**International Partnerships Guidance**

This guidance outlines the Institution’s approach to credit and award-bearing partnership provision, including information on the criteria for considering partnership proposals and the process of approval.

To be read in conjunction with:

* International Strategic Plan 2020 - 2027
* Quality Framework: Chapter E - Institutional Approval and Review of a Partner, as defined by typology

**Scope**

The following guidance has been developed in line with institutional best practice and should serve as a guide to developing new international strategic partnerships. This guidance document applies to international partnerships involving provision which leads to a Teesside University award, or that leads to admission to one of the University’s Courses, whether or not this is with advanced standing. Partnerships include but are not limited to, joint courses, dual awards, articulation arrangements, franchised provision and off-site delivery of University courses. Chapter E of the Teesside University Quality Framework outlines approval and monitoring processes.

The University’s Vice-Chancellor, advised by the University Executive Team, has ultimate responsibility for the strategic direction of partnerships. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) has delegated authority for overseeing the quality and standards of all courses, including those offered through the partnership. The Dean and Associate Dean (International) of the respective School act as the main point of contact between the School and the Partner and oversee the academic development of the partnership. Student Learning & Academic Registry will oversee the partnership process in terms of quality assurance.

International partnership activity is overseen by the International Committee. Its remit is to formulate the University’s International Strategic Plan, including transnational activities in line with University policies.

**Introduction**

The University has a typology which defines current collaborative provision (categorised by partnership type) and its key characteristics. The University may wish to become involved in other types of collaborative provision over time, and the typology will be developed accordingly under the remit of the University Student Learning & Experience Committee (SLEC). The University will wish to satisfy itself that the quality and standards of any Course involving its credit or award are no less rigorous than those applied to courses offered internally so as to meet national and international Higher Education requirements.

The Teesside University Corporate Strategy 2027 sets out a new vision for the University to be an international University with a global network of partnerships that attracts high-quality students and staff from across the world.

The International Strategic Plan was developed to provide strategic direction to the University’s vision, identifying specific deliverables by which to improve the University’s international position. The University recognises there are risks involved with partnership provision and has enhanced its Institutional framework for managing partnership provision in response to this.

**Criteria for Considering Partnership Proposals**

Schools should take a strategic and proactive approach when assessing new partnerships. The following criteria should be considered:

* The compatibility and complementarity of the mission and strategic plan of the University, including current and planned academic activities and those of the prospective Partner.
* The legal status of the prospective Partner and its capacity to contract with the University, along with the commitment and support of its governing body (or equivalent) for the arrangement.
* Whether the ethos and environment for teaching and learning are appropriate to the University’s approach to partnerships and, more generally, to UK Higher Education.
* The financial stability of the prospective Partner and its ability and commitment to provide the resources appropriate to support the proposed courses and a partnership with the University (details of information required by Finance and Legal departments can be found in Chapter E of the Quality Framework).
* The viability of the business model involving partnership provision and the resources required by both parties to maintain a successful partnership.
* Whether appropriate governance, resources and systems are in place for the effective management of the Course and, in particular, to underpin academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement. This will include the expertise of staff to teach the proposed course both in terms of discipline and level.
* The University’s ability to provide for the foreseeable future academic staff with relevant expertise to lead the activity and contribute to academic developments on behalf of the University.
* The potential for creating wider opportunities for the University by developing the partnership.

**Process for Considering Proposals and Establishing a Relationship with a New Partner**

* The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) is responsible for considering new partnership proposals through a process which ensures the strategic fit of proposals with the University and aims to minimise potential risk. It also provides Schools and the University with the opportunity to consider a range of issues relevant to partnership provision prior to course approval and the drafting of a Contract for Collaborative Provision (CCP).
* Financial information and costing of the proposed partnership should be developed with support from the accounts section of Finance & Commercial Development.
* The process is outlined in **Appendix A**.
* Advice and guidance for the entire approval process is available from Student Learning & Academic Registry (Quality Assurance & Validation) (SLAR (QAV) and is detailed in Chapter E of the University Quality Framework.

**Principles**

The following principles apply:

* The University is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name. The academic standards of awards developed and delivered through partnership arrangements are equivalent to those delivered solely by the University.
* The University is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through a partnership is at an appropriate level to enable the student to achieve the academic standards required for the award.
* All new partnership proposals will go through an approval process detailed above.
* Partnership provision is usually underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding, outlining the partnership intentions of the University and the Partner institution.
* Partnership provision is to be fully costed with financial arrangements set out in the CCP.
* Relevant governance structure responsibilities and reporting lines are detailed in the CCP.
* Under no circumstances is a Partner institution permitted to engage in a ‘serial arrangement’ whereby the Partner offers approved provision elsewhere through an arrangement of its own.
* The University undertakes to ensure that staff engaged in delivering or supporting partnership activity are suitably qualified for the role they will perform.
* The University requires that admissions be managed in accordance with the University’s Policy and requirements. The admission criteria are set out in the Course Specifications. The responsibility for managing admission is agreed upon and articulated in the CCP.
* All publicity material generated by the Partner organisation in connection with the partnership activity is subject to initial approval and periodic checks by the University to ensure accuracy and currency.
* The University retains a Register of Collaborative Provision as a central record of all partnership provisions.

