

## Processes for the Approval and Management of Academic Collaborative Provision

### Section 2: Processes for the Approval and Management of Associate Partners

<b>POLICY SCHEDULE</b>	
Policy title	Processes for the Approval and Management of Academic Collaborative Provision  Section 2: Processes for the Approval and Management of Academic Collaborative Provision
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*NB. This policy is available on the University of Cumbria website and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.*

## **1.Introduction**

- 1.1 Section 1 of the University's Processes for the Approval and Management of Academic Collaborative Provision provide definitions of Academic Collaborative Provision. This document describes the University's processes for the consideration, approval and management of Academic Collaborative Provision. This documents has two sections:
- 1.2 Part A – Processes for the approval of new Associate Partners and the approval of programmes to be delivered by an Associate Partner.
- 1.3 Part B – Processes for the management of Associate Partners, including renewal and withdrawal from partnerships.
- 1.4 There is a separate document detailing processes for the approval and management of School Direct and SCITT partnerships.
- 1.5 There is a separate document detailing processes for the approval and management of Articulation and Guaranteed Progression arrangements.
- 1.6 These processes apply to prospective partnerships and new developments with existing Academic Collaborative Partners, with effect from 2020/21.

## **2 Part A: Approval of New Associate Partners**

2.1 The following processes describe how new Associate Partners are approved, with the exception of School Direct and SCITT partnerships. These are detailed separately.

### **2.2 Management of Initial Enquiries**

2.2.1 Proposals for UK partnerships are directed to Head of Collaborative Provision to make an initial assessment based on strategic fit.

2.2.2 Proposals for International partnerships are directed to the International Director to make an initial assessment based on strategic fit.

2.2.3 For proposals to be progressed further, the Head of Collaborative Provision / International Director will support the proposer to produce an outline proposal. This is presented to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for approval to proceed. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Health) will also be consulted for proposals that relate to the Institute of Health.

2.2.4 For those developments approved to proceed, the Head of Collaborative Provision leads on overseeing investigations for UK developments; International Director for international developments.

### **2.3 Memorandum of Understanding**

2.3.1 Where a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is deemed necessary (eg to facilitate the ongoing development), this will be drawn up using the University's standard template. MoUs are presented to the DVC (Academic) for approval to be progressed to the Vice Chancellor for signing.

2.3.2 Where it is necessary to make amendments to the standard template, the Head of Collaborative Provision will work with the proposer to decide if the amendments are such that any additional levels of authorisation are required prior to progressing for signing.

2.3.3 The Head of Collaborative Provision is responsible for maintaining an oversight of the University's academic MoUs.

### **2.4 Managing Ongoing Investigations**

2.4.1 The order in which the following investigations take place may vary depending on the nature of the proposal; however, all will need to have been considered as appropriate by the time a proposal undergoes formal consideration.

2.4.2 For those proposals authorised to proceed and, to facilitate the overall approval process, the Head of Collaborative Provision / International Director may convene working groups as necessary to support the ongoing development. The requirement for such meetings, their frequency and formality and the personnel involved will depend on the type and complexity of the proposed partnership. Where required, such groups will normally be concerned with ensuring the necessary activities are undertaken to ensure due process is followed. Typically, this would include: Developing a timeline for approval (and monitoring its implementation).

- Overseeing partnership building activity (such as informal visits).
- Supporting ongoing work required to develop a business plan.
- Taking account of due diligence enquiries.

- Taking account of discussions with the prospective partner regarding their understanding of the ethos, culture, requirements and standards of UK higher education (including expectations of qualification and expertise of staff delivering on programmes leading to a University award).
  - Taking account of any in-country investigations to understand the legislative, jurisdictional and regulatory frameworks within which any partnership would need to operate (where necessary), including taxation and employment implications of flying faculty arrangements.
  - Taking account of discussions with relevant Professional Services as appropriate to the proposed academic partnership.
  - For proposals that will result in awards being granted by more than one degree awarding body:
    - to gain an understanding of processes and regulatory frameworks to determine the need for discrete regulations and mapping to be undertaken.
    - To take account of additional considerations as detailed in the QAA Characteristics Statement Qualifications Awarded by More than One Degree-Awarding Body
  - For flying faculty proposals, gaining clarity about what services would be provided by the prospective partner.
- 2.4.3 Alongside the ongoing approval process, informal visits to the prospective partner will be arranged as appropriate depending on the type and scale of the proposed partnership.
- 2.4.4 The Head of Collaborative Provision / International Director will support the proposer to develop the outline proposal into a fuller Academic Case.
- 2.4.5 It would normally be expected that each new partnership be subject to a formal 'partner visit'. This will include staff from the University's Quality team with experience of collaborative provision work and other members of University staff as appropriate. The formal partner visit may take place at any point during the investigation and approval process but will typically be toward the beginning of a proposal. The formal partner visit seeks to gather information to inform the ongoing approval process and to gain a better understanding of the prospective partner. A report from the formal partner visit will be produced which forms part of the institutional approval process.

## **2.5 Due Diligence**

- 2.5.1 All Associate Partner proposals that are supported for progression must go through financial and legal due diligence. This is undertaken proportionate to the type of proposed partnership and the nature of the prospective partner.
- 2.5.2 In addition to financial and legal due diligence, the Head of Collaborative Provision will instigate investigations to identify any perceived reputational risks to the University in entering into a partnership. This is reported into the ongoing approval process.
- 2.5.3 The Finance and Planning Service undertakes Financial Due Diligence. Financial Due Diligence seeks to provide assurance of a prospective partner's financial good standing based on the scale of the proposal and extent of commitment entailed. A Financial Due Diligence Report summarises investigations undertaken, outcomes, and identifies risks associated with entering into a partnership. It also includes a recommendation on proceeding. The Financial Due Diligence stage is signed off by the Director of Finance and Planning (or nominee).

2.5.4 Legal Due Diligence seeks to provide the University with assurance of the legal entity with whom the University is proposing working, and to gain confirmation of a prospective partner's legal capacity to enter into a proposed partnership with the University. Depending on the nature and location of the prospective partner, the University legal representatives may be used to undertake this activity. Legal Due Diligence findings are signed off by the Chief Operating Officer.

