



Higher Education Collaboration Policy

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1. Statement of Intent

1.1 The policy is intended to guide staff in developing a range of academic partnerships, collaborations and joint ventures in Higher Education, to ensure well-coordinated delivery for the best possible outcomes for USP college, students and partners.

2. Introduction and Purpose

2.1 All proposals for new academic partnerships must align with the college's Mission Statement and Higher Education Strategic Plan. All arrangements entered into by the college are at an institutional level and the process and policy allows for a consistent approach to partnership approvals.

3. Legislation and Guidance

3.1 This policy aligns to QAA Quality Code – Chapter B10 – Managing Higher Education Provision with Others.

4. Collaboration

4.1 The establishment of new academic partnerships in the UK follows a set approval process and operating framework standards.

4.2 The college will consider the following Higher Education academic collaborations:

a. Articulation Arrangements:

- i. A process whereby students from the partner institution who satisfy the academic criteria are automatically entitled to enter the college's programmes with advanced standing to a college award. These arrangements involve credit accumulation and transfer and a formal written agreement is needed. The process includes a detailed mapping and both institutions are responsible for ensuring that the credit accumulation is valid after the partnership has started.

b. Franchise:

- ii. Where the college agree to authorise a delivery organisation to deliver (and assess) one of its own approved programmes, leading to a college award. The college retains responsibility for the programmes content and quality and standards. Core and Compulsory modules may be modified to reflect cultural differences if the collaboration is overseas, as long as the learning outcomes remain consistent. The partner may be permitted to develop optional modules as long as they enable the programme learning outcomes

to be met. Any module approvals would need to follow the college approval process. Students have a direct contractual relationship with the college. Under franchise arrangements, the college Rules and Regulations of Assessment apply to the programmes.

c. Distributed Delivery/Flying Faculty:

- i. A programme, or part of a programme of study leading to a college award that is delivered at an alternative site away from the main campus. All teaching and assessment is completed at the alternative location by college staff, with local staff providing special support services. Under distributed delivery, the college regulations and rules of assessment apply to the programmes.
- ii. Any potential collaborative arrangement should be discussed with the Head of Learning for the relevant area. No arrangement should be progressed unless the Senior Management Team (SMT) has granted approval.
- iii. The development of new partnerships has a two-stage approval process. First, an Outline approval should be submitted to SMT for approval. This will include details of the proposed partnership, any due diligence information, any resource implications, market research and demand, and any in-country regulations that will need to be considered. Once Outline approval has been granted, then the approval will proceed to a validation event for final approval. No partnership can be progressed without the relevant approval.

d. Alignment with the College's Mission and Strategies:

- i. All proposals for new partnerships must align with the College's Mission Statement and Higher Education Strategy. All proposals will need to outline how the proposed partnership will align to the core values outlined in the College's Strategic Plan 2017-2020.
- ii. Proposals should also demonstrate how the following criteria is met when being submitted to SMT:
- iii. The proposed institution is suitable in terms of reputation and academic standing. All risks as well as associated benefits with the arrangement have been identified, as well as the costs involved to manage any risks.
- iv. That the time, commitment and costs for establishing and maintaining a partnership had been considered fully. It is important to ensure that resources both within programme areas and professional services are available for the partnership to be successful. When costing new

arrangements start-up and maintenance costs should be considered as well as staff time and commitment costs. If the collaboration is small in scale, alternative arrangements may be considered to allow it to become more resource effective.

5. Process

- 5.1** All proposals for new partnerships, or expansion of current partnerships should be discussed at course level and agreed by the Head of Learning for HE and Vice Principal (Quality) before any developments are made. The Head of Learning will need to determine whether there are staff resources, and financial resources available, for the partnership to be developed.
- 5.2** When new proposals are developed, the proposer should have discussions with Marketing, Finance and Registry to determine any risks and issues that may arise and whether there is capacity in other departments for the proposal to go ahead.
- 5.3** The proposer will need to submit an outline approval form with all relevant evidence including due diligence information to the Head of Learning for HE. The proposal will only be submitted to SMT, if confirmation that the Vice Principal (Quality) and Chief Operating Officer are satisfied with the due diligence information.
- 5.4** The proposal shall then be submitted to Curriculum Planning Group, where a panel consisting of SMT will consider the proposal in terms of resource allocation and whether it meets the College's mission statement and strategy.
- 5.5** Once approval has been granted by the Curriculum Planning Group, the proposal will be considered by the Board of Governance, who will consider the relation to the College's portfolio and any quality and standards issues that would need to be considered.
- 5.6** Once approved by the Board of Governance and Curriculum Planning Group, a validation event can take place and a collaborative validation process should be followed. The type of arrangement will be guided by the Head of Learning HE.
- 5.7** When proposals are rejected by either Curriculum Planning Group or the Board of Governance, a clear rationale for the rejection is articulated to the proposer and proposed partner institution.

6. Agreements

- 6.1** When entering into a formal partnership, a Partnership Agreement will need to be drafted and agreed by both parties before a validation event takes place. A programme

cannot commence at a partner institution if the Partnership Agreement has not been signed.

- 6.2** The agreements will outline the responsibilities of each partner and any legal obligations. Programme proposers will be asked to comment on the agreement. The Chief Operating Officer will provide the financial annex.
- 6.3** Any changes to the agreement will result in the agreement being re-drafted. Depending on the type of arrangement, the Partnership Agreement will last for no more than 5 academic years.
- 6.4** When the partnership is proposed, a risk rating will be determined by SMT. The risk rating will determine when repeat due diligence will be completed.

7. Termination

- 7.1** The College is responsible for all students on collaborative programmes. When terminating a partnership, the arrangements for students on the programmes should be considered.
- 7.2** Discussions for termination arrangements should be discussed with the Head of Learning for HE, Vice Principal Quality and the Chief Operating Officer. A termination agreement may need to be established.
- 7.3** This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing College documents. The College may amend the policy from time to time and any such amendments will be notified via the website, through staff newsletter or by email.