**Delivery**

All courses will be delivered and assessed in English, but the type and mode of delivery will differ amongst partners, locations, and courses.

When assessing the most appropriate delivery methods, the following should be considered:

* Current delivery modes and whether they can be replicated.
* Staff expertise and specialisms.
* Physical space and specialist equipment required (e.g., laboratories).
* Cost.

**Continuous Monitoring & Enhancement**

In line with the University’s quality guidelines, the Institution adopts a continuous improvement approach, identifying opportunities to enhance processes, policies, and the student experience wherever possible. This requires robust processes around continuous monitoring, which are outlined in **Chapter D1** of the Quality Framework. In addition, partners will usually go through a formal review process every 6 years (with a mid-cycle review every 3 years) to ensure the partnership remains solid and mutually beneficial. Best practice guidelines around the operational aspects of monitoring of an international partnership include the following:

* Key contact points for both parties and regular interaction between these people.
* Regular, coordinated visits with clear itineraries and outputs identified.
* Management of appropriate records (usually through a designated School office, Student Learning & Academic Registry and/or the Department for International Development).
* Assess opportunities for partnership development through regular interaction and information sharing (e.g., introduction of new courses or initiatives).

**Termination of a Partnership**

If a partnership or course with the University comes to an end, the University has in place a teach-out process, **OM-Annex 9** **Partnership Teach-Out Process**, which is a specific process designed to support students enrolled on a course leading to an award at the University to complete their studies.

The reasons for a partnership ending may vary; for example, the partnership agreement may not be renewed, a change of priorities, or circumstances that require the termination of the agreement. Further information about the closing or ending of a partnership can be found in **OM-Annex 9 Partnership Teach-Out Process** and the Contract for Collaborative Partnerships (CCP) or by contacting the University’s Legal and Governance Services department.

The University will generally seek to continue a partnership until all enrolled students have completed their courses. Where this is not possible, the University will implement appropriate mitigating actions outlined in its Student Protection Plan.

The Teach-Out process may vary depending on the partnership, for example, the number of students enrolled, the typology of courses, and if the Partner is an employer, a UK Partner through the Teesside University Collaborative Partnership, or a TNE Partner.

**NEW**

**TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION PARTNER**

**SINGLE PARTNERSHIP APPROVAL FRAMEWORK FOR NEW PARTNERS**

**STAGE 1 – STRATEGIC APPROVAL, DUE DILIGENCE, AUTHORISATION TO PROCEED & PARTNER APPROVAL**

Following establishment of business case, production of Memorandum of Understanding requiring input from Director of Finance, Legal & Governance, relevant School(s) and signature by Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and Partner.

**DUE DILIGENCE & AUTHORISATION TO PROCEED**

(undertaken by Student Learning & Academic Registry (QAV) with input by Legal & Governance, Department of Finance, relevant School(s) & departments)

**Institutional/Partner Approval**

(Assessment required of Partner’s general learning resources – this requirement might be met by either:

1. holding the event at the Partner’s premises and checking resources as part of the approval event
2. completing a location report prior to the event

School/SLAR Approval

Reported to SLEC **for approval**

Department for Legal & Governance produce a CCP for signature by the Partner & TU together with Operations Manual & Addendum

SLAR update Collaborative Provision Register

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**STAGE 2 – COURSE / LOCATION APPROVAL**

**COURSE / LOCATION APPROVAL**

Location Approval organised by SLAR (QAV) – where a Partner is delivering an approved TU course via a **Franchised Model**

For **short awards** up to 60 credits at U/G or below 60 credits at P/G level

Module and Course Approval organised by SLAR (QAV) – where a **Partner is responsible** for developing a new course and its modules

Assessment required of Partner’s specialist course resources – this requirement might be met by either:

1. holding the event at the Partner’s premises and checking resources as part of the Approval Event
2. completing a location report prior to the event

School Short Award Event

School/SLAR Approval

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**STAGE 3 – COURSE / LOCATION – FINAL SIGN OFF & UPDATING OF LEGAL CONTRACT**

**SLEC approval of course(s)**

Department for Legal & Governance add course(s) to the CCP and update TU addendum to the Operations Manual

SLAR update Collaborative Provision Register

**STAGE 4 – COURSE DELIVERY, MONITORING & PERIODIC REVIEW**

**COURSE DELIVERY, ANNUAL MONITORING, COURSE AMENDMENTS LEADING TO PERIODIC REVIEW**

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**STAGE 5 –REFRESHING DUE DILIGENCE AND PARTNERSHIP REVIEW**

**REFRESHING OF DUE DILIGENCE EVERY 3 YEARS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CPR**