

## QUALITY FRAMEWORK

### QUALITY MANUAL SECTION 7

#### COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND PROVISION: PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING QUALITY AND STANDARDS

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# 1 MANAGING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND PROVISION

## 1.1 Introduction

The University has a number of associated policies, regulations and procedures devised to promote consistency, transparency and fairness in dealing with students' learning and assessment and which meet the expectations of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and relevant national qualifications frameworks.

Quality assurance processes are defined within the University's **Quality Framework**. As part of this Framework, the processes and procedures that apply to collaborative partnerships and provision are set out in this section of the Quality Manual (Section 7) and are informed by the expectations and indicators set out in Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code, '[Managing Higher Education Provision with Others](#)'.

The purpose of this section of the Quality Manual is to provide guidance on the principles, approval, operation, monitoring and contractual procedures that apply to all collaborative partnerships and provision leading to an academic award or credit from the University. The University's collaborative provision is subject to the same quality assurance and enhancement procedures as for onsite provision, with additional process augmentation where necessary, proportionate to the level of risk associated with various types of collaborative arrangement. Detailed definitions of the types of collaborative arrangement the University will enter into are set out in Section 2 of this document.

The University's processes and procedures for managing the quality and standards of collaborative partnerships and provision are designed to both promote and safeguard the University's reputation, nationally and internationally, and to ensure that the quality and standards of its collaborative provision are secure and in line with national expectations. The procedures also seek to ensure that, whilst the collaborative student experience may be different to that experienced by students studying onsite, it is of comparable quality.

## 1.2 Background and Context

The University collaborates with education providers and other organisations to provide a diversity of pathways and progression to higher education. This helps to achieve a diverse but complementary set of academic, business, economic and social objectives. The University engages in a wide range of collaborative partnerships, intended to align academic strengths and shared interests for mutual benefit. The existing range of the University's collaborative partnerships reflects a regional, national and international dimension that demonstrates an ongoing commitment to:

- Regional educational partnerships which promote educational opportunity and access to advanced higher level skills
- Establishing and maintaining a national reputation for providing an outstanding student experience and expanding its market profile

- Ongoing development of international partnerships, with the emphasis on building substantial relationships of a high quality

Collaborative partnerships support the University strategic ambitions by making high quality pathways into higher education available to a diversity of students who, predominantly, do not choose or are unable to study as part of the University's directly delivered educational portfolio by reason of their personal circumstances, learning preferences, geographical location or employment responsibilities.

### 1.3 Definitions

Collaborative partnerships and provision sit within a broader range of University academic and educational partnership activities, including:

- Partnerships with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) in relation to the design and accreditation of University courses
- Partnerships with other HE institutions for student exchanges and study abroad
- Partnerships with employers, both in the public and private sectors, to provide placement opportunities, continuing professional development activities, knowledge transfer and work-based learning (WBL) provision
- Schools and colleges, in support of widening participation, raising aspirations and student recruitment
- Research, consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), as supported and overseen by the Research and Innovation Office (RIO)
- **Partnerships involving working with other providers of education to deliver educational programmes leading to University awards and/or credit, through a variety of models such as validation, franchise, articulation, progression, collaborative delivery, offsite delivery or 'flying faculty' and joint or dual/double awards, etc.**

This section of the Quality Manual is concerned primarily with the latter category of educational partnerships listed above. These are referred to within the University as 'Collaborative Partnerships and Provision'. Although terminology to describe collaborative arrangements involving external partners varies across the Higher Education sector, the University defines its collaborative partnerships and provision in line with the QAA's definition of 'managing HE provision with others'. Specifically, for Sheffield Hallam University, collaborative arrangements will involve:

*'The management of all learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of academic credit or a qualification that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the degree-awarding body.'* (Chapter B10, UK Quality Code, QAA)

The University currently works with a range of collaborative partner organisations including other UK universities, FE Colleges, NHS trusts, public and voluntary bodies, private and public sector organisations and a number of public and private colleges and universities located overseas. A detailed list of the types of collaborative arrangement the University enters into is set out in Section 2 of this document. If there is uncertainty as to whether or not a potential partnership arrangement would be classified as a 'Collaborative Partnership' that would be subject to the principles and procedures set out in this section of the Quality Manual, Academic Quality and

Standards can provide further advice on specific proposals, at the initial stage of development.

Once approved, all collaborative arrangements are listed in the University's central Register of Collaborative Partners and Provision and are subject to regular monitoring and review procedures according to the principles and processes set out in the Quality Framework.