2.5.5 For overseas partnerships, where needed the University's legal representatives may be commissioned to undertake an investigation into the legislative, financial and jurisdictional frameworks within which the proposed partnership will operate. Where University staff are to be involved in delivery overseas (such as flying faculty) this will also include an understanding of taxation and employment implications. The University will make use of any existing generic in-country investigations resource and supplement this with specific in-country investigations as appropriate to the type of partner and proposed partnership.

## **2.6 Consideration for Approval to Proceed**

2.6.1 At this stage, the Head of Collaborative Provision / International Director presents the proposal to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) with a recommendation on approval to proceed.

## **2.7 Business Case**

2.7.1 The Head of Collaborative Provision / International Director will, with support from the relevant academic lead(s) work with staff from Finance and Planning to develop a business case for the partnership. This would be signed off in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. Further to this, individual programme developments will be progressed through the Programme Initiation processes and linked to the University's collaborative provision charging model (unless bespoke arrangements are put in place).

## **2.8 Formal Consideration and Approval of Proposal**

2.8.1 Following approval to proceed from the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), the Head of Collaborative Provision ensure the proposal goes through the University's formal approval process. This would not be expected to take place until the academic case, due diligence, and business case have been approved.

2.8.2 For proposals approved to proceed to institutional approval, the prospective partner will be required to submit a set of evidence including production of a self-evaluation document. This forms the basis of the evidence set used to measure the proposal against the University's Threshold Criteria for Institutional Approval.

2.8.3 Due to the individual nature of arrangements for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body, the University maintains a core set of threshold criteria for the approval of these partnerships. Where such a proposal comes forward, the Director of AQD may agree additional requirements.

2.8.4 An Institutional Approval Panel will be convened to consider the proposal. Institutional Approval Panels are normally held at the University. The Institutional Approval Panel will comprise:

- A Head of Service.
- At least 2 members of academic staff (normally either a Principal Lecturer or a member from Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee or Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee)

- A member of AQD.
  - International Director (for international developments).
  - Additional members may be invited as necessary dependent upon the complexity of the proposal. This may include key professional services or external representation where deemed appropriate.
- 2.8.5 Institutional Approval is an evidence-based process. It is informed by:
- Documents received from the proposed partner to evidence satisfying the Threshold Criteria for Institutional Approval. The Case for Collaboration.
  - Reports from University Professional Services about the proposal as appropriate.
  - The Formal Partner Visit Report.
- 2.8.6 The Head of Collaborative Provision and other relevant members of staff would normally present the proposal to the Institutional Approval Panel. The prospective partner does not attend the Institutional Approval Panel meeting. However, where appropriate, the Panel may request the prospective partner be available (via video conference or other means of communication) to enable any points of clarification to be made.
- 2.8.7 Discussions and consideration of the Institutional Approval Panel is presented to CPSC as a report with a recommendation about proceeding. These may be as follows:
- To recommend that CPSC endorses the proposed partnership for approval by Academic Board (via Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee).
  - To recommend that CPSC endorses the proposed partnership for approval by Academic Board (via Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee) subject to conditions, recommendations and/or actions being satisfied.
  - To refer back for further work at the appropriate stage in the development (following the additional work, an Institutional Approval panel will reconvene)
  - To recommend that CPSC not endorse the proposed partnership to Academic Board (via Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee)
- 2.8.8 Academic Board has the formal authority for the approval of an Associate Partner. Until Academic Board has granted approval, no programmes will commence delivery.
- 2.8.9 All partnerships are supported and underpinned by a formal Institutional Agreement. Institutional Agreements are drawn up by AQD and signed by the Vice Chancellor and the appropriate counterpart at the Associate Partner. The format of agreements may vary depending on the nature of the partnership but will normally include an overarching Institutional Agreement with separate programme-level agreements (including financial annexe) for each arrangement approved. Fully signed agreements are lodged with AQD prior to the partnership operating.

## **2.9 Programme Approval**

- 2.9.1 Within the bounds of its designated status, an Associate Partner may seek approval to deliver programmes leading to University awards. All programmes are considered against the University's Threshold Criteria for Validation.
- 2.9.2 Proposals with UK partners shall align with the University's FE College Partnerships Strategy. Proposals with International partners shall align with the University's International Strategy.
- 2.9.3 Programme development with Associate Partners is undertaken in a timely manner and with strategic oversight. The Head of Collaborative Provision will

work with Institute leads for Student Recruitment and Portfolio Development, the Director of Recruitment and Outreach, and the International Director to develop long-term plans to support and build partnerships.

- 2.9.4 The Head of Collaborative Provision will discuss all new developments with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) to gain approval to progress any development.
- 2.9.5 Where deemed necessary, additional due diligence investigations may be undertaken prior to programme development (for example if a proposal included significant PSRB requirements).
- 2.9.6 For programme proposals to be progressed, an academic lead is identified to support the proposal, in developing or supporting the development of the proposal (in the case of franchises) or in acting as a point of contact for advice (in the case of validations). This role is known as the University Academic Link. For Franchised provision this is likely to be the Programme Leader.
- 2.9.7 With support from the University academic link and the Head of Collaborative Provision, proposals are progressed through the University's Programme Initiation process.
- 2.9.8 Alongside and informing the Programme Initiation process, the Head of Collaborative Provision will seek clarity regarding the arrangements that underpin the development. This will include:
- That the proposal aligns with the University's Curriculum Design Framework.
  - That where a proposal includes as an Apprenticeship, there is clarity about the extent of the University's responsibility in relation to this.
  - The institution that will have the contractual responsibility for students on the programme
  - The appropriateness of library resources available at the Associate Partner.
  - A clear understanding regarding responsibilities relating to Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance on consumer law and associated marketing plans
  - A clear understanding regarding responsibilities relating to sharing student data and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
  - Any implications for the University in terms of UKVI.
- 2.9.9 Where approved through the Programme Initiation Process, programmes are brought forward for validation. Details of this including any variations for collaborative provision are detailed in the University's Validation Processes.
- 2.9.10 In the event of the University's Programme Initiation Process not approving an Associate Partner's programme development proposal, the Partnership Lead will notify the Associate Partner accordingly.
- 2.9.11 For all proposals, the University's templates for Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors are used. Where appropriate and where it includes comparable information to the University's, an Associate Partner's own templates may be used for other documentation (such as Programme Handbooks, Module Guides, etc).
- 2.9.12 For Franchises, staff from the relevant University academic department will be involved in the development of the Programme. There may be input by academics from the Associate Partner, with an increasing expectation of involvement for Shared Delivery Franchises. The Programme Specification and

Module Descriptors will normally be produced by the University with input from the Associate Partner as appropriate. Other programme documentation would be produced by Associate Partner staff.

