5   Collaborations with other institutions

5.1   The University's approach to collaborations with other institutions

The University is responsible for the academic standards of all qualifications granted in its name. In developing collaborative provision the University ensures that the student experience at collaborative partners is consistent with that provided within the University, academic standards are equivalent to those of comparable qualifications within the University, and that collaborations reflect the ethos, mission and values of the University. The standard expected of a qualification in a partner institution is the same as that for a corresponding or comparable qualification in the University and should conform to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and subject benchmarks recognised in the UK.

The University operates similar mechanisms for planning, validation, review, and monitoring of collaborative provision as for internal provision with the necessary amendments or additions to reflect the particular requirements of collaborative partnerships. Equally, all relevant academic policies inform the running of collaborative programmes wherever they are provided.

The University expects that the language of tuition and assessment of collaborative programmes will normally be English. Exceptions are agreed on a case by case basis by the relevant Faculty quality committee.

5.2   Preliminary enquiries

Normally, approaches from other institutions wishing to offer programmes leading to qualifications of the University will be directed, in the first instance, to appropriate colleagues in Academic Partnerships and the Faculty to determine if the University is interested in progressing the proposal.

Initial consideration of a new proposal will be made by members of the University Executive and is based on information provided in the preliminary enquiries form (refer Appendix 5a). Key features taken into account include the length of time the institution has been established, evidence of a compatible mission and an appropriate governance and management framework of the institution. Discipline areas are also considered to ensure that no conflict of interest arises with existing partners of the University. Middlesex will also consider an institution's academic record and the type of collaboration it is seeking.

As part of this preliminary stage the University undertakes appropriate enquiries as to the standing, reliability and financial soundness of the prospective partner institution. For institutions that have or have had links with other UK degree awarding institutions, the Director of Academic Partnerships (or nominee) initiates contact confidentially to enquire about their satisfaction with the cooperation with the institution. Cases where other universities have previously withdrawn from collaborative arrangements are always investigated by the Academic Partnerships team. Negative feedback usually results in the termination of the preliminary discussions with the institution. In the case of overseas institutions the University may also seek the views of the British Council and other independent sources. This may include government offices and agencies of the country in which the prospective partner institution is based and/or from the United Kingdom National Academic Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC). For non-UK based institutions the University also needs to establish if a licence to operate is required.

If the proposal looks promising the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) writes to the prospective partner signalling that the University is willing to proceed to institutional approval and informs it of the University's terms and processes. The template Partnership Agreement (Appendix 5g) and an indicative timeline of the institutional approval process are provided to the prospective partner for consideration. It is at this point in time that the University will request from the prospective partner their most recent statement of audited accounts or annual report. Once submitted the audited accounts or annual report will be reviewed by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (or nominee) for comment on the financial soundness of the prospective partner institution. This provides the necessary assurance to the University as to the financial standing of the institution and will aid the panel undertaking the institutional approval visit. Once the finances of the prospective partner have been approved the institutional approval process will be initiated by the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring).

5.3   Institutional approval

Institutional approval will be granted following consideration of documentation submitted by the prospective partner institution, an institutional visit or, in exceptional circumstances, a waiver report, and responses by the institution to any conditions set. Institutional approval is not programme specific and, when granted, is without prejudice to the outcome of any programme-specific validation event.

5.3.1   Purpose

The purpose of institutional approval is to assure the University of the probity and appropriate standing of a potential partner institution: that its general educational ethos is compatible with that of the University; that the partner is financially sound, has appropriate mechanisms of governance and effective quality assurance mechanisms; and is able to provide an appropriate educational experience for students registered for Middlesex University awards.

5.3.2   Scope

The University undertakes institutional approval of institutions and their satellites that wish to collaborate with the University in the delivery of joint, franchised and validated programmes, or parts thereof for all modes of delivery. Institutional approval is also required for institutions which wish to assist in or facilitate the delivery of University programmes by distance education modes.

5.3.3   Responsibilities
University
The designated member of Executive is responsible for granting institutional approval for all collaborative partner institutions through signature of the Partnership Agreement.

The Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) manages the institutional approval process and normally officers and reports on institutional visits. S/he provides an annual report to the University's Collaborations Sub-Committee on newly approved institutions and keeps a register of currently approved institutions.

Institution
The institution bears all costs incurred by the institutional visit panel. This includes the institutional approval fee, travel costs, accommodation charges and necessary out-of-pocket expenses. Further information on costs can be obtained by contacting

either Academic Partnerships or the Academic Quality Service. All costs should be discussed and agreed between the institution and the University prior to the approval of the preliminary enquiry form.

The institution will submit the required documentation for the approval process and respond to conditions of approval set out in the approval letter.

5.3.4   Procedure
The institutional visit
Normally an institutional visit is required before institutional approval may be granted. Institutional visits normally last one day and must convene at the applicant institution. The Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) will make and confirm all arrangements for the visit with appropriate staff of the partner institution.

The institution must complete the Institutional Approval Commentary Form and provide an electronic copy of the requisite supporting documentation (refer Appendix 5b) to the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring). There may be variations on the documentation required based on the structure of the institution.

Documentation submitted by the institution is reviewed for completeness by the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring) (or nominee) and then forwarded to the chair of the institutional visit panel. Preparations for an institutional visit may be postponed or terminated on the basis of the quality of the documentation provided.

The institutional visit is normally undertaken by a senior member of the University as chair and the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring) (or nominee) as officer for the event. The persons undertaking the visit will be provided with copies of all documentation in relation to the proposed collaboration. Visits may not be led by a member of the Faculties of the University which are likely to develop programmes with the institution to be visited, or by staff from the relevant regional office. Should a conflict of interest arise the persons undertaking the visit must declare this to the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) for action. Chairs for institutional visits will normally be senior members of the University with relevant experience of the University's quality assurance processes.

The Academic Quality Service maintains a list of persons approved to lead institutional visits. All new chairs and officers will attend a training session organised by the Academic Quality Service.

The institutional visit normally includes meetings with senior staff and (where possible) teaching staff, staff involved in student support and current students. The schedule of meetings will be in accordance with the format outlined in Guidance 5xii. More time may be allocated for overseas visits.

At the conclusion of the visit the chair will announce whether the visit panel is minded to recommend that institutional approval be granted and stipulate any conditions that must be met before final approval is granted. The visit team may also make recommendations.

A *condition* is set when the visit team has identified an issue or area of concern where the partner's current and/or likely future management of academic standards and/or the quality of education, as prescribed by Middlesex University, is at risk unless the condition is satisfied.

A *recommendation* is set when the visit team believes that the partner's current and/or likely future management of the quality of education provided locally to students would be enhanced if the recommended action is taken.

The standard conditions under which institutional approval is granted, and to which institutions must adhere, are detailed in the Partnership Agreement (refer Appendix 5g.)

Reporting
The officer of the visit panel will normally draft the report within two weeks of the visit and record any conditions to be fulfilled before the institutional approval can be granted. The draft report is sent to the chair for approval. The report will follow the template set out in Appendix 5c. The unconfirmed report is sent to appropriate staff of the institution for comment and correction of factual errors, a procedure normally completed within two weeks of receipt of the unconfirmed report.

Approval
Criteria which have to be met by the partner institution for approval include:
- clarity of why the institution seeks collaboration with the University and in what way
- compatibility of mission and ethos
- compatibility with existing University partnerships
- confidence in the leadership of the institution*
- confidence in the governance arrangements of the institution*
- evidence that the institution is well-managed*
- evidence that the institution has appropriate staff and can appoint more staff if needed
- evidence of appropriate accommodation and supporting resources
- confidence in the ability of the institution to fulfil the University's requirements as outlined in its policy on the language of tuition and assessment
- confidence in the institution's quality assurance approaches and in its ability to fulfil the University's requirements as outlined in the learning and quality enhancement handbook
- financial soundness of the institution
- ability to comply with the Competition and Market's Authority (CMA) obligations

*Governance and management structures
The appropriate governance arrangements for a partner will differ depending on the nature of the partnership and the degree of autonomy they have in design and development of their curriculum. For those with the most autonomy, usually those in validated partnerships, the University would expect there to be independence of institutional ownership from the exercise of academic authority. The University will normally expect a partner to demonstrate the following:

