necessary'.

17 The University has represented to the enquiry team that this franchise was established in accordance with the normal arrangements for such activities and that no more responsibility was passed to the College than was usual. The team believes that this argument fails to recognise the very high risk involved in handing this level of responsibility for the provision of its programmes to a new establishment, working in a language other than English, in a foreign educational environment.

The Derbyshire Business School

18 The Derbyshire Business School (DBS) was formed in the summer of 1997 from two antecedents, the Schools of Management and of Business. These had in turn been formed from the division in 1993 of a previous Business School. The initiative for developing the management programmes link with INTER College originated in the School of Management, and the proposal was developed and progressed from there by a two person team, although only one of these was engaged substantially on the project. He was initially designated as International Project Co-ordinator (but soon afterwards re-designated School Liaison Tutor, School Project Manager and ultimately Project Liaison Officer). He reported to the Dean of the School of Management, who, following amalgamation into the DBS, assumed the office of Dean, International Development and Operations within the DBS. This latter person (the second member of the development team) in turn reported, following the establishment of the DBS, to its Dean or Acting Dean. Responsibility for the management of the link between the DBS and INTER College was transferred in October 1998 to two different project liaison officers, one for undergraduate programmes and the other for postgraduate programmes.

19 One indirect consequence of the reorganisation of the Business School was a very lengthy period without stable leadership: between 1997 and 1999 there were no fewer than five periods of tenure of the post of Dean or de facto Acting Dean in the School of Management and the DBS. The reorganisation also led to disappointments among candidates for the smaller number of senior posts resulting from the merger. In this volatile atmosphere there appears to have been a lack of cohesion and direction in some of the School's activities, and a compartmentalisation of individual responsibilities.

20 The uncertainties surrounding the leadership of the School did not help the operation of its link with INTER College. Matters were further complicated in the first year of the link by the University's apparently ambivalent attitude to it. To begin with it seemed to doubt the School's capacity to meet effectively the challenges being presented, but after a while this attitude seemed to alter and, following the involvement of the Vice-Chancellor, the University began to champion the link with INTER College with some enthusiasm, notwithstanding evidence late in 1997 that there was significant cause for concern about some aspects of it. The University's change in attitude was also reflected in the way the 'ownership' of the Israel programmes developed: having left the link almost entirely in the hands of the School in the first instance, the University subsequently increased its influence by

moving some responsibilities to the central administration. These responsibilities were considered by the School project managers to be 'academic', although the rationale for moving them was that they were deemed to be 'administrative'. The somewhat vague borderline between these categories of activity, which crucially included the processing of admissions, was understood in different ways by different people, and became the source of much of the contention which lies behind the NATFHE allegations. These difficulties were compounded by the absence of any clear or well understood procedure for making decisions about the changing of arrangements (see paragraphs 35-44).

Background and history of the link with INTER College

21 The formal link between the University of Derby and INTER College, Israel was first established in 1996, when conditional approval was granted by the University for the franchising of its MEd programme to be delivered by the College. The first cohort of 198 students was registered in February 1997 and was followed by a further cohort of 140 students in June 1997. The initiative in Derby for this franchise had come largely from the Dean of the School of Education and Social Science (SESS) and it was in that school that responsibility for managing the MEd franchise rested.

22 In parallel with, but slightly later than, this development the then School of Management decided to explore the possibility of offering some of its own courses in Israel, again using INTER College as its partner organisation. The experience of the SESS had been encouraging, and preliminary visits were made in September and November 1996 by members of the School. The outcome of these visits was positive and it was decided to press ahead with a proposal. A further visit was made in April 1997 at which more detailed discussions took place on the proposal and on 8-9 June 1997 a formal University Approval Panel was convened in Tel Aviv, chaired by the Dean of Quality Assurance, to consider the franchising of four programmes: the MBA, MA Human Resource Management, BA (Hons) Management Stage 3 Top-up, and BA (Hons) Enterprise Management Top-up.

The nature of the 'Top-up' degree

23 For the purposes of this enquiry it is particularly important to understand the nature of the BA (Hons) Management Stage 3 Top-up course (later retitled the BA (Hons) Business Management (Top-up)). This is in some ways a variant of the University's BA (Hons) three-stage degree in Management Studies (itself retitled the BA (Hons) Management in Business).

Students on the Top-up course are in effect admitted to the final year of what would ordinarily be a three-year degree programme. Their studies are therefore confined to Stage 3 of the degree programme. Because this stage of the degree programme was not initially designed to stand alone, and requires the satisfaction of a number of prerequisites, students need to be granted a substantial amount of credit or exemption before they can be registered for the degree. The certificated qualifications required for entry, which must be the equivalent of the notional Stages 1 and 2 in order that the necessary amount of credit can be granted, are centrally important to the academic standards of the degree.

24 The Stage 3 programme proposed in June 1997 was structured in three trimesters of 15 weeks each, which meant that the full course could be completed in 12 months. The total volume of credit (including that provided by approved prior qualifications) needed to obtain the degree was, however, identical with the comparable full three-stage BA programme (and other Derby undergraduate degrees). The Top-up scheme was not unique to the Israel link: it was also available as one of the University's home offerings.

Application for permission from the CHE

25 As part of the developing project, the University applied in March 1997 to the CHE for formal permission to run these programmes. At that time permission was not a legal requirement for foreign universities to operate in Israel: it only became so following the enactment of a new law in February 1998. It was however deemed prudent by the University to secure permission, because of the need to establish its reputation with the Israeli authorities and facilitate public recognition of the degrees. On 7 May 1997 the CHE, while not granting permission, required that the University should structure its programmes bearing in mind a number of factors, including some relating to admissions criteria and the involvement of Derby staff in the teaching. The University has subsequently indicated that it did not consider those to be binding conditions. On 4 June the CHE granted permission to the University to run the management programmes subject to very specific conditions.

The University Approval Panel meeting,
8-9 June 1997

26 At its meeting on 8-9 June 1997 the University Approval Panel (the Panel) considered the proposal for the four programmes. It is not entirely clear from the report of the meeting what documents were before the Panel, that is, what form the submission took. The University's arrangements for approval assumed that the programme to be offered at another location would

already be available in Derby and that the regulations for the 'home' programme would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the franchised programme. The task of the approval panel was therefore in large measure to assess the suitability of the partner to undertake the franchise. It was recognised, however, that some procedural matters relating to the franchise would also need to be considered. To assist the approval panel in this task, the International Project Co-ordinator prepared a proposal document entitled ***Collaborative Arrangements Document*** (CAD), in accordance with the University's quality assurance procedures. It appears that the CAD was the principal reference for much of the reported discussion and most of the Panel's decisions relating to the INTER College link. A fuller comment on the CAD is at paragraph 35. The University has indicated that the Panel's consideration of the submission was informed by a detailed acquaintance with the University's regulatory framework and of the 'home' programmes, and thus the need for more description of, or extensive enquiry about, them was unnecessary. Much, it believes, could be taken as read by the Panel. Many searching questions were asked about the arrangements and a number of potential difficulties or challenges were highlighted. In particular the CAD was criticised for its apparent undue reliance on arrangements set up for the MED programme; at the same time the Panel highlighted the need to move away from solely school-based arrangements to a coordinated approach at the institutional level.

27 The outcome of the Panel meeting was that approval was given for the four programmes to run from June 1997, subject to a number of conditions. The first of these required 'confirmation' of 'the University of Derby roles and responsibilities, both academic and administrative, in relation to the management and operation of the INTER College project for Management programmes'. This echoed an earlier discussion recorded in the report which stated that 'the Vice-Chancellor had just announced the appointment of a Coordinator of the collaborative arrangements between the University and INTER College, and had indicated his intention to identify an academic and administrative team to support both the Coordinator and the project'. It also confirms a sentence in a ***Memorandum of Understanding*** between the University and INTER College dated 9 May 1997 which states that 'The University will establish a central administrative unit to deal with all matters relating to the College and avoid duplicating effort by requiring the College to relate separately to the University's different schools.' Other conditions laid down were that the minimum admissions requirement should be specified, 'both in terms of qualifications and work experience', for the BA (Hons) Top-up degree programmes; that the proposers should 'clarify formally for students the

language requirements for the delivery and assessment of each module'; and that 'Sections 4-7 of the CAD should be expanded...to provide explicit detail of key aspects of the delivery, operation, management, and quality assurance of the franchised programmes, including the application of or any deviation from University Regulations and Procedures'. It appears therefore from these conditions that there were considerable areas of uncertainty remaining after the Panel's meeting, which could not be resolved by simply reading across to the Israeli environment the arrangements operating for the 'home' programmes.

