

# Collaborative Academic Arrangements Policy

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## **1 Purpose**

1.1 The Policy sets out the principles and processes which apply to the development, approval, monitoring and review of collaborative academic partnerships with external organisations. The University is committed to forming sustainable and productive partnerships with professional, educational and community partners with whom it can develop and promote programmes that are relevant, carry academic and professional currency and promote collaborative working. It ensures the University is providing a high quality learning experience for all students studying for a University of Worcester award or credits through a collaborative partner nationally and internationally.

## **2 Scope**

2.1 The processes in the Policy apply to all collaborative arrangements where the University works with one or more other organisations to design and/or deliver courses and/or to award qualifications. This includes:

- Provision which leads to either a course or award of credit from the University of Worcester delivered in collaboration with an external partner
- Provision delivered by University of Worcester staff using off-site delivery and transnational ‘flying faculty’ arrangements
- Articulation and recognition arrangements

- Provision provided by an external partner which contributes to a University of Worcester award.

**2.2** Collaborative arrangements may operate either within the UK or transnationally and include, for example, different modes of delivery such as online, validation arrangements, franchised courses, multiple awards, apprenticeships.

### **3 Principles governing collaborative provision partnerships**

The University has identified a set of principles to guide its partnership activity for collaborative arrangements:

**3.1 Strategic objectives:** the development of collaborative academic partnerships, both regionally and overseas, should reflect the values, commitments and objectives established in the University Strategic Plan.

**3.2 Academic standards and quality:** the University is responsible for the quality and academic standards of all awards and credit granted in its name and must be able to satisfy itself that all courses meet OfS requirements for quality and standards.

**3.3 Language of delivery and assessment:** all courses leading to an award or credit granted by the University of Worcester must be delivered and assessed in English.

**3.4 Approval and risk:** each proposed partner and partnership arrangement is subject to formal approval in accordance with agreed criteria and procedures agreed by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee, together with an assessment of risk. The process for approving potential partnerships is designed to ensure that the University can satisfy itself about the good standing of a prospective partner and their capacity to fulfil their intended role in the partnership arrangement; and that the necessary commitment and resource implications have been considered in the planning of new collaborative partnerships arrangements. Risk is reviewed on a periodic basis as part of the partnership re-approval process or earlier if circumstances demand a review.

**3.5 Academic and business planning:** approval to commence planning a new collaborative arrangement must follow the University processes for developing a new partnership and a new course, and must be fully costed.

**3.6 Funding arrangements:** funding arrangements for collaborative arrangements will be agreed with partners in advance of partnership approval and reviewed annually taking into account the University's and partner's costs including the cost of course development and/or support, approval process, registration, assessment and certification, and the oversight and maintenance of quality and standards.

**3.7 Formal agreements:** all collaborative partnerships must have a formal written and legally binding partnership agreement, setting out the responsibilities and obligations of the University and the partner organisation, including the arrangements for termination or withdrawal from the partnership, and a financial schedule. Such agreements must accurately reflect the collaboration as agreed at approval or as amended by the agreement of both partners, and be signed by the relevant authorities prior to the commencement of the delivery of the provision.

Agreements are prepared centrally and a central record of all partnership activity is maintained by the University.

3.8 Serial arrangements: partner organisations are not permitted to engage in 'serial' arrangements, whereby the partner offers the approved provision or assigns delegated powers elsewhere through an arrangement of its own.

3.9 Quality assurance: the University sets out quality assurance procedures for partnership arrangements in accordance with its own procedures. These include: approval of partners, approval of courses, annual monitoring, External Examiner arrangements, periodic review of courses and collaborative partner arrangements. The University has established the role of Link Tutor to support the delivery of collaborative courses by partners.

3.10 University Regulations: Students enrolled on programmes leading to credit or awards of the University shall be subject to University regulations, policy and procedural documentation governing all matters associated with the development and delivery of an academic programme, including the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework, unless otherwise specified in the partnership agreement.

