



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION FOR OPEN LEARNING

Models for open and distance learning

2: Globalisation, education and distance education



THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

David Hawkrige

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The author, David Hawkrige is Emeritus Professor of Applied Educational Sciences in the Institute of Educational Technology at the Open University, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK, e-mail: d.g.hawkrige@open.ac.uk

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Models for open and distance learning

This series of guides to good practice analyses policy issues about the use of open and distance learning and of information and communication technologies in education. The guides are for decision makers within educational institutions, in ministries of education, and in international agencies. Each guide is based on our understanding of the research evidence and aims to identify alternative models and options in a particular area of education. Each begins by examining the policy agenda and the key questions on it and goes on to address a list of themes – socioeconomic context, governance, purpose and curriculum, outcomes and costs, organisation, technology, funding, accreditation, and assessment – but the weight given to each theme varies according to the area of education being examined. In every case our aim is to give prominence to the more difficult issues. The models series is jointly published and promoted by IRFOL and COL.

2. Globalisation, education and distance education

This wide-ranging review on globalisation, education and distance education has been conceived in the context of the debate about the influence of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), which has important but controversial implications for education. This applies to both industrial countries and low-income countries and all lying between. The author, Professor David Hawkrige, was formerly, now Emeritus Professor of Applied Educational Sciences at the UK Open University and an internationally recognised expert in the field. As is apparent, he is academically active in retirement.

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SUMMARY

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) reached by member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has important but controversial implications for education. Knight (2002) asserts that the current analysis and debate around the impact of GATS on higher education is both complex and contentious:

‘Opinions on the risks and benefits are divided, if not polarised. They differ within and between countries. Each country must undertake the very serious challenge of balancing opportunities and commitments to liberalise trade for exporting higher education services, with the possible impact, related to the same commitments, of the import of education services.’

In reality, whether or not legislation under GATS affects trade in education in the short term is not the fundamental issue, as globalisation of education services proceeds apace. An informed dialogue now on international, regional, national and institutional policy regarding the impact of globalisation on education and training is essential.

Distance education is simply a particular example of the general case. Universities and colleges offering distance learning face a bewildering range of competition, public and private, at home and from abroad, all of which is fuelled by rapid technological advances. Crucially, the capacity of both governments and individual institutions to make robust choices is not evenly distributed between the industrialised countries and the low-income countries. As usual, the latter are generally more vulnerable to external pressures.

The main drivers of change in this field are the movement of labour across borders, the demand for education and training in a global knowledge economy, the need to reduce the brain drain and the pull of new education markets abroad. The WTO, multinational companies and corporate universities are the principal international agencies favouring globalisation under GATS, as examples in the report show, while international associations of universities and trade unions are much more sceptical of its benefits, particularly because of the perceived threat to publicly-funded services.

At regional level, agencies and trade associations such as the Economic Community of West African States appear to vary widely in the attention they are paying to GATS and education. Many have not stated their position yet. Notably, the European Union, acting on behalf of its member countries, has not requested access to education and training services except with regard to US higher education.

At national level, all governments have a responsibility to consider the implications of GATS for education, but most have not yet defined their positions. The US has already requested access in all countries to higher education, adult education, training and educational testing services.

Others, such as the UK and Canada, have declared that they are not offering access to publicly funded education services. The US, Australian and New Zealand governments are pressing for abolition of (i) preferential tax treatment of domestic institutions, (ii) banning of the presence of foreign institutions, (iii) restrictions on on-line learning material from foreign providers, and (iv) requirements for foreign travelling academics. The deadline for requests was 31 March 2003.

At institutional level, individual universities and companies are beginning to watch developments under GATS and considering their position. Trade unions in general oppose GATS, arguing that public services, which are often unionised, will be damaged or destroyed, and that the poor will not be catered for. There is ambivalence towards distance education and training: the benefits of increased trade in education services could be outweighed by loss of government funding.

Accreditation and regulation functions do not yet exist at international and regional levels, although cross-border trade in post-secondary education, including distance education and training, would probably benefit if they did. Countries that are particularly exposed to cross-border trade emanating from the rich countries, South Africa being a prime example, are themselves very anxious about the GATS process. Only in business schools is international accreditation growing fast. At national level rich countries do have these functions: through them, countries importing education services under GATS, including distance education and training, can obtain an assurance of quality, essential in an exploitative marketplace.

Sharing distance education and training functions between institutions offers potential benefits across the full range of functions, as many examples show. Each of the options has serious organisational, cultural, legal, political and economic implications. Resource allocation issues arise for governments and institutions, and must be considered in the light of what little is known about costs and funding options.

The complex and contentious debate on the impact of GATS on education yields important policy questions for governments and institutions. These include:

- Should private or publicly funded distance education and training from abroad be encouraged to supplement publicly funded on-campus provision?
- Should public funds be made available to pay for distance education and training provision by public or private foreign companies?
- How should private or publicly funded distance education and training from foreign providers be regulated, bearing in mind GATS?
- Will the poor be able to afford distance education and training offered by public or private providers from abroad under GATS? If not, who will assist them?
- What policies and incentives would turn poor students into a market for distance education and training?
- If distance education and training from abroad is offered mostly or entirely online, what help can students expect from their home government in gaining access?

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- Will individual governments recognise, and will accreditation bodies accept, foreign distance education and training curricula without any adaptation to match national cultural values?
 - How will individual governments prevent foreign distance education and training providers from offering below-standard courses leading to worthless certificates?

And perhaps pre-eminently important

- How far can national policies, priorities and culture be protected in a more open market for services?

Finally, there is a role for the Commonwealth of Learning in leading discussion and action, helping member countries to:

- understand the technical and legal issues in GATS, and the issues of funding, access, accreditation, cultural identity and intellectual property
- participate in the international debate about the role and purpose of distance education and training, whether as a public or a private service, under GATS
- put GATS and distance education and training on the agenda nationally and locally, so that the promises and threats can be acted upon.

As Perraton (1997) remarked, 'Market forces, the pursuit of economic competitiveness and the financial needs of the universities all seem to be playing a stronger role than academic values of international cooperation and exchange.'

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this paper, prepared for the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), is to support an informed dialogue on international, regional, national and institutional policy on globalisation and education, by looking particularly at cross-border distance education and training, which to date operates almost entirely at the post-secondary level. The paper is based on a desk study of the published literature and Web documentation. It identifies the key issues facing policy makers and sets out policy questions in the context of current negotiations regarding the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

1.2 This paper was made available, though not in this format, in time to be circulated to reach Commonwealth governments before the 31 March 2003 deadline when countries are required to submit to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) their offers of service sectors, possibly including education services, which they wish to be included in GATS during the current round.

1.3 The main topics addressed in the paper are:

Section 2 The changing drivers of development in education and training, examining the role of international, regional, national and institutional agencies and others.

Section 3 Positions being taken up in relation to GATS as it applies to education and in particular to the use of distance learning in tertiary education and corporate training, and their implications at four levels (international, regional, national and institutional).

Section 4 Identification of the functions of the range of agencies and stakeholders at these same four levels in terms of accreditation and regulation, bearing in mind international activity in distance education and training.

Section 5 At an institutional level, examination of the options for and the organisational implications of sharing distance education and training functions between institutions.

Section 6 Resource allocation and funding issues, examining available data on costs and on funding options.

Section 7 The policy questions regarding distance education and training under GATS.

1.4 The paper takes into account three major concerns of COL's partners in developing countries: the brain drain, loss of cultural identity and means of assuring the quality of 'beamed in' e-learning provision. It excludes consideration of cross-border education at primary and secondary levels.

Definitions

1.5 The term 'global education' implies that students scattered throughout the world take the same courses leading to the same qualifications. Global education can be justified: students gain access to much-needed high quality courses and scarce knowledge and expertise is widely shared. Mason (1998, p6) puts it more idealistically:

‘At its most visionary, the ideal of global education is...a movement away from the bounded classroom, seen as a haven from the world, self-contained

and static, to a dynamic synergy of teachers, computer-mediated instructional devices and students collaborating to create a window on the world.'

1.6 'International education' is another term used since 1924 for schooling that increases understanding between nations (Walker, 2000).

1.7 'Globalisation of education' is a new term for a process promoted by governments, driven by commercial interests and accelerated by electronic communications and distance education. It is like a creative gale of destruction.

1.8 Advocates of globalisation of education argue that, as in global education, international participants, staff and students, bring to global classes much that enriches the curriculum; the students gain access to much-needed high quality courses; and scarce staff expertise is made available to students in many countries. Advocates also argue that because public funds for education are never sufficient to meet demand, knowledge producers such as universities must seek new global markets to maintain their income. Moreover, private companies can satisfy unmet demand. Economies of scale can be achieved globally, if not nationally, particularly through distance learning. Proponents see knowledge as a commodity and education as a service, to be traded globally, and students everywhere as customers whose needs can and must be met through globalisation, which is a creative gale.

1.9 Opponents of globalisation of education challenge it on cognitive, educational, social and cultural grounds. E-learning's capacity is limited by electronic, digitised communication: cognition from screens is not the same as from linear text in books. Nor is distance learning cognitively the same as face-to-face. Globalisation of education, by imposing common curricula and resources, cannot match the cultural diversity in national and local education systems and may help to destroy national identities. It also cannot serve varying national social objectives: nowhere are the poor able to benefit from services they cannot pay for. As for cultural objectives, these are incompatible with globalisation (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). Malaysia's determination to sustain an Islamic state is not served well by globalisation of education (Petersen, 2001). As Claude Allegre, sometime Minister of Education in France, said: 'If Americans install their universities all over the world, all on the same model, with the same curriculum, it would be a catastrophe' (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 10, 1999). Its opponents see globalisation of education as a gale of destruction.

2. CHANGING DRIVERS OF DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

2.1 The right of all students to education is guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Education International, 2002a), yet in 2001 135 million children of primary school age were not at school, one billion adolescents and adults were under-literate or illiterate and two billion people required some kind of retraining and re-skilling (Dhanarajan, 2001).

2.2 Against this backdrop, the drivers of development in education and training are changing. This section discusses these drivers, and examines the role of international, regional, national and institutional agencies and stakeholders.

The drivers of development in education and training

2.3 The main drivers of development in this field are the movement of labour across borders, the demand for education and training in a knowledge economy, the need to reduce the brain drain and the pull of new education markets abroad. As globalisation has proceeded, movement of labour across borders has become easier, not least because multinational companies seek workers from many countries. Large numbers of well-educated people have emigrated (the brain drain), mainly from poor to rich countries, usually to jobs or to study in the rich ones. Bennell and Pearce (2002) give the UNESCO figure of 1.5m for overseas students worldwide in 1995, although Martin (2002) reports that the US and the UK had in 2001 340,000 foreign students, 70% of the total studying abroad. In addition, large numbers of poorly-educated people have emigrated, often on short-term contracts, to meet the demand for low-paid workers in rich countries.

2.4 Education is not exempt from market forces. Many of these migrants, whether well-educated or not, seek education and/or training. Before or after they emigrate many want more education to enable them to obtain better jobs in their country of adoption. If they think a degree from a prestigious institution in a rich country will improve their employment chances, they may be willing to pay high fees to obtain that degree. If two or more foreign institutions offer courses leading to a degree, market forces may well apply and the would-be students will choose what they perceive to be the best value for money. They may or may not take into account the loss of cultural identity arising from studying and living abroad (Burbules & Torres, 2000).

2.5 Emigration flows from poor countries may be stemmed, however, if the same prestigious foreign institutions offer similar courses, leading to the same qualifications, on franchised or branch campuses in poor countries or at a distance (not necessarily through e-learning). Campus-based institutions in rich countries may franchise their courses in other countries, with individual universities permitting their names and prestige to be used to support the development of higher education (HE) elsewhere. Some have sold their curricula and/or their teaching materials under these franchises. Some have sent their own staff to teach in or organise the new institutions. Many have provided accreditation and/or examinations to support the degrees being awarded. In some poor countries, universities have been accredited, at least for a time, by organisations in rich ones, regardless of any threat to cultural identity. Degrees and other credentials that command international recognition are in demand in both poor and rich countries (World Bank, 2002).

2.6 As recently as 40 years ago, cross-border distance education and training were almost unheard of except within large organisations scattered across the globe, such as the US armed services, within which personnel could study at a distance, wherever they were stationed. Today, it is fostered by a growing demand for standardised products, services and technical infrastructure; the need to obtain, maintain and upgrade skills for employment; and the reluctance of governments to pay for rapid expansion of campus-based provision (Cunningham *et al*, 2000). It is also fostered by growth of the knowledge-based economy and the spread of information and communication technologies that support international co-operation, even if they damage cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2000).