28 The CAD approved on 8-9 June envisaged that there would be three student entry points each year, and that 'in the first year of delivery each of the three cohorts will comprise 600 students (400 PG, 200 UG) a total intake of 1800 students per annum'. These figures were described as 'market estimates' and subject to appropriate virement between programmes in the light of demand, and the Panel made no comment on them. Notwithstanding this, the formal agreement between the University and INTER College which covered the DBS programmes, dated 20 June 1997, states that 'Recruitment for the first intake for the first year may not exceed 180 students'. The DBS itself, in its 3 October 1997 Business Plan, seemed to have quite different plans in mind, retrospectively describing its targets for June 1997 as 289 for the undergraduate Top-up course and 63 for the MBA, but envisaging these rising rapidly, with the equivalent undergraduate/postgraduate targets for October 1997, February and June 1998 shown as 550/265, 580/320, and 360/160 respectively. The version of the CAD approved in December 1997, however, quotes yet different targets: it envisages 100 postgraduates and 500 undergraduates (split equally between the Top-up and the three-stage programmes - see following paragraph) being recruited three times a year. In the event, a cohort of 78 students was immediately recruited following the Approval Panel's conditional decision in June, and registered on the BA Top-up programme before the end of the month (a further 48 were also recruited to the MBA programme). Four months later the total students registered on DBS programmes at INTER College had reached 1,094, and by June 1998 there were well over 2,300 on the programmes. The enquiry team believes that the University was taking a considerable risk in contemplating the recruitment so quickly of such a very large number of students to a new franchise operating in a foreign language in a recently established college in another country with no permanent University presence.

The University Approval Panel meeting,
14 October 1997

29 On 14 October 1997 a further Approval Panel met, this time in Derby, to consider proposals for the franchising to INTER College of two further management programmes. By now the School of Management had merged with the School of Business to form the Derbyshire Business School and it was under the new School's aegis that these proposals had been submitted. The two new courses to be considered were the BA Hons Management Studies (three-stage programme) and the MA Marketing Management.

30 The report of the October Panel begins by stating that the conditions imposed by the earlier Approval Panel at the June event 'had now been met' (although it is not clear from the report whether this had been achieved before the admission of the first cohort of students in June) and that approval of the four original Management programmes (MBA, MA Human Resource Management, BA (Hons) Top-up and BA (Hons) Enterprise Management Top-up) had been confirmed.

31 The report then continues to describe an extensive discussion, much of which refers to the general condition of the link with INTER College. It contains the telling sentence 'Whilst members of the Panel believed that progress had been made in a number of areas, they were acutely aware of what remained to be done to secure the successful delivery of DBS programmes in Israel, and indeed of the project as a whole, not least the need to establish the necessary support infrastructure at the University and to ensure that all members of the DBS programme teams owned and supported the proposals'. Again, a note of serious concern is raised two sentences later when it is reported that 'Panel members were particularly concerned that the proposed programme start date in Israel was only twelve days away, and acknowledged that only limited activity could take place before then. However, the Panel would require that certain essential actions were completed before delivery of the programme(s) could begin. It was also essential, moreover, that significant further progress be made before any subsequent cohorts of students could be admitted to the programme(s)'.

32 In the event, the Panel conditionally approved 'arrangements for the delivery' of the two courses, but offered no indication in its report what those 'arrangements' were or where they were enshrined, unless it was by implication in the revised CAD which had by this date incorporated some minor amendments from that approved in June, including reference to the new programmes. There is, however, only one direct reference in the October report to the CAD. This relates

to three matters of detail and has no bearing upon the status of the CAD. The University has represented that 'As the Chair and the Secretary of the October 1997 Approvals Panel were the same as those for the June event, the panel knew and understood clearly the relationship between the October CAD and that which had been considered in June of that year'. It has also stated that 'Franchise approval panels are required by the Academic Quality Assurance Procedures of Academic Board to consider Collaborative Arrangements Documents....The submission of a CAD is a pre-requisite for holding a franchise approval panel. This formal requirement is clearly understood within the University and in panel reports it is not considered necessary to reiterate the required purpose of the meeting'. The enquiry team does not consider this sufficient justification for the limited formal reporting of important decisions of the University, especially given that the two Approval Panels had no common membership other than the Chair and Secretary, and that the October Approval Panel consisted of only two people other than the Chair and Secretary (albeit those two had been members of the November 1996 Panel that had approved the arrangements for the delivery of the MEd degree and had conducted the Institutional Quality Audit which approved INTER College as a partner organisation).

33 Some of the conditions imposed by the Panel were categorised as 'pre-start' and others as 'further conditions'. The 'pre-start' conditions appear to have been met and signed off in the proper manner, the necessary work having been done during a visit to Israel by DBS staff later in October. This was just as well, since no fewer than 567 students were registered on the newly approved three-stage programme by the end of October. There were no conditions designed to assure the reliability and consistency of the assessment of students in the event (which occurred) of registrations being very substantially higher than those planned.

34 The total number of students registered on the four DBS programmes offered at INTER College had thus risen between June and October 1997 from 0 to 1,094. This is an extraordinary growth rate taking into account the fact that the College operating the franchise had very limited experience of British higher education and that the University's oversight of day to day operations for all the DBS programmes, with their envisaged annual intake of 1,800 students, was in the hands of only two DBS staff, and in practice only one, who was only intermittently in Israel.

The *Collaborative Arrangements Document*

35 In seeking to understand why there might be different views amongst University colleagues about aspects of the management of the DBS programmes, differences which have formed the basis of some of the allegations, the team looked for the authoritative documentation which would provide a definitive statement of the approved rules about how the programmes were required to be operated in Israel (to the extent that this would be different from their operation in the UK, as a result, for instance, of the programmes being delivered and assessed in Hebrew, or of applicants offering Israeli qualifications not specifically mentioned in the various definitive documents which govern the programmes as a whole, or of the adoption of Israeli custom and practice in relation to admissions requirements). The only document that in any respect met this description was the *Collaborative Arrangements Document* (CAD).

36 The status of the CAD was disputed between members of the DBS and the University. The DBS staff saw it quite simply as an authoritative document which was binding in all respects. In their view it was a formally approved University statement which needed to go through a formal procedure to be changed. By contrast, the University has indicated in a note to the enquiry team that the CAD was 'not regulatory. Its function is to set out the way in which any particular collaborative arrangement will be managed....The CAD is submitted to a University Approvals Panel both to demonstrate the team's preparedness for the delivery of the proposed programme, and to allow the panel to judge whether the proposed arrangements are satisfactory. It also serves to provide information and guidance to the staff involved in the collaborative arrangement'. The University has further re-emphasised its 'clear position' on the CAD's status: the document is seen as 'having guiding force, drawing on antecedent documents that were themselves authoritative and binding...but that it was not binding, reflecting the status identified in its Preface.' Again 'The CAD provides a framework for operational arrangements and as such would be a point of reference for academic staff and senior administrators but the University's mechanisms for changing provisions of the CAD, prevent CADs being seen as cast in tablets of stone'.

37 Neither the DBS's explanation of the status of the CAD nor the University's was satisfactory to the enquiry team. If the document were authoritative and binding, then in the team's view it was seriously inadequate for the purpose, since too much was vague, general or aspirational, while if it were merely indicative, or for guidance, it left open the limits of discretion within which the programmes could be managed by both INTER College and University of

Derby staff. If the University's expressed view were correct, there appeared to be no mechanism whatsoever for establishing unequivocal mandatory provisions even on matters which were seen as being fundamental to the maintenance of academic quality and for assuring the standards of awards. In the team's view, it was most likely that the CAD had in practice a hybrid function, and that in some respects at least, it could properly be seen as containing binding provisions which would require some formal process of consideration and approval in order to be changed. This view is supported by a number of the documents seen by the enquiry team, including some from the University's administration, which make reference to the CAD in a manner which seems to indicate that it has at least some binding authority. For example, in its formal submission to the QAA for the 1998 audit, the University stated: 'consideration of proposals is supported by the production of a Collaborative Arrangements Document...whose format is laid down by Academic Board and which sets down the conditions under which the programmes in question will operate.' Again, in its *Procedural Guide for the Administration of Overseas Provision* dated November 1997, the University states 'The detailed arrangements for each individual programme (or group of programmes) will be set out in the Collaborative Arrangements Document (CAD)...'.

