

Appendix 5: Programme Approval criteria

The *criteria* against which to evaluate academic proposals are as follows:

1. Rationale for the programme, market demand and employment prospects for graduates
 - a. Alignment with the strategic priorities of the University. To include any of: Curriculum Philosophy; either the undergraduate or postgraduate version of the Graduate Attribute Matrix for Employability (GAME); Teaching Intensive and Research Informed (TIRI) nature of the curriculum; Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.
 - b. Market research and other evidence of demand, including findings from consultation with current and prospective students.
 - c. Demonstrable employment prospects for successful graduates including findings from consultation with employers and professionals.
2. The programme meets the Expectations³ for Standards (UK Quality Code for Higher Education):
 - a. The academic standards of programmes meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.
 - b. The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualifications and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards
3. The programme meets the following Core Practices⁴ for Standards (UK Quality Code for Higher Education):
 - The threshold standards for the qualifications are set and maintained at a level consistent with the relevant [national qualifications frameworks](#) [S1].
 - Those who study the programme will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers [S2].
 - Where the programme is offered in partnership with other organisations, the standard of the qualification(s) is credible and secure irrespective of where or how delivered or who delivers the provision [S3].
 - The programme team uses external expertise (i.e. consults external advisors, professional bodies, external examiners, employers) and uses assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent [S4].
4. The programme team works toward achieving the following Common Practice⁵ for Standards (UK Quality Code for Higher Education):
 - a. The programme team uses the University's annual monitoring and periodic review processes to regularly review how effectively the programme meets the Core

³ Expectations - express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision. They are mandatory requirements for all UK providers.

⁴ Core practices - represent effective ways of working that underpin the delivery of the Expectations and result in positive outcomes for students. They are mandatory requirements for all UK providers.

⁵ Common practices - focus on enhancement. They are mandatory requirements for all providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, providers may wish to work towards these, but are not required to do so as they are not regulatory requirements and will not be assessed as part of the OfS's regulatory framework.

Practices for Standards and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

5. The programme meets the Expectations¹ for Quality (UK Quality Code for Higher Education)
 - a. Programmes are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
 - b. From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

6. The programme meets the following Core Practices⁶ for Quality (UK Quality Code for Higher Education):
 - a. The programme has reliable, fair and inclusive admissions arrangements [Q1] that enable the University's policy on widening access and participation.
 - b. The programme is designed to deliver a high-quality educational experience for students [Q2].
 - i. Aligns with the University's curriculum design philosophy and TIRI agenda
 - ii. Demonstrates a blended and flexible learning environment
 - iii. Promotes an inclusive, diverse and relevant assessment strategy
 - c. The programme team comprises sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience [Q3].
 - d. The provider has sufficient and appropriate
 - i. facilities, learning resources and
 - ii. student support servicesto deliver a high-quality academic experience [Q4].
 - e. The programme team actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience [Q5].
 - f. There are fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students [Q6].
 - g. Where the programme is offered in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them [Q8].
 - h. The programme team supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes [Q9].

7. The programme team works toward achieving the following Common Practices⁷ for Quality (UK Quality Code for Higher Education):
 - a. The programme team uses the University's annual monitoring and periodic review processes to regularly review how effectively the programme meets the Core Practices for Quality and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
 - b. When evaluating the effectiveness of their management of the quality of the students' educational experience, the programme team uses external expertise (i.e.

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- consults external advisors, professional bodies, external examiners, employers etc.,)
- c. The programme team engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

There are additional University requirements for the approval of the following types of provision:

- That offered in partnership with other organisations, see below.
- Qualifications awarded in conjunction with another degree awarding body or awarding organisation (e.g. Pearson Ltd., for Edexcel awards).
- That which involves accreditation by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB).

Further information on the additional requirements is available on request from the Standards and Enhancement Office.

