

Heriot-Watt University's Mapping to the UK Quality Code Partnerships

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Regulatory contexts for the Quality Code

The Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) are mandatory for higher education providers in all parts of the UK. Common practices are mandatory in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and while providers in England may choose to work towards them, they are not required to do so as these are not regulatory requirements and will not be assessed as part of the OfS's regulatory framework. National regulators and QAA are not bound by the information in this advice and guidance and will not view it as containing indicators of compliance. This guidance does not interpret statutory requirements.

Terminology

This document aims to provide advice and guidance on how providers who work in partnership with other organisations might ensure that they provide a high-quality student experience and assure the academic standards of their awards. This advice and guidance focuses on provision that leads to the award of academic credit and that is delivered, assessed or supported in partnership between two or more organisations. Its primary focus is on provision where the achievement of learning outcomes for the module or course are dependent on the arrangements made between the organisations.

This document will be of relevance to higher education providers with degree awarding powers and providers that deliver and assess on behalf of awarding organisations.

Provider and organisation: Anybody involved in the delivery of a partnership arrangement.

Awarding organisation: Refers to issues that are specifically relevant to the degree-awarding body. This term is used to distinguish responsibilities between the awarding organisation and any other organisation within the partnership. Organisations within the partnership, who are not the awarding organisation, can still consider the guidance for their own implementation as good practice.

Partner: The provider delivering aspects of teaching, learning, assessment or student support under delegated authority of the 'awarding organisation'.

Partnership: An arrangement between two or more organisations to deliver aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and student support. It refers to collaborative arrangements involving students and/or awards which include those involving guaranteed progression and sharing of services.

Partnership arrangements may apply to the delivery of whole courses of study or to elements of courses, individual modules, or self-contained components of study. Alternative sites and contexts for learning or assessment, or specialist support, resources or facilities for learning, may be provided, for example, by organisations offering work-based or placement learning opportunities, or employers supporting employees on higher education courses where the workplace is used as a learning environment. They may operate either within the UK or transnationally and include, for example, different modes of delivery such as online, validation arrangements, franchised courses, branch campuses, multiple awards, apprenticeships and provision by 'embedded colleges' of integrated foundation courses.

Expectations and Practices

The advice underneath the Expectations and Practices is not mandatory for providers but illustrative of a range of possible approaches.

Providers work in partnership with a wide range of organisations, including awarding bodies, other education providers, non-academic providers (or those whose purpose is not primarily education) and employers. When doing so, awarding bodies retain responsibility for the academic standards of their awards and for the quality of the student experience. This Theme identifies the relevant Core practices for providers when considering the unique nature of partnership working. Other Themes will also be relevant to partnerships.

| EXPECTATIONS FOR STANDARDS | | EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY | |
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| <p>The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.</p> <p><i>When working in partnership, the awarding organisation retains responsibility for the academic standards of its awards, ensuring that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualification frameworks.</i></p> | <p>The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.</p> <p><i>When working in partnership, the awarding organisation retains responsibility for ensuring that academic standards at, and beyond, the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those achieved by other UK providers.</i></p> | <p>Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.</p> <p><i>When working in partnership, the awarding organisation retains responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of the student's academic experience from admissions through to outcomes can be considered high quality. The awarding organisation is also responsible for ensuring that enhancement opportunities are available to students.</i></p> | <p>From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p> <p><i>When working in partnership, the awarding organisation retains responsibility for ensuring that student needs are consistently met.</i></p> |
| <p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Expectations for Standards. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles.</i></p> | | <p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Expectations for Quality. Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping documents to the 'Course Design and Development', 'Admission, Recruitment and Widening Access', 'Enabling Student Engagement', 'Monitoring and Evaluation' and 'External Expertise' themes.</i></p> | |
| Core Practice (Standards) | | Core Practice (Quality) | |
| <p>1. Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.</p> <p><i>In practice, this means that the awarding organisation must put in place all necessary measures to ensure that it can maintain the academic standards of its awards. This will include an analysis of the risks associated with a potential partner, the type of partnership that will be entered into, the management of the partnership (and its associated risks), that an appropriate formal agreement is put in place, and that these arrangements are effectively monitored and evaluated.</i></p> | | <p>2. Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.</p> <p><i>In practice, this means that where an awarding organisation arranges for all, or part, of the course to be delivered by another organisation, it puts in place effective processes for the management and oversight of all aspects of the students' academic experience to ensure that this is high-quality. These will include regular monitoring and review of the course(s), the teaching staff, the facilities, other resources and seeking, and acting on, where relevant, feedback from all involved in the provision with a particular focus on student feedback and outcomes.</i></p> | |
| <p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Core Practices (Standards). Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping documents to the 'Monitoring and Evaluation' theme.</i></p> | | <p><i>HWU is able to confirm that it meets the above Core Practices (Quality). Reference should be made to the detailed mapping provided against each of the Guiding Principles below, as well as the mapping documents to the 'Monitoring and Evaluation' and 'Enabling Student Achievement' themes.</i></p> | |