2.7 Today, globalisation of education and training is being promoted by governments and by public and private agencies seeking to make a financial profit from the trade as well as offering educational benefits to their 'customers'. The public agencies are mainly publicly-funded universities in rich countries: these institutions are often desperate to obtain more foreign students as a way of boosting their annual incomes. They offer many courses at home on campus, some through distance education or e-learning online, and some through their 'off-shore' or franchised branches.

2.8 Australia, for example, has greatly increased its international trade in HE and expects to continue to do so. Massarol & Soutar (2001), who see education as a marketable service, note that Australia's intake of international students rose 12% a year between 1980 and 1990. Income was 9% of Australia's service exports compared with less than 3% ten years earlier. By 1999, this income had risen to be of greater value than the country's export of wheat. The total number of international students studying in Australia is forecast by an Australian study to rise from 101,000 in 2000 to almost 1 million in 2025, with nearly half studying at a distance (OBHE, 2002), although it is not clear that the publicly-funded institutions will be able to cope with this demand.

2.9 Today, particularly in HE and commercial training, cross-border programmes are common in response to increasing demand (Perraton, 1997; Enders & Fulton, 2002). International, regional, national and institutional agencies have roles in driving or opposing this development.

The role of international agencies and stakeholders

2.10 The debate about globalisation has not included education until quite recently because it was widely seen as a non-traded service (Newman and Couturier, 2002). Yet traded education and training services are a major business now in countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US. Most of this cross-border trade is still accounted for by students travelling to study abroad, but other forms are multiplying (see Larsen, Martin & Morris, 2002, for statistics). International agencies and stakeholders are driving this development. The WTO, multinational companies and corporate universities are the principal international agencies favouring globalisation under GATS, while international associations of universities and trade unions are much more sceptical of its benefits, particularly because of the perceived threat to publicly-funded services.

The World Trade Organisation and GATS

2.11 The World Trade Organisation (WTO), an international agency working under UN auspices, has over 140 member countries, accounting for over 97% of world trade. Around 30 others are seeking membership. It operates through international negotiations and treaties, of which the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

(GATT) is the best known, but the newer General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is more relevant to this paper.

‘GATS is the first multilateral agreement [between member countries] to provide legally enforceable rights to trade in all services. It has a built-in commitment to continuous liberalisation through periodic negotiations. And it is the world’s first multilateral agreement on investment, since it covers not just cross-border trade but every possible means of supplying a service, including the right to set up a commercial presence in the export market’

(World Trade Organisation Secretariat, 2002).

2.12 GATS covers education services as well as the sectors of business, communications, construction and related engineering services, distribution, environmental, financial, health, tourism, recreational and transport services. It provides guarantees over a much wider field of regulation and law than the GATT.

GATS identifies four modes of supply of services:

- 1 Cross-border supply from one country to another, including supply by mail, broadcasting, phone, fax or the Internet, as in distance learning.
- 2 Consumption abroad, as in tourism or in students attending institutions in another country.
- 3 Commercial presence, including foreign investment related to services, as when banks set up branches abroad or when foreign education providers, with or without ‘off-shore’ campuses or subsidiaries, offer programmes of study in countries other than their own.
- 4 Presence of ‘natural persons’, which provides for temporary employment of foreign workers engaged in service delivery, such as teachers offering courses in a country other than their own.

2.13 Under GATS, only government procurement is explicitly excluded. GATS includes all other laws, regulations, rules, procedures, decisions, standards, administrative actions and guidelines. It covers, but is not limited to, subsidies and grants, nationality requirements, residency requirements, performance requirements, local content provisions, licensing and training requirements, tax measures, licensing standards and technology transfer requirements. In other words, GATS is extraordinarily comprehensive, possibly even to the extent of making differential home and overseas fees unlawful. In education, it may result in universities, private or public, being exempt from work-permit legislation. There has been talk of ‘GATS visas’ for all engaged in trade in services.

2.14 Strong protests, world-wide, against globalisation are fuelled by concern about exploitation of the poor by the rich, about cultural diversity and identity being dominated by uniformity and about democratic and humanitarian values being subjugated to the marketplace. Globalisation is challenged by those who oppose neo-liberal global capitalism (Hill, 2002; Rikowski, 2002) and the rise of the market state (as conceived by Bobbitt, 2002), as well as by those who believe that globalisation, whether of education or other sectors, causes ever greater differences between rich and poor. Others see globalisation as a social phenomenon: the new global economy is arising from transformations in production, power and experience, all based on technology and all networked, often electronically, resulting in changing relationships within and between countries (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000). Tikly (2001) applies this approach to recent changes in African education.

2.15 A report for the World Development Movement (Gould & Joy, 2000), an independent membership organisation that undertakes research and advocacy on policies to support the world's poor, takes the view that GATS negotiations should be opposed because they:

- Cover essential services such as water, health and education that should be provided by national, regional or local governments, not left to the commercial market.
- Interfere with national development strategies by preventing national regulation of foreign investors.
- Are effectively irreversible.
- Go beyond reasonable definitions of trade or services.
- Harm the poor, by excluding those who cannot pay from what are now public services subsidised by government.
- Undermine democratic decision-making by requiring that local and foreign services and service providers are treated even-handedly.
- Give too much power to multinational [commercial] corporations, particularly those based in the US, the EU, Canada and Japan.
- Demand commitments that are of questionable value to poor countries.
- Oblige governments to give priority to the interests of investors over those of the people, particularly by removing subsidies and by prohibiting themselves from placing such requirements on foreign companies as hiring and training local staff, paying local taxes or transferring technology.
- Are extraordinarily difficult for poor countries to negotiate on account of the complexity of GATS rules and the pressure from multinationals and rich countries to remove limitations.

2.16 The report also notes that supporters of GATS negotiations claim that these:

- Can make services more efficient (in some cases after privatisation) through foreign provision.
- Provide for contract workers from poor countries to work in rich ones.
- Are needed because the Internet enables vastly increased cross-border delivery of services that ought to be under multilateral rules.
- Help governments to overcome resistance to deregulation and privatisation in their own countries.
- Open up markets to competition by removing limits such as those on the number and origin of service providers, and on the services they provide.
- Remove remaining barriers between private finance and the public sector, providing for least government interference in the marketplace.
- Protect services provided under government authority that are without a commercial purpose.

2.17 Support for GATS comes also from those who highlight benefits that more trade may bring: these include new delivery systems and providers, greater access for students and value for money for governments and institutions.

2.18 GATS is in three parts: a framework containing general principles and rules; national schedules listing countries' commitments on access to their domestic markets by foreign providers; and annexes that list specific limitations for each sector of trade.

2.19 Under the Doha Declaration signed in Qatar in 2000, WTO members were expected to file by June 2002 their own requests for liberalisation of services in specific sectors in other countries. Education counts as a single sector, among 12 specified, but is divided into five sub-sectors: primary, secondary, higher (tertiary), adult and other education, including training. (For a more detailed explanation of GATS and its impact on HE in particular, see Knight, 2002.)

2.20 By March 2003 members were expected to present offers to liberalise their services. The current round is due to end in January 2005 (Canadian Association of University Teachers-ACPPU, 2002).

Multinational education companies

2.21 Multinational companies trade in several countries, often in more than one region. Their interest lies in maximising profit for their shareholders. They are major drivers of development: one view is that GATS would not have come into being without heavy pressure from companies such as American Express. While GATS is the product of international agreement between member nations under UN auspices, the undoubted power behind the scenes of such companies cannot be ignored.

2.22 Multinational education companies either offer post-secondary education and training programmes directly to students or provide a range of learning and teaching services to campus universities, colleges and schools. Many of them are quoted on the public stock exchanges. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE, 2003) recently began a three-part report based on 50 publicly-traded companies quoted on 11 exchanges and with headquarters in 10 countries. Of the 50, 26 are US, the rest being from other countries such as Canada, India, Singapore and the UK. Among them are Apollo, DeVry and Sylvan (for-profit universities), INTI Universal Holdings and Raffles La Salle College Group (multi-campus colleges), Informatics, NIIT, Boston Education and Software Technologies, Prosoft Training and SkillSoft (IT and business training companies) and McGraw-Hill, Pearson and Thomson (multinational publishers).

2.23 It is by no means clear how many of these 50 companies have the capacity to engage in cross-border trade in education services and are now so engaged. Among them, however, it is noticeable from the OBHE study that those engaged solely in e-learning have not prospered as much recently as the ones that run bricks-and-mortar college or university operations, in some cases with e-learning added. Bricks-and-mortar examples are Apollo and Strayer Education in the US, INTI Universal Holdings in Malaysia, CDI Education in Canada, and Raffles La Salle College Group in Singapore, Malaysia and China with links to universities in Canada and the UK. Career Education Corporation provides private, for-profit post-secondary education on campuses in Canada, Dubai, the UK and the US. Bond University South Africa is a new subsidiary, owned by the publicly-quoted AdvTech Group, of Bond University, a small but prestigious private institution in Australia. It is entirely campus-based, with undergraduate and postgraduate classes held in three South African cities.

2.24 Apollo recently opened a branch campus in India in association with an Indian industrial conglomerate, Modi; the initial offering is an MBA programme, accredited in the US and India. The cost of attending is about half the cost (for an Indian citizen) of attending in the US. Apollo is also partnered with Hughes Escorts (see below) to offer distance education by satellite in India (OBHE, 2002).

2.25 In Malaysia, in line with the government's drive to stem the haemorrhage of students going to study abroad and to improve education opportunities at home (Othman, 1999), INTI Universal Holdings has five campuses as well as five abroad (in China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam). INTI offers degrees franchised from UK and Australasian universities.

2.26 Sylvan Universities International, part of US company Sylvan Learning Systems, has on-campus programmes in Chile (12,200 students), Mexico (over 37,000), France (1,100), Spain (7,400) and Switzerland (2,770), and may set up into India (Ryan, 2002a). These programmes are aimed at traditional university students and at working adults or lifelong learners. The degrees offered include hotel management, business administration, health sciences and information technology. Sylvan is thus a major provider of cross-border commercial post-secondary education and training, but not much via distance education.

2.27 McGraw-Hill Lifetime Learning offers e-learning courses in 10 languages, particularly in business, IT, health and safety (Ryan, 2002a), but no figures are available for enrolment. The intention is to offer cross-border distance education. Pearson Education, the world's largest education business, has its Learning Network, which offers online education to four groups: K-12, HE, professional development and lifelong learning. Pearson Education has also linked up with the University of Phoenix, a subsidiary of the Apollo Group. Pearson is providing e-textbooks, customised to suit Apollo's programmes, in subjects such as nursing, business, mathematics, science and art history, using content from Pearson Education's imprints Prentice Hall, Addison Wesley, Allyn & Bacon and Longman. The e-textbooks are for campus-based as well as online students. Thomson is a partner in several borderless post-secondary education and training ventures (see below).

2.28 AT&T's Virtual Academy is part of its own Learning Network and not a corporate university. The academy is 'a centralised resource of online courses designed to help educators effectively integrate technology into their curriculum, while updating their professional credentials on their terms – anytime, anywhere'. It uses a range of technologies, both computer-based and videoconferencing. The courses listed belong to other institutions, not AT&T. In other words, the Virtual Academy is a portal, open to students and teachers world-wide. Similarly, the United Institute of International Education in Hong Kong, majority-owned by a listed education and technology group, Horizon Education and Technologies, is a portal into China for degree programmes from Australian, Canadian and US universities.

2.29 Multinational education companies like these have a strong interest in GATS. The deregulation of trade in education services opens up for them vast new export markets. Companies in a deregulated area of commerce can be poor at exercising their corporate social responsibilities: recent examples include Enron (Hutton, 2002). Their roles are to stimulate and respond to demand in order to make a profit for their shareholders.

Corporate universities

2.30 In addition, multinational companies have multinational workforces and usually train them internationally, often through their own 'corporate universities'. An important implication of GATS is that these companies will find it easier to extend their training to other companies, often foreign, such as those that supply them. Training of 'supply chain' companies is becoming increasingly important. As Perraton (2000) points out, corporate universities provide high-demand vocationally-oriented courses, like the most successful for-profit virtual universities.

