

Partnership Management

Procedures for the Management of Partnerships

Responsible Office	Centre for Educational Partnerships
Responsible Officer	Associate PVC - Educational Partnerships
Approving Authority	Academic Board
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Related University Policies	N/A
Amended (if applicable)	
Supersedes	Collaborative Provision Handbook
Next Review Date	January 2025

Introduction

The process is designed to ensure that the management of partnerships, and the provision that lies within them, meets external regulatory requirements as well as internal strategic and operational objectives. Firstly, it meets the following conditions of the Regulatory Framework for Higher Education in England (Office for Students, 2018):

- B1: The provider must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience. A high quality academic experience includes but is not limited to ensuring that each higher education course: is up-to-date; provides educational challenge; is coherent; is effectively delivered; and requires students to develop relevant skills.
- B2: The provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure: students registered on a higher education course receive resources and support to ensure: a. a high quality academic experience for those students; and b. those students succeeding in and beyond higher education; and effective engagement with students to ensure: a. a high quality academic experience for those students; and b. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.
- B3: The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study.
- B4: The provider must ensure that: students are assessed effectively; each assessment is valid and reliable; academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible; academic regulations are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the course; and relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.
- B5: The provider must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body): any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.
- B6: The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.
- C1: to demonstrate that in developing and implementing its policies, procedures and terms and conditions, the provider has given due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law.
- D: The provider must be:
 - financially viable;
 - be financially sustainable;

- Have the necessary financial resources to provide and fully deliver the higher education courses as it has advertised and as it has contracted to deliver them;
- Have the necessary financial resources to continue to comply with all conditions of its registration.
- E1: The provider's governing documents must uphold the public interest governance principles that are applicable to the provider.
- E2: The provider must have in place adequate and effective management and governance arrangements to:
 - Operate in accordance with its governing documents.
 - Deliver, in practice, the public interest governance principles that are applicable to it.
 - Provide and fully deliver the higher education courses advertised.
 - Continue to comply with all conditions of its registration.

The process also ensures partnerships continue to meet the **University's Criteria for Teaching Partnerships:**

- a) they must be consistent with the University's Strategic Plan and contribute to its reputation, mission and values;
- b) they should be with organisations which have the academic standing to deliver programmes of study successfully to appropriate academic standards, the financial standing to sustain them, the infrastructure, resources and staffing to support them, and the legal standing to contract their delivery;
- c) they should be academically-led: built on our areas of subject strength and expertise and assist the University in building its profile and reputation nationally and, when appropriate, internationally;
- d) the partnership proposal should be financially viable and feasible, fully costed and priced accordingly;
- e) they should not be over-reliant on an individual member of staff, either at the partner organisation or within the University;
- f) they should be equivalent in quality and standards to comparable awards delivered solely by the University and adhere to the relevant regulatory frameworks in which they operate;
- g) the partner should be an organisation of esteem and appropriate ethical standard, in a region of stable governance and with appropriate frameworks protecting against corruption, bribery and malpractice as indicated by the Corruption Perceptions Index;
- h) partnerships should have potential for collaboration beyond the curriculum, such as staff and student exchanges and collaborative research projects;

- i) partnerships should have the potential to support student progression to the University for the study of higher qualifications.

The principles that underpin the design and operation of the Partnership Management process are therefore as follows:

- **Proportionality:** Liaison from link tutors at a programme level, and from Centre for Educational Partnerships at a partner level, ensure a bespoke relationship between the university and its individual partners, and a proportional approach to the activities that are undertaken to support the collaborative provision. All of the quality management processes that support the modification of programmes, the development of new programmes, and the ongoing review of existing programmes are proportional by design, focussing effort and attention where most needed.
- **Engaging Academic Staff:** The key academic point of contact for partners is the link tutor, an academic member of the University, who is able to advise and contribute to various operational aspects of collaborative provision. The quality management processes that underpin successful operation of collaborative provision all involve crucial input from academic staff at partner institutions, often with involvement from University academic staff.
- **Enabling Enhancement:** Partner programmes are subject to the University's ongoing Programme Review process, whereby most programmes will be asked to supply local enhancement places to show how the programme is being improved. Those programmes which are selected for active monitoring will directly engaged with to actively address areas where expected thresholds are not being met. Higher level engagement with partners through regular meetings, and partner forums, allow for timely communication and addressing of any issues, sharing of good practice, and enhancement.
- **Providing assurance to Governors:** Quality management processes that are in place to assure standards and student experience feed into the University's governance structure. Partner Annual Reports provide higher-level oversight of partnership operations and are received at Education Committee. An Annual Quality and Standards Report, which is received by the Board of Governors, details operations with partners, including approval of new partners and new partner provision.

Procedure

A. Partnership Management and Liaison

Task

Procedure

A1. Partnership agreement management & renewal

The management of the formation and agreement of partnership agreements for new partnerships is undertaken by the Centre for Educational Partnerships and Partnership Oversight Group and is part of the **Partnership Approval** process. Partnership agreements are normally set for a term of five years. Centre for Educational Partnerships maintain a record of current partnerships, and trigger the activity to renew a partnership agreement in year 4 of the five year term. If deemed necessary by the Centre for Educational Partnerships (APVC-EP), a Partner Review (see A5 below) can be instigated to inform the renewal of the partnership agreement. Partnership agreements are discussed at the regular partner meetings as a standard agenda item (see A3 below).