38 Despite being advised of this preliminary view of the enquiry team, the University has continued to maintain that the CAD 'had guiding force...but that it was not binding', and that the only source of any binding rules is in the University's comprehensive regulatory framework. The view of the enquiry team is that the University was taking insufficient care to safeguard the quality and standards of its awards by not laying down binding rules for the operation of a major overseas franchise which would take account of the considerable differences between the 'home' and the franchised activity, including the lack of direct control over the staff employed to deliver and assess the programmes, and the different language of teaching and assessment.

39 The June 1997 Approval Panel had made it a condition that the CAD should be revised, but the third and last version of it, dated December 1997, still contained omissions and ambiguities (for example in relation to admissions criteria) which were already causing considerable difficulties in the operation of the programmes and were to continue to do so through much of 1998. Some of its provisions were ignored (eg although it stated that a minimum of 20 per cent of the delivery of teaching would be in English, there was very little teaching in English until 1999). An Academic Council was provided for which was given 'overall institutional [which institution?] responsibility for

quality and standards...' but which contained no representation from the University of Derby at all. (This Council never met and was replaced by a different form of Academic Council.) In the team's view the inadequacies of the CAD, its confused status and the absence of any other more authoritative and binding document stating clearly and fully how the programmes would (not might) be operated at INTER College, were a major cause of the difficulties that beset the operation of the DBS programmes in Israel during 1997 and 1998. The team is not convinced that the University fully understood at the time the demands of running a complex, high-volume, non-English language franchise programme in another country and the need for a set of clear, comprehensive and unambiguous rules with which to run it.

40 In 1999 the CAD was incorporated within a **Procedural Document** which offers a fuller statement of operational requirements and whose authoritative status is clear.

Responsibilities

41 The DBS scheme as described in the CAD, and as managed in most respects in 1997 and 1998, divided responsibilities for the main operational decisions between key staff at INTER College and DBS. Some of these responsibilities, especially those that fundamentally underpin the academic standards of the programmes and awards (eg admissions, the marking of student assignments and examination scripts, translation of scripts) appear to the team to have been given surprisingly early to a relatively inexperienced organisation. So, in respect of admissions, 'recruitment and marketing will be carried out by INTER College management in consultation with the [INTER College] Director of Studies'...'The Director of Studies will appoint an Admissions Tutor(s) who will be responsible for selection interviews, acceptance and initial student guidance. Initially the Director of Studies will personally act as Admissions Tutor.'...'Overall responsibility for student entry to the programme will be taken by an Admissions and Scholarship Committee....This will comprise the Director of Studies, the Head of Academic Affairs at EFAL College, a public Official and a representative of INTER College.' (This Committee does not actually seem ever to have met.) The University of Derby's quality control interests were described thus: 'Comparability of applications between the franchise and the home programmes will be monitored by the UoD Liaison tutor. The Liaison Tutor as representative of UoD has final veto on the registration of any candidate who does not meet agreed entry requirements as amended from time to time.'...'The director of Studies/Admissions tutor will refer non-standard

applications to UoD.' The success of these arrangements clearly depended on the Director of Studies having access to accurate information on applicants' qualifications, including the original documentation supporting applications, and being able to recognise non-standard applications. It also depended on the recognised authority of the Liaison Tutor to make final decisions. Crucially it depended upon an agreed definition of 'non-standard applications'. Unfortunately, evidence before the team suggests that not all of these conditions were reliably in place and, given the volume of applications that the programmes attracted, it is not surprising that things sometimes went wrong.

42 In the area of assessment, marking of assignments was delegated to the staff of INTER College, not least because 'the language of assessment will be the same as the language of delivery for each module' (CAD) and, until 1999, virtually all teaching was conducted in Hebrew. It remains the case that no module is taught exclusively or even predominantly through the medium of English and there has never therefore been an assessment in the English language. The University of Derby's direct control of the standard of marking rested perforce on the moderation by DBS of translated scripts, but the CAD is silent on how this was to be reliably achieved. Even before the December 1997 version of the CAD was approved, the large numbers of students registered in October 1997 on the two main BA management programmes raised the prospect of pressure on the translation requirements and the need to ensure that a sufficiently representative sample of assignments and scripts could be translated and moderated.

43 The University has made it clear that all these arrangements relating to the operation of the DBS programmes at INTER College conformed fully with its usual requirements for the management of franchises.

44 Within the University of Derby itself, management responsibility for the DBS programmes in Israel in the early days mostly fell to, and appears to have been readily accepted by, the Liaison Tutor. The October 1997 CAD describes his role as 'to oversee the effective management and delivery of DBS programmes to ensure comparability of standards with the home programmes, and he would have some delegated authority in relation to day to day operational decisions'. This was a heavy load for one person to carry, being a complicated combination of academic and administrative tasks relating to a big new scheme in an unfamiliar foreign cultural setting. Notwithstanding his membership of the two Israeli project management groups, and the availability of support and guidance of the Director of University Programmes in Israel and the Israel Office (from

September 1997 and March 1998 respectively), he seems to have viewed this as largely an exclusive (and exclusively academic) responsibility and seems to have been unwilling on a number of occasions to share the difficulties with others outside DBS, or to welcome any interest of (for example) University administrators in the INTER College link. This may have been unwise, certainly when major difficulties occurred and especially after a virtual breakdown of relations between himself and a number of the senior INTER College staff, who in his view had interpreted Derby's admissions rules too freely. Whilst the University's senior management reacted following this breakdown in working relationships, and took measures through the establishment of the Israel office to support the administrative burden, it does not appear to have anticipated at the time of the establishment of the link the risks inherent in the extent of the reliance on a single individual in such a pivotal position.

Management arrangements

45 The University envisaged at the beginning that the INTER College link programmes would be handled in much the same way as other University of Derby franchised programmes. Academic responsibility would be vested in the appropriate school, while administrative processes would be dealt with centrally, through the various functional administrative sections of, for example, the Student Office. This was the arrangement that was in place in respect of the SESS MED programme when INTER College first began to recruit management students.

46 The October 1997 Approval Panel had required, in its conditions for approval of the three-stage BA (Hons) degree programme in Management Studies, that 'the University should confirm its administrative infrastructure for the INTER College Project as a whole before any further...intakes of students can be admitted to these programmes. Academic Quality Committee is also invited to consider the robustness of that administrative support at the University before approving the franchise of any further programmes within the project'. This condition may have reflected the Panel's unease at the strength and dependability of the current arrangements, or concern that the first of the conditions imposed by the June Approval Panel had not been met. Whatever the reason, the requirement chimed well with the University's own already voiced perception of the need to review its administrative relationship with INTER College in view of the intention to expand the general scope of the operation (see paragraph 25). In recognition of these likely new requirements the Vice-Chancellor had recently appointed the Dean of ESS to a newly-designated post of Director of University

Programmes in Israel and nominated the Deputy Academic Registrar (DAR) (who had been seconded to the DBS since August 1997 with a brief to merge the administrative structures of the Schools of Business and Management into a single structure, and in consequence was assisting with the operational management of the new School) as Israel Project Administrator, with the remit to undertake the review.

47 The decision to review the operational arrangements also coincidentally came at a time when evidence appeared to have emerged that the required admissions procedures had not been adhered to by INTER College. A complicated chain of events, relating to the acceptability of a particular Israeli award (the 'Technai' - broadly equivalent to the HNC) as an admissions qualification for the Top-up BA had led to the apparent registration in June 1997 of a group of students on modules drawn from the three-stage BA Management Studies degree that had not yet been approved by the University. Opinions differ on what had actually happened and how: the enquiry team was presented with three different views of the events. One of these suggests that a group of students who had no previously certificated learning had also been admitted to the three-stage course, without any authority, but this cannot be substantiated. The University has confirmed that, in its view, no students were officially registered without authority, although it appears that, under the University's procedures, it is possible for a student to begin a programme prior to official registration. Although the matter was ultimately resolved, it suggested that the lines of control between INTER College and DBS were at times weak, possibly systemically so. Thereafter the College appears to have accepted a number of applicants with 'non standard' qualifications without authorisation, which had to be regularised retrospectively, sometimes as late as after the final assessment board (see also paragraphs 68-85).

