Approval, Management and Review of Franchised or Validated Awards

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* The University has adopted the principles of Designing for Diverse Learners, and all policy documents should be written with reference to these principles. Further information is available at the [Designing for diverse learners website](https://designingfordiverselearners.info/).
* An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) must be considered for all new and amended policies. Further information is available from the [EIA section of SharePoint](https://hullacuk.sharepoint.com/Services/EDI/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments-(EIAs).aspx).
* This document is available in alternative formats from [**policy@hull.ac.uk**](mailto:policy@hull.ac.uk).
* All printed or downloaded versions of this document are classified as uncontrolled

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Approval, Management and Review of Franchised or Validated Awards

# Introduction

* 1. This code of practice brings together all matters relating to the approval, management and review of franchised or validated awards, for UK and international collaborative provision.
  2. The University of Hull is committed to forming appropriate academic collaboration across a range of national and international providers, in line with its strategic aim to be ‘a university of preference for a wider range of students, staff and partners’, recognising the benefits that appropriate and aligned partnerships can bring in enhancing and broadening higher education opportunities.
  3. As lead provider in any collaborative arrangement, the University has ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of student experience as outlined in the 2018 Regulatory Framework, issued by the Office for Students, which states that ‘lead providers subcontracting all or part of a course to a delivery provider retain responsibility for the students on those courses and the quality and standards of provision’. The University has established effective regulations and procedures to ensure collaborative programmes are effectively managed and monitored, ensuring parity of learning opportunities and experience for students in off-campus locations.
  4. Validation and franchised awards form an important part of the University’s work in enhancing its stature, reputation and influence, in the UK and overseas, by enabling access to high quality degrees, enhancing student mobility, and lifelong learning opportunities, providing comparable standards of academic quality no matter where programmes are delivered.
  5. Any validation or franchise arrangement is dependent on the University having a formal partnership agreement in place with the relevant institution.

## Franchised Provision

* 1. Franchised provision describes an arrangement where the University of Hull agrees to authorise an approved partner to wholly deliver and assess, part or all of an existing University of Hull programme or programmes. A franchised programme is designed, developed, approved and owned by the University of Hull. A franchise arrangement may be particularly appropriate where a specific regional education need is recognised and the University can provide established expertise in this area.

## Validated Provision

* 1. Validated provision describes an arrangement where the University of Hull authorises an approved partner to develop, deliver and assess their own programme. The programme is approved through the University of Hull programme approvals process. A validated programme will normally be in a subject linked to the University’s own portfolio (comparable provision) but the partner may provide specialist expertise in certain disciplines which are not offered at the University (non-comparable provision).
  2. The University of Hull retains overall responsibility for the provision and the quality and standards of the award and student experience for all collaborative provision.
  3. The broad principles of a franchise or validation arrangement are summarised below:
     1. A franchised programme is designed, developed, approved and owned by the University of Hull.
     2. A validated programme is designed and developed by the partner institution (often in collaboration with the University) and approved through the University of Hull’s approval processes.
     3. In a franchise or validation arrangement, the partner institution is expected to have established academic expertise in the subject area of the programme.
     4. A franchise or validation arrangement can only operate with an approved University of Hull partner, (which would not usually hold degree awarding powers) and fit within the University’s strategic aims.
     5. A franchised or validated programme is usually delivered wholly at the partner institution site and is delivered by staff employed by the partner institution.
     6. The franchise or validation arrangement is managed at an operational level through the University of Hull’s collaborative provision arrangements detailed in contracts, regulations and codes of practice.
     7. University of Hull regulations are applicable and specify when they are mandatory for collaborative provision.
     8. A franchised or validated programme **must** normally be taught and assessed in English, however where it is felt that individual modules need to be taught in a language other than English, this would require formal approval.
     9. Third party franchising is not permitted.
     10. Students on franchised and validated programmes receive an award from the University of Hull.
  4. The below summary table sets out the main differences between validated and franchised provision, although in some cases there may be a need to request a variance to the below to fit with specific programme requirements.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Validated Provision | Franchised Provision |
| Award of | University of Hull | University of Hull |
| Award Designed by | Partner Institution | University of Hull |
| Programme approved by | University of Hull | University of Hull |
| Students admitted by | Partner Institution (if devolved admissions in place) | University of Hull |
| Tuition fees paid to | Partner Institution | University of Hull |
| HESA return made by | Partner Institution (UK only) | University of Hull |
| Transcript issued by | Partner Institution | University of Hull |
| Programme delivered at | Partner Institution | Partner Institution |
| Teaching delivered by | Partner Institution | Partner Institution |
| Assessment tasks designed by | Partner Institution | University of Hull |
| Personal Supervision provided by | Partner Institution | Partner Institution (following University of Hull processes) |
| Library access | Partner Institution with access to University Library facilities | Partner Institution with access to University Library facilities and additional online resources, as agreed |
| Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) access | Partner Institution | Partner Institution and University of Hull |
| Hull University Student Union | Associate Membership | Full Membership |
| Student Support Services provided by | Partner Institution | Partner Institution |