2.31 Corporate universities, many of them growing out of training departments in multinational companies, include those that teach at least partly online and that often have students in and from more than one country. For example, Motorola University has nearly 1000 training sites in 24 countries.

2.32 The Corporate Universities International's Fifth Annual Benchmarking Report is based on a survey of 131 corporate universities, most of them based in the US. They operate in competition with universities and colleges, as well as sometimes with each other. Most use print, videoconferencing and online learning to reach their trainees. More than half their target audience consists of non-managerial salaried employees and the first-level managers who supervise them.

2.33 An often-quoted forecast (International Data Corporation, 2001) had the US corporate universities earning revenues of \$23 billion by 2004, up from \$1 billion in 1999. The dot.com disaster, which saw many companies fail, and the more recent economic downturn in most industrialised countries, have ensured that such huge revenues are not likely to materialise soon in this market.

Other international agencies

2.34 WTO and its extremely powerful GATS must be seen as the principal agency driving development in the cross-border trade in services, including that in education and training, but other international agencies have an interest, and some influence, too.

2.35 For example, the Association of Commonwealth Universities has a keen interest in GATS and the growing trade in HE services. On behalf of its members it maintains in London, in partnership with UniversitiesUK, the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) which has the task of watching and reporting on the international external environment – this paper draws substantially on OBHE's reports.

2.36 The International Association of Universities, operating under the auspices of UNESCO, has an interest in the globalisation of HE, as does the francophone Association des Universités Partiellement ou Entièrement de Langue Française (AUPELF), but to date neither these agencies nor others elsewhere have come to the fore in discussions about cross-border trade in services. UNESCO's own education sector calls for a balanced debate (Daniel, 2002).

2.37 Education International, a confederation of teacher trade unions, representing teachers and employees in the education sector in 159 countries and territories, watches GATS closely and in particular those aspects of the trade in education services that threaten publicly-funded provision.

2.38 The Commonwealth of Learning and its francophone equivalent, le Consortium International Francophone de Formation à Distance (CIFFAD), both exist to widen access to and share resources for distance education (Perraton, 1997). By commissioning this study, the former has indicated its strong interest in informing the debate on GATS.

The role of regional agencies and stakeholders

2.39 These regional agencies include those charged with promoting regional trade, as well as world trade, and those with a strong interest in seeing it promoted.

2.40 The European Union (EU) is a major driver of development in education and training, with implications for regional trade. For example, the Commission's SOCRATES programme and others, are aimed at bringing to member countries significant economic benefits through education and training. Reichert & Wächter

(2000) prepared recommendations for an EU response to GATS on education services. Other regional groupings in Europe, such as the European University Association (EUA), with its 673 member institutions in 45 countries, have an interest in GATS.

2.41 The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA, formerly NAFTA) includes 34 countries. Its Web site does not report GATS negotiations over education services, but Hayward (2001) notes that if HE is covered under the FTAA treaty, US institutions may have problems in protecting the quality of their programmes and US post-secondary education and training could even be caught up in a new 'trade war'.

2.42 Elsewhere, regional discussions about GATS and education appear to be at an earlier stage. For example, although the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is aware of GATS and is moving slowly to liberalise trade in services with and within CARICOM, education services have not been featured yet on its Web site. In Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (15 countries) and the Southern African Development Community (12 countries) do not appear to cover education and training services as such, although both are interested in trade agreements. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an organisation located in Cape Town and launched as recently as 2002. Among its objectives are the promotion of networks of HE institutions, and to turn the brain drain into a 'brain gain' for Africa by developing strategies to use the skills and knowledge of Africans now living outside Africa. The South Pacific Commission and the Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Community do not cover education and training services directly. The South-East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) covers education and training but does not appear to have discussed GATS yet.

The role of national agencies and stakeholders

2.43 Globalisation of education and training is also being driven by national governments, and by national public and private agencies, most of them seeking to make a profit from the trade. The environment for this trade in education services, including training, is being deregulated through international negotiations under GATS. By early 2002, 38 countries had agreed to liberalise at least one sub-sector of their education systems. Of the 38, half had made commitments with regard to at least four of the five sub-sectors identified in the GATS classification. They had undertaken to reduce or even completely eliminate the barriers to the supply of education services from abroad (Fouilhoux, 2002, p6). Knight (2002, p10) gives a figure of 44 countries having committed, and notes that Congo, Lesotho, Jamaica and Sierra Leone had made full unconditional commitments on HE, perhaps with the intent of encouraging foreign providers to help develop their education systems.

2.44 In 2000, exports of education services were worth over \$10bn to the US, \$3.7bn to the UK, \$2.1bn to Australia and \$0.8bn to Canada. The same year, imports worth \$2.1bn came into the US, \$0.15bn into the UK, \$0.36bn into Australia and \$0.6bn into Canada (Larsen, Martin & Morris, 2002). These exporting countries are in the strongest position to exploit GATS to their economic advantage. Poor countries in the Commonwealth may be able to benefit under GATS from alliances with such leaders.

National governments

2.45 National governments decide how much to spend from the public purse on education: the US, France, Germany and the Netherlands contribute 1% of GDP to public funding of universities, for example, compared with 0.8% in the UK and 0.4% in Japan (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). In newly-industrialised countries like Malaysia, national governments may decide that the only way to provide sufficient

places in post-secondary education and training, is to enable private providers to enter the market, from home and abroad. To adopt this tactic is more difficult in poor countries, where probably only a small élite has enough money to purchase what these providers sell.

2.46 National governments are participating in the global drive to deregulate services including education and training. Ministries of trade have the task of facilitating and promoting trade within their own countries and with other countries. However, the World Bank (2002, p133) raises two important questions the answers to which are not immediately apparent: How can national authorities exercise quality control over foreign education and training institutions established in their countries? How will rulings by the WTO and decisions under GATS affect national governments in exercising this control? Governments in countries like Syria and Pakistan have decided to let in private providers through their virtual universities (see below), but only after strict selection. It is not clear whether this control will continue under GATS.

2.47 Ministries of education may object to access to education services being included under GATS, and may aim to protect their own public services. Three examples of current practice follow in Section 3, from China, Canada and the UK.

National public and private agencies

2.48 The national public agencies involved are mainly those that represent publicly-funded universities, such as UniversitiesUK. The private agencies are commercial companies, but include corporate and privately-funded universities with national rather than local coverage. Almost all, public and private, increasingly see education and training as a market opportunity, therefore individually and collectively they have important roles in the development of global trade in this field (see under institutional agencies and stakeholders).

National trade unions

2.49 Trade unions, in general, have a significant role in the development of education and training because their attitudes can make or break new international enterprises, particularly if these depend to a great extent on non-unionised labour.

National bodies of accreditation and quality assurance

2.50 These bodies exist mainly in the richer countries. They may work with schools as well as universities and colleges. Elsewhere, ministries aim to exercise direct quality control as well as some control over the curriculum. The role of these bodies is the maintenance of education and training standards.

National education companies

2.51 National education companies trade in a single country. Their interest lies in maximising profit for their shareholders. Their role in relation to GATS is to take advantage of deregulation of services.

The role of institutional agencies and stakeholders

Universities and colleges, public and private

2.52 The commercial motive was not paramount in the movement of students and staff until the 1980s, when, for example, university fees for foreign students were greatly increased in rich countries such as the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, removing any element of subsidy. Commercial profit became more obvious in the trade in services (Massarol & Soutar, 2001). This cross-border process began,

more or less non-commercially, about 50 years ago with mass movements of students between countries, increasing international collaboration between universities and the growth of 'off-shore' campuses. From 1950 to 1980, the cross-border flow of students doubled each decade (Massarol & Soutar, 2001). Direct income from tuition fees is substantial, though only part of the benefit to the host nation. Even in 1991, fees from foreign students were worth C\$1.5bn to Canada. In 1993, US universities and colleges received about US\$6bn from fees, although by then the rate was increasing at a slower rate because students had become liable for tax (Massarol & Soutar, 2001)

2.53 Appendix 1 contains ten examples of cross-border ventures, almost all solely in post-secondary education and training. These range from UK eUniversities Worldwide (UkeU) and Syria's Virtual University, both recently started up to exploit unmet demand for higher education; established cross-border distance education institutions such as the Virtual University of Monterrey (Mexico); niche fillers in the cross-border distance education market like Jones International University; and failures like New York University Online and the Open University of the United States.

2.54 The boundary between publicly-funded universities and private ones is becoming blurred. For example, publicly-funded Melbourne University established a for-profit subsidiary, Melbourne University Private (MUP) which then merged with a similar subsidiary, Melbourne Enterprises International. But the State Minister of Education questioned MUP's use of the university's title because MUP is too like non-university commercial providers of corporate training (Ryan, 2002a).

Companies

2.55 The private agencies are commercial and often multinational, but include corporate and privately-funded universities. Large multinational companies, such as the Apollo Group and Sylvan Learning, wish to tap the market abroad by using online technology. Privately-funded universities compete for the same foreign students as the publicly-funded ones. They too offer many courses on campus, some online and some through their 'off-shore' branches.

2.56 In fact, to date only a few ventures can claim commercial success in cross-border trade in distance learning. As Ryan (2002a, p2) warns, 'the dot.com crash and the downturn in world economies have caused a re-assessment of the business cases of most borderless ventures – not least, the assumed lucrative returns from e-learning and the nature of public-private partnerships.' Some have failed. Others at present operate at a loss or will not reveal their financial status. Success depends on factors such as quality (including accreditation), accessibility, support provided to students and funding patterns. Failure has been traced to poor quality courses, weak marketing, lack of legal standing and critical mass. Far too little is understood about other factors that may be important: distance learning may carry cultural norms, for instance, or be linked to national curricula, or be seen as tools for nationalism (Edwards, 2002).

3. POSITIONS IN RELATION TO GATS

3.1 This section describes positions being taken up in relation to GATS as it applies to education and in particular the use of distance learning in tertiary education and training, and discusses their implications through examples at four levels (international, regional, national and institutional).

International positions and their implications

3.2 Education as a sector is under dispute because many governments see it as a public national service that they should control and provide, rather than deregulating it to allow in foreign commercial providers. As more national services are privatised and deregulated, however, education's position vis-à-vis GATS may weaken. Key decision-makers in the process of removing legislation that protects education may well be in departments of trade that negotiate under GATS, rather than in departments and ministries of education.

3.3 In writing about UK HE in particular, Kelk and Worth (2002) argue strongly that GATS will in due course reduce public funding, damage quality, prevent governments from regulating in the public interest, undermine co-operative internationalisation, accelerate commodification, erode employment conditions, constrain academic freedom, raise student fees, reduce access and threaten the educational experience.

3.4 If GATS were fully implemented, a government would not be able to impose on its universities and schools any restrictions relating to nationality or citizenship of staff or students. Nor would that government be able to restrict the presence of foreign institutions or require them to have local partners, nor would it be able to discriminate against them in taxation or in the allocation of subsidies or research grants.

3.5 Most governments continue to maintain that education services are not subject to GATS, being exempt under Article 1:3, which excludes services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority, neither on a commercial basis nor in competition with any one or more service suppliers.

3.6 Higher education is one of the least committed sub-sectors in GATS (Canadian Association of University Teachers -ACPPU, 2002), but pressure is increasing for countries to make and seek specific commitments. The World Bank (2002, p. xix) warns:

‘Developing and transition countries are at risk of being further marginalised in a highly competitive world economy because their tertiary education systems are not adequately prepared to capitalise on the creation and use of knowledge.’

3.7 The HE sub-sector, in particular, varies from country to country. In some it is heavily subsidised, in others less so. In many countries, institutions public and private compete for students. Some WTO members see HE as an essential public service, but many promote greater privatisation and liberalisation. Wilkes (2001) refers to the creeping privatisation of education world-wide as educational establishments, especially universities, seek new sources of finance while government funding drops. Education International (2002b), referring to OECD (2002a), says that private funding increased from 9 percent in 1998 to 12 percent in 1999. In Australia, the Czech Republic and the UK over a third of the expenditure for tertiary education was then from private sources ranging from fees paid by students or their parents to institutional

endowments. In Japan and the US it was over half, in Korea 79 percent. Levy (2003) analyses the reasons for privatisation of HE, or, as he calls it, expanding HE capacity through private growth.

