

# Academic Partnerships Supplementary Guidance

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to inform decision making with regard to the approval, review and ongoing monitoring of academic partnerships. It does not however, constitute policy and decisions on individual partnership arrangements should be made based on the unique characteristics of the arrangement.

## 2. Approval of a new partner and the mechanisms by which the partnership will operate

### 2.1 Constitution of the Partnership Development and Approval Group (PDAG)

- 2.2 Decisions about who needs to be involved in the PDAG should be informed by:

- i. the assessed risk;
- ii. the novelty and/or complexity of the arrangements;
- iii. the wider objectives of the partnership;
- iv. the experience of the School in managing collaborative arrangements;
- v. any cultural sensitivities.

- 2.3 A PDAG could involve the following. Please note that this table is for guidance only and is not prescriptive:

Low risk/complexity	Medium risk/complexity	High risk/complexity
<i>Example: new UK-based partner with a good track record of delivering professional qualifications</i>	<i>Example: new overseas partner with a good track record of delivering UKHE</i>	<i>Example: new overseas partner with little or no experience in delivering UKHE</i>
Membership		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chair: Member of AcaPSC or a School Quality Manager with</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chair: Member of AcaPSC or a School Quality Manager with experience of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chair: Dean or Deputy Dean with experience of</li></ul>

<p>experience of collaborative provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CADQ review manager</li> <li>• School panel member: member of SASQC</li> <li>• Non-School panel member: member of AcaPSC/colleague from another School wishing to develop expertise in collaborative provision.</li> </ul>	<p>collaborative provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AcaPSC member(s);</li> <li>• School panel member(s);</li> <li>• Non-School panel member;</li> <li>• External panel member with experience in managing collaborative partnerships (not required to be a subject specialist).</li> <li>• NTU Global Associate Director.</li> <li>• External panel member with expertise in collaborative provision.</li> <li>• CADQ review manager from the Collaborations and Partnerships School</li> </ul>	<p>collaborative provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AcaPSC member(s);</li> <li>• School panel member(s);</li> <li>• Non-School panel member;</li> <li>• External panel member with experience in managing collaborative partnerships.</li> <li>• NTU Global Associate Director.</li> <li>• CADQ review manager from the Collaborations and Partnerships School</li> </ul>
<p>Depending on the type of partnership, it may be appropriate to involve stakeholders from other areas of the University.</p>		
<p><b>Approval format</b></p>		
<p>Online or face to face Must involve the partner</p>	<p>Face to face wherever possible Must involve the partner</p>	<p>Face to face wherever possible. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for a smaller delegation to visit the partner as part of approval rather than the whole panel. The final decision on the format will be taken by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) Education Must involve the partner</p>

### Explanatory notes

- Cultural sensitivities should be explored with the School and/or NILIC when designing the approval process. For example, Chinese partners would expect for a senior representative of the University to be present in any institution-level meetings.

## 3. Periodic Collaborative Review

3.1 In most cases, the partnership will be low-risk and can be reviewed by a sub-group of SASQ or AcaPSC. In these cases the review meeting would normally focus on:

- i. Any areas of concern and actions required to address these.
- ii. Benefits of the partnership to the partner, NTU, staff and students.
- iii. Any areas of mutual opportunity that have been identified.

3.2 Where there are serious concerns in relation to the partner or the management of the partnership, a detailed review will be undertaken, focussed on areas of risk, to determine if it is feasible or desirable for the partnership to continue and the actions that must be taken to secure reapproval. This will involve senior representatives from the partner, School and other relevant stakeholders.

### 3.3 Partnership review group:

3.4 The nature and membership of the partnership review group will be informed by the risk and complexity of the arrangements, and ambitions for the development of the partnership. Membership will be determined by CADQ in collaboration with the School(s) and Chair of AcaPSC. The table below provides guidance only.

