

# Section 10B

Nottingham Trent University

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## **Quality Handbook**

**Part C: Assuring and  
enhancing quality**

**Section 10B: Academic  
Partnerships**

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## 1. Categories of academic partnerships

**The University has clear definitions for each category of academic partnership**

1.1 The University defines each category of collaborative provision as follows:

Category	Definition
<b>Validation Service</b>	<p>The partner delivers its own courses to its own students at its own centre. The courses are validated and awarded by NTU.</p> <p>The University does not routinely offer Validation Services to partners overseas.</p>
<b>School-based collaborative provision (SBCP)</b>	
<b>Franchise</b>	<p>The partner delivers and assesses the whole of an existing NTU course to NTU students, at its own centre. On occasions, the arrangement might be for a level or module, rather than a whole course. The partner is approved by NTU.</p> <p>The course could, on occasion, be newly designed by the partner or NTU or could be a modified version of an existing NTU course. The course may be designed to 'top up' an existing award offered by the partner.</p> <p>The University does not franchise its research degree awards.</p> <p>The University does not franchise to international institutions.</p>
<b>Joint delivery</b>	<p>The partner and NTU jointly deliver and assess an existing NTU course (or part of a course, or module) to NTU students.</p> <p>The location of delivery may vary according to the precise nature of the relationship and may include some delivery at NTU.</p> <p>The course could be a modified version of an existing NTU course to suit the nature of the partnership or a new course that is jointly designed by both partners.</p> <p>This category also includes jointly delivered and / or supervised research degrees.</p> <p>This category is different to a joint degree, as NTU is the sole awarding body.</p>
<b>Joint / double degree</b>	<p>For a joint degree, NTU collaborates with one or more degree awarding bodies (or equivalent) in order to jointly design and deliver a course which entails formal study periods in two or</p>

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more centres, leading to a single award made jointly by both partners.

For a double degree, NTU collaborates with one or more degree awarding bodies (or equivalent) in order to jointly design and deliver a course which entails formal study periods in two or more centres, leading to separate awards from each partner. This category is only used where there is a legal impediment in the partner's jurisdiction to making a joint award.

For more information on joint / double degrees, see Quality Handbook Supplement (QHS) CP4.

## **Dual degree**

NTU collaborates with one or more degree awarding bodies (or equivalent) in order to jointly deliver a course which entails formal study periods in two or more centres, leading to separate and different awards from each partner (which may be at different levels).

A dual degree is longer and greater in credit volume than for each of the individual awards but shorter than if they had been studied separately.

Each partner retains ultimate responsibility for the oversight and academic standards of its own course.

## **Joint / double / dual doctoral awards**

Joint, double or dual doctoral collaborations are normally offered on an individual student level and are subject to a co-tutelle agreement.

NTU collaborates with another degree awarding body in order to jointly supervise a programme of doctoral study for an individual student. These awards entail formal periods of study and research at each institution.

For a joint doctoral award, a single award is made jointly by both partners.

For a double or dual doctoral award, separate awards are made by each partner.

Double award qualifications are generally developed as a result of legal impediments, in some jurisdictions, to a single joint qualification; therefore, these arrangements tend to be the exception rather than the norm.

Dual award arrangements require that at least one third of the research undertaken needs to be distinctive.

This category does not cover arrangements where there is joint supervision of a student that does not lead to a joint, double or dual award.

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

**Approval takes place separately from, and only after, due diligence and business approval has been agreed. The University takes a risk-based approach to the approval of academic partners and partnerships.**

### Requirements

- 2.1 The form of approval may vary according to the level of risk, which is determined jointly by the School and Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ) and is based on a set of standard risk indicators.
- 2.2 The nature of academic approval will be proportionate to the type of collaboration, the nature of the partner, the nature of the relationship, the number of credits the partner is responsible for, the nature of delivery of the course, and who has responsibility for design and delivery of the course(s).
- 2.3 The approval of the partner and the mechanisms by which the partnership will operate will be undertaken by a Partnership Development and Approval Group (PDAG). Guidance on the constitution of the PDAG can be found in Quality Handbook Supplement CP1. This must take place before course approval.
- 2.4 Where a new course is being proposed, approval of the course(s) is also required. Courses will be approved through the Academic Course Approval Sub-Committee, in line with requirements in Quality Handbook Section 5.
- 2.5 A partnership approval event may result in conditions (which must be met before delivery commences), recommendations and commendations.
- 2.6 For joint and double degrees, a joint approval event is held where possible. The approval event includes representation from all of the degree awarding bodies involved.
- 2.7 Requirements for the approval of joint, double and dual doctoral award collaborations are detailed in Quality Handbook Supplement SB8.
- 2.8 Academic approval of new academic partnership is a two-stage process:
  - a. Institutional approval;
  - b. Approval of the operation of the collaboration.
- 2.9 For dual degrees, no course approval is required where the dual degree uses an existing course, however the mapping between the two degrees must be approved by the Partnership Development and Approval Group responsible for approving the collaborative arrangements.
- 2.10 The School is responsible for, and bears the cost of, any travel and accommodation associated with the academic approval event for all SBCPs.