3.11 Assessment: the University ensures that the outcomes of assessment meet specified academic standards through moderation activity and the appointment of External Examiners and involvement with examination boards. All partnership provision leading to a University of Worcester award or credit must be subject to independent external moderation, with student assessment outcomes confirmed by a University of Worcester Board of Examiners. Students will be subject to the University's Assessment Regulations and Procedures, including those relating to late and non-submission of work, mitigating circumstances, academic misconduct, academic appeals and failure and re-assessment.

3.12 Certificates and transcripts: The University is the sole authority for awarding certificates for provision leading to a University of Worcester award or credit, and for issuing transcripts unless otherwise specified in the agreement with the partner organisation.

3.13 Staff: the University ensures that staff engaged in delivering courses leading to its awards or credit are appropriately qualified, and that the partner has sound mechanisms to monitor and develop staff. Partner staff who teach on University courses or who administer and manage University validated programmes are University Registered Lecturers or Administrators.

3.14 Information: all promotional material and public information generated by a partner organisation relating to a collaborative arrangement is subject to approval by the University.

#### **4 Types of Academic Partnerships**

This typology is not definitive and from time to time the University agrees to initiate other forms of collaborative partnership and/or to vary the nature of the arrangement in order to take account of particular circumstances or needs. Such variations will always be considered and approved through the relevant executive and committee processes. For further information, see Annex A: Collaborative Arrangements Typology.

4.1 **Articulation:** an articulation agreement is a formal agreement that allows specific credit that has been gained from one higher education institution to be transferred to another institution, guaranteeing admission with advanced standing. The right to such advanced standing applies to all students covered by the agreement, who have gained that specific credit, subject to any limitations set out in the agreement. As the University in receipt of the credits, UW will need to assure itself of the quality and standards of the learning that is undertaken at the partner institution.

4.2 **Recognition:** an arrangement whereby a named award delivered by another institution is formally recognised as appropriate for entry with or without advanced standing to one or more specified UW programmes, thereby providing a basis for individual applications to the course. There is no guaranteed entry through any recognition arrangement.

4.3 **Validation:** a partnership arrangement whereby a new or existing course owned, developed and delivered by a partner, following UW protocols on academic quality management, is approved and validated by the University as of appropriate quality and standard leading to a UW award. The course is delivered by the partner and the University remains responsible for the academic standards of the award granted in its name.

4.4 **Franchise:** an arrangement whereby a partner delivers a course or part of a course owned, developed, designed, approved and/or delivered by the University leading to an award or the award of credit by the University. The relationship is based on a formal agreement, in which the University (also known as the lead provider) allows a partner (known as the delivery provider) to deliver a University course. The University retains overall control of the course content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

4.5 **Offsite Delivery (including Flying Faculty):** UW credit-bearing modules or courses delivered by University staff outside University premises in conjunction with a partner which provides premises and equipment, learning resources, and/or student or administrative support that is integral to the student learning experience.

4.6 **Dual Award:** an arrangement where the University works with one or more degree-awarding bodies to offer a jointly conceived programme leading to separate and independent awards granted by each awarding institution. Dual awards require students to achieve more than one set of learning outcomes. Each degree-awarding body is responsible for its own award but the two components form a single package. Where a student meets the requirements of one degree-awarding body only, they receive only a single award.

4.7 **Joint Award:** an arrangement where the University works with one or more degree-awarding bodies for the purposes of programme design, development, delivery, assessment, management and decision-making on student achievement of a programme and where a student successfully completing the programme gains a single award jointly awarded by all of the degree-awarding bodies.

## 5 Approval of new Collaborative Partners

5.1 The [Partnership Approval Process](#) provides the requirements and processes to approve a new partnership. The exact nature of the approval process in terms of information required, financial, legal and academic scrutiny, and the requirement for

a formal approval visit, will vary according to the nature of the collaboration proposed, and consideration of the risks involved.

5.2 The Director of Quality and Educational Development, in consultation with relevant colleagues, is responsible for determining the processes in accordance with the process and principles of risk management.

