

## 13 COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

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- 13.1 The university seeks to develop collaborations with national and international partners where these are consistent with its strategic objectives and quality standards, and where there is a mutual benefit to the students and partners concerned.

### PRINCIPLES

- 13.2 The university is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name, including the award of academic credit, wherever they are delivered, and through whatever collaborative arrangement.
- 13.3 The university's equivalence policy, which defines how students' learning opportunities are equivalent, applies to provision delivered at or by an external collaborative partner.
- 13.4 The university will seek to ensure that all collaborative activity is conducted in accordance with guidance from QAA, government and funding agencies and relevant awarding bodies.
- 13.5 The university adopts the QAA's definition of collaborative provision as denoting: *'Educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit toward an award, of an awarding institution delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation.'*
- 13.6 Within the above definition of collaborative provision the university recognises the following possible forms of partnership involving some form of joint delivery of programmes:
- **External validation:** where the university validates through its programme approval process a programme of study leading to an award designed, delivered and assessed by an approved external partner institution. (External validation may also be extended in due course to the award of university credit for short courses and in-house training provided by approved external partners)
  - **Franchise:** where a programme of study designed, delivered, and assessed by the university is also delivered at an approved external partner. The university retains responsibility for all aspects of the programme's content and delivery
  - **Dual (or multiple) awards:** an arrangement whereby the university and one or more other awarding institutions together provide a programme leading to different awards at the same level made by each of the awarding institutions
  - **Joint award:** an arrangement whereby the university and one or more other awarding institutions together provide programmes which lead to a single award made jointly by both or all participants.
- 13.7 The definition of collaborative provision also extends to the following types of progression, articulation and student exchange agreements:
- **Progression agreements** with recognition of credit towards a university award. The university assures students who have successfully completed a specified award at an approved external partner that they will be considered for admission (but not guaranteed entry) with recognised credit beyond the standard entry point to an award. Each prospective student's application will be considered individually for direct entry

- **Articulation agreements** with guaranteed direct entry to an award-bearing programme. The university approves all or part of an approved external partner's award as providing specific credit towards a specified programme and guarantees entry with advanced standing to applicants who achieve a specified level of outcome on the external programme
- **Student exchange agreements:** an agreement between the university and an approved external partner in which students from each institution undertake a study period at the other institution and are able to return with credit for successfully completed study which is converted into credit towards an award at their home institution.

- 13.8 The university recognises different types of collaborative activity, which will be subject to different levels of scrutiny and monitoring, according to the level of risk the activity inherently represents.
- 13.9 For each collaborative partnership, the initial scrutiny, and exact approval, monitoring and review arrangements, will vary according to the assessment of the financial, legal, academic and reputational risks involved.
- 13.10 The university expressly forbids 'serial' arrangements by a collaborative partner, ie the practice whereby provision franchised, or authority delegated, to an approved external partner is in turn validated or franchised to a third party.

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION ON COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY**

- 13.11 The university will maintain a register of all collaborative partnerships and agents, and a list of the collaborative programmes operated through these partnerships and agents, which will be made publicly available.

#### **EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS STEERING COMMITTEE**

- 13.12 Academic Council has established the External Partnerships Steering Committee (EPSC) as a subcommittee with responsibility for formulating policy and practice in relation to collaborative provision and partnerships with external institutions, agents and other bodies both in the UK and overseas in accordance with agreed university strategies. It is responsible for monitoring the quality assurance and enhancement of collaborative arrangements.
- 13.13 The university has adopted a Collaborations Handbook which sets out the principles and definitions relating to collaborative provision, and provides operational guidance on the quality assurance and enhancement processes for collaborative partnerships.
- 13.14 All proposed collaborative activity, as defined in the Collaborations Handbook, will be notified to EPSC at the early stages of discussion by the relevant member of staff.
- 13.15 EPSC will receive quality monitoring reports relating to all collaborative arrangements, in accordance with the terms of the formal written agreement(s) for that partnership.

## **APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS**

- 13.16 Academic Council will approve an organisation as an external partner only on the recommendation of EPSC, once EPSC is satisfied that appropriate investigations have been undertaken into the organisation's good standing.
- 13.17 The university and the external partner will negotiate a written institutional-level agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the partnership, which will become effective only when signed by the Principal and the external partner's counterpart. Separate agreements will be negotiated at programme level, setting out specific arrangements relating to that provision.