Devolution of Admissions Decisions to Partner Institutions offering Collaborative Programmes

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Devolution of Admissions Decisions to Partner Institutions offering Collaborative Programmes

Table of Contents

[1 Introduction 4](#_Toc172891730)

[Key Principles 4](#_Toc172891731)

[2 Partner Institution responsibilities 4](#_Toc172891732)

[Responsibility for compliance with the Code of Practice 4](#_Toc172891733)

[Responsibility for admissions decisions 4](#_Toc172891734)

[3 Devolution Approval Process 5](#_Toc172891735)

[Step 1 - Submission of the application 5](#_Toc172891736)

[Entry requirements 5](#_Toc172891737)

[University faculty procedures 5](#_Toc172891738)

[Step 2 – Consideration of the application 5](#_Toc172891739)

[Step 3 - Decision of the panel 6](#_Toc172891740)

[Approval with recommendations and/or conditions 7](#_Toc172891741)

[Defer pending further information 7](#_Toc172891742)

[Reject the application 7](#_Toc172891743)

[Step 4 – The Formal Record 7](#_Toc172891744)

[4 Ongoing arrangements 7](#_Toc172891745)

[Changes to entry requirements 7](#_Toc172891746)

[Entry requirements at ‘Clearing’ 7](#_Toc172891747)

[5 Determining admissions decisions, under Devolved Powers 8](#_Toc172891748)

[Application and Offer Methodology 8](#_Toc172891749)

[Programme approval 8](#_Toc172891750)

[Admissions tutors 8](#_Toc172891751)

[Admissions decisions 8](#_Toc172891752)

[Applications which meet the entry requirements 8](#_Toc172891753)

[Applications which do not meet the entry requirements 9](#_Toc172891754)

[Applications by international students 9](#_Toc172891755)

[Applications for ‘advanced standing’ 9](#_Toc172891756)

[Applications after the commencement of the programme 9](#_Toc172891757)

[Conditional offers 9](#_Toc172891758)

[Record-keeping 9](#_Toc172891759)

[6 Monitoring of Compliance of the approved Powers 10](#_Toc172891760)

[Annual Review 10](#_Toc172891761)

[Withdrawal of authority to make admissions decisions 10](#_Toc172891762)

[7 Version control 11](#_Toc172891763)

Devolution of Admissions Decisions to Partner Institutions offering Collaborative Programmes

# Introduction

## Key Principles

* 1. This code sets out the process through which the University will delegate authority to make admissions decisions to Partner Institutions, and the responsibilities and duties which **must** be adhered to by the Partner Institution in the event of such devolution. It seeks to ensure that admissions processes are carried out in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.
  2. For the purposes of this document, where the term ‘student’ is used, this includes apprentices, trainees and any other learner enrolled on a programme validated by the University of Hull, be this internationally or within the UK.
  3. The purpose of this Code of Practice is to define:
     1. The procedure through which a Partner Institution may apply for authority as above and through which the University will determine whether to grant such authority.
     2. The conditions under which the University will devolve to a Partner Institution (PI) the authority to make decisions on the admission of students to programmes validated by the University.
     3. The University’s expectations governing the way in which admissions decisions will be made, recorded and reported, and
     4. The responsibilities for monitoring compliance with the Code.
  4. The University will grant authority to make decisions only in respect of applications which meet published and approved entry requirements for each programme. Applications **must** be made by Partner Institutions in respect of the entirety of that Partner’s HE provision validated by the University.
  5. The Code reflects the expectations of the UK Quality Code as well as reflecting the University’s framework for the assurance of quality and maintenance of academic standards as applied to programmes validated by the University.

# Partner Institution responsibilities

## Responsibility for compliance with the Code of Practice

* 1. Before submitting an application for devolution, the Partner Institution **must** identify a senior member of staff designated as the responsible officer with appropriate oversight, who will ensure that the Partner Institution’s responsibilities as set out in this Code of Practice are properly and professionally discharged. This may differ from the nominated staff that are able to carry out Partner Institutions’ practices.

## Responsibility for admissions decisions

* 1. The Partner Institution **must** also identify a senior member of staff – who **must** not be the same person identified in accordance with paragraph 2.1 – who will be responsible for the admissions process, including specifically, having the authority to make written offers to applicants.

