Education Partnerships Policy

Contents

Policy owner: QSAT

Committee owner: Education & Student Experience Committee (ESEC), with responsibility delegated to Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee (AQSS) and Education Partnerships Subcommittee (EPSC).

Approved: Education and Student Experience Committee on 1 July 2024.

Related Policies and Processes

TNE Gateways Framework

Programme Approval and Review Process

Mark Translation Scheme

Recognition of Prior Learning

Study Abroad and Student Exchange

Joint and Double PhD Framework

Split-Site PhD Framework

1. Introduction and Principles

1.1 This policy outlines the agreed framework through which the University manages education partnerships from approval to programme development, delivery and ongoing monitoring.

1.2 Education partnership is when the University works in partnership with other organisations to deliver aspects of teaching, learning, assessment or student support, leading to a University of Southampton award.

1.3 This policy aims to ensure that the University's education partnerships:

    1.3.1 maintain the high standard of its awards;

    1.3.2 deliver an excellent student experience;

    1.3.3 support successful student outcomes; and

    1.3.4 meet regulatory requirements.

1.4 This policy is part of the [University's Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement Framework](#). It is primarily for University and partner staff who are or will be engaged in education partnerships with other organisations. It is mandatory for all areas of the University and for education partnerships delivered at all study levels.

1.5 The University follows the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) scope and definition of an education partnership as: "provision that leads to the award of academic credit, and that is delivered, assessed or supported in partnership between two or more organisations. Its primary focus is on provision where the achievement of learning outcomes for the module or course are dependent on the arrangements made between the organisations."[1]

1.6 Where the education partnership involves delivery in a country, or to students, other than where the University is based, it is also an example of transnational education (TNE).

1.7 In line with the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework, the University retains responsibility for the academic standards of its awards and for the

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[1] [UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Partnerships](#), QAA, p.1

quality of the student experience "for whom it is the awarding body wherever and however they study". Adherence to this framework will ensure that all of the University's education partnerships comply with the [OfS ongoing quality and standards conditions of registration](#) (see paragraph 1.12 below).

1.8   The University will consider the business case and the academic credibility of the proposed partnership separately. In all cases both areas must be considered before approval to proceed is granted.

1.9   The University maintains a list of its education partnerships. This is reviewed and approved annually by the Education Partnerships Subcommittee. For further information contact the Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT) by email: QSA@soton.ac.uk.

1.10   Section 2 'Definitions and Partnership Models' provides a full list of education partnership types covered by this policy.

1.11   The University is committed to developing education partnerships that deliver fruitful and mutual benefits to the University, partner organisations and the students involved. Effective partnerships result in benefits including:

1.11.1 Developing strategic links;

1.11.2 Enhancing each organisation's reputation;

1.11.3 Building education capacity; and

1.11.4 Expanding each organisation's network of supporters and alumni.

1.12   To ensure compliance with OfS conditions of registration the University will apply the following principles when developing and approving a new education partnership. All education partnerships:

1.12.1 must be consistent with the University's Strategy;

1.12.2 must be delivered with partners who have appropriate academic standards, infrastructure, financial and legal standing to ensure that the University is not compromised by the partnership;

1.12.3 must meet, as a minimum, the quality of education delivered on the University's UK home campus and will be subject to the University's usual Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement activities;

1.12.4 must offer an equitable student experience for all students, regardless of the location of education provision;

1.12.5 must be financially viable and feasible, fully costed and priced accordingly;

1.12.6 must have a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in place and signed by one of the University's authorised signatories prior to student recruitment;

1.12.7 must engage with the University's annual monitoring procedures for education partnerships once operational and throughout the partnership lifecycle;

1.12.8 will normally have English as the primary language of instruction and assessment;

1.12.9 will normally be entered into at an institutional (rather than subject or individual) level and provide institutional level benefits.

1.13 The University has a proportionate, risk-based approach to approving education partnerships. Section 4 'Approving New Education Partnerships' provides further detail about the approval process.

2. Definitions and Partnership Models

2.1 There is variation in terminology and definition use across the sector and across jurisdictions. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties share the same understanding of partnership type, and how this relates to the University's definition. The University has adopted the QAA definitions[2].

2.2 The University recognises that there are a range of delivery models and award types available through education partnerships. Each presents its own set of risks and opportunities. Subject to appropriate approval [section 4] the University will consider establishing the following education partnership models, which have been grouped into three broad education partnership types.

