

Section **10B**

Nottingham Trent University

Quality Handbook

**Part C: Assuring and
enhancing quality**

**Section 10B: School-based
collaborative provision**

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1. Categories of collaborative provision

The University has clear definitions for each category of School-based collaborative provision.

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

| Category | Definition |
|------------------------------|--|
| Franchise | <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> |
| Joint delivery | <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> |
| Joint / double degree | <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 more centres, leading to a single award made jointly by both partners.</p> <p>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</p> |

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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) SB5.

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.

2. Academic approval

Academic approval takes place separately from, and only after, due diligence and business approval has been agreed. The University takes a risk-based approach to academic approval.

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Requirements

- 2.1 School-based collaborative provision is subject to approval processes which are comparable to and at least as rigorous as the University's own provision.
- 2.2 Initial approval of provision for taught courses and professional doctorates follows the University's Development and Approval Group (DAG) process.
- 2.3 Initial approval of PhD collaborations is undertaken by URDC or DAG as appropriate.
- 2.4 The form of initial academic 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.
- 2.5 The academic approval event 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).
- 2.6 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 The final decision about the nature of academic approval rests with the Executive Dean of Learning and Teaching in discussion with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 2.8 Academic approval of new School-based collaborative partnerships is a two-stage process:
 - a. Institutional approval;
 - b. Approval of the course and / or the operation of the collaboration.
- 2.9 An academic approval event may result in conditions (which must be met before delivery commences), recommendations and commendations.
- 2.10 Where an established School-based partner proposes to add new courses to its portfolio then the form of event may vary.
- 2.11 The School is responsible for, and bears the cost of, travel and accommodation associated with the academic approval event.

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.
- QHS SB1 outlines the approval criteria and process for School-based collaborative provision for taught courses and professional doctorates.
- QHS SB11 outlines the approval process for PhD collaborations.

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School-based collaborative provision is 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.

3. Collaborative Operational Document

School-based collaborative provision is managed according to the Collaborative Operational Document agreed during the approval process.

Requirements

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The Collaborative Operational Document is considered and agreed at the Development and Approval Group (DAG) event or by URDC in the case of PhD collaborations.
- 3.3 The relevant School manages school-based collaborative provision, in accordance with the Collaborative Operational Document.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The Collaborative Operational Document is reviewed and re-approved by SASQCs on an annual basis to ensure it remains current and fit for purpose.

Explanatory notes

- QHS SB3 sets out the requirements for the Collaborative Operational Document.

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- QHS SB4 sets out the requirements of a Collaborative Operational Document for PhD collaborations.

4. Admissions

Ultimately, all decisions on the admission of students 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.

Requirements

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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 at the DAG (or URDC).

5. Monitoring and reporting

School-based 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

- 5.1 Taught courses that are delivered as part of a School-based collaborative partnership are subject to the University's standard course monitoring, review and reporting processes as set out in Quality Handbook (QH) Section 6.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.

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- 5.4 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:
- academic standards continue to be appropriate for the award;
 - the quality of student learning opportunities is maintained;
 - the health of the collaborative arrangement is upheld.

Where school-based collaborative provision is delivered in a language other than English, appropriate arrangements must be made for moderation.

Requirements

- 5.5 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.

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

Requirements

- 5.6 For taught course collaboration, a collaborative academic lead is identified by the School.
- 5.7 For PhD collaborations, the student's Director of Studies undertakes this role.
- 5.8 The collaborative academic lead prepares an annual report and this is considered at the relevant course committee and SASQC.

Explanatory note

- QHS SB5 details the role of the collaborative academic lead.

6. Risk assessment

School-based collaborative provision must have an up-to-date risk assessment in place to ensure that academic risks are identified and actively managed.

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Requirements

- 6.1 Risk assessments for collaborative provision are drawn up by CADQ in liaison with the School upon the approval of a new partnership.
- 6.2 The risk assessment must remain up to date and should be reviewed by the course committee at least one per year as part of annual monitoring, and must be reviewed as part of periodic collaborative review.
- 6.3 Oversight of risk assessments is the responsibility of SASQC and the Collaborations and Partnerships Sub-Committee.
- 6.4 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 by CPSC and VSSC on behalf of the Board of Governors.
- 6.5 Where risk assessment identifies significant risks with a partnership, a mitigation plan is written and a sub-group of CPSC established to monitor and manage the risks.

