

Academic Collaboration

(Joint, Franchised, Validated and Articulated Programmes)

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1.0 QMU Policy on Academic Collaboration

1.1 Context

Academic collaborations are an important element of QMU's provision. Through collaborations, QMU can offer programmes to students in a wider range of geographical locations and professional contexts. The establishment and operation of collaborative partnerships is a key strategic goal as set out in the University's overall strategic plan.

This policy on academic collaboration is designed both to focus and facilitate the development of relevant and appropriate academic partnerships within the UK and internationally. These include, but are not limited to, UK educational providers (both FE and HE); UK organisations (both public and private sector); international educational providers; and international organisations. Further detail on the types of partners that are considered relevant and appropriate is set out in [Section Four](#) below.

1.2 Policy Statement

As indicated above, QMU values academic collaboration as a key aspect of its academic strategy, and recognises the benefits of such collaboration, both to the institution and to its students.

In this context, QMU will seek to engage with a range of relevant and appropriate national and international partners whose work is complementary to that of QMU, whose values match those of QMU, and which bring benefits to staff and students of both partners.

In seeking academic collaboration, QMU emphasises the importance of establishing and maintaining partnerships in which relationships are balanced, with collaborative partners encouraged to derive equal benefit from the partnership and to contribute fully in joint decision-making processes.

Working with UK based educational partners will enable QMU to: develop stronger articulation links and joint educational programmes with Further Education in pursuit of its access policies; strengthen and diversify educational programmes through the synergies developed across partnerships with Higher Education; and develop routes to CPD and life long learning through partnerships with other organisations involved in training.

Partnerships with public and private sector organisations in the UK will allow QMU to work at the interface of professional research-led practices and contemporary approaches to pedagogy.

Partnerships with international organisations will facilitate the internationalisation of QMU's educational programmes and research.

The scope, complexity and volume of collaboration bring new challenges and intensify existing ones. Principal amongst these are the need to safeguard the broader cultural, social and economic contributions of higher education and research; protect the interests of students while facilitating their mobility and preserving cultural diversity within higher education.

QMU believes that academic collaboration can make an important contribution to enhancing higher education if it is developed and delivered responsibly and effectively. It should strive to contribute to the broader economic, social and cultural well-being of communities, and in the case of international collaboration, should be sensitive in its approach and content, strengthening local higher education capacity by, for example, cooperating, with local institutions. It is recognised therefore that such collaborative activity may be time limited.

It will also provide comparable standards of academic quality no matter where it is delivered, and will expand the opportunities for mobility of staff and students.

QMU also recognises the benefits to students of academic partnership through: the promotion of articulated access, lifelong learning opportunities and CPD routes. International collaboration supports the internationalisation of its educational programmes. Collaboration with public and private sector organisations supports the development of awards that are relevant to research informed professional practice.

1.3 The Selection of Relevant and Appropriate Partners

QMU recognises the benefits and risk associated with academic collaboration. Success depends upon working within available resources, managing risks, and identifying synergies with the potential UK or International partner. Considerable emphasis is placed on the selection of relevant and appropriate partners.

In approving a collaborative partnership, the institution requires to be assured of the following principles:

1. that the activities of the proposed collaboration provide a close fit with the vision and strategic plan of QMU and with the operational plan of the School, Institute or Centre;
2. that the proposed collaboration contributes to strategic targets related to academic provision, research or knowledge transfer;
3. that the proposed collaboration supports the operational plan of the relevant School, Institute or Centre;
4. that the discipline or subject area of the proposed collaboration falls within QMU's current or developing areas of expertise;
5. that the educational mission and aims of the partner are consonant with the mission, aims and values of QMU;
6. that entering into the partnership would not have any negative impact on the reputation of the University;
7. that the partner is of good academic standing and financially stable;
8. that the partner is in a position to contract legally with the University;
9. that the partner institution either has robust and complementary systems of academic regulations, quality assurance and staffing policies or is fully willing and able to comply with QMU regulations and procedures;
10. that the partner institution has sufficient facilities to ensure that appropriate arrangements for student support are in place, broadly equivalent to those provided at QMU.

The above points should be covered by the Risk Assessment and Evaluation Report (see below).

In addition, before final approval can be given to proceed to validation, the Academic Planning Board must be satisfied that:

11. the expectations and requirements of both QMU and the proposed partner are clearly demonstrated and appropriately costed;
12. the collaborative programme can be delivered on the basis of an income stream that supports full-economic costs.

Where these principles do not apply in totality, the collaboration may still be approved. However, the basis of that approval must be minuted by the Academic Planning Board, which should also provide details of the basis on which the collaboration can achieve the spirit of the mission/vision statement and the steps which are to be taken to ameliorate the impact of any aspects of the above principles with which the proposal is not fully compliant.

2.0 General Principles

- 2.1 Queen Margaret University may engage in academic collaboration with other institutions and bodies, both within the UK and overseas. Such collaboration will normally lead to an award of the University.
- 2.2 Ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of any programme offered in the name of Queen Margaret University lies with the Senate of the University. Proposals for collaborative programmes must therefore undergo the standard validation process in order to obtain the approval of Senate.
- 2.3 This section is concerned with the arrangements entered into by Queen Margaret University with partner institutions that involve:
- The award of a qualification in the name of Queen Margaret University;
 - The provision by a partner of all or part of a programme of study leading to a Queen Margaret University award;
 - Collaboration with a local support centre for a programme of study leading to an award of Queen Margaret University;
 - Direct entry or entry with advanced standing of students to Queen Margaret University by virtue of their satisfactory progress in approved programmes in a partner institution.
- 2.4 It is recognised that staff of the University may enter into a range of collaborative arrangements that do not lead to awards of Queen Margaret University. This might include teaching on a programme delivered by a partner, or the delivery of a consultancy service. Such arrangements are not within the scope of this section, but approval in principle must be sought from the Dean of School. Staff are advised to consult the University Secretary for further advice and assistance. Specific procedures for the approval of collaborative short programmes are set out in [section 13](#) below.
- 2.5 These regulations have been developed to ensure that the quality and standards of awards offered in the name of Queen Margaret University under such collaborative agreements are equivalent to those of comparable awards offered by the University and are compatible with any relevant benchmarks recognised in the UK including the [UK Quality Code](#) and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- 2.6 No binding collaborative links involving the provision of a programme or part of a programme, leading to an award of Queen Margaret University may be established, or constitute part of Queen Margaret University's provision, without the full prior knowledge and agreement of the Academic Planning Board.
- 2.7 Failure to guarantee the quality and standards of the provision offered in Queen Margaret University's name will serve not only to harm its reputation, but will do a lasting disservice to the University's graduates at home and overseas.

3.0 Types of Collaboration

3.1 A Collaborative Programme is a programme designed and/or delivered and/or assessed by the staff of Queen Margaret University in partnership with one or more institution. A partner institution is the institution or other body with which Queen Margaret University enters into an agreement to collaborate. Note: the terms partner and partnership are not used in these regulations with their narrower legal definition.

3.2 There are four broad types of formal collaborative programme: validated, franchise, joint/double/multiple awards and dual awards. Additionally, articulation agreements may be made allowing entry to a QMU programme from a partner programme. A summary table providing guidance on validation and franchise arrangements and joint awards is provided below. Note that some awards may contain a mixture of franchised elements and elements developed by the partner organisation and may not fall neatly into either the category of franchised or validated programme. Similarly, awards made jointly with other institutions with degree awarding powers may take a wide variety of forms. The table below indicates how responsibilities are normally distributed between partners in different types of agreement. The definitions reflect terminology used within UK higher education. They do not preclude alternative or bespoke arrangements.

	TYPE OF AGREEMENT			
	Validated Programme	Franchise Arrangement	Joint / Double / Multiple Degree*	Dual Award*
<i>Award designed by</i>	Partner Institution or QMU and Partner Institution	QMU	QMU and Partner Institution(s)	QMU and Partner Institution
<i>Programme validated by</i>	QMU	QMU	QMU and Partner Institution(s)	QMU and Partner Institution
<i>Students admitted by</i>	Partner Institution (with advice from QMU) QMU retains the right to make final decision	Partner Institution (with advice from QMU) QMU retains the right to make final decision	QMU and / or Partner Institution(s) – May be delegated to partner	QMU and Partner Institution – this is a joint decision
<i>Teaching provided by</i>	Partner Institution or QMU and Partner Institution	Partner Institution	Partner Institution(s) and/or QMU	QMU and Partner Institution(s)
<i>Award made by</i>	QMU	QMU	QMU and Partner Institution(s)	QMU or Partner Institution or both (separate awards)

* For these awards the partner institution(s) must have degree awarding powers in their own right.

3.3 A Franchise arrangement is the process by which Queen Margaret University authorises the provision of the whole or part of one or more of its own approved programmes by a partner institution. In doing so, Queen Margaret University retains overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements. The approval of such programmes will be conducted through the University's established procedures and a Memorandum of Agreement will be required. If a complete award is franchised, changes to the parent programme made at the point of review, or approved by the School Academic Board between review events, must be reflected in the franchise version. If individual modules are franchised, changes in the

parent modules approved by the School Academic Board will normally be reflected in changes to the franchise version.