- A governance structure that protects and assures the integrity of academic decision making;
- There should be an independent body established within the organisation with a clear remit for academic development, quality assurance and decision

making. This must be independent of all arrangements that the organisation may have for commercial development;

- Where the institution is a company, the owner, shareholders or trustees should not exercise direct authority for academic decision-making, since this could lead to role conflict and jeopardise the stability of the academic environment;
- There should be an appropriate committee structure to support the delivery and assessment of HE programmes that includes effective student representation at all levels of the structure.

Institutional approval may be granted following consideration of the institutional visit report and responses by the institution to any conditions set for the granting of institutional approval. An institution which has been granted approval is free to approach any Faculties of the University in order to put forward proposals for other programmes, or the delivery of programmes by distance learning. If an institution has only been approved to offer franchised programmes and wishes to develop a validated programme with the University this is permissible however further due diligence at an institutional level will be required.

Institutional approval lasts for six years. If no programmes are put forward for validation in the first two years of the approval period, then approval is normally deemed to have lapsed and the partner is notified accordingly by Academic Partnerships.

Once approval has been granted any changes to an institution's circumstances (e.g. changes of institution's ownership, name) must be notified by the institution to the Academic Partnerships team or Academic Quality Service. A determination will then be made by AQS as to whether these changes require appropriate due diligence or a renegotiation of the collaborative agreement. In such cases where a change of ownership has occurred within the partner institution, it is common practice for the University to initiate the institutional re-approval process (refer section 5.7). All such changes will be noted in the annual institutional approval report to Collaborations Sub-Committee.

Partnership Agreements
All institutions which are granted institutional approval must sign a Partnership Agreement (Appendix 5g). The Partnership Agreement is the formal agreement which must be signed by a member of the University Executive and Principal (or equivalent) of the relevant partner institution detailing the contractual obligations to which both parties must adhere. In all cases, whether consequent on institutional approval or re-approval, partnership agreements must be signed no later than one month prior to the scheduled start date of the agreement.

All partners who sign partnership agreements are accorded the same status with the University.

5.3.4.1 Approval of new sites or campuses of approved institutions
All new sites or campuses should be approved by the appropriate Faculty/University Committee via an APPF prior to a visit taking place (refer section 2.3.5). The Academic Quality Service will identify the documentation required in order to ensure clarity of operation of the new site or campus and congruence with other sites of the approved institution. This may include details of management structures, quality assurance arrangements, feedback and complaints procedures, mechanisms to support the student experience, staff appointment, support and development, and

resources. The way in which the new site is incorporated into the operation of other approved sites will be a key consideration in all cases.

The documentation typically required in advance of a site visit is as follows:
a. Written statement covering the legal status of the delivery centre
b. Document (s) detailing the lease arrangements/ownership of the delivery centre.
c. A written statement and diagrammatic representation of the organisational and management structure of the delivery centre and its relationship with other site(s)
d. Financial arrangements and link with the main site (if additional site)
e. Description of the quality assurance arrangements that will be in place at the delivery centre for:
  • Curriculum development, where applicable;
  • teaching and learning methods;
  • feedback to students on assessed work;
  • tracking student progression and achievement;
  • monitoring and review of programmes;
  • collection and evaluation of student feedback;
  • student academic and pastoral support;
  • management and administration of the assessment process;
  • student complaints and academic misconduct;
  • student consultation and representation systems;
  • maintenance of student records.
f. Information on the welfare and support services available to students at the new centre
g. Information about recruitment and monitoring of the performance for teaching staff at the delivery centre
h. Staff appointment and development policy for staff at the delivery centre
i. Description of the physical, learning resources at the delivery centre
j. Insurance arrangements which will be in place in respect of the delivery centre's responsibilities and liabilities towards students (i.e. public liability and professional indemnity insurance)

A site visit will take place. Normally this will be combined with approval to offer the agreed programmes at the new site or campus (refer Section 3). The purpose of the visit is to ensure the suitability of the academic environment in which the programme(s) will be offered, including the staff team, academic and physical resources, student support services. Where a site visit is not taking place as part of a validation or review the procedures detailed below will apply. The site visit team will make the decision as to whether the site is to be approved.