## **1.4 Principles**

The University is responsible for the quality and standards of all academic awards made in its name, the following principles underpin the development of collaborative activities.

### **1.4.1 *The University will enter into collaborative partnerships with organisations that:***

- Have compatible educational objectives, including a commitment to support the success of students and the development of staff
- Have a commitment to widening participation and social mobility, including in an international context
- Are financially stable and legally able and competent to enter into a formal written (and legally binding) collaborative agreement with the University.
- Have effective management systems in place suited to assuring the quality of HE provision, including appropriate quality management arrangements and academic and administrative policies and practices
- Offer an ethos and environment for teaching and learning appropriate to higher education
- Are committed to the delivery of collaborative provision to the appropriate academic standards
- Can provide appropriate resources to support higher education programmes
- Can enable the University to effectively meet its responsibilities for the quality and standards of its awards
- Can enable the University to meet its responsibilities in relation to any external professional, statutory, regulatory bodies (PSRB) requirements as may apply to accredited awards offered via collaborative arrangements
- Are committed to the ongoing monitoring and review of the partnership and its associated provision, on an annual and periodic basis. This is to ensure that each collaborative partnership continues to meet the needs of both partners and students and that the quality and standards of the associated provision is assured.

### **1.4.2 *The University's Collaborative Partnerships will be based on the following principles:***

- Irrespective of a partner organisation's prior experience in managing HE provision, the University has ultimate responsibility for the quality of learning opportunities provided through its collaborative arrangements, even though some aspects of delivery and quality assurance may be delegated to a partner organisation
- The academic standards of all Sheffield Hallam University qualifications delivered under collaborative arrangements will be compatible with SHU regulations, policies, procedure and relevant external reference points

- All new Collaborative Partnerships will be subject to initial planning permission, risk assessment, due diligence procedures and institutional and academic approval processes, as required by the University
- Student learning opportunities and experiences must be of a high standard and comparable to those offered to students whose programmes of study are delivered, supported and assessed solely by the University
- Partner organisations are not permitted to engage in any form of 'serial' arrangement, whereby a partner offers the University's provision or assigns delegated powers related to the provision elsewhere through a separate arrangement of its own
- Collaborative Partnerships will be subject to annual and periodic review and will be managed according to the level of risk as assessed by the University
- All Collaborative Partnerships, once approved, will be subject to a formal and legally-binding agreement which will include details of arrangements for monitoring and review and will include procedures for the termination of partnerships (as appropriate)
- All Collaborative Partnerships will be recorded centrally on the University's Register of Collaborative Partners and Provision (maintained by Academic Quality and Standards)

## 2 TYPES OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

### 2.1 Overview of Different Types of Collaborative Partnership Arrangements

The table below presents an overview of the main types of collaborative arrangements that will be considered by the University. A more detailed version of the table, including the relevant approval processes for each type, is available as Annex 1 to this Section of the Quality Manual.

SHU Category / Typology of Collaborative Arrangements	Key Features
<b>VALIDATION (aka EXTERNAL VALIDATION)</b>	SHU considers a programme or module(s) developed, <b>designed and delivered by a partner organisation</b> and approves the provision as being of an appropriate standard and quality to lead to (or contribute to) a University award. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the delivery organisation. Mainly used for collaborative partnership arrangements with UK Further Education College Partners and other HE providers without Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs).
<b>FRANCHISE (aka SUB-CONTRACTUAL)</b>	A process by which SHU agrees to authorise a partner organisation to deliver (and sometimes assess) all or part of one (or more) of its (SHU's) own approved programmes. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the degree-awarding body. May be used in collaboration with UK FEC partners and overseas partners without DAPs.
<b>COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY (aka Shared Delivery Arrangements)</b>	Both SHU and a partner organisation jointly contribute to the design, development and/or delivery and assessment of provision leading to an award, each with an agreed and specific allocation of responsibilities for teaching, assessing and supporting students. Students may have a direct contractual relationship with either partner, subject to agreement and depending on which organisation has the major share of responsibilities for teaching, assessing and supporting students (more than 50%).