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- 2.11 The partner is responsible for, and bears the cost of, any travel and accommodation associated with the academic approval event for Validation Service Provision.

## Explanatory notes

- The roles and responsibilities associated with the University and the partner are set out in the Collaborative Operational Document which is agreed at approval.
- Course approval will always be required for Validation Service Partnerships.
- QHS CP6 outlines the approval criteria and process for taught courses and professional doctorates.
- QHS CP6 outlines the approval process for PhD collaborations.

**Academic Partnerships are initially approved for a period of between one and three years and a review takes place before approval is renewed.**

## Requirements

- 2.12 The length of the initial approval period is based on the findings of the business evaluation, and academic approval process, and the associated risk of the collaboration.
- 2.13 Following satisfactory periodic collaborative review, provision is re-approved for a period of between one and five years. The length of the re-approval period is based on the findings of the business evaluation, the review, and the associated risk of the collaboration.

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## 2.14 Approval process overview:

### Triage

Triage discussions will include the Collaborations and Partnerships Team Leader, School representatives and/or NTU Global/Director of Mansfield Hub and UK College Partnerships. Triage will consider the strategic fit of the proposal.

### Due diligence

A proportionate level of due diligence must be carried out to ensure the suitability of the partner as a partner of NTU. This is in addition to the financial due diligence undertaken as part of the business case.

### Risk assessment

All partnerships are required to have an up to date risk assessment in place. This should be completed and updated throughout the approval/review process through discussions between the School and CADQ. A final version should be signed off by SASQC and AcaPSC.

### Business evaluation

Business evaluation must be complete before course development and approval begins.

Business evaluation will be considered alongside the risk assessment.

### Desk based review of evidence

The School and partner will submit evidence to demonstrate compliance with approval criteria. This will be scrutinised by CADQ and a report will be prepared for the approval group.

### Partner approval

The partner approval process confirms that an organisation is suitable to become a partner of NTU for specified purposes. This may be a paper-based exercise.

### Approval of the arrangements for the operation of the collaboration.

Full business evaluation must be complete before approval of the arrangements for the operation of the collaboration. Approval of the arrangements for the operation of the collaboration will take place through a Partnership Development and Approval Group.

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## Course approval

The course will be approved through the Academic Course Approval Sub-Committee (ACASC). Outcomes from the approval of collaborative arrangements will be included in the CADQ report to the ACASC. Support for course development will be provided in line with support available for NTU colleagues with additional support packages available.

### 3. Form of approval

**The form of risk-based and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.**

## Requirements

- 3.1 The approval process for new partnerships will be tailored for each partnership and will focus on:
  - Identified areas of risk
  - Areas of mutual opportunity and how these can be realised.
- 3.2 A partner approval event will not be required in the following circumstances, where due diligence criteria are otherwise satisfied. In these circumstances, approval will focus on the arrangements for the operation of the collaboration.
  - a. The organisation falls within the remit of an external quality assurance agency for higher education that is on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and no concerns have been raised in the most recent review.
  - b. The organisation falls within the remit of an external quality assurance agency for higher education that is internationally recognised, (for example, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency or the ANVUR, Italy) and no concerns have been raised during the most recent review.
  - c. The organisation is a UK-based organisation which is registered with the OfS and where there are no concerns about ongoing registration.
  - d. The organisation is a UK-based organisation which is registered with Ofsted, where the latest Ofsted report raised no concerns and the organisation has three or more years' experience in delivering higher education, supported by satisfactory references.
- 3.3 A paper-based exercise is likely to suffice in the following circumstances:
  - a. The organisation is a UK-based organisation which is registered with Ofsted and where the latest Ofsted report raised no concerns. The organisation's ability to deliver Higher Education must still be tested where the organisation has less than three years' experience delivering higher education, or we have not been able to obtain satisfactory references.



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- b. The organisation is an experienced training provider delivering professional qualifications for registered professions, for example, nursing and no concerns have been raised by the regulatory body. The organisation's ability to deliver Higher Education must still be tested where the organisation has less than three years' experience delivering higher education, or we have not been able to obtain satisfactory references.