- 3.4 A Validated programme is developed and delivered by the staff of a partner institution. Whilst some aspects of programme management may be delegated to the partner institution, Queen Margaret University retains ultimate responsibility for the standard of awards made in its name. The validated programme will normally be in a subject linked to Queen Margaret University's own portfolio but the partner may provide specialist expertise. The approval of such programmes will be conducted through Queen Margaret University's established procedures. The award will be conferred by Queen Margaret University and a Memorandum of Agreement will be required.
- 3.5 A Joint award is a programme designed and/or delivered and/or assessed by the staff of Queen Margaret University and one or more partner institutions, where each of the partners has the power to make the award in question. The approval of such programmes will be conducted through the established procedures of the University and the partner institution(s). The programme will be subject to the quality assurance and quality control process of Queen Margaret University and the partner institution(s). The award will normally be jointly conferred by Queen Margaret University and the partner institution(s). A Memorandum of Agreement will be required. In a Joint award a single certificate is issued to successful graduates, bearing the crests of each partner. In some cases, there may be legal or regulatory barriers to the issue of a single certificate. In this case each partner will issue its own certificate but the wording on the certificates will cross-refer to the other partner(s) in order to make clear the nature of the collaborative arrangement. This is normally known as a Double award or (if three or more partners are involved) a Multiple award. See [Section 14](#) for more information.
- 3.6 A Dual Award normally refers to an arrangement in which the student studies partly at each partner institution and uses the credits from one partner's programme towards the other partner's award (or from both awards towards the other). Each degree-awarding body is responsible for its own award. Students who successfully complete the two programmes receive separate certificates, one for each of the qualifications being granted by each of the awarding bodies involved. A distinguishing feature of this type of arrangement is that it is possible for the student to meet the requirements for one award without meeting the requirements for the other. By combining related awards in this way a student may achieve two certificates in a shorter period of time than if each were studied separately. See [Section 14](#) for more information.
- 3.7 In some cases, an institution with degree awarding powers may wish to have its award validated by Queen Margaret University as well. This may make the qualification more attractive to potential students. In this case, the award may be delivered mainly or solely by the partner. It may include elements that are required in that country's education system but which are not required for the QMU award. Graduates would receive two separate certificates as in a Double Award.
- 3.8 Articulation is a particular form of formal credit-rating and transfer agreement between Queen Margaret University and another institution, and will involve Queen Margaret University recognising and granting specific credit or advanced standing to applicants from a named programme of study pursued in the other institution. For example, an HNC at College A may give direct access to Year 2 of a related Queen Margaret University undergraduate programme. Once an articulation agreement is in place, applicants do not require an individual assessment of Recognition of Prior Learning. An articulation agreement will be required.
- 3.9 The following procedures apply in full to franchised, joint, dual and validated programmes that result in an award in the name of Queen Margaret University. There will be an element of discretion in terms of their application to articulation agreements.
- 3.10 The following procedures are an extension of, and should be read in conjunction with, those established in the [Programme development, monitoring and review](#) chapter.

Collaborative arrangements require that those procedures be expanded upon to allow for full consideration of the proposed collaborative link.

4.0 Selecting a Collaborative Partner

For a Local Support Centre please see paragraph 12 of this Section

4.1 In considering possible collaborative partnerships, Queen Margaret University will have particular regard to the national and local context within which the partner institution operates, as well as its own policy on collaborative partnerships.

4.2 Collaborative arrangements should expand on teaching and learning opportunities, without prejudice to the standard of the award, the academic standards of the University and the quality of the learning experience available to students.

4.3 In selecting a partner institution, Queen Margaret University will therefore seek evidence in the partner institution of appropriate:

- Organisational, management and quality assurance arrangements;
- Staff qualifications and experience;
- Regulations and procedures governing the student experience, including academic support and guidance and provision for meeting students' wider educational needs;
- Provision of learning support and infrastructure at a level and quality to meet the requirements for programmes leading to an award of Queen Margaret University;
- Ethical standards for research and other collaborations);
- Provision for staff appointment, induction and development.

4.4 With respect to the overseas partners, particular care will be taken to understand fully;

- The local law relating to higher education, including in relation to the licensing of overseas higher education operators;
- The local law, and applicable laws within the UK, in respect of contracts and their enforceability;
- The local higher education system and the place of the partner institution within it;
- The legal and financial position of private institutions (where applicable);
- Requirements in respect of national and international recognition of awards and professional qualifications (i.e. whether or not an award of Queen Margaret University will be recognised in the students' home country).

It is the responsibility of the University to inform any professional statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) that has approved a programme which is the subject of a possible or actual collaborative agreement of its proposals.

4.5 In addition to paragraph 4.4 above, for overseas partners, the University may seek the advice of the British Council and/or local or UK Government offices based in the country concerned.

4.6 In selecting a partner institution, Queen Margaret University will seek evidence from reliable sources as to the institution's financial security and probity.

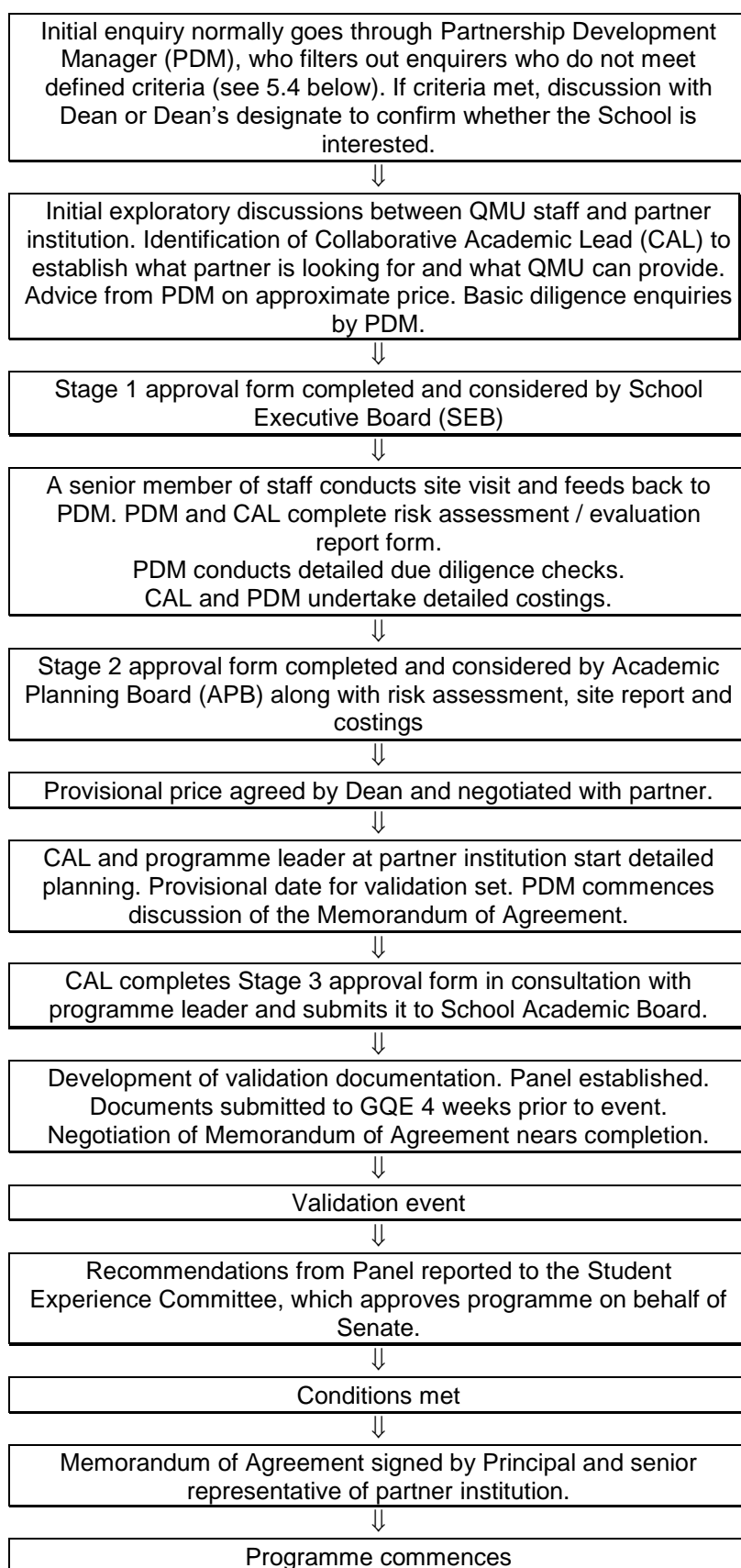
4.7 QMU will not enter into serial collaborations that allow partner institutions to franchise University programmes or modules to third parties. This is to minimise the risk associated with sub-contracting and ensure the University can guarantee the standards and quality of programmes and Short Programmes delivered in its name.

4.8 Unless the circumstances are wholly exceptional, a visit to the intended partner will take place before Queen Margaret University enters into any formal collaborative agreement with the intending partner.