48 A visit to INTER College by both the Director of University Programmes in Israel and the DAR took place from 3-7 November 1997 and the DAR subsequently recommended fundamental changes in the way the whole link was managed. Her report took account of developments in INTER College's own administration and proposed a University Israel Office in Derby, which would 'fulfil a dual function of School/University administration'.

49 In the course of her report she also noted that 'a review of the systems and procedures currently operating revealed that the links between INTER College and Derby need to be much sharper. In particular, the order in which some of the processes are carried out undermine the control aspect by Derby and some decisions are clearly retrospectively made by Derby staff'. It is not clear from a reading of the text

whether the 'Derby staff' referred to here were from DBS or the central administration or both. The University has stated to the enquiry team that it referred only to DBS staff. The report continued '...INTER College administrative staff have not been advised of key regulatory issues affecting their work. There is a culture of keeping the administrative and academic functions distinct and separate unlike the model at Derby where senior academic administrators, under the direction of the Academic Registrar, are referred to direct on regulatory matters and in a sense are seen as the framework of the institution for implementation of and adherence to the regulations'.

50 Amongst the questions identified, in the light of her visit, as needing either further discussion and clarification or amendment to current procedures were the following: 'Is it necessary for the liaison tutors to see all application/registration forms? Should there be merely a control check? If so this could [sic] be undertaken by administrators in Derby?' If the outcomes of these questions were to lead to the suggestions being implemented, then clearly, in the eyes of the relevant DBS staff, who appear to have had a particularly exclusive view of their role in respect to admissions procedures, some of the key academic decisions would have been removed from them, the rules for the management of admissions in the CAD would be being ignored and the established division of responsibility between academic and administrative staff would be radically altered (see paragraph 44).

51 The recommendations put forward were accepted and an INTER College (Israel) Office was established in the University in February/March 1998, with the DAR as its head from April 1998. The suggestions for admissions described in the previous paragraph were implemented.

52 The establishment of the Derby Israel Office led to a transfer of some responsibilities from DBS. For the most part these seem to have been clearly administrative, but in the grey area of admissions they did mean that some of the cases hitherto viewed as the responsibility of the Liaison Tutor were now considered in the first instance by the Derby Israel Office. Some of the consequent decisions of that process were challenged, and that is the subject of one of the allegations. Given the sensitivities surrounding this revision of the management arrangements for the DBS Israel programmes, the team is not sure that the transfer of responsibilities was managed as adroitly as it needed to be in order to ensure a sufficiently wide and willing acceptance of the new regime. Whilst the change of administrative arrangements was within the executive powers of the Vice-Chancellor, there appears to have been insufficient consultation with those immediately affected. This departure from best practice

has clearly left serious scars on parts of the University. In saying this the enquiry team is not judging the rights or wrongs of these changes (that matter is commented on in the next paragraph), but simply observing that they do not seem to the team to have been particularly well handled.

Subsequent changes

53 There is little doubt in the enquiry team's mind that the decision to centralise all administration of the INTER College link in one office was necessary. The link had grown rapidly and needed strong and effective administrative systems and coordination to ensure that it ran smoothly. It needed greater control and dedicated staff to run it. From March 1998 it was also subject to the stringent requirements of the CHE which for some time were not clear but on adherence to which the future of the link clearly depended. Although the team has not conducted a full audit of the current arrangements, it has seen indications (eg the thrice-yearly audits of the admissions systems) that encourage it to believe that the link is now in better shape and based on more secure foundations.

54 It should not, however, be assumed that vigilance and great care are no longer required to ensure the integrity and stability of the link. Although INTER College now has considerably more experience of the expectations and requirements of UK higher education in general, and the University of Derby in particular, than was the case in 1997, the new national quality assurance framework being established by QAA will undoubtedly test the strength of the organisation as it strives to meet these more exacting expectations.

Variation of admissions requirements

55 In the course of its enquiries, the enquiry team discovered that the University's own designated entry requirements for the BA (Hons) in Management Studies franchise appear to have been partly disregarded, and others substituted, without proper approval or authority. This was the subject of the third of the original 13 allegations contained in the NATFHE document. The team now believes that it should have been included in the topics for enquiry with the University, and has therefore considered the relevant events.

56 The enquiry team conducted extensive discussions in its interviews on the criteria for entry to programmes at INTER College. Despite these, the team remains unclear as to why and by whom it was originally decided that the entry requirements for the BA (Hons) Management Studies (three-stage) degree should be varied from those approved in the CAD.

This is an important matter as it goes to the heart of the exercise of proper responsibility for the academic standards of the University's awards. The University disputes that the entry requirements were, in fact, changed, but the team is not persuaded by its arguments. The third and final version of the CAD as approved in December 1997 states that 'For the UG 3-stage degree, students will have completed military service and will hold the Bagrut or equivalent'. The Bagrut is the Israeli matriculation qualification; it is possible to obtain a lesser 'part Bagrut' and its equivalents are exemplified in the CAD by reference to the 'French Baccalaureat, American High School diploma or British "A" Levels'. The CAD completes its section on admission for this programme by saying 'Notwithstanding the above, the Israeli programme will seek to offer access to the programmes to those who have relevant qualifications and experience and who are likely to benefit from participating in it, interpreting the APL [Accredited Prior Learning] regulations in similar ways to the home arrangements. Any candidate admitted to programmes via the APL (or possibly in the future APEL [Accredited Prior Experiential Learning]) route must have UoD approval for admission'. Although this implies that the process of consideration of 'non Bagrut' applicants would be that of APL, it does not indicate who in the University was empowered to grant that permission. As there is no separate mention of 'part-Bagrut' holders, it must be assumed that they were expected to be considered formally under the University's APL arrangements.

57 It appears, and is not disputed by anyone, that the entry requirements applied by INTER College to the three-stage Management Studies degree, including the first cohort recruited in October 1997, included an important variation to those described and approved in the CAD in October and December of that year. This variation granted 'standard' status to applicants over the age of 28 who had a part-Bagrut, and to those over the age of 30 who had a High School Leaving Certificate (a now-withdrawn school-leaving certificate, the predecessor of the Bagrut, whose final recipients were, in 1997, aged 30 or more). The effect of this was that students applying on the basis of this age and qualification related variant were not referred to the DBS Liaison Tutor for special consideration as 'non standard', but were treated in the same way as if they had the full Bagrut.

58 There is nowhere any record of this practice having been agreed or approved by the University. The explanation that the University has offered is that the conditions relating to admission to the programme stipulated by the CHE in its letter of 7 May 1997 (see paragraph 25 above), which was appended to the June CAD, appeared to allow for a relaxation of the 'full Bagrut' requirement where this was the custom and

practice of cognate Israeli higher education colleges. This is, in the view of the enquiry team, a very particular interpretation of the English text (which says that the Committee 'insists that the requirements of admission to the Honours Degree programs at the extension in Israel be those that are accepted and customary for similar programs in Israeli universities. In other words, the 'Extensions Committee' demands that the pre-condition for admission to the Honours Degree program in management at the University of Derby's extension in Israel will be an Israeli matriculation certificate'). There is, however, no reference at all to Israeli custom and practice in the subsequent permission letter of 4 June 1997 from the CHE to the College, where it is plainly stated 'The programs of study for the Bachelor's degree in Business and Management of the University of Derby's Israeli extension shall accept only those candidates with a **full** Israeli high school **diploma** (as a minimal requirement).' INTER College took advice from its legal adviser who maintained that the age and qualifications variant would be acceptable in the case of the Derby management degrees. The College itself has indicated that it took as its reference point for this purpose the admissions policy of Emek Yzrael College 'as published in an internal announcement within the Police department about agreed terms'. These make reference to a similar age/qualifications scheme as that adopted by INTER College, but also makes reference to the additional requirement to obtain a particular score in a psychometric test, an element that is usual in Israel, but absent from the Derby requirements. In the light of this it would appear that INTER College adopted a practice which was not fully identical to that used elsewhere in Israel, but which may have been sufficiently close to local custom and practice to enable it to persuade itself that it was meeting the CHE's condition, as interpreted, of 7 May. It remains unclear, however, why the condition in the formal permission letter of 4 June (four days before the Approval Panel) was ignored or not brought to the attention of the Approval Panel in October.