Low risk SBCP	Low-risk Validation Service provision	Complex, high-risk or high-value partnerships.
Membership		
<p>A sub-group of SASQC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair (usually the School Quality Manager);</li> <li>SASQC member;</li> <li>SASQC member from another School;</li> <li>CADQ review manager, usually from the C&amp;P team.</li> </ul>	<p>A sub-group of AcaPSC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair: the Chair of AcaPSC or nominated deputy.</li> <li>AcaPSC member from the School OR the School Quality Manager.</li> <li>AcaPSC member from another School.</li> <li>(Where appropriate: Director of the Mansfield Hub and UK College Partnerships or their nominated Deputy).</li> </ul>	<p>Independent review panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair: Dean/Deputy Dean/relevant Director.</li> <li>AcaPSC member(s);</li> <li>School panel member(s);</li> <li>Non-School panel member;</li> <li>External panel member with experience in managing collaborative partnerships (not</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CADQ review manager.</li> </ul>	required to be a subject specialist). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NTU Global Associate Director.</li> <li>CADQ review manager from the Collaborations and Partnerships team.</li> </ul>
<b>Review format</b>		
Online or face-to-face. May or may not involve the partner in discussions.	Online or face-to-face. May or may not involve the partner in discussions.	In-person wherever possible, in some circumstances it may take place online with a smaller delegation visiting the partner. The final decision on the format will be taken by the PVC Education. Must involve the partner in discussions.

- 3.5 Joint delivery arrangements can be reviewed by the SASQC where risk is identified and recorded as low.
- 3.6 Periodic Collaborative Review of joint degrees may take the form of a joint event to satisfy the requirements of both partners.
- 3.7 As part of the review of joint and dual degrees the review panel will need to meet with students. The review should therefore be scheduled to align with the period at which the students are studying at the institution subject to review.

#### Notes

- Where Schools have a separate group responsible for the management of collaborative provision it may be more appropriate to draw membership of the PRG from there for low-risk reviews.
- For complex, high-risk or high-value partnerships it may not be necessary for the whole panel to visit the partner and the visit may include the Chair and senior representative of the School only. Where the review is of an international partner, NTU Global should also be involved.

## 4. Approval and review criteria

### Approval of the partner and the collaborative arrangements

- 4.1 The evidence for approval/review is for guidance only and is not designed to be a prescriptive list. It is for the School and the partner to determine how they evidence that the criteria are met, and for the approval group to use their professional judgement to decide whether the information provided is sufficient evidence that the criteria is met.

Approval Criteria	Validation	Franchise	Dual degree	Joint degree	Joint delivery	Evidence for approval
<b>The strategy and context for the collaboration</b>						
a. The partner's educational/organisational ethos and aims are compatible with those of the University and the ambitions within 'University, Reimagined'.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate material (Desk-based due diligence.)</li> <li>Discussions with partner leadership team</li> <li>References from current partners</li> </ul>
b. <i>[Where the partner is a degree awarding body]</i> Educational standing and PSRB requirements: any applicable national or local governmental requirements and standards and/or the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) are being met.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Statement from the partner supported by copies of relevant reports/links to relevant reports. (May require translation.)
c. The partner has an appropriate forum for planning, target setting and devising implementation strategies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This includes the learning environment and the provision of adequate learning resources, for the delivery of courses.	✓	✓	x	x	<sup>1</sup>	Organisational structure accompanied by short narrative.

<sup>1</sup> Dependent on the proportion of delivery undertaken by the partner, where the partner delivers more than one third of the credits an appropriate forum should be in place.