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[2] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/glossary [accessed 24 January 2024]

2.3 **Strategic Partnerships.** This type is characterised by large-scale activities at an institutional level and may involve substantive University investment. These education partnership models are developed as a strategic institutional-level initiative and will be managed through a Strategic Major Project. For further information contact the Strategy Delivery and Transformation Department.

2.3.1 **International Branch Campus** - A campus of the University that is located in a country other than the UK (the location of its 'home' campus).

2.3.2 **Franchise** – A process by which the University agrees to authorise another organisation to deliver (and sometimes assess) part or all of one (or more) of its own approved programmes. The University will retain direct responsibility for the programme content, teaching and assessment strategy, assessment regime and quality assurance. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the University.

2.3.3 **Validation** - A process where a programme is approved by the University in order to contribute, or lead, to one of its awards. The validated programme is delivered by the organisation that designed it and students on the programme normally have a direct contractual relationship with that organisation and not the University (who is the validating provider). The University remains responsible for the academic standards of the award granted in its name.

2.4 **Standard Collaborative Provision.** This type covers education partnership models that result in jointly developed programmes with one or more partner with or without degree-awarding powers. The programme is jointly conceived and offers an enhanced student experience that is only possible through partnership delivery. For further information contact the [Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT).](#)

2.4.1 **Joint Award** - An arrangement under which the University and one or more partner with degree-awarding powers together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, awarding bodies.

2.4.2 **Double / Multiple Award** - An arrangement where the University and one or more partner provide a jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to separate awards (and separate certification) being granted by both the University and the partner(s).

> N.B. Double/multiple awards share the same characteristics as a joint award other than certification. They are offered where the partner is not legally constituted to award a joint degree with another institution.

2.4.3 **Dual Award** - An arrangement where the University and one or more partner(s) offer a jointly conceived programme with overlapping elements, leading to a separate award (and separate certification) being granted by both the University and the partner. Each award has its own set of criteria and learning outcomes and may be at different levels of study.

2.4.4 **Split-Site Research Degree** - An arrangement at postgraduate research level where one or more partner(s) provide a study location and jointly deliver supervision leading to a University of Southampton award.

2.4.5 **University of Southampton Jointly Delivered Programme** - An arrangement where one or more partners together provide a single jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to a University of Southampton award.

2.4.6 **Flying Faculty / Off-site Delivery (with partner support)** – An arrangement whereby a programme is delivered in a location away from the main campus (usually overseas) by the University's staff. Support for students may be provided by local staff. This may result in a University of Southampton award or be part of a mixed delivery model offered under a joint, dual or double/multiple award.

2.5 **Recruitment**. This type covers education partnership models that provide a route for students at a partner organisation to progress to a University of Southampton degree programme. Once admitted to the University's programme the partner is not involved in the delivery of the University of

Southampton award. For further information contact the [Global Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing team.](#)

2.5.1 **Progression** - An arrangement where a designated programme at a partner organisation is recognised for the purpose of eligibility to apply without advanced standing to a University of Southampton programme. It does not guarantee entry to the programme and each application is considered on an individual basis for direct entry.

2.5.2 **Enhanced Progression** - An arrangement where a designated programme at a partner organisation is recognised for the purpose of eligibility to apply with advanced standing to a subsequent part or year of a University of Southampton programme. It does not guarantee entry to the programme and each application is considered on an individual basis for direct entry.

2.5.3 **Articulation** - An arrangement where students enrolled on a designated programme at a partner provider are automatically entitled (subject to academic criteria) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent part or year of a University of Southampton programme.

2.5.4 **Articulation with standard entry** - An arrangement where students enrolled on a designated programme at a partner provider are automatically entitled (subject to academic criteria) to be admitted to a University of Southampton programme at the standard entry point.

2.6 University staff can refer to the Education Partnerships Key Characteristics Grid [section 8.1.1] for further details on each partnership model.

2.7 The University recognises the need for flexibility to respond to new and emerging education partnership proposals and a partner's individual requirements. The guidance information provided in the Key Characteristics Grid is a starting point for discussion. Further advice is available from the [Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team (QSAT)](#).

2.8 This policy covers education partnerships resulting in a University of Southampton award. Further partnership types are supported through alternative routes:

2.8.1   For learning opportunities offered through a study abroad or student exchange partnership refer to the [Global Mobility Team](#) and [Study Abroad Policy](#).