Membership of the visit team will be determined by the extent of the new campus and the new provision. Where programmes are to be delivered by a new team of academic staff at a new site the visit team will comprise:
  • A senior member of staff from the Faculty (Chair)
  • Officer to the event
  • External assessor (in relation to the programme validation, may be by correspondence as determined by Academic Quality Service)
The link tutor may also be in attendance.

Where the provision at the new site is to be delivered by the same staff as deliver already at another approved campus, the visit team will comprise a senior member of staff of the Faculty, plus the officer to the event.

Where the additional location represents only a teaching resource – i.e. learning resources and academic and pastoral support are provided from the main site or via e-resources, and all the teaching staff are employed and based at the main site - the visit may be undertaken by a senior member of the Faculty staff or exceptionally the link tutor, as agreed by the Director of AQS.

Where a site visit is required as a result of a move of premises, the visit will be undertaken by a senior member of the Faculty staff or exceptionally the link tutor, as agreed by the Director of AQS.

If a partner institution wishes to run an existing programme at a new site then they must complete form Appendix 2f. If a partner institution wishes to run an existing programme at a currently approved site then they must complete form Appendix 2g. The APPF must be approved by the relevant Faculty and/or University committee prior to delivery of the programme(s). A site visit by the senior member of the Faculty or University Link Tutor (as determined by AQS) will normally be required to confirm that the premises are suitable for the delivery of the programme(s). AQS will work with the relevant Faculty to determine the appropriate arrangements.

Visit reports are written by the Officer for the event and will be sent to the partner institution, with copies to Academic Partnerships, the Deputy Dean, University Link Tutor, and Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) following the template provided in Appendix 5c.

5.3.4.2 Institutional approval without the need for a visit
In exceptional circumstances Middlesex University at its own discretion may waive the need for an institutional visit. The requirement for an institutional visit may be waived where prospective partners are recognised as high quality providers of HE provision and have rigorous internal academic quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms in place.

Normally, institutions where visits are waived are expected to be internationally recognised degree awarding institutions in their own right. This recognition would apply to the institution as a whole rather than particular departments within the institution and would come from such authorities as regional or national quality organisations, governmental bodies or other authoritative organisations or international quality organisations.

Institutional visits may be waived for the following types of institutions:

UK-based institutions
- UK universities and other HE institutions with degree awarding powers in their own right
- HE institutions without degree awarding powers previously approved by another UK University
- FE Colleges with existing expertise in delivering HE provision
- Reputable and financially sound privately funded education providers with recent expertise of collaboration with other UK HEIs in the delivery of HE provision

Overseas institutions
- Reputable state-funded overseas universities and other HE institutions with internationally recognised degree awarding powers in their own right whose

educational ethos is compatible with that of the University with or without experience of delivering UK HE provision
- Reputable privately funded overseas universities and other HE institutions with degree awarding powers in their own right whose educational ethos is compatible with that of the University with experience of delivering UK HE provision
- Distance Education administrative centres

Agreement to waive the institutional visit is given by the Director of AQS, but it should not be assumed that a waiver will be granted to institutions which meet the criteria listed above. Once the Director of AQS has agreed that the institution is a candidate for a waiver, the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring) will prepare a report detailing the outcomes of the documentary evidence review and make a recommendation as to whether institutional approval be granted.

5.4   Programme development and validation
Please see sections 2 and 3 for full details of programme development and validation processes.

5.5   Institutional monitoring
5.5.1 Purpose
The purpose of institutional monitoring is to ensure that academic standards, student achievement and the quality of the student experience continue to be adequate, that institutions manage quality and standards in an appropriate way and that they remain financially viable. Institutional monitoring is also intended to provide assurance that there are no serious problems at institutional level, rather than at individual programme level which are already closely monitored by existing arrangements.

