

**University of Suffolk**

**PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL,  
MONITORING AND REVIEW OF  
PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY**



## **1. Introduction**

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- 1.1 Partnership activity represents an important aspect of the implementation of the University

course under the usual admission criteria, after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.

- x **Articulation arrangements:** where the University guarantees students entry to an advanced stage of a University of Suffolk course as a result of successfully completing an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.
  - x **Delivery of University of Suffolk module(s) at a partner institution:** where the University agrees to deliver module(s) at a partner institution, leading to the award of University of Suffolk credit.
  - x **Delivery of a University of Suffolk course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others:** where the University delivers one of its own courses off-campus (usually overseas) in collaboration with a partner institution, with delivery and assessment being undertaken by University staff.
  - x **Co-delivery of a course in partnership with a professional organisation:** where the University delivers a course in collaboration with a professional organisation (for example involving co- WHDFKLQJ DQG RU XVH RI WKH SDUWQHUV ¶ V
  - x **Validation arrangements:** where the University judges that a programme (or part thereof) developed and delivered by another institution is of an appropriate quality and academic standard to lead to a University of Suffolk award.
  - x **Franchise arrangements:** whereby the University allows the whole or part of one or more of its own internally developed courses to be delivered and assessed at a partner institution, leading to a University of Suffolk award.
  - x **Dual or multiple awards:** where the University and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to separate awards of both, or all, of the institutions (with awards made on successful completion of all elements of the collaborative course<sup>1</sup>).
  - x **Joint awards:** where the University and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to a joint award of both, or all, institutions.
  - x **Exchange arrangements and study abroad:** including student exchanges and student mobility programmes such as the Turing Scheme.
- 1.7 If a potential partnership does not fall into one of the above categories, please contact the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships (CAIP) ([partnerships@uos.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@uos.ac.uk)) in the first instance for further advice and guidance.

- 1.8 Proposals for partnership arrangements may come forward through various routes, for example through academic schools, by an approach from another institution or via a steer from the Executive. It is an imperative that once a representative of the University has been approached regarding a possible relationship with a new organisation, the representative should notify the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships ([partnerships@uos.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@uos.ac.uk)) at the earliest opportunity. An initial expression of interest form for prospective partner institutions is available on the [University website](#).
- 1.9 Sufficient lead-in time should be built in for the development and approval of proposed new partnerships. Whilst every effort is made to expedite matters, prospective partners should be aware that, depending on the nature of the arrangement and the approval process (and associated meeting schedules), it can take time to undertake due diligence activity and complete the approval process. No partnership arrangement should commence until the approval process has been completed and the underpinning legal agreement has been signed by authorised signatories of all parties.



- 2.2 More information on required due diligence activity for each type of partnership arrangement is provided in subsequent sections of this handbook. The Director of Finance and Planning should be consulted on any financial due diligence activity.
- 2.3 The [advice and guidance on partnerships](#) within the UK Quality Code is a useful reference point in terms of the conduct of due diligence enquiries and associated risk assessment and risk management.

**3. Financial costings**

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#### **4. Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

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- 4.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is designed to enable the University and another institution to agree to promote cooperation, discussions and positive academic relations to their mutual benefit, without establishing a binding relationship between them. Under such arrangements, opportunities may be sought for the exchange of students and academic staff or other activities agreed to be mutually beneficial.
- 4.2 The MoU represents a statement of intent rather than an agreement establishing a formal relationship between the two institutions. This type of arrangement might be a precursor to the negotiation of a more detailed partnership arrangement.

##### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 4.3 In order to seek approval for a MoU, the MoU proposal form (available within the CAIP area of the [University H](#))

- 4.7 The original signed copy of the MoU will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring of MoUs

- 4.8 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the MoU, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution and periodically reviewing the arrangement, providing updates to the Portfolio Oversight Committee as required.
- 4.9 MoUs are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 4.4 above

#### Escalation of a MoU

- 4.10 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the tw4 Tfff2(p )JT(i)5(i)5(ns)13(t15e)3(s )-4(t)to c-d&/F78to c-d)d0 595.32 841.92 reW\*nBT/F

## 5. Progression arrangements with no recognition of credit

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- 5.1 Under a progression agreement, the University of Suffolk guarantees students at the partner institution consideration for admission to the first year of a University of Suffolk course after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at the partner institution. This is normally subject to standard admissions criteria for the relevant course, although the criteria may be adapted, for example to meet widening participation objectives as part of Access and Participation planning. The University does not recognise credit from the partner institution, and students enter the University at the same point as standard applicants.
- 5.2 Students wishing to be admitted through a progression arrangement will have to apply individually for transfer to the University and progression may be subject to an individual admissions hurdle, for example individual application, interview or examination of a V W X G H Q W ¶ V S H U I R U P D Q F H R Q W K H L U a E x e r n i c s o o M s t u n J U D P P H the University retains the right to refuse admission.
- 5.3 Students admitted under progression arrangements will be required to meet standard English language entry requirements, as outlined on the University of Suffolk website.

### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 5.4 In order to seek approval for a progression arrangement with no recognition of credit, the progression agreement proposal form (available within the CAIP area of the [University Hub](#)) should be completed and signed by relevant parties.
- 5.5 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives
  - that the proposed institution from which students will progress is of an appropriate academic standing
  - that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution prepares students well for progression to the relevant University of Suffolk course, enabling them to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes commensurate wi85 Tm0 g0 q0 0 0 1 65.184 399

### Approval of the progression agreement

- 5.6 Once the proposal form has been approved by the relevant parties, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the progression agreement can be completed.
- 5.7 The agreement should be drafted by External Relations and/or the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be submitted to the partner institution for signature.
- 5.8 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

### Ongoing monitoring of the progression agreement

- 5.9 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the progression agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to progressing students.
- 5.10 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis (including monitoring the progress of students entering the University of Suffolk from the partner institution), feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Portfolio Oversight Committee and/or Quality Committee as required.
- 5.11 Progression agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 5.5 above

### Escalation of a progression agreement

- 5.12 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the partner institution and the University, the following procedures should be followed:

### Termination or expiry of a progression agreement

- 5.14 Either institution may withdraw from the progression agreement or cease to pursue its objectives at any time during the term of the agreement. The potential impact on any students at the partner institution intending to apply for progression to the University of Suffolk should be taken into consideration when considering withdrawal from the agreement.
- 5.15 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the progression agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.



- d) for international links, that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution enables students to develop appropriate English language skills in alignment with standard University English language entry requirements
  - e) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - f) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the progression arrangement
  - g) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the progression arrangement.
- 6.7 The supporting evidence should include full details of the programme of study at the proposed partner institution from which students will be progressing; information on the course to which they will be progressing at the University of Suffolk; and evidence of mapping of relevant learning outcomes for the recognition of prior learning.
- 6.8 If programme delivery and assessment at the partner institution is in a language other than English, an independent translator needs to be appointed to support the approval process. The translator should be on the British Council and/or Institute of Linguistics register of translators.

#### Approval of the progression agreement

- 6.9 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Quality Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the progression agreement can be completed.
- 6.10 The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.
- 6.11 The original signed copy of the agreement

partner institution, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by either institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.

- 6.14 Progression agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 6.6 above.

#### Escalation of a progression agreement

- 6.15 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the two institutions to include other more complex arrangements, the relevant approval process should be completed in accordance with the guidance in relevant section(s) of this handbook.
- 6.16 It is important to ensure that progression agreements are not allowed to escalate into more complex partnership arrangements without the necessary approval being sought and appropriate legal agreements being developed to underpin the revised arrangement.

