

PERIODIC REVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

1 Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 All of the University's academic programmes delivered under collaborative arrangements with public or private providers in the UK or overseas are subject to periodic review at intervals of approximately five years. The aims of periodic review are to confirm that the following dimensions, as applicable to the type of collaborative arrangement, continue to be appropriate:
- The academic standards of the programme(s) concerned;
 - The quality of the learning opportunities afforded to students studying the collaborative programmes;
 - The measures taken to maintain and enhance the quality and standards of provision.
- 1.2 Review of academic standards will require scrutiny of the aims, intended learning outcomes, curricula, assessment strategy and methods, and student achievement.
- 1.3 Review of the quality of learning opportunities will involve appraising the student experience by scrutinising the effectiveness of learning and teaching and of strategies of student progression and academic support, and the adequacy of learning resources and their effective utilisation.
- 1.4 Review of the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards will appraise the evaluation and use of quantitative data and qualitative feedback in a strategy of enhancement and continuous improvement. In addition to the standard aspects of this 'quality assurance' dimension, particular interest will be taken in **the effectiveness of the management of the collaborative arrangement, as evidenced by liaison between the University and the partner organisation, staff and student interaction and communications, University support for programme delivery, staff development, the design and conduct of assessment, administrative arrangements, the operation of programme committees and assessment boards.**
- 1.5 Rather than the partner organisation as a whole, the focus of review is therefore the collaborative academic programmes concerned and the quality and standards thereof, for which the relevant University Department is ultimately responsible. However reviews of collaborative provision also provide a 'window' allowing reviewers to observe and comment upon the partner organisation's structures, policies and procedures supporting collaborative provision.

2 Outline Review Methodology, Planning and Documentation

- 2.1 Reviews of collaborative provision will operate according to the University's 'Guidelines for Internal Subject/Programme Review', (<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/ISPR.htm>). The current notes are Annex 9 of that document (http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/Annex9_ISPR.pdf) and are replicated as Annex M of the document 'Development, Approval, Operation and Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision', <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Quality/QAContents/Collaborative%20Provision/documents/PDF/CollaborativeProvision.pdf>
- 2.2 Reviews may be 'event-based' (including a series of events) or 'process-based', depending on the nature, scale, complexity and configuration of the provision, e.g. number of partners, number of programmes, geographical location(s) of partners, whether the review is part of the subject review of cognate University provision, whether the University also delivers the programme(s) concerned. **The main variations of the review method are described in section 3 below.**
- 2.3 The provisional schedule of provision due for review in a particular year is drawn up in the previous year, from the rolling cycle of programme review, by the Senior Academic Affairs Officer in the Academic Quality and Standards Unit. Following any necessary adjustments by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards to reflect prevailing circumstances, the schedule is made available to Departments for comment and amendment and then presented to the Academic Quality and Development Committee and the Academic Board for approval.
- 2.4 The schedule includes a provisional review panel, established by the Senior Academic Affairs Officer, the size and composition of which will reflect the scale and nature of the collaborative provision under review, as described in section 1.3 of the Validation Handbook (http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/Validation_Guide.pdf). For all but 'standalone' recognition and credit recognition arrangements there will be at least one external panel member who will be nominated and approved in accordance with the University's published guidance (http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/Val_Annex_O.pdf).
- 2.5 Departments are formally notified of scheduled reviews by the Senior Academic Affairs Officer and begin their preparations, which are facilitated by a planning meeting at the University arranged by the Academic Quality and Standards Unit. The purpose of the planning meeting is to confirm what provision is in scope, the modus operandi of the panel, the documentation requirements, and the provisional timetable for the review, including a schedule of activities, meetings and a target date for the final report. Attendees include the Head of Academic Quality and Standards, the Chair and Secretary of the review panel, the Departmental Programme Leader and/or Liaison Tutor, Quality Manager and Head. Representatives from the partner organisation(s) may

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participate in the meeting and/or the relevant University Department will be expected to discuss the outcomes with appropriate partner organisation staff and jointly plan their preparatory activities.