3.8 Under GATS, private for-profit institutions may be considered as competing with public institutions for students; if the former do not receive the same grants and degree-granting powers as the latter, a conflict may arise in which the public institutions may not be able to shelter behind Article 1:3. Fuller interpretation of the article is urgently needed. A Joint Declaration on HE and GATS (2001), signed by four associations representing thousands of universities and colleges in Canada, Europe and the US, asserts that HE exists to serve the public interest and is not a 'commodity'; that HE must remain in the hands of competent bodies as designated by any given country; and that education exports must complement and not undermine the efforts of developing countries.

3.9 Public Citizen (2002), a national non-profit public interest organisation founded by Ralph Nader in the US, claims that the WTO and the OECD have provided 'over-simplified or misleading assurances'. Public Citizen further claims that 'critics' key concerns – that GATS threatens public services systems and public service regulation – are well-founded'. 'The treaty's governmental authority exclusion...is, at best, unclear and subject to conflicting interpretations. At worst, if narrowly interpreted by dispute panels, it is of little or no practical effect.' It is apparent that GATS imposes new burdens on 'exclusive service supplier arrangements (common in post-secondary education)...which must be listed as country-specific exceptions'. Domestic regulations will in future have to treat local and foreign services and service providers even-handedly. This will 'constrain legitimate public interest regulation and democratic decision-making'.

3.10 Distance education, particularly when provided online, can more easily cross borders than campus-based education (or face-to-face training) and may either escape or add to the full impact of deregulation of education and training under GATS. It may escape deregulation because few regulations at present apply to it. It may add to the impact of GATS because it can help to remedy a dearth of services brought about in national systems through deregulation.

Regional positions and their implications

3.11 Many regions have not yet stated their positions, although the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC, 2001) has considered measures affecting trade and investment in education services in the Asia-Pacific region. In July 2002, the European Union (EU) submitted on behalf of its members its initial requests for improved market access to services in 29 WTO member states, including the US, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, South Korea and India (Public Citizen, 2002). However, the EU emphasised that it had consulted its own member countries about the provision of public services in general and health and education in particular. The EU declared that it shares its citizens' desire to maintain and develop public services, and that it did not seek to dismantle them nor to privatise state-owned companies.

3.12 GATS is widely perceived in the EU as a threat to publicly-funded education, particularly at the post-secondary level. In the EU's submission, only the US received a request under 'Education and Training Services', limited to HE services. By contrast, the US made many requests, focused on HE, adult education, training and educational testing services. In addition to a general request to ALL countries to make full commitments (the GATS language is legalistic) for market access and national treatment in cross-border supply of service, consumption abroad and permitting commercial presence, the US asked 20 named countries to undertake these

commitments, thus exerting more pressure on them. A further 8 countries (included in the general request) are asked to remove specific restrictions such as ownership limitations, nationality requirements for staff and prohibition of joint ventures with local partners. A third set of 9 countries are asked to remove even more, such as China's ban on education services provided by foreign companies and organisations via satellite networks, and Israel and Japan's limits on recognition of degrees issued by accredited institutions of HE. South Africa is asked to remove burdensome requirements applicable to foreign universities operating or seeking to operate there. These requests are aimed mainly at easing provision (by the US) of private education services in HE, adult education and training (Larsen, Martin & Morris, 2002).

National positions and their implications

3.13 National positions on GATS are becoming more clearly defined, although many governments are still (in January 2003) not publishing these. Ryan (2002a, p3) comments that 'geopolitical, legal and technical environments remain uncertain and unstable. National prohibitions on some forms of distance and higher education have not been addressed...' A few examples follow.

3.14 The Chinese Ministry of Education regulates foreign HE by requiring foreign providers to have a local partner education institution (there are 657 collaborative projects) and by publishing lists of approved foreign universities. Distance education is not covered by these regulations: the Minister has argued that it is not covered under GATS and that China will not open this market to foreigners (OBHE, 2002).

3.15 By contrast, India, with 144 foreign universities and colleges in 2000, at present neither regulates nor recognises them, but is likely to require that foreign providers are accredited in their own country. Both governments want to attract quality, address national economic needs and build up HE (OBHE, 2002).

3.16 The Government of Canada (2002) has declared that it is not offering commercial access to the country's public education services, nor does it seek access to public education in other countries. Colas and Gottlieb (2001) provided a legal opinion on the impact of GATS on education in Canada. They observed that GATS lacked definitions of important terms such as 'commercial basis' but a public university that charged fees to provide services with the intent of making profits would fall under GATS. One that provides services mainly with the intent of competing for service users and market rather than fulfilling a governmental duty would be considered to be in competition with other education service providers and would also fall under GATS.

3.17 Under Canada's federal constitution, public and private education services are regulated by provincial and territorial governments at all levels. A recent development is Canada's Virtual University, designed and authorised to deliver courses abroad from all Canada's universities. Despite a tight regulatory environment, non-Canadian educational institutions have entered the post-secondary market as service providers: in British Columbia, City University (UK) and the University of Phoenix (US); in Alberta, the DeVry Institute of Technology (US); in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, the University of South Australia. Non-Canadian private companies, including corporate universities and publishers, now offer a range of education and training services in Canada. There is a distinct trend towards commercialisation or privatisation of these services. Colas and Gottlieb noted that Canadian students studying in other WTO countries, foreign professors providing services in Canada, and foreign institutions providing online education services to Canadian consumers may all fall under GATS. They predicted that Canada would make market access commitments in education and training services.

3.18 The UK's position re GATS and education and training services is likely to be based on the Department of Trade and Industry's second consultation document issued on October 10, 2002. The deadline for responses was January 3, 2003 (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/worldtrade/service.htm>).

3.19 On education services the DTI argues that GATS is not intended to cover public services. It therefore excludes primary and secondary education from the negotiations. On HE and other forms of post-secondary education the DTI says the UK government will not permit public funding of private providers nor give up its powers to fund and regulate public post-compulsory education.

3.20 The DTI committed the whole of privately-funded education to deregulation in a previous round of negotiations, and states its belief that 'the potential impact of further liberalisation of education services in the UK is limited' (p37). Foreign providers can already operate in the UK if they are recognised in their own country. UK Citizens can take foreign courses and obtain foreign qualifications.

3.21 The DTI sees benefits to the UK in deregulation of HE abroad, but the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE, 2002) comments that the DTI does not consider whether or not foreign or domestic private providers could address capacity problems in UK HE. The for-profit HE sector in the US and elsewhere has specialised in career-related HE. In the UK, HE is 'caught between state support that can no longer adequately meet the costs of a mass system, and state regulation that restricts institutions' ability to raise additional income from the consumer and inhibits competition from the private sector or from overseas'. Changes in fee structures announced by the government in January 2003 do permit institutions, including those teaching at a distance, greater flexibility, but have the effect of transferring costs to students.

3.22 The UK's Department for Education and Skills (2003) declares that universities are critical to the country's ability to master change. It recognises that UK universities need to compete in the world market, and that leading universities in other countries will be able to draw on extensive private funding.

3.23 The US, Australia and New Zealand, with a view to cross-border trade, have already requested that the trade in education services in other countries should be liberalised. The US stance is to press for abolition of (i) preferential tax treatment of domestic institutions, (ii) banning of the presence of foreign institutions, (iii) restrictions on on-line learning material from foreign providers, and (iv) requirements for foreign travelling academics. The Australian and New Zealand stances are similar.

3.24 Other WTO members have not yet proposed such liberalisation of trade abroad. Their own stance at home is that they will protect their public education but possibly make commitments in private education, despite the problems of drawing a line between the two and the dangers of liberalisation in one spreading to the other. Japan, for example, wishes to maintain and improve quality, protecting its consumers from low quality cross-border education providers (Larsen, Martin & Morris, 2002). Countries are allowed to include country-specific limitations to their commitments in the sector, such as a limit on market access, but once accepted these limitations cannot be changed without paying compensation. Such limitations must be drafted carefully: they will be interpreted narrowly and attacked during negotiations. They do not serve well the need for flexibility in the future because they usually apply to existing commitments (Canadian Association of University Teachers-ACCP, 2002).

Institutional positions and their implications

3.25 Individual publicly-funded universities may well be ambivalent towards GATS in the hope of benefits from increasing their trade in education services yet in the fear that they will lose government funding. Private and corporate universities are more likely to be positive towards GATS, seeing profit in wider access to foreign markets.

3.26 GATS is opposed strongly by UK universities and their trade unions. Universities Scotland warns that liberalisation of trade in HE could open all HE to market competition, with financial rather than educational requirements driving provision. Cross-subsidies of more expensive courses by less expensive ones could go.

3.27 Trade unions in general oppose GATS; they argue that public services (which are often unionised) will be damaged or destroyed, and that private services will do not cater for as wider a spectrum of society, including the poor. The Canadian Association of University Teachers-ACCP (2002), for example, calls on governments to protect education from GATS' commercialising influence, strengthening the exclusion for public services under Article 1:3 by making this exemption self-defining by each member. Each member country must also avoid making any commitments in the education sector, public or private.

3.28 UK Trade unions such as Unison, the Association of University Teachers (AUT) (see for example Nunn, 2001; Nunn and Worth, 2002), and the National Union of Students are all opposed to GATS (Guardian, December 23, 2002), mainly on the ground that it will increase privatisation of public sector services. The AUT foresees that HE may be supplied from overseas via distance learning, that UK students may receive lectures over the Internet for degrees awarded by overseas universities and that a US university may be able to set up in the UK, with the benefit of public sector funding, in direct competition with UK universities. The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education suggests that universities in developing countries might suffer particularly as services were bought in from abroad. For Australian university staff, Cohen (2000) explores how extensions to GATS designed to increase market access of private service providers to industries now in the public sector could affect public HE in Australia. She asserts that these agreements have an alarming potential to limit the role of government in the delivery of public services such as HE. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (2002) recommends that education should not be included in the agreement.

3.29 It is difficult to forecast the long-term implications of such opposition to GATS from universities and trade unions. It may make for problems in concluding cross-border agreements on accreditation and quality assurance, without which poor countries will be unable to judge which, if any, foreign providers should be recommended to students resident in those countries, and which of these students, if any, should be subsidised in their studies. It may make for problems in regulation of both domestic and foreign providers, public and private.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF ACCREDITATION AND REGULATION FUNCTIONS

4.1 This section identifies the functions of the range of agencies and stakeholders at these same four levels in terms of accreditation and regulation, bearing in mind international activity in distance education and cross-border enrolment.

Accreditation functions

4.2 According to Sursock (2001), the European Universities Association has agreed that:

'Accreditation is a formal, published statement regarding the quality of an institution or a programme, following a cyclical evaluation based on agreed standards.'

Similar definitions apply outside Europe. Quality assurance and credit transfer systems are part of accreditation and regulation of HE, including distance education.

International

4.3 There is no agreed international quality framework for HE, and accreditation and quality assurance systems vary widely (Larsen, Martin & Morris, 2002). UNESCO fosters debate in this field through its Global Forum on international quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications. In a contribution to this debate, van Damme (2001) suggests that an international initiative is essential in this field. Some observers, while noting the danger of massive bureaucracy, are in favour of international quality assurance systems, at least for HE. Most existing schemes are national and do not cover foreign providers, whether on bricks-and-mortar campuses or operating through distance education or online. International practice in quality assurance was reviewed by Harman (1998), Petersen (1999) and the OECD (1999). Distance education is already included in the debate, for much the same reasons as cross-border education: concerns about quality control.

4.4 Quality assurance needs and practices have changed with increased globalisation of education and the growth of distance learning. The World Bank (2002, p35) notes that:

'It is doubtful that the philosophy, principles and standards customarily applied in evaluating and accrediting campus-based programmes can be used without major adjustments for assessing the quality and effectiveness of online courses and other modalities of distance education. Appropriate and reliable accreditation and evaluation processes are needed to assure the public that the courses, programmes and degrees offered by the new types of distance education institutions meet acceptable academic and professional standards. Less emphasis is likely to be given to traditional input dimensions such as qualifications of individual faculty and student selection criteria and more to the competencies and capabilities of graduates.

'... very few developing nations have established accreditation and evaluation systems, nor do they have access to the necessary information on the quality of foreign programmes or the institutional monitoring capacity to be able to detect fraud and protect their students from low-quality offerings. ... The risk that students in low-income countries will fall prey to unscrupulous borderless operators is real.

'Countries that cannot afford to or do not have the capacity to develop their own information systems should have the opportunity to participate in international accreditation and evaluation networks. Another option... is to insist that foreign tertiary institutions meet the same quality assurance requirements and guarantee the same type of degree recognition as prevail in the parent institution in the country of origin.'