#### Termination or expiry of a progression agreement

- 6.17 If either institution wishes to withdraw from the



## 7. Articulation arrangements

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- 7.1 Under an articulation agreement, the University guarantees students entry to an advanced stage of a University of Suffolk course (with recognition of prior learning), as a result of successfully completing an agreed programme of study at a partner institution. The maximum amount of credit that can be recognised through prior learning is specified within the framework and regulations for the relevant type of award, but may be reduced by the Quality Committee depending on the degree of risk involved.
- 7.2 For example, a student might complete an agreed programme of study at a partner institution and then enter Level 5 of an honours degree programme at the University of Suffolk (i.e. with 120 credits of recognised prior learning at Level 4). In the international arena, these are sometimes referred to as 2+2 arrangements.
- 7.3 Unlike progression arrangements, the relevant academic school within the University of Suffolk does not normally have the right to refuse admission to a student who has fulfilled the agreed conditions for entry (including, for international students, meeting relevant English language entry requirements and other UK immigration requirements). The only exception is where the student has a criminal conviction which results in the decision not to make the offer of a place or to withdraw an offer (in accordance with the procedure outlined in the [Admissions Policy](#)).

### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 7.4 In order to seek approval for an articulation arrangement, the articulation agreement proposal form (available within the CAIP area of the [University Hub](#))





formally withdraw from the Articulation Agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## **8. Delivery of University of Suffolk module(s) at a partner institution**

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- 8.1 Where an academic school within the University wishes to allow delivery of individual modules at another

University (the

### Ongoing monitoring of the arrangement

- 8.10 A member of University academic staff should be nominated to oversee the arrangement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and coordinating module delivery and assessment. The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, providing updates to the Quality Committee as required.
- 8.11 Where module(s) are being delivered on an ongoing basis, they should feed into relevant course and school level quality monitoring processes. This includes monitoring student performance and making provision for gaining student feedback on their learning experiences to inform enhancement activity.
- 8.12 Where module(s) are delivered on a one-off basis, a report on the delivery of the module(s) should be submitted to the Quality Committee for quality monitoring purposes.
- 8.13 Underpinning legal a







- 9.8 Approval of the proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee signals permission to progress to Stage 2 of the approval process.

Approval process stage 2: approval of the course and flying faculty model of delivery

- 9.9 Where the course involved is a proposed new course or where substantial changes (as determined by the Head of Quality) are required to an existing validated course to allow for delivery under a flying faculty model, the standard University procedure for the validation of new courses should be completed at this second stage (with Stage 1 completed prior to the course validation event).
- 9.10 Alternatively, where the course involved is an existing validated course that does not require substantial modification

## Legal agreement

- 9.14 Following approval of the partnership arrangement and the flying faculty model of delivery, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement should include clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students when a partnership ends, in accordance with an agreed Student Protection Plan. A financial agreement must also be agreed and signed by all parties as an appendix to the agreement. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice

## **10. Co-delivery of a course in partnership with a professional organisation**

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- 10.1 There may be occasions where an academic school within the University wishes to deliver a course in partnership with a professional organisation, potentially involving co-

- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate professional standing and has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University
- c) that the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include consideration of the registered status, ownership and financing of the organisation and internal governance arrangements (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
- d) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- e) that the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and the associated culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- f) that the proposed co-delivery arrangement has academic credibility, and the proposed partner institution has demonstrable academic and/or professional capacity to deliver any learning, teaching and support at the appropriate levels (with reference to the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and relevant subject benchmark statements)
- g) that the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students; provide a safe working environment; and meet the requirements of the course (including physical resources, learning resources, and staffing arrangements)
- h) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the delivery of the course, both within the University and at the proposed partner institution
- i) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the delivery of the course in collaboration with the proposed partner institution
- j) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
- k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

10.8 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the proposed partner institution to view facilities and resources and meet with staff.

- 10.9 Approval of the proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee signals permission to develop a full course proposal, leading to final approval of the partnership arrangement and the associated course.

Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and co-delivered course

- 10.10 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated course.
- 10.11 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 10.7), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:
- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns with relevant UK reference points (including the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements)
  - b) the University and the proposed partner institution have arrangements in place to ensure that students on the course will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate and consistent quality and standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
  - c) the learning infrastructure at the University and the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the award (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
  - d) the legal and contractual relationship of students with each institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
  - e) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, ovEMC /Span tt UK r10

- x at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area outside the relevant academic school)
- x one member of senior staff from the proposed partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed course)
- x Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- x Quality team representative
- x Learning Services representative
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- 10.17 The panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the University and the proposed partner institution to effectively deliver the proposed course, and decide under the delegated authority of Senate whether the proposed partnership arrangement and course should be approved for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or should be rejected. The outcome will be UHFRUGHG LQ D UHSRUW ZKLFK ZLOO VXPPDU Lnd W KH SDQ specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved and the course can commence.
- 10.18 The report will be submitted to Senate, via the Quality Committee, for information.
- 10.19 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.
- 10.20 Further guidance on the course approval process and the conduct of the approval event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

#### Legal agreement

- 10.21 Following approval of the partnership arrangement and the associated course, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement should include clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students when a partnership ends, in accordance with an agreed Student Protection Plan. Where appropriate, a financial agreement must also be agreed and signed by all parties as an appendix to the agreement. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors where appropriate.
- 10.22 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.



x course re-approval (on a maximum of a five year cycle)

## 11. Validation arrangements

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- 11.1 A validation arrangement is one whereby the University of Suffolk, as an awarding institution, judges that a course (or part thereof) designed and delivered by another HE provider is of an appropriate quality and academic standard to lead to a University of Suffolk award. The course will normally be designed, delivered and assessed by the partner institution, and the partner institution will normally have direct contractual responsibility to the student. The role of the University will be to approve entry standards, the design of the programme, arrangements for its delivery and mechanisms for quality assurance and enhancement. The University of Suffolk remains ultimately responsible for the quality and academic standard of the award.
- 11.2 All prospective new validation arrangements need to go through an initial screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the proposed partnership is worthy of further, more detailed scrutiny. Approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny leads to the development of a full proposal and an institutional validation event (Stage 2). Following final approval of the partnership arrangement at institutional level, approval of individual courses to be offered through the validation arrangement can commence (Stage 3). Institutional and course level validation may be combined when the validation arrangement is confined to a small number of courses.

### Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny

- 11.3 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the validation agreement proposal form (available within the CAIP area of the [University Hub](#)) should be completed and submitted to:
- x the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - x the Senate for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 11.4 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:











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expectations in terms of quality and academic standards.

- 11.23 The appointment of any new partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment for validated provision is subject to approval by the University through the submission of a CV to the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships.
- 11.24 Strategic management of the partnership is normally facilitated through a joint Partnership Management Group or equivalent, including representation from both institutions and reporting annually (or more regularly as required) to the Portfolio Oversight Committee. Sub-groups may be established to deal with operational management of the partnership.
- 11.25 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that partner institution(s) continue to have the capacity to fulfil their designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 11.4 and 11.8 above.

Termination or expiry of a validation agreement

- 11.26 The validation agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students involved in the validation arrangement is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.
- 11.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.



**12. Franchise arrangement - 101.11**

- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
- c)

### Approval process stage 2: institutional approval

12.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at institutional level. This second stage in the process, involving an institutional approval event, ultimately leads to the approval of the partnership arrangement by Senate. This paves the way for the delivery of franchised courses (Stage 3).

12.10 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 12.6), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:

- a) both the University and the proposed partner institution have arrangements in place to ensure that students on franchised courses will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and academic standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
- b) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the awards (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
- c) the partner institution has a sound understanding of relevant University of Suffolk regulations, policies and procedures
- d) the legal and contractual relationship of students with the University and the partner institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated

12.12 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

12.13 The relevant University academic school(s) and the proposed partner institution should compile a partnership proposal document and supporting evidence for consideration by the panel, in consultation with relevant academic and professional services departments within the University. This should provide an evaluative commentary on the extent to which the proposed partnership meets the criteria for approval (see paragraphs 12.6 and 12.10 above) and should outline proposed arrangements for the strategic and operational management of the partnership by both parties. The document should cover:

