

Partnership Review

Partnership review is the process through which the University reviews and seeks to re-approve its collaborative provision partnerships prior to the end of the approval period. Collaborative arrangements are normally approved for a five-year period. The review has both a retrospective and prospective context in that it provides an opportunity for a School and its partner to reflect upon the operation, management and development of the partnership and to also consider the future. Whilst the emphasis is on the strategic direction of the partnership, in reaching a decision concerning re-approval of the partnership the review will additionally take into account the management of the collaborative arrangements that underpin programmes.

Partnership review is distinct from the annual monitoring procedures described in Section 9. It considers the operation of the partnership at a higher level than that of the programme and the strategic development of the partnership.

The Academic Collaborations Office (ACO) will maintain a partnership review schedule and will alert Colleges at least 6 months prior to the commencement of the academic year in which the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) is due to end.

Approximately 6-9 months in advance of the end date of the MoA, the College should undertake a formal review of the partnership to establish:

- whether the rationale for the collaboration remains valid;
- the future of the partnership in the light of University and partner strategic priorities;
- whether the collaboration remains appropriate in the context of the University's commitments;
- whether it continues to command the support of senior managers in the University and the partner organisation;
- whether the partner institution retains appropriate academic, financial, and legal status;
- whether the programme will continue to meet the appropriate academic standards and offer students the learning opportunities and experiences necessary to achieve them including consistent and equivalent on-site student support;
- whether the arrangements for collaboration will continue to enable the University to effectively discharge its responsibilities for the academic standards of awards and the quality of the student learning experience;
- the support and monitoring provided by the home School or RI, for example, the effectiveness of Link Tutor arrangements;
- whether the business case remains valid;
- developments and enhancements which have taken place since the partnership was established or the last Partnership Review;
- good practice and innovation worthy of dissemination across the University's other collaborative arrangements.

The review should be scheduled so that immediate recommendations can be addressed before the new MoA is issued. If serious problems are identified the University reserves the right to issue an MoA for fewer than 5 years, either to allow for recommendations to be addressed and checked, if necessary by another review, or to provide solely for teach-out and termination of the partnership.

The sponsor School/RI should first complete the Partnership Review – Self Assessment form and make a recommendation on the way forward. Key issues will be the consideration of the student experience and student progress as well as the operation of the collaboration and effectiveness of the business case. Depending on the nature of the collaboration the form should be completed in liaison with the partner institution. The completed form should then be submitted to a panel consisting of the following:

- the Dean (L&T) or Dean (Graduate Studies) as appropriate (Convener);
- SRC College Convener or other SRC representative;
- College Quality Officer;
- College Business Development Manager;

- College Finance Manager or nominee;
- an academic member of staff from another College with experience of academic collaborations;
- the Head of Academic Collaborations Office or nominee;
- Clerk (member of college staff).

The Panel should review the Self Assessment Form and relevant documentary evidence provided by the School/RI including: annual monitoring reports incorporating information on student performance; student feedback; External Examiner, PSRB accreditation and periodic subject review reports; Joint Board or visit reports and a report on the operation of the arrangement and effectiveness of the business case. Normally a business case for the next phase of the arrangement should also be provided. The Panel may consult with key University staff and staff and students at the partner institution(s) where further clarification is required.

On the basis of the information provided the Panel should make an assessment on whether there is sufficient evidence to support the recommendation of the School/RI. Where there is general support for the partnership but areas of concern have been identified the Panel will arrange to consult with students as well as key staff from each institution. The consultation will normally take place via video-conferencing. Once the consultation process has been completed the Convener of the Panel should complete a report for the relevant College committee outlining the recommendation.

The relevant College committee should review the evidence against the criteria above and report to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). The report should cover the following:

- context and background
- Key changes/development of the partnership
- Summary of effectiveness of partnership (including student numbers and progression)
- Partner observations on the effectiveness of the partnership
- Recommendations

Possible Recommendations

- Renewal of partnership for a further five year period
- Renewal of partnership conditional on clarification of certain points by a subsequent programme approval panel
- limited renewal of partnership (for limited time period or for limited areas of activity)
- withdrawal from the partnership (in line with the procedures outlined in Section 11).

ASC will report the decision to Senate.

The College should also advise the Academic Collaborations Office of the decision. Where appropriate, the ACO will arrange to progress any amendments to the Memorandum of Agreement in liaison with the relevant School Administrator or College Business Development Manager.

Given the close nature of the relationship between the institutions and students in the case of joint research degrees, the review process may be modified to suit.

In the case of validated partners, the review will be undertaken by the ACO in liaison with the associated School. It will follow the same principles as outlined, however, some of the detailed arrangements may differ, for example, the membership of the review panel. Further information can be obtained from the Collaborations Unit or the Code of Practice for Validated Provision.

Partnership Review Procedure