<b>ARTICULATION</b>	<p>A process whereby cohorts of students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme (delivered and awarded by a partner organisation) are automatically entitled, on academic grounds, to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent stage of a SHU programme leading to a SHU award. The two separate components are the responsibility of the respective partner organisations delivering each of them but, together, contribute to a single award of the degree-awarding body.</p> <p>NB: Articulations are distinct from Progression Arrangements, whereby individual student applications are assessed prior to entry to a specified programme. Entry to the specified programme is neither automatic nor guaranteed. Entry may be to the initial stage or to a later stage of an individual programme, subject to meeting relevant entry requirements and / or requirements for advanced standing.</p>
<b>DUAL/JOINT/MULTIPLE AWARD</b>	<p><b>Dual:</b> arrangement where SHU and one or more partners (with degree awarding powers) together provide a single jointly delivered programme leading to separate awards and separate certification being granted by both, or all, of the awarding bodies.</p> <p><b>Joint:</b> arrangement under which two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants. A single certificate or document (signed by the competent authorities) attests to the successful completion of this <b>jointly delivered programme</b>, replacing separate institutional qualifications.</p>
<b>CREDIT RATING (eg. of learning/training/CPD provided by employers/other organisations)</b>	<p>SHU assesses, recognises and assigns a general and specific academic credit rating to provision designed, developed and delivered by another delivery organisation, support provider and/or University partner. Credit rating may subsequently provide progression to specified SHU award with advanced standing.</p>
<b>SUPPORT PROVIDER / AGENT (provider of specialist facilities/equipment/student services)</b>	<p>An external organisation which <b>supplies support, resources or specialist facilities</b> for student learning opportunities for students studying on SHU programmes, leading to a University award.</p>

## 2.2 Other Types of Partnership (non-Collaborative)

The following types of partnership are not covered by the procedures and processes outlined in this section of the Quality Manual which apply only to the University's Collaborative Partnerships as defined in Section 1.3 above.

Type of partnership	Responsibility for Management / Oversight
Employer Partnerships	Directorate of Education and Employer Partnerships (DEEP)
Erasmus and Erasmus+ and non-EU Exchanges ( <i>click on link for list of <a href="#">Participating Institutions</a></i> )	Global Engagement Directorate
Overseas Recruitment Agents (provision of recruitment services only, not including support for learning, teaching or assessing)	Global Engagement Directorate
Study Abroad (individual institutions with whom SHU has exchange arrangements in place)	Locally managed by individual faculties and departments
Schools and NHS Trust Placement Providers for ITT and Pre-registration courses (professional and clinical placements)	Locally managed by individual faculties and departments; also cross-University Placement Management Project and AT4 portal
Sandwich Placement Providers	as above
WBL Placement Providers	as above
Split-site PhDs	Research Degrees committee / Graduate Studies Team
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and other Research and Consultancy Partnerships	Research and Innovation Office is responsible for contractual and partnership arrangements with research councils and regional and EU funding and grant activities.
Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)	Locally managed by individual faculties and departments, with support from Academic Quality and Standards for oversight, reporting and accreditation status of courses, on behalf of UTQC.

## 2.3 Other Terms

A number of other terms, used in relation to collaborative provision planning and development, are defined below:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Collaborative Partner	An external organisation approved by the University for the purposes of providing 'learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of academic credit or a qualification [of the University] that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the degree-awarding body.
Risk Assessment	An assessment of the level of risk presented to the University's reputation and standing by a potential collaborative partnership and the proposed provision, and the type of mitigation that may be required to offset the risk.
Due Diligence	Initial evaluation of a potential collaborative partner organisation's financial, legal and organisational status. Confirm a potential partner's ability to legally contract with the University.
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC)	A statement of intent to work with another external organisation. These documents do not constitute any specific commitment to a formal partnership but may detail potential development activities that if progressed, would be subject to subsequent planning permissions and specific approval by the University.

## 3 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND GOVERNANCE

### 3.1 Governance

Collaborative partnerships can do much to enhance the University's reputation nationally and internationally, but the risks that may be associated with operating collaborative partnerships must also be carefully managed to protect the University's standing and the interests of its staff and students. As part of the overall management of collaborative provision, the University is required to enter into a formal relationship with each of its approved Collaborative Partners, articulated in a legally-binding formal agreement signed by both parties.

### 3.2 Institutional Level

Authority for the final approval of collaborative partnership proposals and for signing formal agreements with approved Collaborative Partners rests with the Vice-Chancellor.



### **3.3 Planning**

The arrangements for the Education Partnership Planning and Approval process is currently under review. Planning approval for collaborative provision sits with Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors

### **3.4 Faculty Level**

Responsibility for the initiation of new collaborative proposals and the day to day management of quality and standards relating to approved Collaborative Partners and the associated provision is located with faculties and their academic departments.