- 2.9.13 For Franchises, the University may decide to progress the development on the basis of a greater level of input than normal. In particular, this might happen with a new Associate Partner or a partner delivering a new subject area where the University decides to take a more active role in the assessment process. Where appropriate, this will be reflected in the accompanying Programme Agreement.
- 2.9.14 For Validations, it would be expected that staff from the Associate Partner will produce all documentation. For Shared Delivery Validations, the relevant University academic staff would support the Associate Partner in the production of programme documentation as appropriate to the nature of the proposal (eg for those elements that will be delivered by the University).
- 2.9.15 During the validated life of a programme approval, in the event of a request to change the model of collaboration, this shall be discussed with the Head of Collaborative Provision and Quality Assurance Manager to agree the most appropriate mechanism to formalise any change. At all times, the ability of the University to secure its academic standards shall take precedence in decision-making. For example, the conversion of a Shared Delivery Franchise becoming a fully Franchised arrangement would require a validation (franchise) event, whilst converting a University validated programme (ie its own core delivery) to a shared delivery arrangement might require scrutiny of staff cvs, approval of the delivery arrangements and reporting to Minor Modification and Awards Panel.
- 2.9.16 For programme developments for qualifications awarded by more than one degree awarding body, specific arrangements outwith the standard processes may be developed to manage such bespoke arrangements. In this situation, arrangements would be presented to CPSC for approval prior to use.

## **2.10 Approval of Additional Partner sites**

- 2.10.1 For multi-site Associate Partners, in the event of an Associate Partner wishing to add or change a site of delivery (from that approved at validation), approval would go through the University's Minor Modification and Award Process.

## **2.11 Approval of Placements and Work-based Learning within collaborative provision programmes**

- 2.11.1 Where programmes are validated to include placements or WBL, consideration is given to the ways in which the University will maintain oversight of activity where the achievement of learning outcomes is reliant on a third party (the placement or WBL venue).
- Where programmes come forward for validation or franchise to include placements or WBL, the Associate Partner will state how they approve and manage these arrangements. Arrangements may vary depending on scale but may include any of the following: Agreeing criteria for suitable venues.
  - Agreeing criteria for mentors at the venue.
  - Venues secured for students by the Associate Partner.
  - Venues visited by the Associate Partner prior to students' commencing placement / WBL.



## 3. Part B: Management of Associate Partners

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Part A of the University's Processes and Procedures for the Approval and Management of Academic Collaborative Provision details the processes for the approval of Associate Partners and programmes for delivery by Associate Partners. Part B describes the University's processes for the management of Associate Partners. In addition to this, there is also additional guidance available to provide supplementary information regarding qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body.

3.1.2 Part B includes the following areas:

- Framework for Quality Assurance
- Marketing and Information
- Admissions and Registration Arrangements
- Contractual Responsibility, Student Returns and Associate Partner Staff and Student Status
- Associate Partner Staff Approval and Staff Development
- Programme Delivery and Assessment
- Certificates and Graduation
- Student Support
- Student Representation and Feedback
- Annual Monitoring
- Minor Modification
- Programme Withdrawal
- Partnership Review and Renewal of Partnerships
- Managing Unsatisfactory Provision

### 3.2 Framework for Quality Assurance

3.2.1 In accordance with the UK Quality Code, the University of Cumbria is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name.

3.2.2 The University's awards will be delivered and managed by Associate Partners in accordance with University's Academic Regulations and the University's Academic Processes and Procedures. The University may approve bespoke arrangements to manage awards granted by more than one degree awarding body.

3.2.3 University-wide oversight of ACP is maintained through the **Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee (CPSC)**. CPSC is a sub-committee of Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee which reports to Academic Board. The Terms of Reference and Purpose are detailed in the University's Committee Handbook.

3.2.4 Individual programmes approved for delivery by an Associate Partner will have a University 'home' in an Academic Institute. Within that Institute, an academic will take a 'link tutor' role and be responsible for the day to day management of partnership arrangements at programme level.

3.2.5 The Head of Collaborative Provision in AQD is responsible for managing the quality assurance arrangements for the University's Academic Collaborative Provision (ACP).

3.2.6 The University's Student and Academic Administration Service (SAAS) provide University administrative support to each collaborative partnership.

### 3.3 Management of Associate Partnerships

3.3.1 The following table provides an overview of the institution whose processes would apply to different stages of the student journey. In the event of the University agreeing to operate differently to this, such variations would be considered by CPSC and approved by Academic Board (where a variation to the Academic Regulations was required):

Process	Ownership of Process					
	Validated	Shared Delivery Validation	Franchised	Shared Delivery Franchise	School Direct	Flying Faculty
Academic Regulations	University	University	University	University	University	University
Annual Monitoring (AMR) process	University	University	University	University	University	University
External Examining processes	University	University	University	University	University	University
Extenuating Circumstances Processes	University	University	University	University	University	University
Assessment processes	University	University	University	University	University	University
Student representation	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	University	University	Associate Partner
Personal Tutor processes	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	University	University	Associate Partner
Academic Malpractice	University	University	University	University	University	University
Student complaints	Associate Partner in the first instance with recourse to the University if complainant	Associate Partner in the first instance with recourse to the University if complainant	Associate Partner in the first instance with recourse to the University if complainant	University	University	Associate Partner in the first instance with recourse to the University if complainant

	remains unsatisfied.	remains unsatisfied.	remains unsatisfied.			remains unsatisfied.
Student Academic Appeals	University	University	University	University	University	University
Student Code of Conduct and Adjudication	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	University	University	University
Peer Review of teaching and learning	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	Associate Partner	University	Associate Partner	University

Note: for Joint / Double Degree and Dual Degrees, the use of relevant processes and procedures would be agreed through the approval process and may require bespoke arrangements to be set up.