- a) introductory information on the partner institution (including mission and educational objectives; current HE portfolio and student numbers by course; student profiles; outcomes of relevant external reviews)
- b) HE strategy and plans for portfolio development within the partner institution, and the perceived benefits of the proposed partnership to both parties
- c) organisational structures and key staff who will be involved in managing and supporting the partnership from both institutions
- d) internal HE governance arrangements at the partner institution, and how these will
- e) mechanisms for the appointment, induction, appraisal and professional development of academic staff (including any peer review schemes in operation within the institution)
- f) entry criteria for HE programmes and information on recruitment and admissions processes (including arrangements for induction and for supporting the transition to HE)
- g) the intended legal and contractual relationship of students with the University and the partner institution, and associated registration status and student entitlements (and how this will be communicated to students)
- h) learning, teaching and assessment strategy, and associated policies and procedures that will apply to partnership provision (including arrangements for

- n) arrangements for securing employer engagement in course development and/or delivery
- o) arrangements for managing work-based learning opportunities (where relevant)
- p) student support mechanisms (e.g. tutorial support, academic skills development, welfare, counselling, careers guidance, specialist support for students with disabilities, advice on accommodation, student finances)
- q) arrangements for monitoring student retention, progression, achievement and graduate destinations (and relevant data showing performance in this regard)
- r) arrangements for dealing with student complaints, academic appeals and disciplinary matters (including relevant policies and procedures to be used for the partnership arrangement)
- s) student representation and feedback mechanisms at module, course and institutional level (including relevant data showing student satisfaction levels)
- t) internal arrangements within the partner institution for monitoring and review of the quality and academic standard of HE provision (including evidence of recent outputs)





x quality monitoring processes, including production of an annual monitoring report



### **13. Dual or multiple awards**

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- 13.1 Under a dual or multiple award arrangement, the University of Suffolk and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to separate awards of both, or all, of the institutions. Such arrangements usually involve recognition of credit from the elements of the course delivered at the partner institution(s), with students required to fulfil the requirements of all degree awarding bodies in order to be eligible for the award. The University of Suffolk is individually responsible for the quality and academic standard of the award made in its name.
- 13.2 The development of dual or multiple awards should only be considered where degree awarding powers at the relevant level are held by all partner institutions. The awards should be

- b) the proposed partner institution(s) are of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, have a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
- c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution(s) are consistent with those of the University
- d) the proposed partner institution(s) have experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or have demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
- e) the proposed partner institution(s) have an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- f) the proposed partner institution(s) provide a safe working environment for students
- g) the proposed partner institution(s) have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- h) the proposed partner institution(s) are financially stable and do not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
- i) the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- j) the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University or its students
- k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution(s).

13.7 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the partner institution(s) to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.

13.8

## Approval process stage 2: approval

- x one member of senior staff from each partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed dual or multiple award)
- x Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- x Quality team representative
- x Learning Services representative
- x Student V 8 Q Rep Representative.

13.12 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

13.13 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed partner institution(s), should compile the following documentation for consideration by the panel as part of the approval event:

- a) information on the proposed partner institution(s), including evidence of credibility as an academic partner, legal status and capacity to enter into the proposed partnership arrangements
- b) for international collaborations, information on the legal, financial and cultural environment (particularly in relation to quality and standards and language issues) from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country (e.g. the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
- c) information on the proposed new course leading to the dual or multiple award (covering the elements of the course to be delivered at all partner institutions and presented in accordance with the documentation requirements for a standard University of Suffolk course validation event, i.e. to

- i) information on how student complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters will be dealt with across all institutions (including copies of relevant policies and procedures)
- j) staffing policies and criteria for the appointment of academic staff at the partner institution
- k) arrangements for course management and administration i82 reW\*nBT/inghe partner

arranged at the time of the approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.