59 The reason for introducing the variant has not been explained to the team, although the recruitment pool would clearly be bigger if the programme were to be routinely opened to part-Bagrut and high school leaving certificate candidates. It is also argued by both the University and INTER College that in any case the adoption of this practice was known to, and agreed with, relevant DBS staff. It is further claimed that all applications, including those which related to part-Bagrut and over-30 applicants, were approved by the DBS liaison tutor, who signed the relevant enrolment forms. That assertion is flatly denied by the DBS staff, who maintain that the practice was followed without their agreement or any reference to them. Their version of events suggests that having learnt indirectly about what was happening, they demanded that the

practice should stop, but that these requests were ignored, until the University formally endorsed the College's practice. If the enrolment forms for the three-stage programme were the same as those for the Top-up degree (see paragraph 77 below), then adequate information on which the DBS staff could make a decision on the matter would not have been present.

60 In the face of these opposed assertions it was not possible for the enquiry team to determine where the truth lies. What can be said, however, is that the CADs approved in October and December 1997 make no reference at all to the part-Bagrut and over 30s issue, or to the CHE's letter of 7 June, when there was every opportunity to include them in the documentation being considered. It is also the case that no formal reference to the practice appears to have been made in University papers until the Vice-Chancellor signed a certificate on 7 August 1998 addressed to the CHE as part of a submission for a licence for the INTER College programmes. This contains a statement confirming the University's admissions policy for the INTER College programmes. It states: 'Specifically the admissions procedures in the Israel Extension [ie INTER College] are: For undergraduate degrees: For applicants who are under the age of 28 : an Israeli Bagrut certificate or an equivalent qualification from another country; for applicants who are over 28 years of age a Bagrut of 10 units (ie a 'part Bagrut'); for applicants who are over 30 years of age a certificate of 12 years of study (ie a school leaving certificate)'.

61 Whether or not the adoption of the age and qualification-related variant to the documented admissions requirement was (tacitly) understood by all concerned, those processing application forms for the first time in the Derby Israel Office had not been informed of the fact, as is confirmed by an internal Office memorandum dated 11 September 1998, nearly a year after the College's adoption of the policy, which states that:

'In processing the June '98 intake of the above programme following the admission criteria contained within the CAD document, I want to advise you that the admission criteria applied to these students falls into 3 categories:

Full Bagrut - students are normally under 28 years of age

Part Bagrut (10 units) - students are normally over 28 years of age

High School Graduate Diploma - students are normally over 30 years of age.

The first category is as per the CAD document and we are able to go ahead and confirm registration with the students. The other two categories, using the criteria within the CAD document, are non-standard and I suggest that we refer these applications directly to the School.

It appears that the non-standard criteria that is being applied falls into 2 main categories and that Israel are working within a framework for admissions. If the school agrees to the change in the admissions criteria, it will need processing through the normal Quality Assurance channels'.

62 The enquiry team is unclear, if the policy on admissions had been operative since October of the previous year, why those in the Derby Israel Office who were confirming during September 1998 the registrations of students who had started the programme in the previous June should not have been aware of the change. On receipt of this memorandum the addressee suggested to the Liaison Tutor that 'maybe we need to consider a change to the standard admissions criteria outlined in the CAD documents in order that in future the office may progress the forms', and finished her memo 'Clearly, this is an academic judgement for the School, and I would be grateful if you could please advise me accordingly'.

63 Nor is it clear to the enquiry team why, if the INTER College admissions policy had been known and accepted by all concerned, was it necessary to have discussions, which took place on 30 September 1998 between School officers (including the new Dean) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (who had previously been the Acting Dean), to consider the suggestion that the apparent de facto situation, of the standard admission requirements being varied according to age and qualification, should be regularised and adopted as standard practice. In the absence of agreement amongst those present (the DBS representatives resisting the proposal), the Pro Vice-Chancellor was asked by the Dean for a 'ruling' to clarify the situation. This he provided on 3 November. In his ruling he made clear that the 'June 1997 CAD' was 'consistent with the definitive document', ie the regulatory master description that governs the degree for its delivery in the UK, and therefore, in accordance with the University's conventions, for its delivery generally (including overseas). The ruling also described the three age-related categories of Bagrut holders/non holders as 'General current practice by Israeli colleges of the Bagrut entry requirement' and stated that 'This is the practice which Inter College has adopted'. The ruling itself says that 'The interpretation of the entry requirements outlined in paragraph 4 above is that which currently applies to the BA Hons Management

in Business'. The ruling of 3 November approves the age-related framework as the basis for defining 'standard' applicants. (It should be noted that in February 1998 the title of the Top-up Programme was changed from 'Management' to 'Business Management' and in April 1998 that of the three-year programme from 'Management Studies' to 'Management in Business'.)

64 The Pro Vice-Chancellor's analysis also states that 'This interpretation of the entry requirements [ie the age-related framework] was included as part of the appendix to the University's QAA submission document.' QAA undertook an audit of the University's link with INTER College in February 1998, for which it received briefing papers in December 1997 and January 1998. Amongst the December submission was a photocopy of the INTER College publicity/information booklet in Hebrew. The audit team requested a translation, which was provided in January 1998. The translation (which is not dated) includes a statement about entry requirements which says:

'Enrolment for BA Degree

A candidate can only enrol if he satisfy one of these conditions:

An Israeli High School graduation certificate

An Abroad High School graduation certificate

Those who are between 28 to 32 years old, a partial High School certificate

Those who are over 32 years old, 12 academic years certificate

The owner of a practical engineer or technician certificate or in the alternative a senior teacher

The owner of another certificate that the University considers appropriate'.

65 In December 1997 these entry qualifications did not, so far as the enquiry team is aware, conform to any published programme requirements approved by the University. Their legitimacy can therefore only be acknowledged if it is accepted that they are implicitly permitted by a combined interpretation of the University's general admissions regulations, the validated programme documentation and the 'Notwithstanding...' paragraph in the admissions requirements section of the CAD (see paragraph 56 above). If this argument is valid then the enquiry team believes that the opacity of the information is indicative of inadequate procedures. If such an interpretation is, however, thought to be stretching the bounds of credibility (as the enquiry team believes it is), then the events of 1997 and 1998 suggest that the University was not in adequate control of its franchise at that time.

66 This episode and the circumstances in which it took place, do not bring credit on the University and its management of the INTER College franchise in 1997 and 1998. It could have been readily avoided by a more robust control process and more comprehensive approval procedures. It emphasises the fragility of the early relationship between the University, the DBS and INTER College in areas of academic responsibility and confirms the enquiry team in its view that aspects of the development of the management programmes were injudicious and inadequate. Having said that, the team acknowledges the progress that the University has since made in putting the franchise on a more reliable footing.

The allegations: analysis and findings

67 ***Allegation 1: 'The Deputy Academic Registrar - Israel appears to have deliberately failed to ensure the relevance of Israeli students' entry qualifications for an undergraduate one stage 'Top-up' degree despite constant reminders from managers in DBS'.***

Allegation 2: 'Some Israeli students have been granted a BA (Hons) degree in less than 12 months. These students in some cases possess NO PREVIOUS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS'.

68 Allegations 1 and 2 are linked. They can best be dealt with by describing the events surrounding the discovery of wrongly recorded entry qualifications during the summer of 1998 for a number of students on the BA (Hons) Management Top-up degree. As has already been explained (see paragraph 23 above), the BA (Hons) Management Top-up degree is designed to allow a student to complete the degree in three trimesters over a period of one calendar year, provided they have prior approved entry qualifications that, in effect, cover the work that would otherwise have been undertaken in stages one and two of a regular course. That is its purpose and it has been designed with that in mind.

69 In June 1997, following approval of the one-year Top-up degree (see paragraphs 26-28), a cohort of 78 students was registered on the programme. The entry qualification for this programme, was specified by the CAD as follows:

'For the UG top-up programmes, admission will usually be granted on the basis of a candidates [sic] holding a Handesai or Technai qualification. Both qualifications are similar to BTEC HND level in terms of hours of both class contact hours and the level of learning achieved. Both qualifications are usually of a nature which integrate [sic] the study of an applied discipline, such as civil engineering, with Management'.

70 The CAD makes no requirement for the Handesai or Technai to be in 'relevant subjects'.

71 Although the BA (Hons) in Management Studies was not approved until October 1997, a number of students appear to have been recruited to the course by INTER College in the previous July. It is not at all clear what precisely were the circumstances in which this happened. They are inherently complex and the interpretations of events offered to the enquiry team by those interviewed are very different.