d. The partner effectively supports the success of all students and minimises gaps in attainment between groups of students with common characteristics.	✓	✓	x	x	<sup>2</sup>	<i>May not be possible to evidence depending on partner's context.</i>
e. Executive, administrative and academic responsibilities for the delivery of the courses are assigned to individuals and groups and are clearly defined and understood.	✓	✓	x	x	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>• Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>
f. There is an appropriate forum and, where relevant, appropriate processes in place to support the quality management and enhancement of the course or courses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>• Organisational structure and accompanying narrative.</li> <li>• Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>
<b>Approval of the operation of the collaboration</b>						
g. The partner has appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver and manage the course or courses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff CVs;</li> <li>• Discussion with course team(s);</li> <li>• References from current partners</li> </ul>
h.						
i. Reasonable expectations for the provision of staff development on an annual basis have been defined (B2).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document.</li> <li>• Staff CVs</li> <li>• Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>
j. Appropriate resources and support have been identified by the School and the partner and responsibilities for the provision of these have been defined.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>• Feedback from external panel member (where required)</li> <li>• Discussions with representatives from the partner and School.</li> </ul>
k. There is appropriate student support in place, both academic and pastoral, including English language support where applicable (B2).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>• Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>
l. Methods have been identified by the partner and the School for effective engagement with students and responsibilities for engagement have been clearly defined (B2).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document.</li> <li>• Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

m. The responsibility for the analysis of student achievement and graduate outcomes and mechanisms for using the data to inform course development are clearly defined and appropriate (B3).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
n. Where relevant, academic regulations are at least as rigorous as those of the University, are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible and are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner that appropriately reflects the level and content of the course (B4).	✓	✓	X	✓	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic regulations</li> </ul>
o. Responsibilities for the management of appeals and complaints have been agreed and are appropriate.	✓	✓	X	✓	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic regulations</li> <li>• Collaborative operational document</li> </ul>
p. Effective arrangements are in place for monitoring and reporting (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>• Organisational structure and accompanying</li> </ul>
q. The proposed governance arrangements are effective for maintaining oversight of the provision.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> <li>• Organograms;</li> <li>• Meeting ToR.</li> </ul>
r. A collaborative academic lead is in place, their role has been scoped and defined and it is clear how they will be supported to undertake their role, including through appropriate time allocation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Academic Lead role specification.</li> <li>• Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>
s. Arrangements for the production and approval of marketing and promotion materials are defined.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Operational Document</li> </ul>

### Explanatory notes

- Academic freedom can be defined as staff having 'freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or the

privileges they may have' (1988 Educational Reform Act). The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 introduced new measures requiring both universities and students' unions to promote and protect freedom of speech for students, academics, and visiting speakers. These new measures include, in summary, requirements to bring these rights to the attention of staff and students annually and ensure that all policies and procedures reflect free speech and academic freedom considerations and that appropriate training on this issue is provided to colleagues. Periodic Collaborative Review. The way in which this is applied to partners is still unclear, and advice should be sought from the Collaborations and Partnerships team within CADQ and NTU Global, for international partnerships, on how this criterion should be tested. As stated in QH Section 10B, consideration must be given to the laws of the country in which the partner operates.

Review Criteria	Validation	Franchise	Dual degree	Joint degree	Joint delivery	Evidence for review
<b>The strategy and context for the collaboration</b>						
a. The partner's educational/organisational ethos and aims continue to be compatible with those of the University and the ambitions within 'University, Reimagined'.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion with the CAL.</li> <li>• Desk-based due diligence.</li> </ul>
b. [Where the partner is a degree awarding body] Educational standing and PSRB requirements: any applicable national or local governmental requirements and standards and/or the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) continue to be met.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Statement from the partner supported by copies of relevant reports/links to relevant reports. ( <i>May require translation.</i> )
c. The partner has an appropriate forum for planning, target setting	✓	✓	x	x	<sup>3</sup>	Updated organisational structure and narrative.

<sup>3</sup> Dependent on the proportion of delivery undertaken by the partner, where the partner delivers more than one third of the credits an appropriate forum should be in place.



