

APPENDIX D

Key Characteristics of World-Class Universities

A world-class university

- Has an international reputation for its research;
- Has an international reputation for its teaching;
- Has a number of research stars and world leaders in their fields;
- Is recognized not only by other world-class universities (for example, U.S. Ivy League) but also outside the world of higher education;
- Has a number of world-class departments (that is, not necessarily all);
- Identifies and builds on its research strengths and has a distinctive reputation and focus (that is, its “lead” subjects);
- Generates innovative ideas and produces basic and applied research in abundance;
- Produces groundbreaking research output recognized by peers and prizes (for example, Nobel Prize winners);
- Attracts the most able students and produces the best graduates;
- Can attract and retain the best staff;
- Can recruit staff and students from an international market;
- Attracts a high proportion of postgraduate students, both taught and research;
- Attracts a high proportion of students from overseas;

- Operates within a global market and is international in many activities (for example, research links, student and staff exchanges, and throughput of visitors of international standing);
- Has a very sound financial base;
- Receives large endowment capital and income;
- Has diversified sources of income (for example, government, private companies sector, research income, and overseas student fees);
- Provides a high-quality and supportive research and educational environment for both its staff and its students (for example, high-quality buildings and facilities/high-quality campus);
- Has a first-class management team with strategic vision and implementation plans;
- Produces graduates who end up in positions of influence and/or power (that is, movers and shakers such as prime ministers and presidents);
- Often has a long history of superior achievement (for example, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the United Kingdom and Harvard University in the United States);
- Makes a big contribution to society and our times;
- Continually benchmarks with top universities and departments worldwide; and
- Has the confidence to set its own agenda.

Source: Alden and Lin 2004.