

Academic liaison tutor role requirements

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University appoints an academic liaison tutor to each course or cognate group of courses at a Validated Centre. The academic liaison tutor is appointed from the relevant University Link School and has broad knowledge of the discipline area for the course or cognate group of courses to which they are appointed.
- 1.2 The academic liaison tutor acts as a representative of the University as the awarding body. Their primary role is to:
 - a. ensure, through a spirit of partnership, that academic standards, quality and student learning opportunities are maintained;
 - b. act as a critical friend, providing advice and guidance, and facilitating two-way communication between the partner and the University.
- 1.3 Where there is an approved progression route to a University course, the academic liaison tutor role also includes a requirement to support student progression.
- 1.4 Where there is large or complex provision, the University may appoint an additional person to attend the examination board.

2. Appointment criteria and time allowance

- 2.1 The academic liaison tutor is appointed by, and reports directly to, the Head of Department.
- 2.2 An academic liaison tutor is identified in advance of the approval of the course(s), and is appointed for the duration of the academic approval period.
- 2.3 A replacement academic liaison tutor is identified in advance of the periodic collaborative review, and is then appointed for the duration of the academic approval period following that review.
- 2.4 An academic liaison tutor is expected to meet the following criteria:
 - a. broad expertise of the subject area of the course or cognate group of courses to which they are appointed;
 - b. academic or professional qualifications at an equivalent or higher level than the course(s) to which they are appointed;

- c. appropriate standing, expertise and experience in the discipline in order to undertake the role;
 - d. experience of validation service collaborative arrangements or other types of collaborations/partnerships, if possible, or knowledge and understanding of quality management in higher education, and preferably the requirements of the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
 - e. experience of teaching, learning and assessment at the level of the course(s) to which they are appointed;
 - f. experience of the enhancement of student learning opportunities.
- 2.5 The following restrictions on appointment apply:
- a. An academic liaison tutor is expected to be impartial in judgement, and therefore should not have any direct, current ties with the validated partner.
 - b. A former student or member of staff at the partner cannot be appointed as an academic liaison tutor unless a minimum of five years has elapsed before the intended date of appointment.
 - c. An academic liaison tutor should not have acted as a consultant for the partner within the last three years.
 - d. An academic liaison tutor may not be re-appointed immediately following the end of their tenure, unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example where the partner is in teach-out.
- 2.6 An identified academic liaison tutor participates in the academic approval event, where appropriate. At the end of their tenure, an academic liaison tutor participates in the periodic collaborative review event as a member of the review panel.
- 2.7 An academic liaison tutor is given sufficient time to undertake the duties associated with the role. This is included within the Management of Academic Workload (MAW) and is clearly communicated to the newly appointed academic liaison.
- 2.8 The time allowance is reviewed annually by the Head of Department.
- 2.9 Consideration of an appropriate time allowance should include visits to the partner, writing of the report, attendance at induction/workshop events, and ongoing liaison with the partner throughout the academic year. Where an academic liaison tutor is appointed to a course with progression to the University, the time allowance will need to take in to account the additional duties associated with this role.
- 2.10 Upon appointment, the academic liaison tutor is issued with the following by the Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ):
- a. The academic liaison tutor handbook;
 - b. Relevant course documentation, including the course and module specifications;
 - c. Common Assessment Regulations in use at the partner institution;
 - d. A copy of the role requirements.
- 2.11 Where changes to a course are made during the academic liaison tutor's tenure, updated course documentation will be provided by CADQ.

- 2.12 The academic liaison tutor is supported in their role by:
- an academic liaison tutor induction provided by CADQ.
 - the academic liaison tutor handbook and information provided on academic liaison area of the CADQ website.
 - annual workshops provided by CADQ.