5.0 Developing a New Collaborative Programme

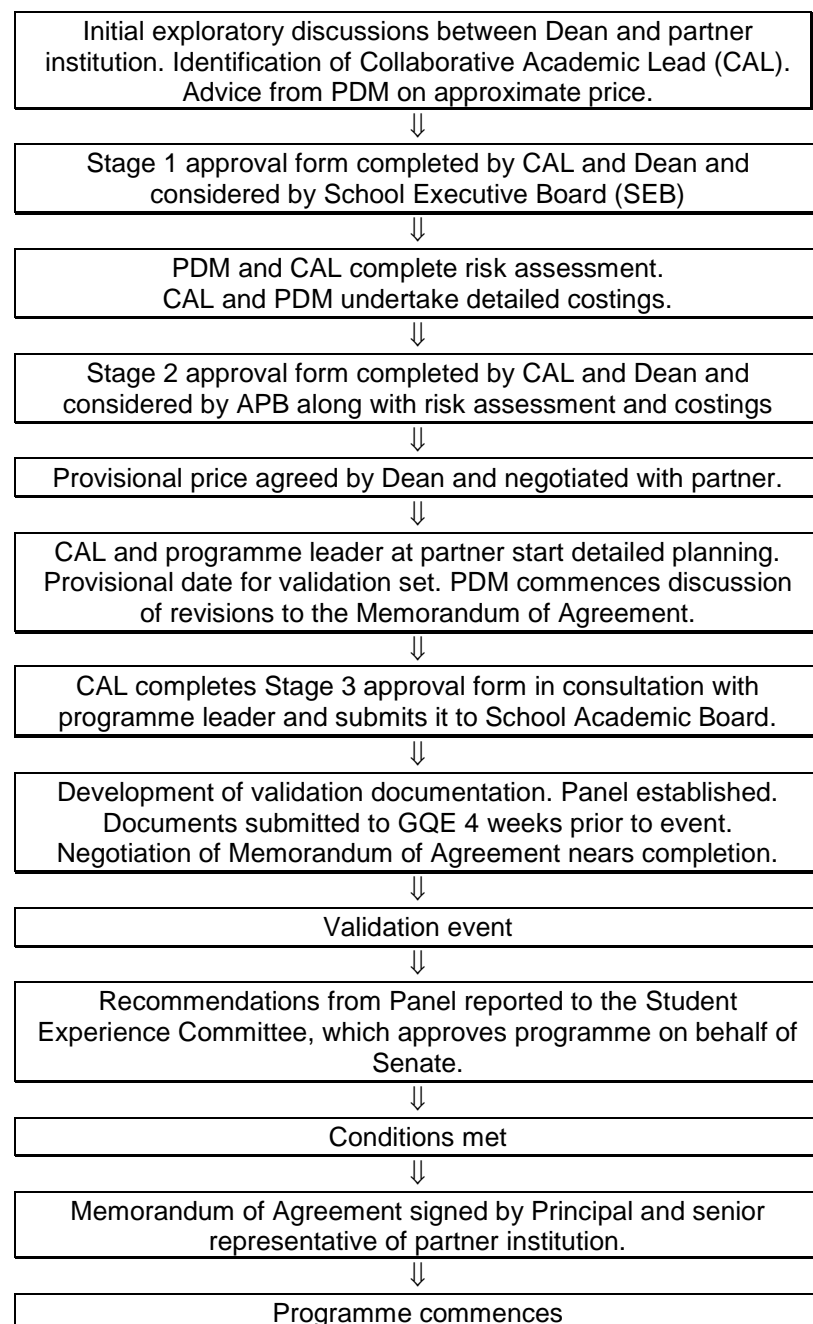
- 5.1 As with a standard programme, a proposed programme that involves formal collaboration must obtain planning approval in order to proceed. This follows the procedures established in the Programme Development Section, with the following modifications.
- 5.2 Programme planning will be led by the proposed Programme Leader from the partner institution with advice from the Collaborative Academic Lead. The programme team will need to discuss how the programme will be delivered at the partner institution and set this out in the programme document. Partners may choose to copy a QMU programme in its entirety; to design a programme which meets their needs from a selection of validated QMU modules; to design a programme using a mixture of existing validated modules and new modules; or to design a completely new programme.
- 5.3 The procedures for developing a collaborative programme are outlined in diagram one overleaf. NB Further detail is also available in [Appendix 1](#).

Diagram one



- 5.4 Criteria for the selection of partners will be agreed by the Student Experience Committee in consultation with Deans of School and aligned with the selection principles in 1.3 above. The Partnership Development Manager will normally reject enquirers who do not meet these criteria, taking advice from the relevant School as appropriate.
- 5.5 The procedure above is the same for new programmes with an existing partner, apart from the initial stages. Discussions about new developments will be channelled through the Dean of the School that hosts the proposed new programme. Normally no additional site visit is required, unless there are specific circumstances such as requirement for specialist equipment, but a programme specific risk assessment must be completed.

Diagram two



6.0 Site Report and Risk Assessment / Evaluation Report

- 6.1 One or more representatives of Queen Margaret University must visit the partner organisation to collect evidence and write a site report on the facilities available to support study. The site visit may be waived if the School can demonstrate that there is substantial information available to the University that would make such a visit unnecessary (for example existing reports from other independent bodies, such as national accrediting organisations). Note that no additional site visit report is required for a new programme with an existing partner, unless the programme requires specialist facilities or a substantial increase in learning and teaching capacity (including information technology infrastructure).
- 6.2 APB is responsible for identifying a suitable person or persons to undertake the site visit. This person should be a senior officer from professional services or an academic staff member with relevant expertise, as agreed by APB. He/she should have experience of working with collaborative partners and understanding of the infrastructure required to support teaching and learning. For programmes that require specialist facilities, it is appropriate for the main visitor to be supported by a subject expert from the host Division who can comment on the sufficiency of the specialist resources available.
- 6.3 Advice must be sought from Information Services regarding the adequacy of information and communication technology infrastructure.
- 6.4 The Collaborative Academic Lead, with support of staff from Governance and Quality Enhancement, must then complete a risk assessment report. This is required for all new collaborative arrangements, including Short Programmes and those with local support centres. For a new programme with an existing partner a programme specific risk assessment must be completed, using the template for existing partners.
- 6.5 The risk assessment and evaluation report should be based on scrutiny of evidence, such as copies of the partner's policies and procedures. Reports from external bodies (accreditation bodies, other UK universities working with the partner) may be appended.
- 6.6 The purpose of the risk assessment and evaluation report is to allow for a realistic judgement to be made regarding the risks pertaining to the proposal: financial, physical and quality related. Where a risk is identified, control measures should be proposed.
- 6.7 The site report, risk assessment / evaluation report and detailed costings must be submitted to the Academic Planning Board along with the Stage 2 form. Only once the Academic Planning Board is satisfied that the level of risk is acceptable in relation to the potential benefits of the proposal, may a provisional date for validation be set.

7.0 Validation

- 7.1 Validation procedures for collaborative programmes follow those in the section on [Programme development, monitoring and review](#), section 3, with the following exceptions.
- 7.2 Validation events are usually one or two day events and take place a minimum of three months prior to the commencement of the programme. It is essential to leave sufficient time to incorporate any issues that arise from the event within the finalised Memorandum of Agreement.
- 7.3 The event will normally be held in the partner institution. This allows for a thorough scrutiny of the partner organisation's resources, facilities, staff, traditions, ethos, and academic and non-academic capability.

- 7.4 The validation panel will consist of senior representatives of Queen Margaret University. The panel members must include the following:
- Convener, the criteria for whom are the same as described in Programme Development, Monitoring and Review, section 9;
 - At least one external member, the criteria for whom are the same as described in Programme Development, Monitoring and Review, section 9;
 - At least one internal member (but usually two), the criteria for whom are the same as described in Programme Development, Monitoring and Review, section 9;
 - Secretary: a member of staff from the University Secretary's Group.
- 7.5 Panel membership should normally include at least one member with experience of University collaborative arrangements. All panel members must have general experience of validation and review. A student reviewer will be appointed to provide feedback to inform the Panel's discussions with the partner institution.
- 7.6 The Secretary to the validation panel will normally be a member of staff from University Secretary's Group. A member of the partner institution's staff may also be in attendance to facilitate communication.
- 7.7 The programme document necessary for validation is described in [Resources for Validation and Review](#). For a collaborative programme, this should incorporate the partner institution into each of the subject headings. It must describe how the partner will meet the criteria in each area. It should also include:
- Explanation of the reasons for seeking the collaboration.
 - Evidence of equivalence of procedures and processes.
 - A statement on the relationship between QMU and the partner institution and proposed arrangements for quality assurance, programme management and communication between the partners.
 - A statement on the language of instruction and assessment: if this is not English the documentation must include details of mechanisms to ensure the standard and quality of student work. (See [Section Seventeen](#).)
- 7.8 Entrance requirements outlined within the programme document must not be reduced in respect of programmes offered overseas, but must reflect the level of knowledge, skills and understanding required to succeed on the programme.
- 8.0 Formal Collaboration Agreements**
- 8.1 A formal collaborative agreement is required for each programme leading to an award of the University. The agreement must be developed pre-validation and approved and signed by all parties before the programme can be offered.
- 8.2 No binding partnership links involving the provision of a programme, or a part of a programme, leading to an award of Queen Margaret University may be established by a constituent part of the University without the full knowledge and approval of the Academic Planning Board and Senate. No financial agreement should be made without going through the University's standard costing and pricing approval procedures.
- 8.3 The respective responsibilities of the partner and QMU must be outlined in either a Memorandum of Agreement (where an award is being made in the name of the University), an Articulation Agreement (where there is provision for direct entry and/or preferential entry arrangements) or a Local Support Centre Agreement (where services are provided to QMU students at a distance from a QMU campus).
- 8.4 The agreement will be drafted by Governance and Quality Enhancement staff and circulated to all interested parties for comment. The financial agreement will be drafted in consultation between the relevant Dean and the Partnership Development Manager, with advice from the Director of Finance as required.

