



**REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR EDUCATIONAL
PARTNERSHIPS**

Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Partnerships

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Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Partnerships

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Code

1.2 The purpose of these Regulations and Code of Practice ('the Code') is to set out the University's expectations for all educational partnership arrangements with which it is involved.

1.3 The Regulations and Code takes account of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: section 2, collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)*, published in September 2004¹ and should be read in conjunction with the *University's Handbook for Academic Quality and Standards*, which is available from the Education Support Unit (ESU) website: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/handbook.html>

1.4 The Regulations and Code have been developed with the intention that all guidance, regulation and information about educational partnerships are contained in one document for ease of reference. Together, the information enclosed summarises the general principles that underpin the University's approach to educational partnership arrangements; explains the internal approval process more fully; and addresses areas for consideration when developing an educational partnership for eventual inclusion in the formal approval paperwork and Institutional Agreement.

1.5 The Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and Official Record provide the formal requirements for all educational partnerships:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cms/go/statutes/>

1.6 Regulations that have been integrated into the Code will continue to have regulatory status (as indicated by text in boxes), while other parts are viewed as best practice. It is expected that practice should align with this guidance wherever possible. Where practices deviate from the Code and other University regulations and guidelines, these must be formally approved and stated explicitly in the Institutional Agreement. Any departures from the agreement or faculty policy must be approved by the relevant undergraduate or graduate dean in advance.

1.7 It is the responsibility of each Faculty's Quality Assurance Team (FQAT) supported by the dean of faculty as appropriate, to work closely with departments to ensure that any educational partnerships in which they are involved, are managed effectively and formally recognised and appropriately reflected in an up-to-date Institutional Agreement.

2 General Principles

Overview of the University's expectations

2.1 Partnerships between educational providers can offer effective and innovative programmes, through the pooling of expertise and resources. However, such

partnerships need to be carefully developed and documented to assure quality and safeguard the student learning experience. It is therefore vital that any arrangements for educational partnerships¹ pay attention to issues of academic standards and quality assurance and are underpinned by explicit agreements and procedures that are regularly monitored and reviewed. The following principles apply to all educational partnerships:

All educational partnerships with which the University of Bristol is involved require a formal written Institutional Agreement. Institutional Agreements are normally put in place for a period of five years and must be ratified by Education Committee, the University Planning and Resources Committee (UPARC) and Senate.

2.2 It is important that all partnership arrangements support the University's educational objectives and those of any prospective partner organisation, to ensure a shared approach that will bring about a more productive relationship and be of greater benefit to students. This is achieved by jointly agreeing a clear statement of responsibilities, roles and financial arrangements, with particular reference to quality assurance mechanisms in a formally approved Institutional Agreement.

The University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Partnerships apply to educational partnerships with any institution or organisation, whether within the UK or overseas, that involve the teaching and assessment of students who are registered for a University of Bristol award² or require an institutional-level commitment to contributing towards another institution's award.

All students registered for a University of Bristol award that is delivered through an educational partnership arrangement are considered students of the University of Bristol for external and internal quality assurance purposes, regardless of where they are taught, and are therefore entitled to the same rights and equivalent resources as students studying on any other University programme.

2.3 This distinction must be clear to all partners from the outset of any partnership arrangement; the exact entitlement of students on such programmes, welfare arrangements and responsibility for disseminating this information to students will be specified in the Institutional Agreement.

2.4 It is critical that, when establishing, reviewing and renewing an educational partnership, the responsibilities for assuring the quality and academic standards of provision are clearly defined and student support arrangements are made explicit both within the agreement and all programme and unit-related material. Other important considerations, expectations and procedures related to education

¹ These regulations cover programme-level educational partnerships which result in University of Bristol awards only; they are not intended to address high-level strategic alliances or institutional Memorandums of Understanding.

² Student exchanges such as Socrates and Erasmus and four year programmes with placements that were approved in line with the University's procedures for new and revised programmes and units are exempt from these regulations.

partnerships follow.

Definition of an educational partnership

Educational partnerships are those where a programme of study, or part of a programme of study, at any level, which leads to a University of Bristol award, is delivered and / or supported and / or assessed through an arrangement with a partner institution or organisation.

2.5 Programmes can take various forms but fall principally into the following three categories:

- a) programmes fully delivered by Bristol staff at another institution/organisation, using the partner's resources (e.g. library);
- b) programmes delivered by staff from the University and another institution/organisation;
- c) programmes fully delivered by staff from another institution/organisation, who have been granted academic status by the University³.

Example partnership models

- Consortium arrangements leading to separate awards from the University of Bristol and the partner institution/s or a single award from the lead institution, but with units from all partners available to students.