Guiding Principles with Mapping from HWU Practices

A 'Reference' document is available to use in conjunction with this mapping document.

The guiding principles given here are not mandatory for any provider. They are a concise expression of the fundamental practices of the higher education sector, based on the experience of a wide range of providers. They are intended as a framework for providers to consider when establishing new or looking at existing higher education provision. They are not exhaustive and there will be other ways for providers to meet their requirements.

| Guiding Principles (Standards and Quality) | Heriot-Watt University Practice |
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| <p>1. The awarding organisation will be accountable for assuring the overall quality and academic standards of the provision, regardless of the type of partnership.</p> <p>An awarding organisation is accountable for the quality and academic standards of its provision irrespective of the partnership arrangements. Procedures, systems and safeguards implemented for the management of partnership arrangements should be in proportion to the level of risk to quality and academic standards posed by the arrangement.</p> | <p>The University has in place a four-part Code of Practice (COP) for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes which provides a framework for managing the University's provision delivered across various locations and by various modes. Part Three of the COP relates specifically to the Management of Programmes and Partnerships and complies with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Partnerships. The following points demonstrate how the University complies with Guiding Principle 1:</p> <p>The Awarding Organisation will be accountable for assuring the overall quality and standards of the provision, regardless of the type of partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A key fundamental principle governing all multi-mode, multi-location provision is that programmes offered in more than one location or by more than one mode of study must have identical academic standards. In addition, academic standards and the quality of learning of all awards must meet the formal expectations of the UK Quality Code, be properly located in the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework and be consistent with the Subject Benchmark Statements. All external partnership arrangements are built on these baseline principles (<i>COP Principle 3.1: Academic Standards in Partnership Programmes</i>). ○ The legal power of Heriot-Watt University as a UK degree-awarding body means that the institution is responsible for the academic standards of all credit and awards granted in its name. This responsibility is never delegated. For Approved Learning Partners and Articulations, Heriot-Watt University is the awarding body and is solely responsible for the academic standards of its awards. In the case of Joint Collaborative Partnerships, the University makes the award in conjunction with another Institution(s) (<i>COP Principle 3.1: Academic Standards in Partnership Programmes</i>). ○ Heriot-Watt University and the partner organisation must enter into a written and legally binding agreement/contract, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the parties, prior to the commencement of student recruitment and registration. The written Agreement must be signed by the authorised representatives of the University and the partner organisation. The agreement/contract must be regularly monitored and reviewed (<i>COP Principle 3.12: Production of Written Agreement/Contract</i>). ○ Due to the major risks associated with serial arrangements, and in order for the University to have confidence in, and retain accountability for, the quality of its programmes, HWU will not normally enter into a serial arrangement with a partner organisation. Only in exceptional circumstances will a serial arrangement be considered (<i>COP Principle 3.4: Serial Arrangements</i>). ○ Where programmes are accredited by UK Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), their requirements and guidelines will be taken into account. Programmes offered outside the UK must also meet the academic standards of, and be aligned with, the qualifications frameworks and other educational requirements of the overseas countries within which the University operates. For example: the Knowledge and Human Development Agency in Dubai; the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are Academic Briefing papers setting out definitions of Partnership arrangements and associated awards and outlining the approval process and University authorisation of partnerships. ○ For Joint Collaborative Partnerships, the responsibilities of each party for quality and academic standards are clearly set out in the agreement template (collaborative provision). <p>Procedures, systems and safeguards implemented for the management of partnership arrangements should be in proportion to the level of risk to quality and academic standards posed by the arrangement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A set of procedures and policies is available for each type of partnership arrangement, each of which covers the following: negotiation and development; formal approval and agreement; management/oversight and quality assurance and; student entitlements. Policies and procedures are designed to be fit for purpose, and proportionate to the type of partnership involved or location/mode of delivery. The University recognises that a single 'one size fits all' approach would not sufficiently address the particular requirements of each type of activity (<i>COP Principle 3.2: Policies and Procedures</i>). ○ The University recognises that the management of partnerships need to be relevant to the type of partnership, the nature of the partner organisation and proportionate to the complexity and volume of the provision involved and the risks which it may present. For example, due to the complexity and the higher risk associated with joint collaborative provision, the University stipulates that a School Collaborative Board of Studies is set up to manage each partnership arrangement. This Board of Studies forms part of the School's Academic Management Structure. It is responsible for the academic management and operation of a programme delivered in partnership with one or more Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) either in the UK or Overseas. ○ All partnership arrangements should be managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of Heriot-Watt University which should be referenced within the partnership contract to ensure that risks are minimised (<i>COP Principle 3.2: Policies and Procedures</i>). Furthermore, the University has in place appropriate insurance cover within the Agreement to minimise any financial risk. |