## 4. Approval criteria

**Approval criteria will be tested through a desk-based review of evidence, and where, necessary, a partner approval event.**

## Requirements

- 4.1 The following expectations should be used as a guide to confirm whether a partner is suitable to become or remain a partner of the University for the delivery of an academic partnership. The expectations include the relevant B conditions of the OfS Ongoing Conditions of Registration. The expectations relate not just to the partner but to the partnership as a whole. The University must be satisfied that the expectations are met and will continue to be met.
- 4.2 Not all criteria will be relevant for all partnerships; for example, dual and joint degrees with another degree awarding body will be reviewed against fewer criteria. Quality Handbook Supplement CP1 provides guidance on which criteria will apply to different types of partnership.
- 4.3 The Partnership Development and Approval group will exercise professional judgement, at a threshold level, to assure themselves that the following expectations are met.

### The strategy and context for collaboration:

- a. The partner's educational/organisational ethos and aims are compatible with those of the University and the ambitions within 'University, Reimagined'.
- 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) are being met.

The partner has an appropriate educational infrastructure:

- 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.
- d. The partner effectively supports the success of all students and minimises gaps in attainment between groups of students with common characteristics.

The partner has an appropriate organisational infrastructure:

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- e. Executive, administrative and academic responsibilities for the delivery of the courses are assigned to individuals and groups and are clearly defined and understood.
- 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.

## **Approval of the operation of the collaboration**

- g. Reasonable expectations for the provision of staff development on an annual basis have been defined.
- h. Appropriate resources and support have been identified by the School and the partner and responsibilities for the provision of these have been defined.
- i. There is appropriate student support in place, both academic and pastoral, including English language support where applicable.
- j. The partner has appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver and manage the course or courses.
- k. Methods have been identified by the partner and the School for effective engagement with students and responsibilities for engagement have been clearly defined.
- l. 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.
- m. 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.
- n. Responsibilities for the management of appeals and complaints have been agreed and are appropriate.
- o. Effective arrangements are in place for monitoring and reporting.
- p. The proposed governance arrangements are effective for maintaining oversight of the provision.
- q. A collaborative academic lead (there will be one role title covering all partnerships) 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.
- r. Arrangements for the production and approval of marketing and promotion materials are defined.

## **Explanatory notes**

- Quality Handbook Supplement CP1 contains guidance on the approval process and how each criterion will be tested/where the evidence is likely to be found.

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## 5. Collaborative Operational Document

**Academic partnerships are managed according to the Collaborative Operational Document agreed during the approval process.**

### Requirements

- 5.1 The Collaborative Operational Document represents a shared understanding by the University and the partner of the mechanisms through which the collaboration will operate and the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- 5.2 The Collaborative Operational Document is considered and agreed by the PDAG or by URDC in the case of PhD collaborations.
- 5.3 For School-based collaborative provision, School Academic Standards and Quality Committees (SASQCs) and collaborative academic leads are responsible for ensuring that the collaboration is functioning in line with the approved Collaborative Operational Document in the period between approval and review. For Validation Service provision, this is the responsibility of the Academic Partnerships Sub-Committee and the collaborative academic lead.
- 5.4 The Collaborative Operational Document is reviewed and re-approved by SASQCs/AcaPSC on an annual basis to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose.

### Explanatory notes

- Templates for Collaborative Operational Documents are available from the Collaborations and Partnerships webpages.

## 6. Approval of a new course at an existing partner

**Approval of a new course(s) at an existing partner will not require partner approval event.**

- 6.1 Business evaluation must be completed before the academic approval process begins. For international partnerships, this is managed by NTU Global, and for UK partnerships by CADQ.
- 6.2 Approval of new course(s) at existing partner will require approval of the mechanisms by which the course will operate, however this can be done through SASQC/AcaPSC where the arrangement is similar to existing ones. In this case, the Collaborative Operational Document (COD) should be updated to reflect the additional course. Where arrangements are significantly different, a separate COD should be prepared.

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- 6.3 Where the arrangement is significantly different to those existing, an approval panel may be required to support the School and the partner in making decisions about how the course will operate and ensure that risks have been adequately considered and planned for.
- 6.4 Requirements for the operation of the collaboration should be referred to as part of the approval process to ensure that these will be met by the new arrangements.
- 6.5 Exact arrangements will be determined by CADQ in consultation with the Chair of the AcaPSC.