Programmes operating as a standard University of Bristol programme with credit and marks from other institutions accepted as Accredited Prior/Concurrent Learning (APL). Joint board oversees the management of the consortium; complaints and appeals at programme level are the responsibility of the awarding institution; complaints and appeals at unit level are the responsibility of the institution awarding credit for that unit. Any changes at unit or programme level are subject for formal approval by the awarding institution according to its standard procedures. One institution takes the lead for all financial and administrative matters.

- Joint award – programme and units jointly designed and approved by the partner/s with one institution taking the lead in all financial, administrative and quality assurance matters. Students receive a single certificate and transcript from which features the name and logo of both institutions. The University has altered its statutes to enable it to offer joint awards; however, it does not offer any at present.
- Off-site delivery – programme designed, approved and owned by the University of Bristol but delivered by University of Bristol staff at another institution or organisation.
- Validation arrangements – programme designed, approved and owned by the University of Bristol but delivered by another institution on its behalf.
- Other examples of educational partnerships include dual awards when a programme of study leads to separate awards from both institutions and franchise

³ Ordinance 20 'Academic Status' refers.

arrangements, whereby the University of Bristol takes responsibility for assuring the academic standards and quality of a programme of a partner institution/organisation in order to ensure it is comparable to any other University of Bristol award. The University is not normally supportive of dual awards because of the potential of 'double-counting' and does not intend to pursue any new franchise arrangements in the future.

- Serial arrangements whereby a partner institution/organisation offers approved collaborative provision to a third party or assigns, through an arrangement of its own powers delegated to it by the University of Bristol are not normally permitted. Exceptionally, faculties may propose such an arrangement to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG) for approval in principle before beginning the formal approval process.

It is the University's responsibility to ensure that the academic standards of its awards are safeguarded; responsibilities should only be delegated if the University is satisfied that the 'chain' of accountability is sufficiently transparent and comprehensive to manage academic standards effectively. If a serial arrangement is approved then it must be clear how it will affect all aspects of the University's partnership agreement.

Arrangements whereby staff from elsewhere contribute to a University of Bristol award and vice versa

2.6 Arrangements whereby staff from another institution contribute to teaching on a University of Bristol programme fall into three categories.

2.7 First, those whereby the arrangement forms part of a formal, institutional-level consortium agreement as described in paragraph 2.5. Second, arrangements whereby a faculty-level credit recognition agreement is put in place with another institution/s but the delivery and administration of the institutions' respective programmes remain entirely separate. Third, arrangements whereby an individual from another institution is contracted by a department to provide a particular unit or units towards a University of Bristol programme. Faculty-level credit recognition agreements and arrangements with individual members of staff from another institution are not deemed to be educational partnerships and are therefore matters for faculties/departments to negotiate. However, while both arrangements require that staff from the other institution are accorded Academic Status under Ordinance 20 of the University's Statutes, Ordinances and Official Record, such staff are not permitted to act as programme or unit directors or as personal tutors.

2.8 Other restrictions apply to instances where University of Bristol staff are invited to contribute towards another institution's programme/s. Again, it is for departments to come to an agreement with the other institution about financial arrangements, taking account of staffing and other resource issues within the department. However, it should be made clear that under no circumstances should the other institution use the University Bristol logo or describe the arrangement as a 'partnership' in its publicity and programme material.

3 Overview of responsibilities for the management of quality and standards

Safeguarding academic quality and standards

All partners with whom the University of Bristol enters into an educational partnership must become an Associated or Affiliated Institution of the University before the agreement can take effect. University Ordinances 22 and 23 (in the University Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and Official Record) outlines general arrangements for the Association and Affiliation of Institutions. Any changes to affiliations will require the approval of Senate and Council, with appropriate notice to the partner institution/organisation.

All members of staff at a partner institution who are involved in the teaching or research of students who are registered at the University of Bristol and receive a University of Bristol award must be accorded Academic Status under University Ordinance 20 (in the University Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and Official Record).

3.1 In short, association enables partner institutions working as part of a consortium to provide specialist teaching and/or research facilities for students who are registered with, and completing their programme of study at, the University of Bristol. Affiliation safeguards the student experience for those students that are registered for a University of Bristol award but are taught at the partner institution. In particular, affiliation gives the University the right to visit and inspect those institutions with which it has an educational partnership arrangement to ensure the quality of teaching and supervision carried out by members of the institution who have been accorded academic status at the University. Proposed amendments to Ordinances 22 and 23 must be put forward as part of programme approval documentation.

Internal quality procedures

3.2 The University itself needs to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of its own quality assurance mechanisms in order to assure that the academic standards of its partnership arrangements are appropriately located within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). It is most important therefore that partnership arrangements are managed effectively at faculty and departmental level⁴ and incorporated within all University quality assurance procedures.

As the awarding institution the University of Bristol has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered is adequate to enable a student to achieve the academic standard required.