5.5.2 Scope
The Academic Quality Service will build up an academic quality profile for all collaborative provision. This will form part of a partner risk register maintained with Academic Partnerships, which will form the basis for an institutional monitoring report which is provided to the Collaborations sub-Committee on an annual basis.

This report includes an evaluation of the partner institution's engagement with University quality procedures (e.g. through the timely response to recommendations raised in external examiner reports and the timely provision of annual or quality monitoring reports); an evaluation of quality documents that might indicate serious concerns or continuing issues with standards and/or the quality of the student experience (e.g. OfS concerns, external examiner and programme validation/review reports, annual monitoring reports, HTS/tier 4 licence status, student complaints, appeals and academic misconduct cases). The report will enable emerging themes, issues and actions to be identified, to be addressed by Faculties and/or partners as appropriate.

5.5.3 Responsibilities
University
Responsibility for institutional monitoring rests with the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring) in the Academic Quality Service.

Institution
The institution is responsible for submitting the required documentation for the monitoring process as required, for example audited accounts (in instances where a financial review is scheduled to take place).

5.5.4   Procedure
A risk register for all partners will be compiled to include, for each partner:

- Factual information, including numbers of programmes and student numbers, dates of programme reviews, expiry dates of Partnership Agreement or MoC;
- Registration with the Office for Students (where applicable);
- Outcomes of any reviews by QAA or other regulatory bodies;
- Border Agency Status;
- Outcomes of most recent reviews of marketing and representation of the Middlesex Brand;
- Criteria for quality and standards assessment: concerns raised by external examiners or in Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB) reports; concerns arising from annual monitoring reports; numbers of cases of academic misconduct and complaints;
- Financial viability and lateness of payment;
- Political or economic context/reputational risks;
- Legal/regulatory compliance.

For each assessable risk, a risk rating will be assigned and planned actions identified.

Monitoring the financial viability of the partner institution
The University monitors the ongoing financial viability of all partner institutions through an assessment of the partner institution's accounts. Partners submit their accounts at institutional approval at which point they are risk rated. Following this, the financial viability of partners will normally be checked on an annual basis. With the approval of the Chief Financial Officer (or nominee), and on the basis of an assessment of low financial risk, these checks may be made on a less frequent basis. Financial viability of UK partners is first assessed via credit check reports which are reviewed in the first instance by the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring). UK Partners meeting pre-defined criteria on financial risk and financial strength are assigned an overall risk rating of low without an assessment of the accounts. Where a partner does not meet the pre-defined criteria the accounts are sent to the Chief Financial Officer (or nominee) so that s/he may conduct a detailed review. Accounts for international partners are always sent for detailed review. The Chief Financial Officer (or nominee) is responsible for reviewing partner institution accounts and assesses the profitability and balance sheet for financial robustness. Copies of the financial review are circulated to the Academic Quality Service. An overall financial risk rating of high will result in more intensive investigation involving discussion with the institution to fully understand the financial position and may result in termination of the collaboration.

Monitoring the partner institution's status with the UK Border Agency (UKBA)
The University monitors partners in order to ensure that the partners are meeting their Tier 4 requirements. Partners are required to send a copy of the report by the UKBA to Academic Partnerships, and inform the Academic Quality Service and relevant the Faculties of the outcomes of any monitoring by the UKBA.

The University also monitors relevant UKBA statistics and any other changes with respect to partners (such as loss of UKBA status) to identify changes in risk. Partner institutions are required to inform the Centre for Academic Partnerships, the Academic Quality Service and the relevant Faculty of any changes.

5.6   Institutional review

If at any time during the agreement period there are serious concerns that quality requirements and standards across the institution are not being met, appropriate actions must be taken on the part of the collaborative partner, and an institutional review will be required in those cases where the University is not assured that concerns are being appropriately and effectively addressed. If such concerns are identified through institutional monitoring a formal review may take place before the end of the institutional approval period.

5.6.1   Responsibilities
University
Responsibility for institutional review rests with the Director of AQS. The Academic Quality Service manages the review process, services any review visits and produces a review report. All administrative arrangements for institutional review visits and travel arrangements for the institutional visit panel are made by the Academic Quality Service. The costs incurred by the visit panel during a review visit are borne by the partner institutiton.