8.5 All parties, each to retain one original copy, must sign the agreement before a programme can be delivered.

8.6 The Agreement and financial appendix are subject to periodic review. This is undertaken by staff from the partner institution, the Collaborative Academic Lead, the Partnership Development Manager and the Dean or Head of Division.

8.7 Some of the key issues in collaborative agreements are discussed briefly below.

8.8 **Admitting Students**

8.8.1 Queen Margaret University will determine the admission requirements and acceptable entry qualifications for students joining a programme provided under a collaborative agreement, and will monitor the application of these requirements. Particular care will be taken with regard to any arrangements for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Queen Margaret University will also review information on student progression.

8.8.2 The University's approval and monitoring procedures for entry requirements will ensure that:

- The partner organisation has details of the entry qualifications of all entrants to a programme;
- Queen Margaret University is able to monitor the entry qualifications of students against the agreed criteria;

8.8.3 Prior to admission, students of the partnership programme will receive details of:

- The intended outcomes of the programme;
- Admission and qualification requirements and any assumed experience or necessary access to particular learning resources;
- The time commitments required for study on the programme;
- The assessment methods that will be used;
- Guidance available should they wish to transfer to study at the Queen Margaret University;
- The opportunities to use Queen Margaret University's learning and other resources (if applicable);
- Fees and incidental expenses and how and when these are to be paid;
- Welfare, guidance and support services available;
- The status of the student within Queen Margaret University and the entitlements that such status does or does not confer;
- The nature of the award involved and the information that a successful candidate would expect to have recorded on the award certificate and transcript;
- Named contacts at Queen Margaret University and the Partner Institution;
- Complaints, grievance and appeals procedures and how to make use of these.

8.8.4 Students must receive copies of the University regulations, normally by link to the University website.

8.8.5 In addition to the above, for arrangements involving overseas partners or intended specifically for overseas students, the following must be detailed:

- The language of instruction and assessment;
- Accurate information about the recognition of the programme or award in other countries or by professional and statutory bodies in the UK or elsewhere;
- For programmes involving study in more than one country, information about the features of studying in those countries, including information about costs.

8.9 Examination and Assessment

- 8.9.1 Examination and assessment arrangements provided under a collaborative arrangement must be devised so as to ensure that such awards are of an equivalent academic standard to those delivered by Queen Margaret University.
- 8.9.2 For franchised programmes, examination and assessment requirements must be the same as those required by Queen Margaret University when it delivers the programme itself.
- 8.9.3 For programmes delivered under a validation arrangement, the examination and assessment requirements must be equivalent to, and be as effective as, those employed by Queen Margaret University where it provides the same or comparable programmes.
- 8.9.4 Procedures must be in place to ensure that staff of the partner institution understand and abide by Queen Margaret University's requirements for the conduct of assessments. This will include an agreed convention or protocol on invigilation, procedures to ensure the security of examination papers and to ensure that students undertaking an examination or assessment are those recorded as having completed that examination or assessment.
- 8.9.5 For all collaborative provision, QMU staff will moderate a sample of student work for the first full cohort. The sample size for moderation for each module will be at least the square root of the total number of students (rounded to the nearest whole number) taking the assessment plus all borderline fails. The sample should include a range of performance and the minimum size should be six pieces of assessed work. Moderation will continue for subsequent cohorts for as long as it is considered necessary by the host Division. This may be indefinitely.
- 8.9.6 Only the School Academic Board may decide whether to suspend or reduce moderation. This will be on the basis of a recommendation supported by an updated annual risk assessment. The Board must be satisfied that the partner has demonstrated the ability to mark in line with QMU's standards and expectations and that this will continue in the coming academic year.

In making its decision, the Board will consider the level of risk to academic standards, and will take into account the following:

- Feedback from QMU moderators and external examiners
- Standards of student performance
- Whether there have been any significant changes to staffing or the programme

If the Board is satisfied that the level of risk is sufficiently low, they may enforce one of the following options:

- To continue moderation but reduce the sample size.
- To suspend moderation for certain specified modules but not others.
- To suspend moderation for an entire level of the programme but retain the right to moderate a defined number of random modules each year as an on-going check.
- To suspend moderation altogether for an entire level, levels, or all levels of the programme

If the Board is not fully satisfied, normal moderation will continue.

Clear records will be kept by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement regarding the moderation arrangements applicable to each programme. The School Academic Board will review annually the situation regarding moderation and may require it to recommence as set out below.

8.9.7 The risk status of the programme will be reviewed annually. This will include a review of the effectiveness of the moderation arrangements. In a programme where moderation has been reduced or suspended, it may become appropriate to resume full moderation. Reasons for re-starting full moderation might include:

- External examiners or internal moderators had raised concerns about the marking of a particular module or modules.
- Student performance had altered significantly.
- A significant change had been made to the module learning outcomes or assessment format.
- There had been a number of changes to staffing.

A recommendation to alter the moderation arrangements should be detailed on the risk assessment form and submitted to the School Academic Board, along with supporting evidence as appropriate. The School Academic Board will make the final decision.

8.9.8 Normally, moderation arrangements will apply for a full academic year. In the event of a sudden change that increases the level of risk, the Collaborative Academic Lead may ask the School Academic Board to reinstate full moderation during the course of an academic year.

8.9.9 The decision of the School Academic Board will be final. The University reserves the right to determine the moderation arrangements in proportion to the level of risk as part of its responsibility for the academic standards of the award. The University will not enter into correspondence with partner institutions regarding this decision.

8.9.10 Where programmes are taught and assessed in a language other than English, the provisions of [Section Seventeen](#) below will apply.

8.9.11 Queen Margaret University will be responsible for the appointment of External Examiners, who will be appointed on the basis of criteria established by the University, details of which are set out in the section on [External Examiners](#).

8.9.12 For arrangements involving an overseas partner, additional consideration must be given to:

- The experience and understanding of UK higher education, including the role of External Examiners, of individuals nominated to act as External Examiners;
- The desirability of appointing additional External Examiners to assist with the monitoring of the provision and to ensure an appropriate range of skills, expertise and experience.
- The availability of Examiners who are able to work in the language of instruction and assessment where this is not English.

8.9.13 Full advice on issues relating to External Examiners and examination procedures is available from GQE and Students Records staff.

8.10 **Student Certification and Transcripts**

8.10.1 The University Secretary will have sole access to, and be the only individual empowered to issue award certificates. Duplicate certificates will be issued only after staff of the University Secretary's Group have undertaken detailed enquiries.

8.10.2 The wording and terminology on the Award Certificate will be consistent with those used by Queen Margaret University on certificates for comparable programmes delivered by the University.

8.10.3 Academic transcripts will record the location of delivery of the programme and the language of instruction, if not English. If the language of assessment was not the same

as that used for the instruction, this should be clearly recorded on the certificate and transcripts. Only in very exceptional circumstance, will the language of instruction be other than English. (See [Section Seventeen](#).) Award certificates will state that they are accompanied by an academic transcript.

8.11 Financial Arrangements

8.11.1 Appropriate financial arrangements should be detailed in the collaborative agreement between the University and the partner institution.

8.11.2 Validation and franchising arrangements will attract a fee, which will include charges for developing the programme and arranging the validation event. This fee is in addition to the annual fees payable. Some collaborations will also include a de minimis payment to cover the operating cost of the agreement.

8.11.3 Arrangements will also be put in place:

- To record and account for all transactions made in connection with the arrangements;
- To identify and respond to significant changes in the financial aspects of the arrangement in a way that will ensure that academic standards will not be compromised and the interests of students will be protected;
- For the authorisation of travel and subsistence arrangements for staff.

8.12 Information and Publicity

8.12.1 Misleading or inaccurate information about the nature of the collaborative link is harmful to all partners. Therefore mechanisms for the checking of promotional and publicity material produced by the partner institution will be established from the outset, and monitored during the lifetime of the collaborative agreement.

8.13 Termination of Agreement

8.13.1 Arrangements for the termination of a collaborative agreement by any party must take account of the need to provide for the interest of continuing students registered on the programme concerned.

8.13.2 The University reserves the right to terminate a collaborative agreement immediately if the collaborative partner is in serious breach of the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement i.e. that:

- It fails to make any payment in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Memorandum;
- It becomes insolvent or unable to pay its due debts or enters into any arrangement with its creditors or engages in any legal process approximate or equivalent to the appointment of a receiver or liquidator or any other condition reasonably describable as insolvency under the law of Scotland.
- A breach of material obligation has not been rectified to the complete satisfaction of Queen Margaret University within 28 days following service of a notice requiring such rectification.

8.13.3 Full detail of procedures for termination will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement. Neither party will be permitted to admit further students to a collaborative programme once a termination notice has been served.

9.0 Modification(s) to Collaborative Programmes

9.1 Collaborative programme modification follows the same procedures as in [Programme development, monitoring and review](#) section 5, with the exception that the Joint Board

of Studies will report directly to the relevant School Academic Board, which will receive the minutes of all Joint Board of Studies meetings for consideration.

