Developing an Internationalised Foundation Program:  
XAIU iFP – A Descriptive Case Study

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DECLARATION

Statement of Originality

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my dissertation, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Robert T.W Rogers:
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my loving mother Fleur and to the memory of my dad Rob. Without their unwavering support I would not have achieved the pinnacle of my academic dreams and I owe all that I have done with my education to them.

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This dissertation examines the practical issues related to internationalisation of programs at Xi’an International University (XAIU), a leading Chinese private higher education institute. The study is expected to be of particular interest to foreign universities considering partnerships with Chinese higher education institutes, especially in the establishment of international cooperation programs, like the XAIU foundation program in this study that is branded ‘iFP’. The problem initially focuses on what motivates XAIU toward internationalisation activities and then focuses on how iFP would be developed and implemented. The study is bound by time and place to establish limits on scope. The theory statement that binds the two study questions and their propositions is that “XAIU internationalisation activities are profit motivated”. The study’s rival theory produces a possible contrasting perspective of participants and stakeholders reality stated as “XAIU internationalisation activities may fail if too much emphasis is placed on profit”. A descriptive case study strategy provides the methodology for this study; a triangulation of methods of gathering evidence pursues validity and reliability; and the use of a logic model provides study direction. A general inductive analysis is used to produce four key findings within the arenas of Government Policy, Commercialisation, Human Resourcing and Internal Dynamics. Tracking the development and implementation of iFP provides a rich mix of influences that all contribute to the internal and external challenges that face the team tasked to take iFP to market. This study is expected to influence the debate on internationalisation because the discourse happens at ground level. As an example of its success, the practical implications of this study are that the development of iFP has already created some interest within the higher education industry with several consultancy-based enquiries.