Institution
Institutions due for a review visit are responsible for producing all necessary documentation for the review process in good time.

5.6.2   Scope
The scope and focus of the review will depend on the nature of the concerns.

5.6.3   Procedure
The Director of AQS confirms the necessity of a review visit based on recommendations made by the Academic Quality Service as a result of the ongoing monitoring exercise of collaborative links. Institutional review will involve the provision of documents specified by the Academic Quality Service on a case by case basis and a review visit to the institution in question.

The review is undertaken by a Senior Member of the University unconnected with the partner as chair, and the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring) as officer for the event. The visit panel will also include a University representative from a Faculty or central service not aligned to the institution to be reviewed. The persons undertaking the review will be provided with copies of all documentation in relation to the review.

Review visits will last at least half a working day and must take place at the partner institution. The visit schedule will be determined by the Academic Quality Service on a case by case basis. The Academic Quality Service will make contact with the institution and make arrangements for the visit. The Deputy Dean(s) of the link Faculty and University Link Tutors will be informed of the date of the visit and its focus.

The panel officer drafts a report usually within two weeks of the visit. The report will follow the template set out in Appendix 5f.

The review report will make a general judgement on the level of confidence that the University has in the institution as an organisation capable of discharging its responsibility for the standards and quality of awards granted in the name of Middlesex University. The judgement will be one of the following: "confidence", "limited confidence" or "no confidence". Action points will be categorised as essential, advisable or desirable. In the case of "limited confidence" a report on actions taken to address essential

recommendations will be required by the institution within six months of publication of the report. If a "no confidence" verdict is reached the University may terminate the collaborative link. The report will also indicate whether a decision for an extension of approval for a future period can be made, record any conditions to be fulfilled before the institutional re-approval can be granted and detail any conditions that may be attached to this extension.

The unconfirmed report is sent to the institution for comment and correction of factual errors. Based on the decision in the report the partnership will either continue or be terminated (refer section 5.8)

5.7   Institutional re-approval

Institutional re-approval will typically be undertaken prior to the revalidation/review of the programme(s) following initial approval or previous re-approval. The Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) will make a recommendation for re-approval to the Director of AQS based on documentation submitted by the partner.

A visit may take place to ensure that processes, procedures, facilities and resources remain suitable for teaching and learning. The composition of the visit team will be appropriate for the size and complexity of the partner.

All partner institutions, whether offering franchise, joint or validated collaborative programmes, must complete the Institutional Re-Approval Commentary Form and provide an electronic copy of the requisite supporting documentation (refer Appendix 5d) to the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships & Quality Monitoring). There may be variations on the documentation required based on the structure of the institution.

In addition, the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) (or nominee) will also review the Educational Monitoring Reports and External Examiners' Reports for the previous two years, and the website. On the basis of the documentation the Quality Enhancement Manager (Partnerships and Quality Monitoring) (or nominee) will write a report, including a recommendation, for the Director of AQS to consider. Only the Director of AQS or, in her/his absence, the designated member of Executive may grant institutional re-approval. Institutional re-approval normally lasts for six years. Following confirmation of the institutional re-approval, a new Partnership Agreement (see 5.3.4 Partnership Agreements) will be signed.

5.8   Termination of partnerships

The University will consider closure of non-viable programmes and/or partnerships. The decision to terminate rests with the designated member of Executive. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. if the programme and/or partnership makes an important contribution to the achievement of the University's corporate objectives, is vital to fulfilling the University's obligations in the region or significantly contributes to the enhancement of the University's reputation) the University may decide to continue with the collaboration. Reasons for termination include, lack of alignment with University strategy, concerns regarding academic standards, consistent under-recruitment and/or low student numbers, financial viability of the institution or the collaborative link, local economic or political unrest, and or damage to the reputation of the University.

MoCs provide for a minimum 12 months' notice period in such cases. In these cases provision is made for any remaining students to complete their programmes as originally planned at the partner institution. In other circumstances (such as a partner institution experiencing financial difficulties and having to close) the University will implement the agreed Student Protection Plan and Contingency Arrangements to ensure that the students can continue their studies. The obligations for the University and partner institutions in matters related to closure are included in the relevant MoC.