### **3.5 Department Boards**

The Department Board exercises local oversight of onsite and collaborative provision and reports to the University Teaching Quality Committee on quality and standards matters in relation to all its award-bearing provision, including any delivered under collaborative arrangements.

### **3.6 Collaborative Course Leader**

Each collaborative course operating under individual collaborative partnerships must have an identified academic lead, known as the Collaborative Course Leader (CCL). The CCL role and academic support is currently under review.

### **3.7 Central Directorate Support and Oversight**

In addition to the support provided at local level by individual faculties' professional services teams, a number of central directorates also have a key role in supporting and co-ordinating the University's collaborative partnerships and provision:

- **Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)** is responsible managing the University's Quality Framework and supports the core quality processes for approval, monitoring and review of all award-bearing provision, including collaborative provision. AQS supports the processes for the ongoing monitoring, review and management of quality and standards of collaborative provision. AQS provides expertise and guidance on all quality assurance matters relevant to collaborative partnerships and provision and works closely with colleagues in other key central directorates (see below) to continuously improve processes and services to collaborative partners and students and to resolve common issues relating to the implementation of collaborative provision. AQS also co-ordinates the University's approaches to oversight of its collaborative arrangements at institutional level.
- **Directorate of Education and Employer Partnerships (DEEP)** is a central point of contact for faculties wishing to develop new UK and international collaborative partnerships. DEEP provides a strategic perspective and offers advice, guidance and co-ordination between all stakeholders (including consultation with other faculties and central directorates/support services, as required) during key phases of a partnership, from initiation, initial planning approval and development through to implementation, operation, review and termination.
- **Global Engagement Directorate (GED)** provides advice and guidance to faculty developers on potential new international partnerships, informed by its management of the University's international recruitment services. GED also co-ordinates and manages the University's Erasmus scheme, international exchanges and other study abroad arrangements in liaison with faculties. GED is responsible for operation of the International Entry Qualifications Group and for the oversight and management of overseas recruitment agents.

- **Governance Services (GS)** provides legal services and advice on MoUs, formal agreements and other contractual matters, including the legal aspects of contract termination for existing Collaborative Partnerships. GS also provides expertise in the evaluation and due diligence assessments of proposals for new collaborative partnerships.

### **3.8 Quality Framework Processes and Collaborative Provision**

Processes for the management of the quality and standards of academic, award and/or credit-bearing provision delivered under collaborative arrangements are described within the University's Quality Framework and are detailed in the relevant sections of the Quality Manual. The Quality Framework is managed on behalf of the University by Academic Quality and Standards (AQS). The AQS team also provides support for faculties through the institutional approval of new collaborative partnerships, the academic approval of collaborative provision and its ongoing monitoring and review. The main processes for managing the quality and standards of collaborative provision are outlined in the next section of this document.

## **4 MANAGING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND PROVISION: QUALITY FRAMEWORK PROCESSES**

### **4.1 Overview**

The six main phases in the 'lifecycle' of a collaborative partnership are:

- Initial Development and Planning Approval (faculty and institutional level)
- Institutional Approval of New Collaborative Partners and Approval of Provision
- Implementation, Operation (including External Examiner Arrangements, Assessment Boards and Student Administration)
- Annual Monitoring and Review
- Collaborative Periodic Review
- Contract Renewal or Course Closure and Contract Termination

An overview of the main approval and review processes are described in outline, below. In principle, collaborative provision leading to a University award or credit is subject to same Quality Framework processes as applies to onsite provision delivered solely by the University. However, there may be additional requirements that apply where provision is delivered under collaborative arrangements. In most cases, the full description of a specific process (and how it applies to collaborative provision) will be found in the relevant section of the Quality Manual. An overview of the main processes that apply to collaborative partnerships and provision is given below.

### **4.2 Initial Development and Planning Approval - Faculty and University Level**

All new course proposals (onsite, distance learning and collaborative provision involving an external partner) are subject to initial Business Planning Approval, see above arrangements for Education Partnership Planning and Approval processes are currently under review.