| Guiding Principles (Standards and Quality) | Heriot-Watt University Practice |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The University has introduced safeguards to prevent compromising its academic standards, the quality of learning opportunities and the integrity of the partnership or education provided. This includes, for example: financial or other temptations, wider potential conflicts of interest or competing priorities (<i>COP Principle 3.8: Safeguards</i>). ○ The University's position on spectrum of choice underpinned by common safeguards for its multi-location/mode provision is encapsulated in, and summarised by, the following fundamental principle: identical academic standards; diversity of learning experiences (<i>COP, para 1.3, page 9</i>). ○ Safeguards are considered as part of the business approval process and is therefore a basic requirement of any partnership arrangement. The University has designated Senior Officers, staff in Schools and Professional Services staff, who have the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to elicit and analyse the information relevant to selecting and deciding upon the suitability of a partner (<i>COP Principle 3.6: Due Diligence: Partner</i>). Schools are responsible for managing the application of these safeguards in each partnership, and should have in place procedures for monitoring their effectiveness (<i>COP Principle 3.8: Safeguards</i>). ○ Safeguards are embedded within the University's policies and procedures for approving and managing external partnership arrangements and the University's Studies Committee is required to approve all new collaborative taught programmes and take into consideration academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities (as delegated by the Senate and the University Committee for Quality and Standards). Safeguards are also embedded within written agreements. <p>Risk based methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The University has in place clear and robust approval processes which take account of all academic and business aspects, including a consideration of risk, relating to the delivery of programmes with external partners. ○ With regard to partnerships, in its evaluation of a proposed partnership, the University will ensure that the following steps have been taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The financial, legal, academic and reputational risks have been adequately assessed ○ Appropriate due diligence procedures have been determined to provide the necessary information on the partnership ○ Appropriate safeguards have been put in place to manage the risks associated with the partnership ○ The design and development of the programme to be offered through the partnership is complete ○ This evaluation process normally takes 4 – 6 weeks to complete as each area described above is reviewed and considered by Senior Officers within the University (described later within Guiding Principle 2). ○ The University recognises that key risks relating to international collaborative provision are reputational and financial. These risks are managed at operational level through Schools and at strategic level through the University Committee for Learning and Teaching and the University Executive and the Audit and Risk Committee and ultimately Court as the Governing Body responsible for risk. They are reported through the governance structure via the Risk and Management Strategy Group, which reports to the University Executive and the Audit and Risk Committee (of Court) and through this Committee to the Court itself. ○ If issues arise where proposed arrangements do not align with current policies/practices, these would be raised/considered, and proposed changes could be put forward to decision-making University level committees which meet reasonably frequently throughout the session. ○ The Internal Audit process reviews each School's risk assessment processes and requires sight of its risk register in relation to high-risk activities, which includes programmes delivered through an external partnership arrangement (<i>COP Principle 3.27: Periodic Review and Re-Approval of Partnerships and Multi-Location/Multi-Mode Programmes</i>). Assurance Services provides support and guidance in the development and review of risk registers. |
| <p>2. The awarding organisation will have in place appropriate governance to authorise and oversee the development and closure of partnership arrangements and to monitor their effective operation.</p> <p>The awarding organisation will manage the development of partnerships to ensure that there is oversight of the partnership from inception through to closure. Formal procedures may set out requirements for differential arrangements dependant on the type of partnership and the level of risk. All aspects of a partnership</p> | <p>1) Governance to authorise partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heriot-Watt University has a strong commitment – reinforced recently through <i>Strategy 2025</i> – to partnership and collaborative activity. Although the University does not have a separate “Collaborative Provision Strategy”, the University's strategic approach to collaborative provision is defined by its ethos as a global institution: Heriot-Watt is not limited as an institution to one location with an international outlook, rather it excels as a global university based in multiple locations, each successful and interconnected. ○ All proposed partnership arrangements must go through a separate business and academic approval process, culminating in University Authorisation. The business approval process is designed to supplement the academic approval procedure by providing a mechanism for comprehensive scrutiny and due diligence in such matters as resources, risk assessment and management, financial arrangements, and obligations of the University. The Senate has overall responsibility for academic approval of, and major modifications to, disciplines and programmes. Responsibility for detailed scrutiny and approval is devolved to University's Studies Committees (as delegated by the Senate and the University Committee for Quality and Standards), chaired by a Dean of the University. The Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) is responsible for oversight of the academic approval process (which is managed by Academic Quality). (<i>COP Principle 3.13: Business Approval and COP Principle 3.14: Academic Approval</i>). |