Terminated partnerships are reported to the Collaborations Sub-Committee Academic Partnerships on behalf of the designated member of Executive together with an outline of the reasons and timescales for closure. The partner is notified accordingly by Academic Partnerships.

In cases where the University finds itself in a position which necessitates withdrawal from a collaborative arrangement it will, if asked, make disclosures to any other UK universities wishing to collaborate with that institution, insofar as this does not breach any legal or contractual arrangements entered into by the University with the institution.

5.9 Management of collaborative partnerships
5.9.1 Responsibilities

University

Faculty Dean
The Faculty Dean, in collaboration with Academic Partnerships, has overall responsibility for the development and operation of collaborative partnerships. This responsibility is exercised largely through the Deputy Deans and the University Link Tutor(s).

Deputy Dean
The relevant Deputy Dean(s) are responsible for the appointment of the University Link Tutors preparing the programme validation proposals for the relevant Faculty Committee, preparing the APPF, representation at the validation/review and identification designation of chair for validated programme assessment boards.

University Link Tutor
The University Link Tutors together with Institution Link Tutor(s) and Academic Partnerships ensure the smooth running of the day-to-day operation of the partnership. The full range of duties for Link Tutors is set out Guidance 5(ii).

Academic Partnerships
Academic Partnerships provides the central administrative hub working closely with Deputy Deans, Link Tutors, and relevant services to provide comprehensive support to collaborative partnerships for the development, management and delivery of provision.

Academic Quality Service
The Academic Quality Service monitors quality assurance issues arising from collaborative links at University level.

Partner Institution
The partner institution appoints the Institution Link Tutor for the proposed programme when the University Link Tutor is appointed. The head of the institution

is ultimately responsible to the University for the quality and standards of the programme.

The Institution Link Tutor together with the University Link Tutor and Academic Partnerships ensures the smooth running of the day-to-day operation of the link. The full range of duties for link tutors is set out in Guidance 5(ii).

5.9.2   Administrative and operational procedures
The Memorandum of Co-operation for every collaborative programme includes an administrative annexe identifying those responsible for the administrative functions relating to the collaborative link.

Academic Partnerships, the institutional contacts and the link tutors ensure an effective partnership is sustained at an administrative level between the University and the partner institution.

These relationships provide the University with assurance that there is a reliable and timely exchange of information in relation to the operation, management and quality assurance of the partnership. This is underpinned by regular visits by the University Link Tutors. Link tutors working with Academic Partnerships will maintain the link between the University and the partner and act as sources of advice and are required to notify the Faculty and the Academic Quality Service of any significant operational difficulties which require urgent resolution.

5.9.3   Quality enhancement

Partnership quality enhancement review
After the first year of operation of a new collaborative link the Academic Quality Service may conduct a partnership quality enhancement review. For UK partners this will involve a visit to the partner together with the University Link Tutor and/or Deputy Dean. The aim of the visit is to review the operation of the link and identify any problems that need resolving as well as to discuss with the partner any University requirements for the coming year, e.g. annual monitoring. Overseas partners will usually receive a virtual visit by the Academic Quality Service, but in certain circumstances, a visit to the partner institution may be required.

Student feedback
All collaborative partnerships are required to hold Programme Voice Groups twice per academic year. The detailed requirements are set out in section 9.

In addition, franchised or joint programmes will use University student feedback mechanisms outlined by the Faculty. Validated programmes may opt to use the University feedback mechanism or operate an equivalent process which must be approved by the relevant Deputy Dean of the link Faculty.

Students from joint and validated/funded programmes in publicly funded institutions will also be invited to participate in the National Student Survey (NSS). For further details see section 9.

Staff visits
University staff regularly visit and liaise with partner institutions including attendance at Programme Voice Groups, and assessment boards where appropriate, and to verify the accessibility and appropriateness of learning facilities and other support services.