### **3.4 Marketing and Information**

- 3.4.1 The arrangements for the management of marketing and information relating to an Associate Partnership will be agreed through the approval process and detailed in accompanying agreements. Roles and responsibilities may vary depending on the nature of the partner and the type of partnership.
- 3.4.2 The Head of Collaborative Provision routinely monitors the accuracy of information about the University's collaborative provision (as presented by both the University and Associate Partners). These are actioned as required and reported into the next Partnership Review.

### **3.5 Public Information**

- 3.5.1 The University publishes information on its website about its Associate Partnerships and the programmes offered through these arrangements.
- 3.5.2 Associate Partners are responsible for ensuring accurate information is published about its relationship with the University and the programmes offered through the partnership.
- 3.5.3 The University provides its Associate Partners with a set of minimum expectations regarding information on websites. These are mapped to CMA guidelines. Associate Partners are responsible for complying with any national requirements around publishing of information (such as the UK Discover HE data set).

### **3.6 Approval of Publicity Information**

- 3.6.1 When an Associate Partner produces publicity material, drafts are submitted to the Head of Collaborative Provision Team for approval.
- 3.6.2 The Head of Collaborative Provision Team liaises with the University's Marketing department and relevant academic Departments as appropriate to ensure publicity material aligns to the University's Branding Guidelines and provides accurate information about the programme and the nature of the partnership with the University.

### **3.7 Programme-level Documentation**

- 3.7.1 A set of programme-level documentation is produced and approved through the validation process (Programme Specification, Programme Handbook and Module Descriptors). Following validation, Module Guides are produced as necessary to support each module delivery. For Franchised and Shared Delivery Franchised programmes, academics from the relevant University department may support the production of the Programme Specification, Module Descriptors and, depending on the particular arrangement, Module Guides. Other programme documentation would be produced by Associate Partner staff. For Validated programmes, the Associate Partner would be expected to produce all documentation. For Shared Delivery Validated programmes, the relevant University academic staff would support the Associate Partner in the production of programme documentation as appropriate to the nature of the proposal.

- 3.7.2 The University's templates for Programme Specifications and Module Descriptors are always used. Where appropriate and where it includes comparable information to the University's, an Associate Partner's own templates may be used for other documentation (such as Programme Handbooks, Module Guides, etc).
- 3.7.3 Associate Partners update Programme Handbooks and Module Guides to retain currency. Copies shall be submitted to the relevant University Academic Link. Programme documentation shall be reviewed regularly and monitored through the Partnership Review process.

### **3.8 University Marketing and Outreach**

- 3.8.1 The University will look to make use of each partnership as part of its own marketing and outreach work. The Head of Collaborative Provision will liaise with the Director of Recruitment and Outreach to ensure such activity aligns with the University's strategies for recruitment.

### **3.9 Admissions and Registration Arrangements with Associate Partners**

3.9.1 The following provides information about the management of admissions and registration arrangements. Where variations are agreed, these should be detailed in accompanying partnership agreements. All students being admitted to a programme leading to a University award must satisfy the University's general entry requirements appropriate to that level.

### **3.10 Where students apply to the Associate Partner**

3.10.1 Under arrangements where students apply and register with the Associate Partner, the Associate Partner will forward student data to the University Admissions Team within an agreed timeframe to enable a University student record to be created. An [Admissions Flowchart](#) outlines this process.

3.10.2 Once an Associate Partner student is registered on the University's student record system, an email is sent to the student. This confirms what the student has been registered onto and allocates a University student reference number.

3.10.3 All information passed between an Associate Partner and the University does so in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and in line with Information Sharing Protocol statements that form part of partnership agreements.

3.10.4 The University Admissions team routinely audit Associate Partner's admissions process. This is undertaken by a sample of each cohort. Should queries arise, University Admissions may audit the entire cohort admission and take action as required. The admissions audit is reported to the CP Team in AQD for monitoring as appropriate. Admissions audits are also reported and considered as part of Partnership Review.

### **3.11 Where students apply to the University**

3.11.1 Under arrangements where students apply to the University (including Shared Delivery and School Direct arrangements), the University Admissions Team forward students details to the Associate Partner within the agreed timeframe.

3.11.2 All information passed between the University and an Associate Partner does so in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and in line with Information Sharing Protocol statements that form part of partnership agreements.

### **3.12 Contractual Responsibility, Student Returns and Associate Partner Staff and Student Status**

3.12.1 As part of the approval process, agreement will be reached about Associate Partner staff and students' status with the University. This status affects entitlements to access to the University's services and learning resources. This will be linked to the financial agreement underpinning the partnership. This status should be set out in the Programme Agreement and reflected accurately in all programme information. This discussion will also confirm which institution has full contractual responsibility for the provision of educational services to students. This will be expressed in agreements.

