



UK-UZBEKISTAN TNE SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Regional Symposium: TNE – Quality Assurance and Inclusion in the Context of Growth
3–4 March 2026 | Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Summary

The Regional Symposium on “*TNE: Quality Assurance and Inclusion in the Context of Growth*” brought together government stakeholders, higher education leaders, quality assurance agencies, and universities from the UK, Uzbekistan, and other Central Asian states to discuss the evolving landscape of UK TNE in the region.

Organised in partnership with the British Council, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT), and the Uzbekistan TNE Good Practice Network, the Symposium was held on 3–4 March 2026 at the Westminster International University campus in Tashkent. The event provided a platform for dialogue on how TNE can continue to expand sustainably while maintaining high academic standards and ensuring inclusive educational opportunities.

The Symposium focused on the rapid growth of TNE provision in Uzbekistan and in Central Asia more broadly, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges associated with this expansion. Participants explored the role of quality assurance frameworks, institutional governance, student engagement, and industry collaboration in supporting sustainable, quality TNE provision.

Insights and knowledge were shared throughout the two days through plenary sessions, panel discussions, workshops, and collaborative group work. These formats facilitated knowledge exchange between different stakeholder groups. Discussions emphasised the importance of equitable partnerships, transparent quality assurance processes, and the inclusion of student perspectives in programme design and delivery. The Symposium concluded with reflections on key insights and takeaways, and discussions on future priorities for advancing TNE in the region.

Background and Context

UK TNE has grown significantly in Uzbekistan over the past decade, supported by national reforms aimed at increasing access to international higher education and strengthening collaboration with global institutions. Within this context, the development of strong quality assurance mechanisms and inclusive educational practices has become increasingly important.

According to the HESA Aggregate Offshore Record, Uzbekistan recorded 10,740 UK TNE enrolments in 2024/25, representing a 37% increase over five years and 139%

growth over the past decade, placing the country among the top 20 global markets for UK TNE. This growth has been driven almost exclusively by validation and franchise agreements between UK institutions and Uzbekistani universities.

Business and Management programmes make up the majority of current TNE courses on offer in the country, accounting for 52% of provision, followed by Computing (14%) and Economics (7%). Provision is also heavily concentrated at undergraduate level, which represents 67% of programmes, while postgraduate courses make up the remaining 33% of courses despite enrolments at this level accounting for only around 5% of total TNE students.

Symposium Objectives

The main objectives of the Symposium were to provide meaningful dialogue and collaboration on the development of high-quality and inclusive TNE provision in Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Specifically, the event sought to:

- Support the internationalisation of higher education regionally by sharing UK–Uzbekistan TNE experience, good practice, and examples of scalable partnership models.
- Strengthen quality assurance and inclusive approaches in TNE across all UK–Uzbekistan TNE operators, drawing on lessons from existing TNE provision to inform institutional best practice.
- Support the development of the Uzbekistan TNE Good Practice Network, fostering continued dialogue and collaboration among institutions engaged in TNE partnerships.
- Identify priorities for future TNE collaboration, exploring how international partnerships and knowledge exchange can contribute to broader higher education development across the region.

Key Themes and Discussions

Quality Assurance in the Context of TNE Growth

Quality assurance was a central theme of the Symposium and was the focus of the opening plenary, led by Vicki Stott of the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and Charles Knight of Advance HE. The discussions examined how national regulatory frameworks and institutional governance structures can support the continued expansion of TNE while safeguarding academic standards and student outcomes. Speakers highlighted the importance of clearly defined responsibilities within international partnerships and strong alignment between institutional processes and national quality assurance systems.

Regional TNE Growth and Models of TNE

Drawing on insights from a presentation examining the TNE landscape in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, participants were provided with a data-led overview of current trends in TNE across the region. The presentation highlighted the rapid expansion of higher education in Uzbekistan, where TNE growth has largely been driven by collaborative, partner-delivered provision. In Kazakhstan, recent years have seen increased TNE activity through the establishment of international branch campuses.

Building on these insights, a panel discussion focused specifically on models of TNE operating in Uzbekistan, examining how national development priorities, regulatory

frameworks, and institutional strategies shape the design and delivery of international partnerships. Panellists discussed the opportunities and challenges associated with different partnership models and highlighted the importance of clear governance structures to support sustainable collaboration.

Inclusion and Students as Partners in Quality Assurance

Inclusion and student engagement featured prominently across discussions, with speakers highlighting the importance of involving students as active partners in shaping the quality and inclusivity of TNE programmes. A welcome feature of the Symposium was the strong student presence across discussions and workshops, reflecting a student-centred approach to quality assurance. Several deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students participated in the event and were supported by two English-to-sign language interpreters, Ezoza Akhmedova and Gulnora Mahkamova, who provided live interpretation throughout the sessions. Their work enabled the DHH students in attendance to engage fully with the discussions.

Research on Quality Assurance Developments in UK-Uzbekistan TNE

The Symposium also provided an opportunity to discuss preliminary findings from the forthcoming British Council study, *“UK–Uzbekistan Transnational Education: Quality Assurance Policies, Practices, and Challenges in the Context of Growth”*, due to be published in April 2026. The presentation shared early insights from the research, which examines quality assurance practices across UK–Uzbekistan partnerships and considers how these are evolving in response to the rapid growth of TNE provision.

In addition, an updated mapping of UK–Uzbekistan TNE provision was also presented. This represents the most comprehensive mapping to date, identifying 14 UK providers delivering programmes in partnership with Uzbekistani institutions. The findings provided participants with a clearer understanding of the scale, structure, and development of UK TNE activity in Uzbekistan.

Campus Visits and Institutional Engagement

On the second day of the Symposium, participants took part in campus visits to several universities with active UK-TNE programmes. This included the Pharmaceutical Technical University, TEAM University, and the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) in Tashkent. The visits offered participants the opportunity to observe UK-TNE in practice and gain a better understanding of how international partnerships operate within Uzbekistan’s higher education system. Through meetings with institutional representatives and tours of facilities, participants were able to learn more about programme delivery, student support services, and the operational structures supporting TNE partnerships.

From Learning to Action: Collaborative Discussions

Building on the discussions from earlier sessions, participants took part in facilitated group discussions on the second day of the Symposium to explore how institutions, policymakers, and sector organisations could work together to strengthen TNE partnerships in the region. The session focused on identifying tangible next steps to enhance collaboration, strengthen quality assurance practices, and support the sustainable expansion of TNE.

Priority Areas for Future Collaboration

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Strengthening opportunities for academic professional development through research workshops, academic exchanges, and English language support to further support collaboration and capacity building between partner institutions.

Accessibility and Inclusion for Disabled Students

Improving accessibility for disabled students, particularly in relation to physical campus access and support services. Discussions highlighted the importance of sharing inclusive practices across institutions so that progress in accessibility can benefit the wider higher education sector in Uzbekistan.

TNE Data and Evidence

Improving the availability and reliability of data on TNE activity in the region to support more informed decision-making by institutions considering entry into these markets, while also enabling the sector to better monitor the growth of TNE in key markets like Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

Student Mobility

Exploring the potential for a second phase of TNE development focused on inbound student mobility, and the role that UK TNE provision in the region could play in attracting international students to study in Central Asia.

Expanding the Regional Lens

Broadening the scope of future TNE symposiums to strengthen participation from across Central Asia and support wider regional dialogue on TNE development.