2.8.2   For external scholarships and funding partnerships refer to the Global Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing team and contact [the International Relations and Scholarships Manager.](#)

2.8.3   For learning opportunities offered through a work placement refer to the [Careers, Employability and Student Enterprise](#) team and [Placement Policy](#).

2.8.4   For education partnership activity related to Doctoral Landscape Awards (DLA) and Doctoral Focus Awards (DFA) refer to the [Doctoral College](#) for advice on the pre-screening process. Where it involves delivery of an education partnership model the corresponding definition and processes outlined in this policy will apply.

2.8.5   For research partnerships refer to the [Research and Innovation Services](#) team.

2.9   Partnership proposals that seek to develop a large-scale Transnational Education (TNE) arrangement will be referred to the University's TNE Growth Programme. This will include but is not limited to all education partnership models under the Strategic Partnership type [as listed in section 2.3].

3.   Roles and Responsibilities

3.1   **Governance**: Formal oversight, approval and review of education partnerships is provided through the University's education and corporate governance structures.

3.1.1   **Senate** has responsibility for oversight of all academic matters of the University [Ordinance 3.4].

3.1.2   **Education and Student Experience Committee** (ESEC) has delegated responsibility from Senate to oversee the provision of all education delivered under the name of the University and the development, implementation and evaluation of the University strategy as it applies to the education and the student experience.

3.1.3 **Education Partnerships Subcommittee** is a subcommittee of ESEC set up to advise on the quality management and enhancement of the University's education programmes delivered through UK and overseas partnerships. It makes recommendations on approval of education partnerships to ESEC and monitors the ongoing quality and standards of the delivery of education in partnerships.

3.1.4 **Faculty Education and Student Experience Subcommittee** (FEC) has strategic oversight of the Faculty's whole education portfolio, including education partnerships, and provides strategic advice to Faculty Board.

3.1.5 **Faculty Operations Board** (FOB) is responsible for developing Faculty strategy, ensuring its alignment with the University's strategy, its implementation and monitoring progress towards the achievement of agreed goals. It is accountable for the strategic/business approval of all new and renewing education partnerships in its Faculty.

3.1.6 **International Executive Board** (IEB) has strategic oversight of international recruitment and partnership activities across the University. It is accountable for international education partnership strategic approval following recommendation by a Faculty Board.

3.1.7 **Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee** supports the Doctoral College Committee in carrying out its delegated responsibilities to Senate for leading and directing the development of the Postgraduate research student experience and environment.

3.1.8 **School Programmes Committee** (SPC) reports to and supports the Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee of ESEC in carrying out its delegated responsibilities. It oversees delivery of educational programmes consistent with the University strategy as it applies to education and student experience, ensuring implementation of the University's regulatory and quality assurance framework for taught programmes and taught parts of research programmes, including recruitment type education partnerships. SPC reports to AQSS. It also reports to FEC and the Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee.

3.2 The University has well-established organisational structures to support the development and management of education partnerships within the Faculties and Schools and the Professional Services. The key roles are listed here, with further stakeholders identified in the Education Partnerships Approval Procedure [section 8.1.10].

3.3 University Academic Staff

3.3.1 The **Collaboration Sponsor** is a member of academic staff in a School with appropriate experience of education partnerships. They will take the lead on the partnership approval process and ongoing partnership monitoring. They may also hold the role of Programme Lead. The collaboration sponsor is responsible for managing the proposal for a new partnership through the relevant partnership approval process, including ensuring that the correct approval documentation and process has been completed and followed. The collaboration sponsor must ensure that relevant stakeholders are consulted or informed. They are not responsible for approving the academic programme or the business plan, and so this role cannot normally be held by an Associate Dean (Education) or Associate Dean (International).

3.3.2 The **Programme Lead** represents the interests of the University and its students at an operational level and is responsible for the day-to-day liaison with the partner(s). They may also hold the role of Collaboration Sponsor. They escalate any concerns or issues to the Director of Programmes. For larger scale partnerships these responsibilities may be delegated to a separate role, the **Academic Link Tutor**.

3.3.3 The **Associate Dean (Education)** chairs the Faculty Education and Student Experience Subcommittee and maintains an oversight of the quality of all education partnerships within their Faculty.