### **4.3 Institutional Approval of New Collaborative Partners and Provision**

Planning approval, risk assessments and due diligence checks are undertaken prior to the Institutional Approval of a new collaborative partner. Institutional Approval is the process through which the proposed partner is judged by the University to be a suitable organisation with which to form a collaborative relationship, in line with the principles set out in section 1.4 above. An IA Panel, including an independent chair and appropriate external representation will be

convened for the purposes and a timeline agreed for completion of the approval process, including a Panel visit to the partner's main delivery location. The IA process is used to confirm that the proposed arrangements for the establishment and maintenance of academic quality and standards delivered by a new partner organisation meet the requirements of, and are comparable to, provision delivered directly by the University.

Institutional Approval of the partner organisation is a pre-requisite for the approval of any academic provision that will be delivered through collaborative arrangements with the partner. The processes for Institutional Approval and validation/approval of the specific provision and/or delivery arrangements may proceed in phased stages or, where appropriate, Institutional Approval of the partner and approval of the programmes may proceed concurrently, as part of the same process and during the same approval event.

Once a new collaborative partnership is approved, it will be subject to a legally binding agreement, signed by both parties, setting out the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the specific collaborative provision and delivery arrangements, as approved by the University.

Following initial Institutional Approval, all collaborative partnerships and provision are subject to Annual Review and Monitoring and the partnerships will undergo a Collaborative Periodic Review (CPR). The Annual and Periodic Review processes are described in detail in the relevant sections of the Quality Manual.

### **Overview of the Institutional Approval Process**

- 1 An initial business case and outline planning approval is produced.
- 2 Financial, legal and quality-related risk assessments and due diligence reports are prepared.
- 3 Once permission to proceed is granted with the approval of the new partnership, Academic Quality and Standards will begin to make arrangements for the Institutional Approval (IA) of the new partner organisation and for approval of the associated provision (note that the academic provision may be approved as part of the same IA visit or may be completed at a later stage, through an associated course validation process). The arrangements will include a preliminary meeting to agree a timeline for approval with the prospective partner and to identify the formal University IA Panel that will visit to the prospective partner organisation and conduct the Institutional Approval. For details of the constitution of IA and Validation Panels, see Section 2 of the Quality Manual (Validation). AQS officers will also produce a detailed Briefing Document for the IA Panel, giving an overview of the collaborative proposals and specific details and background on the prospective partner organisation.
- 4 An Institutional Approval visit will be conducted by a University Panel (including an external representative and University learning resources specialist) to hold discussions with senior staff, students and other representatives of the prospective partner organisation. The visit will usually take place over a full day, based at the partner's location, and the event will follow a standard agenda/outline programme, as previously agreed with the Chair of the IA Panel at the preliminary meeting.
- 5 The academic lead/developer for the new partnerships should be available at the IA visit, and during the lead-up to the visit, to support partner staff throughout the University's approval process. As part of the Institutional

Approval process, video conferencing between the prospective partner organisation and University representatives in the UK may be used, during any stage of the approval process, as deemed appropriate by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards.

## **7 Institutional Approval - Outcomes and Recommendations**

A report detailing the outcomes of the Institutional Approval process will be produced by AQS following the IA visit. The report will include the background to the proposals, the findings of the IA Panel and any specific approval conditions or recommendations required to complete the IA process. The IA Panel may recommend that the partnership is approved (with or without conditions) or may recommend that a prospective partner is not approved by the University. Where a recommendation not to approve a new partner is made, the IA Panel will give full reasons for this recommendation.

- 8 Once all stages of the Institutional Approval process and approval of the associated provision and/or delivery arrangements (in the case of pre-approved courses being franchised to a collaborative partner) are completed, preparations for implementation and delivery of the new collaborative provision can begin.

### **4.4 Approval of Academic Provision with New Collaborative Partners**

All proposals for award(s), modules or other credit-bearing provision, whether onsite and delivered solely by the University or whether delivered under collaborative arrangements with an approved Collaborative Partner are subject to validation/approval by a University Validation Panel in line with the requirements of the University's Validation process. This process is described in detail in Section 2 of the Quality Manual (see Validation).

Certain types of collaborative provision may be designed specifically to operate within the University's Work-based Learning Framework (WBLF) and to be delivered in collaboration with approved corporate clients or employer-based partnerships. In such cases, the approval process will be conducted by the Work-based Learning Framework (WBLF) Standing Panel<sup>12</sup>, a standing validation panel specifically constituted to approve work-based learning provision and Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

Where provision is to be delivered in collaboration with a partner, the approval of the academic programmes/courses and/or delivery arrangements may take place either at the same time as the Institutional Approval process (see above) or may take place at a later stage, either during a further Panel visit to the partner location or the validation meeting may take place at the University, with representatives from the partner organisation in attendance (applies to new collaborative partners only). The timing of approval of the academic provision to be delivered under the new collaborative arrangements will depend on the timescales for the development, marketing and delivery of the provision as agreed between the University and the partner.

