Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedure

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1.0 Purpose

1.1 This document outlines the University of Salford (UoS) policy and procedures for the approval, management, monitoring and withdrawal of all forms of Collaborative Provision, both in the UK and overseas, to enable the University to fulfil its responsibilities as defined by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

1.2 The fundamental principle underlying this policy is that the University has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities of all awards made in its name, regardless of where these opportunities are delivered and who is delivering them.

1.2 The policy is designed to protect the experience of our students, regardless of their location of study, and to encourage and facilitate enhanced practice within our own institution and those of our partners.

2.0 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of University of Salford's academic credit or qualification that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the University.

2.2 This policy does not apply to non-credit bearing continuing professional development, non-credit bearing student exchanges, work-based or placement learning, consultancy or commercial activities. Whilst falling under the definition of collaborative provision, approval of placements and work-based learning is covered by the University's programme approval process.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 The Partnership Committee (PC) has authority from Senate for institutional oversight of the strategic and business case(s) for all proposed collaborative provision activity to ensure consistency with University strategy.

3.2 The Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) has authority from Senate for institutional oversight of the academic standards and quality assurance mechanisms for all proposed collaborative provision activity to ensure consistency with University policy.

3.3 A collaborative arrangement is normally approved for a five-year period and will require re-approval prior to expiry of this period.

3.4 The procedure and guidance recognises the diverse nature of Collaborative Provision and the need for a proportionate and tailored approach towards the assessment and management of risk. For example, approval involving larger amounts of credit, at higher levels, will be considered as greater risk. Collaborative Provision with institutions outside the UK and outside of the HE sector will also be considered greater risks.

3.5 A full risk assessment and due diligence of any proposed collaborative arrangement will be undertaken as part of the initial approval and will be reviewed at appropriate intervals as determined by the relevant professional service.

3.6 The University does not permit the advertisement of any programme involving Collaborative Provision until PC has approved the partner. At this point the programme can be advertised as 'subject to approval' if permitted by in country regulator. When the programme(s) have been approved, full advertisement can take place.

3.7 The University does not permit recruitment to any programme involving Collaborative Provision until the partner and programme(s) have been approved and the agreement has been formally signed by both parties.

3.8 The University will enter into a legally binding contract with an apprenticeship delivery subcontractor who is listed on the Register of Approved Training Providers. Before doing so, the University will follow the processes for partner planning/approval and institutional approval which are outlined in Section 4 of the Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedure.

3.9 The University expressly prohibits the practice of 'serial' or 'sub' franchising - i.e., the practice whereby provision franchised to a partner is, in turn, franchised to a third party – except with its express written permission.

3.10 English Language is the sole permitted medium for the delivery and assessment of Collaborative Provision except where, in limited circumstances, the learning outcomes are explicitly related to competence in languages other than English.

3.11 The following types of arrangement that are covered by UK Quality Code are outlined below.

- Franchise;
- Validation;
- Dual awards;
- Joint award (both taught and PhD);
- Joint delivery;
- Articulation;
- Progression;
- Off- campus delivery of a taught programme (including flying faculty and online learning with elements of partner support);
- PhD Without Residence (Off-site PhD) or other postgraduate research awards;
- Split- site PhD or other postgraduate research awards.
- Centre for Doctoral Training;

3.12 There may also be other activities, not specifically mentioned here, that need careful consideration under this procedure, as there may be implied responsibility for standards and/or learning opportunities.

3.13 The Quality Management Office (QMO) will maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of all collaborative provision that is covered by this procedure.

3.14 The Faculty will appoint an appropriately qualified link tutor for every programme or discipline area of Collaborative Provision.

3.15 Visits to and from the partner are an important feature of the University's management of Collaborative Provision. Normally there would be two visits in the first year of operation and then minimum of one annual visit. The frequency of the visits may vary according to the nature of the collaboration. The nature of the visits will cover areas outlined in the visit template report which will also capture actions to be followed up through the Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure (PMEP) (see section 8).

4.0 Collaborative Provision Procedure – Approving a partnership

4.1 The Collaborative Provision Procedure has three stages which are designed to ensure that the University adopts a strategic approach to Collaborative Provision and that appropriate levels of resource are committed to such activities.

Stage 1: Business Case Approval – Strategic Fit and Financial Viability

4.2 The Business Case Approval stage for new partnerships confirms that there is an institutional strategic fit and business case within the context of the University's Strategic Plan. They also confirm that the proposal aligns with the Faculty's strategic and operational plans and that there are resources available to develop the proposal and progress it through the approval procedure (see Related Documentation for the Stage 1 form and initial risk assessment form).

