



**GUIDE TO POLICY AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE ASSURANCE
AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF
TAUGHT PROGRAMMES OF STUDY (THE 'RED BOOK')**

**DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL, OPERATION AND QUALITY
ASSURANCE OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION**

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1. Introduction and Principles

Preface

This document identifies University requirements and expectations in respect of the development, approval and validation, operation and quality assurance of collaborative arrangements with partner organisations involving taught programmes. The requirements and expectations are designed to secure a number of principles which underpin the standards of the University's awards, the quality of the student learning experience and the effective operation of collaborative partnerships. The terminology used in this document is defined at Annex A. The University's practices are intended at all times to be consonant with the relevant precepts of the applicable sections of the QAA *Code of Practice*.

Principles

- 1.1 The principles of collaborative partnerships relate to five main dimensions of quality assurance:
 - mission, purpose, status;
 - organisational governance and management;
 - academic and educational responsibility;
 - resource provision;
 - stability and continuity.
- 1.2 The adoption of these principles and their operationalisation aim to ensure that proposed partners are suitable, the student learning experience is appropriate, standards are preserved and the partnership arrangements are robust. The principles are elaborated below.
- 1.3 The procedures for approving collaborative provision are designed so that proposers must provide acceptable evidence to satisfy the University that these aims are met. Until this is confirmed to the satisfaction of Senate then no binding agreement with a prospective partner will be signed.
- 1.4 However the way in which the principles need to be operationalised and the nature and extent of the evidence which needs to be available to support their implementation will vary according to the characteristics of the partner organisation (e.g. whether public or private, size, primary purpose, etc) and the nature of the collaboration. These matters are further addressed in the *Institutional and/or Site Appraisal Process* explained in section 5 below and in Annex B. A key aim will be to apply the procedures and secure evidence in a way and to an extent which are proportionate to the perceived risk to quality, standards and the operation of the partnership which are inherent in the collaborative arrangement.
 - 1.4.1 Acceptability of the partner organisation in terms of its mission, purposes, status

- The purpose and aims of the collaboration should be clear and appropriate;
- the aims, status and educational ethos of the partner should serve to secure the predicted benefits of the collaboration.

1.4.2 Organisational governance and management

- The governance and management structures must be clear, effective and accountable;
- administrative structures should be capable of supporting the collaboration;
- the legal foundation of the governance and management should be secure.

1.4.3 Academic and educational responsibility

- There should be a responsible body for academic matters within the partner organisation, including the development, approval and promulgation of academic policy;
- there should be clear structures, roles and relationships for the planning, approval and operation of academic programmes, including recruitment and admissions, learning and teaching, assessment, quality assurance, student support, communication and feedback systems.

1.4.4 Resource provision

- There should be appropriate levels of human and physical resources of sufficiently high quality to support the delivery, quality assurance and management and administration of the programme and the collaborative arrangements, including any necessary staff development.

1.4.5 Stability and Continuity

- There should be reasonable expectation that the factors contributing to fulfilment of principles 1.3.1 - 1.3.4 above will remain secure into the foreseeable future;
- the financing of the partner organisation should be subject to a legally based, controlled and audited system;
- joint planning by the partners should be in evidence to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the arrangement;
- continuity of the student learning experience must be safeguarded, particularly in the event of termination of the agreement;
- contractual obligations and commitments must be confirmed by the partners through the signing by their

respective chief executives (or nominees) of formal agreements in a form specified by the University.

2. Consultation

2.1 Before any detailed discussions take place with a prospective partner, and particularly before any commitment to enter into an agreement is either given or implied, proposers should consult:

- The Deputy Vice Chancellor if there is any doubt whether the intended collaboration is consonant with the mission and strategic goals of the University;
- the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards and, for overseas or UK links respectively, the Director of International Relations or the Director of Business Support and Development, to ascertain whether the University has prior or current contacts with the prospective partner, or with other organisations which may be affected by the proposed arrangement, or whether the prospective partner has current or prior links with any other organisation which might influence how the University proceeds;
- the University Secretary and/or Director of Finance to obtain a preliminary view if there appear likely to be any particular legal, contractual or financial issues to explore and resolve prior to the formal agreement stage.

