

Requirements for professional development collaborations

This Supplement should be read in conjunction with Sections 10, 10A and 10B.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Professional development collaborations recognise an organisation's own training programmes, for academic credit, which may lead to a University award. Students are employees of the partner.
- 1.1 Key features of a professional development collaboration are that:
 - a. it provides workforce development for organisations, building on existing training;
 - b. learners gain academic credits or University awards, which enhances the value of the training programme for employees;
 - c. the provision blends applied work-based learning with underpinning academic theory.
- 1.2 The credits awarded for professional development courses can be at any level from 3 – 8.
- 1.3 Professional development collaborations may be based on an organisation's existing provision or may involve the joint development of new provision.

2. Categories of professional development

- 2.1 Professional development can be developed and delivered through any existing category of collaboration or partnership, as set out in Quality Handbook (QH) Section 10.
- 2.2 The category of collaboration or partnership, which the professional development is delivered as part of, is set out in the approval report, and on the collaborative register. For example, a professional development arrangement undertaken as part of a validation service category of collaboration, is designated as Professional Development: Validation Service.

Explanatory note

- This supplement does not apply to collaborative higher education apprenticeship proposals. Where a collaborative apprenticeship is being proposed, advice should be sought from the Apprenticeships Team within CADQ.

3. Development and approval

- 3.1 The development and approval of professional development collaborations or partnerships will generally follow the principles of approval for the relevant category of collaboration set out in the QH for the designated category, i.e. Section 10B for Validation Service. However, given the nature of professional development courses, significant upfront development is required by the University to ensure standards and quality are maintained. Therefore, in all cases, approval of professional development collaborations or partnerships have the following additional stages:
- a. Stage one: initial discussions and mapping;
 - b. Stage two: course development;
 - c. Stage three: academic approval.
- 3.2 The requirements of each stage are detailed in the sections below.

Stage one: initial discussions and mapping

- 3.3 This stage is undertaken jointly by the School and the partner and involves expert advice and guidance from the Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ). These discussions determine the following:
- a. The category of collaboration or partnership;
 - b. The proposed award and/or credits;
 - c. The level of the awards and/or credits;
 - d. The course structure and delivery model;
 - e. The basic features of the operation of the collaboration;
 - f. The development and approval timescales.
- 3.4 Where the proposal is based on existing provision, this is scrutinised and mapped against the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) to establish the current level and credits. Development work required to bring the provision up to the agreed level and credits is determined.
- 3.5 Where new provision is proposed, the award, level and credits are discussed and agreed.
- 3.6 Current learning, teaching and assessment methods are reviewed to allow the University to determine any staff development requirements for the delivery of higher education qualifications by the partner (where applicable).

- 3.7 A first draft of the Collaborative Operational Document is jointly produced by the partner and the School to ensure shared understanding of how the collaboration will operate.
- 3.8 Timescales for development and approval are agreed between the partner, School and CADQ based on the amount of development work identified through the mapping process.
- 3.9 The School and CADQ jointly determine when a proposal is sufficiently developed to progress to stage two.

4. Stage two: institutional and course development and approval

- 4.1 This stage requires support for the partner to meet the institutional approval criteria, and either development of a new course, or re-design of existing provision. In all cases, the principles set out below apply.
- 4.2 The School and CADQ provide advice and guidance to the partner with regards to the requirements for institutional approval.
- 4.3 The School and the partner jointly undertake academic development or re-design of the course with support from CADQ, according to the timeline agreed at stage one.
- 4.4 The design of a professional development course needs to consider the following:
 - a. Flexible delivery patterns to meet the needs of the employer;
 - b. Provision for on- and off-the-job learning, including the identification of workplace learning opportunities;
 - c. Ongoing mentoring and support, both academic and in the workplace;
 - d. Credit accumulation and transfer;
 - e. Mechanisms for moderation of assessment;
 - f. Learning and teaching methods for part time, work-based provision, including blended learning;
 - g. Assessment methods that are relevant to the workplace.
- 4.5 Institutional approval is undertaken in line with the approval process outlined in QH Section 10B. Course approval is undertaken in line with the approval process outlined in QH Section 5.

5. Approval periods

- 5.1 Professional development collaborations or partnerships are initially approved for between one and three years, based on risk indicated by the business evaluation, academic risk assessment and due diligence process. A periodic review takes place before approval is renewed and follows the processes for the category of collaboration set out in the relevant QH sections and supplements.

- 5.2 Following review, the collaboration or partnership may be reapproved for between one and five years, based on risk indicated by the business evaluation, academic risk assessment and the findings of the review event.

6. Monitoring

- 6.1 A professional development collaboration or partnership is monitored through the processes established for the category of collaboration and set out in the relevant QH sections and supplements.

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
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Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	None
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Sept 2022	22.09.22	01.10.22	None
Sept 2023	14.09.23	01.10.23	Clarification on process for institutional approval.

Equality Analysis		
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Sept 2018	TBC	TBC