10.0 Monitoring

10.1 The annual programme monitoring of a collaborative programme follows the procedures detailed in [Programme development, monitoring and review](#) section 7, with the exception that the Annual Monitoring Report will be considered by the Joint Board of Studies).

10.2 In addition, each collaborative programme is subject to risk monitoring. As part of the selection and programme approval process, a risk assessment will be undertaken and considered by the Academic Planning Board (APB). Programmes which are assessed as high risk will not normally be allowed to proceed. If approval is granted, this will only be on the basis that actions to reduce and mitigate the risk are put in place. In this case, a follow up risk assessment must be submitted to APB after the first year of operation with a commentary on the effectiveness of the control measures agreed.

10.3 In all cases, a further risk assessment will be undertaken annually to allow for a review of operational and quality assurance arrangements. This will be undertaken by staff of GQE in consultation with the Collaborative Academic Lead. The risk assessment will identify areas of potential risk and actions to be taken to mitigate the risk. All completed risk assessments are passed to the Head of the home Division for information. A summary of the outcome of risk assessments is reported to the School Academic Board (SAB).

10.4 Depending on the level of risk, reports will be followed up as set out below.

<i>Risk level</i>	Low	Medium	High
Report passed to:	CAL, Head of Division, GQE	CAL, Head of Division, Dean, GQE	CAL, Head of Division, Dean, GQE, APB, SAB
Issues followed up by:	CAL, programme leader and Joint Board of Studies	Head of Division, CAL, programme leader and Joint Board of Studies	Action plan to address issues must be approved by APB
Committee oversight:	Joint Board of Studies; reported to SAB through Joint Board minutes	Joint Board of Studies and SAB	Implementation of action plan monitored by APB. Quality issues must be reported to and monitored by Joint Board of Studies and SAB.

Further information on the process for dealing with high risk programmes or persistent failure to address risks is set out below.

10.5 Any programme that is classified as high risk will be reported to APB. APB will normally require an action plan, drawn up by the Collaborative Academic Lead and Head of Division, which sets out how risks will be mitigated and reduced. If APB determines that because of the known circumstances of the partnership an action plan is not required, the reasons for this will be recorded in the minutes.

10.6 Once an action plan has been put in place it will be monitored by APB. The plan will include target dates for individual actions and for an overall reduction in risk score. A follow up report, indicating progress against the action plan, will be compiled by GQE approximately six months later or in accordance with the target dates in the plan.

10.7 Serious issues may arise outwith the risk assessment cycle. At any time, a Dean of School or the University Secretary may refer a programme to APB for consideration if concerns have come to light. If APB agrees that the concern is potentially serious, it will ask the Collaborative Academic Lead and the Governance and Quality Enhancement division to provide more detailed information about the overall risk profile and the actions taken to mitigate the risk. APB may decide either:

- That no further action is required at this time
- To require the Collaborative Academic Lead and Head of Division to draw up an action plan (as in the procedure for high risk programmes)
- To convene a Partnership Review Panel

The APB decision should be notified to the School Academic Board for information.

10.8 The decision to convene a Partnership Review Panel is made by APB. APB will determine whether the scope of the review consists of all QMU programmes offered by a partner or, exceptionally, only one or more specific programmes. The following circumstances will normally trigger the convening of a Partnership Review:

- A programme has scored as high risk for a number of years in a row, with no evidence of likely improvement. Normally if a programme has remained at high risk with no reduction in the score for three years, a Partnership Review would be convened.
- An action plan agreed in response to a high risk score has not been implemented, or only implemented in part (ie less than 50% of actions were progressed)
- Evidence has come to light of extremely high risks that place the reputation or finances of the University in jeopardy.

10.9 The Partnership Review Panel must be composed of senior members of QMU staff who have experience of working with collaborative partners. Panel members will not normally include members of the Academic Planning Board. The Panel will normally include external involvement, whether from the existing external examiner or from an external panellist selected for the review. The Deputy Principal, University Secretary and Head of Division housing the programme must approve all Panel members.

10.10 GQE, working in consultation with the CAL, will collate documentation relevant to the partnership, including previous risk assessments, external examiner and other quality reports, committee minutes and due diligence information. The Panel will meet face to face with the Collaborative Academic Lead and other staff who have supported the programme. The Panel will normally also speak to representatives from the partner institution. APB will determine whether the event should take place at the partner institution or if it can be held at QMU with videoconferencing.

10.11 The Panel would make a report to APB with one of four recommendations:

- a) Initiate termination of the programme
- b) Continue but suspend recruitment until key concerns are addressed
- c) Continue but subject to conditions
- d) Continue subject to normal monitoring procedures

APB would discuss the report and take action accordingly. The full report and APB's recommended action must be reported to Senate. Only exceptionally might APB modify the recommendation of the Panel. The reasons for doing so must be included in the report to Senate.

The full report would be shared with the partner who would have the right to correct any matters it considered to be inaccurate.

Note that the final decision on termination must be taken by Senate.

10.12 In the case of decision (b) or (c) above, a follow up report would require to come to APB confirming whether or not the issues had been addressed. It would be for APB to determine the timescale for meeting any conditions or responding appropriately to a formal written warning. This would depend on the nature of the concerns and the practicalities involved. If APB decided that the conditions had not been met or the issues not satisfactorily responded to, the decision would be taken to terminate.

10.13 A review of the risk status of each partnership will take place before the University agrees to renew an agreement. Staff from Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE) will:

- Conduct updated due diligence checks on the partner's financial and legal status.
- Undertake a fresh costing to inform price negotiations.
- Review the risk assessments of all programmes in the partnership, with a particular focus on the partner's continued ability to provide an appropriate learning environment for all its provision.

A formal report would come to APB including the above information, plus a summary of changes since the most recent partnership review. APB would agree whether:

- The partnership should be renewed.
- A partnership review should be undertaken before making the decision to renew.
- The partnership should not be renewed.

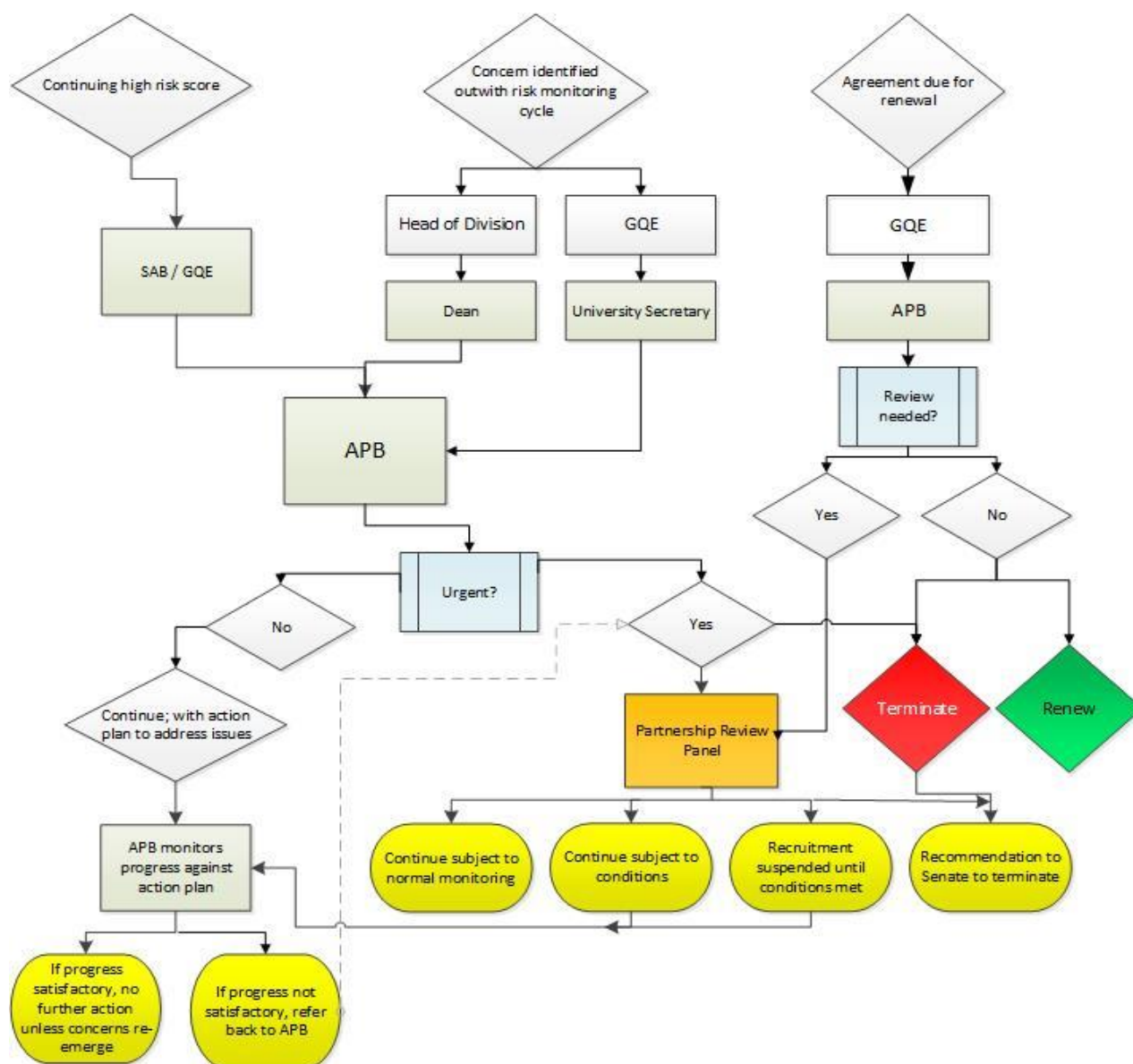
Reasons for the decision would be recorded in APB minutes. If the decision was taken not to renew the partnership, formal termination of the programme(s) in the partnership would require to be notified via the School Academic Board and Senate who would consider and approve measures to be put in place to protect current matriculated students.