2.2 Matters to be covered by consultations with a prospective partner include:

- an explanation by the partner organisation of why it is seeking a relationship with the University;
- an explanation by the partner organisation of its policy on establishing partnerships;
- information on other existing, previous and planned partnerships, sufficient to give each other a 'feel' for institutional missions and their implementation;
- aspirations of the partner organisation about targeted programmes and longer-term ambitions;
- an outline of the University's procedures for institutional appraisal and academic validation;
- sharing information about respective expectations regarding operation of the arrangement at institutional and programme levels, including management, teaching, assessment, monitoring and review;
- outline timetable for moving forward in the approval processes.

3. Declaration of Interest in Collaboration

If the outcomes of consultation indicate that it is appropriate to proceed with development of the proposal, then the relevant Director of School\Centre or another member of the University's Executive Board may sign a letter or memorandum of agreement indicating the University's interest in pursuing the

collaboration. At this stage, the declaration is without prejudice and non-binding.

4. Planning Approval

- 4.1 All proposed collaborative partnerships are initially subject to the University's academic development approvals (ADA) procedures. These are described in detail in the appropriate section of the 'Red Book'. Particular consideration will be given during the scrutiny of proposed new or extended collaborative arrangements to the strategic and academic aims of the proposal, the financial implications and the resources to be made available for the delivery of the programme, the management and administration of the arrangement, and its quality assurance needs. The University's strategy for international or UK collaborative provision will be a major influence on whether planning approval is granted. Note that ADA forms for international or UK collaborative partnerships will be passed as appropriate to the Director of International Relations or the Director of Business Support and Development for comment, in addition to other senior post-holders specified in the ADA procedures.
- 4.2 No collaborative arrangement will be allowed to proceed to academic validation until planning approval for the development has been given by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. Similarly, no collaborative arrangement is considered to be fully validated until Senate has approved the event report and any validation conditions have been fulfilled. This **must** be made clear to the prospective partner by the proposers concerned, and the University will **not** take responsibility for any statements made to the partner, whether implicitly or explicitly, which indicate otherwise.
- 4.3 In some cases, to expedite the process and at the discretion of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, evidence informing a final decision about planning approval may be gathered as part of a parallel institutional appraisal and academic validation process. In such instances, the combined report of these processes will proceed through the relevant Senate committee (see section 5 below).

5. Institutional and/or Site Appraisal

- 5.1 For any newly proposed collaborative partner with which the University is considering entering into a legal agreement governing academic provision leading to University awards or credits, the Deputy Vice Chancellor will normally require that an institutional appraisal process be conducted, prior to or in parallel with the academic validation process, of a scale and nature to be determined by the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and others as necessary, and operating within the guidelines given below and in Annex B.
- 5.2 For any newly proposed partner organisation, it will be normal practice to obtain at least part of the evidence for the required institutional appraisal from a visit to the proposed partner organisation which includes at least one senior University post-holder outside the

proposing subject area, who will normally be responsible for collating the acquired evidence and compiling the appraisal report.