72 The University's account of the matter was that it had originally been expected by INTER College that Technai students, after studying a special bridging programme (composed of Level 1 modules from the three-stage Management Studies degree), would have been able to join Handesai students on the one-year Stage 3 Top-up programme. It is not clear why any bridging course should have been a requirement for admission to the Top-up programme, since no distinction was made in the CAD between the Handesai and the Technai as a qualification for entry. It is possible that the action of INTER in admitting the students to a bridging programme anticipated the possibility of the Israeli Ministry of Education making such a distinction. It may alternatively reflect one of the respects in which the CAD failed adequately to describe the rules or procedures to be followed. Following the registration of the first cohort of Technai students on the Top-up degree however, the Israeli Ministry of Education imposed a requirement that only students who had entered the Top-up programme with the Handesai would have the degree recognised for salary enhancement purposes. All other students would have to pursue the full three-year degree programme. A sizeable number of students left the programme at that point. Following the Ministry's decision, DBS and Israeli colleagues agreed that Technai students already on the Stage 3 Top-up programme should be given the opportunity to transfer, with appropriate credits, to the three-year programme. INTER College staff had assumed that students who successfully completed the bridging programme would be allowed entry with advanced standing to Stage 1 of the three-stage programme (ie with credit for the modules previously studied), but had not fully understood the requirement to follow formal procedures for the award of credit to be approved, and had not made the necessary arrangements at the appropriate times.

73 It has also been suggested by others, however, that there was a deliberate, unauthorised and irregular recruitment in July 1997 of a separate group of students directly onto the three-stage programme in advance of its approval, which had nothing to do with the issue of Ministry approval.

74 Whatever the facts of the matter, there was general agreement that a group of students at INTER College had been admitted by the College and had been undertaking Derby modules in good faith, although not registered by the University, and that their interests needed to be protected. As a result it was agreed by the University's Academic Quality Committee that the students concerned should not be disadvantaged and that those who had undertaken Derby modules should be given credit for the work done.

75 The view was also taken, described in one University document as 'charitable', that the cause of these unfortunate events was 'a series of confusions and misunderstandings'.

76 In July 1998 the cohort of June 1997 entrants to the Top-up programme came before a final assessment board in Israel at which the award of degrees was to be considered. By this time it appears that the Israeli Ministry of Education had changed its former ruling and had agreed that the Technai students could, on an individual basis, apply for recognition of their Technai qualification as an acceptable entry qualification. Two students obtaining recognition in this way had been transferred back to the Stage 3 Top-up programme by INTER College. It is not clear to the enquiry team that this procedure had been agreed with DBS staff.

77 Following the July assessment board, in the course of routine checking of entry qualifications for transfer to the official student transcripts, it became apparent that some of the students whose degree results had been considered at the board had inappropriate entry requirements. The Chair of the board, in bringing this to the attention of the Chair of the Academic Quality Committee on 9 October, pointed out that the CAD stated that any non-standard applications must be referred to the University and that 'From the time of the commencement of the programme...no such applications have been referred'. (The University asserts that she was mistaken in this view because the School Liaison Tutor was handed all enrolment forms for the cohorts in question. The enquiry team has seen a selection of these enrolment forms, some of which related to students whose admission should have been treated as non-standard, but where there was no indication that this was the case on the face of the enrolment forms, thus giving the inaccurate impression that the students concerned had the required formal qualifications needed for standard entry. In the view of the team the Chair of the Assessment Board was acting reasonably in assuming that no non-standard applications had been referred.) In the light of this, and because the Chair considered that 'There are clearly serious implications here for the integrity of our award...', she invoked chair's powers to request that the ratification of the awards cease immediately and

that further investigation and a full audit of the cohort's qualifications should be undertaken.

78 The audit was carried out by the Deputy Academic Registrar and the Deputy Administrative Officer (Israel Office) on 15 September, in cooperation with the General Manager of INTER College and an administrative manager from the College. There was no representative from the DBS present. Original Hebrew certification was checked against the lists of qualifications that had been submitted by INTER College for the July assessment board. Translations were provided by the INTER College staff. Assistance in verifying translations was provided by a Hebrew speaker from another school of the University. The check showed that some 13 students out of 80 did not have the Handesai qualification which had been recorded on the lists. A view on the appropriateness of the entry qualifications of some of the 13 appear to have been taken at the audit ('the content of the programme was deemed to be academically relevant'). These views were submitted to 'a meeting with senior School representatives, which included the Dean of School' and accepted.

79 One 37 year old candidate whose file was examined in the course of the audit was reported to have no prior certificated learning, and to have been accepted on the basis of having 'undertaken a Computer Programming course...although he did not receive credits or certification for this', being 'deemed to have relevant management experience'. This candidate was subsequently awarded a lower second class honours degree. It is clear to the enquiry team that this candidate was awarded a degree without having previous academic qualifications, although he satisfied the examiners in all the University assessments. The team believes, therefore, that the second part of allegation 2 must be upheld. There is no indication in the official record of the rationale of the assessment board in recommending the award in the light of this admissions profile. The University has represented that the rationale for the award of the degree was that the student had met all the assessment requirements for the award and that it was within the Board's power to determine this. It also maintains that the assessment board was 'operating on the basis of an output model, not the input model which is implicit in all this discussion'. Whether an input or output model is the more appropriate in respect of a degree which depends on prior learning for two thirds of its achievement is not to the point (see paragraph 83 below): what is germane is that the University had published and approved a scheme which did require specific entry requirements, and this candidate had been admitted without them, and not in the light of special consideration.

80 Nevertheless, the team does believe that the decision was taken by a properly constituted committee of the University, acting within its discretionary powers, and after due deliberation. It also recognises that this is a single instance that has come to the team's attention, out of many hundreds of students who have been admitted to the top-up programme. Eventually, the University awarded degrees to all 13 students identified as not having the Handesai as their entry qualification.

81 Although the enquiry team was informed that two of the 'non-standard' students from this group had been recommended for a BA top-up degree after only 10 months of study, it has reviewed the official University final transcripts for all 13 students identified as non-standard and can confirm that these attest that the students have completed all modules, gained all credits required, and completed all the learning hours stipulated for the award of the degree. In the absence of any documentary proof that the students registered two months later than they should have done, the team cannot uphold the first part of allegation 2.

82 The 15 September audit has been criticised in some quarters on procedural grounds, not least because no check was apparently made on the original Hebrew certification to ensure that the Handesai had been obtained in 'relevant subjects'. There is some doubt as to whether 'relevant subjects' is, in any case, a meaningful concept in respect of the Handesai qualification. One view (held by the University) is that the qualification is 'by definition' in relevant subjects. A counter view is that the Handesai can be obtained with varying amounts of study in particular subjects, and that a requirement had been stipulated that a Handesai should only be accepted for the top-up degree if it involved at least 550 contact hours of study in business and management subjects. There is, however, no mention of such a requirement in any formal documentation seen by the enquiry team. Certainly the admissions regulations, as laid down in the CAD, do not mention the necessity of the Handesai being in 'relevant subjects' or make this a requirement. The enquiry team recognises that it may have been a common belief amongst relevant staff of DBS that the Handesai had to have a minimum number of contact hours in subjects directly relevant to business and management, and that they may have asked the DAR to include this in the audit check (although there is no documentary evidence that they did - the University states that they did not - and there are no formal terms of reference for the audit), but to the extent that this question is the subject of allegation 1, the team believes that there is no substance to the allegation. Nevertheless, the omission of any reference in the CAD to what might or might not be acceptable as an entry qualification in the Israeli context only serves to confirm

the previously stated views about the inadequacies of that document. The nature of the Top-up degree required students admitted to the programme to have had directly relevant previous experience, and the criteria for determining this should have been clearly reflected in the approved entry requirements.

83 The 15 September audit conducted by the University revealed serious weaknesses in the control of the admissions procedures by both INTER College and the University. Students had been admitted without the standard qualifications but this was not discovered until the final assessment boards. This could have put at risk the integrity of the degree, not least because, in the case of the Top-up degree, the entry requirements stand as a full proxy for stages 1 and 2 of the degree programme. Award of the degree assumes that the learning outcomes and skills associated with the first two stages have been achieved by other means. If this is not the case then the award will misrepresent what it purports to be.

84 The enquiry team notes that following the September 1998 audit, the University has put in place regular trimester checks on admissions qualifications for the DBS programmes. These suggest that errors are now much rarer, although the team is not entirely satisfied that applicants are being given sound advice about the acceptability of their qualifications in every case. Nonetheless there are good indications that the present regime is considerably improved on that which operated in 1997 and 1998.