3.3.4 The **Associate Dean (International**) steers and oversees the Faculty's international partnership developments, supporting the Director of Internationalisation and Head of School to ensure that both proposed and established international partnerships (including education partnerships) align with Faculty and institutional strategy.

3.3.5   The **Faculty Director of Graduate School** chairs the Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee and maintains oversight of the research environment and postgraduate research student experience in their Faculty.

3.3.6   The **Deputy Head of School (Education)** chairs the School Programmes Committee and maintains quality oversight of all education partnership programmes within their School.

3.3.7   The **Director of Internationalisation** is a School-level role responsible for ensuring that any new international partnership proposal aligns with School strategy and can be adequately resourced.

3.4   University Professional Service Staff

3.4.1   The **Faculty Education Manager/Head of Faculty Student Administration** (FEM/ HoFSA), or a delegated member of the Faculty Curriculum and Quality Assurance Team, provides support to the collaboration sponsor throughout the partnership approval process. They provide appropriate advice and guidance about the process. The FEM / HoFSA / CQA Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that the agreed quality standards processes and procedures are adhered to for the duration of the collaboration. This includes ensuring that the School reviews collaborations in accordance with the process and timelines set out in this policy and prior to the expiry of the Memorandum of Agreement.

3.4.2   A member of the **Quality, Standards and Accreditation Team** (QSAT) with responsibility for education partnerships provides secretarial support for the Education Partnerships Subcommittee and is responsible for providing advice and guidance about the Education Partnerships Policy and its associated processes. QSAT maintains central records of education partnerships and is responsible for coordinating the approval and review processes for standard collaborative provision types of education partnerships.

3.4.3   The **International Partnership Managers** (IPM) (within the International Office) are regional specialists who facilitate the

development of relationship management in education partnerships. They support the faculties to develop proposals that align with the University's strategy. They complete initial partner due diligence checks and provide advice and guidance to collaboration sponsors about partnership models and market intelligence for their region. For cross-Faculty and Faculty-wide international education partnerships they provide project management support for the collaboration sponsors. They support the Programme Leads and (where applicable) the Academic Link Tutors to maintain good relationships with partners in their region and with recruitment and promotional activities related to the partnership.

3.5   Cross-Faculty / Institution-wide Partnerships

3.5.1   Multi-Faculty partnerships should be allocated a Lead Faculty. The Lead Faculty Collaboration Sponsor is responsible for leading on the approval process and liaising with contributing Schools and/or Faculties. The Lead Faculty Education Manager / Head of Faculty Student Administration will provide advice and guidance on the process in the first instance.

4. Approving New Education Partnerships

4.1   All education partnerships must be developed in line with the University's principles [section 1.12] and are subject to the partnership approval process detailed in the Education Partnerships Approval Procedures [section 8.1.10].

4.2   Where applicable, the associated processes must also be followed:

4.2.1   University Strategic business approval of programmes.

4.2.2   [Programme Approval and Review](#) for taught programmes or for postgraduate research programmes.

4.2.3   Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) approval, accreditation or registration requirements.

4.3   To initiate the approval process, the Collaboration Sponsor should consult the Education Partnerships Models Indicative Risk Assessment Grid [section 8.1.2] and definitions [section 2], in discussion with the DHoSE and FEM/FAR,

to identify the partnership type and its indicative risk level. Details of the required documents and processes to be followed for each type and risk level are given in the Education Partnerships Approval Procedures [section 8.1.10].

4.4 All new partners will undergo initial due diligence checks to assess risks associated with the partner's profile. The University maintains Risk Registers at Faculty and University level, and risks identified through the due diligence process should be recorded there.

4.5 It is important that a realistic timeline for approval is discussed and agreed together with the partner. This will vary depending on the partnership type, its complexity and scale, as well as available resource to support its development. As a guide, it is expected that once a proposal has received 'in principle' strategic approval, it will be developed within 12 months for recruitment partnership types and within 18 months for standard collaborative programmes. Delivery of the desired timeframe will require ongoing commitment from all parties and extensions must also be agreed by all parties.

4.6 The partnership approval process has four stages. The approval level and documentation required at each stage is proportionate to the risks identified through the process.