3.3 This must be clear to all partners from the outset of any agreement. Furthermore the University must be able to satisfy itself at regular intervals that that the terms and conditions that were originally approved as part of the Institutional Agreement have been, and continue to be, met.

⁴ This includes ownership for the ongoing review of all public information, programme/unit material and publicity relating to a partnership programme and arrangements for ensuring the accurate and timely dissemination of such information to students.

Departmental ownership

3.4 Consequently, faculties and departments must take ownership for any partnership in which they are involved and will be responsible for ensuring that such arrangements are managed effectively.

The department must nominate a member of academic staff who will be responsible for managing the partnership on behalf of the University. This person will act as the principal point of contact for all matters relating to its operation.

3.5 Educational partnerships without adequate departmental leadership will be subject to review by the Programme Review Group and may be terminated.

3.6 The departmental contact is responsible for ensuring that the Institutional Agreement is implemented and that an Administrative Manual is developed in consultation with the partner institution/organisation, departmental and faculty colleagues and the relevant central support services. The manual should clarify roles and responsibilities on a practical, day to day level in order to ensure alignment with University/faculty procedures and systems. For example, student data requirements and the scheduling of exam boards.

3.7 A register of approved educational partnerships, including the name and title of the departmental contact is maintained by the ESU and is publicly available on the ESU website.

The relevant Faculty Quality Assurance Teams (FQATs), working with the Education Support Unit (ESU), will maintain an overview of arrangements. In particular, all programmes delivered through educational partnerships are:

- subject to Annual Programme Review which is also attended by FQAT and ESU representatives;
- under the jurisdiction of a Faculty Examination Board, Faculty Quality Assurance Team and the Programme Review Group;
- considered as part of the relevant University Departmental Review process.

3.8 In addition, the University must ensure that proposers of any new educational partnerships make appropriate use of section 2 of the QAA Code and that its partner institutions/organisations are aware of their responsibilities in terms of addressing the precepts of the current QAA Code and any successor document.

3.9 Relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), which have approved or recognised a programme that is subject to a possible or actual partnership arrangement, must be kept informed of proposals and of the final agreement. Proposals for new programmes must include a timetable for accreditation and roles and responsibilities with respect to securing professional recognition clearly defined within the Institutional Agreement.

All partner institutions/organisations must be aware that any collaborative arrangements are subject to the University's internal quality procedures and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: section 2, collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning).

3.10 The QAA Code is underpinned by a series of precepts. A summary of the precepts relating to section 2 of the QAA Code, Part A is enclosed at Annex A for information.

4. Developing an educational partnership

Informal discussion and advice from the Education Support Unit

4.1 Before undertaking any detailed planning, departments should contact the Assistant Registrar (Educational Development) in the Education Support Unit (ESU) with an outline proposal to discuss the possibility of establishing an educational partnership. The Unit will be able to offer advice about the most appropriate partnership model to pursue, drafting the Institutional Agreement if the University of Bristol is to be the lead partner, and the timetable for approval.

4.2 It should be noted that the development and formal approval of a new educational partnership is a lengthy process and can take over a year to complete, owing to the complexity of the negotiation process and the risks associated with this type of collaboration. Only when the draft Institutional Agreement has been endorsed by Education Committee, will it be possible to advertise the partnership/programme. This decision will be taken by Education Committee on a case by case basis, depending on the nature of the partnership.

Important issues to consider when developing an educational partnership

4.3 It is important to note the following obligations in respect of the University's partnership arrangements which lead to a University of Bristol award: all prospective partners must be made aware of these conditions at the outset of any discussions.

Student registration

Student registration arrangements are fundamental to all educational partnerships and must underpin the Institutional Agreement.

Students studying on a programme that is delivered under a consortium arrangement must register with the awarding institution at the outset of their studies. Dual registration poses serious risks to the University's reputation and is not permitted⁵.

Students undertaking a programme or professional doctorate that is delivered at a partner institution/organisation that leads to a University of Bristol award must be

⁵ This does not apply to co-supervision arrangements which are agreed on an individual basis not at programme-level.

made aware in all programme and publicity material that they are considered to be University of Bristol students and are therefore subject to the University's Rules and Regulations for Students.

Doctoral students taught under a consortium agreement should only register with the University of Bristol if the department is contributing to the taught component of the programme and/or supervising the research project; students completing the taught component elsewhere should register with the partner institution for this part of the programme before transferring to the University of Bristol to undertake their research project. It is important that this distinction is reflected in, and provision made for, appropriate exit routes from such arrangements.

4.4 Where responsibility for registration and admissions processes is to be devolved to a partner institution/organisation, the University must put in place mechanisms to ensure that practices align with University and faculty policies and procedures. In addition, the partner institution/organisation must be listed in the Department for Innovations, Universities and Skills Register of Education and Training Providers and have a current sponsor license from the UK Borders Agency.