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| <p>should be subject to monitoring and evaluation to ensure their effective operation and to establish areas for development or the timely need for closure of the partnership.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All partnership arrangements are subject to University Authorisation which involves the review and approval of key supporting documentation and contractual Agreements by designated individuals who have responsibility for the operation of a partnership. The following Senior Officers have responsibility at the institutional level for oversight of the implementation, operation, monitoring and review of the partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Academic Registrar (confirms that application has been quality-checked and that the partnership can be delivered operationally) ○ Director of Governance and Legal (confirms that application has been appropriately risk assessed and that the Agreement meets legal requirements) ○ Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) (confirms that the Agreement satisfies the University's Learning and Teaching policies) ○ Secretary of the University (provides delegated authority to approve the partnership on behalf of Heriot-Watt University) <p>The above individuals share responsibility with Academic Quality, whilst Schools ensure that partnership development and approval activity is managed at a local level by a range of staff members such as Programme Directors, Directors of Academic Quality, Directors of Learning and Teaching (<i>COP Principle 3.21: Responsibility for Operation of Partnership</i>).² These roles provide a reference point for those developing partnership proposals as well as providing advice and guidance. For International Partnerships, the School Director of International and the International Development office may liaise with some of these senior roles in the School to identify and develop partnerships in line with the Strategy 2025, particularly the key enabling strategies of Building Flourishing Communities; Excelling in Research and Enterprise; Pioneering in Education; Being a Globally Connected University (see point 2 below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Partnership approval process, and all quality-assurance related procedures, are disseminated using the Academic Management Structure within the University, e.g. from the University-level committees and/or Academic Quality to Schools (via key roles such as Director of Academic Quality). ○ Through its Approved Teachers, Approved Tutors and Approved Markers scheme, HWU will ensure that the appropriate skills and expertise are held by staff who are not employed by the University and who provide support to learners on programmes offered through a partnership arrangement. ALP staff, who are almost always appointed as Approved Tutors, are expected to meet the University's usual requirements in terms of the qualifications to teach at a specific level. Where an individual course or part of a programme is delivered by a partner, for example an industry or business organisation, HWU will assess the appropriateness of the staff to deliver the type of learning or support involved. Schools should ensure that, when submitting applications for Approved Tutors, the ALP staff in question are fully prepared for, and understand, the cultural assumptions about higher education in the UK, which may differ from the expectations of other sectors and other countries. In the case of joint or dual awards, where due diligence searches on the standing of the partner are satisfactory, it would be reasonable to acknowledge that the partner institution will have adequate mechanisms in place to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified to deliver those parts of the programme for which it is responsible. An authoritative, up-to-date record of Approved Teachers, Approved Tutors and Approved Markers is maintained by Academic Quality (<i>COP Principle 3.17: Expertise of Staff</i>). <p>2) Oversee development of partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ International Development, led by the Assistant Principal for International Development, leads the development and delivery of Heriot-Watt's strategic