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| University Code of Practice  Approval of New Academic Partnerships | |
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# Introduction

**Key Principles**

* 1. This code is underpinned by the Guiding Principles of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Partnerships (Nov 2018), notably including the requirements for appropriate governance arrangements, due diligence and a legally binding written agreement:
* The awarding institution will have in place appropriate governance to authorise and oversee the development and closure of partnership arrangements and to monitor their effective operation (GP2).
* Due diligence enquiries are completed and legally binding written agreements are signed prior to the commencement of student registration – due diligence enquiries are refreshed periodically and before agreements are renewed. (GP3)
  1. This Code applies to the approval of new Partners, whether UK or international, for the delivery of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and modules leading to the award of University of Hull awards or credit.
  2. Agreements **must** only relate to activities within the scope of this Code and excludes activities concerned with the engagement with other institutions for the sole purposes of research, staff mobility, knowledge exchange etc.
  3. The Code recognises two stages of approval in the approval of Academic Partnership and its Activities:

Approval of the individual **Partnership** **Activities**

e.g. progression, validation etc

Approval of the Academic **Partnership**

(leading to a Partnership Agreement)

* 1. Each Partnership Activity is defined in Appendix 1 of this code.
  2. New partners require the approval of the relevant committee(s), including having first consulted with Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC) where required.

*Explanatory note:*

* The University cannot be committed to a binding legal relationship unless approval has been granted in accordance with the Code

# Partnership Approval

* 1. The Quality Support Service (QSS) supports the application process. QSS will help to clarify the nature of the approval that is sought, establish whether there are any existing partnerships/agreements with the partner, and outline the timescales and the information needed to support the application.
  2. Partnership Approval is classified according to four levels, designed to reflect the increasing extent of commitment and risk involved in the anticipated Activity:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Partnership Level** | **Partnership Activities Permitted** | | | |
| **1** | * Progression * Incoming Study Abroad |  | | |
| **2** | * Progression * Incoming Study Abroad | * Exchange * Outgoing Study Abroad |  | |
| **3** | * Progression * Incoming Study Abroad | * Exchange * Outgoing Study Abroad | * Validation of Programme / modules |  |
| **4** | * Progression * Incoming Study Abroad | * Exchange * Outgoing Study Abroad | * Validation of Programme / modules | * Dual award * Joint award * Inst’l level |

*Explanatory note:*

* If the planned activity is for placement learning other than student exchange or outgoing study abroad, the University Code of Practice: Placement for Learning (QH:K9) must be used for the approval of the placement provider and the activity.
  1. This Code provides for the upgrading of Partnership approval enabling higher level activities to be undertaken.
  2. Each Partnership Activity can only be approved once the appropriate level of Partnership Approval has been obtained.

**International Partnerships**

* 1. International Partnership approval at levels 1 and 2, may be approved by the Director of Global Engagement (GE). Approval decisions **must** be reported to the Education Planning Committee.
  2. International Partnership approval at levels 3 and 4, must be approved by Education Planning Committee (EPC) and Senate having first consulted with Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC).

# The Process of Obtaining Partnership Approval

* 1. Obtaining a Partnership Agreement involves two stages of approval:

**STAGE TWO - strategic case**

* Coordinated by the QSS and/or GE, a number of **due diligence** and further analysis checks will take place
* the application will then be **considered for full Partnership Approval**

**STAGE ONE – initial proposal**

* to identify whether the University would support **exploring approval of a Partnership** with the institution
* approval of Stage One will allow the application to **proceed to Due Diligence checks** (Stage Two)

*Note:*

* If the nature of the partnership activity is not yet known, a strategic case cannot be established and the application cannot proceed. In exceptional circumstances a Memorandum of Intent will be considered.

# Step (i): Submission of the proposal (Stage 1 – initial proposal)

* 1. An application, using the Academic Partnership Proposal Form, must be completed, signed by the relevant head(s) of school and dean(s) of faculty, or by the head of the relevant Professional Service, and be submitted to the QSS/GE.

# Step (ii): Consideration of the application for Stage 1 approval

* 1. Applications for partner approval will be considered by EPC having first consulted with the CPC or GE, notwithstanding 2.5 above.
  2. EPC is empowered to:
* Approve the application
* Defer decision pending further information
* Reject the application.
  1. The secretary of EPC will inform relevant areas of the University regarding the decision of EPC.

# Step (iii): Submission of the application (Stage 2 - confirming the strategic case)

* 1. An application, using the Academic Partner Approval Form, must be coordinated by the QSS, in consultation with the relevant School and Faculty or Professional Service.
  2. The application **must** include written evidence by the proposed partner, confirming the institution’s wish to become a partner.

# Step (iv): Site report/Independent site visit

The need for a site visit in respect of the Partnership is determined below, this is informed by the context of the proposed activity.

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| **Partnership Level** | **Site visit requirements** |
| **1** | No requirement |
| **2** | Site report |
| **3** | Independent site visit |
| **4** | Independent site visit |

* 1. A ‘Site Report’ is defined as: a ***report*** prepared by the school/faculty/Professional Service that provides evidence that the partner institution has been visited by a member of University staff of the school/faculty or Professional Service and confirming that the learning resources (broadly defined) available at the partner institution are suitable to support the learning opportunities of the students concerned.
  2. An ‘Independent Site Visit’ is defined as: a ***visit (and subsequent report)*** led by a member of staff nominated by EPC who is independent of the school/faculty/Professional Service proposing the partnership. Members of the QSS and other University service areas may also attend.

