1 Relevance of SQA’s work to China Plan

This written evidence provides SQA’s perspective as the national awarding and accreditation body for Scotland.

SQA has relevant activities in two areas.

1 Providing Scottish qualifications in Chinese universities.
2 Providing Chinese language qualifications in schools in Scotland.

In carrying out this work, SQA meets three of the four guiding principles in the current 2012 China Plan (page 3 of the plan)

1. **Securing sustainable economic growth.** SQA qualifications help to generate income, which is re-invested in products and services for the benefit of all learners. This also supports SQA’s goal to be self-financing and reduce its dependency on the public purse.

2. **Understanding of culture.** SQA plays a significant role in this through offering Scottish qualifications in China, and Chinese language qualifications in Scotland. This includes working relationships with colleagues in China; capacity building/CPD on ways of teaching and assessing, standards of global business and industry embedded in our qualifications; language qualifications that are contextualised to include Chinese culture. SQA also offers a number of Units relating to Chinese civilisation in subject areas such as Modern Studies.

3. **Increasing Scotland’s influence** in many parts of China (page 4 of the report). SQA has approved centres in four of the six areas already targeted by Scottish Government. These are:
   - Beijing
   - Shanghai
   - Shandong
   - The Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong

In addition SQA has centres spread across a further eleven provinces in China. These are:

- Fujian
- Guizhou
- Hubei
- Hunan
- Inner Mongolia
- Jiangsu
- Liaoning
- Ningxia
- Shanxi
- Sichuan
- Xinjiang
2 SQA HND Programme in China

2.1 Success and growth

SQA has a well-established and successful SQA HND programme in China promoting both Scottish education and Scotland. The programme was set up in 2003 in partnership with the Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE). Under the Memorandum of Understanding SQA can only develop Higher National related business in the People’s Republic of China under the auspices of the CSCSE partnership. (NB this excludes the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau).

Since its inception the programme has gone from strength to strength. The number of qualifications awarded each year since 2003 is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1 SQA HNDs awarded in China by SQA by academic year

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>1,659</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>1,931</td>
<td>3,136</td>
<td>3,766</td>
<td>3,480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. SQA qualifications have been offered in China since 2003 but because of length of programme, the first students were not certificated until academic session 2005/6.

Indicative projected entry figure for 2012/13 is 4,212. Confirmed awards will be known in June 2013.

Our success in China has been formally recognised by the Chinese Government through the Ministry of Education's agency CSCSE, which awarded SQA the ‘Best International Partnership Award’ in March 2013.

2.2 Potential/Future Growth

In terms of potential growth in China, under the terms of the MoU SQA’s partner CSCSE is responsible for identifying and securing new centres for the HND programme, therefore there is little support UK and Scottish stakeholders can offer with respect to new centre identification and development. SQA therefore focuses most of its business development and account management activity on supporting CSCSE and centres with new and existing centre faculty development, quality assurance and student recruitment. Growth may come in terms of an increase in centres and/or students but this is dependent on the CSCSE partnership decisions.

Growth through other international qualification types such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) or International Vocational Awards (IVAs) require approval from the Ministry of HR (MoHR) and SQA has been advised by the MoHR awarding body Occupational Skills Testing Authority (OSTA) that the list of approved international qualifications is not currently open for new applications from international awarding bodies for approval.
2.3 Work/engagement with other agencies and institutions

In the past SQA has engaged with new opportunities for Scottish training providers. However, as indicated in 2.1 and 2.2 above, SQA is prevented from pursuing these opportunities because it would not want to jeopardise its valuable partnership with CSCSE. SQA is now keen not to raise expectations among Scottish training providers, colleges and stakeholders that could ultimately undermine SQA relationships with its existing partners. There is therefore limited scope for SQA to work with SDI, British Council and UKTI to develop new business opportunities that fall outwith the SQA CSCSE HND programme.

However, within these constraints, SQA works with agencies and institutions from Scotland and across the UK. This includes:

- Meeting with the British Council Beijing to introduce SQA and discuss opportunities for cooperation.
- The SQA China Country Manager participated in a UKTI mission in Summer 2011 to meet vocational colleges in provinces outwith Beijing.
- The UKTI Head of Education in Beijing has been invited to the 10 Year Anniversary Award Ceremony in May 2013.
- SQA in Scotland regularly meets with SDI to discuss and update on all international activities including China. In addition, The China based Country Manager has attended a number of SDI Beijing events/meetings.
- SQA works closely with CBBC to manage the Launch pad Manager scheme whereby CBBC employs three members of staff on behalf of SQA. These three members of staff are responsible for account management and quality assurance in China and report directly to the Operations and International teams in SQA.
- SQA staff attend CBBC member events and seminars in Glasgow and Beijing.
- SQA’s International Team has regular meetings with the Scottish Government’s counterpart team to discuss and share information on all international activity, including China.

2.4 Other support/promotion of Scottish Education and Scotland

Through the CSCSE partnership, articulation arrangements have been negotiated with over 40 universities worldwide (UK, US, Australia, Ireland, Canada and New Zealand) offering articulation from the SQA HND programme into the final year of a 3 year Bachelors Honours degree.