Additional University requirements for the approval of programmes offered in partnership with other organisations:

1. The University commits appropriate levels of resources (including staff) to academic oversight of its Off Campus (OfCD) provision.
2. The University's policies and procedures provide adequate safeguards against financial impropriety, conflicts of interest that might compromise academic standards of quality of learning opportunities.
3. The University uses appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures to evaluate proposed arrangements for academic partnerships.
4. The University considers the business case for provision with others separately from approval of the academic proposal.
5. The University assesses the risk of each partnership arrangement
 - a. at the outset
 - b. through academic oversight by meetings of the Partnerships Panel
 - c. at the point of periodic review
 - d. annually through the Annual Review of Partnership Operations.
6. Following risk assessment, the University introduces suitable and proportionate safeguards to manage risk.
7. There is a written and legally binding agreement, setting out the rights and obligations of the parties, which is regularly monitored and reviewed. It is signed by the head of the partner organisation and the University (or nominee) normally before the relevant activity commences.
8. The University conducts due diligence checks periodically to ensure that each partner organisation can continue to fulfil its obligations. This includes the Annual Review of Partnership Operations.

9. The University takes responsibility for ensuring that it retains proper control of the academic standards of learning delivered through collaborative partnerships.
10. The University does not permit serial arrangements.
11. In the event of termination of a collaborative partnership, the University retains responsibility for ensuring that enrolled students can complete their studies.
12. The University maintains records (by type and category) of its collaborative partnership arrangements (i.e. the Registers of Collaborative Partnerships, Progression Agreements, and of Articulation Agreements).
13. The University Senate retains ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in its name. This responsibility is never delegated.
14. The University ensures that there are equivalent academic standards and quality of educational experience in its on and off campus provision.
15. The University uses QA processes for the approval of on and off campus provision that are rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny.
16. The University has clear arrangements for determining which of the following management functions are the responsibility of the University, the partner organisation or a shared remit. A responsibilities checklist is used to present this information, which is included in the contract.
 - a. Use of external expertise in maintaining academic standards
 - b. Course design and/or delivery
 - c. Setting assessments
 - d. First marking of student work
 - e. Moderation or second marking of student work
 - f. Giving feedback to students on their work
 - g. Student recruitment
 - h. Student admissions and registration/ enrolment
 - i. Widening access
 - j. Selection or approval of teaching staff
 - k. Facilities, learning resources and student support services
 - l. Student engagement
 - m. Responding to external examiners and other third parties
 - n. Annual monitoring
 - o. Student complaints and concerns
 - p. Student appeals
 - q. Managing relationships with other partner organisations (such as placement providers)
17. Admission arrangements for OfCD provision should be consistent with the University's admissions policies.

18. OfCD partnerships should adhere to the University assessment regulations.
19. The University has clear arrangements for determining whether the partner organisation adopts the University's requirements such as the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.
20. For any joint, dual/double or multiple awards, the University will agree with the partner the division of assessment responsibilities and the assessment regulations and requirements which apply.
21. The University retains ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The University uses consistent external examining arrangements for its on and off campus provision. The external examiner for an OfCD programme will normally examine the equivalent on campus provision.
22. All OfCD modules and programmes are subject to the same or equivalent University monitoring and the same review arrangements as on campus provision.
23. The University ensures that it has effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to learning opportunities delivered with others which lead to University awards
24. Delivery organisations or support providers are provided with all information necessary for the effective delivery of the learning or support.
25. The University retains authority for awarding certificates and issuing detailed records of study in relation to student achievement.
26. The University qualification certificate, transcript and/or Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) states that the principal language of instruction and/or assessment is English, with only two exceptions.
27. Subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any local jurisdiction, the certificate and/or transcript (the record of achievement) records the name and location of any other higher education provider involved in the delivery of the programme of study
28. Where information relating to the language of study or to the name and location of the delivery organisation or partner is recorded on the HEAR only, the certificate refers to the existence of this formal record.
29. It is unusual for a University OfCD partnership to involve recognition by a PSRB.

In such cases the provision should adhere to the requirements of the PSRB in relation to aspects of delivery and any associated formal agreements. The status of an OfCD programme in respect of any PSRB recognition should be made clear to prospective students.