# Location

* 1. Where a location (UK or International) is one which has not previously been approved for delivery for a programme leading to a University of Hull award (whether it is a new, additional or replacement location) requires a site visit. This is carried out by the Quality Support Service (UK) and Global Engagement Office (International).
  2. A site visit is required for new programmes (with existing partners) requiring specialist equipment, space or resources. This is carried out by the relevant Faculty and Quality Support Service.
  3. The purpose of the visits is to assure the Education Planning Committee (EPC) of the suitability of the facilities and learning resources at the given location.

# Approval of partnership

* 1. Any validation or franchise arrangement is dependent on the University having a formal partnership agreement in place with the relevant institution.

See University Code of Practice: Approval of New Educational Partnerships.

# Programme approval and management

* 1. The University’s Code of Practice for New Programmes is applicable to all collaborative provision.
  2. Every validated programme will be appointed an Academic Contact or equivalent.
  3. The annual Joint Development Board (JDB) or equivalent facilitates the strategic development of the partnership and related activity.
  4. Joint Board of Studies (JBoS), or equivalent, which meet twice a year, provides the forum for academic and administrative discussion at a programme level.
  5. Programmes or groups of programmes are assigned a University of Hull Academic Contact, or equivalent, who is responsible for programme-level liaison. They are responsible for providing advice on quality assurance, the interpretation and implementations of University of Hull processes, codes of practice and regulations.

## Marketing Publicity

* 1. The University is responsible for the effective control of the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to its franchised and validated programmes. The production of publicity and marketing materials is the responsibility of the partner institution who **must** provide up-to-date, accurate programme information, including full costs of programmes. Publicity **must** make it clear that a programme is an award of the University of Hull and explain what this means.

See University Code of Practice: Approval of Collaborative Provision Publicity and Marketing Information.

## Recruitment

* 1. Recruitment to a validated or franchised programme is the responsibility of the partner institution, with the University being the final decision maker on all applications for franchised programmes only. The management of admissions **must** safeguard entry standards, in line with the University Code of Practice for Admissions and related devolved admissions requirements and **must** safeguard entry standards and ensure equity of treatment to applicants including those of diverse backgrounds or with additional needs.

## Student Support

* 1. The partner institution is responsible for all student support in situ, including assessment and provision of additional needs, financial matters, accommodation, and access to partner institution library and learning materials. Students have access to University of Hull library facilities, with franchise students having the right to access off-campus.