### **3.13 Associate Partner Staff Approval and Staff Development**

#### **3.14 Associate Partner Staff Approval**

- 3.14.1 Staff contributing to the delivery of University awards must be approved by the University. In the first instance, Associate Partner staff are approved at the point of validation. The Academic Link is responsible for maintaining an oversight of who is delivering a programme at an Associate Partner.
- 3.14.2 Supported by the AQD CP Team, University Academic Links work with their counterparts and associated colleagues to ensure Associate Partner staff understand the processes and procedures that underpin the delivery of programmes.
- 3.14.3 The AQD CP Team liaise regularly with Associate Partner staff to provide information and guidance on the use and implementation of University processes and procedures.
- 3.14.4 At the start of each academic year, the Partner Programme Leader (PPL) will confirm to the Academic Link the programme team delivering the programme.
- 3.14.5 Where a new member of staff has been identified to teach on a programme of study, the Associate Partner will submit a Staff Approval Form and CV to the AQD CP Team.
- 3.14.6 The AQD CP Team liaises with the relevant University Institute Head and other staff as relevant to make one of the following decisions:
- Approve the member of staff.
  - Approve the member of staff subject to conditions (such as staff development or mentoring support).
  - Defer decision pending receipt of additional information.
  - To not approve the member of staff.
- 3.14.7 This decision is fed back to the Academic Link to be reported to the Associate Partner. Where a decision is taken not to approve a member of staff, the Academic Link will work with the PPL to identify an appropriate resolution.
- 3.14.8 Following the decision, the AQD CP Team will update its records and liaise with HR to ensure the appropriate levels of access to University systems and resources are made available.

#### **3.15 Associate Partner Staff Development**

- 3.15.1 It is expected that at least one member of an Associate Partner should achieve Descriptor 2 of Advance HE's UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) (giving Fellowship status). Where there are no members of staff who have achieved this (or a comparable level of achievement) at the point of validation, timeframes will normally be agreed for staff to achieve this. For international partnerships a comparable form of teaching and learning accreditation would be sought.



3.15.2 The University offers a range of staff development activities for partners. Where a specific need is identified, the CP Team in AQD may identify training as appropriate.

### **3.16 Programme Delivery and Assessment**

#### 3.16.1 Programme Delivery Planning

3.16.2 The Academic Link is responsible for liaison with counterparts at the Associate Partner on a regular basis to help ensure the smooth running of the partnership.

3.16.3 Programme delivery planning will take place between Academic Links and PPLs and other relevant members of staff. Typically this includes meetings but the nature and complexity of the partnership may result in different approaches being taken. Programme delivery planning ensures an alignment of Associate Partner programme delivery to the University's assessment calendar and other academic processes to ensure the successful operation of the programme.

3.16.4 In addition to this, for franchised provision, it is expected that meetings take place before the start of module delivery to ensure a standardised approach is taken to delivery and assessment.

3.16.5 It is the role of the Academic Link to work with Associate Partner to ensure effective engagement in University's module data collection processes (eg MAV).

### **3.17 Assessment**

3.17.1 The programme assessment strategy and methods of assessment are approved through the validation process and published in the Programme Specification and Module Descriptors (MDFs).

3.17.2 The University is responsible for approving assessment for franchised provision.

3.17.3 Unless specifically agreed otherwise, all arrangements for assessment are conducted in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Processes and Procedures (except where specific Academic Regulations are approved to manage Joint Degrees).

3.17.4 Any specific arrangements regarding assessment will be agreed through approval processes and detailed in accompanying agreements. Roles and responsibilities may vary depending on the nature of the partner and the type of partnership.

3.17.5 For franchised provision that is being delivered by both the University and an Associate Partner, the programmes from respective institutions liaise prior to the start of a module to ensure both teams shared an understanding of the module and assessment requirements.

### **3.18 Marking and Moderation**

3.18.1 Assessment relating to modules delivered by an Associate Partner is marked and moderated (or blind double marked where appropriate) by the Associate Partner, unless agreed otherwise (for example, where additional steps are agreed as part of a franchise).

- 3.18.2 Following the Associate Partner completing marking and moderation, a sample (as detailed in the University's Procedures Governing the Marking and Moderation of Assessment) of student work is submitted to the University to be moderated by the Academic Link or relevant University Module Leader. The purpose of the University's review of student work is to verify that the internal marking process at the partner is fair and consistent across the programme and within sector norms. This is overseen by the Academic Link.
- 3.18.3 In the event of there being discrepancies between the Associate Partner and the University moderation, the arrangements as detailed the University's Academic Procedures and Processes, Appendix 3b: Procedures Governing the Marking and Moderation of Assessments shall be followed.
- 3.18.4 All appropriate assessment is reviewed by a University appointed External Examiner as set out in the University's Academic Regulations.

### **3.19 Examination Arrangements**

- 3.19.1 Where programmes include formal examinations, Associate Partners will follow the University procedures for examinations, including invigilation (except where specific arrangements might be approved to manage Joint Awards). The University's Assessment, Awards and Compliance Team provides support to Associate Partners in ensuring appropriate arrangement are made.
- 3.19.2 Any time differences from the UK will be taken into account so that examinations take place simultaneously (or as near as possible).
- 3.19.3 Associate Partners retain examination scripts and a sample of other work until after assessment results have been confirmed by the appropriate University Assessment Board and in accordance with the University's policy on the retention of assessed work.

### **3.20 External Examiner Arrangements**

- 3.20.1 External Examiners for programmes leading to a University award are appointed by the University as External Examiners of the University. The arrangements for External Examining shall be as set out in the University's Academic Regulations and the Academic Procedures and Processes.
- 3.20.2 Where franchised modules are being delivered by the University and an Associate Partner, the same External Examiner shall normally be used.
- 3.20.3 External Examiners whose remit includes Associate Partner delivered provision will receive additional guidance to inform them of the nature of the collaboration and any additional responsibilities related to it.
- 3.20.4 External Examiners whose remit includes Associate Partner delivered provision shall be asked to specifically comment on the collaborative provision in their annual reports. Reports shall be circulated to the Associate Partner and the Partner shall be involved in the production of the response.

- 3.20.5 Wherever practicable, it is expected that External Examiners are able to visit an Associate Partner and meet students. Appropriate arrangements shall be made to facilitate this. Alternatively, this may be achieved via video conference.
- 3.20.6 The Associate Partner is responsible for ensuring External Examiner details (name, position and institution) and reports are made available to students.
- 3.20.7 Specific arrangements may be put in place to manage external examining arrangements for qualifications awarded by more than one degree-awarding body. The requirements of all partners must be satisfied in such a way to enable all to secure their academic standards. Any variations to the University's standard processes may require approval from Academic Board prior to implementation and this will be articulated in supporting agreements.