# Devolution Approval Process

## Step 1 - Submission of the application

* 1. An application, using annexe 1 of this Code of Practice, **must** be completed, signed by the Principal of the Partner Institution or such person nominated by the responsible office and submitted to Quality Support Service.
  2. The application **must** be supported by the following documentation for approval in their own right:
     1. Proposed entry requirements for each programme of study currently offered by the Partner Institution and validated by the University. The approved entry requirements will be attached to the formal record.
     2. Confirmation of the programmes which will recruit through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), or an equivalent national admissions service. For programmes which will not recruit through such a service, the Partner Institution **must** submit, for approval, the application form (or forms) which will be made available to prospective students to apply for places on specific programmes of study. The approved form(s) will be attached to the formal record.
     3. The necessary correspondence which the Partner Institution will use to make offers to applicants. The approved document will be attached to the formal record.

## Entry requirements

* 1. The Partner will be responsible for ensuring entry requirements remain appropriate and in line with the University’s minimum requirements per level of study.
  2. Entry requirements **must** detail any specific category of applicant where admission to the programme might be refused. They **must** also be consistent with the University’s minimum requirements for English language proficiency, or the Partner’s own English language policy where these are utilised.

## University faculty procedures

* 1. The admission of students to collaborative programmes under a franchise arrangement may have an impact upon any faculty requirements to an external accrediting or legislative body. In such cases, the application for devolved powers **must** be supported by the relevant faculty, including detailed narrative regarding the nature of such requirements and how compliance towards these will be maintained.

## Step 2 – Consideration of the application

* 1. The Education Planning Committee (EPC) **must** establish a panel with delegated authority to determine an application.
  2. The membership of the panel shall be approved by the Chair of EPC and **must** consist of the following:
     1. A member of EPC to act as chair, nominated by the Chair of EPC
     2. Director of Admissions.
     3. An academic member of the Collaborative Provisions Committee (CPC).
     4. A member of the Quality Support Service (QSS), to serve as secretary.
  3. The Chair of EPC may approve the nomination of such additional members of the panel as they deem appropriate.
  4. A meeting of the panel **should** be held no later than one month after receipt of the application for devolution. The panel **must** meet with relevant staff of the Partner Institution, including the persons identified in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 above and, a representative group of admissions tutors.
  5. The panel **must** be satisfied that the Partner Institution has identified suitable responsible officers with oversight and ability to monitor delegated staff’s ability to carry out admissions practices, including:
     1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and experiential (RPEL).
     2. English language proficiency requirements.
     3. Parity in consideration of all cohorts, modes of study and application methods.
     4. In line with practices relating to accessibility to study.
     5. Applicants with criminal convictions (which **should** be in accordance with the [University General Policy for Student Admissions, section 8.](https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/study-at-hull/admissions/docs/policies/general-policy-for-student-admissions.pdf)
     6. Informing students of programme details and requirements.
     7. The making of applications and offers.
     8. Assessment of fee status.
     9. Suitable induction of new students.
     10. Staff development for those making admissions decisions.
     11. Monitoring of admissions decisions.
     12. Retention admissions data.
     13. Processes for administering complaints by applicants regarding admissions decisions and process.
     14. Relevant immigration status checks, and potential student visa sponsorship where students are non-British or Irish nationals. The panel **should** be assured that processes used to determine a student’s eligibility to study will be similar to those operated by the University. University policies are available on request.

## Step 3 - Decision of the panel

* 1. The panel is empowered to:
     1. Approve the application, with or without conditions and/or recommendations.
     2. Defer the application pending further information.
     3. Reject the application.
  2. The Secretary of the panel **must** notify the Partner Institution of its decision in writing within ten working days of the panel meeting. A copy of the Record of Decision **must** be submitted to EPC for information.
  3. Where applicable, the Record of Decision **must** include any commendations any details of approval conditions, recommendations or further information required.

## Approval with recommendations and/or conditions

* 1. Conditions **should** be set where the panel is satisfied that an action or actions **must** be taken by the Partner Institution to achieve compliance with this Code of Practice. Such conditions **must** specify the deadline by which the action or actions **must** be taken and the means through which the panel will satisfy itself that the conditions have been met. The panel will consider evidence from the Partner Institution at a subsequent panel meeting. Conditions can be passed by Chair’s action if they are minor.
  2. Recommendations **should** be set where the panel is satisfied that an action or actions **should** be taken by the Partner Institution as means of enhancing the institution’s policies and procedures. Such recommendations **should** specify the deadline by which the action or actions **must** be taken and the means through which the panel will satisfy itself that the conditions have been met.

## Defer pending further information

* 1. Where the panel defers approval of the application pending further information, the panel **must** specify the deadline by which any additional evidence required **should** be submitted. The panel will consider evidence from the Partner Institution at a subsequent panel meeting.

## Reject the application

* 1. In the event of a decision to reject, the Record of Decision **must** state the reasons for rejection. Resubmission of a further application for devolved admissions will be permitted.