## **6 Changes to a Collaborative Partnership**

6.1 Partnerships and the courses they provide will change and develop over time and it is expected that partners will follow the same course development processes as outlined in the [Course Planning and Approval Process](#), specifically noting the [Guidance on Amendments to Modules and Courses](#) and the [Course Closure, Suspension and Major Change Policy and Procedures](#).

## **7 Review and monitoring of educational courses and partnerships**

7.1 All collaborative arrangements are subject to the same quality assurance processes as implemented at the University concerning formal approval of modifications and changes, annual evaluations and periodic reviews.

7.2 Annual Evaluation Reports (AERs) are produced for every course (or accredited module) that results in a UW award or academic credit, including those delivered through collaborative arrangements. Partners are able to submit reports to the format normally used by that institution provided that required elements of the Annual Evaluation process are present.

## **8 Renewal of an educational partnership**

8.1 Each partnership is subject to a formal partner periodic review at an interval of no more than six years.

8.2 [Partner Periodic Review](#) (PPR) aims to explore and to provide assurance that both institutions wish to continue working in collaboration and that a partnership is operating in accordance with the terms of the Partnership Agreement. The Review involves revisiting the due diligence, and fully appraising the management of the student experience and the courses that are delivered through the partnership. Normally a PPR will lead to a recommendation to renew a partnership arrangement, and reapproval of associated collaborative courses.

## **9 Suspension and termination of a collaborative partnership**

9.1 In the event that the University or a partner wishes to withdraw from a collaborative arrangement, the University ensures that there is an orderly discontinuation of the partnership or arrangement which protects the interests and student experience of the students registered for, or accepted for admission, to the collaborative course or other arrangement. Full details of the principles governing termination of a partnership are set out in the partnership agreement.

9.2 Schools should follow the procedures outlined in the [Course Closure, Suspension and Major Change Policy and Procedures](#). For provision delivered through a collaborative partnership, consultation on the proposed suspension or termination must also include consultation with the partner organisation and the University's Head of Collaborative Programmes.

9.3 AQU will inform the University Secretary who will then instigate the procedures to terminate the legal Agreement and inform the Office for Students.

## 10 University's Register of Collaborative Partnerships

10.1 AQU is responsible for the maintenance of the University's [register of collaborative partnerships](#). This is a publicly available document providing information on the University's current partnerships.

### Related Policies, Documents or Webpages

[Articulation Agreements to UW awards](#)

[Course Closure, Suspension and Major Change Policy and Procedures](#) [accessed on 7/12/2021]

[Course Planning and Approval Process](#) [accessed on 28/09/2021]

[Guidance on Amendments to Modules and Courses](#) [accessed on 28/09/2021]

[Link Tutor Information](#) [accessed on 28/09/2021]

[Guidance for the Approval of Off-site delivery](#) [accessed 07/10/21]  
[Off site delivery approval report](#)

[Partnership Approval Process](#) [accessed on 28/09/2021]

[Partner Periodic Review](#) [accessed on 28/09/2021]

[Policy and Procedures for Approving Public Information and Marketing Materials for UW Collaborative Provision](#) [accessed 07/10/21]

[Recognition Arrangements](#) [accessed 07/10/21]

[Registered Lecturers & Administrators](#) [accessed on 10/03/22]

[Policy for the Approval of Registered Lecturers for UW Collaborative Academic Provision](#) [accessed via the [Collaborative Provision](#) page 10/03/22]

[Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#) [accessed 19/01/22]

### Approval/Review Table

| Item             | Notes                    |
|------------------|--------------------------|
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| Date of Approval | 26.1.2022                |
| Approved by      | Academic Board           |
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| Policy Officer   | Head of Academic Quality |
| Department       | Academic Quality Unit    |

|  |   |
|--|---|
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| Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)                     | N/A   |
| Accessibility Checked                                | 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2021                                   |