- 5.3 Where the proposed collaboration will not involve University awards or credits, e.g. in the case of articulation, recognition and credit recognition arrangements, then an institutional appraisal is not required. However the University will need to be assured through the academic validation process that the curricula, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, assessment processes and standards of student achievement for the relevant partner organisation programmes are sufficiently appropriate, robust, secure and verifiable for the intended purpose.
- 5.4 Planning approval is not considered to be formally granted until the institutional appraisal report is approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, whether or not the two processes (institutional appraisal and academic validation) are combined. Where they are combined, the Deputy Vice Chancellor has the authority to make a judgement about the outcomes of the institutional appraisal process when the combined report of the two processes comes to the relevant Senate committee which s/he chairs.
- 5.5 A partner organisation is considered to be an approved University partner following approval of the institutional appraisal and of the academic validation of the specific academic provision which is to be the subject of the collaboration.
- 5.6 'Approved partner' status is not itself subject to regular review, although the University does reserve the right to reappraise a partner organisation where it is deemed necessary. This may occur, for example, if in the University's view circumstances arise which might affect its' collaborative relationship with the organisation, if evidence becomes available from any source which suggests that such a reappraisal would be prudent, or if there is a proposal to operate collaborative provision with an approved partner following a substantial (normally five year) period during which there has been no active collaborative arrangement with that partner.
- 5.7 Otherwise, on an annual and 5-6 year cycle, the University's annual monitoring and periodic review processes respectively will apply to any collaborative academic provision approved for operation with the partner, as described in section 9 below.
- 5.8 The main purpose of institutional appraisal is to ascertain whether a proposed partner organisation provides an appropriate environment for the conduct of programmes of higher education leading to awards, credit, or recognition from the University. In its customary form, the appraisal process has traditionally involved direct scrutiny by the University of all of the dimensions described in Annex B that are considered to help secure the academic standards set and achieved, the quality of student learning opportunities, and the quality assurance of the collaborative arrangement.

- 5.9 The increase in the volume of collaborative activity in recent years has been met in large part by new forms of collaboration, greater diversity of partner organisations, innovative collaborative arrangements including full or partial delivery and assessment in the workplace (whether by employers and/or the University), and the use of 'satellite delivery sites' for the convenience of learners.
- 5.10 Additionally, both in the UK and overseas, there is an increasing amount of appraisal evidence to draw on from the outcomes of quality assurance and standards reviews by recognised national and international bodies operating within an increasingly harmonised and transnational framework.
- 5.11 The above factors have respectively required and facilitated a more selective approach to institutional appraisal such that it can be applied in ways which more appropriately and proportionately reflect the risks to quality, standards and learner expectations inherent in the characteristics of the proposed partner organisation and collaborative arrangement.
- 5.12 The nature, scale and scope of the institutional and/or site appraisal processes may therefore be varied to focus more specifically on the perceived risks associated with the variety of proposed partner organisations and collaborative arrangements currently encountered. These include, for example, recognised public FECs and HEIs in the EU and some other countries, public and private sector employer organisations of varying sizes whose main purpose may or may not be higher education, and 'satellite sites' to be used for delivery by existing partners or the University on a short- or long-term basis, primarily for the convenience of learners. The appraisal process is also able to draw on the outcomes of reviews by bodies such as the QAA and OFSTED, the British Accreditation Council, or comparable recognised authorities operating overseas.
- 5.13 A useful classification emerging from such developments is between institutional appraisal in its full form, which covers the whole range of dimensions listed in Annex B; institutional appraisal applied selectively according to the characteristics of the proposed partner organisation and collaborative arrangement; and 'site appraisal', where a limited subset of dimensions needs to be considered.
- 5.14 The nature of the institutional and/or site appraisal processes will be determined by the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards in consultation, as appropriate, with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Director of Business Support and Development, Director of International Relations and/or other senior post-holders.
- 5.15 It is the responsibility of the proposing School/Centre, in collaboration with the (proposed) partner organisation, to facilitate acquisition by the University of the necessary evidence to inform the institutional and/or site appraisal processes. This evidence will normally comprise documentation and one or more visits to the partner organisation by nominated University staff, including discussions with partner and

University staff responsible for managing and delivering the proposed collaborative provision. These matters are further addressed in Annex B. Evidence gained from any prior visit(s) by University staff to the prospective partner organisation and/or delivery site may be taken into account during the processes but will not automatically preclude any further visits being conducted in the University's name.