A2. Link tutors

Identification and Induction

Link tutors are identified by the Head of School(s) when new partnerships, or new provision under existing partnerships is established, as part of the approval process. There is an annual induction/training event, organised and run by the Centre for Education Partnerships, to help new link tutors take up the role.

Role and responsibilities

The link tutor role is the primary academic contact for partnerships, and is responsible for providing guidance and liaison with partners, including on teaching and learning, moderation, exam boards, external examiner processes, supporting partner staff with **Programme Design and Approval**, and **Suspension and Discontinuation** processes. Full guidance on the role of link tutors is given at Appendix 2

Reporting and link to governance

Link tutors complete a **Link Tutor Report** (attached at Appendix 3) throughout the year, which is received at each of the School Quality Management Committee meetings held throughout the year. This is the primary means by which link tutors report on ongoing partner programme operations, and also provides an opportunity for link tutors to flag areas for development and good practice.

Link tutor forum

The Centre for Educational Partnerships organises and runs regular link tutor forums, which is an opportunity for link tutors to meet and discuss partner provision, seek advice on any issues or concerns and share good practice.

A3. Partner meetings

The Centre for Educational Partnerships will arrange regular meetings with all partners, usually three per year, to be used for general communication over partnership operations, highlighting and resolving any issues, communications about new staff members, communication about new programmes and sharing information on recruitment. Partner meetings inform the completion of the **Partner Annual Report** (see A4 below).

There is a standard template **Partnership Meeting Agenda** for use at these meetings, which can be adjusted as needed. Meetings are attended by Centre for Educational Partnerships and Academic Governance and Policy team members as standard, with other teams being invited to attend as required.

A4. Partner annual reports

A **Partner annual report** for each partnership is completed by the Centre for Educational Partnerships throughout each academic year, primarily informed by data, intelligence and information shared through Partner meetings (see A3 above). Annually, partners and appropriate Head(s) of School are asked to complete a reflection on the report, then Education Committee receives a summary of these reports, produced by the Centre for Educational Partnerships.

A5. Partner reviews

Partner Reviews are run on an exceptional basis and are instigated by the Centre for Educational Partnerships. Reviews may be run after the initial phase of operating with a new partner, to ensure operations are running well in practice, to address any initial issues and ensure that expectations are being met. Partner Reviews may also be run at any time, as required, to provide additional information that might be required to inform further development or discontinuation of the partnership.

A6. Partner forums

An annual Partner Forum is organised, hosted and run by the Centre for Educational Partnerships, and is the opportunity for all partners to come together with members of the University, and be informed of any policy and procedure change, share good practice, discuss current affairs pertaining to Higher Education provision and network.

A7. Partnership exit management

Centre for Educational Partnerships manage and monitor the closure and exit of partnerships. Alongside normal programme-level **exit strategy(ies)**, a partnership exit strategy is developed to provide high level information and oversight of the partnership closure. The Centre for Educational Partnerships will also manage the implementation

B. Quality Management of Programmes delivered through Partnership

B1. Annual Programme Review

Programmes delivered through partnership arrangements are subject to the University's **Programme Review** process, where subject areas will be routed either to local enhancement or active monitoring. Full details of this process are given in the **Programme Review policy**. Guidance and oversight of this process will be given to partners through partner meetings (see A3 above).

B2. Partner staff approval	All partner staff that teach on University programmes that are delivered through partnership must be approved by the University. Information about new starters is a standing item on the regular Partner Meetings agenda (see A3 above). Centre for Educational Partnerships will request CVs for new teaching staff, which will be forwarded to the appropriate Head(s) of School where the provision is located. The Head(s) of School have responsibility for approving partner teaching staff that will be teaching on collaborative provision that is linked to their school.
B3. New site of delivery approval	If the partner wishes to operate collaborative provision from a new site of delivery, the new site must be approved, with a Site Visit report. The Centre for Educational Partnerships will coordinate the site visit, normally including attendance from a school member from the school(s) where the collaborative provision resides, completing a site visit report and confirming the approval of new sites.
B4. External examining	Normally the responsibility for appointing external examiners remains with the University, and follows the University's External Examiner process . The link tutor will work with partner staff to help identify and put forward nominations for new external examiners. External examiners will submit an annual report and the link tutor will work with partner staff to address the contents of the report.
B5. Programme modifications	Modifications to programmes will follow the process and timelines as set out in the University's Programme Modifications procedure. Academic Governance and Policy will notify partners of modification timelines and deadlines. Link tutors will work with partner staff on the completion and submission of the required documents for the Programme Modifications procedure.
B6. New programme developments	<p>Where new programme(s) are being developed under existing partnerships, the procedures set out in the University's Programme Design and Approval policy will be followed, with activity coordinated by the Portfolio and Planning team and operated by Academic Governance and Policy.</p> <p>The Centre for Educational Partnerships will liaise with Academic Governance and Policy to establish a proportionate method of approval, dependent on the nature of the new provision and the risk inherent in the proposal.</p> <p>Academic Governance and Policy will run activity to approve programmes and their delivery by partners, communicating outcomes to stakeholders, partners and the Centre for Educational Partnerships in accordance with section B5 of the Programme Design and Approval Procedure.</p>
B7. Published Information	The Centre for Educational Partnerships will monitor information published by partners on a regular basis, in particular ensuring that partners adhere to expectations around when new programmes may be

promoted and opened for applications, as detailed in the Programme Design and Approval process.