### **3.21 Assessment Boards**

- 3.21.1 Assessment Boards operate in accordance with the Academic Regulations and the Academic Procedures and Processes (The Conduct and Operation of Assessment Boards). Any variations to this (such as for qualifications awarded by more than one degree-awarding body) will require approval from Academic Board prior to implementation and will be articulated in supporting agreements.
- 3.21.2 Where modules are delivered by the University and an Associate Partner, they would be presented to the same assessment board to enable there to be confirmation of parity between delivery venues.
- 3.21.3 The University Academic Link is expected to attend the Module Assessment Board (MAB) and University Assessment Board (UAB).
- 3.21.4 A representative from the Associate Partner is expected to attend the Module Assessment Board (MAB) and University Assessment Board (UAB). This is normally be the PPL although other staff with substantial responsibilities for teaching and/or assessment may be considered members of the MAB and invited as appropriate. Associate Partners are expected to input into any pre-MAB meetings as necessary.
- 3.21.5 Where appropriate, and with prior approval from the Assessment Manager, MABs may be held at the Associate Partner. In such cases, the MAB would be chaired by the relevant University staff. The preparation and paperwork for the MAB would be produced by the University's PAd. The MAB would operate in accordance with University Regulations.
- 3.21.6 Following confirmation of marks at UABs, the University release individual students' confirmed module results as a Statement of Results.
- 3.21.7 Following confirmation of marks at UABs, the University's Assessment, Awards and Compliance Team provides Associate Partners with a partner-wide overview of its students' results. This is sent to the named institutional contact with the Associate Partner in line with data protection protocols.

### **3.22 Academic Appeals**

3.22.1 Associate Partner students wishing to submit an Academic Appeal will follow with the University's Academic Appeals Procedures. The Associate Partner provide students with information about this process.

3.22.2 The University's Assessment, Awards and Compliance Team is responsible for administration of this process.

### **3.23 Academic Malpractice**

3.23.1 Where an Associate Partner suspects a student of academic malpractice, the University's processes for Academic Malpractice will be followed. This is detailed in the University's [Policy and Procedures Governing Academic Malpractice](#).

3.23.2 The University's Assessment, Awards and Compliance Team is responsible for administration of this process.

### **3.24 Student Complaints**

3.24.1 In the event of a student wishing to make a complaint, the Associate Partner's Student Complaints process will be followed in the first instance. The student has the right of appeal through the University's complaints procedure once the Associate Partner's process has been exhausted. This is articulated in supporting agreements.

3.24.2 Associate Partners must provide clear information to students about the ways in which a complaint might be made (through their own and the University's procedures).

## **3.25 Certificates and Graduation**

### **3.26 Production of Certificates**

3.26.1 The University retains responsibility for awarding certificates granted in its name. The publication of results and production of certificates will be undertaken by the University in accordance with standard University procedures.

3.26.2 In the case of Joint Degrees, the University may agree to delegate the issuing of certificates to one of the other degree-awarding bodies involved in arrangement (where it is satisfied it can retain a means to exercise control over the process). Where this is the case, it is expressed in the discrete Academic Regulations underpinning the Joint Degree.

3.26.3 The name of the Associate Partner is recorded on students' certificates.

3.26.4 Certificates and transcripts are normally sent to students' home addresses as detailed on the University records. Any variation to this must be discussed and agreed with the Assessment, Awards and Compliance Team.

### **3.27 Graduation Ceremony**

3.27.1 Students from Associate Partners are entitled to attend the University's Graduation Ceremony.

3.27.2 The University's Ceremonies Team will invite students and relevant Associate Partner staff to the appropriate Graduation Ceremony.

3.27.3 Where an Associate Partner undertakes its own award ceremony or celebration, these are to be undertaken in line with additional guidelines available as an [annexe to this document](#). These must not be regarded as the public conferral of the award.

### **3.28 Student Support**

#### **3.29 Personal Tutor**

3.29.1 Associate Partners will provide Personal Tutoring arrangements of a nature comparable to the University's [Personal Tutoring Policy](#) and of a manner that reflects the nature of the Associate Partner delivery.

#### **3.30 Extenuating Circumstances**

3.30.1 A student wishing to make a claim for Extenuating Circumstances will follow the University's procedures (except where specific Academic Regulations are approved to manage Joint Awards). The claim is considered in accordance with the University's procedures. This is detailed in the University's [Procedures for Extenuating Circumstances](#).

3.30.2 The University's Assessment, Awards and Compliance Team is responsible for administration of this process.

#### **3.31 Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)**

3.31.1 Unless agreed otherwise, it would normally be assumed that students studying at the Partner would seek Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) through the Partner. This is articulated in the accompanying agreement.

3.31.2 The University's Disability Manager is responsible for DSA administration.

#### **3.32 Safeguarding and Prevent**

3.32.1 For UK-based franchised partnerships, the University retains responsibility for ensuring Prevent arrangements are in place for its registered students. As a part of the approval process, the University will assure itself of the appropriateness of the Associate Partners' arrangements for managing this.

3.32.2 For UK-based validated partnerships, the Associate Partner retains responsibility for their own policies and procedures regarding Prevent. As a part of the approval process, the University will assure itself that these are in place.

### **3.33 Student Representation and Feedback**

3.33.1 Associate Partners are expected to actively seek the views of its students . The manner in which feedback is gathered may vary dependent upon the nature and scale of the Associate Partner but Associate Partners will normally undertake forms of the following:

- Gather evaluation for students at programme level.
- Gather evaluation from students at module level.
- Provide opportunities for student representation.
- Provide opportunities for staff and student meetings.

3.33.2 The outcomes of student feedback will inform the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

3.33.3 The CP Team in AQD regularly gathers samples of student feedback from Associate Partners. The CP Team in AQD liaise with the University Academic link as appropriate where issues are identified. The student feedback is also considered as part of the next Partnership Review.

3.33.4 As a part of assuring itself that students' needs are consistently met, the University may seek to gather feedback from Associate Partner students.