## Step 4 – The Formal Record

* 1. The Record of Decision of the Panel will subsequently become the University's formal record of decision reporting for Partner Institutions with devolved powers. Details of the notification will be populated within the Admission’s Partners Database and reported to EPC on an ongoing basis.

# Ongoing arrangements

## Changes to entry requirements

* 1. EPC **must** not approve a proposed programme of study from a Partner Institution to which this Code applies unless appropriate entry requirements for the programme have been specified in the proposal with appropriate supporting justification.
  2. Entry requirements **should** be reviewed annually by the Partner as part of the annual monitoring of programmes process. Amendments to entry requirements for programmes to which this code applies **must** be submitted for approval by the relevant Joint Board of Studies via faculty and be approved by EPC.

## Entry requirements at ‘Clearing’

* 1. At the Interim Joint Development Board, the Partner Institution **should** discuss their proposed UCAS Clearing Strategy for the academic year.
  2. Where it is considered appropriate to lower entry requirements during the UCAS Clearing period, the Partner Institution **must** apply in writing to EPC for approval to lower the entry requirements for this purpose only.
  3. Such applications **must** be made in writing no less than six weeks before the start of Clearing, specifying the changes requested and the rationale for them. Entry requirements during the Clearing period **must** not fall below the minimum matriculation standards of the University.

# Determining admissions decisions, under Devolved Powers

* 1. This part of the code sets out the framework within which the Partner Institution **must** operate when making admissions decisions having been granted Devolved Powers.

## Application and Offer Methodology

* 1. A candidate **must** not be admitted to, or be registered for, a programme of study without having submitted a formal application via the usual application method (UCAS or via the provider’s own application method) and, without having been made an offer in writing which accords with this Code of Practice. Applicants **must** not be permitted to enrol onto the programme without having provided sufficient evidence to meet any conditions of offer.

## Programme approval

* 1. A programme **must** not be advertised before the programme has been granted Development Consent approval by EPC. No applications for admissions for programmes **should** be received until this point. Where Development Consent approval has been granted any advertising **must** explicitly indicate that the programme is ‘subject to approval’ until such time as full approval is granted.
  2. An offer **must** not be made to any applicant before the Partner Institution has been informed in writing that the programme has been approved by EPC. The responsible officer identified is responsible for ensuring compliance in this regard.

## Admissions tutors

* 1. The Partner Institution, through the responsible officer, **must** identify staff of the institution to serve as Admissions Tutors for each of the programmes offered by the institution and validated by the University, who may be referred to as ‘delegated persons.’ Delegated persons may be responsible for more than one programme however each programme **should** only have one delegated person. The person nominated **must** inform EPC in writing of the names and responsibilities of each Admissions Tutor, including informing him/her of changes as they occur.
  2. Admissions tutors **must** engage in such staff development activities as are reasonably prescribed by the faculty, particularly in relation to external body or legislated requirements.

## Admissions decisions

## Applications which meet the entry requirements

* 1. The Partner Institution has full authority to make an offer where the applicant satisfies or exceeds the entry requirements approved by the panel. Entry requirements for each programme **must** be clearly published and to adhered to in line with CMA guidance.

## Applications which do not meet the entry requirements

* 1. Where an applicant does not meet the approved entry requirements and the Partner Institution wishes to make an offer based on an applicant’s prior experience, the application **must** be considered within the University’s Recognition of Prior Learning code of practice in collaboration with the University Faculty. Evidence submitted alongside the application for recognition of prior experiential learning may be in the form of an interview report or essay submitted by the applicant. The application **must** detail discussions with the applicant and indicate the Partner’s reasons for recommending admission notwithstanding the entry requirements.
  2. Each application for recognition or prior learning **must** be considered on its merits by the Faculty nominated person, who **should** be the ‘Academic Contact’ (or equivalent). The Partner Institution **should** be informed in writing of the decision within 7 working days of receipt by the University of the application.

## Applications by international students

* 1. Where an applicant has non-UK qualifications, the Partner Institution **must** make appropriate use of the guidance available from ECCTIS and/or UCAS.

## Applications for ‘advanced standing’

* 1. Subject to the preceding paragraphs, all applications for ‘advanced standing’ – that is to a stage higher than the first stage of the programme – **must** be determined in accordance with the Code of Practice: Recognition of Prior Learning.

## Applications after the commencement of the programme

* 1. An application may be submitted on or after the first day of the commencement of the programme in any given year. These applications **should** be assessed on an individual basis to determine the effects that late arrival may have on the student, both in terms of academic and pastoral matters in accordance with the University’s requirements for induction. Applications submitted later than 14 days after commencement of the programme **must** not be considered.