4.5 A recent OECD-US forum on trade in education services, without considering distance education specifically, noted that (OECD, 2002b):

'...much work [remains] to be done in different sectors in terms of defining standards internationally and translating these into criteria for accrediting institutions, recognising quality and awarding qualifications. ... An overall framework for recognising and certifying quality across the world would require more than just the sum of many local agreements. An internationally recognised infrastructure is starting to be created at the regional level (for example in the EU), but much more work would be needed to make progress at a world-wide level. An important reason for moving beyond a regional focus is the significance of emerging demand from developing countries, which can potentially be met partly by institutions in OECD countries, who do not have regionally-oriented agreements with those areas of high demand.'

4.6 There are a few signs that international accreditation is under way, at least for business schools. For example, the Australian Graduate School of Management, part of the University of New South Wales, has secured accreditation from the US-based Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business, which already has 34 accredited member institutions outside the US, including some that teach at a distance.

4.7 Similarly, the Belgian-based European Foundation for Management Development has the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), an international accreditation system with 52 member institutions in 16 countries, not just in Europe (OBHE, 2002). The process of accreditation is rigorous. Applicant business schools first have to be accepted into the "fast track" EQUIS on the basis of having a certain size, national standing and range of activities. This is followed by a comprehensive self-evaluation including assessing quality across staff, students, programmes, research, student support, and contribution to the community. Two key criteria applied are the degree of internationalisation and links with business. A peer review team visits the business school for several days, speaking to staff, students, business connections, employers, researchers, and senior members of the university, as well as the business school management team. The UKOU is one of only a few members of EQUIS that teach mainly at a distance, but many EQUIS members engage in cross-border education.

4.8 The Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) was formed recently under the auspices of Jones International University (see Appendix 1) as an international alliance of business, HE and government dedicated to principled advocacy for transnational educational programmes. GATE has drawn up a set of guiding principles and these can be applied by GATE through international peer reviews, when requested by member institutions, as a form of quality assurance though not accreditation. Van Damme (2001) observes, however, that GATE's origins outside the HE community and its links to a specific for-profit provider may retard its growth. Distance education providers feature in GATE's membership.

4.9 The European University Association (2002), in partnership with the Academic Co-operation Association, the Institutional Management in Higher Education Programme of the OECD and the International Network for Quality

Assurance in Higher Education, offers a worldwide quality review service aimed at assisting HE institutions in formulating their international policy, including distance education.

4.10 These and other similar developments at international level clearly have implications for distance education in the longer term. Despite deregulation under GATS, there is some hope for poor countries that they will be able to distinguish clearly between foreign providers that have gained international recognition and those that have not.

Regional

4.11 No strictly regional accreditation or quality assurance systems are in operation yet. A European project on accreditation, aimed at ensuring transparency of degrees and promoting mobility at European and international levels, was developed under EU auspices (Sursock, 2001). Further progress in Europe on accreditation is likely to be slow, according to van Damme (2001).

4.12 In the US, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which represents over 3,000 institutions, has fostered discussion of regional or even international accreditation, while acknowledging the problems of decentralised educational systems and national isolationism (Petersen, 1999). To assist its members, CHEA has formulated principles, relating particularly to accreditation abroad and of online or Web-based distance education (Hayward, 2001).

4.13 Countries in the South Asia region are considering mutual recognition of degrees (see the Indira Gandhi National Open University Web site for an update).

National

4.14 In general, as the World Bank (2002) notes, rich countries have established or begun to establish accreditation, quality assurance and/or credit transfer systems. For example, the US has a model of national and regional accreditation for universities and colleges, but the US regions do not at present have a common set of standards and assessment criteria. The UK has a Quality Assurance Agency that performs audits of teaching and research in universities and colleges, including distance education institutions such as the UKOU.

4.15 Countries like the US, that seek to deregulate the trade in education and training services, often apply very strict rules in validating foreign degrees. Even with regard to the professions where associations with international links already exist, such as the US Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, a federation of 31 professional engineering and technical societies, individual countries defend their own standards and have difficulty in recognising professionals from other countries.

4.16 The Arab Open University (AOU), which teaches at a distance, was set up as a regional private Arab institution of HE, with special status (see Appendix 1). In Jordan, the AOU had some difficulty in gaining recognition from the Ministry of Higher Education as a licensed institution, mainly because as an open university its admission requirements were lower than those in other Jordanian universities (Khader, 2002).

4.17 CHEA's (2002) report on accreditation and assuring quality in distance learning is particularly relevant here. It found that in the US no less than 1,979 institutions were offering distance education. The regional and national accrediting organisations now ask seven questions of each of these institutions (CHEA, p7):

- Does offering distance learning make sense in this institution?
- Is the institution suitably structured to offer quality distance learning?
- Does the institution sustain adequate financing to offer quality distance learning?
- Does the institution have appropriate curricula and design of instruction to offer quality distance learning?
- Are faculty competent to be engaged in offering distance learning and do they have adequate resources, facilities and equipment?
- Do students have needed counselling, advising, equipment, facilities and instructional materials to pursue distance learning?
- Does the institution routinely evaluate the quality of distance learning based on evidence of student achievement?¹

Institutional

4.18 Although many universities accredit the programmes of neighbouring university colleges or colleges, there are few examples of single institutions performing a large-scale accreditation function. The UK's Open University Validation Service (OUVS) accredits HE courses or programmes provided by organisations or institutions that do not have degree-awarding powers. These programmes can then lead to validated taught or research degrees or a credit rating of the UKOU. OUVS has over 100 accredited and approved institutions, most in the UK, with about 11,500 registered students or candidates following 250 approved programmes. Its service enables students or employees to gain nationally and internationally recognised qualifications. Institutions in Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, and Thailand are linked to OUVS.

4.19 Bennell & Pearce (2002) provide detail from a survey in 1997 on overseas courses validated by Australian and UK universities, many of them involving distance learning and most having a strong vocational orientation. Over 125,000 students were then taking these courses abroad; the number is likely to have risen since. Most came from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. Korea and Taiwan at that time prohibited overseas distance education providers. Language was a major factor in the spread from the UK and Australia of overseas validated courses. The UK Quality Assurance Agency publishes guidelines and codes of conduct for these courses and has audited them abroad to check on quality.

4.20 Equally, many universities have internal quality assurance systems; in HE quality assurance is not always a government function, although in the UK the semi-independent Quality Assurance Agency functions nationally and similar agencies operate in several other Commonwealth countries, including Australia. Tait (1997) provides case studies of quality assurance within distance education institutions in Germany, Norway, Israel, India, the UK, Hong Kong and Canada.

4.21 Some universities, like the UKOU, have credit transfer agreements with a range of other universities, based on mutual recognition of standards.

4.22 Corporate universities are at present entirely outside accreditation and credit transfer, although occasionally they offer accredited courses from universities. Quality assurance is performed only by the companies that own them. There appear to be no moves to change this situation, perhaps because employees are in some respects a captive audience.

Regulatory functions

International

4.23 There is no international regulatory body for HE (or distance education and training). Indeed, van Damme (2001) points out that globalisation leads to an erosion of national regulatory and policy frameworks within which universities operate, and suggests that an international regulatory framework is needed.

Regional

4.24 Similarly, there are no regional regulatory bodies for HE or for distance education and training. It is difficult to see how they could exercise any real control over institutions scattered across a large region of the globe. At international and regional levels, GATS will produce deregulation rather than regulation.

National

4.25 Many governments regulate their own education systems more or less directly and expect to continue to do so. For example, Australia and many other Commonwealth governments regulate the award of the university title and degree-awarding powers. Nor may any university be set up in China without government consent. Is GATS likely to end such control?

4.26 At the moment, national governments have the last word. Countries like Greece and Israel at present regulate HE by refusing to recognise qualifications obtained from foreign providers operating within those countries (van Damme, 2001). Levy (2003) reports that in the 1990s the El Salvador government shut down many private HE providers that had sprung up unregulated. GATS will reduce such powers.

Institutional

4.27 Regulatory functions within HE institutions are usually exercised by a hierarchical series of councils, boards and committees. In some countries many such institutions, whether public or private, have sufficient autonomy to be able to decide whether, when, how and where they will engage in cross-border distance education. Elsewhere, ministries of education regulate them directly or indirectly. Companies regulate their own corporate universities.

4.28 In all these cases, the regulatory bodies will have to take GATS into account, sooner or later, whether in fending off competitors, setting fees, hiring and managing staff, choosing markets for selling materials or almost any other aspect of regulation and governance, at home or abroad.

5. OPTIONS FOR SHARING FUNCTIONS BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS

5.1 This section examines options for and the organisational implications of sharing functions between institutions, particularly those engaged in distance education. Collaboration between institutions is potentially beneficial because institutions learn from each other. As Dohmen (1998) points out, the new technologies make cross-border contacts easier, and networks rapidly form for the exchange of experience and expertise. The Commonwealth of Learning (2000) is particularly concerned with fostering inter-institutional partnerships and has already published a guide (Swales, 1999) for producers and users in selling, transferring, purchasing and acquiring materials. It facilitates inter-institution negotiation by addressing types of transfer arrangements; copyright and intellectual property; adaptation and translation; costs, pricing, and remuneration; quality; and accreditation.

5.2 Collaboration of some kind is feasible, though not necessarily cost-effective, across all the six main functions in distance education and training: development of teaching material; student recruitment and marketing; distribution of teaching material; student support; quality assurance and accreditation; regulation and management. It takes many forms, as this section shows by quoting examples from Appendix 1. Even among corporate universities (see Appendix 2) there is some collaboration, though take-overs and mergers are more common.

5.3 Conceivably, collaboration in distance education could be fostered by institutions adopting the same proprietary virtual learning environments (VLEs), such as Blackboard or WebCT, which enable individual teachers and teams of teachers to build courses, provide resources, tutor and assess students, and so on. VLEs differ, not all providing administrative functions and not all being Web-based (see Morris & Rippin, 2002, for a discussion of VLEs in business and management education; Farrell, 1999, 2001, takes a global perspective for COL). The UkeUniversities new learning management system, as yet untried, may prove the most comprehensive.

The options

Development of teaching materials

5.4 Perraton (1998) suggests five types of production partnership, although in fact there are even more variations now. Examples are provided in Appendix 1 as well as below.

- Central funding: one party, perhaps the government, provides funding and others undertake the development, as in the EU's SOCRATES programme or the World Bank's African Virtual University. Bates (1997) reports on production of courses at the publicly-funded University of British Columbia for purchase by and use in the Universidad Virtual in Mexico and surrounding countries. Pakistan's Virtual University was set up under the Ministry of Science and Technology, not the Ministry of Education. It uses the national telecommunication infrastructure for television and the Internet, but also rents for its students 'private virtual campuses' in existing institutions.
- Consortia: institutions combine to share the cost of development and the responsibilities for teaching. Cardean is a platform and content provider, its main partners being universities with a company, Thomson Learning, doing the marketing to other universities that do the teaching. The Indira Gandhi National Open University in India belongs to consortia that use its courses

in other countries, providing the tutoring themselves. The UKOU does much the same in Eastern Europe and Singapore.

- Production only partnerships: institutions combine to share the cost of development but split up the responsibilities for local student support, as in the case of the Arab Open University, where most course material is from the UKOU, but all student support is in the hands of local branches.
- Partnerships between universities and companies: the universities produce degree programmes for the companies' staff, wherever they are. The Open University's partnership with IBM in the 1990s was an example of this type. Some universities become involved in programmes for corporate universities (see Appendix 2): MIT makes and the National Technological University provides courses for Booz, Allen & Hamilton, and Hughes Escorts Communications in India uses courses made within the Apollo Group. Harvard's Business School makes and offers short interactive online courses to companies. Jones International University makes and provides credit-bearing courses to Ball Corporation, a multinational company.
- Cooperative structures: Open Learning Australia was set up by the federal government to work with the tertiary institutions in producing materials. Fathom is a different kind of consortium, made up of a wide range of prestigious knowledge producers.

5.5 Copyright and intellectual property issues rear their heads in any production partnership for developing teaching materials. New rules being prepared by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) are expected to complicate rather than ease the use of materials originating elsewhere.