### Recent changes

| <b>Committee</b> | <b>Date</b>                     | <b>Change</b>  |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Academic Board   | 26.1.2022                       | Substantial revisions and updating throughout document.  |
| ASQEC            | 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2014 | Para 2.1 updated and para 2.2 inserted, plus entry on the subsequent table, all relating to the status of Recognition Agreements |

|                         | <b>Articulation</b>   | <b>Recognition</b>  | <b>Validation</b>  | <b>Franchise</b>   | <b>Off-Site Delivery<br/>(including Flying Faculty)</b>   | <b>Dual Award</b>   | <b>Joint Award</b>   |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Definition</b>       | A partnership arrangement which recognises and grants guaranteed admission with advanced standing to a UW award from a course undertaken at an approved partner organisation. | A partnership arrangement which recognises formally a named award from another institution as appropriate for entry onto a UW programme, with or without advanced standing.   | A partnership arrangement whereby a new or existing course owned, developed and delivered by a partner, following UW protocols, is approved and validated by the University as of appropriate quality and standard leading to a UW award. The course is delivered by the partner and the University remains responsible for the academic standards of the award granted in its name. | A partnership arrangement whereby a course or part of a course owned, developed and/or delivered by UW is also delivered by one or more partners.  | UW credit-bearing modules or courses delivered by UW staff outside UW premises in conjunction with a partner who provides premises and equipment, learning resources, and/or student or administrative support that is integral to the student learning experience. | The University, with one or more partner institutions, together provide a jointly delivered course leading to separate awards being granted by both, or all, of them.   | A course delivered by UW together with one or more degree-awarding institutions, leading to a single award made jointly by both or all partners. Students normally undertake a period of study at UW and a period of study at one or more partner organisations. |
| <b>Approval Process</b> | Requires an approved Academic Partner, as set out in the UW <a href="#">Partnership Approval Process</a> .  | Requires an approved Academic Partner, as set out in the UW <a href="#">Partnership Approval Process</a> .<br><br>Requires the mapping of the partners' programme onto a UW programme to confirm appropriate standards have been met. | Requires an approved Academic Partner, as set out in the UW <a href="#">Partnership Approval Process</a> .<br><br>Follows <a href="#">Course Planning and Approval/Re-approval Process</a> .   | Requires an approved Academic Partner, as set out in the UW <a href="#">Partnership Approval Process</a> .<br><br>Follows <a href="#">Course Planning and Approval/Re-approval Process</a> . | If off-site delivery only (ie: no further functions provided by the partner organisation), approval is via a site visit by the School and approved by College Director LTQE.<br><br><a href="#">Guidance for the Approval of Off-site delivery</a> .                | Requires an approved Academic Partner, as set out in the UW <a href="#">Partnership Approval Process</a> .<br><br>Follows <a href="#">Course Planning and Approval/Re-approval Process</a> .<br><br>The programme of study must be taught in English. | Requires an approved Academic Partner, as set out in the UW <a href="#">Partnership Approval Process</a> .<br><br>Follows <a href="#">Course Planning and Approval/Re-approval Process</a> .<br><br>The programme of study must be taught in English.            |