10.14 In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to terminate a programme or partnership immediately. This would be in circumstances where there was a serious risk to the reputation or legal status of the University, or a risk to the safety of staff or students at the partner organisation. An extraordinary meeting of APB would be held and a formal written record kept of the reasons for the decision to terminate. APB would also agree the measures that could practicably be taken to safeguard the right of students to complete their programme.

10.15 There may be cases where a partner was unable to deliver the programme due to circumstances beyond their control, such as a natural disaster or war. APB might decide to suspend a programme temporarily until the situation was resolved.

The various elements of the risk monitoring and review process are set out in the diagram overleaf.

Diagram Three: Process for identifying and responding to concerns with collaborative programmes



11.0 Review of Collaborative Programmes

- 11.1 The academic review of collaborative programmes follows the procedures established in [Programme development, monitoring and review](#) Section Eight, with the exception that the review panel and the review event will be established as detailed in paragraphs 7.4 to 7.6 above.
- 11.2 The University will also undertake periodic risk monitoring of collaborative programmes and review of partnerships, taking into account academic and non-academic factors, as set out in [Section Ten](#) above. This enables the University to act proactively to mitigate and reduce risks and to maintain oversight of the effectiveness and appropriateness of collaborative links.

12.0 Local Support Centre (Distance Learning)

12.1 It may be that the University wishes to use the services of a local support centre to facilitate distance learning arrangements. In doing so, it must be satisfied that the local support centre's interests are compatible with those of Queen Margaret University. It must also be satisfied that the local support centre will act in the best interests of potential students.

12.2 Local Support Centre is the term used to describe an organisation that provides services to support Queen Margaret University awards delivered by distance learning. Services provided by a local support centre may include assistance with marketing / recruitment, the provision of physical facilities for guest lectures by Queen Margaret University staff, tutorial support and the provision of IT and other study aids. A Local Support Centre Agreement is required.

12.3 In exercising its responsibilities to assure the quality and standard of courses offered in distance learning mode, the University will:

- State the respective entitlements, responsibilities and accountability of the parties relating to the distance learning programme, including, as appropriate, those of the student, any local agent, local tutor, travelling teacher and those associated with the programme in the providing institution. These will be specified in a written, binding, Memorandum of Agreement;
- Specify the qualifications and experience required of any local administrative agent and academic tutor; formally approve and appoint any directly-employed local staff after operating a due recruitment process, and appraise staff performance regularly;
- Plan and conduct briefing, training and staff development for those filling both administrative and academic roles associated with delivering the distance learning programme;
- Operate a procedure for approving and reviewing every local support centre to be employed in delivering the programme;
- Establish and operate a system of quality controls that include regular monitoring and review against defined levels of performance of processes undertaken by local agents, local tutors, travelling teachers and those conducting teaching at a distance.

12.4 Selecting a Local Support Centre

12.4.1 In selecting a local support centre, the University will consider the legal status of the centre and its financial standing and reputation within the local educational community.

12.4.2 Where the University considers a local support centre, it should seek:

- Information available from local government offices and agencies;
- Information from UK agencies based in the country;
- Information concerning the cultural, legal, financial and political environment in which the agent operates;
- Evidence of the centre's experience and understanding of UK higher education.

12.5 Local Support Centre Evaluation Report

12.5.1 Normally, in approving a local support centre, a party comprising a School representative, a Convener (for whom the criteria are the same as described in the Programme Development section) and an external assessor will visit the proposed support centre(s) and evaluate it against the overarching principles for selection of new partners. (See paragraph 4.3 above.)

12.5.2 Documentation should be provided covering the following general information about the proposed arrangement:

- Entry requirements
- For articulation agreements allowing entry with advanced standing, details of the programme used for such entry.
- Information on the services to be provided by the Local Support Centre
- Information on resources (facilities, staff and other)
- Information about the following policies held by the Local Support Centre: Discipline, Complaints, Equal Opportunities
- CVs for all staff involved in teaching

It is expected that these materials will be produced jointly by staff at the Local Support Centre and staff from the host School at QMU. The documentation should be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the approval visit.

12.5.2 The panel will view the facilities at the partner and meet with key staff in order to establish that the partner is able to provide a suitable learning environment and high quality of student experience. The panel will produce a report following the same procedures as for validation and review panels. This report is then reported to the Student Experience Committee which approves the partnership on behalf of Senate.

12.6 Local Support Centre Review Process

12.6.1 Local Support Centre arrangements should normally be reviewed every five years. Governance and Quality Enhancement will alert the host Division of the need for the review and negotiate a date for the event.

12.6.2 A Panel comprising of a School representative, a Convener (for whom the criteria are the same as described in the Programme Development section) and an external assessor will visit the proposed support centre(s) and evaluate it against criteria in the Local Support Centre evaluation form. The Panel will be approved by the University Secretary and Deputy Principal. A member of staff appointed by the University Secretary will act as Secretary to the Panel.

12.6.3 The documentary requirements for the Local Support Centre approval visit are as stated below:

- Reflection on the operation of the Local Support Centre over the period of review, including information on:
 - Student numbers and success rates
 - Feedback from students and (if possible) graduates
 - Feedback from internal and external examiners
 - Response to feedback and changes made over the course of the review period
 - Commentary on the appropriateness of organisational arrangements
 - For articulation agreements allowing entry with advanced standing, description of any changes to the programme used for such entry
 - Changes to the learning environment offered by the Local Support Centre, including changes to staffing, facilities or other resources.
 - CVs for all staff involved in teaching.
- Evidence in the form of Joint Board of Studies minutes, annual monitoring reports, student evaluations and external examiner reports should be provided for the last two years.

It is expected that these materials will be produced jointly by staff at the Local Support Centre and staff from the host School at QMU. The documentation should be submitted no later than three weeks prior to the approval visit.

- 12.6.4 A report of the review visit will be drafted within 20 working days of the visit. This will be considered by the University's Student Experience Committee on behalf of Senate. The report will include any conditions of continuing approval and the date by which these are to be met. It will also include the date of the next review of the Local Support Centre. Typically, this will be once every five years

13.0 Collaborative Short Programmes

- 13.1 There are specific arrangements for collaborative Short Programmes. These derive from the small scale of Short Programmes; the need for a suitable balance between quality assurance arrangements for full collaborative awards such as franchises and validated programmes and the need to ensure appropriate standards and monitoring of collaborative activities.
- 13.2 A Short Programme is defined as a module, or group of modules, that may be taken separately without leading towards an award of the University. Short Programmes typically comprise one or more modules at SCQF level seven or above, usually up to a maximum of 60 credits. Although in some cases credit from short programmes may be used towards another QMU award, these programmes normally stand outside validated programmes and are taken by students as a self-contained package of learning for their own personal or professional development.
- 13.3 The procedures for approval and review of Short Programmes are set out under [Programme development, monitoring and review](#), section 11. A validation event is not normally required for a Short Programme, although exceptions may apply (for details contact Governance and Quality Enhancement). Instead, the School Academic Board will consider the programme documentation and make a recommendation to Senate.
- 13.4 No new collaborative short programme may be approved unless a full costing has been carried out and the Dean has approved the price. A risk assessment must also be conducted by the Collaborative Academic Lead, in consultation with staff from Governance and Quality Enhancement. A Memorandum of Agreement will be required.
- 13.5 Short programme proposals with new partners must be considered by the Academic Planning Board, as for full collaborative programmes and Local Support Centres. The Academic Planning Board approves the partner. The full documentation is then submitted to the School Academic Board (SAB) for approval of the programme and module descriptor(s). Proposals for new short programmes with existing partners may be submitted straight to SAB. The Short Programme approval form, costing information and a risk assessment will accompany the documentation.
- 13.6 Each collaborative Short Programme will report to a relevant University Programme Committee, of which a representative of the collaborative partner will be a member. Through the University Programme Committee, the Short Programme team will in turn report to the relevant School Academic Board. (In some cases, the Short Programme may have its own Joint Board of Studies.) The collaborative Short Programme leader's annual report will be reported to and discussed by the relevant University Programme Committee and thereafter reported to the relevant School Academic Board.
- 13.7 Academic results from collaborative Short Programmes will be considered by the appropriate University Board of Examiners, of which representatives from the collaborative partner will be members.

14.0 Collaborative agreements with partners that have degree awarding powers

- 14.1 Partnerships may be established with institutions that have their own degree awarding powers. In such cases, both partners will require to be assured that the academic standards of the award have been met. Quality assurance arrangements will need to take into account the needs of the partner's quality assurance processes. In some cases a single certificate will be awarded to successful students (joint degree). In others

two separate certificates may be awarded by each partner (double or dual degree). For the purposes of these regulations, such arrangements will be referred to generically as joint/dual degrees.