Student recruitment and marketing

5.6 Collaboration in recruiting students may seem unlikely in a 'market' where institutions are obliged to compete fiercely for students. Collaboration across borders may seem even less likely to occur. On the other hand, institutions may be complementary in some respects in the courses they offer, looking for niche markets. Moreover, new distance education portals like the Syrian Virtual University may benefit from collaboration with their foreign course providers, whose knowledge and experience of student recruitment and marketing may be of some use in a country like Syria despite cultural differences.

Distribution of teaching material

5.7 Here too collaboration occurs. The Open University Worldwide (OUW), the wholly-owned commercial arm of the UKOU, has educational partners in Brazil, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hong Kong SAR, Hungary, India, Romania, Russia, Singapore, the Slovak Republic and South Africa. These partners enable students to take a range of OU courses in their own countries. They benefit from the OU's initial investment in high quality teaching materials, and from locally-provided tutorial support. Courses are licensed by OUW, to enable educational institutions to save time and costs in developing their own, but can be adapted and translated to suit local needs. Awards based on the courses are made by these institutions, not the OU, unless accreditation is part of the arrangement (see OU Validation Services' Web site). In a few instances, students belonging to the foreign partner register with the OU and receive OU qualifications. The partner institution is always responsible for recruiting students.

5.8 A unique example of sharing teaching material by a non-commercial public provider is being set by MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) project, which makes

available without charge on the Web the outlines, readings and assignment questions for MIT courses (about 40 in late 2002, but due to rise to 2,000 by 2007). There are no opportunities, however, for would-be students to register or contact the academic staff.

5.9 Other providers of teaching material act mainly as elaborate portals or way stations: the Syrian Virtual University is a portal for courses from some 25 foreign universities, Universitas 21global is a portal for courses from its members universities in various countries, and the UKeUniversities are a portal for courses from UK universities, although the UKeU has its own learning management system.

5.10 The Commonwealth of Learning (1997) offers two sets of guidelines for remote delivery of courses: the first assists students in deciding which course to take, but the second assists institutions in collaborating over the development and delivery of such courses by providing a common framework.

Student support

5.11 As examples already cited show, this is frequently organised collaboratively through partnerships between national or international providers of materials and local providers of student support. It is now possible for training of online tutors to be done online (Salmon, 2000) and across borders. Online tutors can operate from anywhere in the world, with students anywhere in the world. Knowledge and expertise available among staff in one institution can be shared with students in another, in another country.

Quality assurance and accreditation

5.12 Collaboration is essential in accreditation, which depends heavily on peer review, often international. The Commonwealth of Learning has guidelines for franchising educational programmes, and is looking into other aspects of quality assurance policies and procedures. The idea of a 'Commonwealth credit bank' to ease credit transfer has been mooted.

Regulation and management

5.13 A lead is needed in this field before cross-border collaboration becomes common, although there are already some isolated examples in distance education through the partnerships already mentioned.

5.14 Meantime, it is worth noting for distance education that the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (2000) favour development of an international approach to regulation of cross-border education, preferably through mutual recognition of professional qualifications as under EU policy. They also favour raising the issue of quality internationally, so that foreign governments are alerted to the dangers of poor quality provision.

Implications

5.15 Each of the collaboration options has organisational, cultural, legal, political and economic implications. Most distance education and training institutions are oriented first and foremost towards the market in their own countries: they have difficulty in facing towards foreign markets as well, for many reasons. A good practice exchange could be valuable to those who wish to change.

5.16 The cultural implications of collaboration are more serious and have not been addressed sufficiently by either private or public distance education and training institutions. Modifications being made to UKOU materials for the Arab Open

University are difficult to make, costly and above all as yet untried. In the UK OU's long history of successful and unsuccessful collaboration abroad, cultural issues have often been dominant, and are likely to be so for many cross-border providers, particularly in distance education and training.

5.17 The legal implications of collaboration are too extensive to go into here. Suffice to say that international case law relating to GATS is only now being developed and shows signs of being extremely complex and tendentious. Again, the UK OU's experience of agreements and contracts in collaborative partnerships indicates that the legal implications cannot be ignored.

5.18 The political implications of collaboration must be borne in mind, ranging from the difficulties in arranging for political agreement over access to markets to the practicalities of dealing with semi-autonomous political entities within nations.

5.19 Finally, the economic implications of collaboration must be taken into account. Cooperative ventures, desirable though they may be on other grounds, are not always cost-effective. Within Europe, there is a long record of attempts at collaboration between the distance teaching universities in carrying out all of the six functions discussed above. This record does not contain many successes, and even these may not have proved cost-effective.

6. RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FUNDING ISSUES

6.1 This section deals with resource allocation and funding issues, and examines the available data on costs and funding options.

Resource allocation

6.2 Allocation of resources by governments determines the funding available to public distance education institutions. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (see Appendix 1) depends heavily on government funding. The UK Open University receives about 60% of its income from government and most of the rest from student fees. The Arab Open University is being primed with funds from international sources, probably including government funds. The Syrian Arab University was founded by the state but is expected to become self-financing. In each case, political will brought these institutions into being and public capital is behind them. By contrast, the commercial ventures in Appendix 1, such as Cardean, Fathom and Universitas21global, cannot draw on public capital. However, governments may still assist private enterprise indirectly: for example, they may allocate funds to pay student fees for civil servants, buy whole courses for sections of the civil service, permit shared use of government buildings as study centres at reduced rates, and so on.

6.3 Allocation of resources by institutions depends on the structure each adopts. Among the many cross-border examples quoted in this paper, a large proportion of them are what Rumble (2000) calls vertically integrated global teaching organisations. That is to say, they retain close control over all the operations and processes needed to develop, deliver and maintain their teaching programmes. Wye College, part of the University of London, is an example: with about 900 students in 20 countries, it retains tight control.

6.4 As Rumble points out, distance education lends itself to the development of integrated but disaggregated value chains. Sub-systems can be split up. Different functions can be farmed out to partners. Resources can be out-sourced. But the whole system is still integrated, linked together. The African Virtual University (see Appendix 1) is funded by the World Bank to develop and buy in live and pre-recorded television and computer-based teaching materials. The originating universities and companies deliver these to their teaching partners in Africa, making the AVU somewhat like a franchise. Inevitably, cost structures will not be the same in this type of global teaching organisation as in the first type.

Costs

6.5 Cost data are scarce in a fast-changing environment that is becoming more and more commercialised. The assumptions underlying the meagre published data are shaky, too, although not for lack of a developed methodology. In a study of the costs and economics of distance learning, prepared before Internet use became significant, Rumble (1997, pp5-6) identifies two major operating systems in distance education. First, 'the materials subsystem involves the design, production, distribution (or delivery) and reception of course materials to support an agreed curriculum of awards and courses'. Second, 'the student subsystem which recruits and enrolls students; registers them on courses of their choice; collects fees and other payments; allocates students to tutors, local centres and examination centres; provides them with ongoing advice; arranges for their assessment; arranges tutorials and other points of contact; maintains their record, organises graduation ceremonies; and provides transcripts and references'. These two major subsystems are supported by logistical, regulatory and

student administrative subsystems. Rumble analyses the costs of each system, noting that the high fixed costs of the materials subsystem are usually offset against economies of scale obtained through high enrolments in the student subsystem, in which variable costs rise more or less in line with enrolments.

6.6 The pattern of costs in distance education has changed with the introduction of e-learning (see Fielden, 2002). Following detailed study of costing methodology and examples, Rumble (1999) suggests six categories of costs, for:

- 1 Developing e-materials
- 2 Teaching (and assessing) students online
- 3 Accessing the Web site
- 4 Administering students online
- 5 Providing the infrastructure and support within which e-education can operate.
- 6 Planning and managing e-education at the macro-level.

6.7 Developing e-materials (online learning materials) is more costly, to judge by evidence so far available, than developing print materials, but there are savings, to the institution, on delivery to the student, who carries the cost of printing. Teaching and assessing students online is more expensive, in general, than by other means. The cost of administering students is likely to be less online, but against this must be set the costs of infrastructure and support, as well as those of planning and management.

6.8 Rumble (2001a) acknowledges that costs vary widely depending on the e-learning approach used. Some approaches require more academic labour, others more technical labour. Simple course outlines and assignments are cheapest, and virtual reality the most expensive, but there are many models in between. Some of the latter expect students to study textbooks (only) and engage in considerable online conferencing with their fellow-students and tutors, possibly engaging in substantial group learning tasks the outcomes of which are formally assessed. Development costs rise with the richness of the resources provided to students. Economies of scale obtained with older distance learning systems may not emerge with e-learning, because of the need to support students well online and the high cost of doing so. Institutional Web site development costs are likely to be high.

6.9 Comparative studies of costs of e-education, distance education without e-learning and conventional campus-based education are difficult, according to Rumble (2001b), because often reported costs do not take into account full institutional costs, full system costs, costs to students, network maintenance costs and so on.

6.10 What seems fairly clear from Rumble's (2001b) analyses is that there is no guarantee that distance education and e-education will be more cost-effective than campus-based education. Indeed, he argues that although distance learning systems have improved access to education for a great many people, in many such systems this has been at a price: a decline in quality of the educational experience. Noble (2002) identifies the same problem of quality and excoriates the 'digital diploma mills'. Not for nothing did the Australian government close down Greenwich University, a so-called international open university on Norfolk Island in the Pacific (*The Australian*, October 11, 2002).

6.11 Rumble's (2001b, p231) analyses conclude:

'Globalising providers of distance education who exploit the capabilities of e-education to transcend frontiers will no doubt look to that part of the market that can afford to meet the costs of e-education. As they turn their attention towards the global market, so it will become easier for them to forget those sectors of the market (including the local market) that cannot afford the cost. The temptation to become increasingly commercial will grow – a temptation that is being fuelled by current approaches towards public expenditure.'

6.12 Rumble (1999) stresses that distance education, including e-education, has to make a business case to justify investment, whether or not it is commercialised. He does acknowledge the many other justifications for its introduction and use: cost is only one factor in the equation. If the economic consequences of introducing e-learning are to raise the cost of developing teaching material and of providing student support (increasing both fixed and variable costs), then who will want to invest in materials development? Will it be only those offering courses in business and IT, with perhaps niche providers for medicine and health, where expertise is scarce? What of philosophy and art?

Funding

6.13 Along with other forms of part-time education, distance education and training have generated new patterns of funding compared with full-time education, although the latter's funding is changing too, towards students and parents having to pay a greater share and government a smaller share. The funding options are limited: many governments declare they cannot afford to increase their spending on education and do not necessarily see distance education as a cost-effective alternative even at post-secondary level.

6.14 Table 1, setting stakeholders and funding sources against functions on which money must be spent, raises interesting questions about who pays for what. Distance education and training in many countries has been paid for by students' fees, which may be covered partly by their employers; by publicly-funded and privately-funded institutions; through government grants or subsidies; and occasionally through community resources. These are the main sources of income for providers. As Table 1 shows, expenditure falls under six headings.

6.15 The balance between the sources of income for distance education has changed with the introduction of e-learning and reductions in government funding. Private sector institutions like the University of Phoenix (see Appendix 1) are providing a larger share than before of the capital required for the development and distribution of materials. Income to pay for running costs is also coming more from the private sector: many employers are obliged to pay for most of their employees' training, particularly in corporate universities (see Appendix 2), whether or not it is at a distance. The private sector at present provides practically all the income, in fact, for corporate universities.

Table 1. Stakeholders and functions in distance education and training

	<i>Students</i>	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Public sector institutions</i>	<i>Private sector institutions</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Community resource</i>
Development of teaching materials						
Student recruitment and marketing						
Distribution of teaching material						
Student support and assessment						
Quality assurance and accreditation						
Regulation and governance						

6.16 Rumble (2001a) quotes an early business plan for the UKeU as making it clear that students would have to pay for access to online libraries, for tutorial support, for guidance and advice, and for examinations and awards. And in e-learning students generally have to pay for their own computer, printer, software and Internet access. Making students (the beneficiaries) pay more seems to be the pattern for the future, but it does raise again the question of how poor students can be helped. Means testing of students may be a practical proposition in rich countries, but it is not in poor ones. If in the latter only the rich élites benefit from distance education, publicly- or privately-funded, that is not equitable.

7. POLICY QUESTIONS REGARDING GATS

7.1 Knight (2002, p21) asserts that the current analysis and debate about the impact of GATS on HE is complex and contentious.

'Opinions on the risks and benefits are divided, if not polarised. They differ within and between countries. Each country must undertake the very serious challenge of balancing opportunities and commitments to liberalise trade for exporting higher education services, with the possible impact, related to the same commitments, of the import of education services.'