### **3.34 Annual Monitoring (AMR)**

- 3.34.1 The regular monitoring, review and enhancement of University provision delivered by Associate Partners follows the University's standard processes through production of an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
- 3.34.2 Where programmes are franchised for delivery by an Associate Partner, the Associate Partner is responsible for completing a collaborative programme AMR. This is normally completed by the PPL. The Academic Link will provide support on the production of the collaborative programme AMR, including the timetable for the production of the AMR. The franchised delivery AMR informs the University's own AMR for that programme.
- 3.34.3 For programmes that are validated for delivery by an Associate Partner, the Associate Partner is responsible for completing a collaborative programme AMR. This is normally completed by the PPL with guidance from the Academic Link.
- 3.34.4 Where a programme operates as Shared Delivery Franchise, the Academic Link shall be responsible for completion of the AMR. This shall use the standard University programme AMR template. The partner shall support the completion as appropriate to the scale of the shared delivery model.
- 3.34.5 For qualifications awarded by more than one degree-awarding body, the Academic Link will complete a University Programme AMR that provides an overview for the whole arrangement. This will require input from the Associate Partner(s) as appropriate.

### **3.35 Minor Modifications**

3.35.1 During the validated life of a programme, where changes are requested to provision delivered by an Associate Partner, it is discussed in the first instance with the relevant University Academic Link. Requests for changes are made through the University's Minor Modification process. It would normally be expected that the University Academic Link would present to the Minor Modification and Awards Panel on the Associate Partner's behalf. Consideration and approval of changes to Joint Degrees may vary depending on the content of the agreement.

### **3.36 Programme Withdrawal**

3.36.1 In the event of the Associate Partner wishing to withdraw the programme, this shall follow the University's Programme Withdrawal process.

3.36.2 In the event of the University wishing to withdraw a programme that is delivered by an Associate Partner, this shall follow the University's Programme Withdrawal process. Prior to this, the Head of Collaborative Provision shall discuss this with the Associate Partner. Where required, action plans shall be delivered to ensure students are able to see out their programme of study.

### **3.37 Associate Partner External Audit**

3.37.1 Associate Partners are expected to engage with the University in any external review activity and to advise the University of any planned reviews.

3.37.2 Where Associate Partners undergo external audit, the University shall support the partner as appropriate.

3.37.3 The University maintains oversight of Associate Partner external audit activity through regular reporting into CPSC.

### **3.38 Instigating due diligence investigations on existing Associate Partners**

3.38.1 As part of the development of Associate Partnerships, due diligence investigations are carried out. During the life of a partnership, the University may seek to undertake further due diligence investigations. This may be for a number of reasons but typically would include:

3.38.2 A large increase in the scale of the partnership (increasing the risk to the University should the partnership collapse).

3.38.3 Notification of a change of governance.

3.38.4 Sector-wide changes that might adversely affect an Associate Partner.

3.38.5 Concerns caused by persistent delays in payments.

3.38.6 The instigation of additional due diligence investigations would normally be via the Head of Collaborative Provision. Outcomes would normally be managed via the Partnership Review process.

### **3.39 Partnership Review and Renewal of Partnerships**

3.39.1 Partnership Reviews are undertaken periodically throughout the life of a partnership. There two focuses to Partnership Review: to gain assurance about the ongoing quality assurance of a partnership and compliance with internal and external requirements; and to gain assurance about the business performance of a partnership.

3.39.2 The Head of Collaborative Provision oversees the completion of a quality assurance-focussed Partnership Review and works with Finance and Planning to complete a business-focussed review.

### **3.40 Academic-focussed Partnership Review**

3.40.1 Academic-focussed Partnership Reviews normally take place toward the end of Semester One. The review considers an evidence set as list below, although as partnership matures, this may be tailored, based on and proportionate to the maturity, size and range of the partnership as well as the historical performance of the partnership.

3.40.2 As a minimum, there will be an academic-focussed Partnership Review following the first and third years of delivery. Follow-up Partnership Reviews may take place every subsequent three years although different levels of frequency may be agreed.

3.40.3 Academic-focussed Partnership Review will normally comprise a visit to the partner by the Head of Collaborative Provision and another member of the QA Team. Visits would typically include:

- A meeting with the Partner's HE lead.
- A meeting with relevant academic and support staff.
- A meeting with students from across the HE provision awarded by the University.
- A review of the facilities used by HE students.

3.40.4 Partnership Reviews will include the following:

- An analysis of student recruitment, retention and achievement statistics
- Admissions audit undertaken by UoC Admissions Team.
- Website and publicity audit.
- A review of programme delivery teams.
- Scrutiny of Associate Partner-wide External Examiner reports and AMRs.

- Compliance with University assessment processes.
- A review of the partnership agreement against the day to day operation of the partnership.
- A review of publicly available reports relating to the Associate Partner (eg, QAA, Ofsted, TEF, etc).
- Where a visit is not possible, video conference facilities shall be used to facilitate the Partnership Review process.

3.40.5 The findings of Partnership Reviews are reported to CPSC where any actions are monitored as appropriate. The Head of Collaborative Provision liaises with the Associate Partner as necessary to discuss the actions and outcomes.

### **3.41 Business-focussed Partnership Review**

3.41.1 Following the third year of the operation of a partnership, the Head of Collaborative Provision undertakes a business review of the partnership, working with Finance and Planning as necessary to review the financial performance of a partnership, measured against any targets set. In the event of the financial performance being deemed not satisfactory, this will be reported as appropriate and continue to be monitored. The Head of Collaborative Provision will discuss this with the Associate Partner to identify steps to address and resolve concerns.

3.41.2 For those partnerships whose financial performance is deemed not satisfactory, following the fourth year of the operation of a partnership, the financial performance of the partnership will be reviewed again. In the event of financial performance continuing to be deemed not satisfactory, the Head of Collaborative Provision shall discuss this with members from VCE to agree steps to be taken. This may lead to the decision being taken to bring the partnership to a close.