- 5.16 The institutional and/or site appraisal and academic validation processes are conceptually distinct. In practice, where circumstances permit and at the discretion of the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor, a single process may be implemented with the agenda covering institutional and/or site appraisal and academic validation, as required.
- 5.17 For an existing partner organisation, where there is a proposal to extend the arrangement to a different subject, to a higher level of the same subject, or to an arrangement involving higher levels of perceived risk, the partner organisation itself will not normally be reappraised but academic validation of the proposed collaborative provision will necessarily involve scrutiny of any evidence considered relevant to judgements about the academic standards (to be) set and achieved and the quality of learning opportunities designed to help students achieve those standards.
- 5.18 Where site appraisal alone is required, which will typically be where an existing partner or the University proposes, for the convenience of learners, to make use of a satellite site in delivering academic provision, planning approvals permission is not required. The process relies on scrutiny, certification and notification by the partner and/or a member of the relevant University School/Centre, to the satisfaction of the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards, of the relevant appraisal dimensions described in section 9 of Annex B. A note of approved 'satellite delivery sites' will be placed on the collaborative course record and in the register of collaborative provision but they do not in themselves constitute new partnerships.
- 5.19 The institutional appraisal process does not require external representation. However where the institutional appraisal and academic validation processes are combined and external representation is required for the academic validation process under the protocols described in the University's *Validation Handbook*, institutional appraisal may therefore also include or be informed by views solicited from representation external to the University.
- 5.20 In all cases the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards will determine what form the institutional and/or site appraisal process will take, in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and others as necessary, and will take account of the guidelines described above and in Annex B.
- 5.21 Whilst noting the variations in the institutional and/or site appraisal process described above and any other amendments necessary to take account of what is being proposed, the principles, criteria and

procedures for validation, as described in the University's *Validation Handbook*, will be adhered to. This means that **no collaborative arrangement can be considered to be formally approved** until Senate has accepted the validation report and any necessary validation conditions have been fulfilled. The University will **not** be responsible for any statement, made or implied, which indicates otherwise.

6. Validation Approval

- 6.1 In all cases, the validation process, whatever its nature, will be informed by the production of relevant documentation as outlined in Annex C of the *Validation Handbook* and elaborated upon in respect of collaborative provision in Annex C of the current document. The documentation will of course reflect the fact that it is a collaborative arrangement that is being proposed and it will be tailored according to the precise nature of that arrangement. There is however a wide range of potential types of arrangement and it is not possible to provide exhaustive guidance as to what particular aspects need to be addressed in every potential case. Nevertheless, a basic classification of collaborative arrangements is given in Annex C of this document, along with a note of issues considered especially important in the various kinds of arrangements and to which attention should therefore be paid in producing the required documents.
- 6.2 Early consultation should take place with the Dean of Academic Quality and Standards to begin to determine the likely form of the validation process and documentation requirements. The validation planning meeting, described in the *Validation Handbook*, formalises this consultation and agrees the details.

7. Formal Agreement

- 7.1 Every collaborative arrangement will be governed by a formal, written, legal agreement, derived from the relevant University model agreement, setting out the legal, academic, administrative and financial arrangements between the parties for the operation of the collaboration.
- 7.2 Model agreements covering common types of arrangement are available electronically from the University's shared staff drive (L-drive) in *Public\University Documents\Academic Quality and Standards Documents*. Draft agreements must be included in the document set which informs the validation process (see Annex C of the *Validation Handbook*).
- 7.3 Assistance with the drafting of agreements may be sought from the Head of Business Strategy and Policy Support, Director of Business Support and Development, Director of International Relations, Dean of Academic Quality and Standards, University Secretary, Director of Finance, and/or other responsible post-holders, e.g. Principal lecturers with responsibility for partnerships.

- 7.4 A typical division of responsibilities between the University and any partner organisation in operating a collaborative arrangement is shown in Annex D of the current document. Only a typical distribution of some of the responsibilities is shown there; the precise responsibilities of each partner will be negotiated and agreed during discussions and fully described in the completed University document designed for the purpose and which forms part of the required validation documentation (*'Management of Collaborative Provision'*, the template for which is available electronically from the University's shared staff drive (L-drive) in *Public\University Documents\Academic Quality and Standards Documents*).
- 7.5 Following validation, any necessary amendments must be made to the draft agreement before final signature by the Vice Chancellor or nominee and by the Head of the partner organisation or nominee.