4.7 Pre-Stage Informal Discussions

4.8 New partnerships will always start with informal exploration of the opportunity. The Collaboration Sponsor should consult their Faculty Education Manager / Head of Faculty Student Administration for early advice and to clarify the partnership model and approval route. The Associate Dean Education, Associate Dean International, Faculty Director of the Graduate School and Doctoral College should also be consulted as relevant to consider the strategic fit.

4.9 Stage 1: Strategic business approval and initial partner due diligence

4.10 In stage 1 the rationale for the partnership is outlined and its strategic fit for the University is assessed together with the business case. This ensures the financial viability of the partnership and that adequate resources are available

to support its development. Initial partner due diligence checks and a risk assessment are also conducted.

> Approving bodies: FOB and, where involving an international partner, IEB.

4.11 Stage 2: Full partner due diligence (where required)

4.12 For education partnership models assessed as medium or higher indicative risks, as determined by the Education Partnerships Risk Assessment Grid.

4.13 In stage 2 the University exchanges due diligence letters with the proposed partners to confirm reciprocal information about our financial, regulatory and legal status.

> Approving body: EPSC.

4.14 Stage 3: Education partnership approval and academic quality assurance

4.15 In stage 3 the proposed partner's contribution to the delivery of teaching and learning is assessed. This includes a review of the partner's staffing and learning resources, and the partnership's proposed governance structure. It aims to establish that the learning environment, support services and ethos of the partner will assure an equivalent University of Southampton student experience. The partnership delivery model is considered in more detail and the operational considerations outlined in section 5 should be discussed.

> Approving body: EPSC, reporting to AQSS and ESEC.

4.16 Stage 4:Memorandum of agreement (MoA)

4.17 In stage 4 the terms of the partnership are finalised with the partner and a legal contract is drafted. A legal agreement (MoA) must be in place and signed by authorised signatories from both parties before student recruitment commences.

> Approving body: Legal Services.

4.18 Approval granted at each stage of the process provides the approval to proceed only and is subject to the successful progression through the full approval process within the agreed timeframe. Approving bodies may withdraw their 'in principle' approval should new information become

available that changes the nature of the proposal or should the agreed timeframe be exceeded without prior extension.

4.19 A list of key stakeholders to be consulted and informed at each stage of the approval process is detailed in the Education Partnerships Approval Procedures [section 8.1.10].

5. Operational Considerations

5.1 The University's responsibilities for the operation of any education partnership arrangement and those of the partner institution must be discussed and agreed with all partners during the development phase and will be specified in the Memorandum of Agreement.

5.2 The Collaboration Sponsor is responsible for consulting with Professional Service staff and academic colleagues who might contribute to the programme operation. In addition to the key roles outlined in section 3, this may include:

- Programme Director and other academic staff involved in the programme;

- Faculty Finance and Faculty Operating Service;

- Professional Service teams from across Student Administration and Academic Affairs and Student Life.

5.3 Failure to adequately consult may have an adverse impact on the effective operation of the programme.

5.4 For high-risk partnership models as identified in the Education Partnerships Models Indicative Risk Assessment Grid 8.1.2, an Operations Manual must be put in place. This provides further detail for academic and support staff administering the arrangement. For medium risk partnership models this may also be recommended by the Collaboration Approval Panel at stage 3 of approval. The lead School is responsible for producing the Operations Manual. A template is available [section 8.1.7].

5.5 A summary of key requirements and considerations is provided below and further details are available in the Operational Checklist [section 8.1.9].

5.6 Marketing and Recruitment

    5.6.1   Agree mechanisms to approve and regularly check publicity, materials and programme information published by the partner/partners. The materials must accurately represent the nature of the partnership programme and fully comply with the University's obligations under the Competitions and Markets Authority.

    5.6.2   Plan for how students will be recruited to the programme, and agree the responsibilities of each partner in delivering this plan.

5.7 Admissions and entry requirements

    5.7.1   Agree the process for administering applications and responsibilities of each partner in the decision-making process.

    5.7.2   Entry requirements must take account of both partners' criteria and the University's Admissions Regulations as well as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion considerations and any PSRB requirements. Where bespoke criteria are required, these must be clearly documented. The University's minimum English Language programme requirements must always be met. Non-UK qualification equivalence must be considered by the University's Entry Requirement and Admissions Policy Advisory Group, which advises AQSS.

5.8 Enrolment, Registration and Induction

    5.8.1   Clarify responsibilities and processes for the registration and induction of students. Confirm whether students will remain registered at both institutions for the duration of the programme.