### **3.42 Renewal of Associate Partners**

3.42.1 Following the fourth year of operation of all Associate Partners, the Head of Collaborative Provision meet with the relevant involved in the partnership to review the partnership to date and agree whether to continue the partnership. This will reflect on the findings of the academic and business focussed partnership reviews and the alignment of the partnership to the University's Strategic Plan. The Head of Collaborative Provision shall report this to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic).

3.42.2 Where there is support for the partnership to continue, the Head of Collaborative Provision shall report to CPSC with a summary of the partnership to date and a recommendation to endorse to Academic Board the renewal of the partnership. Alongside this, the Head of Collaborative Provision shall lead on entering discussions with the Associate Partner to renegotiate the partnership. Following formal approval by Academic Board, a new Institutional Agreement shall be drawn up and signed.

3.42.3 Where it is agreed the partnership should come to a close, this shall be reported to CPSC and the Head of Collaborative Provision will notify the Associate Partner of the decision. The Head of Collaborative Provision shall liaise accordingly to instigate teach-out arrangements. These shall be reported to CPSC.

- 3.42.4 In the event of the Associate Partner deciding to withdraw from the partnership, the Head of Collaborative Provision and the relevant University staff shall discuss the decision with the Associate Partner. An appropriate representative from the University will formally acknowledge the decision, coordinated by the Head of Collaborative Provision.
- 3.42.5 Where a decision is taken for a partnership to come to a close, the Head of Collaborative Provision will coordinate planning for teach-out arrangements. An action plan may be drawn up to manage the timely teach-out of students. These are monitored by CPSC on a regular basis throughout the teach-out.

### **3.43 Managing Unsatisfactory Provision**

- 3.43.1 This section describes processes that are followed in the event of serious problems being identified with provision leading to a University of Cumbria award that is delivered by an Associate Partner.
- 3.43.2 Unsatisfactory provision may be identified through a variety of routes. This may include student feedback or complaints, annual monitoring reports (AMRs), External Examiner reports, Partnership Reviews, QAA or other external body reports. Problems may also be identified via regular interaction between the University and the Associate Partner.
- 3.43.3 Where issues are identified they will normally be progressed through the stages described below. However, in the event of a serious issue arising (including any issues which are deemed to compromise academic standards), stages may be bypassed.

### **3.44 Informal Stage**

- 3.44.1 Where an issue is identified and received, the Head of Collaborative Provision will liaise with the relevant University Department and work with the Head of academic Institute, Academic Link, Associate Partner, and University Professional Services as necessary to resolve the issue.

### **3.45 Formal Stage**

- 3.45.1 Where informal working does not resolve the situation, the Head of Collaborative Provision will convene a meeting with the relevant University staff and Associate Partner staff to discuss the issue. The Head of Collaborative Provision will coordinate the development of an action plan of issues to be addressed. The action plan will include timelines for resolving the situation. The Head of Collaborative Provision will monitor the action plan and this will be reported into the following Partnership Review.
- 3.45.2 In the event of actions not being addressed within the specified timelines, this shall be reported to the Director of AQD who will review progress to date and either agree revised deadlines to resolve the action or convene a group to undertake a formal review meeting.
- 3.45.3 A formal review meeting is normally facilitated by the Head of Collaborative Provision and typically this will include attendance by the Academic Link, and relevant Associate Partner staff.

- 3.45.4 The review meeting will consider the issues identified, progress made and make appropriate recommendations. This will be reported to CPSC. CPSC will monitor the action plan.
- 3.45.5 Where recommendations agreed by the formal review do not resolve the issue, this is reported to the Director of AQD. One of the following may be agreed:
- 3.45.6 That sufficient evidence has been provided to show that reasonable steps are being taken to resolve the issue. CPSC to continue to monitor the issue and take steps accordingly.
- 3.45.7 That evidence received shows the issue under review remains a concern with little or no indication that it will improve to the University's satisfaction over the agreed timescale. A decision will be taken to:
- Consider the wider future of the partnership.
  - Suspend recruitment until the issues are resolved to the satisfaction of CPSC.
  - Instigate programme withdrawal processes.
- 3.45.8 In cases where the evidence received shows that the issue under review remains a concern such that it gives the University limited confidence in the overall partnership, CPSC will recommend to Academic Board that the partnership be terminated in line with the relevant partnership agreement. The Head of Collaborative Provision shall advise the Associate Partner of the University's decision and clarify each party's responsibility to students who are still enrolled on the programmes.
- 3.45.9 Planning meetings will be convened to discuss and manage teach-out arrangements. The Head of Collaborative Provision coordinate teach-out planning meetings. An action plan may be drawn up to manage the timely teach-out of students.
- 3.45.10 CPSC monitors the action plan to oversee the effective teach-out.

### 3.46 Responsibilities retained by the University

Responsibilities that are never delegated by the University	Steps taken by the University to fulfil its responsibilities
<p>UoC retains responsibility for academic standards: Ensuring consistency with national qualification frameworks. Ensuring standards are reasonably comparable with other UK providers</p>	<p>The University's Validation process sets academic standards. Partner programmes follow the University's Academic Regulations. External Examiners Regular checking of partner's quality management. Partnership Review</p>
<p>UoC retains responsibility for ensuring the student's academic experience (from admissions to outcomes) is high quality.</p>	<p>Audits of partners' admissions processes. Partnership Review Approval of partner staff (at validation and ongoing). Partner provision is progressed through the University's Assessment Board process. Partner student feedback is analysed by the University. Partner provision is subject to the University's Annual Monitoring process.</p>
<p>UoC retains responsibility for ensuring the enhancement opportunities are available to students.</p>	<p>Regular receipt and analysis of student feedback</p>
<p>UoC retains responsibility for ensuring that student needs are consistently met.</p>	<p>Regular receipt and analysis of student feedback. Meeting with Partner student support staff. Meeting with Partner students</p>
<p>UoC retains authority and responsibility for awarding certificated and records of study.</p>	<p>Partner provision is progressed through the University's Assessment Board process. The University produces partner students' certificates and transcripts. The University retains a student record.</p>