## 7. Course approval

**Collaborative courses are subject to approval processes which are comparable to and at least as rigorous as the University's own provision.**

- 7.1 Courses will be approved through the Academic Course Approval Sub-Committee (ACASC). Details of the course approval process can be found in Section 5.
- 7.2 Before a course is submitted for approval through ACASC, approval of the collaborative arrangements must have taken place. Details of the outcomes of the approval of collaborative arrangements will be included in the report provided by CADQ to the Sub-Committee.
- 7.3 Additional support required for course development will be scoped at the planning meeting.
- 7.4 Initial approval of provision for taught courses and professional doctorates follows the University's standard processes for course approval, however in some cases additional support may be required.
- 7.5 Initial approval of PhD collaborations is undertaken by URDC or through the course design process, as appropriate.

## 8. Admissions

**Ultimately, all decisions on the admission of students to its own courses rests with the University in cases of disagreement between the University and its collaborative partners or if concerns about partner processes are revealed through annual monitoring or review. Decisions on the admission of students to a partner's course rest with the partner.**

## Requirements

- 8.1 The decision about operational responsibility for admission and recruitment will be agreed between the University and the partner and set out in the Collaborative Operational Document.

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- 8.2 University Schools and / or collaborative partners may take operational responsibility for admission and recruitment to courses (including making formal offers to students) according to specified criteria. These criteria are approved through the PDAG process (or URDC).

## 9. Monitoring and reporting

**Collaborative provision is subject to ongoing monitoring and reporting to ensure that the course(s) operates satisfactorily between periodic collaborative reviews, that academic standards and quality are maintained and that enhancements are made as appropriate.**

### Requirements

- 9.1 All taught courses that are delivered as part of an academic partnership are subject to the University's standard course monitoring, review and reporting processes as set out in Quality Handbook (QH) Section 6.
- 9.2 Research degrees that are delivered as part of a School-based collaborative partnership are subject to the University's research degrees monitoring and reporting processes as set out in QH Section 11.
- 9.3 Monitoring of the ongoing health and currency of a course, including those delivered through a School-based collaborative arrangement, is primarily the responsibility of the course committee.
- 9.4 Monitoring and reporting is the process by which the University is assured of the on-going currency and health of its provision at collaborative partners. It ensures that:
- a. academic standards continue to be appropriate for the award;
  - b. the quality of student learning opportunities is maintained;
  - c. the health of the collaborative arrangement is upheld.

**Where provision is delivered in a language other than English, appropriate arrangements must be made for moderation.**

### Requirements

- 9.5 Wherever possible moderation is undertaken by speakers of the language of assessment, who are subject specialists working at the University or in UK higher education.

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## 10. Collaborative Academic Lead

**The University identifies a specific member of staff to take responsibility for monitoring the ongoing quality of collaborative provision.**

### Requirements

- 10.1 For taught course collaboration, including Validation Service provision, a collaborative academic lead is appointed by the School.
- 10.2 For PhD collaborations, the student's Director of Studies undertakes this role.
- 10.3 The requirements of the role will vary depending on the nature, size and risk of the partnership. The role will be specified through the development and approval process and approved as part of the approval of collaborative arrangements.
- 10.4 The collaborative academic lead prepares an annual report and this is considered at the relevant course committee and SASQC for SBCP, and the Academic Partnerships Sub-Committee for VS provision.

### Explanatory note

- QHS CP2 contains guidance on the role of the collaborative academic lead.

## 11. Risk assessment

**Academic Partnerships must have an up-to-date risk assessment in place to ensure that academic risks are identified and actively managed.**

### Requirements

- 11.1 Risk assessments for collaborative provision are drawn up by CADQ in liaison with the School and NTU Global where necessary, upon the approval of a new partnership.
- 11.2 The risk assessment must remain up to date and should be reviewed at least one per year as part of annual monitoring, and must be reviewed as part of periodic collaborative review.
- 11.3 Oversight of risk assessments is the responsibility of SASQC and the Academic Collaborations and Partnerships Sub-Committee (ACPSC).
- 11.4 Individual risks with a score of 8 or more must be escalated to the Collaborations and Partnerships risk register which is managed by CADQ and overseen ACPSC on behalf of the Board of Governors.

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- 11.5 Where risk assessment identifies significant risks with a partnership, a mitigation plan is written and a sub-group of AcaPSC established to monitor and manage the risks.