External examiners

The University is responsible for the appointment and functions of external examiners. The appointment of external examiners for programmes operating within partnership arrangements will be as outlined in the Guidelines for External Examining of Taught Programmes and the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes at the University of Bristol or their equivalent.

Where the procedure for the appointment and use of external examiners differs from that outlined in the Guidelines, this must be explicitly outlined in the written agreement and approved by Education Committee. All external examiners must receive briefing and guidance, approved by the University of Bristol, in advance of any visit to a partner organisation.

Certificates and transcripts

The issuing of award certificates and transcripts for University of Bristol awards must remain under the control of the University. If the principal language of instruction and/or assessment is not English this must be recorded on the certificate and/or transcript and if such information is recorded on the transcript only, the certificate must refer to the existence of the transcript. The name and location of any partner organisation in delivery of the programme of study must be included on the certificate and/or transcript.

Partnerships with overseas institutions or organisations

4.5 The University considers proposals involving overseas partner institutions or organisations to be particularly high risk: all such proposals require 'approval in principle' from the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG) before the

department embarks on the formal approval process outlined below. This process will be managed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and the Education Support Unit in consultation with the dean and department.

Preparing the Institutional Agreement

4.6 Informal negotiations must take place before a proposal can be formally considered via the University approval route: a draft Institutional Agreement, which takes account of the guidance within this Code, must be agreed provisionally at this stage and is an integral part of formal documentation requirements. Any partnership proposal without such an agreement will be deemed to require further development before formal approval can be pursued. Further details are provided in annexes B and C.

It is the responsibility of the lead institution to draft the Institutional Agreement. All Institutional Agreements, regardless of whether they lead to a University of Bristol award, are subject to the University's formal approval processes to ensure appropriate scrutiny of the arrangement.

4.7 Other higher education institutions with whom the University enters into agreements will have their own criteria for educational partnerships. Similarly industrial and commercial partners with whom relationships may be formed may have other quality assurance requirements. Institutional Agreements for such provision must cover the requirements of all parties.

4.8 It must be made clear to all prospective partners that the draft agreement will be subject to internal scrutiny and approval and may require amendment, before a final decision is taken by the University.

5. Procedures

All partnership arrangements must follow the University's approval process.

Securing Faculty Support

5.1 After informal negotiations have been completed, a proposal to establish a new educational partnership should be developed. All proposals for a new or existing programme offered through an educational partnership must consist of the standard new programme approval paperwork⁶ (<http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/approval/> refers) and a draft Institutional Agreement, which distinguishes between the institutional aspects of the partnership and programme-specific arrangements. A detailed breakdown of financial arrangements must accompany the draft Institutional Agreement, as described in paragraph 5.6.

⁶ The New Programme Approval form must comprise details of all consequential regulatory changes including the association or affiliation of the partner institution/organisation. Any changes to associations or affiliations will require the approval of Senate and Council, with appropriate notice to the partner institution/organisation.

5.2 As for other new programmes, this documentation should be submitted to the relevant departmental and faculty committees before being considered by the Faculty Planning and Resources Committee (FPARC). If the FPARC is satisfied with the proposal the Dean of the faculty should confirm formally, in writing, to the Education Support Unit that the proposal is financially viable, has the full backing of the Faculty and that due consideration has been given to planning and resource issues, including student numbers and fees.

University Educational Partnership Group

5.3 Following receipt of this confirmation, the ESU will convene a University Educational Partnership Group (UEPG) to consider the proposal and, if possible, assist the department in finalising the draft Institutional Agreement.

All educational partnership proposals are subject to scrutiny and further development by a University Educational Partnership Group (UEPG).

5.4 The Group will be chaired by an academic from the relevant Faculty (to be agreed by the Dean and the Director of the ESU), a Faculty Education Director from another faculty and at least two representatives from the originating department/faculty who will be responsible for liaising with the partner institution/s. Other members will include the Director of the ESU or his/her nominee as well as representatives from the following Support Services: Academic Registry; Finance Office; the Planning, Policy and Projects Support Office (if the bid involves Additional Student Numbers (ASNs)); and the University's Secretary's Office. The Group will be supported by the ESU.

5.5 The UEPG is responsible for determining the legal status of a prospective partner institution/organisation and its capacity to enter into a contract with the University of Bristol. It will also consult any UK awarding institution with a current or previous relationship with the proposed partner institution/organisation about the standing and effectiveness of the institution/organisation.

Financial arrangements

5.6 The UEPG will also consider the financial status of a prospective partner institution/organisation. It is most important that the financial basis of any educational partnership arrangement is explored at as early a stage as possible, in consultation with relevant Faculty Accountant who will be a member of the UEPG, and a separate Financial Memorandum drawn up as part of the draft Institutional Agreement.