- 14.2 Proposals for new joint/dual degree arrangements must go to the Academic Planning Board (APB). Stage 1 and Stage 2 programme approval forms will be required. The Stage 2 form must be accompanied by a risk assessment and due diligence information about the partner. In particular, APB will want to be assured that confidence can be placed in the partner university's academic standards and quality assurance processes, and that any credits to be transferred are equivalent in academic level. Normally, a site visit will be undertaken, although this may be waived for existing partners, recognised UK universities or European universities with a full Erasmus charter.
- 14.3 Following Stage 2 approval, the Academic Planning Board will determine the appropriate method for final academic approval of the programme, depending on the type of arrangement that is proposed. The table below provides guidance (see Section 3 for definitions):

Degree type	Curriculum design	Approval mechanism
Joint	Developed by both partners	Stage 3 SAB approval Validation event
Double	Developed by both partners	Stage 3 SAB approval Validation event
Dual	Standard QMU degree used as credit towards partner's award	SAB approval No validation required
Dual	Credit transfer between each award towards the other	Stage 3 SAB approval Validation event (see 14.13 below)

- 14.4 Once the arrangement has been approved, the joint/dual degree will be subject to quality assurance as for a standalone programme. A Programme Leader / Collaborative Academic Lead will be appointed, who will lead the QMU delivered elements of the programme and liaise with the partner institution. The Programme Leader will complete an annual programme monitoring report in collaboration with the programme leader at the partner institution.
- 14.5 Except where special joint regulations are agreed between the partners, programmes will be governed by the QMU governance and regulations and must comply with standard quality assurance procedures.
- 14.6 Where both partners are UK universities, it may be appropriate for one partner to take the role of administering university, with that university's procedures being followed. The other partner may delegate certain aspects of quality assurance to the administering university. However, all awards must be ratified by the Senate (or equivalent body) of each partner. Administering university status may rotate between partners.
- 14.7 An external examiner will be appointed for the programme and to review modules delivered at QMU. Quality reports from each partner institution will be shared for information. The decision as to whether to require external examiner scrutiny of modules delivered by the partner will be made on the basis of the risk assessment through the formal approval process. For programmes delivered by two UK universities, a single examiner will be appointed on behalf of both partners.
- 14.8 The arrangement will be covered by a Memorandum of Agreement with the partner institution, which will include on-going quality assurance arrangements to enable each partner to maintain confidence in the academic validity of the modules delivered and assessed by the other.

- 14.9 A joint board of studies or joint programme committee will normally be convened annually to oversee the operation of the programme and make recommendations regarding any changes to modules or programme specific regulations. Any changes to modules contributing to the programme must be notified to the other partner.
- 14.10 Where the programme is jointly designed and awarded, the credits delivered and assessed by the partner organisation will be treated as validated by QMU and will be fully integrated into the award. Therefore regulations on the maximum amount of credit that may be awarded through Recognition of Prior Learning do not apply. QMU must take steps to satisfy itself of the academic standard of the modules delivered by the partner and the quality assurance mechanisms applied. Normally, students on such programmes will receive a grade for all modules. Grade-mark conversion schemes to align different assessment systems must be agreed between the partners.
- 14.11 For those arrangements for which graduates receive two certificates, the certificates and transcripts will contain a statement clarifying the nature of the dual/double degree arrangement.

Special types of arrangement

- 14.12 The University may wish to enter into credit transfer agreements with other universities that lead to the potential award of dual degrees. In terms of such agreements each partner agrees to accept credits earned through study at the other institution towards an award of the home institution. These agreements differ from exchange agreements in that they lead to the award of degrees from both institutions, providing students satisfy the minimum conditions of award for each partner.
- 14.13 A dual degree and credit transfer arrangement will be submitted for approval as a separate award in its own right (although linked to the original QMU degree). Stage 3 documentation outlining the proposed structure will go to the School Academic Board. A programme approval event will then be convened. The documentation for this will be as for a normal approval, but may incorporate documentation from the partner institution regarding the elements of the programme that will be taught by the partner. The programme documentation must clearly set out how credit from the partner institution may be used towards the existing award and provide confirmation that the overall programme learning outcomes will be met. Normally, a mapping of the partner's modules against the overall programme learning outcomes will be required.
- 14.14 When the parent programme is due for review the credit transfer / dual degree arrangement must be approved at the same time, so as to take into account any changes to modules and programme structure.
- 14.15 Modules delivered by another organisation as part of a dual degree / credit transfer agreement will normally be recorded on the transcript as an award of credit only with no grade or mark. No more than 50% of the final award may be made up of credits from other providers.
- 14.16 In some agreements a full QMU award may be used in its entirety towards another university's award. In this case, no credits from another award contribute to the QMU award. Quality assurance arrangements are therefore much simpler. The arrangement may be approved through the School Academic Board, without the need for a validation event. No separate annual monitoring report is required. Nonetheless, appropriate arrangements should be put in place to liaise with the partner institution, confirm that the agreement remains fit for purpose and to oversee the quality of the student experience.
- 14.17 The University may enter into consortium arrangements with multiple partners, for example in order to deliver an Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Degree. In this case a consortium agreement will be signed by all partners, setting out the governance and quality assurance arrangements. Students may undertake modules from two or more

partners. In this case, certificates will include only the names and crests of those partners involved in delivery.

- 14.18 Joint degrees that are delivered with a European university may require to be approved by an external quality assurance agency in that country. The University will comply with the expectations of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of joint programmes.

15.0 Record Keeping of Collaborative Arrangements

- 15.1 An up to date register of all approved partnership arrangements will be maintained by Governance and Quality Enhancement.

- 15.2 For all partnership arrangements, the register will list:

- The name, location and nature of the partner institution;
- The date of the formal agreement or contract, and the dates on which it is to be reviewed and will end;
- The nature of the collaboration and the programmes and awards involved;
- The details of the individuals within both Queen Margaret University and the Partner Organisation who have designated responsibility for overseeing the arrangement;
- The language of instruction and assessment used in each programme.

Records of names and numbers of students both registered on a programme and those who have received an award under the arrangement will be kept by Student Records.

16.0 Arrangements for Communication

- 16.1 For day to day management issues it is crucial that there is a named contact person at the partner institution. This may be the programme leader, another member of academic staff or an administrator.

- 16.2 Each partner institution will have two named contacts at QMU. The Collaborative Academic Lead from the Host Division is responsible for liaison regarding academic issues, policy and regulations. The Collaborations Team in the School Office is responsible for administrative arrangements, including Boards of Examiners. Joint Board of Studies meetings will be arranged by staff from GQE who will normally provide secretarial support. All correspondence between QMU and the partner institution must be copied to the Collaborative Academic Lead and contact at the partner institution.

- 16.3 The responsibilities of the Collaborative Academic Lead and School Office are detailed in the University's operational Collaborative Agreements Manual.

17.0 Policy on programmes delivered in a language other than English

17.1 General policy position

- 17.1.1 As agreed by Senate in June 2014, QMU will not consent to deliver a programme in any language other than English with a new partner. However, if a current partner wishes to deliver a programme in another language, and QMU has sufficient confidence in the partner's understanding of the expectations and processes of UK higher education, the proposal will be considered by the Academic Planning Board.
- 17.1.2 Postgraduate programmes will normally be delivered in English. This is because at this level students are expected to read widely and much of the relevant literature, in all subjects, is in English. The partner would need to provide a very strong rationale before the University would consider offering a postgraduate programme in a language other than English.
- 17.1.3 QMU will not undertake joint or dual research degrees in a language other than English.

17.2 Conditions for delivery in a language other than English

17.2.1 Necessary:

- There is evidence that it will be possible for QMU to secure the services of bilingual academics with the relevant subject specialism to act as internal moderators and external examiners.
- The partner must normally have worked with QMU for at least four years and a full cohort of students must have been seen through to graduation.
- There is evidence of good compliance with QMU quality standards and processes. (The programme or nearest equivalent programme must have a risk rating of low or medium.)
- The programme team and key administrative staff must have a sufficient level of English to engage in discussions with QMU staff in English and to take advantage of staff development opportunities. All meetings involving QMU staff will be held in English.
- There is a sufficient breadth of literature in the language of instruction to enable students to meet the programme learning outcomes. The partner institution's library is sufficiently well stocked with these resources or can provide access to other local libraries. If this is not fully the case, English language classes must be available to help students to improve their English skills and take advantage of QMU library resources. The partner organisation must demonstrate a strategy to engage students with English language training and enhance their language skills throughout their studies.

17.2.2 Circumstances in which delivery in a language other than English may be appropriate:

- Programmes which involve study of the language or are built around the development of professional communication skills in that language may be most effectively delivered and assessed in that language.
- In countries where English is not routinely taught to a high level in secondary schools, delivery in English may create an excessive barrier to participation.

17.2.3 Note: the language of assessment (including feedback to students) and language of delivery must be the same.

17.2.4 Dual delivery: a partner may wish to offer a programme in the language of the host country for home students and in English for international students. It is advised that the partner establishes the programme first before attempting to run two streams of delivery.

17.3 Approval mechanism

17.3.1 New programme proposals in a language other than English will go to the Academic Planning Board for approval in the normal way. The Stage 2 form should include a rationale for delivery in another language and information about how the above criteria are met. Further information should be included in the Stage 3 form for School Academic Board scrutiny. Final approval rests with the validation panel, which will have the opportunity to assess the language ability of the programme team and to review reading lists on module descriptors. (It is also incumbent on the CAL to confirm that the texts are sufficient.)