3. Key responsibilities

- 3.1 The key responsibilities of the academic liaison tutor are as follows:
- Oversee the ongoing quality and standards of the course(s).
 - Maintain oversight of the appropriateness and enhancement of student learning opportunities.
 - Review assessment practices to ensure that they are implemented appropriately.
 - Maintain oversight of the appropriateness of teaching and learning.
 - Liaise with the partner on the nomination of external examiners, providing advice and guidance on the suitability of nominees prior to submission to the University for approval.
 - Act as a critical friend in relation to proposed changes to existing courses, prior to submission to the University for approval.
 - Maintain oversight of progress in relation to the rolling action plan.
 - Support decision making at the board of examiners in line with approved assessment regulations (except where an additional examination board academic liaison tutor is appointed).
 - Engage in ongoing dialogue with the partner to ensure the health of the partnership is maintained, and recommend enhancements where appropriate.
- 3.2 Where an academic liaison tutor is appointed to a course with an approved progression route to the University, the following additional key responsibilities apply:
- Monitor the ongoing alignment of the courses in order to ensure effective progression.
 - Provide appropriate information to students about the progression route.
 - Facilitate opportunities for students to engage with the University prior to progression.
 - Facilitate progression to the University.
- 3.3 The academic liaison tutor, at all times, acts as a critical friend in the spirit of partnership, and therefore may engage in academic debate about, for example, teaching and learning philosophies, the nature of the subject and research into its discipline. However, an academic liaison tutor must never attempt to impose specific views upon a partner.
- 3.4 The academic liaison tutor must not engage in the following activities:

- a. Preparing a partner for academic approval or periodic collaborative review events, other than to advise on proposed changes to existing courses, as specified above.
- b. Regular staff development for the partner.
- c. The day to day operation of the course, outside of the responsibilities detailed above.

4. Visiting the partner

- 4.1 In carrying out these responsibilities, it is expected that the academic liaison tutor undertakes one or more visits to the partner in each academic year. During the visit the following activities may be undertaken. Where more than one visit is made, these activities may be spread across visits:
 - a. Meet with the course team(s) to discuss the ongoing operation of the course;
 - b. Meet with current students on the course(s) to discuss their learning opportunities;
 - c. Review a sample of assessment to establish the appropriateness of assessment practices;
 - d. Attend teaching sessions, where possible and appropriate;
 - e. Participate in the examination board (where a separate examination board liaison is not appointed).
- 4.2 Where an academic liaison tutor is appointed to a course with an approved progression route to the University, more frequent visits are undertaken, and the following additional activities may apply:
 - a. Participate in the induction of new students on the partner course in order to provide an introduction to the University, and the progression route.
 - b. Provide guest lectures, or arrange for colleagues to undertake these, as appropriate.
 - c. Facilitate student visits to the University prior to progression.
 - d. Facilitate any bridging requirements for the progression.
- 4.3 Between visits, the academic liaison tutor will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the partner in order to fulfil the other duties associated with the role.

Explanatory notes

- Participation in the examination board may be by electronic means for international partners where a visit has been undertaken earlier in the year, and where no examination board academic liaison tutor is appointed.

5. Reporting

- 5.1 An interim report may be produced where more than one visit is made during the academic year. An interim report must be produced where an academic liaison tutor identifies significant concerns in relation to standards, quality or student learning opportunities following a visit.
- 5.2 The academic liaison tutor produces an annual report within one month of the final visit to the partner. This report draws on findings from visits and ongoing dialogue with the partner throughout the academic year.
- 5.3 The purpose of the report is to provide both the partner and the University with a summary of findings in relation to standards, quality and student learning opportunities, to identify areas of shareable good practice and to make recommendations for enhancements.
- 5.4 Where a report identifies significant concerns about standards, quality or student learning opportunities, this will be considered by the VSSC at the earliest opportunity to ensure a swift resolution is achieved.
- 5.5 The annual report is shared with the partner, and the academic liaison tutor can expect to receive a response through the annual monitoring process.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
<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	Change from VS12 to VS8 Requirements of the role removed and incorporated into aspects
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	Change to the role title. Significant changes to the primary role and key responsibilities Addition of appointment criteria and time allowance Introduction of an extended role for courses with a progression route to the University
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	Renumbered from VS8 to VS4

Equality Analysis		
<i>Version:</i>	<i>EA date:</i>	<i>Completed by:</i>
Sept 2016	04.09.2016	CADQ