All educational partnerships must be fully-costed and accounted for comprehensively with adequate safeguards against financial or other temptations that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities.

A detailed Financial Memorandum must form part of the Institutional Agreement; agreements with insufficient information about financial arrangements will be considered incomplete and will not be put forward for approval.

A review of the financial arrangements must be considered as part of any review of the partnership provision.

5.7 In considering potential partnerships, UEPGs will evaluate the suitability of the institution as a whole, possibly visiting the institution in some cases, and examine the particular programme/s that relate to the proposal in more detail, including subject-specific resources and expertise. It will also pay particular attention to financial viability, programme structure, quality assurance matters and the legal implications of entering into the partnership.

5.8 The UEPG will report to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and recommend whether the partnership proposal should proceed through the University's standard approval processes. Only when the Education Support Unit has received confirmation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education that the proposal is satisfactory, will it be passed to the Programme Approval Group for scrutiny through the University's standard new programme approval procedures.

5.9 If the UEPG recommends that the proposal should not proceed, their judgment must be evidence based and provide sufficient feedback to allow departments to consider whether they wish to undertake further work to make the proposal viable.

Programme approval process

5.10 Following scrutiny by a University Educational Partnership Group, those arrangements that are recommended for approval by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education will be formally considered by the University through the New Programme Approval process. This process, in conjunction with the Institutional Agreement, ensures that the University's regulations are underpinned by procedures which make certain that all educational partnership arrangements are managed in line with University policies; and are supported by the central authorities of the University and those of any educational partner.

5.11 After consideration by the Programme Approval Group and Education Committee, all educational partnership proposals will first be considered by UPARC before being recommended to Senate. Further revisions to the proposal and/or Institutional Agreement may be requested at any time during this process.

5.12 Following approval of the Institutional Agreement by Senate, and amendment of the relevant Ordinance to include the partner organisation, the Institutional Agreement will then be formalised and can then be signed in accordance with standard University procedures. The Education Support Unit will oversee this process on behalf of the University.

Reviewing and renewing partnership arrangements

Education Committee is responsible for overseeing, on behalf of Senate, all educational partnerships.

5.13 Faculty Boards, via FQATs, will undertake detailed supervision of the relationships as part of their routine visits and report annually to Education Committee. Education Committee may refer any issues about individual programmes to the Programme Review Group.

All educational partnership arrangements will be subject to review by the Programme Review Group one year before the arrangement is due for renewal, unless otherwise stated in the Institutional Agreement.

5.14 The decision whether to continue the partnership will normally be made after four years (agreements normally cover a five year Term). Education Committee will convene the Programme Review Group to carry out a comprehensive review which will recommend whether the partnership continues to be viable and advise if any specific conditions should be met if the Agreement is to be renegotiated. Education Committee will then determine if a UEPG is required to revise the agreement, before recommending a new agreement to UPARC and Senate for approval.

Arrangements for terminating a partnership must be included in the Institutional Agreement. Either the University or its partner institution/organisation may terminate the agreement, after a period of consultation, with a minimum period of at least one year's notice subject to satisfactory provision being made for the completion of the programme for existing students.

Overview of precepts from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 2: collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning, Part A (September 2004)

A copy of the QAA Code of practice, including sections 4 (External Examining) and 10 (Recruitment and Admissions) can be found at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>

A1 The awarding institution is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name.

A2 The academic standards of all awards made under a collaborative arrangement should meet the expectations of the UK Academic Infrastructure. This applies equally to awards made as a result of FDL arrangements.

A3 Collaborative arrangements should be negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the awarding institution.

A4 An up-to-date and authoritative record of the awarding institution's collaborative partnerships and agents, and a listing of its collaborative programmes operated through those partnerships or agencies should form part of the institution's publicly available information. This also applies to FDL programmes where these warrant a separate identification.

A5 The awarding institution should inform any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB), which has approved or recognised a programme that is the subject of a possible or actual collaborative arrangement, of its proposals and of any final agreements which involve the programme. This applies equally to programmes for which significant FDL arrangements are developed after the programme has been approved or recognised. In any case, the status of the programme in respect of PSRB recognition should be made clear to prospective students.

A6 The awarding institution's policies and procedures should ensure that there are adequate safeguards against financial or other temptations that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities.

A7 Collaborative arrangements should be fully costed and should be accounted for accurately and fully. This applies equally to FDL arrangements.

A8 The educational objectives of a partner organisation should be compatible with those of the awarding institution.

A9 An awarding institution should undertake, with due diligence, an investigation to satisfy itself about the good standing of a prospective partner or agent, and of their

capacity to fulfil their designated role in the arrangement. This investigation should include the legal status of the prospective partner or agent, and its capacity in law to contract with the awarding institution.