- 2.6 Reviews will be informed in part by the documentary evidence listed in Annex 3 of the Guidelines for Internal Subject/Programme Review (<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/Annex3.pdf>). This will always include a **self evaluation document** prepared by the relevant University Department in collaboration with partner organisation staff according to the published guidance (<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/Annex1.pdf>). The documentary evidence, plus relevant discussions with staff and students, is mapped in detail to each aspect of standards and quality in the *Aide Memoire* for Internal Subject/Programme Review, (<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/PDF/Annex5.pdf>) and summarised in **section 4 below**.
- 2.7 To ensure that the available evidence covers the potential lines of additional panel enquiry relating to collaborative provision in particular, Departments should also refer to the University document 'Development, Approval, Operation and Quality Assurance of Collaborative Provision' (<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/aqas/ColProvision.htm>), Annexes D, G and H. These respectively cover the general responsibilities of the University and the partner organisation, responsibilities for external examining, and information to be provided to students.

3 Implementation

Independent Collaborative Review (UK and Overseas Collaborative Provision)

- 3.1 Collaborative provision may be scrutinised through **independent review**, i.e. **separately from the internal review of the host subject**, whether or not the collaborative programmes are also delivered at the University. **This method will always be used to review collaborative provision overseas.**
- 3.2 Where the collaborative programmes are also offered at the University, independent collaborative review will encompass slightly less than all components of the academic standards dimension. Thus, it will **not** normally encompass scrutiny of the programmes' aims and outcomes, curricula and assessment methods in relation to each other or to external reference points. This is to avoid these components being repeatedly scrutinised during collaborative and internal reviews. These matters will be included when the programmes are reviewed within the internal subject review at the University. However independent review will appraise **students' views** on whether the curriculum facilitates achievement of the learning outcomes, the effectiveness of communication of information relating to the intended learning outcomes,

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curricula and assessment, and the **achievement of students** studying the programmes delivered collaboratively.

- 3.3 Where the collaborative programmes are not also offered at the University then independent review will encompass all aspects of the dimensions of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities and their maintenance and enhancement, as they relate to the collaborative programmes.

Combined Review (UK Collaborative Provision only)

- 3.4 Collaborative provision may also be scrutinised through **combined review**, i.e. as an integral part of the internal review of the host subject, whether or not the collaborative programmes themselves are also offered at the University. **This method will only apply to UK collaborative provision.**
- 3.5 Scrutiny of collaborative provision within combined review will always encompass all aspects of the dimensions of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities and their maintenance and enhancement.
- 3.6 The following table represents the application of the different methods to the range of provision.

	<i>Collaborative programmes not also delivered at the University</i>		<i>Collaborative programmes also delivered at the University</i>	
<i>Review method</i>	<i>UK provision</i>	<i>Overseas provision</i>	<i>UK provision</i>	<i>Overseas provision</i>
<i>Independent</i>	FULL COVERAGE OF ALL ASPECTS	FULL COVERAGE OF ALL ASPECTS	DEFINED COVERAGE OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS	DEFINED COVERAGE OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS
<i>Combined</i>	FULL COVERAGE OF ALL ASPECTS	N/A	FULL COVERAGE OF ALL ASPECTS	N/A

Panel Visits to Partner Organisations

- 3.7 For all collaborative arrangements, other than recognition or credit recognition, the review will always involve a visit to the partner institution by the review panel or by selected members of the panel, depending on the configuration of the provision under review. No distinction is drawn here between different models of collaborative arrangement (franchise,

validation, etc – see section 4 below for definitions of the most common types of arrangement), or between UK and overseas provision.

Appraisal of Learning Resource Provision

- 3.8 A report on provision of physical learning resources at the partner organisation will be commissioned from the University's Learning Support Services by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards and made available to the review panel, the partner(s) and the relevant University Department(s).