7. Changes to School-based 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

- 7.1 The mechanisms for approval of changes to courses are the same as if the course was delivered solely at NTU (QH Section 5).
- 7.2 Changes to a Collaborative Operational Document are approved by SASQCs and are reported to the Collaborations and Partnerships Sub-Committee.

8. Periodic collaborative review

School-based collaborative provision is periodically reviewed by the University.

Requirements

- 8.1 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. The review process is both developmental and judgemental.

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- 8.2 Periodic collaborative review forms part of the University's normal quality management procedures for collaborative provision. Review is intended to give all parties an opportunity to explore the strengths of the arrangement and to identify any weaknesses perceived by stakeholders with a view to their improvement.
- 8.3 Periodic collaborative review is a two-stage process:
 - a. Institutional review;
 - b. Review of the operation of the collaboration.
- 8.4 School-based collaborative provision for taught courses or professional doctorates is reviewed by a review panel. A form of review takes place prior to the end of each approval period.
- 8.5 PhD collaborations are approved for the duration of the registration period of the student and are subject to ongoing annual monitoring, review and reporting.
- 8.6 Joint delivery arrangements can be reviewed by the SASQC where risk is identified and recorded as low.
- 8.7 Periodic Collaborative Review of joint degrees may take the form of a joint event to satisfy the requirements of both partners. Joint and double degree arrangements can be subject to the standard periodic collaborative review process as detailed in QHS SB6, or a bespoke review model can be agreed. Review can take place at either institution, preferably on a rotational basis. As the review panel will need to meet with students, the review should be scheduled to align with the period at which the students are studying at the institution where the review is being held.
- 8.8 Review for dual degrees can take place at either institution. As the review panel will need to meet with students, the review should be scheduled to align with the period at which the students are studying at the institution where the review is being held.
- 8.9 Each collaborative arrangement is subject to both business evaluation and periodic review prior to the end of the current approval period.
- 8.10 After a successful review outcome, the academic approval period is extended for between one and five years.
- 8.11 The ongoing length of the approval period is determined at each periodic collaborative review and is based on evidence about the business evaluation, and the quality and standards of the provision.
- 8.12 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.
- 8.13 All School-based collaborative provision is also considered at Periodic School Review (PSR) or Periodic Research Degrees Review.

Explanatory note

- QHS SB6 sets out the requirements for School-based periodic collaborative review.

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9. 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

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Once representation is received from both parties, a decision will be made to either:
 - a. confirm the decision of the DAG / URDC;
 - b. refer the case back to the DAG / 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.
- 9.3 The decision of the appeal body is final.

10. External examiners

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

Requirements

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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.

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- 10.3 Joint and dual degree collaborations may have a jointly appointed external examiner.
- 10.4 The University is responsible for the induction and payment of external examiners.
- 10.5 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.

11. Board of Examiners

School-based 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.

Requirements

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 For joint degrees, the Board is arranged and attended jointly by both partners.
- 11.4 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.
- 11.5 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.

12. 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.

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Requirements

- 12.1 All School-based collaborative provision is governed by the University's procedures for academic appeals, irregularities and student complaints (QH Section 17).
- 12.2 The processes to be undertaken are specified in the Collaborative Operational Document and agreed at approval.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 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

- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 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.
- 12.7 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

- 12.8 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.
- 12.9 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.
- 12.10 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

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

PhD collaborations

- 12.12 PhD appeals, complaints and irregularities will be investigated using the research degree processes.
- 12.13 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.

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13. Certificates and transcripts

Award certificates and transcripts are produced by the University.

Requirements

- 13.1 The certificate and / or transcript states the location of delivery and language of study where this is not English.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 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.
- 13.4 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.
- 13.5 Joint PhD students receive one award certificate, which carries the crests / logos of the participating degree awarding bodies.
- 13.6 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.
- 13.7 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.

14. Information for students and partners

Responsibility for the provision of information to students and partners is set out in the Collaborative Operational Document which is agreed at approval.

Requirements

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 Information provided to students includes:
 - a. entitlements to University services;

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- b. the student's relationship with the University;
- c. membership of representative bodies;
- d. processes for academic appeals and irregularities.

The University ensures that collaborative partners have current and appropriate information about courses and modules which they deliver.

Requirements

- 14.3 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.
- 14.4 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.

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| 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 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 |

| Equality Analysis | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
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| | | |