Brief summary of meeting between Catriona Shannon, Barbara Webb and Eric McKenzie to discuss recruitment of overseas (OS) students.

Three recruitment issues were mentioned: postgraduate, undergraduate and 2+2 arrangements.

We decided after a short discussion that 2+2 arrangements are more trouble than they are worth and we would focus on UG recruitment at POE1 and POE2.

PG recruitment is already being addressed, more so than UG, as are research associations with OS universities.

The motivation is to recruit high quality students. Other issues are that we must increase our OS numbers and CSE must increase their overall OS numbers too.

China and India were identified as our major targets.

They present quite different problems for recruitment. We are unable to accept Chinese school qualifications and require them to study some A-levels or take one of the many Foundation courses on offer and take a suitable English language qualification. Although we receive many applications from such routes, very few come and understandably prefer to stay with the local university in an area they have adapted to. Heriot-Watt and Glasgow universities have or plan to start a foundation year programme to address the issue. Indian students, on the other hand, can present with excellent school qualifications and generally would look for POE2 from us. They are not prepared to pay fees for four years.

Scholarships are very important to both groups, probably more for prestige rather than for financial reasons. Of course, many English universities will waive part or all of their top-up fee and call it a scholarship. Some European universities, particularly in France, I believe, reduce fees to almost nothing to attract Chinese and Indian students, so important to the research community in all countries if they stay after graduation. Edinburgh does not plan to change the current system of fees.

Our University's representative in China is largely concerned with developing research collaborations but will be available to assist us. We have great experience to draw on with Catriona and Lorna Halliday to guide us. It may be useful to call on the experience of Linda Burns, Ewen Macpherson and Colin Pritchard too from time to time.

Our University uses agents to find and nominate potential students at both UG and PG levels. These are respected agents who are paid a commission of 10% of the OS fee per matriculated student. Some universities pay more, up to 15%. It is a competitive market. The agent will set up interviews, in cooperation with our International
Office, at appropriate times of the year. In this way, for example, it is possible to conduct several interviews and be in and out of India in one week. It is really essential to make instant decisions. Interviewees expect to leave the interview with a firm decision.

**Actions Required for China**

We may have to investigate the provision of some kind of foundation programme. However we should target students from the growing number of IB schools in China and from the growing number of schools teaching their courses in the English language.

Our representative must be an academic from Informatics as that is expected and shows respect.

**Actions required for India**

The agents along with our International Office will identify good students from good schools.

We need to write a list of requirements for POE2, with some flexibility, to interface to Indian school qualifications.

Here again, the interviewer must be an academic from our School and preferably our admissions tutor or someone with similar knowledge of our courses and degrees. Relying on visiting academics isn't appropriate.

The timing may be wrong and they may not have the required knowledge to make the instant decisions required.

**To do:**

We have to discuss and set a budget for a programme of visits to China and India. The budget must be set in terms of both finance and staff time.

Catriona can assist in this process to ensure it is correct.

The proposal for such a programme is a real no-brainer as just one OS student recruited will cover all costs.

Eric McKenzie, 18/07/08