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment

* 1. The University is responsible for ensuring that students studying on franchised and validated programmes have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to complete their studies. The partner institution **must** have systems in place to monitor the quality and development of learning resources and support on a regular basis. These systems are monitored through the University of Hull’s Annual Monitoring, Review and Enhancement of Programmes (AMREP) process for collaborative provision, Joint Boards of Study (JBoS) and Joint Development Boards (JDB).
  2. The partner institution is responsible for all teaching on the programme, including second marking and ensuring availability of scripts and other assessment materials for moderation by the University of Hull.

See University Code of Practice Moderation of Collaborative Provision.

* 1. Staff CVs: the usual process of consideration of Recognised Teacher Status (RTS) will apply for the approval by the University of any staff whom the partner institution wishes to teach on franchised and validated programmes.

See University Code of Practice: Recognised Teacher Status.

* 1. All assessment is moderated by the University. The University sets the assessment tasks for any franchised provision, whereas assessment tasks are set by the partner in the case of validated provision.
  2. Assessment Boards, both module and programme boards of examiners are organised and managed by the partner institution, with support from the University. Membership of the boards of examiners will include staff from both the University and the partner institution, in line with the board attendance regulations stipulated by the University of Hull. For a franchised award, it **should** be the same Board for on-campus and franchised programmes.

See University Code of Practice: Boards of Examiners.

## Quality Assurance

* 1. The University of Hull’s Annual Monitoring, Review and Enhancement of Programmes (AMREP) process is applied to all collaborative provision. The annual programme review being reported through the relevant University faculty to the Quality Support Service.
  2. An annual institution-level report is completed by partner institutions and submitted to the Quality Support Service.

See University Code of Practice: Continual Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement.

* 1. Comment on franchised provision is included within the Continual Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement (CMEE) process and submitted to the Education Committee.
  2. External Examiners: for all collaborative provision and off-site delivery, the University’s External Examining arrangements apply in full to all programmes of study. The appointment of the external examiner is the responsibility of the University of Hull through the relevant faculty. It is expected that the external examiner in post at the University of Hull would also cover any provision running on a franchised basis, to ensure consistency in approach and sharing of good practice.

See University Code of Practice: External Examiners.

## Programme Review and Amendments

* 1. A franchised programme specification would usually be the same as that being delivered at the University of Hull, therefore minor or more substantive changes to the programme will be led by the University through discussion with the partner institution. A validated programme can be reviewed and amended by the partner institution.

See University Code of Practice: Modifications to Programmes of Study.

## Student Feedback and Complaints

* 1. The partner institution is responsible for setting effective processes for gathering and monitoring student feedback, in line with the AMREP process.
  2. The University’s required set of module evaluation questions (MEQs) **must** be used for all collaborative provision. The outcomes of student feedback questionnaires administered by the partner **must** be made available to the University. Franchised provision **must** follow exactly the same process as on-campus.
  3. Student complaints will be handled in the first instance by the partner institution in line with University of Hull regulations. For franchised provision, all complaints go to Programme Director/s. In certain situations, students may then have a right of appeal to the University and are also entitled to refer their complaints to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The next stage of the complaints process will be handled through the University with appropriate representation from the partner. Any variations to the University process **must** be approved by the Education Planning Committee (EPC).

## Regulations, Certificates and Student Records

* 1. Where ‘mandatory’ is stated, regulations applied to collaborative provision **must** be those of the University of Hull. Some regulations are ‘for information’ so may be used at the partner’s discretion. Where programme or partner specific regulations are required, these **must** be approved by EPC as part of the approval of programmes process.
  2. Academic Services are responsible for the production and award of certificates and transcripts for franchised provision, and certificates only for validated provision. The certificate will bear only the name of the University of Hull with the partner institution referenced on the transcript.

# Collaborative Provision Agreement and Register

* 1. All partnerships are published on the University’s Collaborative Provision Register. When a franchise or a validated programme is approved, either an existing agreement will be updated to cover the franchised award, or a new/separate memorandum of agreement will be issued. The Quality Support Service will issue the Agreement and inform the faculty concerned when it has been signed so that recruitment can start or continue.

# Version control

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