### **4.5 Approval of New Provision with Existing Collaborative Partners**

Where a collaborative partner is an existing, approved partner of the University, the approval of any new or additional courses, modules or other academic provision to be added to the existing collaborative arrangements will be approved separately. Approval of additional provision with an existing partner will follow the University's standard process for the validation/approval of all new provision and/or delivery arrangements. See Quality Manual, Section 2 Validation for full details including documentation requirements and constitution of Validation Panels for collaborative proposals.

The timescale for validation and/or approval of new delivery arrangements will be

agreed between the University and the collaborative partner. Any additions or changes to the provision to be delivered by an existing Collaborative Partner will be reflected in an updated version of the formal, legally-binding Agreement between the two partners.

#### **4.6 Annual Review**

All of the University's taught provision (both onsite and collaborative) must be reviewed annually, as part of the University's Annual Review Cycle. All collaborative partnerships are also subject to Collaborative Periodic Review (CPR) ; the CPR process is described in section 4.6, below. The annual review and monitoring of collaborative provision operates according to the same principles as those which underpin the annual review of onsite courses and modules. Collaborative Course Improvement Plans seek to ensure that the quality and standards of collaborative provision satisfy both University expectations and those embedded within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

The annual review process operates at course and department level drawing on a wide evidence base of information generated by routine quality processes, including external examiner reporting and student feedback.

The annual review process involves action planning to ensure that the strengths of academic provision are consolidated and areas for improvement are addressed. Annual review for collaborative provision requires close liaison between the Collaborative Course Leader at the University and the collaborative course team located at the partner organisation/delivery location. Where annual monitoring and review raises any serious concerns, these will be escalated in accordance with the 'Causes for Concern' procedure (see 4.10 below).

Academic Quality and Standards co-ordinates the annual exercise for the review and monitoring of all collaborative partners and associated provision. The process begins in September of each year when a standard Collaborative Annual Review report template is issued to academic contact(s) at partner organisations and to Collaborative Course Leaders for completion.

Staff of the partner organisation (course leader, academic course team etc) will complete the relevant sections of the CCIP and action plan, reflecting on the previous year's experience of operating the course and on the evidence of student outcomes and feedback. The CCIP will also include an action plan and a consideration of possible future developments for the provision.

As part of the departmental level stage of the Annual Review Cycle, departments are expected to analyse and comment on the outcomes of collaborative reviews in their Departmental Overview Report and to identify necessary actions to address any common issues or themes arising from the reviews of their collaborative portfolio. To supplement the faculty-level exercise, a central overview report and analysis of the outcomes of annual review of collaborative provision is prepared by Academic Quality and Standards. Further details of the Annual Review Cycle, guiding principles and associated processes are set out in Section 4 of the Quality Manual. In addition to annual review and monitoring of collaborative provision, all the University's approved Collaborative Partners are subject to an in-depth Periodic Review. This process, Collaborative Periodic Review, is as outlined in the next section of this document.

#### **4.7 Collaborative Periodic Review**

The University monitors and reviews the 'academic health' of provision delivered through collaborative arrangements on an annual basis, via the Annual Review cycle (according to the principles of the University's Quality Framework - see also Section 4 of the Quality Manual). In addition to annual monitoring and review, and in line with the expectations and indicators of the UK Quality Code, the University also

undertakes a more in-depth review of its partnerships on a periodic basis. The Collaborative Periodic Review (CPR) process seeks to be flexible enough to address the needs for partnership review across a wide spectrum of different types of partners and provision, ranging from single course links involving one faculty/department and one partner to more complex cross-faculty links involving multiple courses and delivery arrangements.

The Collaborative Periodic Review process provides an effective partnership review mechanism which is intended to be proportionate to the scale and scope of a specific collaborative partner. CPR is conducted on a risk-led basis and therefore the level of scrutiny applied by the University varies according to the nature and scope of different types of partnership and the level of risk they represent to the University. A forward schedule of Collaborative Periodic Reviews is published and maintained by Academic Quality and Standards.