A10 There should be a written and legally binding agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties and signed by the authorised representatives of the awarding institution and the partner organisation or agent.

A11 The agreement or contract should make clear that any 'serial' arrangement whereby the partner organisation offers approved collaborative and/or FDL provision elsewhere or assigns, through an arrangement of its own, powers delegated to it by the awarding institution, may be undertaken only with the express written permission of the awarding institution in each instance. The awarding institution is responsible for ensuring that it retains proper control of the academic standards of awards offered through any such arrangements (see also paragraph 20 of the Introduction).

A12 The awarding institution is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through a collaborative arrangement is adequate to enable a student to achieve the academic standard required for its award. This applies equally to learning opportunities offered through FDL arrangements.

A13 An awarding institution that engages with another authorised awarding body jointly to provide a programme of study leading to a dual or joint academic award should be able to satisfy itself that it has the legal capacity to do so, and that the academic standard of the award, referenced to the *FHEQ* (the *SCQF* in Scotland), meets its own expectations, irrespective of the expectations of the partner awarding body.

A14 The scope, coverage and assessment strategy of a collaborative programme should be described in a programme specification that refers to relevant subject benchmark statements and the level of award, and that is readily available and comprehensible to stakeholders. This applies equally to programmes offered through FDL arrangements.

A15 The awarding institution should make appropriate use of the *Code* to ensure that all aspects of the *Code* relevant to the collaborative arrangement are addressed by itself and/or the partner organisation, and should make clear respective responsibilities of the awarding institution and a partner organisation in terms of addressing the precepts of the *Code*. This applies equally to FDL arrangements that involve other organisations.

A16 In the case of a collaborative or FDL arrangement with a partner organisation, or engagement with an agent, the awarding institution should be able to satisfy itself that the terms and conditions that were originally approved have been, and continue to be, met.

A17 The awarding institution should be able to satisfy itself that staff engaged in delivering or supporting a collaborative programme are appropriately qualified for their role, and that a partner organisation has effective measures to monitor and

assure the proficiency of such staff. This applies equally to staff engaged in delivering of supporting an FDL programme.

A18 The awarding institution should ensure that arrangements for admission to the collaborative or FDL programme take into account the precepts of Section 10 of the Agency's *Code of practice on Student recruitment and admissions (2001)*, or any successor document.

A19 The awarding institution is responsible for ensuring that the outcomes of assessment for a programme provided under a collaborative or FDL arrangement meet the specified academic level of the award as defined in the *FHEQ* (or *SCQF* in Scotland), in the context of the relevant subject benchmark statement(s).

A20 The awarding institution should ensure that a partner organisation involved in the assessment of students understands and follows the requirements approved by the awarding institution for the conduct of assessments, which themselves should be referenced to Section 6 of the Agency's *Code on Assessment of students (2000)*, or any successor document.

A21 External examining procedures for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements should be consistent with the awarding institution's normal practices. This applies equally to programmes offered through FDL arrangements.

A22 The awarding institution must retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment and functions of external examiners. The recruitment and selection of external examiners should be referenced to Section 4 of *Code on External examining (2004)*, or any successor document.

A23 External examiners of collaborative programmes must receive briefing and guidance approved by the awarding institution sufficient for them to fulfil their role effectively. This applies equally to FDL programmes.

A24 An awarding institution should ensure that:

- it has sole authority for awarding certificates and transcripts relating to the programmes of study delivered through collaborative arrangements. This applies equally to programmes delivered through FDL arrangements;
- the certificate and/or transcript records (a) the principal language of instruction where this was not English, and (b) the language of assessment if that was not English*. Where this information is recorded on the transcript only, the certificate should refer to the existence of the transcript;
- subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any relevant jurisdiction, the certificate and/or the transcript should record the name and location of any partner organisation engaged in delivery of the programme of study.

A25 The minimum level of information that prospective and registered students should have about a collaborative programme is the programme specification approved by the awarding institution. This applies equally to an FDL programme.

A26 The information made available to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme should include information to students about the appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals, making clear the channels through which they can contact the awarding institution directly. This applies equally for students registered on an FDL programme.

A27 The awarding institution should monitor regularly the information given by the partner organisation or agent to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme. This applies equally to students registered on an FDL programme.

A28 The awarding institution should ensure that it has effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to its collaborative provision, and provision offered through FDL arrangements.

* Except for awards for programmes or their elements relating to the study of a foreign language where the principal language of assessment is also the language of study.

* Reference in this section of the *Code* to 'foreign language' or a language that is 'not English' does not include programmes provided and assessed by Welsh institutions in the Welsh language.