85 In summary, the team finds that allegation 1 and the first part of allegation 2 are without foundation. So far as the second part of allegation 2 is concerned, the team has found one example of a student who has been awarded a degree without any previous academic qualifications. The award has been made, however, in accordance with the University's powers and using approved procedures.

86 ***Allegation 3: 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management appear to have ignored and latterly changed the DBS requirements for translation and moderation of Israeli students' course work on the grounds of cost. To-date no examination scripts have ever been translated or moderated by DBS staff'.***

87 The December 1997 CAD for the management programmes states that 'programmes will be delivered in a mixture of Hebrew and English. It is expected that a minimum of 20% of any programme will be delivered in English. The use of home faculty members could increase this level up to 50%'. The CAD also states elsewhere: 'the language of assessment will be the same as the language of delivery for each module. External examiners bi-lingual in Hebrew and English will be

appointed...INTER College have accepted responsibility for the translation of sample assignments, examination scripts and Independent Studies [ie dissertations] for moderation by UoD staff and home programme external examiners'.

88 Finally, the CAD says 'The form and content of the assessment briefs and examination papers will be developed by local faculty and agreed with the relevant UoD subject/module leader. They will be marked by local faculty and moderated by UoD staff through a translated sample. The minimum number of translations will vary but must represent at least one translated script for each assessment grade (eg A, B, C, etc) in each module'.

89 It is a matter of common agreement that until the summer of 1999 there was no significant teaching in English and that all assessments were carried out in Hebrew. This meant that all moderation in the University had to be carried out through translations, since there were no Hebrew speakers on the DBS staff. It also meant that no University of Derby staff saw any students' work in its original form. In practice only coursework assignments were translated, and all moderation of examination scripts was undertaken by the two external examiners working directly in Hebrew with the original manuscripts.

90 In the light of this the enquiry team believes that the second part of the allegation is true.

91 From the beginning there were difficulties with the translations. These included an unwillingness on the part of professional translation services to translate manuscripts rather than typescripts (a constraint that might have been foreseen); the slowness of delivery to Derby of translations for moderation, because of the need to type the scripts prior to translation; the volume of translations produced under the trimester system (documents suggest that there would be some 250 to 300 translated scripts required for the assessment boards in November 1998 alone); distortions to the original quality of work caused by translation inaccuracies or imprecision in replicating nuances; and the consequent high costs. At the same time it was fully recognised by the University that moderation through translated assessments was vital to assure the protection and comparability of academic standards.

92 In an attempt to deal with these problems, a review of the translation policy was begun in March 1998 by the Project Management Group (also known as the Israel Management Group (Derby)) and a debate began based on a discussion paper produced by the Director of University Programmes in Israel. Iterative discussions continued on an alternative approach throughout 1998 and 1999 in both the Project

Management Group and the Core Management Group and were finally resolved in November 1999 with the promulgation of a new policy, which involves fewer scripts being translated. It is not clear by what process this policy was ratified by the University, other than in the Project Management Group. The proposal to change the arrangements was reported to the Academic Quality Committee by the Director of University Programmes in Israel in his annual report in October 1998 and that committee 'raised no objection to this change of approach'. It is, however, clear that the proposals did not find favour with everyone in the DBS, some members of which thought the new arrangements were diluting the moderation procedures. Be that as it may, the enquiry team has seen sufficient documentary evidence to satisfy itself that the matter received a long airing in properly constituted groups, in which school representatives had an opportunity to present their views, and that the changes were introduced principally for logistic rather than financial reasons. That does not mean that the enquiry team is persuaded that the assessment practices now mediated through translation are beyond criticism. For example, there appears to be no means by which DBS staff can monitor variations in marking standards amongst the Israeli markers, of whom there seem to be a substantial number. Comparability between markers in Israel is of as great importance as comparability between Israel and the UK in ensuring consistently applied academic standards. Further, the amount of moderation of examination scripts undertaken in Hebrew by the two external examiners must of necessity be limited, an important consideration given the numbers of candidates being examined: the team notes that there are considerably more external examiners for the programme in Derby. The team assumes that the University will carefully monitor the new arrangements and test them rigorously for reliability and effectiveness.

93 The team therefore finds that the first part of the allegation is without foundation.

94 There is, however, a related matter which deserves to be remarked upon. The CAD for the programmes states that proficiency in English language is a prerequisite for admissions and specifies a list of eight acceptable certificates. It states clearly that this list is not exhaustive, and that 'reference should be made to the UoD through the International Office via the Liaison Tutor' in the case of qualifications not listed. It continues 'Alternatively, recognition will be given to other evidence such as previous Higher Education study in English or through direct interview with the admissions tutor'. Although these criteria give some discretion to the admissions tutor, it is clear that proficiency in English prior to registration was not intended as an option, but as a requirement.

95 This point was emphasised in the Vice-Chancellor's statement of 7 August 1998 to the CHE in respect of admissions requirements. There it is stated:

'Students are required to demonstrate a level of proficiency in English adequate for study at UG and PG levels respectively'.

96 Opinions appear to differ whether the English language requirement was introduced in order to ensure that the students could follow tuition in English, or whether it was felt that it was an academic necessity in respect of any degree in business offered by a British university. Whatever the reason, there is some evidence to suggest that this requirement was not enforced prior to registration in all cases, and that a significant minority of students had difficulty as a result in keeping up with their courses when an element of English language tuition was introduced during the summer trimester of 1999 (following the imposition of stringent conditions on English language tuition by CHE in 1999). Some additional English tuition has subsequently been provided for weaker students through INTER College, but the University now needs to ensure that its requirement is rigorously implemented in all cases.

97 *Allegation 4: 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management have pressured DBS staff to pass sub-standard dissertations on an ongoing basis'.*

98 In the course of its discussions, the enquiry team encountered recollections by a number of people of an incident that took place around the time of an assessment board held in Israel in July 1998. The incident is neither denied nor disputed by the University although the information it has supplied about the incident is more limited than that given to the team by other sources. In outline, a student submitted an MBA dissertation three months prematurely. The INTER College markers had given it a clear pass. A translation was read by two members of DBS and they both agreed that it fell well short of the standard required to pass. This view was relayed to the relevant member of INTER College's academic staff and the matter was the subject of heated argument between the University's and INTER College's staff. The chair of the assessment board refused to accept the dissertation for consideration by the board. What happened next is a matter of contention. Some say that INTER College staff nevertheless pressed the case at the board meeting, but the University staff maintained their position. That meeting was adjourned, but on resumption the merits of the dissertation were again pressed by Israeli academic staff who asserted that it fully met the pass standard. It was pointed out that if it were submitted and failed the student would have only one further opportunity to resubmit. As it was a

premature submission the student would be better advised to undertake more work on the dissertation and submit it at the normal time. This was not accepted by the Israelis and the matter continued to be discussed very vigorously at a third resumed meeting. The chair of the assessment board held firm and refused to accept the dissertation. Other accounts suggest that the matter was never formally brought before the assessment board by College staff, and that the matter was dealt with entirely at an informal 'pre-board' meeting. It has also been alleged that after these proceedings it was admitted by one of the Israelis that none of them had read the dissertation, since the only Hebrew copy had been sent to the external examiner in the UK in error and the only translation was with the DBS staff at the meeting. Again, this is the subject of dispute. The external examiner also took the view that the dissertation had not reached the necessary standard.

99 Whatever might be thought about this incident, it appears clear that even if pressure was brought to bear on University staff to pass the dissertation it was firmly and robustly rebuffed. The dissertation was not accepted or assessed at the July assessment board. The enquiry team does not believe that, in this instance, there is any case for the University to answer.

100 The team received no corroborating evidence, documentary or oral, to support the allegation that the Director of University of Derby programmes in Israel pressured any staff to pass sub-standard dissertations and it has no reason to believe there is any foundation to the allegation.

101 The team was given some written evidence about one further case where marks were disputed between a University staff member and an Israeli examiner, but the evidence is slim and has been denied by the member of staff concerned in a written statement. The team does not consider that the allegation has been substantiated.

102 The team is, however, aware that there have on occasions been heated discussions at assessment boards in Israel about the merits of some dissertations, which might not be exceptional within the Israeli educational context but which, in the context of an assessment board in the UK, might be thought to constitute undue pressure on colleagues to change their judgements. The University of Derby staff appear to understand these cultural differences in approach and the associated dangers to both the integrity of the assessment process and the reputation of UK higher education, were they to allow their academic judgement to be inappropriately influenced by such pressure.