4.3 As part of business case approval criteria in establishing whether a site visit is required or not would include:

- the status of the proposed partner institution (for example, whether the partner is publicly or privately funded, whether it is a degree awarding body),
- whether it is a new or existing partner,
- its experience of HE Collaborative Provision and
- the risk level of the proposed provision.

Stage 2: Partner Approval - Due Diligence and Risk Assessment

4.4 The Partner Approval stage (See Related Documentation for Stage 2 form) and ensures that due diligence and risk assessments have been completed and signed off prior to consideration of the academic case.

4.5 Due diligence will be undertaken to inform Stage 2 and includes the financial, academic quality, legal and ethical due diligence as a minimum. In addition, the due diligence procedure will ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place to manage risk.

4.6 Due diligence will consider financial requirements such as the financial background and current financial standing of the organisation, the tax status, the ratings in the Corruptions Perceptions Index and Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Index rating.

4.7 Due diligence will consider reputational and ethical issues such as the organisation's existing partnerships/relationships with academic and industrial partners, compliance

with similar regulations as the UK in terms of Human Rights, Modern Slavery, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Bribery and Corruption.

4.8 Due diligence will consider legal issues such as the legal capacity of the organisation to enter the arrangement being undertaken, the history of the organisation, and if there any litigations/arbitration proceedings that have taken or are taking place.

4.9 Due diligence will consider academic quality of the proposed partner including its quality processes, management, and organisational structures, physical and learning resources. It will also ensure that the appropriate quality assurance processes are in place between the Faculty and the proposed partner to safeguard the University's academic standards as well as the experience of students on a programme leading to University award or credit.

4.10 As part of the due diligence consideration, a partnership site visit may be required which will take the form of an independent assessment of the proposed partner (see criteria in 4.3).

4.11 The site visit (which is part of the University's due diligence process) is intended to ensure that the partner is aligned with the University's Vision and Mission and has in place appropriate learning resource, including student support, and appropriate quality systems.

4.12 The site visit will be conducted by a minimum of two members of staff and will normally include a member of QMO. If appropriate, additional professional service staff may be in attendance.

4.13 Student Exchanges and articulation/progression agreements do not require formal partnership site visits.

4.14 PC approves a new partner and grants Stage 2: Partner Approval – Due Diligence and Risk Assessment approval. This is done without prejudice to the outcome of the later quality assurance stages of approval.

4.15 PC may identify areas for discussion at the forthcoming CPVP.

4.16 PC approval applies to the collaborative partner in its entirety or as specified in the Memorandum of Agreement (e.g., where the collaborative partner has a multiple locations). All significant areas within the agreement should have been agreed with the Partner prior to the Stage 2 submission to PC.

Stage 3: Collaborative Programme Approval

4.17 Following Stage 2 approval by PC, the home Faculty(s) is responsible for bringing the Collaborative Provision Programme(s) through the approval process in accordance with the University's Programme Design, Validation, Amendment, Revalidation and Withdrawal Policy.

4.18 The Collaborative Programme Validation Panel will normally be held at the partner and would be held in line with the Programme Design, Validation, Amendment, Revalidation and Withdrawal policy. The panel approves both the partnership and the academic programme.

4.19 The panel will normally involve an external member; this could be the external examiner for an existing programme or an external advisor for a new or validated programme who should have had direct experience of managing and delivering collaborative provision.

5.0 Collaborative Provision - Extension

5.1 Where a Faculty wishes to extend an existing collaborative partnership by, for example, approving delivery of another programme, they must complete the extension form which is signed by the relevant Faculty Executive for consideration at the next PC for approval.

5.2 Following approval of the Collaborative Provision Extension by PC, the home Faculty(s) is responsible for bringing the Collaborative Provision Programme through the approval process in accordance with the University's Policy.

5.3 Where a Faculty is seeking to extend an existing collaborative arrangement with a higher qualification level, a new area of study or a specialised and complex area of study, it is anticipated that a new site visit report would be required for the programme approval stage.

6.0 Formal Agreement

6.1 An appropriate Agreement (wherever possible using a Legal Services template) must be prepared for each proposal, including one which is being renewed or extended.

6.2 Prior to signing on behalf of the University, and in parallel with the approval process, the Agreement(s) must be approved and signed off by Legal Services.

6.3 The authorised signatories of Agreement(s) must be the Vice Chancellor (or nominee) on behalf of the University and the Principal or other duly authorised Officer, on behalf of the partner institution.