Issues for inclusion in the programme approval paperwork and draft Institutional Agreement

When considering a potential educational partnership, departments should explore the issues listed below fully with their prospective partner/s in advance of approaching the ESU for advice about the approval process. It is expected that informal discussions will cover all these areas, which will in turn feed into the formal proposal and will subsequently be reflected in the Institutional Agreement. If not mentioned elsewhere in the submission documentation, a supplementary memo will be required to address those areas that have been omitted.

Information collated in response to the requirements outlined below and the Institutional Agreement will provide a framework for discussion at the relevant Faculty and University committees and, if the proposal is approved, will form the basis for future Faculty Quality Assurance Team (FQAT) monitoring visits. In addition, when a partnership is being reviewed or renewed, these areas (as specified in the particular agreement), will enable the University to judge to what extent it and its partner/s has met, and will continue to meet, clearly defined responsibilities in respect of quality and standards.

Information to be provided by the department proposing the partnership includes:

- the **rationale** for the partnership (or its renewal if appropriate), including the factors that have contributed to its development and its fit with institutional strategies, in particular the Education Strategy;
- the respective **roles** of the University and its partner, specifying **responsibilities** and the use of **delegated powers** where appropriate⁷;
- the role of **external examiners** in ensuring that the University's responsibilities in respect of academic standards are fulfilled, taking account of Guidelines for External Examiners of Taught Programmes and section 4 of the QAA Code on External examining;
- arrangements for **learning support** (including library and computing resources);
- arrangements for **student support** (including student welfare, channels of complaint/appeal and academic support systems with regard to section 5 of the QAA Code on Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters);
- arrangements for ensuring that the **assessment** of students is consistent and appropriate and that the partner organisation is made aware of the University's Code of Practice for the Assessment of Students on Taught Programmes and the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (or their equivalent) and section 6 of the QAA Code: Assessment of students;

⁷ Serial arrangements, as defined in paragraphs 2.3-2.4 of University Regulations for Educational Partnerships, will not normally be permitted.

- **information** arrangements for prospective and registered students (including publicity material, student handbooks and the monitoring of information provided by the partner institution);
- arrangements for ensuring that **admission** to the collaborative programme meets the University's Guidelines to Admissions Tutors and section 10 of the QAA Code on Student recruitment and admissions;
- the source and location of any **quality-related information**;
- arrangements for **copyright** and **intellectual property rights**;
- **financial arrangements** including staff costs, attributed costs and details of any funding will be distributed internally
- arrangements for **suspension, withdrawal and termination** of the partnership (including mediation provisions, financial procedures and transitional arrangements for any residual students).
- arrangements for **monitoring** and **reviewing** the partnership at regular intervals (including an on-going review of all publicity, marketing and programme/unit material and human resources requirements)

Information required from the prospective partner institution/organisation⁸

- institutional mission, strategic plan and latest financial statement;
- organisational and management structure;
- quality management procedures and how/if they will link to the University of Bristol's;
- indications of quality from relevant external quality assessments;
- staff development policy;
- educational guidance facilities;
- current or previous work with other partner institutions, including other HEIs.

For new programmes:

In addition to completing the University's standard new programme approval forms (insert link), the following information should also be provided:

- the rationale for the proposed programme, how it relates to other programmes within the University and at the partner institution or organisation and if the programme is offered elsewhere;
- the subject-specific resources available (laboratories, specialist equipment etc);
- the expertise and qualifications of the staff offering the programme and the partner organisation's monitoring arrangements to assure the proficiency of such staff;

⁸ It is the responsibility of the potential partner institution/organisation to provide this information. The department must consult the Secretary's Office separately regarding the legal and financial status of a prospective partner and its capacity to enter into a contract with the University of Bristol.

- related staff development activities;
- progression arrangements, credit and mark transfers (if appropriate) and exit awards;
- indications of quality from relevant external quality assessments and accreditation arrangements.

Information to be included in Institutional Agreements

The following list sets out the information to be included in all Institutional Agreements. Departments are strongly advised to seek advice from the Education Support Unit at an early stage when considering putting in place an educational partnership arrangement. The Unit will ensure that the relevant Support Services are consulted as appropriate.

Partner

1. Full details of each partner to include name and main address.

Partnership Details

2. A brief statement explaining the rationale for the partnership and what it aims to deliver and an overview of the partners' respective obligations.
3. A statement of whether the partner institution/organisation will be an Associated or Affiliated institution of the University (Ordinances 22 and 23 in the University's Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and Official Record refer). As part of the affiliation or association, teaching staff from a partner institution/organisation will be given academic status of the University of Bristol under University Ordinance 20.
4. The programmes to be offered at the partner institution/organisation.
5. Precise details of any 'serial' arrangement being put in place by the partner⁹.