Summary of findings

103 At the request of the University of Derby the enquiry team has undertaken an investigation of four allegations made by NATFHE about aspects of the University's provision of programmes of study leading to management degrees delivered through INTER College, Israel.

104 In undertaking the enquiry the team has considered documentary evidence provided by both NATFHE and the University, and has interviewed those people it considered to have been most closely involved in the matters under consideration. In addition it has interviewed other people suggested to it by NATFHE or the University. There were two individuals the team had hoped to meet who were not available for entirely valid reasons.

105 The team has found it difficult to arrive at a fully secure judgement on the allegations. Two detailed accounts of events were presented, each very different from the other. Proponents of both were unshakeable in their conviction of the accuracy of their accounts and their interpretations of them and refused to move from their views of events, which in some instances were entirely contradictory. Because of this, and because of the non-judicial nature of the enquiry, the team has been obliged to reach its conclusions on the basis of what it believes to be the balance of probabilities.

106 After a careful review of the documentary evidence, and taking into account all the oral evidence which it gathered during its visit to Derby, the team has reached the following conclusions:

- ***Allegation 1. 'The Deputy Academic Registrar - Israel appears to have deliberately failed to ensure the relevance of Israeli students' entry qualifications for an undergraduate one stage 'Top-up' degree despite constant reminders from managers in DBS'.***

The enquiry team believes that this allegation is without foundation and that the Deputy Academic Registrar - Israel at the time of the allegation did not 'deliberately fail to ensure the relevance of Israeli students' entry qualifications for an undergraduate one stage 'Top-up' degree despite constant reminders from managers in the DBS'. It does, however, consider that the stated admissions requirements for the programmes were ambiguous, and in some respects unclear and confusing, and considers it likely that there were different understandings about the status of some of these requirements.

- ***Allegation 2. 'Some Israeli students have been granted a BA (Hons) degree in less than 12 months. These students in some cases possess NO PREVIOUS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS'.***

The enquiry team has not seen any documents that indicate that any students have been registered for less than 12 months and does not believe that the substance of this allegation is supported by the evidence. It does, however, believe that it is true that one of the students on the one-year Top-up degree programme possessed no academic qualifications, but equally recognises that the University's regulations permit this in certain circumstances and that the relevant student's application was subject to properly considered (albeit retrospective) judgement by a properly constituted committee. In a significant number of cases, not limited to the Top-up degree, judgements of the appropriateness of non-standard qualifications have been made retrospectively, in order to regularise otherwise irregular procedures. This is not good practice. Generally, the team does not consider that the administrative arrangements for the admission of students to the University's management programmes at INTER College were managed well in 1997 and 1998, although there is now evidence that the University's control has been improved and admissions arrangements are more secure than previously.

- ***Allegation 3. 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management appear to have ignored and latterly changed the DBS requirements for translation and moderation of Israeli students' course work on the grounds of cost. To-date no examination scripts have ever been translated or moderated by DBS staff'.***

The enquiry team does not believe that 'the Director of University of Derby Programmes in Israel and INTER College management have ignored and latterly changed the DBS requirements for translation and moderation of Israeli students' course work on the grounds of cost'. It considers the allegation to be without foundation. To the extent that there have been changes made to the arrangements for translating coursework from Hebrew into English, it believes that the University has acted within its powers in doing so and that the changes have been made principally for reasons other than cost. The team believes that the allegation that no examination scripts have ever been translated or moderated by DBS staff is true. Sample original examination scripts have, however, been moderated by the two external examiners, who are bilingual in Hebrew and English.

- ***Allegation 4. 'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management have pressured DBS staff to pass sub-standard dissertations on an ongoing basis'.***

The enquiry team believes that this allegation is without foundation. It also believes that there was a widely acknowledged attempt in July 1998 by staff of INTER College to put pressure on some DBS staff to allow a dissertation to be prematurely submitted and passed which the DBS staff had indicated would be failed were it to be formally submitted for assessment. However, the pressure was resisted and the dissertation was neither accepted nor passed on that occasion. There is, therefore, no case for the University to answer. Indeed, it can be argued that the quality control arrangements operated effectively on that occasion. The enquiry team has received no evidence to suggest that improper pressure has been brought to bear on DBS staff by the Director of University of Derby Programmes in Israel to pass sub-standard dissertations. Neither has it seen any evidence to suggest that there have been other cases of similar pressure being brought to bear on University staff by members of INTER College's management.

Recommendation

107 In the course of this enquiry the team has had the opportunity to observe, through documents and extensive discussion, some of the details of the operation of the link with INTER College, in respect of management programmes offered in association with the DBS, particularly as they operated in its initial period in 1997 and 1998. In the light of this the team has formed the opinion that in a number of ways the establishment and operation of the links at that time were undertaken with insufficient care and prudence. In the view of the team the link was established and approved too quickly; the documentation describing the operational arrangements was inadequate and in some respects incomplete and inaccurate, its ultimate status confused and disputed; the target numbers for initial student recruitment were too high; the ownership of the project lay on too few shoulders; the volume of activity increased too rapidly for the administrative infrastructure (both in Derby and in Israel) to sustain comfortably; and considerable operational responsibility, including much for quality and standards, was given to staff of an Israeli organisation that had very limited experience of the requirements and values of UK higher education and which operated, at least in part, on the basis of very different local norms. These factors increased the risk of difficulties occurring and many of them should have been foreseen; it is fortunate, perhaps surprising, that

no greater problems were experienced than those which have been considered here. The required learning curve of all concerned was steeper than advisable in the circumstances.

108 In one area, that of the unauthorised variation of admissions requirements in 1997-98 for the three-stage Management Studies/Management in Business programmes, the enquiry team has observed a sequence of events that has caused it some concern.

109 In the period since the events that form the subject of most of this report, which took place in 1997 and 1998, the University has restructured the INTER College project and put it, the team believes, on a sounder and more secure footing. To a significant extent this has been the result of the imposition of stringent licensing requirements by the Israeli Council for Higher Education. The new regime augurs well for the success of the venture, but it will need continuing rigorous care and vigilance to ensure its future security.

110 The University has requested QAA to audit the link again fully in 2001. The enquiry team recommends that QAA should do so.

Robert Pearce
University of Buckingham

Peter Williams
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Gloucester
27 July 2000

Annex

Terms of reference of the enquiry

The remit of the enquiry was set out in a letter dated 31 May 2000 from Mr Peter Williams, Director of Institutional Review, QAA, to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Derby, in the following terms:

'The enquiry has been set up to establish whether or not the allegations have any substance and/or raise issues that must be addressed.

It will concern itself in the first instance with the following allegations, which are contained in the document entitled 'Brief Details' supplied to the Department of Education and Employment by NATFHE:

- ***'The Deputy Academic Registrar - Israel appears to have deliberately failed to ensure the relevance of Israeli students' entry qualifications for an undergraduate one stage 'Top-up' degree despite constant reminders from managers in the DBS.'***
- ***'Some Israeli students have been granted a BA (Hons) degree in less than 12 months. These students in some cases possess NO PREVIOUS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS.'***
- ***'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management appear to have ignored and latterly changed the DBS requirements for translation and moderation of Israeli students' course work on the grounds of cost. To-date NO examination scripts have ever been translated or moderated by DBS staff.'***
- ***'The Director of UoD programmes in Israel and INTER College management have pressured DBS staff to pass sub-standard dissertations on an ongoing basis.'***

If, in the light of the examination of these allegations, others appear to require investigation, the enquiry team will either make the investigations itself or recommend that a further enquiry do so.

The enquiry will be conducted by Professor Robert Pearce, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham, and myself.

We will review documents and take oral evidence in confidence from any whom we believe can help us in our task.

The review is being undertaken at the request of the University and will be carried out independently and in good faith by QAA.

Timetable

We will visit the University on 19 and 20 June 2000. We will use our best efforts to send a draft report to the University by 30 June, for the correction of errors of fact. We intend the final report to be completed by 28 July. The final text will be determined by QAA.

Reporting process

The final report will be submitted simultaneously to the University and the Board of QAA. QAA will place the report in the public domain.

Access

In accordance with our usual procedures, the University will be expected to provide all documents requested by the enquiry team, and to use its best efforts to arrange meetings with any members of its staff or other persons that the team may request'.