    5.8.2   Ensure that the induction process will inform students about the partnership programme they are joining including all operational elements detailed in the agreement.

5.9 Assessment arrangements and External Examiners

    5.9.1   The assessment requirements for programmes provided under an education partnership must ensure that the academic standards of the awards are equivalent to those of the same or comparable programmes delivered at the University.

5.9.2   Where existing University of Southampton taught programmes are offered under a partnership model (either delivered at another location or in a different study mode), the assessment requirements should be the same and the same external examiner should be appointed. Essential variations should be considered and approved following the Programme Approval and Review Process.

5.9.3   Agree what assessment procedures will be followed and the responsibilities of each partner. Where the partner is involved in assessment delivery or marking, consider how equivalence of marking practice will be guaranteed.

5.9.4   Agree whose assessment regulations will apply to the programme. Exemptions or variations to the University's standard academic regulations require approval by AQSS.

5.9.5   The external examiner arrangements for the partnership programme must conform to UK Higher Education expectations as laid out in the QAA's UK Quality Code. Wherever possible, external examiners should conform to the University's External Examiners Procedures.

5.10 Financial processes

5.10.1 Negotiate student tuition fees rates and any stipend or other student funding offered as part of the partnership programme. Where non-standard rates are proposed, Faculty Finance, the Fees Office and Global Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing should be consulted and approval route confirmed.

5.11 Learning resources

5.11.1 Confirm what provision of learning resources each partner will be responsible for providing and how students will access these (online or in person).

5.11.2 Clarify what level of access to University systems and services (such as the Virtual Learning Environment, Library, IT account) partner staff will require.

5.12 Student Support and Engagement

5.12.1 Establish how student feedback will be sought and addressed.

5.12.2 Clarify how students will access support services, in particular where they spend periods of study away from the University's campus.

5.13 Certificates and Transcripts

5.13.1 Where a bespoke degree certificate and/or transcript is required, such as for joint or double awards, a sample certificate should be developed to clarify the words, terms, partner logo and signatories in consultation with the Awards team. The sample certificate must be appended to the Memorandum of Agreement.

5.14 Programme management and governance arrangements

5.14.1 A named academic lead at each partner and the University must be allocated with responsibility for the management of the programme including regular communication with the partner [Programme Lead and/or Academic Link Tutor in section 3.3].

5.14.2 Clarify how the programme will be managed. Partnership models with indicative risk level of high or above must include arrangements for a Joint Management Committee. Template Terms of Reference are available [section 8.1.8].

5.15 Student Complaints and Academic Appeals

5.15.1 Determine whose procedures will apply for student complaints and academic appeals. This may vary depending on the nature of the complaint or the study location of the student at the time. Where the partnership involves a University award only, the University's academic appeals process should always apply.

5.16 Monitoring Quality and Standards

5.16.1 Partnership programmes are subject to the University's usual Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement Framework (QME Framework).

5.17 Exit Strategy

5.17.1 Teach-out arrangements and safeguards for the student experience of existing cohorts should be considered at the outset to cover the

possibility of either institution exiting the arrangement [section 7.7 to 7.10 and 8.1.11].

6. Annual Monitoring, Periodic Review and Partnership Renewal

6.1 The collaboration sponsor is responsible for completing an Education Partnership Annual Monitoring Report to review the effectiveness of the arrangement at the partnership level. This is additional to the standard programme level monitoring requirements, which will also apply. Guidance and deadlines for reporting will be provided annually by QSAT.

6.2 All programmes are subject to quinquennial review as defined by the Programme Approval and Review process (PAR). Partnerships are reviewed in the academic year preceding the year of expiry of the Memorandum of Agreement to ensure that the partnership remains viable and continues to meet the University's principles [section 1.12]. Where a Memorandum of Agreement has been signed for a period longer than five years, an interim review should take place.

6.3 The School responsible for renewal should allow 18 to 24 months for the renewal process. Alternatively, see section 7 for closure of a partnership. If a change is proposed to a partnership during the term of the Memorandum of Agreement (e.g., a programme amendment), advice should be sought from Legal Services to determine whether the Memorandum of Agreement requires amendment.

6.4 The process for reapproving an existing programme can be found in the [Programme Approval and Review Process](). Refer to the Education Partnerships Approval Procedures for details of the required documents and processes to be followed.