|   | <b>Articulation</b>   | <b>Recognition</b>   | <b>Validation</b>  | <b>Franchise</b>  | <b>Off-Site Delivery (including Flying Faculty)</b>  | <b>Dual Award</b>   | <b>Joint Award</b>  |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Agreement</b>                        | <p>Covered by a formal agreement between the partner and UW.</p> <p>The articulation agreement is time limited, normally for a period of three years in the first instance.</p> | <p>Covered by a formal agreement between the partner and UW.</p> <p>The recognition agreement is time limited, normally for a period of three years in the first instance.</p> | <p>Covered by a formal agreement, between the partner and UW, which includes financial arrangements.</p> <p>The agreement is normally for a period of six years.</p> | <p>Covered by a formal agreement, between the partner and UW, which includes financial arrangements.</p> <p>The agreement is normally for a period of six years.</p>  | <p>Covered by a formal agreement, between the partner and UW, which includes financial arrangements, and sets out clearly the responsibilities of the partner.</p> | <p>Covered by a formal agreement, between the partner and UW, which includes any financial arrangements, and agreement as to certification of the award(s).</p>   | <p>Covered by a formal agreement, between the partner(s) and UW, which includes any financial arrangements, and detailed arrangements for all aspects of quality assurance and management.</p>                |
| <b>Contact</b>                          | <p>Named UW contact to visit the partner at least once per year to discuss the continuing validity of the arrangement.</p>  | <p>Named UW contact is responsible for all liaison.</p>  | <p>Link Tutor is appointed to oversee delivery of the course and provide liaison with UW.</p>  | <p>Link tutor is appointed to support the delivery of the course at the partner and provide liaison with UW.</p>  | <p>Named UW contact is responsible for all liaison.</p>  | <p>Named UW contact to visit at least once per year to discuss the continuing validity of the arrangement.</p>  | <p>Named UW Contact/s – normally the UW Course Leader and Head of Department - meet at least annually for the purposes of annual review and continuous monitoring.</p>  |
| <b>External Examiner and Exam Board</b> | <p>N/A</p>  | <p>N/A</p>   | <p>The University appoints an External Examiner and the Exam Board is chaired by UW.</p> <p>Students are registered with the University.</p>                         | <p>The University appoints an External Examiner.</p> <p>Student results (identified by the partner) are presented to UW Subject Examination Board and the External Examiner is asked to specifically comment on the results by the partner in their report.</p> <p>Students are registered with the University.</p> | <p>N/A</p>   | <p>The University appoints an External Examiner.</p> <p>Examination Boards held and Chaired by UW for UW Award.</p> <p>Students are registered with the University for the duration of the period of time for which they are studying for a UW award.</p> | <p>Arrangements for Board of Examiners, including the arrangements for External Examiners, must enable the University to assure the quality and standards of its awards and are set out in the Agreement.</p> |

|                              | <b>Articulation</b>  | <b>Recognition</b>  | <b>Validation</b>  | <b>Franchise</b>  | <b>Off-Site Delivery (including Flying Faculty)</b>  | <b>Dual Award</b>   | <b>Joint Award</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Review</b>                | Partnership and articulation arrangement subject to annual review and report to CAPSC. | Partnership and recognition arrangement subject to annual review and report to CAPSC. | Subject to academic annual review and partner periodic review. | Subject to academic annual review and partner periodic review.  | Subject to UW annual evaluation and periodic review as part of normal processes.   | <p>Awards are subject to annual evaluation and periodic review, which should comment on the partnership/dual award arrangements.</p> <p>Partnership and award arrangements are subject to annual review and report to CAPSC.</p> <p>The partner is responsible for assuring the quality and standards of its own award.</p> | Partnership and award arrangements are subject to annual review and periodic review, reporting to CAPSC. |
| <b>Intellectual Property</b> | Students join UW course; no Intellectual Property (IP) issues.                         | Students join UW course; no IP issues.  | The course is designed, developed and owned by the partner.    | UW owns the course and as such retains direct control of and responsibility for its content, the learning and teaching strategy, assessment and all aspects of quality assurance. | UW owns and delivers the course and as such retains direct control of and responsibility for its content, learning and teaching strategy, assessment and overall management. | Each partner would maintain IP of their distinct part of the award.   | IP should be covered in the Agreement.   |

|                  | <b>Articulation</b>  | <b>Recognition</b>   | <b>Validation</b>   | <b>Franchise</b>  | <b>Off-Site Delivery<br/>(including Flying Faculty)</b> | <b>Dual Award</b>  | <b>Joint Award</b>   |
|------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Marketing</b> | Monitoring of publicity material undertaken by the School and reported annually. | Monitoring of publicity material undertaken by the School and reported annually. | Publicly available information, including marketing materials, to be approved by UW and monitored annually by Link Tutor. | Publicly available information, including marketing materials, to be approved by UW and monitored annually by Link Tutor. | Marketing materials produced by UW.                     | UW to approve marketing and promotional materials. Ongoing monitoring is undertaken by the School.<br><br>Awards should be marketed, promoted and managed as a 'dual award'. | UW to agree marketing and promotional materials. Ongoing monitoring is undertaken by the School. |