The Collaborative Periodic Review process provides the opportunity for an in-depth evaluation of an existing collaborative partnership and its ability to manage the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities of any provision leading to a Sheffield Hallam University award. A Review may also lead to procedures for termination of a collaborative partnership and/or specific provision (see Summary of Periodic Review process and outcomes, below). See also 4.9, Termination of Collaborative Partnerships procedures, below. Where a Periodic Review provides evidence of serious issues arising from a collaborative partnership, a Review Panel may recommend that the 'Causes for Concern' procedure is followed, as described in 4.10 below, see 'Causes for Concern'. All Collaborative Periodic Reviews will take place via a Panel visit to the partner location.

### **Principles of Collaborative Periodic Review**

The process, which is intended to meet the requirements of the UK Quality Code (Chapter B10) will involve:

- the use of independent external reviewers to ensure objectivity
- involve students

*and be:*

- collegial in nature, seeking to involve University and partner staff and students in a peer review and discussion process
- evidence-based
- 
- integrated with other University quality management processes especially validation/approval, annual review and monitoring, agreement and partnership termination procedures and the University's cause for concern procedure
- proportionate to the scope and complexity of collaborative provision and sensitive to the needs/circumstances/maturity of each partnership
- efficient and effective, drawing on existing documentation

## **2 Aims of Collaborative Periodic Review**

The aims of CPR are to:

- review the health of the partnerships and
- confirm approval status of provision in line with outcomes of the relevant Department Periodic Review.

## **3 The objectives of Collaborative Periodic Review**

The specific objectives supporting CPR are as follows:

1. to ensure continued alignment with external review requirements and reference points
2. confirming that the partnership continues to support the strategic objectives of the University and its partner
3. confirming that the management of the quality and standards of the HE provision offered by the partner in collaboration with the University remains sound
4. confirming that the University can continue to have confidence in the partner's capability and capacity to fulfil the requirements of the inter-institutional agreement(s) covering the collaborative arrangements in place, and confirming the continued appropriateness of the agreement(s) themselves
5. confirmation of continued approval of provision
6. to identify and share examples of good practice
7. to assist the University in identifying any development needs that may enhance the collaboration and the collaborative student experience
8. enabling the University and partner to demonstrate sound quality and standards as well as identifying areas for improvement and future opportunities to maximize the benefits of the relationship for both parties
9. considering the potential for future collaborative developments.

## **4 Key attributes of Collaborative Periodic Review**

CPR meets the requirements of B10 including:

- the use of independent external reviewers to ensure objectivity
  - fully involve students
- and be:
- collegial in nature, seeking to involve University and partner staff and students in a peer discussion
  - evidence-based and transparent in process and outcomes
  - action-focused
  - aligned with other internal University Quality processes
  - proportionate to the scope and complexity of collaborative provision and sensitive to the needs/circumstances/maturity of each partnership

## **5 Scope**

CPR includes all provision subject to partnership agreement(s) i.e.

- All approved programmes leading to University awards
- Any provision leading to University credit

## **6 Timing**

Following initial approval of the partnership, CPR will take place on a three yearly cycle, subject to satisfactory outcome of the CPR process. If the outcome of the CPR process raises any concerns in relation to the partnership and/or the provision the CPR schedule will be revised accordingly. A higher frequency of review may occur where a partnership is deemed 'high risk'. The cycle for review may also be extended if there are no known issues with the partnership. This would be subject to completion of satisfactory External Examiner and Annual Review Reports.

## **7 Notification of review**

A list of scheduled CPR activity will be maintained and published by Academic Quality and Standards (AQS). Reviews for the forthcoming academic session will be communicated to the relevant partner and senior faculty staff, together with full details of the process. At the point of notifying the partner of their CPR, details of a Secretary within AQS will be provided. In liaison with faculty staff, the Secretary will be the key contact throughout the process.

## **8 Summary of the CPR process**

In light of the aims and key attributes outlined above, the CPR process includes the following key elements:

- CPR will be undertaken by a visit to the partner location by a duly constituted Panel
- If a partner requires, a briefing session can be arranged upon request
- Indicative timescales for CPR will be agreed with the partner (date of Briefing Paper and event)
- Meeting of the CPR Chair and Secretary with relevant Collaborative Course Leader(s), relevant Faculty staff, representatives from Library and Student Support Services (L3S) and Registry Services
- A Briefing Paper will be produced by the Secretary, based upon existing extant information gathered from quality processes (see Appendix C). The Partner will have the opportunity to add supplementary detail to the Briefing Paper.
- Outline agenda for the CPR event to be agreed with the partner (see Appendix D).
- The CPR report produced including any conditions and recommendations to the University and the partner