- 13.19 Further guidance on the approval process and the conduct of the approval event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

#### Approval of the underpinning legal agreement

- 13.20 Following confirmation of approval of the dual or multiple award, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of all parties. The agreement must include an appropriate exit strategy in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.
- 13.21 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be forwarded to the partner institution(s) for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement should be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring and review of the dual or multiple award

- 13.22 A member of University academic staff should be nominated to oversee the partnership arrangement and the associated dual or multiple award, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution(s), approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to students as they transfer between institutions.
- 13.23 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Quality Committee as required. This should include monitoring the progress and experience of students, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by any institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.
- 13.24 An external examiner should be appointed to oversee the quality of the course, in accordance with the U Q L Y H U V L W \ ¶ V V W D Q G D U G H [ W H U Q D O H [ D P L Q H U  
The course will be subject to re-approval on a maximum of a five year cycle, in accordance with the standard University of Suffolk [Procedure for the re-approval of existing courses](#), adapted as necessary to suit the partnership arrangement.
- 13.25 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to

ensure that partner institution(s) continue to have the capacity to fulfil their designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 13.6 and 13.10 above.

Termination or expiry of a dual / multiple award agreement

- 13.26 The agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students enrolled on the dual or multiple award is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.
- 13.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

14.



- c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution(s) are consistent with those of the University
  - d) the proposed partner institution(s) have experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or have demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
  - e) the proposed partner institution(s) have an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
  - f) the proposed partner institution(s) provide a safe working environment for students
  - g) the proposed partner institution(s) have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
  - h) the proposed partner institution(s) are financially stable and do not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
  - i) the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
  - j) the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution(s).
- 14.7 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the partner institution(s) to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.
- 14.8 Approval of the joint award proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate signals permission to develop a full proposal, leading to final approval of partnership and the associated joint award (Stage 2).

Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and joint award

- 14.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated joint award.
- 14.10 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 14.6), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:

- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns with relevant UK reference points (including the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements)
- b) the proposed partner institution(s) have arrangements in place to ensure that students on the course leading to the joint award will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate and consistent quality and academic standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
- c) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution(s) is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the award (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
- d) the regulations, policies and procedures governing the delivery of the course are appropriate (within the context of relevant UK reference points); meet the requirements of each partner; and are clearly communicated to students
- e) the legal and contractual relationship of students with each institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
- f) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement
- g) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the joint award.

14.11 An approval event will be held to consider the proposed partnership and the associated joint award, usually taking place over a full day. An approval panel will be appointed on behalf of the Quality Committee to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:

- x Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
- x one external academic subject expert (selected by the U

14.13 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed partner institution(s), should compile the following documentation for consideration by the panel as part of the approval event:

- a) information on the proposed partner institution(s), including evidence of credibility as an academic partner, legal status and capacity to enter into the proposed partnership arrangements
- b) for international collaborations, information on the legal, financial and cultural environment (particularly in relation to quality and standards and language issues) from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country (e.g. the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
- c) information on the proposed new course leading to the joint award (covering the elements of the course to be delivered at all partner institutions and presented in accordance with the documentation requirements for a standard University of Suffolk course validation event, i.e. to include a course validation document, student course handbook, mapping of course and module learning outcomes, staff CVs and HEAR descriptions for each award presented for approval)
- d) arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of all published information associated with the joint award, including ensuring clarity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner institution
- e) the admissions criteria for the joint award, and arrangements for managing the admissions and enrolment process (including the intended legal and contractual relationship of students with each partner institution, and associated registration status and student entitlements)
- f) assessment regulations, policies and procedures for the joint award, taking into consideration the requirements and expectations of each institution and ensuring consistency of approach in terms of the maintenance of academic standards
- g) resourcing, including physical, IT and learning resources, at each institution
- h) student support and guidance mechanisms at each institution, including arrangements for induction and ongoing academic and pastoral support
- i) information on how student complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters will be dealt with across all institutions
- j) staffing policies and criteria for the appointment of academic staff at the partner institution
- k) arrangements for course management and administration (including arrangements for the maintenance of student records and monitoring student progression and achievement)

- l) arrangements for ongoing quality monitoring and enhancement (including arrangements for student representation and feedback and for the appointment of an external examiner)
  - m) arrangements for the production of transcripts and certificates and for graduation ceremonies (transcripts and certificates should clearly state that the course is taught collaboratively)
  - n) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).
- 14.14 The documentation should be submitted in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the approval event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.
- 14.15 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally view facilities and resources and undertake discussions with the proposed course team, including relevant staff at the partner institution(s). Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution(s) by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the approval documentation.
- 14.16 Under the delegated authority of Senate, the panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the University and the proposed partner institution(s) to effectively deliver the proposed course leading to the joint award, and decide whether to approve the proposed partnership arrangement and joint award for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or whether to reject the proposal. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the SDQH O T V G L V F X V L R and specify any conditions and PQ V



experience of students enrolled on the joint award is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.