international portfolio including via its integrated campuses in Dubai and Malaysia, wider transnational education and global partnerships. This work is collaborative in nature and engages stakeholders from across the University, including schools, campuses and services. The team works closely with the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and Academic Quality and Governance teams to reinforce the University's governance and quality assurance framework through the strategic development of partnerships and regularly communicating risks and issues affecting academic business development and stakeholder relationship management. In 2019 the International Development team established an informal International Directors Forum (IDF) comprised of School International Directors (academic), the Deputy Provosts of the Dubai and Malaysia campuses and representatives from the University's Academic Quality team. The aim of the IDF is to champion a 'One Heriot-Watt' approach to internationalisation and development for the wider benefit of all Schools and campuses in line with University Strategy, the Learning and Teaching Strategy and School and Campus international development plans. ○ Schools identify areas of growth, for example partnership revenue, during their five-year budget planning. Schools manage the delivery of their own partnership agreements except in the case of multi-School agreements. Monitoring of partnerships is carried out at an institutional level as described in section 4 below. ○ The resources (library, IT, student support) needed to deliver a partnership agreement (both parties) is assessed and confirmed through the business approval process by the School entering into the partnership. This is then authorised at the institutional level by the delegated Senior Officers and in particular, by the Academic Registrar who will review and confirm that services such as student support and student records are sufficient. ○ For Joint Collaborative Partnership arrangements, the formal agreement includes arrangements for operational matters such as student enrolment, assessment and examinations, graduation and student discipline, appeals and complaints. These are also considered as part of the Partnership Annual Monitoring and Review process (see point 4 below). <p>3) Oversee closure of partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of their partnerships through evaluation of student numbers, student feedback and academic feedback as well as taking into consideration costs/income to the School. As such, the decision on whether to withdraw or terminate a partnership is delegated to Schools and, in addition to those already mentioned, is informed by a number of factors, including: information gathered from Partner Annual Monitoring and Review (PAMR), partner visits, partner student performance, partner's ability to recruit students to Heriot-Watt University, etc. ○ Depending on the nature of the partnership, any areas of concern identified are discussed at the School's Learning and Teaching Committee or with the Head of School to take a view on renewal or withdrawal. The Head of School would take the final decision to withdraw or terminate a partnership, discussing any financial issues with the Assistant Principal for International Development. ○ Should a School decide to withdraw or terminate a partnership, it is University policy that a Teach-Out plan is submitted. The Teach-Out plan details how the School and the partner plan to support students through to completion of their studies. Once a School has taken the decision to withdraw or terminate a partnership, specific paperwork must be submitted to Academic Quality. Academic Quality then coordinate University Authorisation of the partnership closure and will notify the University Committee for Quality and Standards who maintain oversight of partnership closures. ○ For Joint Collaborative Partnerships specifically, a 'termination of agreement' clause is included in the formal agreement which states that adequate arrangements must be in place to support registered students who wish to continue their studies under the programme without any detriment or disadvantage. These arrangements will be set out in a formal letter between the institutions. |