Staff development
The University encourages all possible joint staff development which is designed to brief staff and/or enhance the understanding of the delivery, assessment or management of the programmes. This may include involvement in validation and review events which will support and assure the comparability of ethos and standards across partner institutions.

The University does not formally observe teaching as partner institutions will have their own mechanisms for evaluating teaching and these will have been considered as part of the institutional approval process. However, informal opportunities for observation, as a form of staff development, may provide valuable insights. In addition, the University will make available its own policies and procedures in relation to teaching and peer observation of teaching.

Institutional Link Tutors and University Link Tutors should consider, on a regular basis, the implications of feedback for staff development. Such activities are recorded in the annual monitoring reports, as is the identification of future staff development requirements.

5.9.4   Partner Institution Forum
A Partner Institution Forum for UK-based partners is normally held biannually to promote information exchange and discussion encompassing all relevant topics including UK HE teaching and learning developments, quality assurance and enhancement.

Terms of reference
a. to maintain awareness in partner institutions of developments in UK HE teaching and learning and quality assurance and enhancement that are likely to impact on institutions' processes and provision;
b. to consult with partner institutions on major changes in the University's teaching, learning and quality assurance and enhancement processes and procedures relevant to collaborative partners;
c. to brief partner institutions on external review processes involving collaborative partners of the University; and
d. to serve as a forum for partner institutions to discuss with colleagues and the University any issues or concerns relating to their provision and or quality procedures.

5.10   Collaborative programme Students Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements

5.10.1 Purpose
Collaborative programme Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements are concerned with protecting the interests of students on collaborative programmes delivered by partners unable to continue to offer MU awards. The intention of the plans is to put in place arrangements that would allow such students to complete identical or similar University awards. The plans allow the University to meet its contractual obligations to enrolled students, and also fulfils an expectation of the QAA Quality Code which requires the University to put in place measures that would ensure that all students enrolled with the University are able to graduate with an appropriate University award.

5.10.2 Scope

All University collaborative awards should have valid collaborative programme Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements in place.

5.10.3 Responsibilities
Faculty
The relevant Deputy Dean has responsibility for ensuring that there are Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements in place for programme(s) within their Faculty. Generating appropriate contingency plans is normally the responsibility of the University Link Tutor working with the Deputy Dean.

Academic Partnerships
For large partnerships, where appropriate, Academic Partnerships, in consultation with Faculties, will arrange for agreements to be made at partner level[1]. Academic Partnerships will keep copies of the most recently agreed plans for all collaborative programmes, and will report on the status of the plans in their annual report on MoCs and associated matters to the Assurance Committee.

5.10.4 Procedure
Agreeing
Academic Partnerships will coordinate the finalisation of the plans in conjunction with the relevant Faculties. Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements will be agreed within the Memorandum of Cooperation.

Reviewing plans
Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements must be reviewed and reaffirmed at programme review (before a review can be signed off). The updated plan should be submitted to Academic Partnerships by the officer of the event.

Guidance on writing contingency plans
This section provides guidance to those generating Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements.

Nature of the awards that will replace the award no longer supported by the partner
In creating Student Protection Plans and Contingency Arrangements it is first necessary to consider the criteria for any award that will replace the exiting award should the need arise. The replacement award should meet the following criteria (provided here in outline, a fuller explanation of these criteria which would be required for generating contingency plans is included as Guidance 5x:

Aspect	Requirements in respect of the replacement award
Aims	Identical or similar to existing award
Learning outcomes	Identical or similar to existing award
Title	Identical or similar to existing award
Teaching, learning and assessment strategies	May be changed but should be appropriate for the aims, learning outcomes, title and profile of the students
Syllabus	May be changed - conditions as above
Mode of learning	Changes from face to face to blended learning allowed without restriction. Changes to distance education allowed up to a maximum percentage change

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[1] N.B. These arrangements may also involve subsidiary contingency agreements at programme level.

Accreditation	Learning may be accredited (up to a maximum percentage of the programme)
Student support and resourcing arrangements	May be changed so as long as arrangements meet MU requirements for awards
PSRB recognition	Plan should consider how existing PSRB would be obtained for the replacement award
Language of tuition/assessment	Normally identical to the existing award