- 14.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## **15. Exchange agreements and study abroad (including Turing Scheme)**

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- 15.1 Exchange arrangements include student and staff exchanges and student mobility programmes under the Turing Scheme. Under such arrangements, individual students studying specified University of Suffolk courses can accrue a maximum of 120 credits at international partner institutions and reciprocal arrangements for partner institution students to study at the University of Suffolk are also in place. For out-going students under such an arrangement, the University of Suffolk agrees to recognise and grant credit for those modules undertaken at the partner institution.
- 15.2 Under an exchange arrangement, the University of Suffolk is responsible for ensuring that the academic standards set and achieved by students at the partner institution are

- d) that arrangements for student support and guidance at the partner institution are appropriate
- e) that adequate student accommodation is available for students
- f) that the proposed exchange agreement does not present undue risks to the University or its students (including analysis of the stability of the region and student security both on and off campus)
- g) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the exchange agreement (including arrangements for credit transfer and, where relevant, mark conversion)
- h) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the exchange agreement.

#### Approval of the exchange agreement

- 15.6 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Portfolio Oversight Committee Exchange Agreement sub-group, negotiations with the proposed partner institution concerning the exchange agreement can be completed. Schools should liaise with the Study Abroad Adviser regarding agreement templates.
- 15.7 The agreement should be submitted to the Study Abroad Adviser, who will finalise it in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional support departments. The agreement should be signed by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The Study Abroad Adviser will arrange for the agreement to be signed by the legal representative of the partner institution, and the final signed version will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring of exchange agreements

- 15.8 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the exchange agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to students involved in the exchange. The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, providing updates to the Portfolio Oversight Committee as required.
- 15.9 The operation of the exchange agreement should feed into the U Q L Y H Quality \ ¶ V monitoring processes at course and school level. This includes making provision for gaining student feedback on their learning experiences while on exchange, to inform enhancement activity.
- 15.10 Exchange agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 15.5 above.



### Termination or expiry of an exchange agreement

- 15.11 If either institution wishes to withdraw from the exchange agreement, arrangements should be put in place to ensure any students currently taking part in the exchange are able to complete their studies and, where relevant, be awarded the associated credit.
- 15.12 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## Appendix A: Summary of the approval processes for different types of partnership

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	Progression and articulation arrangements	Delivery of University modules at a partner institution	Delivery of a University course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others	Co-delivery of a course with a professional organisation	Validation arrangements	Franchise arrangements	Dual, multiple or joint awards	Exchange arrangements (including study abroad)
Portfolio Oversight Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)	<p>For arrangements <u>not</u> involving recognition of credit: approval of proposal form by relevant senior staff</p> <p>For arrangements involving recognition of credit: Quality Committee approval of proposal form</p> <p>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</p>	<p>Quality Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)</p> <p>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</p>	<p>Stage 1: Portfolio Oversight Committee and Quality Committee approval of flying faculty partnership proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and financial arrangements)</p>	<p>Stage 1: Portfolio Oversight Committee and Quality Committee approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p>Stage 1: Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p>Stage 1: Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p>Stage 1: Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p>Portfolio Oversight Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)</p> <p>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</p>
			<p>Stage 2: Course validation event (for new or substantially modified courses) or paper-based approval process informed by site visit (for existing validated courses)</p>	<p>Stage 2: Course validation event (including scrutiny of partnership arrangement)</p>	<p>Stage 2: Institutional validation event</p>	<p>Stage 2: Institutional approval event</p>	<p>Stage 2: Course approval event (including scrutiny of partnership arrangements)</p>	
					<p>Stage 3: Course validation event(s)</p>	<p>Stage 3: Course approval event(s)</p>		