

Collaborative Partnership Working and Nurse Practice Development. How partnership working has helped develop Nursing in Malaysia

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In April 2005 Northumbria University established a collaborative partnership with the Malaysian Allied Health Sciences Academy (now MAHSA University College) a distance delivered nursing completion degree offered from the School of Health, Community and Education Studies (HCES) was validated and approved to run. Cohorts of 100 qualified nursing students commenced this programme in 2006 and in March 2009 a re-approval event supported a proposal to continue delivering a distance delivered Nursing Practice Development degree along with a Health Practice degree programme to 800 students per year. In addition Physiotherapy degree programmes have been franchised to MAHSA as well a distance delivered MSc Nursing and franchised programmes from the School of Applied Sciences programmes in Biomedical Sciences (with further programmes in Food and Nutrition to follow) Collectively these programmes from both Schools will generate student numbers of more than 2000 by April 2010.

MAHSA University College was established in 2004 to provide programmes in the field of allied health sciences to train personnel needed for the health services in the public and private sector. In 2004 MAHSA University College and the School of Health, Community and Education Studies (HCES) at Northumbria University signed a Memorandum of Understanding and entered into partnership. Within a four year period the College has substantially grown its own portfolio, while also collaborating with several English and one Indonesian University. In March 2009 its student population exceeded 10,000

This collaborative partnership between MAHSA University College and Northumbria University has grown and matured over the last four years because of the excellent working relationship Northumbria have with MAHSA University College. The benefits of the partnership have been numerous, while the original focus and intention has never been lost; that of moving nursing forward in Malaysia through practice development. As with all good partnerships the strength and quality of the outputs can be correlated to the effort invested by the partners.

The Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2008) in launching the Governments Strategic Plan for Higher Education stated that it is imperative for local educational institutions to work collaboratively with creditable overseas Universities in developing research programmes and innovative purposeful curriculum. This partnership can certainly boast the development of good programmes and curriculum.

The purpose of this paper is to share with conference delegates the strengths of this collaborative partnership and highlight the role it has had in helping Nurse Practice Development within Malaysia.