17.3.2 It may be that some of the people the panel wishes to meet as part of the validation / review are not fluent in English (eg employer representatives, placement providers, students). In this case an interpreter may be provided. The interpreter should not be a member of the programme team. It may be appropriate to include at least one panellist who is fluent in the language of delivery, where this is feasible, but normally it will be expected that people meeting the panel will be sufficiently fluent in English to participate.

17.3.3 If a partner wishes to change the language of delivery for an existing programme, a proposal must go to the Academic Planning Board, for consideration of resource-related issues such as the appointment of additional bilingual staff. Following APB approval, a detailed rationale must be provided, explaining how standards and quality will be maintained:

17.3.4 If switching to delivery in a language other than English, how the above criteria will be met. Documentary evidence should include:

- Evidence regarding reading lists and library resources at the partner (as QMU electronic library resources will be in English)
- Evidence regarding availability of bilingual moderators and external examiners
- Proposed quality assurance mechanisms for moderation of assessment

17.3.5 If switching to delivery in English, documentary evidence should include:

- Evidence of demand. A statement about the minimum student numbers required to form a viable cohort.
- Qualifications for entry and the minimum English level.
- Information about the ability of the programme team to teach and assess in English. A list of teaching staff and CVs must be provided, with details of each individual's English language level.
- Language of student support, including non-academic support services. Confirmation of the English language level of key support staff.
- Placement arrangements (if applicable). A list of suitable placement sites should be provided to confirm that students would receive the appropriate range of placement experiences. Information about staffing at each placement site and the level of English of likely supervisors should be included.
- Availability of language classes (both English and the language of the host country).

17.3.6 A change to delivery language will be treated as a major change. The documentation listed above must go to the original validation panel who will recommend approval on behalf of Senate. Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to delegate approval to a subgroup of the School Academic Board, taking advice from the Convener of the original validation panel. The University Secretary and the Convener of the Academic Planning Board will determine the appropriate approval route.

17.4 Appointment and use of bilingual moderators

External examiners

17.4.1 If those parts of a programme that require external examiner scrutiny are delivered in a language other than English, a bilingual external examiner must be appointed.

17.4.2 (For undergraduate degrees this will be modules at SCQF 9 and 10. For postgraduate degrees this will be all modules. Programme Leaders should seek advice from Governance and Quality Enhancement regarding external examiner requirements for short programmes and sub-degree level programmes.)

17.4.3 The examiner must meet the standard appointment criteria, including familiarity with the expectations and procedures of UK higher education.

17.4.4 The external examiner will not necessarily be the same person as the examiner who oversees the equivalent programme at QMU. If the examiner is not familiar with the QMU programme, a representative sample of assessments should be made available in the examiner's first year of tenure, so as to enable him or her to make a comparison between the academic standards of the overseas programme and the nearest QMU equivalent.

Approval of assessment instruments

- 17.4.5 The partner must make all assessment instruments available for approval, before they are issued to students. Draft assessment instruments will be sent to the QMU Collaborative Academic Lead before they are sent to the external examiner. (See Collaborations Manual.) These should be provided in the language of instruction (ie in the format to be supplied to students) with a translation.

Internal moderation for QMU

- 17.4.6 Partners will be expected to organise their own internal moderation in line with QMU's assessment regulations. QMU academic staff will also normally require to moderate a sample of assessments. (In certain exceptional circumstances QMU may delegate moderation entirely to the partner if quality standards have been met.)
- 17.4.7 Note that moderation is required for *each* assessment component of *each* cohort undertaking *each* module. If a partner delivers the programme at more than one site, a separate sample must be provided for each site. This enables the QMU team to compare standards between different marking teams and identify any issues that might be particular to that site. (If teaching and assessment is undertaken by the same team at two sites separate samples may not be necessary.)

Use of translation

- 17.4.8 If 50% or less of the programme is delivered in a language other than English, QMU will not normally appoint a specific bilingual member of staff to support the programme. In this case, translation may be allowed to facilitate moderation of the following assessment types:
- Written examinations
 - MCQ and short answer examinations
 - Essays, case studies and reports
- 17.4.9 It is normally the responsibility of the partner organisation to arrange translation. Only official professional translation services may be employed. It is not permissible for staff members at the partner organisation to undertake the translation themselves, or for students to do so. Translators should possess a relevant qualification, have at least five years' experience, and demonstrate that they have internal proof-reading and quality control mechanisms.
- 17.4.10 Translators will be provided with model answers in English and glossaries of subject-specific terminology, as well as the assessment specification and marking criteria.
- 17.4.11 The following types of assessment are not suitable for translation and will normally be moderated in the original language:
- Presentations
 - Practical exams
 - Posters
 - Dramatic performances
 - Honours projects and theses
 - Portfolios

A non-core bilingual member of staff may be appointed to assist with moderation of the above assessment formats. This staff member will also be asked to conduct spot checks on the quality of translation for other forms of assessment.

Use of bilingual moderators

17.4.12 If more than 50% of the programme is delivered in a language other than English, QMU will normally appoint a bilingual member of staff to support the programme. This staff member may act as Collaborative Academic Lead, or may work in conjunction with another member of staff who has relevant experience of programme management. The bilingual staff member will be responsible for the majority of moderation. If additional subject expertise is required, non-core staff may be employed to undertake moderation for individual modules.

17.4.13 Bilingual moderators must have the following characteristics:

- Fluency in English and the language of assessment, spoken and written.
- Possession of a higher degree in a related subject
- Experience of teaching and assessment across the relevant subject(s)
- Experience of UK higher education (whether as a student or a teacher)

17.4.14 Duties:

- Approval of assessment instruments (in conjunction with module co-ordinators)
- Moderation of assessment
- Periodic checks on the quality of translation (where this is used) and materials produced by the partner in the language of delivery. (If quality of translation is found to be below standard, that translation service would no longer be used.)
- Scrutiny of non-standard applications and evidence submitted for RPL.

17.4.15 Bilingual moderators will be briefed by colleagues within the host division regarding the modules they are moderating. This will include guidance regarding marking criteria. Where appropriate, moderators may be provided with examples of assessments from similar modules delivered at QMU. Bilingual moderators will produce a report on each module, with recommendations regarding potential changes to marks and highlighting any issues raised. This report will be submitted to the CAL, if the bilingual moderator is not the CAL.

17.4.16 Where the bilingual moderator is not the CAL, the CAL will conduct follow up discussions with the partner regarding confirmation of marks and resolution of issues raised through the moderation process. (For example, evidence that students have struggled with one element of the module, misunderstandings about the marking criteria etc.)

17.4.17 It is recommended that a sample of assessments from each year of the programme is translated into English to allow other members of staff to view examples of student work. This may happen after the moderation process is complete. The purpose of this is to allow the wider staff team to understand the level of work produced by students on the programme.

17.4.18 In the event that it proves impossible to recruit a bilingual moderator, work will be translated (as above) for moderation by QMU staff.

17.5 Programme management

17.5.1 Where a programme is delivered in another language it is expected that student support and day-to-day programme management will be conducted in that language. However, for quality assurances purposes, the following documents must be made available in English (although in some cases the originals may be in the delivery language):

- All documentation for validation and review
- Student staff and programme committee minutes
- Annual programme monitoring reports

- Responses to external examiners
- Module evaluation information
- Student handbooks

17.5.2 Boards of Examiners, Joint Boards of Studies and staff development will take place in English. Minutes of Boards of Examiners and Joint Boards of Studies will be taken by members of staff of the University in English. All associated papers will be in English.

17.5.3 The partner will make available on request translations of publicity materials. The University will also conduct periodic checks of publicity materials through bilingual members of staff.

17.5.4 The partner will make available on request translations of materials supplied to students including information provided via a virtual learning environment (VLE). The University may conduct periodic checks of VLE materials through bilingual members of staff.

17.5.5 QMU will ensure that key University policies are translated into the language of delivery for the benefit of students:

- Assessment regulations
- Appeals procedure

Students should also have access to referencing guidelines and information on the prevention of plagiarism.

17.5.6 Materials written by the partner organisation in the language of delivery will not normally bear the QMU logo. The QMU logo may, however, appear on documents that are direct translations of QMU materials.

17.6 Language dictionaries

17.6.1 If examinations are held in a language other than English, students whose first language is not the language of instruction may use translation only dictionaries in accordance with standard University regulations.

17.7 Placements

17.7.1 Placements will normally take place in the language of the host country. Placement supervisors will complete assessment documentation (if required) in that language.

17.7.2 The overall procedures for approval and management of placements are considered by validation and review panels. As part of the University's standard procedures, the panel sees English language versions of handbooks for students and/or placement providers, which should include information about respective responsibilities for management, approval and oversight of the placement experience.

17.7.3 Following validation, it is the responsibility of the Collaborative Academic Lead (CAL) to work with the programme leader and/or placement co-ordinator to support the implementation of these procedures. The CAL's role is to provide training and advice to the programme team, rather than to be involved directly in liaison with the placement providers.

17.7.4 For healthcare programmes, CALs and external examiners typically visit a sample of placement sites during their visits to the host country. CALs may also ask to see evidence of student feedback or samples of clinical assessments. The partner will be expected to provide translations of these on request.

17.8 Certificates and transcripts

17.8.1 The language of instruction will be noted on the student transcript.

Appendix 1

