

University Code of Practice: Approval, Management and Review of Dual Awards

## 1. Principles

A dual award is a qualification given as two awards, each from a different organisation with degree awarding powers, for the same programme of study. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code describes them as being jointly-delivered and this, together with the fact that both partners are making an award, helps distinguish them from other forms of collaboration, particularly from validated programmes or joint awards. The implications of this are spelt out in the Characteristics Statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body. The University of Hull sees dual awards as bringing benefits to both partners as well as to their students from combining their skills and knowledge. A dual award may be based on an existing programme in the partner and/or at Hull but should be characterised by design, development and delivery which has substantial involvement from each partner resulting in a jointly-delivered programme which could not be provided by either partner separately. In some cases, the students may study in both locations, although this is not a requirement.

To secure substantial joint contributions from each partner, both must be involved in the development, delivery and management of the programme. This includes the development of teaching materials, assessments and the on-going review of the programme as well as delivery.

This must include:

* a minimum input of 25% to the delivery of the programme. This may be achieved by:
* each partner being solely responsible for at least one quarter of the modules;
* each partner having an input into a larger proportion of modules but in such a way that overall at least a quarter of the delivery of all the modules rests with each partner;
* ensuring that the balance of input is such that all students will engage with each partner for at least a quarter of their study activity. This means that care should be taken to ensure that any core/compulsory/optional split cannot result in a student engaging with one partner for less than a quarter of the programme;

* and the involvement of both partners in:
* assessment, including:
* participation in Assessment Boards;
* setting and first marking assessments relating to module(s) for which the partner concerned is the primary deliverer;
* having engagement (usually in the form of moderation) in the assessment of modules delivered by other partner(s);
* programme review and development including:
* initial programme design;
* the development of teaching materials and of assessments;
* annual review and minor modifications;
* where applicable, periodic programme review.

Note that:

* it is not necessary for there to be the same division of responsibility across all years of study provided that each partner is involved in the overall programme management;
* despite that, each partner should have involvement in delivery and assessment at the level of the award;
* where accreditation of prior learning is to be accepted for entry, care should be taken to ensure that such students will have contact time with each partner for at least a quarter of their dual award programme delivery;
* the validation panel in the first instance, and subsequently the committees empowered to make modifications, should ensure that the estimate of engagement of each partner is agreed and remains appropriate.

Each participating institution must have degree-awarding powers in its own country and the award must meet all the UK Quality Code for Higher Education descriptors and benchmarks. Any such award must also be robustly quality assured by the UK awarding body in the same way as any other award made in its name.

## 2. Approval of a dual award

Initial approval to progress a dual award must come from Senate on the recommendation of the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education). The faculty must complete and submit a proposal form signed by the relevant head(s) of academic unit and faculty dean(s). The Pro Vice Chancellor will consider the proposal and make recommendations to Senate, the recommendation should be;

* reject the request;
* refer the request to a review panel;
* approve the request.

Dual awards represent a significant risk for the University and should therefore only be approved

* in a subject area in which the University has appropriate subject expertise to carry out joint delivery, moderation of assessment and the other responsibilities required;

*either to an existing partner*:

* with whom the University has already worked successfully for at least four years in a joint franchise or validation model of collaboration;
* in a subject area in which the University has already worked successfully with the partner for at least three years in a joint franchise or validation model of collaboration;
* at an academic level at which the University has already worked successfully with the partner for at least three years in a joint franchise or validation model of collaboration;

*or to a new partner*:

* which has had, and used, degree-awarding powers (DAPs) for at least three years;
* which has had in-country approval throughout that time, subject if applicable to addressing recommendations effectively;
* which has graduated students successfully, completing their programmes in a timely way and progressing to appropriate employment;
* which has experience of successful collaborative provision.

(This is in addition to the normal requirements for the approval of a new partner as outlined in the relevant process documentation).

A multiple award drawing on three partners may exceptionally be permitted on the basis described above. In such a case:

* each partner would give its own award;
* a student might not study with all the partners;
* a student would receive awards only from those with which he/she had had contact time for at least one quarter of the programme;
* each partner is involved in the development and management of the programme.

After approval to progress a dual award has been granted, the usual University approval of new partners’ process should be undertaken as per the University Code of Practice: Approval of New Partners. The process should commence at stage two (strategic case) of the code. In addition, the proposed programme(s) will be validated following the University [approval of programmes process](https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/download/attachments/104855931/Programme%20Approval%20Process.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1504775121787&api=v2).

### Documentation for Programme Approval

#### Programme specification

The approval of a specific dual award requires the University of Hull to be satisfied that the programme meets the usual UK standards. The partner and the faculty are jointly responsible for producing the programme specification, using the University of Hull template and incorporating the QAA points of reference.

#### Module outlines

Modules to be delivered by the partner may be designed to the partner’s specification but must record credit volume (or learning hours as a proxy), academic level, learning outcomes/competencies, content, modes of teaching, learning and assessment, and a reading list. If this is not in place the University of Hull module outline must be used. Modules to be delivered by University of Hull staff will be designed on the Hull template.

#### Programme management

Proposals must be brought forward for:

* Annual monitoring and review of programmes;
* Programme board of studies;
* Programme board of examiners;
* Student-Staff Forum at programme level;
* A clear indication of programme-specific regulations and code of practice/procedures (or a statement of which institution’s regulations/codes will be used, if applicable);
* A designated programme director at Hull and the roles of any other participating staff;
* The management of transcripts;
* The management of admissions;
* relevant staff CV’s (of the partner institution) including research / scholarship and capacity to maintain the currency of the curriculum;

#### Alignment of standards

During, or prior to, the programme validation panel the faculty and the partner must undertake cross-marking of a sample of scripts/assignments from each partner in the subject area(s) in question. This must include external examiner input from the UK. The outcomes of this must be presented to and discussed with the approval panel.