*Explanatory note:*

* Arrangements for the independent site visit will be made by QSS
* The full cost of the independent site visit will reside with the proposing faculty/Professional Service

# Step (v): Approval for non-standard Agreements

* 1. A standard Partnership Agreement, using the approved template, should be drafted. If a non-standard Agreement is requested, the need for it **must** be identified, discussed and confirmed with the QSS.
  2. Where the proposed agreement is to be a non-standard agreement, a copy of the agreement or those elements which make it non-standard **must** be included with the application.

# Step (vi): Consideration of applications for Stage 2 approval

* 1. Applications for a Partnership Agreement will be considered by EPC having first consulted with CPC, notwithstanding 2.5 above.
  2. EPC is empowered to:
* Approve the application or recommend to Senate approval of the application,
* Defer decision pending further information or,
* Reject the application.
  1. In the event of recommending approval to Senate, EPC **must** determine whether to recommend approval for a limited time (e.g. three or five years) or an unlimited time.
  2. Provided that EPC has recommended approval, Senate **should** consider the proposed partner at its next available meeting. In the event of approving the partner, Senate will determine whether to grant approval for a fixed period of time taking into account the recommendation of EPC. In all cases partnerships are subject to a review no less than every five years, as described in paragraphs 6.
  3. The Secretary of EPC will inform relevant areas of the University regarding the outcome of the decision made by EPC, including, if relevant, the reasons for referral or rejection

# Step (vii): Production and authorisation of the Agreement

10.1 In all cases the Agreement **must** be produced and authorised by the University Governance and Compliance Office.

# Step (viii): The Legal Agreement

* 1. All Partnerships are effected through a Legal Agreement. The University Governance and Compliance Office will draft the Legal Agreement and (once agreed by the partner institution) will prepare the document for signing (two copies). The Legal Agreement will be signed by the Chair of Education Planning Committee or a person specifically designated in writing by them for this purpose if they are not available or by the Vice Chancellor, and by an authorised representative of the partner institution. If the proposed partner provides an Agreement that is acceptable to the University and approved by the University Governance and Compliance Office, this may be considered instead.
  2. One signed copy of the agreement **must** be held in the University’s Deed Store.

*Explanatory note:*

* Production of and obtaining signatures for the formal document is the responsibility of the Governance and Compliance Office
* It is expected that in the majority of cases a standard agreement will be used
* Any amendments to Agreements **must** be effected by the University Governance and Compliance Office
* Acting on the authority of the Chief Compliance Officer, the QSS.GE is empowered to effect specific standard Agreements.

# Collaborative Provision Register

4.1 All new Collaborative Provision Partnerships will be recorded on the University’s Collaborative Provision Register. The Register, which reflects external expectations, must be maintained by the QSS.

# Criteria for Approval

* 1. The consideration of applications is based on balancing a number of factors reflecting the University’s approach to partnerships, primarily:
* The potential benefits to the University and to the proposed partner
* The potential risks to the University, both financial and reputational
* The sustainability of the partnership
  1. Consideration of proposed Partnerships is informed by sector good practice reflected in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Partnerships* (Nov 2018), especially the need for due diligence regarding the standing of the proposed partner and its capacity to meet the obligations of the partnership. The proposed partner **should** be expected to undertake equivalent due diligence in respect of the University.

*Explanatory note:*

* In all cases the potential risk of the proposed partnership will be assessed and will influence the extent to which each of the above factors is important. For example, it will be entirely appropriate for a partnership for the purposes of progression to be short term and benefit one department. As such, it is likely to be inherently low risk. In contrast any proposal for collaborative delivery is likely to benefit large sections of the University, will need to be capable of being of long term benefit to both parties and will carry with it inherent risks. Other risk factors include, for example, geographical location and level of UK HE experience.

# Review, Renewal and Termination of Academic Partnerships

* 1. All agreements **must** be reviewed in accordance with the processes set out in the Code of Practice Academic Partnership Review, Renewal and Termination.
  2. Any amendment, renewal or termination of Agreements **must** be effected by the University Governance and Compliance Office.

**Partnership Permission Levels Overview**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Partnership** **Level** | **Progression / Incoming Study Abroad** | **Exchange / Outgoing Study Abroad** | **Validation of Programme / modules** | **Dual award / Joint award** | **Authority to approve application** | **Site visit** | **Authority to sign Agreement\*** |
| **1** | ✓ | - | - | - | EPC / Director of Global Engagement | N/A | Chair of EPC, Director of Global Engagement |
| **2** | ✓ | ✓ | - | - | EPC /  Director of Global Engagement | Site report | Chair of EPC, Director of Global Engagement |
| **3** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | - | Senate on recommendation of EPC \*\* | Independent site visit | VC |
| **4** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Senate on recommendation of EPC\*\* | Independent site visit | VC |

\*Level 1 and 2 agreements can only be signed by the PVC (Edu) or a person specifically designated in writing by them for this purpose, if they are not available or by the Vice-Chancellor. International Agreements for Level 1 and 2 may be signed by the Director OF Global Engagement

Level 3 and 4 agreements can only be signed by the Vice-Chancellor or a person specifically designated in writing by them for this purpose.

\*\*Following consultation with CPC

**Version Control**

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
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