7.2 The same is true for distance education. Universities and colleges offering distance learning face a bewildering range of competition, public and private, at home and from abroad. This competition is likely to increase under GATS.

7.3 Governments everywhere are facing difficult decisions about funding education and training from the public purse, and distance education must come into consideration. Ministries of education may not be used to thinking in terms of international trade, yet GATS obliges them to do.

7.4 Important policy questions for governments and institutions regarding GATS include the following:

- Should private- or publicly-funded distance education and training from abroad be encouraged to supplement publicly-funded on-campus provision?
- Should public funds be made available to pay for distance education and training provision by public or private foreign companies?
- How should private- or publicly-funded distance education and training from foreign providers be regulated, bearing in mind GATS?
- Will the poor be able to afford distance education and training offered by public or private providers from abroad under GATS? If not, who will assist them?
- What policies and incentives would turn poor students into a market for distance education and training?
- If distance education and training from abroad is offered mostly or entirely online, what help can students expect from their home government in gaining access?
- Will individual governments recognise, and will accreditation bodies accept, foreign distance education and training curricula without any adaptation to match national cultural values?
- How will individual governments prevent foreign distance education and training providers from offering below-standard courses leading to worthless certificates?

7.5 There are also policy questions for the Commonwealth of Learning to consider. Within the Commonwealth the distance education and training community, like the HE community, needs proactive leadership in discussing and acting on GATS. Can COL offer its member countries help to:

- understand the technical and legal issues in GATS, and the issues of funding, access, accreditation, cultural identity and intellectual property?

- participate in the international debate about the role and purpose of distance education and training, whether as a public or a private service, under GATS?
- put GATS and distance education and training on the agenda nationally and locally, so that the promises and threats can be acted upon?

7.6 As Perraton (1997, p6) remarked, 'Market forces, the pursuit of economic competitiveness and the financial needs of universities all seem to be playing a stronger role than academic values of international co-operation and exchange.' What can COL do to redress the balance?

Appendix 1. Examples of cross-border distance education

Cross-border distance education ventures can be divided in 2003 into four broad categories: cross-border distance education starters, established distance education institutions, market niche fillers and market failures (to date).

Cross-border distance education starters

Ventures in this category cannot yet claim large numbers of students abroad or a wide range of courses on offer, although they may be targeting markets in several foreign countries and have plans for a fairly broad curriculum. Thumbnail sketches of eight follow:

African Virtual University (AVU), although it started under the World Bank's auspices in the late 1990s, has developed slowly. The concept was tested via satellite between both anglophone and francophone countries. The originating universities and other institutions are now in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Togo and the US. The course-receiving universities are in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe (using English), and in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal (using French). AVU aims to produce its first graduates in 2007. Numbers are likely to be small, however, while students must attend the one or two local centres in each country to participate in the courses.

Arab Open University (AOU) was launched in November 2002, when 1,803 women and 1,765 men from Kuwait, Lebanon and Jordan began studying an adapted UKOU undergraduate course. Early in 2003 more students were due to join AOU from Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Within five years, AOU may be serving students in other countries such as Yemen, Syria and Sudan. As many as 22 Arab countries may eventually participate.

AOU was created by a consortium of Middle Eastern organisations with help from the UKOU's international division, Open University Worldwide. The consortium's President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees is Saudi Prince Talal Bin Abdul Aziz, who is also President of AGFUND, a United Nations programme supporting educational and social projects in the region, including AOU.

In preparing for the launch, more than 200 metric tonnes of teaching materials were shipped from the UKOU to AOU headquarters in Kuwait. The AOU's courses, which will include online support and activities, are being offered in English and lead initially to bachelors' degrees in English Language and Literature, Computer Science/IT, Education or Business Administration. Accreditation is being arranged through the UKOU. Tutors are being recruited and trained locally in using the UKOU's methods.

Course materials supplied by Open University Worldwide are being adapted for the Islamic culture. For example, references to gay parenting, alcohol and religion have been removed, through delicate negotiation and judicious editing, from UKOU social science courses to be used in the region. Where different examples were needed these could be substituted without damaging the intellectual coherence of the course (Open House, 2002).

AOU is an obvious case of a cross-border distance education provider, despite its dependency at present on imported courses.

Cardean University is a for-profit venture founded by UNext Inc., a platform and content provider. Cardean's partners are Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Stanford,

Chicago and the London School of Economics. It is aimed at corporations and individuals wanting accredited business and IT training within an MBA and short courses (Ryan, 2002a). In 2002, Royal Dutch Shell announced that it had entered into agreements with Cardean to provide business management and leadership courses and global e-learning services to its 81,000 employees in 45 countries. Multinational companies like to use e-learning courses from Cardean, they say, because they can expect a consistently high standard of teaching. UNext agreed in 2002 that Thomson Enterprise Learning would market Cardean's courses world-wide. It seems likely that Cardean's offerings will provide cross-border distance education.

Fathom Knowledge Network is a consortium of, among others, Columbia University, the Smithsonian, the British Library, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, New York Public Library, Cambridge University Press, the London School of Economics, and the Universities of Chicago and Michigan. Its aim is to offer low-cost, short, non-credit courses and online seminars to students, teachers, professionals and lifelong learners. Although international in concept, Fathom was failing, in early 2001, to attract enough paying students to be viable (Ryan, 2002a). As yet, it is not clear whether Fathom will offer distance education.

Global University Alliance (GUA) is made up of nine universities from Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. It acts as a portal for postgraduate degrees and short courses offered by these universities. No enrolment figures are available at present (Ryan, 2002a) and again it is not clear how much of the activity is cross-border or distance education.

Syrian Virtual University (SVU) was established by the state to provide flexible HE first in Syria and later throughout the Arab world and Central Asia, but with the specific aim of cutting the number of Syrians studying abroad. It was expected to register 600 students for the current academic year after trials with 50 last year. SVU offers degrees from some 25 foreign universities, almost all in the US and Canada. Its 774 online programmes include bachelors' and masters' courses across a wide range of disciplines. Over 40% of the 774 are in business education or IT. The language of instruction is at present English, therefore SVU offers a preparatory year of English, IT and study skills. Students do not usually have the option of face-to-face support; they should own a computer and have Internet access, although 'telecentres' are being set up for those without. Fees are very high by Syrian standards and in relation to incomes. SVU's degrees are accredited by the Syrian Ministry of Education (OBHE, 2002).

UK eUniversities Worldwide (UKeU), set up in May 2001, aims to provide online degrees from UK universities to students world-wide, as a specialised and very well-equipped broker. Ryan (2000a, p9) says that this government-backed for-profit project has been developed to 'safeguard current overseas markets and to exploit what is thought to be massive unmet demand for HE'. UKeU is the operating company of e-Learning Holding Company Ltd, whose shareholders are UK universities and colleges. Through the holding company, these universities and colleges have granted UKeU a licence to deliver their courses online. The UK government has provided £62m for start-up of this public-private initiative and is committed until 2004.

Sun Microsystems is providing the matching private contribution, mainly through the supply of hardware and customisation of the Sun LearnTone learning management system for the UKeU at a cost of £20m (MacLeod, 2002). UK universities are showing some interest in adopting it for their own students' e-learning.

Revenues will be earned from fee income from enrolling students. The first courses, to be launched in spring 2003, are intended for students in Malaysia, Hong Kong, the

Middle East and Brazil, and sales managers were appointed in late 2002 to cover these countries and regions. UKeU will charge at least £9,000 for a course from the University of York leading to a Masters in Public Policy, £9,250 for one leading to a Masters in Information Technology and Management from Sheffield Hallam University, and £2,600 for a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning in the Connected Economy from Cambridge University and the Open University. These are UK prices and may be higher in other countries. UKeU will also market from 2004 five courses from the University of Ulster: a Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Biomedical Sciences and four courses in Environmental Management.

Student enrolments in the UKeU are as yet unknown, but this is a case of distance education, some of which will be cross-border.

Universitas 21Global (U21global) is a joint venture between Universitas 21, which is a consortium of universities in Australia (3), Canada (2), China (3), Germany (1), New Zealand (1), Singapore (1), Sweden (1), the United Kingdom (4), and the United States (2), and Thomson Learning, a subsidiary of Thomson Corporation, the Canadian-based publishing house with 2001 revenues of \$7.2 billion. With headquarters in Singapore, U21global will be offering an MBA and other postgraduate courses in accountancy, business, information science and IT developed by Thomson Learning, which serves over 5,000 customers world-wide, including companies such as DaimlerChrysler, Northwest Airlines, Honeywell, Proctor & Gamble and Dow Chemical. Ryan (2002a) notes that U21global will thus avoid the intellectual property problems that arise when for-profit divisions of publicly-funded universities sell materials developed by academics in these institutions.

Student enrolments of U21global have not been disclosed as yet and it is not clear how much of the activity is cross-border or distance education.

New virtual universities in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden (see Web Directory below) should be added here.

Established cross-border distance education institutions

These are properly called institutions: they are no longer merely short-term projects or experiments. They have large numbers of students abroad and a wide range of courses on offer, although not always to a large number of countries. Thumbnail sketches of five follow:

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in India, is the largest open university in the world with some 800,000 students, 55% in IT and 18% in management courses. Several hundred study centres provide facilities for study, including access to television, video and computers. It recently announced that Nigeria and Kenya had requested 160 of its courses for use in universities in those countries. It has links with Open Universities of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and has a leading role in the South Asian Consortium of Open and Distance Learning. Current discussions may lead to IGNOU assisting Afghanistan with distance learning. IGNOU's academic programmes are on offer in Abu Dhabi, Al-Ain, Dubai, Sharjah, Doha, Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman in the Middle East Asia; Singapore, Myanmar, Vietnam in South-East Asia and in Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles in the Indian Ocean Rim. In collaboration with the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, a UNESCO organisation, IGNOU offers distance education programmes in Ethiopia, Liberia and Madagascar.

UK Open University (UKOU) with a total enrolment of about 165,000, teaches some 30,000 students each year outside the UK, mainly in Western Europe. Its Business School alone has 30,000 students in 38 nations, including 2,500 taking the MBA degree

outside the UK. Most UKOU students study at a distance in English and take UKOU examinations to obtain a degree from the UKOU, but franchise arrangements and accreditation agreements with a large number of institutions at home and abroad extend the UKOU's reach.

Universidad Virtual, a subsidiary of the privately-funded Monterrey Institute of Technology in Mexico, offers 15 Masters programmes via satellite, teleconferencing and learning centres, of which it has about 1,500 in Mexico and over 100 in other Latin American countries, serving some 50,000 students (World Bank, 2002). Despite its many learning centres, this institution can be counted as a further example of cross-border distance education (see also Bates, 1997).

University of Phoenix Online, part of the fully accredited University of Phoenix (UoP) and of the Apollo Group, is expanding dramatically in the big-volume US market where access to computers and communications is not a problem (Ryan, 2002b). With 49,000 online enrolments in August 2002 out of 134,000 students, UoP claims to be the largest US private institution of HE. Some 172,000 students had graduated by 2002. It has extended its online reach beyond US borders to Canada, Puerto Rico and Germany, but also provides 121 learning centres on the ground, mostly in the US (Ryan, 2002a) but also in the Netherlands (OBHE, 2002). UoP recognises for credit the courses offered by other providers: for example, Envision University, the corporate university of a fairly small Canadian company, Envision Credit Union, has over 200 courses recognised for college credit. (Corporate Universities International Newsletter, 2002). UoP's enrolments are mainly in business studies and IT; it is clearly running a 'mixed economy' of campus-based and distance education, some of it cross-border.

University of Maryland's University College (UMUC), which has provided print-based, tutor-supported, accredited distance learning for many years, particularly for personnel in the armed services in the US and abroad. UMUC claims to have operations in 29 countries and offers undergraduate and graduate programmes. Online enrolments stood at 40,000 in 2000, including 4,700 in Europe and 4,000 in Asia; UMUC no longer has a campus in Germany (Ryan, 2002a). It is an obvious example of cross-border distance education.

Niche fillers in the cross-border distance education market

These institutions occupy niche markets at home and abroad for which they have (so far) a small range of courses and/or materials ready and available, even if only small numbers of students enrol. Some of the niche fillers may well expand into other markets soon.

Asia International Open University, based in Macau, provides accredited degree programmes in business and management to students in Macau, Hong Kong and mainland China.