## 12. Changes to collaborative provision

**Changes to approved collaborative provision, either to the Collaborative Operational Document, or to a course(s), may be proposed at any time in the academic year. The formal mechanisms for approving such changes depend on the scale and type of change proposed.**

### Requirements

- 12.1 The mechanisms for approval of changes to courses are the same as if the course was delivered solely at NTU (QH Section 5). For Validation Service provision, AcaPSC will take the role of SASQC. The exception to this is that for international provision, the School must consult their NTU Global Associate Director and complete the NTU Global Change Form for business approval prior to academic approval.
- 12.2 Changes to a Collaborative Operational Document are approved by SASQCs and are reported to the AcaPSC.

## 13. Periodic collaborative review

**Collaborative provision is periodically reviewed by the University.**

**Periodic Collaborative Review sits within the University's wider framework for the review and continuing approval of its provision and ways of working.**

- 13.1 Collaborative provision is subject to the same processes as standard University courses and sits within the wider quality framework:
- a. **Periodic review** will test the efficacy of the School's processes for the management of collaborative provision;
  - b. **Periodic Collaborative review** will consider the efficacy of arrangements for the operation of the collaboration;
  - c. **Periodic Course review** will test the validity, currency, and academic quality of the provision.

### Requirements

- 13.2 Periodic collaborative review forms part of the University's quality management procedures for collaborative provision. Review is intended to give all parties an

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opportunity to explore the strengths of the arrangement, identify any weaknesses perceived by stakeholders with a view to their improvement and give stakeholders space to reflect on future opportunities for the partnership. The review process is both developmental and judgemental.

- 13.3 A form of review takes place prior to the end of each approval period.
- 13.4 Business evaluation must be undertaken before academic review begins. For international partnerships, this process is managed by NTU Global. For UK partnerships, this process is managed by CADQ.
- 13.5 Periodic collaborative review aims to:
- satisfy the University that the arrangement continues to fulfil the requirements for quality, that the academic standards of the awards are appropriate and that there are comparable student learning opportunities to those students studying at the University.
  - reflect on whether the anticipated benefits are being realised
  - Consider themes from course reviews where there are multiple courses with one partner;
  - Reflect on the strategic ambitions for the partnership and provide a forum for discussing future developments;
  - Ensure that the relationship is managed effectively.
- 13.6 The nature of review will be proportionate to the type of collaboration, the nature of the partner and of the relationship, the number of credits the partner is responsible for, the nature of delivery of the course, who has responsibility for design and delivery of the course(s), any concerns raised by student data, student and staff feedback and the updated risk assessment. Where there are serious concerns about a partner or the management of the partnership, a partner re-approval event may be more appropriate. For further information, please see QHS CP1.
- 1.1 Periodic Collaborative Review will be undertaken by a Partnership Review Group (PRG). The nature of this group will be determined by the risk and complexity of the review. If the partnership will involve an apprenticeship, a member of the apprenticeship team must be involved. For more information, please see QHS CP1.
- 13.7 The format of the review will be determined on a case-by-case basis and approved by AcaPSC at the start of the academic year in which the partnership is due to be reviewed.
- 13.8 Periodic collaborative review is a two-stage process:
- Stage 1 - Institutional review;
  - Stage 2 - Review of the operation of the collaboration.
- 13.9 **Institutional Review** assesses whether the partner continues to be appropriate to deliver or jointly deliver an NTU award.
- 13.10 Institutional review focuses upon two specific criteria:
- strategy and context for collaboration;
  - the maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards.



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13.11 These criteria are assessed through a number of methods:

- a. Consideration of evidence captured through business evaluation and due diligence;
- b. consideration of responses to the reflective questions produced by the partner and the School/CADQ in preparation for the review;
- c. a commentary undertaken by CADQ using a range of available evidence (course review, interim course report, external examiner reports, collaborative academic lead reports);
- d. Partnership risk assessment;

13.12 **Review of the operation of the collaboration** assesses the effectiveness of the management of the partnership to ensure that the quality and standards of the course, and of the student learning opportunities, are maintained and that the OfS B-Conditions are being met.

13.13 Review of the collaboration focuses upon a range of criteria which are aligned to the Collaborative Operational Document, and the initial approval criteria.

13.14 These aspects are considered through a number of methods:

- a. consideration of responses to the reflective questions produced by the School and partner (or jointly prepared School/CADQ and partner) in preparation for the review;
- b. a commentary undertaken by CADQ prior to the event using evidence provided by the School and partner in an electronic repository of information;
- c. discussion with the partner, and School course and administrative teams during a review event (SBCP)/representatives from the Collaborations and Partnerships Team within CADQ.

