

APPENDIX 3: RECOGNITION OF A PARTNER INSTITUTION¹

For an institution to be approved as suitable for the delivery of courses leading to awards of the University, a full risk assessment will be carried out by the Recognition Panel based on a) the submission from the prospective partner providing evidence and contextual evaluation addressing the issues set out below, b) documentary evidence of formal institutional policies and procedures and c) the recognition event.

It is important that documents demonstrate the extent to which the partner organisation can operate at a level appropriate to the delivery of higher education and interact properly with the awarding institution in the assurance of academic standards, in line with the Office for Students' (OFS) ongoing conditions of registration¹, particularly the 'B' conditions relating to quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students. It may be that some of the documentation required already exists, whereas other documents may need to be written specifically.

The documentation should be laid out addressing the following areas:

1. REPUTATION AND STANDING OF THE PROPOSED PARTNER

The University must be satisfied of the good standing of the prospective partner and of its capacity to fulfil its designated role in the arrangement. Information and evidence which the prospective partner should provide should include (but not be restricted to):

- Information regarding the legal status of the institution and legal jurisdiction in which the partnership agreement will apply
- Details of its capacity in law to contract with the University
- Information on partnerships with other HEIs in the recent past
- Copies of external audits / reviews over the last three years
- Details of the institution's adherence to anti-corruption, anti-bribery and ethical business policies and legislation, including the Bribery Act 2010, Consumer Rights Act 2015, Modern Slavery Act 2015, Data Protection Act 2018, and Prevent Duty

2. COMPATIBLE AND COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES WITH THE UNIVERSITY

The Panel must establish whether the missions and educational objectives of the two institutions are compatible. The prospective partner must provide:

- The mission statement
- The current strategic plan
- Prospectus
- Range of existing courses
- The size and nature of the student body
- The number and nature of teaching and other staff
- Details of any external requirements, such as PSRBs and in-country regulatory requirements, with which the course and/or students will have to comply.

¹ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/annex-a-initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/>

3. FINANCIAL STABILITY

The University must be satisfied that the prospective partner is financially stable.

The prospective partner must provide:

- Information on how the institution is financed
- Proof of continued solvency
- Privately funded organisations should provide bankers' references and published accounts for the last three years
- Partners receiving funding from the Office for Students should provide audited accounts for the same period

4. EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

The Panel must assess whether there are effective and accountable management systems and whether appropriate administrative infrastructures are in place to support the delivery of courses leading to the University's awards. The prospective partner must provide information to address the following:

- What management structure is in place (giving details of the roles and responsibilities of officers)?
- What organisational and academic structures are in place?
- What is the committee structure (details of constitution and terms of reference)?
- Where does responsibility lie for the admission and induction of students and for the keeping of student records? Is there adequate administrative support for these functions? What systems are in place to ensure equality of opportunity within the admissions process?
- Who has the responsibility for the organisation of the assessment of students? Is the administrative support adequate?
- Are there reliable, accurate and systematic arrangements for recording marks and confirming student results?
- What are the arrangements for the conduct and invigilation of examinations and are they consistent with University principles?
- What are the arrangements for data collection and are they adequate for the University's requirements?
- Is there a student protection plan?

5. ETHOS AND ENVIRONMENT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROPRIATE TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The Panel must assess whether there is an ethos and environment appropriate to higher education. The following information should be supplied at a minimum:

- Is there a Teaching and Learning strategy and how has its implementation been monitored and evaluated?
- Are all students provided with the support they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education?
- Research and / or consultancy opportunities for staff.
- Equal opportunity and diversity policies*
- Safeguarding policy

6. APPROPRIATE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES

The Panel must ensure that the prospective partner has sufficient and appropriate resources to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The prospective partner should provide evidence to address the following issues:

- Are there sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver the existing and proposed portfolio?²
- Under what form of contract are staff employed?
- What are the arrangements for induction, appraisal, promotion and staff development?
- What arrangements are made for the training of staff new to teaching?
- What are the grievance, harassment and disciplinary procedures for staff?
- Is there appropriate technical and administrative support available?
- Are there sufficient and appropriate facilities (including teaching accommodation), learning resources (including Library and IT provision) and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience?
- What social facilities are there for HE students?
- What are the services in place for students in relation to welfare, counselling, CEIG (career education, information and guidance) and students with disabilities?
- What arrangements are in place for academic support and personal tutoring?
- Is there an overall strategy for the deployment of learning resources?
- How are resources allocated?

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT PROCESSES

The Panel must assess the appropriateness of the quality assurance and quality enhancement processes. The prospective partner should describe and provide evidence on the following:

- How the organisation has engaged with the UK Quality Code for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Mapping documents should be provided indicating how institutional practices relate to the expectations and core practices of the Quality Code
- What is the process for course and module approval?
- What are the annual monitoring procedures?
- What are the periodic review procedures?
- What are the processes for student evaluation and engagement in the quality of their educational experience?
- How is student progression monitored?
- What are the external examining arrangements* – nomination procedures, induction, involvement in assessment?
- Are there effective mechanisms for the review of assessment regulations?
- How does the institution set, maintain and develop its academic standards?

² The expectation is that any staff who contributes in a substantial way to the teaching on courses approved on a franchised or validated basis would normally be qualified to a level of at least one above the level at which they are teaching, or have attained recognition from a professional body, at an appropriate level.

8. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Panel must assess whether there is an appropriate regulatory framework in place together with academic policies and procedures. In key areas these must be consistent with University principles. The prospective partner must provide the following information and documents:

- Admissions policies and procedures*
- Assessment policies and procedures*
- Examination board regulations; procedures for appointment of boards
- Misconduct and plagiarism policies and procedures*
- Grievance policies/procedures in relation to harassment and sexual misconduct which comply with the OFS Regulatory Condition E6*
- Induction policy and procedures
- Complaints and appeals procedures*
- Any regulatory requirements in the country of planned delivery with which the course and/or students will have to comply, if appropriate
- Details of any PSRB accreditation being sought, if appropriate
- Policies on promotional materials
- Information and handbooks given to the students

Policies marked with * should be consistent with the University's normal principles and relate to the UK Quality Code as appropriate.