8. Timescales

- 8.1 The timing of the stages described above will vary according to a number of factors. Under normal circumstances, the requirement is to notify and gain approval for proposed academic developments as part of the annual planning cycle in late spring/early summer terms for proposals intended to come to validation the following academic year, with a view to commencement at the beginning of the subsequent academic year. This implies, for example, that a development gaining planning approval in 2008/09 would come to validation in 2009/10 and begin operation in 2010/11. Given the need for prior informal discussions and visits by staff, the timescales inherent in bringing developments to fruition should not be underestimated. Typical stages are shown in Annex F.
- 8.2 It is recognised, however, that to capitalise on opportunities for collaboration occurring at times which do not align with normal planning cycles, the stages and timescales may sometimes need to be contracted so as not to jeopardise the proposed partnership. Nevertheless, the integrity of the institutional appraisal and academic validation processes will not be compromised. Proposers must be prepared to present valid and reliable evidence and the University will insist on pursuing such inquiries as it sees fit in order to satisfy itself that any proposed collaboration meets all relevant criteria.

9. Assuring Quality and Standards

9.1 Communications and Development

- 9.1.1 Once approved, it is essential to the success of a partnership that continuing links are maintained between key staff in both institutions. Since quality assurance arrangements will be diverse, reflecting the varied nature of partner organisations and collaborations, the most important principle is that of clarity; everyone involved in the partnership needs to know what is expected of them. Specific roles should be identified for communication regarding the ongoing quality assurance of

collaborative arrangements and these should be incorporated within the Programme Handbook and formal agreements.

- 9.1.2 To facilitate this specification of responsibilities, the proforma document '*Management of Collaborative Provision*', available from the University's shared staff drive (L-Drive) at *Public\University Documents\Academic Quality and Standards Documents*, should be completed and submitted as part of the document set for the validation of collaborative provision.
- 9.1.3 Partner organisations will vary in size, complexity and familiarity with the audit and quality assurance requirements of UK higher education institutions and of national bodies in the countries of either partner. Where necessary, the University will guide the partner organisation in meeting these demands, dovetailing with existing procedures where practicable, so that the required quality systems become embedded within the culture of the partner organisation and are allowed to adapt and develop within it. Over and above the University's essential requirements, the development of the partner organisation's own arrangements is to be encouraged.
- 9.1.4 Agreement should be reached between the University and partner organisation on some fundamental principles of quality assurance and how they are to be enacted. These include:
- the appointment of external examiners, their involvement in the assessment process and other aspects of quality and standards, whether and how often they might visit the partner organisation (see Annex G);
 - other arrangements for achieving regular and periodic external consideration of quality and standards (eg internal and external subject/programme review);
 - the nature and frequency of any peer observation of teaching in the partner organisation by University and/or partner organisation staff;
 - the University's minimum requirements for the collection, presentation and evaluation of statistical data to inform annual monitoring and periodic review;
 - information to be given to students (see Annex H);
 - arrangements for student feedback and meetings with students;
 - arrangements for the University to approve additions and/or changes to the approved collaboration, including mode and method of delivery at another location;
 - arrangements by which the University will assure itself that the standards achieved by students studying in the partner organisation are appropriate;
 - comparability within the partner organisation of all arrangements and regulations governing all forms of assessment.