and devising implementation strategies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This includes the learning environment and the provision of adequate learning resources, for the delivery of courses.						
d. The partner effectively supports the success of all students and minimises gaps in attainment between groups of students with common characteristics.	✓	✓	x	x	<sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data and analysis provided by the partner OR commentary on OfS B3 dashboard data.</li> </ul>
e. Executive, administrative and academic responsibilities for the delivery of the courses are assigned to individuals and groups and are clearly defined and understood.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School/partner/CADQ reflection on the operation of the collaboration.</li> <li>Course/thematic deep dive.</li> <li>Organisation chart.</li> <li>Discussions with leadership and operational teams.</li> </ul>
f. There is an appropriate forum and, where relevant, appropriate processes in place to support the quality management and enhancement of the course or courses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes or action logs from relevant forums.</li> <li>PR report(s).</li> </ul>
<b>Review of the operation of the collaboration</b>						
g. The partner continues to have appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver and manage the course or courses.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff list for each course, and CVs.</li> <li>Review of changes to the staff team</li> <li>Student feedback</li> <li>Student outcomes data</li> </ul>
h. Staff have engaged in appropriate professional development and this has been supported in line with arrangements set out in the COD.	✓	✓	x	x	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion with the course team(s)</li> <li>CAL/EE reports</li> </ul>
i. Appropriate resources and support have been provided by the School and/or the partner and both parties have met their	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student feedback</li> <li>Discussions with the course team</li> <li>CAL/EE reports</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Dependent on the proportion of delivery undertaken by the partner, where the partner delivers more than one third of the credits they should be able to clearly articulate how they ensure the success of all students.

responsibilities for the provision of resources set out in the COD.						
j. Students are well supported academically and pastorally, including with English language where applicable and responsibilities for student support set out in the COD have been met.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student feedback</li> <li>• CAL/EE reports</li> <li>• Discussions with the course team.</li> </ul>
k. Students are engaged effectively in their learning and in the quality management and enhancement of their course(s). Student engagement helps to ensure a high quality academic experience and that students succeed in and beyond higher education.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of how the arrangements specified in the COD 'run to ground'. This may include student survey results, evidence of how student feedback has been discussed and responded to.</li> <li>• Student survey</li> <li>• Discussion with students</li> <li>• Discussion with the course teams</li> </ul>
l. Student achievement and graduate outcomes data have been analysed and the results used to inform course development.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of how the arrangements specified in the COD 'run to ground', to be determined by the partner (and School).</li> </ul>
m. Where a centre is applying its own regulations to an NTU course: academic regulations continue to be appropriate in the context of any regulatory changes and have been applied consistently to ensure that relevant awards are credible.	✓	✓	x	✓	x	Evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how regulations have been applied, for example, academic misconduct data, marking criteria.</li> <li>• how regulations have been kept up to date.</li> </ul>
n. Where appeals and complaints are managed by the partner: appeals and complaints have been managed as agreed in the COD and in line with any relevant regulations.	✓	✓	x	✓	x	Evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how regulations have been applied, for example, academic misconduct data, marking criteria.</li> <li>• how regulations have been kept up to date</li> </ul>
o. Monitoring and reporting arrangements have been effectively applied.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of how the arrangements specified in the COD 'run to ground', to be determined by the partner (and School).</li> </ul>

p. Governance arrangements are effective in maintaining oversight of the provision.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of how the arrangements specified in the COD 'run to ground', to be determined by the partner (and School).</li> </ul>
q. The role of the collaborative academic lead is working effectively and in line with the COD. The CAL has been supported by their School to undertake their role, including through appropriate time allocation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion with the CAL</li> <li>feedback from the partner</li> <li>Periodic review commentary on the management of collaborative provision</li> </ul>
r. Arrangements for the production and approval of marketing and promotion materials are effective.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of how arrangements in the COD are applied.</li> <li>Discussion with course team(s) and/or members of the administration teams.</li> </ul>

<b>Policy owner</b>
CADQ

<b>Change history</b>			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
Sept 2016	30.09.16	01.10.16	Refinement of approval criteria
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	No major changes
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	None
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	None
Sept 2021	07.09.21	01.10.21	None
Sept 2022	22.09.22	01.10.22	None
Sept 2023	14.09.23	01.10.23	None
Jan 2024	25.01.24	30.01.24	Full rewrite following changes to the approval and review processes for collaborative provision. Now covers both School-based collaborative provision and Validation Service provision. QHS renamed and renumbered.

<b>Equality Analysis</b>		
<i>Version:</i>	<i>EA date:</i>	<i>Completed by:</i>
Sept 2016	07.08.16	CADQ