## Conditional offers

* 1. Where an offer is made subject to conditions, the responsible officer **must** ensure, by receipt of appropriate documentation, that such conditions have been satisfied before allowing the applicant to attend lectures and to be registered on the programme of study.

## Record-keeping

* 1. The Partner Institution **must** retain sufficient records of each admissions decision to provide an audit trail, including any advice (such as ECCTIS assessments) on which the decision was based.
  2. Records **must** at least be kept until the applicant has successfully completed the programme on to which they were admitted or until they have formally withdrawn or been failed by the appropriate Board of Examiners.
  3. It is the responsibility of the Partner Institution to complete all statutory returns required for higher education students, including the Higher Education Students Early Statistics Survey (HESES) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
  4. The Partner Institution **must** take reasonable steps to ensure the authenticity of the supporting documentation and that copies are certified by a reputable body.

# Monitoring of Compliance of the approved Powers

* 1. EPC is responsible for overseeing compliance with this Code of Practice. Within 12 months after devolution has been approved, the Partner Institution **must** complete an Implementation Report, using annexe 2 of this Code of Practice, detailing the effectiveness of the procedures it has operated during that year.
  2. The report **must**:
     1. Identify any strengths, examples of good practice worthy of wider dissemination.
     2. List any areas for development.
     3. Detail the effectiveness of procedures to deal with applicants with criminal convictions.
     4. Detail the effectiveness of procedures for identifying special cases.
     5. Provide details and copies of any relevant updated policies and procedures.
     6. Provide details of any significant changes in roles and responsibilities.
     7. Detail the impact of any changes in relevant legislation.
  3. The report **must** be received by EPC.
  4. The report **must** be completed as part of the Partnership Review process.

## Annual Review

* 1. The Institutional Review and Enhancement Report template **must** be used to provide updates or progress since the original application for devolved admissions authority to allow. Any issues noted in the execution of the devolved powers **must** be reported to EPC.
  2. Following consideration of the any issues raised, EPC may determine any actions which it considers **must** or **should** be taken by the Partner Institution to enhance compliance with this Code of Practice or otherwise enhance its admissions processes.
  3. EPC may direct such further reports as it deems appropriate. Normally further comment on the operation of the process and details of any changes in policy or staff **should** be included in the Institutional Review and Enhancement Report.

## Withdrawal of authority to make admissions decisions

* 1. EPC is empowered to suspend or withdraw the authority to make admissions decisions where it is satisfied that there has been substantial non-compliance with this Code of Practice. The decision **must** not be made until the Partner Institution has been provided with reasonable opportunity to make written representations to the Committee. This power **should** not be exercised unless it has been established that the non-compliance cannot be remedied satisfactorily. The Partner is responsible for demonstrating compliance with the Code of Practice; a failure to demonstrate compliance may result in withdrawn authority.

# Version control

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
| 2 00 | UoH Working Group | July 2024, ESEC | Significant review to bring the code into line with current university structures and updating of language, including:   * Confirms the role of EPC in the approval and monitoring of the devolved powers. * Confirms arrangements for changes to entry requirements at Clearing. * Confirmation of the appropriateness of the policy via annual review (AMREP) and the partner audit process. |
| 1 07 |  |  | * Change of Programme Management Committee PMC to Education Planning Committee (EPC). * Several amendments for clarity, including provisions for the code applying to UK and internal Partner Institutions. * Confirmation of the review of devolved powers via the Annual Monitoring and Partnership Review process. * Confirmation of changes to entry requirements as part of Clearing. |
| 1 06 |  | Housekeeping. | Change of Programme Approvals Committee to Programme Management Committee and PAC to PMC. |
| 1 05 |  | Housekeeping. | Change of name Head of Quality, to Quality Manager |
| 1 04 |  |  | Update to paragraph 47 to require Partners who have been granted devolved admissions to prepare their report for ULTAC in the PQER template (section 3b). |
| 1 03 |  | Housekeeping. | * Updates the code with reference to the new committee structure. * Several amendments for clarity. |
| 1 02 |  |  | * Provides greater detail regarding the reports which are to be provided to the University by those Partners with devolved admissions authority and provides a template for use when preparing the reports. This template is published as annexe 2. * Clarifies the relative roles of CPC and QSC. * Clarifies the definition of “special cases” |
| 1 01 |  |  | * In line with legislation related to age discrimination the requirement for applicants over 21 be handled as ‘special cases’ has been removed. * Paragraph 38 of the Code has been revised to provide an exemption for PI staff applying for teacher training programmes. * References to AAC have been removed and replaced as appropriate. |