

# PROVIDING A UK IFP EXPERIENCE IN MALAYSIA: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES



Bruce Howell  
Head of Foundation, Study and Language Institute  
University of Reading Malaysia, Iskandar campus  
June 2019



1985



**UK**

**MALAYSIA**



**2019**

# APPROXIMATE TIMELINE

2010,  
opportunity  
arises,  
decisions  
made

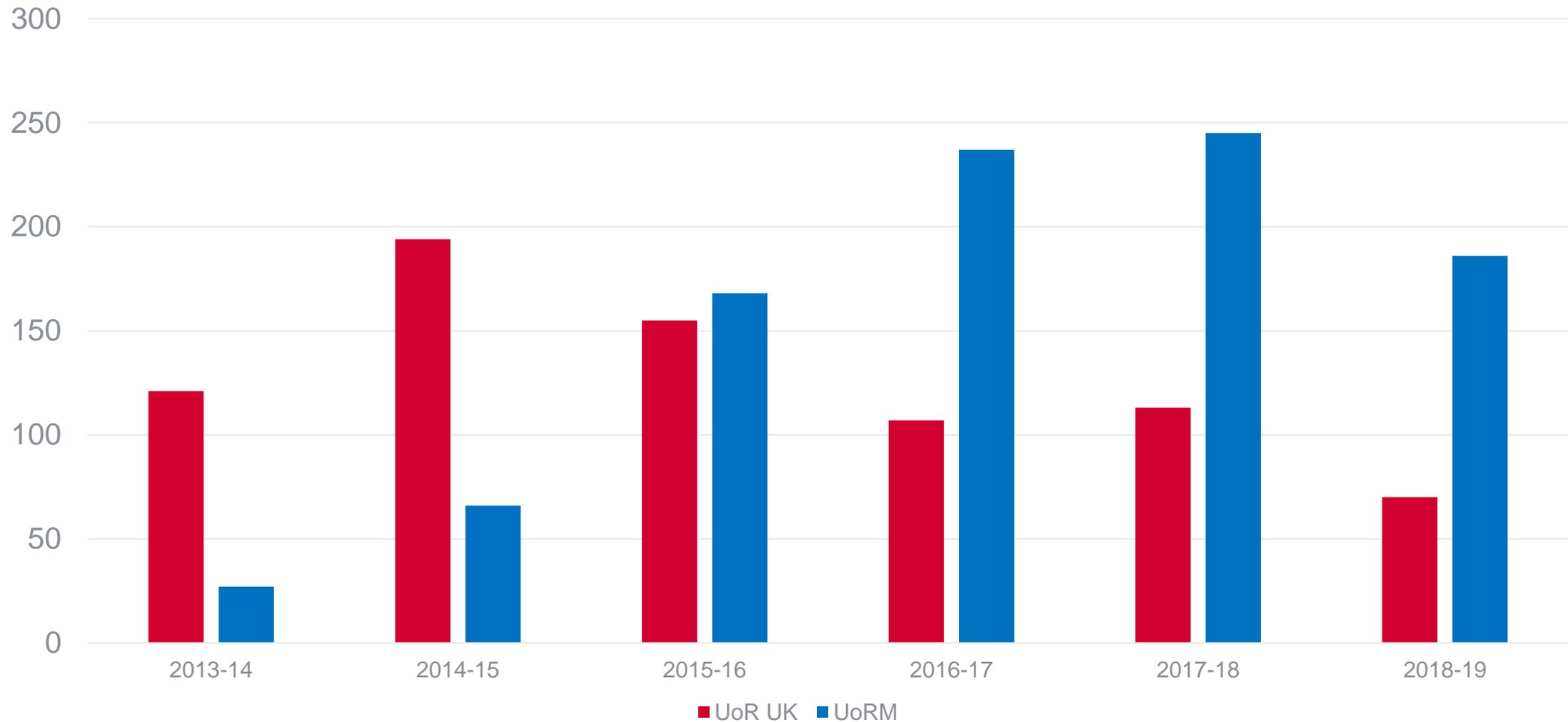
2012, first  
staff,  
temporary  
office

2013, first  
11 students  
(foundation  
only)

2016, new  
building  
complete

2017~,  
growing  
student  
numbers

# IFP STUDENT NUMBERS



# SO, WE JUST DELIVER WHAT WE'VE GOT IN A NEW LOCATION, RIGHT?

*Not that simple.*

- Malaysian Education Ministry needs to permit programmes, demanding particular specifications

– vs –

- UK home campus expectations: follow UK standards, follow UK policies & procedures

– vs –

- Desire, or need, to develop locally:
  - deliver to the 'local market'
  - meet expectations of locally-employed staff.