### General - approval panels will need to be satisfied:

* that the dual award is a genuinely joint venture which draws creatively on the experience and expertise of both partners to the benefit of students;
* as to the partner’s experience and/or understanding of UK expectations and University of

Hull processes;

* that the programme will meet UK points of reference;
* that any proposed programme-specific regulations will not jeopardise academic standards;
* a common grading criteria, applicable to all modules, has been agreed by the institution;
* that the proposed programme management structures appear sound and will articulate appropriately with processes at both partner institutions.

Note that:

* programme-specific regulations and the wording of certificates and transcripts will require Education Committee approval;
* the programme(s) must normally be taught and assessed in English, however where it is felt that individual modules needed to be taught in a language other than English, this must be approved at the Programme Approval stage (along with suitable External Examining and assessment moderation arrangements).

## 3. Programme management

### General

For the management of a dual award:

* proposals for structures and processes may draw on either partner’s processes or reflect an amalgam of the two;
* it is not required that a dual award should use the same structures as those in place at Hull but it is required that they provide for the same management activities as the University Programme Boards of Studies, Programme/Module Boards of Examiners and Student-Staff Forums;
* consideration should be given to how annual monitoring and the review of programmes will be best satisfied: by using the partner’s annual review documentation as it stands; by using the University’s annual review documentation; by using either set of documentation with agreed addenda; or by developing a hybrid process;
* annual programme review must report to the Quality Governance, as well as through the partner’s regular processes;
* comment on the dual award will be included in the annual Subject Group/Academic Unit Enhancement Report submitted to the Education Committee;
* the programme board of studies must include membership from both partners and must meet in person, ideally, at least twice per year; other meetings may have representation by video-conference. The balance of membership of the group will depend on the joint delivery envisaged;
* minor changes to the programme must align with the Hull criteria for minor modifications (or where required be brought back for re-validation if major changes are required);
* the programme boards of examiners must include membership from both partners and must meet in person at least once per year; other meetings may have representation by video-conference. The balance of membership of the group will depend on the joint delivery envisaged;
* a Student-Staff forum must be held at programme level with a member of academic staff from the University in attendance at least twice per year; at additional meetings the University may be represented remotely. The balance of membership of the group will depend on the joint delivery envisaged;
* the outcomes of student feedback questionnaires administered by the partner must be made available to the University;
* provision must be made to enter the student data into SITS so that we can calculate degree classifications (if applicable) and issue transcripts (unless this is delegated to the partner) and certificates;
* student complaints will be handled in the first instance by the awarding body responsible for that aspect of the provision according to their own process. As students will be 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 of Hull with appropriate representation from the partner, which will be agreed as part of the dual award arrangement. Any variations to the University of Hull process must be approved by the Education Committee;
* the detail of the management of student appeals will be agreed as part of the dual award arrangement. As students will be entitled to refer their complaint to the OIA the process will follow that of the University of Hull although the appeal panel must include representation from both awarding institutions. Any variations to the Hull process must be approved by the Education Committee;
* the management of admissions must safeguard entry standards and ensure equity of treatment to applicants including those of diverse backgrounds or with disabilities;
* staff CV’s: the usual process will apply for the approval by the University of staff who the partner wishes to teach on the programme. Approval must be obtained before staff start to teach;
* publicity: the usual process for approval of publicity by the University will apply to publicity relating to the dual award. Publicity issued by either partner must make clear that this is a dual award and explain what that means. It will be expected that its distinctiveness will be a feature of the marketing materials. This will include hard copy and electronic media.

Note that the management of a dual award applies to all levels and stages of a programme so that all the credits required for an award are quality assured. Where there is a progression or articulation route this must also be quality assured using the University’s procedures for articulation and related processes.

### Regulations and Certificates

The regulations used may be those of the University of Hull or of the partner or may be specially developed as a ‘hybrid’. In any event the standards of both partners must be met and if necessary those of one partner must be exceeded to allow those of the other partner to be met. Where programme or partner specific regulations are required these must be approved by the University Education Committee.

If the Hull assessment criteria and marking scales are not to be used, a schedule must be drawn up that converts programme marks into standard University of Hull stage weightings. Advice on conversion schedules can be sought from the Student Services Directorate.

The wording of the University of Hull transcript and certificate given to a student must make it clear that this is a dual award and must reference the location(s) of study. Student Services Directorate will be responsible for proposing wording for certificates and transcripts in consultation with the faculty and the partner. The transcript and certificate provided by the partner must do the same unless there is clear evidence that in-country regulations would make this impossible.

### Assessment

Relevant University of Hull staff must be involved in approving examinations, assignments and projects, including liaison with the external examiner. Moderation of scripts by University staff and sampling by the external examiner must be undertaken as per University codes of practice.

One or more external examiner(s) must be appointed by the University of Hull to its usual role profile, reporting to the University. The terms of engagement are as for on-campus external examiners, including attendance at the Board of Examiners wherever they may be held.

External examiner reports will be sent to the University. The programme director will be responsible, through the usual University processes, for responding to the external examiner in consultation with the partner and for ensuring that the report and response are made known to the Programme Board of Studies and to the students.

Any issues which cannot be resolved with the partner in response to the external examiner will be taken as a matter of urgency to the Faculty Associate Dean (Education).

## 4. Collaborative Provision Agreement

When a dual award is approved, either an existing agreement will be updated to cover the dual award or a new/separate memorandum of agreement will be issued. The Academic Partnership Office, Quality Governance and the Solicitors Office will work together to finalise the agreements. The Academic Partnership Office will issue the Agreement and inform the faculty concerned when it has been signed so that recruitment can start or continue.