Session 4
International Collaborations with AUT's School of Computer and Mathematical Sciences:
Achievements and Challenges
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This paper provides an overview of the achievements and challenges from the administrative perspective of the International Collaborative Programme that is run through AUT's School of Computer and Mathematical Sciences (SCMS). This programme is in accord with the New Zealand Government's Export Education Strategy for international education that aims to double the economic value of international education to New Zealand, as well as AUT's Strategic Plan 2012-2016 that states a commitment to strengthen international relationships and collaborations in order to have a global impact with communities, industry, businesses and the professions, through the creation and exchange of knowledge and in the application of learning and research. SCMS has a number of formal arrangements with overseas universities for delivery of its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the most successful being the undergraduate degree, the Bachelor of Computer and Information Sciences. The first collaborative programme began in 2009 with HCMU based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and now has 90 graduands. A collaborative programme running in China now has, in round terms, 274 currently enrolled students. Both of these programmes require combined delivery of on-site teaching as well as distance learning.

There are many achievements now that the programme has matured: the graduands in Vietnam have established an active alumni club; the Auckland-based staff who travel to China and Vietnam as well as the staff in the off-shore institution have gained a greater cross-cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of various teaching and learning strategies. The students have the advantage of gaining an NZ and internationally recognized qualification taught in English without the additional costs of travel and accommodation; this is important to many Vietnamese students who are also working to finance their studies. In terms of administrative support to lecturers and students, AUT makes teaching and learning resources available through its dedicated online system, Blackboard ™.

There have been a number of challenges. One has been ensuring fast and easy access to AUT's on-line system and negotiating the various firewalls. The difference time-zones has meant that the overseas students and staff want to access the system when AUT's IT support want to run upgrades or system maintenance because most NZ student and staff have finished for the day. Other challenges include aligning the admission and enrolment processing of these students with the University's standard practices. Ensuring that the students meet and maintain the required level of English has been another challenge that the overseas institutions address in different ways.