6.4 Students must not be registered or enrolled on any programmes offered through Collaborative Provision until after the Agreement has been approved and signed by both parties.

6.5 Signed agreements are held by Legal & Compliance.

7.0 Approval and Monitoring of Information and Publicity Materials

7.1 It is the University's responsibility to maintain control over the accuracy of all public information and publicity relating to Collaborative Provision.

7.2 Information for students and stakeholders must be clear, accurate, fit for purpose and trustworthy.

7.3 All promotional materials for Collaborative Provision devised and used by the partner institution must be designed in keeping with the University's corporate identity and approved by the Directorate of Marketing and Student Recruitment prior to their use.

8.0 Collaborative Provision Monitoring and Review

8.1 The University is responsible for the ongoing monitoring and review of all Collaborative Provision.

8.2 Collaborative Provision will be monitored and reviewed through processes that are consistent with, or comparable to those used for the University's own provision.

8.3 Continuous Monitoring will be undertaken for all taught and research collaborative programmes (see related documentation - Programme Monitoring and Enhancement policy (PMEP)) which will facilitate the identification and sharing of best practice.

8.4 For taught programmes, a Periodic Programme Review and Reapproval (PPRR) will be undertaken on a periodic basis following original approval of the programmes.

8.5 For taught programmes, a Joint Board of Study (JBoS) will be established to cover collaborative programmes that will oversee the ongoing quality assurance and management of the provision. The constitution and Terms of Reference of Joint Boards of Study are detailed in the Scheme of Governance (see Related Documentation).

8.6 The operation and management of external examiners for collaborative programmes is governed by the University's External Examining for all Taught Programmes Policy and through the Code of Practice for PGR Programmes. (See Related Documentation).

8.7 An interim review of programmes offered at a collaborative partner may be instigated based on outcomes from PMEP and would normally take place in the first or second year of operation.

9.0 Collaborative Provision – Revalidation and Re-approval

9.1 A formal revalidation and re-approval of the partnership will be undertaken in the year prior to the renewal of the formal partnership agreement.

9.2 The revalidation and re-approval process will ensure that:

- The collaborative provision continues to have the support of the Faculty;
- The rationale for the collaboration remains valid;
- The collaboration remains appropriate in the context of the University's strategic plan;
- The partner institution retains the appropriate academic, financial and legal status;
- The business case remains valid;
- The collaborative provision continues to deliver appropriate quality, standards and learning opportunities.

9.3 The process for the re-approval of a collaborative partner will follow the confirmation that Faculty Executive and consideration of Business Case approval to reconfirm the intention to continue with the partnership and will refresh the business case and due diligence accordingly.

9.4 The review of the academic programme(s) is subject to the University's Policy.

10.0 Certificates and Records of Study

10.1 The University retains authority for the awarding of certificates and issuing of transcripts.

10.2 The transcript will normally record the name of the teaching institution responsible for the delivery of the programme. Any exceptions approved will be reflected in the formal agreement with the partner.

10.3 In the case of dual, multiple or double awards, the University certificate and transcript will refer to the existence of the other partner(s) and make it clear that they refer to the completion of a single, jointly conceived programme.

11.0 Withdrawal/Termination and Contingency of Agreement

11.1 The University is responsible for ensuring that students registered on a Collaborative Provision programme are enabled to complete their studies if the University or a partner withdraws from an agreement or is no longer able to fulfil their responsibilities as stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement.

11.2 Contingency costings and arrangements must be included in the proposal and the Memorandum of Agreement.

11.3 Programme withdrawal is governed by the Programme Design, Validation Amendment, Revalidation and Withdrawal Policy. (see related docs)

11.4 Where a partnership is to be withdrawn/terminated, the appropriate documentation should be completed by QMO, in liaison with the UoS Faculty, to ensure academic standards and the quality of experience are maintained for remaining students.

12.0 Related Documentation

The following documents can be found on the Quality Management Office hubsite:

- Programme Design, Validation, Amendment, Revalidation and Withdrawal Policy
- Research Award Regulations.
- External Examining for all Taught Programmes Policy
- Scheme of Governance
- Code of Practice for PGR Programmes
- Apprenticeship Subcontracting Policy

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Policy Management and Responsibilities:		
Owner:	This Policy is issued by the Quality Management Office (QMO). The QMO has the authority to issue and communicate policy on Collaborative Provision and has delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to the Head of Academic Quality and Partnerships. All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.	
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