- 9.1.5 Although much of the communication between the University and partner organisation can take place remotely, there is no substitute for face-to-face conversation with staff and students. Distance is a major factor affecting the nature of visit arrangements. Other influences on the quantity and content of communication will be the nature of the partner and its own quality assurance arrangements; the nature of the collaboration; the language of delivery and assessment; previous experience of the partner in delivering the subject at the required level; the extent to which the partner is known to the University. The validation process might result in the specification of a minimum number of visits (other than any teaching engagements) or other interactions concerning the routine operation of the collaboration.
- 9.1.6 Whatever the number and purposes of visits, the responsible University programme staff should ensure that over the course of an academic year they gather and record information on those matters listed in the sample agreement shown in Annex I. Visit reports should lead to clear actions by identified personnel within stated timescales and should be circulated to nominated individuals in the University and partner organisation.
- 9.1.7 In order to provide a context for such visits within the annual operating cycle of a collaborative arrangement, it is useful to establish a clear understanding with the partner organisation on the key events, processes and dates in any forthcoming period. A pro forma to facilitate the recording of such information is provided in Annex J.
- 9.1.8 In the period following initial approval of the collaborative arrangement the appraisal and validation reports should be used to help form the agenda to be followed during visits, by pursuing any observations, issues, conditions and recommendations arising in the course of the approval process. This will help to ensure that relevant matters are considered and reported on during annual monitoring.
- 9.1.9 Where feasible it is valuable to consider establishing cross-membership of relevant existing groups or committees or of any forum specifically established to focus on collaborative activities in a particular subject area or group of cognate subject areas.

9.2 Annual Monitoring

All collaborative programmes are subject to the University's annual monitoring procedures as described in the University's *Guidelines on Annual Monitoring*. The exact way in which this is achieved may vary with the nature, scale and complexity of the collaboration, the number of programmes and/or centres involved and so on. It is essential, however, that each programme which is the subject of a collaborative arrangement and each partner organisation involved in the delivery of the programme, is monitored via an annual report submitted to the University by an agreed date and in an approved form. These reports

will feed as appropriate into the quality enhancement plans at programme, subject, School/Centre and University levels in such a way as to allow consideration, at each level, of collaborative arrangements in general, as well as of points specific to particular partner organisations or individual programmes.

9.3 Periodic review

- 9.3.1 The periodic review of collaborative arrangements will be undertaken in accordance with the prevailing procedures (see Annex M and also *Guidelines for Internal Subject/Programme Review*). These will be applied so as to accommodate the nature, size, complexity and location of the collaborative arrangement under review. Thus, a programme offered only via a partner organisation and not at the University will itself be subject to review, in conjunction with a review of the collaborative arrangements for delivering the programme with the partner. Further, whilst isolated provision of small size may be able to be included within the normal internal review of the host subject or programme on campus, large and complex collaborative provision will normally demand a separate collaborative review. Finally, reviews of overseas collaborative provision will, where feasible, be undertaken on a country by country basis and may therefore encompass a range of different subjects (size and complexity permitting).
- 9.3.2 Whatever model is used, reviews of collaborative provision will require submission of a self evaluation document and other written evidence by the subject area concerned, an initial meeting between a review panel and relevant University staff, and a visit to the partner organisation by the panel to test claims made about the operation of the arrangement, the quality of learning opportunities and the relevant dimensions of academic standards, by meeting staff and students and scrutinising documentary and other evidence.
- 9.3.3 The dimensions to be considered in reviews of UK and overseas collaborative provision, the evidence to be supplied and the means of gathering the evidence will be as described in the relevant sections of the *Guidelines for Internal Subject/Programme Review*. The process will be adapted and applied to reflect the fact that a collaborative arrangement (possibly in an overseas country) is being reviewed and the nature, scale and complexity of that arrangement. See in particular section 4 of Annex C and Annexes D and E for pertinent issues.
- 9.3.4 The final summary report of the review will be subject to consideration by the relevant Senate committee and Senate itself. An action plan will be required from the subject area by the end of the term following that in which Senate receives the report.

9.4 Approval of changes

Modifications to the structure, content or method of delivery of collaborative programmes should follow the normal procedures for approval described in the University's *Validation Handbook*. Particular care should be taken to ensure that students in the partner organisation are kept informed of and, where assessment of the programme they are studying is affected, consulted about such changes. Where new material, methods of delivery or assessment are proposed then evidence should be provided in seeking approval that there is appropriate expertise within the partner organisation to deliver what is intended and that what is proposed is appropriate to the cultural context in which the programme is offered.