Examples:

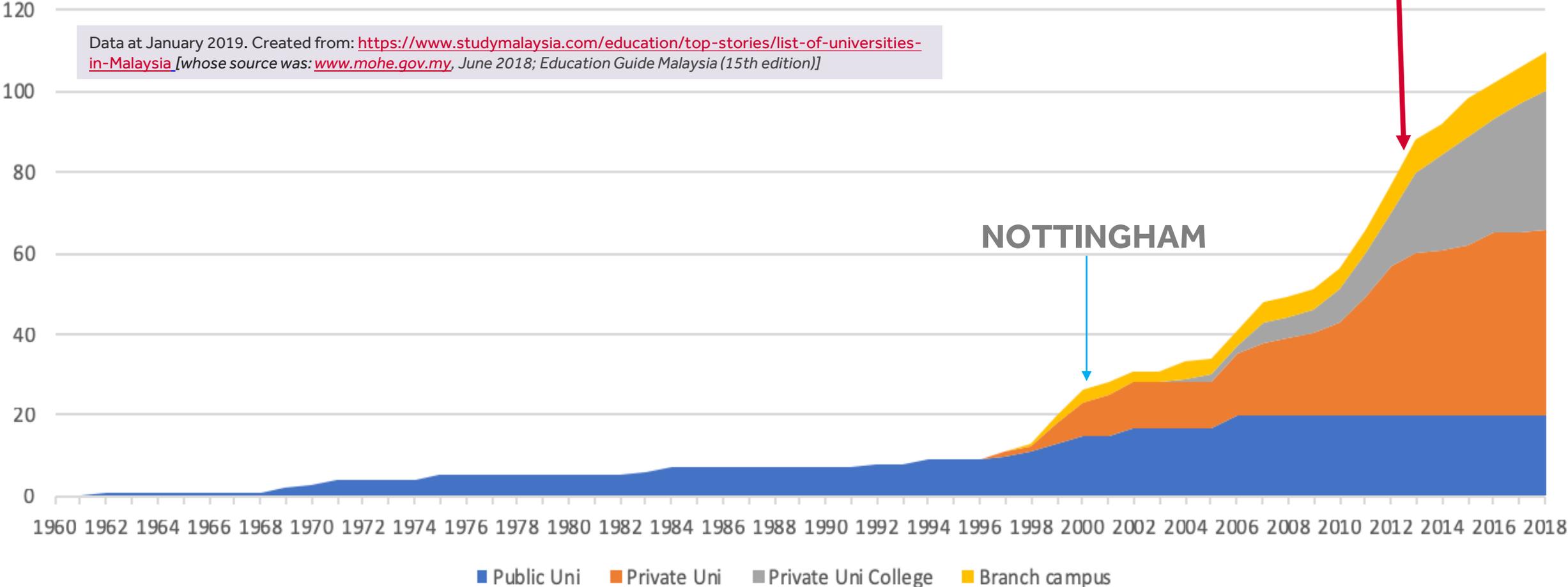
- naming the programme (cannot be 'IFP')
- 11-11-8 term structure to 14-14-14 term structure
- adjusting total teaching hours to make credit conversions work
- fees must be lower; quality must be the same
- local 'competitive' salaries or 'expat' salaries?
- teaching & learning not valued as highly: staff may leave to further their careers by doing research
- employment, visa or tax laws restricting or discouraging non-Malaysian staff
- marketing approaches may be unknown or seem inappropriate to UK staff
- etc.