Duke University's Fuqua School of Business in the US offers a Cross Continent programme leading to an internationally-focussed MBA in 20 months. Students study in teams and attend nine weeks of residential sessions in Durham, North Carolina, or in Frankfurt, Germany. The rest of the programme is delivered over the Internet to students, each of whom has a laptop computer with software customised by the university. In 2001, about 1,000 students were on the programme, most of them in the US.

Harvard's Business School operates a non-profit subsidiary that offers short online interactive case studies to corporate executives and their staff. Clients can obtain a non-credit completion certificate, but few do. Its customer list includes major US multinationals (Ryan, 2002a).

Jones International University (JIU) offers undergraduate and graduate courses entirely online and has students in 57 countries. It uses content experts from the US and the UK. JIU has provided six specialised credit-bearing programmes in management education for staff in Ball Corporation, the international food and beverage container company. However, although part of the same Apollo Group as UoP, JIU had graduated only 10 students by 2001, according to Ryan (2002a). The Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE), is another subsidiary of Jones International.

Pakistan's Virtual University (PVU) was set up as a top priority project of the Ministry of Science and Technology to exploit the potential of IT as a key contributor to the socio-economic development of Pakistan. It aims to use the services of the best available faculty, at home and abroad, without relocating them. Through Pakistan's national telecommunication infrastructure it provides education nation-wide via television and the Internet, eliminating the need for qualified faculty at each campus and providing uniform learning. It started with a 4-year Bachelor of Computer Science programme and intends to introduce Masters degrees and conversion programmes for engineers and scientists. Students can attend 'private virtual campuses' in existing institutions for study and for administrative purposes. PVU awards a federally recognised degree. (Note: Pakistan already has the Allama Iqbal Open University offering distance learning.)

Western Governors University (WGU) in the US offers online degrees based entirely on competencies, not on required courses. Students must demonstrate their knowledge and skills through WGU's assessments. They can register for a limited range of undergraduate and graduate programmes. Those new in 2003 are aimed at teachers in primary and secondary schools. WGU imposes no special admission requirements for international students, other than proficiency in English, but they may need to visit the US for the assessments. No figures are available of students or graduates and there is some doubt whether WGU should be regarded as a cross-border distance education institution at all.

Failures in the distance education market

If details can be obtained, and that can be difficult, lessons may be learned from institutions offering distance education that have failed. The main reasons for failure of the examples below was that they did not attract sufficient students and/or expand their course catalogue. Not all of them aimed at cross-border markets.

DePaul University, Chicago, had a proposed Masters in e-commerce that did not attract any students, national or international (MacLeod, 2002).

Harcourt University, set up by Harcourt the US publisher and to be based on that firm's textbooks, failed to attract sufficient students and was closed when Thomson Corporation, the Canadian publishing company, took over that part of Harcourt in 2001 (Ryan, 2002a).

Malaysian Virtual University (MVU) was conceived in 1996 as a degree-granting institution aimed at increasing the participation in commerce and industry of the indigenous Malay ethnic group. One of the country's largest commercial co-operatives was behind it and an American company was brought in to design it, but not as a Web-based distance teaching institution. The MVU did not come into being, however, for lack of agreement regarding where, when or how the courses would be developed. Nor did it obtain the necessary licence to operate from the government (Ress and Sonberg, 1998).

New York University has closed its NYU Online despite an investment of \$21.5m (MacLeod, 2002). No details are available.

Open University of the United States (OUUS), after three years of financial losses and low student enrolment, was closed in 2002 by the UKOU, its parent institution. It had not yet obtained full US regional accreditation.

Temple University's Virtual Temple had closed by mid-2001 (Ryan, 2002a). No details are available.

Appendix 2. Examples of corporate universities

There are several useful recent sources on corporate universities. Taylor and Paton (2002) provide a conceptual analysis, with details of their historical development and relationships with public-sector HE.

Taylor and Phillips' (2002) study for the European Foundation for Management Development includes case histories of the corporate universities of ABN-AMRO (Dutch), Allianz (German/Swiss), and BT Academy (British). All three are international.

Examples of corporate universities, many of them based in companies that are household names, are discussed on the Web site of the Corporate University Xchange: BAe Systems, Bank One, Barclays, Booz Allen Hamilton, Dell Learning, Dow Chemical, FDS.COM (Federated Department Stores, Inc.), First University, Ford Motor Company, Hughes Escorts Communications, IBM, Infosys Technologies, Kettering University (General Motors), KPMG, Microsoft, Motorola, Nestlé, Oracle University, Shell Open University, The Academy @ University of Chicago Hospitals and Toyota. Thumbnail sketches of six of these follow:

Booz Allen Hamilton, a consulting firm based in the US, has over 7,000 employees in its geographically-dispersed World Technology Business Operation. The company realised that e-learning offered the means to cope quickly with changing laws, policies and regulations in the countries where its employees were working. However, the company's Center for Performance Excellence reported that among the staff desktop e-learning is sometimes considered 'nice to know', but less valuable and prestigious than traditional forms; multi-tasking and distractions are common, so many staff e-learn at home instead. One of the first courses offered online was from MIT and the National Technological University (both US). Now the company has a Virtual Campus giving its employees access to over 600 online courses.

First University was set up to meet the training needs of up to 70,000 employees in First Union, a US bank holding company. Following a merger in 2001 of First Union with Wachovia, First University expanded to serve a corps of over 90,000 staff. It uses a range of distance training methods, including satellite-borne interactive television and some online delivery. Its students are entirely in the US, however (Latten *et al*, 2001).

Kettering University is the corporate university of the parent company, General Motors. It combines e-learning and print with face-to-face sessions, and operates in North America, Latin America, Europe and the Asia Pacific region, serving over 350,000 employees. It has 2,600 undergraduate students from the US and 22 other countries.

Infosys Technologies Ltd., a consulting and IT company with 30,000 employees, is in India. It operates a partly online Infosys University for its own staff, who receive on average 8 days' training a year. This corporate university plans to extend its services to other companies in India (Corporate Universities International Newsletter), but not yet in other countries.

Hughes Escorts Communications Ltd., the largest VSAT service provider in India and the Asia Pacific region, announced in August 2001 that it had adopted for its employees several degree and certificate programmes from the Apollo Group's subsidiary, Western International University. Apollo claims its curricula are 'totally standardised and developed centrally. The learning outcomes are managed so as to be uniform across the world'. The teaching is delivered via satellite using synchronous video, with text messaging that enables students to question their teachers and vice versa. Among

the first programmes launched in 2001 was Apollo's MBA in Global Management. It is worth noting that Apollo and Hughes are both 'closely monitoring the regulatory framework governing operations of foreign universities in India and are confident of complying with all requirements and meeting registration norms, as and when they are announced'. Meantime, Harvard Business School is to set up a regional centre in Madhya Pradesh (India Times, Jan 13, 2003).

SkillSoft is a leading provider of e-learning courseware and referenceware for business and IT professionals. It announced in late 2002 a four-year deal under which it is offering 1200 IT courses to US Air Force personnel world-wide, but the Air Force is only one of its 2800 corporate customers, many of them multinational companies, and it has over 4.5 million licensed users. In 2002 SkillSoft customised 27 of its business skills courses for the Chinese market.

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African Virtual University (Kenya) <http://www.avu.com>

Arab Open University (Kuwait) <http://www.arabou.org/>

Association of Commonwealth Universities (UK) <http://www.acu.ac.uk/>

AT&T Learning Network (US) <http://www.att.com/learningnetwork/teachers/>

Bank One (US) <http://www.bankone.com/>

Bond University (South Africa) <http://www.bondsa.co.za/index1.htm>

Booz | Allen | Hamilton (US)
[http://www.bah.com/bahng/SilverDemo?PID=Home.html&NGPgID=HOME
 &contType=TABLE&dispType=HTML](http://www.bah.com/bahng/SilverDemo?PID=Home.html&NGPgID=HOME&contType=TABLE&dispType=HTML)

Boston Education and Software Technologies (India) <http://www.bostonci.com/>

Canada's Virtual University <http://cvu-uvc.ca>

Career Education Corporation (US) <http://www.careered.com>

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat
<http://www.caricom.org/expframes2.htm>

CAUT - ACPPU (Canadian Association of University Teachers) <http://www.caut.ca/>

CDI Education Corporation (Canada) <http://www.cdieducation.com/english.nsf/cdi>

Commonwealth of Learning <http://www.col.org>

Corporate University Xchange (US) <http://www.corpu.com/>

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (US) <http://www.chea.org/>

Dell Learning (US) <http://www.dell.com/us/en/gen/corporate/dellu.htm>

Denmark's Virtual University <http://eng.uvm.dk/news/dvuni.htm>

Department for Education and Skills (UK)
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/frontend/index.shtml>

DePaul University (US) <http://www.depaul.edu/>

DeVry International (US) <http://www.international.devry.edu/index.php>

Dutch Digital University <http://www.digiuni.nl/>

Economic Community of West African States
http://www.africana.com/Articles/tt_477.htm

Education International <http://www.ei-ie.org/>

Envision Credit Union (US) <http://www.envisioncu.com>

EUA (European University Association) <http://www.unige.ch/eua/>

European Union On-Line http://www.europa.eu.int/index_en.htm

Fathom: The Source for Online Learning <http://www.fathom.com/>

FDS.COM (Federated Department Stores, Inc.) (US) <http://www.federated-fds.com/home.asp>

Finland's Virtual University <http://virtuaaliyliopisto.fi/index.php?language=eng>

Ford Motor Company (US) <http://www.ftdc.com/index.htm>

Free Trade Area of the Americas

GATE (Global Alliance for Transnational Education) <http://www.gate@edugate.org>

GATSwatch (Netherlands) <http://www.GATSwatch.org>
Global University Alliance <http://www.gua.com>
Harcourt, Inc. <http://www.harcourt.com/>
Horizon Education and Technologies (Singapore) <http://horison.com.sg>
New Partnership for Africa's Development (South Africa)
<http://www.gov.za/issues/nepad.htm>
Harvard Business School (US) <http://www.hbs.edu/>
Indira Gandhi National Open University (India) <http://www.ignou.ac.in/>
Informatics (Singapore) <http://www.informaticsgroup.com/>
Infosys Technologies Limited (India) <http://www.inf.com/>
International Association of Universities <http://www.unesco.org/iay/>
INTI Universal Holdings (Malaysia) <http://www.intimal.edu.my/>
Jones International University (US) <http://jiu-web-a.jonesinternational.edu/eprise/main/JIU/home.html>
Kettering University - formerly General Motors Institute (US) <http://www.gmi.edu/>
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US) <http://web.mit.edu/>
McGraw-Hill Education (US) <http://www.mheducation.com/index.html>
Microsoft Corporation (US) <http://www.microsoft.com/>
NIIT (India) <http://www.niit.com>
Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (UK) <http://www.obhe.ac.uk>
OECD <http://www.oecd.org/>
OpenCourseWare at MIT (US) <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html>
Open University (UK) <http://www.open.ac.uk>
Open University Validation Services (UK) <http://www.open.ac.uk/validate/>
Open University Worldwide (UK) <http://www.open.ac.uk/collaborate/index.htm>
Oracle University (US) <http://www.oracle.com/education/index.html?content.html>
Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Community <http://www.sptc.gov.au/>
Pakistan Virtual University (Pakistan) <http://www.vu.edu.pk/>
Pearson Education <http://www.pearsoned.com>
Pearson Education Learning Network <http://www.learningnetwork.com>
Prosoft Training <http://www.prosofttraining.com/>
Public Citizen (US) <http://www.Citizen.org/>
Raffles La Salle College Group (Singapore) <http://www.raffles-lasalle.com/singapore/>
SADC - Southern African Development Community (South Africa)
<http://www.sadc.int/>
SkillSoft (US) <http://www.smartforce.com/corp/marketing/>
South Pacific Commission <http://www.spc.org>
Strayer Education (US) <http://strayereducation.com/>
Sylvan International Universities (US) <http://www.sylvanu.com/>
Swedish Virtual University <http://www.netuniversity.se/Default.asp?c=63>
Syrian Virtual University (Syria) <http://www.svuonline.org/eng.svu/index.asp>
Temple University Online (US) <http://www.temple.edu/index.html>
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International Research Foundation for Open Learning
The Michael Young Centre, Purbeck Road, Cambridge
United Kingdom CB2 2PG
Tel. +44 1223 401020 Fax. +44 1223 401026
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