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| | <p>4) Monitoring of partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All forms of partnership arrangements are regularly monitored through the University's standard processes, detailed below, and are reported to the University Committee for Quality and Standards (UCQS). All monitoring activities are the responsibility of the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and are managed by Academic Quality. All partnerships are subject to the University's standard procedures for monitoring and review: annual monitoring; periodic review and; visits to partner organisations (<i>COP Principle 3.22: Adherence to Terms and Conditions</i>). ○ Annual Monitoring and Review process (AMR) All academic activities of the University, including programmes delivered through partnerships or in multi-modes/locations, are reviewed on an annual basis through the Annual Monitoring and Review process. Academic Quality summarise outcomes from the Schools' PAMR and SAMR (both of which are described below) into the University AMR Report (<i>COP Principle 3.25: Annual Monitoring and Review</i>). ○ Partner Annual Monitoring and Review (PAMR) The PAMR process has been designed to specifically monitor the delivery of programmes through Approved Learning Partners and Joint Collaborative Partners. A report for every ALP or JCP is required from all Schools to capture key information such as student numbers, student progression and retention, student feedback, staff feedback and any amendments made to the programme (<i>COP Principle 3.25: Annual Monitoring and Review</i>). ○ School Annual Monitoring and Review process (SAMR) Information from the PAMR then informs the School's overarching SAMR where key information is collated into a summary report of the School's activities during the previous academic year. In addition to ALPs and JCPs, the SAMR reviews other forms of partnership provision, such as Articulation Partners and Study Abroad/Student Exchange Partners (<i>COP Principle 3.25: Annual Monitoring and Review</i>). ○ Academic Review The University's internal enhancement-led Academic Review process considers all academic activities, irrespective of the mode or location of delivery, on a five-year cycle. The Academic Review process ensures that academic standards of a programme are being maintained; that programmes are of an appropriate quality; that students are receiving an appropriate learning experience and; that learning and teaching are being enhanced in a managed way (<i>COP Principle 3.27: Periodic Review and Re-Approval of Partnerships and Multi-Location/Multi-Mode Programmes</i>). ○ Internal Audit In addition to the Academic Review process, a separate assurance-led process (an Internal Audit) reviews each School's management and operation of its high-risk activity (including all partnerships) on a three-year cycle. The shorter timeframe of the Internal Audit reflects the more rapid pace of change and the need for more frequent scrutiny of partnership activity (<i>COP Principle 3.27: Periodic Review and Re-Approval of Partnerships and Multi-Location/Multi-Mode Programmes</i>). ○ Partner visits Schools are required to visit partner organisations every three years in order to undertake a comprehensive, face-to-face review with staff and students. Each visit should then be followed up with a written report, submitted to Academic Quality who then inform the University Committee for Quality and Standards (<i>COP Principle 3.23: Visits to Partner Organisations</i>). |
| <p>3. Due diligence enquiries are completed and legally binding written agreements are signed prior to the commencement of student registration - due diligence enquiries are refreshed periodically and before agreements are renewed.</p> <p>The awarding organisation and, where relevant, the partner should conduct a range of due diligence enquiries appropriate to the type of partnership, the detailed arrangements and the identified level of risk. Legally-binding written agreements, where required, which set out the rights and obligations of all parties, should be finalised and signed before students register on the associated provision. Where relevant, the written agreements will include appropriate student protection plan (or equivalent) clauses.</p> | <p>Due diligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is Heriot-Watt University policy that due diligence enquiries are undertaken in order to assure the institution that the partner is of good standing and has the capacity to fulfil the designated role. Depending on the nature of the partnership, the due diligence enquiries which need to be undertaken will vary (<i>COP Principle 3.6: Due Diligence: Partner</i>). ○ The University is currently reviewing its Strategic Decision Making Evaluation Framework which includes consideration of its risk management arrangements. Once this has been completed the University will deliver appropriate training to ensure that Risk is considered within the approved framework. ○ The University recognises that the enquiries need to be relevant to the type of partnership envisaged, the nature of the partner organisation and proportionate to the complexity and volume of the provision involved and the risks which it may present. Irrespective of the form of due diligence, the University will satisfy itself – as part of the business approval process described above – that the financial, legal, academic and reputational risks have been adequately assessed and appropriate due diligence procedures have been followed to provide the necessary information (<i>COP Principle 3.6: Due Diligence: Partner</i>). ○ Schools are expected to undertake their own internal due diligence enquiries prior to submission of a proposal for approval. This is carried out by senior managers within each School. The outcomes of School enquiries should be included with the paperwork submitted for University Authorisation (<i>COP Principle 3.7: Due Diligence: Schools</i>). The outcomes of the due diligence exercise is reviewed and approved by the Director of Governance and Legal. ○ All Schools should actively seek accreditation by the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) for all variants of a programme, and not just the UK campus-based version. Schools should put forward multi-mode, multi-location programmes for accreditation by PSRBs at the same time as accreditation (or renewal of accreditation) is being sought for a UK campus-based programme. Schools should ascertain instances where in-country PSRB accreditation is a condition of (or an opportunity arising from) government approval of a partnership arrangement. Academic Quality maintains a record of all PSRB accreditations and renewals. (<i>COP Principle 3.11: Accreditation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies</i>). |