13.15 Periodic collaborative review is both developmental and judgemental. The review group makes the following decisions about both institutional review and the review of the operation of the collaboration:

- a. whether the partner satisfies the review criteria and therefore continues to satisfy the approval criteria;
- b. the period for which further approval is given (between one and five years, based on risk indicated by the business evaluation, academic risk assessment and the findings of the review event);
- c. required actions;
- d. timescale for the production of an action plan to address any required actions;
- e. recommendations;
- f. commendations;
- g. affirmations.

13.16 Joint, double and dual doctoral award collaborations are reviewed by URDC as detailed in Quality Handbook Supplement CP6.

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- 13.17 PhD collaborations are approved for the duration of the registration period of the student and are subject to ongoing annual monitoring, review and reporting.
- 13.18 The University reserves the right to bring a review date forward if there are significant concerns about the standards and quality of provision at a collaborative partner.

## Notes

- See Supplement CP1: Academic Partnerships supplementary guidance for information on the process for re-approval of the partner by the School Executive Team.

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## 13.19 Review process overview:

### Due diligence

A proportionate level of due diligence must be carried out to ensure the continued suitability of the partner as a partner of NTU. This is in addition to the financial due diligence undertaken as part of the business case.

### Risk assessment

All partnerships are required to have an up to date risk assessment in place. This should be updated as part of the review process through discussions between the School and CADQ. A final version should be signed off by SASQC and AcaPSC.

### Business evaluation

Business evaluation must be complete before the academic reapproval process begins.

Business evaluation will be considered alongside the risk assessment.

### Student feedback

Student survey: students will be asked questions on their experience of the course.

And/or:

Meeting with students: a student meeting may be hosted by CADQ and a member of AcaPSC.

### Desk based review of evidence

This will result in an updated risk assessment which will inform the next steps:

- Low – medium risk: partnership review and development meeting.
- High risk: partnership re-approval event.

### Partnership review group

The partnership review meeting will focus on:

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

## Explanatory note

- QHS CP1 provides guidance on the approval process.

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## 14. Review criteria

**The following review criteria must be met in order for a partner(ship) to be reapproved.**

### **The strategy and context for collaboration:**

- a. The partner's educational/organisational ethos and aims continue to be compatible with those of the University and the ambitions within 'University, Reimagined'.
- 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.

The partner continues to have an appropriate educational infrastructure:

- 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.
- d. The partner effectively supports the success of all students and minimises gaps in attainment between groups of students with common characteristics (*see explanatory notes*).

The partner continues to have an appropriate organisational infrastructure

- e. Executive, administrative and academic responsibilities for the delivery of the courses are assigned to individuals and groups and are clearly defined and understood.
- 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.

### **The operation of the collaboration**

- g. The partner continues to have appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver and manage the course or courses.
- h. Staff have engaged in appropriate professional development and this has been supported in line with arrangements set out in the COD.
- i. Appropriate resources and support have been provided by the School and/or the partner and both parties have met their 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.
- 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.

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- l. Student achievement and graduate outcomes data have been analysed and the results used to inform course development.
- 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.
- 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.
- o. Monitoring and reporting arrangements have been effectively applied.
- p. Governance arrangements are effective in maintaining oversight of the provision.
- 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.
- r. Arrangements for the production and approval of marketing and promotion materials are effective.

## Explanatory notes

- When assessing the requirement for a partner to support the success of all students, consideration must be given to the context in which the partner operates. International partners and business partners are unlikely to collect comparable data. The focus in these cases should be on student support and in particular academic support and how achievement is monitored.

## 15. Appeal of approval / review decisions

**An appeal of a decision relating to collaborative approval or review must be presented by the collaborative partner or School to the Chair of ASQC or URC within 14 days of receipt of the confirmed approval or review report or minute of the meeting where the approval or review was undertaken.**

## Requirements

- 15.1 If a matter of dispute is not resolved by ASQC or URC, the partner or School may make a direct submission to the University's Academic Board through the Vice-Chancellor. Academic Board will consider the matter itself or by means of a working party, which would not include any member of staff involved in the earlier decision.
- 15.2 Once representation is received from both parties, a decision will be made to either:

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- a. confirm the decision of the Partnership Development and Approval / Review Group / URDC;
- b. refer the case back to the Partnership Development and Approval / Review Group / URDC with instructions to consider the proposals *de novo*;
- c. rescind the decision and make recommendations for action towards further progress;
- d. make such other arrangements for the determination of the issues as it deems appropriate.