SQA has worked with CSCSE and Universities Scotland to encourage Scottish Universities to negotiate with CSCSE for similar articulation agreements and to use events such as the annual education exhibition in China to attract students. This includes raising the matter at high level committees with CSCSE and providing information, support and advice to the International Committee and officers of Universities Scotland. CSCSE are keen to engage
with Scottish Universities but, to date, only one university engages with CSCSE and only two universities exhibit at the annual exhibition event.

This year, SQA celebrates its 10th anniversary of SQA HND Programme in China. To mark the occasion SQA is holding a competition and celebratory event. This builds on the previous two years in which we have held competitions to foster relations between China and Scotland – the two winners of the 2011 competition visited Scotland and met ministers at the Scottish Parliament. These events also receive good coverage in the China media and through CSCSE.

SQA has also used ministerial visits to China to further promote Scottish education, the SQA HND programme and Scotland by asking the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning to present prizes in China to our competition winners. Further support from ministers has also been provided through film footage.

2.5 Comments on plans and report

The SQA HND programme in China is both a valuable ‘export’ (generating significant income for SQA); extends and deepens Scotland’s education links with China; and contributes to the mobility of students to destinations outwith China. Relative to its resources, SQA punches above its weight in the higher education market in China. However, this has not been reflected in the priority areas or targets nor have any of SQA’s successes been referred to or acknowledged in the 2009 report.

3 Chinese language qualifications

An important strand in both the 2008 and 2012 China Plans is increasing the number of students studying Chinese language in Scottish schools.

SQA has welcomed the emphasis on language learning and has been delighted to support this drive by developing a wide range of Chinese language qualifications from SCQF level 3 to SCQF level 7. The Units and Courses developed by SQA are designed not only to provide a vehicle for language learning but to widen horizons to encompass awareness of aspects of the culture of China and to contribute to a wider understanding of how language works.

3.1 Success and growth

SQA has organised a range of support activities and mechanisms to ensure that practitioners feel confident in delivering qualifications. Such activities have enhanced the reputation of SQA and its work with practitioners, candidates and the wider community. SQA also delivered the qualifications a year earlier than required by the plan.

Achievement in qualifications has assisted in communicating SQA’s work in the broader area. The target in the 2008 plan was 200 pupils in schools achieving Chinese language qualifications and this has been met.

3.2 Potential/future growth

With the large range of qualifications on offer, from an SQA point of view, there is great potential for future growth in this area and therefore we fully support objective 2.3 in the
2012 plan to ‘Double the number of school students attaining recognised qualifications in Chinese language, based on 2011/12’.

Given the baseline is 200 pupils this means an increase to 400 pupils. This measure was recommended by the Scottish Schools Advisory Group on China (SSAGC), of which SQA was a member. This group gave the steer on "doubling" the amount of pupils taking qualifications in Chinese languages. In the original Scotland's Stronger Engagement with China Plan, point 1 of the ten point plan charged SQA with producing "qualifications", and for 200 students to take these. From this, doubling would equate to 400 pupils.

This target should be attainable and SQA suggests:

- continued resource to ensure capacity building in terms of continued support and development, and teacher resource, ie teacher numbers;
- an increase in the number and spread of state schools offering Chinese language qualifications;
- continued partnership between agencies relating to Chinese language development; and
- more focused strategic direction from Scottish Government.

3.3 Work with other agencies/partners

In Scotland, SQA works co-operatively with a number of key players including Scottish Government, Confucius Classroom, the Scottish China Education Network (SCEN), and the Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching (SCILT).

We also have a close and formal partnership with Hanban – the Chinese National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Hanban is charged with cultivating knowledge and interest in the Chinese language and culture in nations around the world that are not native speakers of Chinese.

Through our partnership with Hanban, SQA has developed a unique qualification – the only awarding body in the world to do so – for pupils from Scotland who attend a Hanban summer camp in China. Part of the programme is designed to develop their Chinese language skills and successful pupils receive a joint SQA/Hanban qualification.

As we indicated in our response to the development of the current China Plan, it is important to reiterate the necessity of building on and fostering cooperation and partnerships between organisations in Scotland and with Chinese partners. A key aspect in this would be the overview provided by the strategic direction of the Scottish Government. We consider this strategic driver is essential to the eventual successful outcome of Target 2.2 and 2.3.

3.4 Comments on plans and report

SQA is fully committed to supporting Priority Area 2 to ‘expand and deepen Scotland’s education links with China’ through its range of Chinese language qualifications. However, as indicated in 2.5 above, SQA’s contribution to this does not appear in any meaningful way (other than reference to the use of our examination database) despite our significant contribution in this area.
4 General comments

The current China plan is sharper and clearer than previous plans with more focused targets.

The higher education market in China is vast and both commercial and cultural interests could be met through considering different models of delivery. SQA welcomes the inter-agency approach and also supports the need to listen to existing and potential customers as to how they wish to engage and operate with organisations in Scotland.

Whilst the focus of the China Plan is on attracting students to Scotland, the awarding of qualifications in China clearly contributes to the aims, principles and broad objectives of education as an ‘export’. Current activities in China result in significant numbers of Scottish qualifications being offered in-country, with the concomitant value of capacity building and the opportunity to promote Scottish education and Scotland.

The continued involvement and support of Scottish Government both in China and fostering greater understanding in Scotland is greatly welcomed. We would therefore like to see this not only maintained but increased, as setting the strategic context and direction facilitates the practical activities that will ensure the successful implementation of the China Plan.