6.5 The education partnership re-approval process broadly mirrors the partnership approval process.

6.6 The renewal of the agreement will be subject to approval for the continuation of the partnership being granted through this process.

6.7 A fully signed Memorandum of Agreement must be in place prior to the commencement of the recruitment activity for the relevant programme.

7. Closing an Education Partnership

7.1 Closure by non-renewal is the most common way to close a partnership arrangement, whereby the Memorandum of Agreement expires without renewal of terms. This may be by mutual agreement or because one partner chooses not to continue. No further action is required.

7.2 The University and/or partner may decide to end a partnership arrangement before the term of the Memorandum of Agreement has finished for a variety of reasons. These include:

   7.2.1 a breach of terms in the Memorandum of Agreement by either the partner or the University;

   7.2.2 the end of the natural life of the arrangement, for example, due to insufficient recruitment to the programme/s;

   7.2.3 a change in strategy;

   7.2.4 concerns raised through the quality and standards monitoring process;

   7.2.5 a change in status or ownership of the partner organisation.

7.3 The decision to terminate a partnership arrangement during the agreement term will be made by the University following discussions between the relevant Associate Dean (Education), the Deputy Head of School (Education), the Head of Quality, Standards and Accreditation and the Vice-President (Education & Student Experience) and, for international arrangements, the Associate Dean (International), the Director of Internationalisation, Vice-President (International & Engagement) and the International Office. Where termination on the basis of breach is involved, Legal Services must be consulted.

7.4 Whatever the reasons for the closure, the University must consider the interests of its students on all University programmes of study, including those delivered in partnership. This is why agreeing an exit plan at the outset

of a partnership is crucial so that the University can ensure students already enrolled can complete their studies.

7.5   The University's programme closure policy must also be followed where the closure of the partnership will result in the closure of a programme.

7.6   Once the decision to terminate has been made, QSAT will provide a copy of that decision (and relevant agreement) and consult with Legal Services in good time in order to prepare an appropriate letter of termination which will be signed by the President and Vice- Chancellor. This letter should outline the reasons for closure of the partnership and specify the date of the final intake of students to the programme.

7.7   A teach-out strategy should be developed by the lead School together with the partner to ensure all students can successfully complete their programme. Where this is not possible (for instance due to partner insolvency), the University will consider alternative arrangements for provision of equivalent learning opportunities for all impacted students.

7.8   The teach-out strategy should include arrangements for:

7.8.1   communication plan to set out what and when staff and students are disclosed about the closure;

7.8.2   agreed final student intake and removal of publicity materials;

7.8.3   agreed final completion dates and assessment resit opportunities;

7.8.4   provision of ongoing learning resources and student support services.

7.9   Refer to the Education Partnership Teach Out Strategy Guidance [section 8.1.11] for more information.

7.10 During the teach out phase, the University's normal Quality, Monitoring and Enhancement processes continue to apply. ESEC through EPSC and AQSS will be responsible for overseeing the closure of the partnership.

7.11 Partner institutions will have their own internal procedures for closing a partnership. In such cases partner institutions must comply with the terms set out in the Memorandum of Agreement.

8. Procedures, Forms and Guidance

8.1 Further resources are published on the University's internal network to provide procedural information, forms and additional guidance relevant for the University's staff engaging with this policy:

8.1.1 Education Partnerships Key Characteristics Grid (draft available)

8.1.2 Education Partnerships Models Indicative Risk Assessment Grid (new, draft available)

8.1.3 Initial Partnership Proposal Form (UK and International partner versions) (exists, to update)

8.1.4 Partnership Renewal Form (UK and International partner versions) (new TBC)

8.1.5 Partner Risk Assessment Form (new TBC)

8.1.6 Due diligence Form (standard collaborative and recruitment versions) (exists, to update)

8.1.7 Site Visit Checklist (exists, to update)

8.1.8 Operations Manual Template (exists, to update)

8.1.9 Joint Management Committee Terms of Reference Template (exists for PGR, to update)

8.1.10 Operational Checklist (new TBC)

8.1.11 Education Partnerships Approval Procedures (exists, draft in progress) (including summary flow charts for each partnership type and slide deck summary)

8.1.12 Education Partnership Teach Out Strategy Guidance (new TBC)

8.2 Access to these resources requires a University login.