15.3 The decision of the appeal body is final.

## 16. External examiners

**External examiners are appointed for all award-bearing collaborative provision.**

### Requirements

- 16.1 External examiner nominations for taught course collaborations are considered and approved by the University's External Examiner Appointments Panel and are subject to the criteria as specified in QH Section 9.
- 16.2 External examiners for research degree collaborations are considered and approved by the School Research Degrees Committee and are subject to the same criteria as specified in QH Section 11.
- 16.3 Joint and dual degree collaborations may have a jointly appointed external examiner.
- 16.4 The University is responsible for the induction and payment of external examiners.
- 16.5 The Validated Centre is responsible for arranging travel and visas for external examiners and for the payment of expenses.
- 16.6 Where the same course is delivered at more than one location, the same external examiner should consider the provision at all locations, wherever possible, to ensure comparability of standards.

## 17. Board of Examiners

**Collaborative arrangements are required to have a formally constituted Board of Examiners. The conduct of the board is specified at approval and aligns to the terms of reference, membership and procedures set out in the QH.**

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## Requirements

- 17.1 For Validation Service arrangements, the Board of Examiners is arranged by the Validated Centre. The collaborative academic lead and/or a member of the Collaborations and Partnerships team within CADQ represents the University at the board, either in person or via video conferencing and will report to the University on the fitness of the process. The exception to this is where a separate exam board liaison is appointed
- 17.2 For franchise arrangements, the Board of Examiners is arranged by the partner. The collaborative academic lead represents the University at the board, either in person or via video conferencing and will report to the University on the fitness of the process. Boards in these categories may be chaired by a University representative.
- 17.3 For joint delivery, the Board of Examiners is arranged either by the partner or the University, as set out in the approved Collaborative Operational Document. There will be attendance at the Board by representatives of both the University and the partner.
- 17.4 For joint degrees, the Board is arranged and attended jointly by both partners.
- 17.5 For dual degrees, this is considered at two boards, one at the University and one at the partner institution. A representative of the University may attend the partner's board and vice versa.
- 17.6 PhD collaborations are subject to research degree examination processes as specified in QH Section 11. Joint viva voce examinations may be held where a joint PhD is undertaken.

## 18. Academic appeals and irregularities

**Students on courses delivered as part of a School-based collaboration have ultimate right of appeal to the University when they make a complaint or appeal about academic matters.**

**Students on courses at Validated Centres have right of appeal to the University when they make a complaint or appeal about academic matters only when the Centre has failed to follow or correctly apply its own procedures**

## Requirements for School-based collaborative provision

- 18.1 All School-based collaborative provision is governed by the University's procedures for academic appeals, irregularities and student complaints (QH Section 17).
- 18.2 The processes to be undertaken are specified in the Collaborative Operational Document and agreed at approval.
- 18.3 Where a partner is using its own appeals, complaints and irregularities processes, these need to be considered and agreed as part of the approval process.

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- 18.4 Students on School-based collaborative provision have the right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator following completion of any University process.

## **Franchise**

- 18.5 Appeals, irregularities and complaints will be undertaken by the partner in the first instance using either the partners own approved processes or the NTU processes as specified in QH Section 17.
- 18.6 Students have the right to appeal to the University only when the process undertaken by the partner has been completed and where they believe that the partner has materially failed to follow or correctly apply its own procedures. In such cases, the University will investigate the accuracy with which the partner has followed its procedures, to establish whether there has been any material error or failing in the application of the procedures and if so, whether the outcome to the student may have been adversely affected.
- 18.7 Should this appeal be upheld, the University may request that the partner discards the original outcome and revisits the matter or reconsiders the procedure afresh to ensure that the procedure is correctly applied.

## **Joint delivery**

- 18.8 The process undertaken will depend upon the level of responsibility that is delegated to the partner as set out in the approved Collaborative Operational Document.
- 18.9 Where the course is delivered mostly by the University, with minimal input from the partner, the University will investigate using the processes set out in QH Section 17.
- 18.10 Where the partner delivers the majority of the course, the processes are undertaken by the partner in the first instance, and therefore the statements made in paragraphs 11.5 – 11.7 above apply.

## **Joint and dual degrees**

- 18.11 The procedures of the institution at which the student is studying at the time will apply.

## **PhD collaborations**

- 18.12 PhD appeals, complaints and irregularities will be investigated using the research degree processes.
- 18.13 Where it is a joint, double or dual PhD, the procedures of the institution at which the student is studying at the time will apply.

## **Requirements for Validation Service provision**

- 18.14 Validated Centres are required to develop their own policies and procedures for dealing with academic appeals and irregularities. These policies and procedures are reviewed by the University's Academic Registry prior to academic approval.
- 18.15 The policies and processes for appeals and irregularities are considered and agreed at approval.