Review of Overseas Collaborative Provision

- 3.9 Overseas collaborative provision will always be reviewed using the **independent review** method, whether or not the collaborative programmes are also delivered at the University.
- 3.10 Where feasible, the normal review method will be on a 'country by country' basis. Since the University's review method normally incorporates panel visits to partner organisations, this provides a cost-effective means of securing the necessary level of engagement. Should this method prove impractical because of the number and/or geographical location of partners in a particular country and/or the distinctiveness of the collaborative programmes, more than one review will take place in the country concerned.
- 3.11 Where a range of subjects is represented by the programmes to be encompassed by the review taking place in a particular country, recruitment of sufficient external panel members with matching subject expertise will secure the necessary profile of subject expertise.

UK Collaborative Provision: Independent Review

- 3.12 Where a single partner offers the programmes there will normally be a single review event held at the partner organisation(s). The panel will hold meetings with relevant partner organisation students and staff and Departmental staff from the University and will visit learning resource facilities.
- 3.13 Where multiple partners deliver the programmes, reviews of the collaborative provision may still take place through single events for one or more partners (as in 3.12 above), or there may be one or more 'parallel' reviews of the programmes at all or some of the partners.
- 3.14 Such parallel reviews will be informed by visits by all or some of the panel members to each partner organisation to engage with partner organisation staff and students and to review learning resource provision. The panel will also meet with Departmental staff from the University during meetings which may be held at the University and/or at

one or more of the partner organisations, depending on the logistics of implementation.

- 3.15 The precise way in which the review method is implemented where multiple partners deliver the programmes will depend on the number of partners, their geographical location, and the period of time for which they have been approved to deliver the programme and whether it is reasonable to align their review cycles.

UK Collaborative Provision: Combined Internal Subject Review and Collaborative Provision Review

- 3.16 This method will only be implemented where the totality of the relevant subject provision at the University and the collaborative programmes delivered through partner organisation(s) in the UK is of a scale and complexity such that the combined internal subject and collaborative provision review is manageable within the defined timescale and will not make unreasonable demands on the panel. The whole review panel, or selected members, will visit the partner organisation(s) to meet with staff and students and review learning resource provision.

4 Documentation and Other Evidence to Inform Review

- 4.1 In addition to the self evaluation document, the range of documentation and other evidence which panels will expect to be able to access is referred to in sections 2.6 and 2.7 above. For convenience, the evidence is mapped below to each aspect of the dimensions of academic standards, the quality of learning opportunities, and their maintenance and enhancement. The evidence is supplemented as appropriate by documentation specific to collaborative arrangements.

Academic Standards

4.2 Aims and outcomes

Programme handbooks and curricular documents such as module or unit guides; subject benchmark statements and details of professional body requirements.

4.3 Curriculum

Programme handbooks; curricular documents such as module or unit guides; practical or placement handbooks; validation and review documents and reports; external examiners' reports; professional and/or statutory body accreditation reports.

4.6 Assessment

Assessment methods, criteria and guidance to markers; external examiners' reports; procedures for monitoring and recording achievement; assessment board minutes; student achievement data; samples of student work.

Quality of Learning Opportunities

4.7 Learning and Teaching

Student questionnaires; reports of peer observation of teaching; internal review documents; staff development documents; programme handbooks; academic staff appointment documents.

4.8 Student Progression

Programme handbooks; student questionnaires; internal review documents; recruitment and progression data; further study and employment statistics.

4.9 Learning Resources

Staff CVs; internal review documents; external examiners' reports; staff development documents; equipment lists; library stocks.

Maintenance and Enhancement of Quality and Standards

Internal and external review documents; staff development records; external examiners' reports; professional and/or statutory body accreditation reports; assessment board minutes; course committee and board of study minutes; annual monitoring reports; records of visits to partner organizations and annual planning activities; updated memoranda of co-operation.