# MALAYSIA: A RAPIDLY-CHANGING 'MARKET'



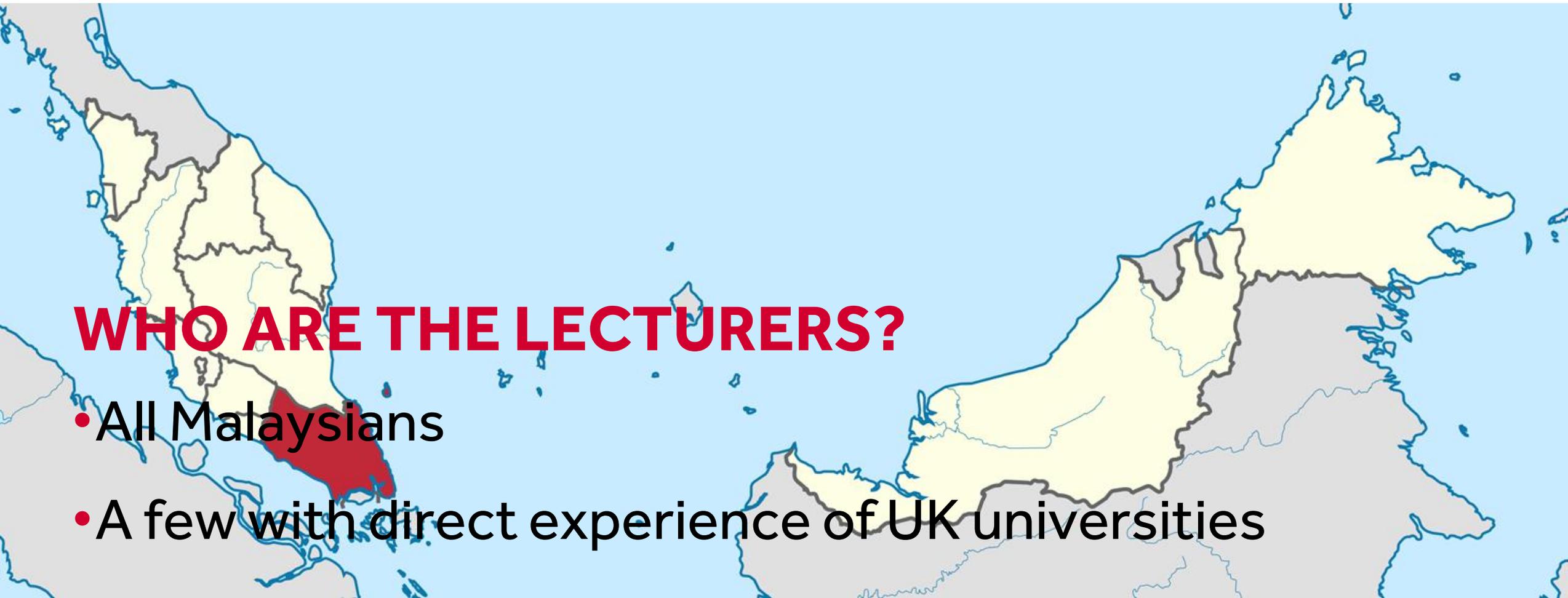
## READING STARTED HERE

### The Growth of Malaysian Universities



# WHO ARE THE STUDENTS?

- Around 200 students a year, almost all Malaysian, mostly from Johor, most 17 years old.



# WHO ARE THE LECTURERS?

- All Malaysians
- A few with direct experience of UK universities

# WHAT'S THE SAME?



## University of Reading UK & Malaysia - IFP

modules (the curriculum)

standards (difficulty of materials, assessment setting and marking)

progression rules onto undergraduate degrees

external examining

personal tutorial system, welfare support, procedures for absence/misconduct/underperforming/etc.

team-building, fun and social activities

# WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

University of Reading UK	University of Reading Malaysia
Nearly 100 years old; IFP since 1985	New
Most staff British	Most staff Malaysian
A public UK university, answerable to the Office for Students, etc.	A 'private Malaysian university', regulated by the Ministry of Education
IFP is 'niche' – low profile at the university compared to other activities	Highly dependent on IFP: the majority of students come through this route.
UK international fees	Less than ¼ of UK international fees
Students from many different countries	Most students Malaysian
Students live far away from home	Most students live with parents
Visa issues are key	Visa issues less important



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## AND, PERHAPS THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE...

**Perception** of what the institution is, and who the competitors are. Rankings/reputation are not the main attraction.

Far more important:

- **fee level & discounts;**
- **location;**
- **job prospects.**

1. Maintaining the ethos and quality of the UK programme on the Malaysia programme

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

2. Compliance to Ministry of Education's QA requirements, and employment laws

3. Do not assume UK-based staff understand the context! Develop and maintain UK links

## Success?

1. YES
2. YES
3. YES (needs further work)

It all takes a lot of time and effort, but well worth it. Need continual support for Malaysia staff during the early years. Need to involve UK-based staff. Communication is key!!

# A MODEL: UK IFP IN MALAYSIA

Don't compromise ...	Be flexible and open minded with ...
Quality, brand, promises in marketing	Marketing methods
Ministry QA requirements	Interpretation of requirements <i>be creative</i>
Commitment to excellent teaching	Expectations of staff skills and experience <i>provide plenty of staff development</i>
Ethos (academic integrity, inclusivity, fairness)	Cultural considerations <i>avoid being too prescriptive</i>
Level/difficulty	Expectations of student engagement <i>provide plenty of support but nurture independence</i>
Standard-keeping between campuses	UK staff who have less invested in the Malaysia campus <i>spend plenty of time building and maintaining relationships and understanding</i>



## Are branch campuses withering?

Overseas branch campuses have mushroomed in the past two decades, but with the risks larger than initially assumed and the returns less certain, stories of abandoned ventures have begun to mount. Ellie Bothwell asks whether the model still has a future

June 20, 2019

By [Ellie Bothwell](#) Twitter: [@elliebothwell](#)

When Christopher Hill left the UK in 2008 to take up a role as director of the graduate school at the University of



# Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding

May 2019

UK Government (2019) *Independent panel report: post-18 review of education and funding* ("Augar review")  
ISBN 978-1-5286-1322-4, CP 117

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-18-review-of-education-and-funding-independent-panel-report>

Chapter three: Higher education

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## Recommendation 3.8

We recommend withdrawing financial support for foundation years attached to degree courses after an appropriate notice period. Exemptions for specific courses such as Medicine may be granted by the OfS.



**WE NEED TO KEEP  
ON ADAPTING TO  
WHATEVER  
SCENARIO!**

*Remember, the students  
make it all worth it*