9.5 Assessment

- 9.5.1 The University must be secure and confident in the assessment practices and procedures of any partner organisation. Due attention will be paid in approval, monitoring and review to the expertise and experience of partner organisation staff in conducting assessments of an appropriate nature at comparable levels, the educational culture of the partner organisation, especially where it is outside the UK, and the administrative systems and procedures supporting assessment.
- 9.5.3 Support and guidance will be provided by the University where necessary; staff exchanges might be considered in addition to provision of information by the University about, for instance, UK subject benchmark statements, national and University expectations of assessment practices and procedures (the latter encompassing the *Assessment Process Handbook* and relevant regulations), levels and qualifications descriptors.
- 9.5.4 An annual operating agreement between the responsible University programme authority and the partner organisation may be used to specify the details of dates and responsibilities for aspects of the assessment process, including, where appropriate, arrangements for internal and external moderation of assessment tasks and outcomes (see Annex J).
- 9.5.5 Assessment boards in the University reflect the tradition in UK higher education of corporate responsibility for quality assurance and the safeguarding of academic standards. Where collaborative arrangements lead to an award or credit of the University they will need to comply with University regulations and national norms in respect of decisions made about student achievement, progression and awards. In the case of credit recognition or recognition arrangements involving an award of the partner organisation, the University requires the involvement of relevant University subject staff and/or an external examiner responsible to the partner organisation in the moderation of assessment tasks and outcomes.

Overseas partnerships

9.5.6 Proposers should ensure that overseas partner organisations hold the same understanding of assessment as an integral part of learning and teaching. Thus:

- assessment should test knowledge, understanding and skills in preference to retention of items taught by rote or with the examination predominantly in mind, within the context of the intended learning outcomes of the module concerned;
- marked work should be retained or be readily available until after internal and external moderation has taken place and the assessment board has met;
- the first attempt at which a student attains a pass grade is the student's final attempt at that assessment;
- the number of resit attempts is regulated;
- use of unfair means in assessment is defined according to University regulations and is penalised;
- except in the case of foreign language programmes, the University does not normally permit assessment in languages other than English, unless exceptionally approved by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, for part or all of a programme. Stringent safeguards will need to be in place to ensure the robustness, integrity, reliability and validity of judgements about student achievement, if such an arrangement is approved.

9.5.7 Overseas partner organisations must be made fully aware of the need to:

- provide assessment boards with secure and accurate data;
- provide secure storage and transit of assessment papers and assessed work;
- maintain confidentiality of the business of assessment boards.

9.5.8 Assessment practices and their place within the overall learning and teaching approaches adopted in an overseas partner organisation should be explored in the pre-approval process and dialogue to help the partner organisation come to a clear understanding of the University's requirements and expectations.

9.6 External Examining

Principles

- 9.6.1 The University requires that an external examiner be responsible for all awards or credit given in the University's name.
- 9.6.2 Where possible, it is preferable for the external examiner responsible for the UK programme also to have the collaborative programme within their remit. Sometimes this will not be practicable and in such cases opportunities should be provided for the relevant external examiners to consult and discuss with each other the standards being achieved by students in the University and the partner organisation. This matter should also be high on the agenda of the relevant assessment boards.
- 9.6.3 Additional burdens may be placed upon external examiners for collaborative programme; programme authorities should ensure that adequate time can be devoted to the task and that the financial arrangements reflect this.

Nomination, appointment and duties

- 9.6.4 External examiner nominations, appointments procedures, duties, rights and responsibilities are the same as for examiners appointed to University-based programmes. Particular care will be taken during their induction into the role of external examiners for collaborative programmes.
- 9.6.5 A clear understanding must be reached with the partner organisation about the rights and responsibilities of the external examiner and of the partner organisation's and the University's roles in facilitating the external examiner's execution of those rights and responsibilities. A possible distribution of tasks is given in Annex G.
- 9.6.6 In those wholly exceptional cases where the University may approve a collaborative arrangement in which part or all of the assessment is in a language other than English (see 9.5.6 above), then the external examiner must have a sufficient knowledge of the language in question or translations of assessment materials must be available and subject to appropriate safeguards to ensure true reflection of students' achievements. No information should be lost nor any advantage gained by students through the translation process.