Monitoring of implementation of recommendations by the Collaborative Advisory Group and the Teaching Quality Committee for discussion



#### **4.8 Renewal of Formal Agreements**

All existing academic partnerships must successfully undergo a Collaborative Periodic Review in order to continue to operate. Formal, legally-binding agreements are renewed on a regular basis, in line with the terms and recommended approval periods for each collaborative partnership and University contract and business review procedures. Renewal of collaborative formal, legally-binding Agreements may involve revised risk assessments and further due diligence checks. Any changes to the legal status of a partner organisation or modifications or additions to the collaborative provision delivered under the approved arrangements must be reflected in revisions to the formal Agreement. The University's Governance Services (GS) oversees, maintains and updates all formal agreements issued to collaborative partners. GS will provide further advice and guidance on any legal and/or contractual matters involving collaborative arrangements.

#### **4.9 Termination of Collaborative Partnerships and Exit Strategies**

The University has a process for the closure and withdrawal of courses. Where courses delivered in collaboration with partners are to be closed, the Course Closure process will apply. This will involve amendment to, or possibly even termination of the formal agreement/contract with a partner organisation. The Course Closure process ensures that the implications of closure, for existing students and potential applicants, have been fully considered before the decision to close a course is made and ensure that appropriate measures to safeguard the continued standards of the provision and the quality of the student experience during any phasing out period, are in place. Should either a Collaborative Partner and/or the University wish to withdraw from an existing collaborative relationship or to close an individual collaborative programme or programmes, the process will be governed by the terms set out in the formal Agreement between both parties.

The University and the partner organisation should agree, where possible, an appropriate 'exit strategy' that will ensure current students can complete their studies and continue to progress towards their target award. The timescale for phasing out of the collaborative arrangements should enable current students to complete their programme of study, allowing an appropriate period of time to complete teaching, allow for the possibility of resits, deadline extensions etc, in line with the University's policies on extenuating circumstances and academic appeals.

The agreed 'exit strategy' will be detailed in letter of termination to be drafted and issued by the University's Governance Service (GS) in liaison with both parties and with AQS, DEEP and GED (as appropriate). The exit strategy will detail the responsibilities and obligations of both partners for any remaining students during the duration of any phasing out period, as necessary. If a partner organisation is unable to continue to provide delivery of the academic provision during the phasing out period, due to insolvency resulting in ceasing to trade, for example, it will become the responsibility of the University to ensure that existing, currently enrolled students are able to continue their studies towards their target award. This may require the University to agree alternative arrangements for teaching, assessing and providing equivalent learning opportunities for the students affected by the termination of the collaborative partnership.

#### **4.10 Causes for Concern Procedure**

The Causes for Concern procedure provides the University with a formal route through which serious concerns raised about the quality and/or standards, operation, management and/or outcomes of collaborative partnerships and provision can be escalated and resolved appropriately. In most cases, the Causes for Concern procedure will resolve the majority of issues. However, in serious cases, Causes for Concern may form an initial stage of investigation, leading to a full internal audit, where required. Causes for Concern may be instigated at any time, but may also result from the outcomes of the annual review and monitoring process or may arise from a Collaborative Periodic Review exercise, where further investigation of serious issues is recommended.

**Key Stages of the Causes for Concern Procedure are:**

- A serious issue affecting quality, standards or delivery of collaborative provision arrangements is raised either at faculty or University level. This may happen at any time during operation of the partnership or as a result of annual or periodic monitoring and review activities
- Head of Academic Quality and Standards is notified and the issue is logged by AQS. The relevant faculties are notified (this will involve senior staff including the PVC and Head of Department) and an initial investigation into the cause of concern is initiated by AQS
- AQS will discuss the issue with relevant faculty staff and will draw up a proposed course of action or improvement plan in agreement with senior faculty staff and the Collaborative Course Leader/s for the specific partnership
- All cases of Cause for Concern will be submitted to the relevant University Committee. Issues that constitute a serious threat to the quality or standards of a validated University award will be referred to UTQC for further consideration and advice
- Where the concern is of a very serious nature, AQS, DEEP and GED (as appropriate) will, with faculty support, initiate an Internal Audit which will then inform the development of the improvement plan
- Details for any prior Cause for Concern case, and its outcomes, will inform the preparation for any subsequent Collaborative Periodic Review of the partner organisation

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