Management of the partnership

6. Although the agreement, if approved, will be signed by the Vice-Chancellor it is vital that a departmental contact is identified who will be responsible for managing the partnership on behalf of the University, for example the Programme Director. Similarly, a contact must be identified at the partner institution/organisation.
7. The agreement must stipulate how the partnership will be managed and agree responsibilities and representation in respect of regular update meetings to review the arrangements. This should include details of the Steering Group designated to oversee the partnership and any relevant faculty procedures and involvement. All agreements must include a statement of cooperation in the event that the programme/partnership is subject to an external audit or an internal review.

Student-related issues

8. The status and rights of students in respect of the University's Rules and Regulations. Students undertaking a programme of study that is delivered through a consortium agreement must register with one institution only; dual registration is not permissible.

⁹ Note: Serial arrangements whereby a partner institution/organisation offers a University of Bristol award through a partnership arrangements of its own, are not normally permitted by the University

9. Learning and student support arrangements at both the University and any partner institution/organisation must be clearly stated, including arrangements for:

- Access to scholarships, bursaries and Learning Access Funds
- Access to support services such as Counselling, Student Health, Students' Union etc
- Complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters
- Computer and other IT access (including e-mail)
- Library access
- Personal tutoring and supervision arrangements

10. That a Certificate and Transcript will be provided to all students by the University of Bristol, stating their achievements on the partnership programme. The certificate and/or transcript will include the name of the partner organisation/institution plus the language of instruction and assessment where this is not English¹⁰.

Programme-related issues

11. To help ensure that the arrangement is managed and reviewed effectively it is vital that arrangements are specified and responsibilities are clearly defined with regard to the recruitment, registration and progress of students:

- Recruitment
- Admissions
- Registration (including students' visas and collection of fees)
- Assessment (including arrangements for examination boards and External Examiners)
- Student progress
- Exit awards
- Graduation arrangements

12. Confirmation that the programme will be subject to University of Bristol quality assurance procedures. If there is any variation to these procedures this must be clearly explained in the Institutional Agreement. The relevant procedures include:

- Student feedback
- External examining
- Annual Programme Review (including review of the programme structure and content)
- Faculty Quality Assurance Team visits and related activities
- Departmental Review
- Procedures for new and revised programmes and units.

13. Confirmation that the programme/s are subject to the ordinances and regulations of the University of Bristol unless the agreement specifically states otherwise.

¹⁰ Only the University of Bristol logo should appear on the Certificate and Transcript. Similarly, if the University has contributed towards another institution's award only the University's full title and location should appear on the certificates and transcripts that are issued by the awarding institution for that award.

14. All programmes delivered in partnership must have an up to date Programme Specification which is published on the University of Bristol website.

Financial arrangements

15. A comprehensive Financial Memorandum must form part of the agreement, including income collection/transfer, mechanisms for the allocation and payment of funds, tuition fees and financial provisions on termination.

Staffing

16. Details of how staff who will teach on University programmes are selected, approved and reviewed and their opportunities for staff review and development. Also details of any secondment or transfer arrangements.

17. Arrangements for copyright and other intellectual property rights must also be covered.

Administrative manual

18. Arrangements for the development of an Administrative Manual which lays down which processes are carried out by each partner and mechanisms for ensuring alignment with University/faculty policies and procedures.

Publicity, use of University name and logos

19. Responsibility for information relating to the programme (including publicity material, prospectus and handbook contents), plus how this information will be updated and reviewed.

20. Effective communication with students underpins all aspects of the agreement so it is important that clear channels for disseminating all information (including publicity material, prospectus and handbook contents) are established. The approval process for such information, particularly where the University's name and/or logo are being used, should also be considered.

Monitoring, review, termination arrangement and the resolution of disagreements

21. Arrangements for the review and renewal of a partnership must be set out, as must responsibilities with respect for the suspension, withdrawal or termination of an agreement. In addition it must be made clear to all partner institutions/organisations that any request to change the agreement must be made in writing to the Dean and will require Senate approval and be in writing signed by an authorised signatory.

22. Grounds for termination of the partnership by any partner. This will include the notice period required and the responsibilities for students remaining on any programme.

23. For partnerships with institutions not in the UK the applicable law under which the agreement shall be construed (normally English law) and the normal Language to be used (normally English).

24. How disputes/mediation will be dealt with.

25. Also consider whether the following should be dealt with:
- Use of personal information (e.g. if results are to be passed between partners);
 - Confidentiality;
 - Freedom of information requirements;
 - Other University policies (e.g. equality and diversity policies);
 - Any particular issues raised if arrangement involves placements or overseas students/institution/organisation.

Updated and approved Education Committee November 2008, Senate February 2009

Updated and approved by Education Committee, June 2006

Updated and approved by Education Committee, December 2003

Updated April 2003 and approved by Senate, June 2003

Originally approved by Senate, November 1994

ⁱ Hereafter referred to as 'the QAA Code'. (A full copy of the QAA Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education can be found at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp>)