9.7 Assessment Boards

- 9.7.1 If an external examiner attends any assessment board constituted under University regulations and conducted at the partner organisation, then their role is the same as it is for any other assessment board.

- 9.7.2 If results are to be released by a partner organisation, this must be after confirmation by the external examiner and with the approval of a senior member of School/Centre staff.

9.8 External Examiner Reports

External examiner reports on collaborative programmes will be dealt with according to the University's defined procedures. Reports will be passed to the partner organisation by the responsible authority in the University and both organisations will take responsibility for ensuring that issues raised and action to be taken are considered by programme management and committees and that senior management also scrutinises the report. The outcomes of such consideration are, in line with normal University practice, to be communicated to the external examiner and to responsible officers in the University and partner organisation.

9.9 Certification

Standards of certificating practice

- 9.9.1 The University recognises the importance of award certificates and transcripts as educational currency in an increasingly global higher education system. As such, its standards of certification practice, including control and security of production, verification and distribution arrangements are documented in detail in the *Regulations for the Conferment of University Awards*, published as part of the University's *Academic Regulations*.

Design and Content of Certificates

- 9.9.2 The University has absolute control over the design and content of its award certificates. As such, it has decided that the award certificates themselves will not normally be differentiated for awards resulting from collaborative programmes of study.
- 9.9.3 Award certificates do however draw attention to the existence of a separate transcript providing further information about the programme of study and assessment outcomes to which the award certificate relates.
- 9.9.4 Where relevant, the transcript includes a statement to the effect that the programme of study to which the award relates was delivered in association with a (named) partner organisation (including the town/city if it is not included in the partner organisation's title). In the case of overseas partners the statement will include the name of the country and, if the programme was not assessed in English, that it was assessed in a (named) language.
- 9.9.5 The above position is kept under review and may change or be modified in particular instances. For example: following

consideration of a request from a partner organisation; where omission is felt to be misleading to students, sponsors, future employers or national recognition authorities; where legal or statutory requirements are involved relating to professional recognition or accreditation, or to the country concerned. At all times the University's certification practices are intended to be consonant with the relevant precepts of the applicable section of the *QAA Code of Practice*.

10. External Relations

10.1 Publicity and Marketing

10.1.1 The University, via the procedures and post-holders described in Annex R, will use its best endeavours to ensure that all material produced by partner organisations for the purposes of publicity and marketing will be explicitly scrutinised and approved before publication. Such materials will include both electronic and paper-based material, including web-based material, prospectuses, leaflets, posters, brochures, press advertising, PowerPoint presentations and video/DVD materials.

10.1.2 The University will provide detailed advice and guidance to partner organisations on:

- the use of the University's name and logo on promotional material in all media;
- appropriate messages about the University which accurately reflect its mission and strategic intentions;
- the nature of the relationship with the partner organisation;
- the titles and subjects of the awards.

10.1.3 The University's Corporate Communications Officer may be consulted by partners seeking further advice and guidance on the above matters.

10.2 Use of agents

10.2.1 Agents may be used by the University to facilitate the development and management of collaborative arrangements. Where this is proposed as part of a new or existing collaborative arrangement, the University will seek evidence that the agent's interests do not conflict with the University's or with those of the students to be recruited to the collaborative provision.

10.2.2 In particular, proposers will provide evidence to satisfy the University, as part of the planning approvals process, as to the financial status and reputation of the agent within the educational community at home or overseas. Information may usefully be obtained from overseas government offices and agencies and from UK government offices based in the country about the cultural, legal, financial and political environment in which the agent operates.

10.2.3 A legally binding agreement with any appointed agent should define the role, duties, responsibilities and delegated powers of the agent, including those regarding publicity materials. The agreement should make provision for regular monitoring and review arrangements, financial details, arbitration, termination, and the legal jurisdiction under which any disputes would be resolved.