B8. Subject Review

Academic Governance and Policy will coordinate and liaise with partner staff if any partner programmes are subject to a Subject Review.

Appendix 1 – Roles and Responsibilities

Centre for Educational Partnerships (APVC – Educational Partnerships)

1. First point of contact for partner enquiries.
2. Maintain a central record of partnerships, updating with new provision as this is added.
3. Manage process of partnership agreement renewal, normally on 5 year cycle, triggering process 1 year before agreements are due to expire.
4. Coordinate any revisions to live partnership agreements, as required. Includes adding new schedules to existing partnership agreements where new programme(s) are approved for delivery with existing partners.
5. Arrange, coordinate and lead regular partner meetings for all partners, inviting participation from BSU staff as appropriate. Take notes during meetings, disseminating and allocating actions as appropriate.
6. Maintain and coordinate ongoing completion of Partner Annual Report throughout the academic year, informed by regular partner meetings. Share Partner Annual Report with partners and appropriate Head(s) of School for comment, before reporting with a summary to Partnership Oversight Group.
7. Arrange, coordinate and lead annual Partner Forums, setting agenda, arranging speakers, inviting partners and appropriate BSU staff. Coordinate follow up actions from the forum as appropriate.
8. Arrange, coordinate and lead on link tutor induction events.
9. Arrange, coordinate and lead on regular link tutor forums.
10. Where required, instigate and organise partner reviews, setting agenda and pulling in BSU academic and professional service staff as required. Report outcomes of partner review with any recommendations to Partnership Oversight Group.
11. Manage exit of partnerships, maintaining and updating timeline of activity and exit plan, arranging and leading on partner meetings to inform the exit where necessary.

12. Coordinate with partners and appropriate school(s) on the approval of new sites of delivery, arranging for the completion of a site visit report, reviewing and approving sites on the basis of the report.
13. Manage the approval of partner teaching staff, requesting CVs for new staff and passing these on to appropriate Head(s) of School for approval, notifying partners when staff have been approved. Where required, communicate details of new staff to the IT team to allow partner staff to be established on necessary BSU IT systems (for example, Minerva).
14. Instigate **Programme Design and Approval** process with Portfolio and Planning team where existing partners wish to develop new programmes, ensuring early involvement and communication with appropriate Head(s) of School when provision will reside in their area.

Partnership Oversight Group

1. Work with Centre for Educational Partnerships on partnership agreements, establishing agreements for new partnerships (see **Partnership Approval** procedure), and consulting on and maintaining oversight of partnership agreement renewals, led by the Centre for Educational Partnerships.
2. Maintain strategic oversight of partnerships, deciding and confirming where partnerships should be discontinued.

Portfolio and Planning

1. Coordinate activity and timelines for the approval of new programmes with existing partners, per the **Programme Design and Approval** process.

Academic Governance and Policy

1. Liaise with and advise partners on all matters regarding academic policy, academic governance and academic quality management.
2. Coordinate activity for partner participation in the annual **Programme Review** process.
3. Coordinate activity for partner participation of **Programme Modifications**.
4. Lead on activity for **Programme Design and Approval**, including recommending approval method to Centre for Educational Partnerships, collation of information from partner, event management of approval events or coordination of desk-based approvals, write up and sharing of approval outcomes and report, liaising with partner and school on response to approval outcomes, confirmation to Centre for Educational Partnerships, Curriculum Committee and appropriate stakeholders that approval conditions have been met and the panel have approved provision.
5. Coordinate partner involvement in **Subject Review** process, where required

6. Participation at regular partner meetings, hosted by CEP.
7. Participation at Partner Forums, as required.

Head of School

1. Nominate and appoint link tutors for new partner provision, confirming appointments to CEP.
2. Comment on Partner Annual Reports on annual basis, before receipt at Partnership Oversight Group.
3. Review and confirm approval of partner teaching staff CVs

Link Tutor

1. Main academic point of contact for partner provision
2. Complete Link Tutor Report informed by regular contacts with partner, and submit to each School Quality Management Committee meeting
3. Work with partner staff on the identification and nomination of external examiners when new external examiners are required, submitting the nomination per the University's external examiner process
4. Ensure University moderation of Partner assessment marking is completed, noting outcomes in Link tutor report
5. Work with partner on Quality management processes, including programme design and approval, programme modifications, programme review, noting activity in Link tutor report
6. Attend at least one of the partner's Staff Student Liaison Committee (or equivalent) per year, commenting on this activity in Link Tutor report