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- 18.16 Should a student believe that the Centre has materially failed to follow or correctly apply its own procedures, the University will investigate this. It will consider the accuracy with which the Validated Centre has followed its procedures to establish whether there has been any material error or failing in the application of the procedures and if so, whether the outcome to the student may have been adversely affected. Should this appeal be upheld, the University may request that the Validated Centre discards the original outcome and revisits the matter or reconsiders the procedure afresh to ensure that the procedure is correctly applied.
- 18.17 Students on Validation Service collaborative provision have the right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator following completion of the University procedure

## 19. Certificates and transcripts

**For School-based collaborative provision award certificates and transcripts are produced by the University.**

**For Validation Service provision award certificates are produced by the University and transcripts are produced by the Validated Centre.**

### Requirements for School-based collaborative provision

- 19.1 The certificate and / or transcript states the location of delivery and language of study where this is not English.
- 19.2 Where the partner, location and delivery language is not stated on the certificate, the certificate includes a sentence which states "This certificate is to be used in conjunction with the transcript and/or diploma supplement issued separately".
- 19.3 Franchise and joint delivery students receive an award certificate and transcript / diploma supplement from NTU. The partner name, language (where not English) and location of delivery is detailed on the transcript or diploma supplement.
- 19.4 Joint degree students receive one award certificate which carries the crests or logos, and signatures of all degree awarding bodies. The maximum number of partners that can be included on the certificate is three. The student receives one transcript which describes the nature of the collaboration, and details all credits and in which locations these were achieved.
- 19.5 For dual / double degrees, students receive two certificates and transcripts, one from each awarding body. The transcript produced by the University will indicate where credit has been dual counted towards both awards.
- 19.6 Joint PhD students receive one award certificate, which carries the crests / logos of the participating degree awarding bodies.
- 19.7 For double or dual award PhD collaborations each institution awards a separate qualification. The partners may agree to award the same qualification but issue separate certificates.

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- 19.8 In some contexts, it may be inappropriate for the location and language of study to be included on the certificate; in such cases, the transcript will contain this information and the certificate will refer to the existence of the transcript.

## Requirements for Validation Service provision

- 19.9 The certificate and / or transcript states the location of delivery and language of study where this is not English.
- 19.10 The certificate always contains the partner's name and will be signed by the University's Vice-Chancellor. Inclusion of the Centre's logo and a signature from the Head of the Centre is optional.
- 19.11 Transcripts produced by the Centre align to minimum requirements prescribed by NTU and are approved by the University.
- 19.12 In some contexts, it may be inappropriate for the location and language of study to be included on the certificate; in such cases, the transcript will contain this information and the certificate will refer to the existence of the transcript.

## 20. Information for students and partners

**For School-based collaborative provision, responsibility for the provision of information to students and partners is set out in the Collaborative Operational Document which is agreed at approval.**

**For Validation Service provision, the Validated Centre is responsible for the provision of information to students.**

## Requirements

- 20.1 School-based collaborative provision: The School is responsible for ensuring that information provided to students studying on courses delivered as part of School-based collaborative partnerships, is accurate and fit for purpose.
- 20.2 Validation Service Provision: the Validated Centre is responsible for ensuring that information provided to students studying on courses delivered by them is accurate and fit for purpose.
- 20.3 Information provided to students includes:
- entitlements to University services;
  - the student's relationship with the University;
  - membership of representative bodies;
  - processes for academic appeals and irregularities.

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**The University ensures that collaborative partners have current and appropriate information about courses and modules which they deliver and any policies and process by which they may be affected.**

## Requirements

- 20.4 Any changes to University policies, procedures and courses that impact upon a School-based collaborative arrangement, are communicated to the partner by the relevant party, as set out in the Collaborative Operational Document.
- 20.5 School-based collaborative partners are provided with adequate and transparent information and materials in order to deliver the course or module. Responsibility for the provision of these materials is set out in the Collaborative Operational Document.
- 20.6 Any changes to University policies and procedures that impact upon a Validated Centre are communicated to the partner by CADQ, on behalf of ASQC

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<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	Change of name of CFD to Collaborative Operational Document Additional requirement for SASQC to re-approval COD on an annual basis Shift of some policy to NTU QH Section 10
Sept 2017	12.09.17	01.10.17	None
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	Changed course coordinator to collaborative academic lead
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	Updates to the definitions in the franchise and joint/double/dual doctoral award categories
Sept 2021	07.09.21	01.10.21	Updated to include reference to risk management process
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. QH renamed and renumbered.

<b>Equality Analysis</b>		
<i>Version:</i>	<i>EA date:</i>	<i>Completed by:</i>
Sept 2016	26.10.2015	CADQ