| Guiding Principles (Standards and Quality) | Heriot-Watt University Practice |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two key documents (the Partnership Proposal and the Risk Register) developed by Governance and Legal Services enable Schools to carry out due diligence enquiries prior to progressing with legally-binding written agreements. These supporting documents form part of the partnership approval process and have been designed to be completed in sequence, requiring the approval of key senior School management (such as Academic Lead, Financial Controller, Director of Learning and Teaching/Academic Quality and the Head of School) before the partnership application can progress to University Authorisation. <p>Legally-binding Agreements⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As outlined above (<i>Guiding Principle 2</i>) all written agreements are drawn up and approved by appropriately qualified/experienced individuals. Legal advice is provided by the University's in-house lawyer, the Director of Governance and Legal and external legal advice may be sought for unusual arrangements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-country accreditation is considered at the preparatory stage. In certain instances, the development of partnership, associated agreement and application for in-country accreditation are parallel processes. ○ Non-legal advice can be sought from a number of agencies, such as Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), British Council, UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC), UK Government Bodies, etc. ○ Advice is also sought from the University's in-country teams such as the Heriot Watt University colleagues working in the China and India offices. ○ Heriot-Watt University and the partner organisation must enter into a written and legally binding agreement/contract, which sets out the rights and obligations of the parties, as well as the legal jurisdiction in which it will apply, prior to the commencement of student recruitment and registration. The written Agreement must be signed by the authorised representatives of the University and the partner organisation. The agreement/contract must be regularly monitored and reviewed (<i>COP Principle 3.12: Production of Written Agreement/Contract</i>). ○ The nature and content of such agreements or contracts will differ depending on the type of partnership. The University has in place a series of standard templates for partnerships arrangements (Approved Learning Partner, Joint Collaborative Partner, Articulation Partner), which should be used to ensure that all key academic standards, quality assurance matters, financial arrangements, etc. are incorporated in the agreement. For example, the following clauses are included: distinction between different levels and types of relationship; roles and responsibilities; copyright and intellectual property rights; legal responsibilities; suspension or withdrawal; date and mechanism for review of the agreement (<i>COP Principle 3.12: Production of Written Agreement/Contract</i>). ○ Template Agreements are available for Approved Learning Partnerships, Joint Collaborative Partnerships and Articulation Partners that have been developed and approved by the University's Governance and Legal Directorate. In some situations, it is necessary for the School to amend the existing templates to suit a particular partnership, or in the case of Joint Collaborative Partnerships, for example, the partner may prefer to use their own template. Irrespective of whether a Heriot-Watt University template, a bespoke written agreement, or a partner template has been drafted, the Director of Governance and Legal Services must review and approve all partnership agreements before they are signed. ○ The University aims to protect students through the undertaking of a thorough due diligence exercise prior to commencing with a new partnership and prior to the renewal of a partnership. Partnerships are not authorised by the University without the supporting documentation (which includes a Business proposal and an up-to-date Risk Register) which details how the School would mitigate any risks associated with the partnership. Should a School decide to withdraw or terminate a partnership, it is University policy that a Teach-Out plan is submitted. The Teach-Out plan details how the School and the partner plan to support students through to completion of their studies. All partnership Agreements contain standard clauses in relation to the Data Protection Act 2018. |
| <p>4. Provision delivered through partnership arrangements will be subject to quality procedures that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those used for the provision delivered by the awarding organisation.</p> <p>The partnership agreement will include information on the quality procedures for the provision, if, and how, they differ from those used for the provision delivered by the awarding organisation. They do not need to be the same procedures but they must be as rigorous, secure and open to security as those of the awarding organisation. There may be additional quality procedures and safeguards depending on the nature of the partnership and the level of risk identified.</p> | <p>Quality and Standards of Provision delivered through Partnership Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any programme offered at HWU in more than one location, or by more than one mode of study, must be of the same quality and standard and have the following identical components across all versions: learning outcomes; award/programme title; mandatory courses; core knowledge, skills and competencies. Courses within such programmes must have identical learning outcomes and core curriculum (<i>COP Principle 3.1: Academic Standards in Partnership Programmes</i>). ○ A range of external expertise contributes to the approval of programmes, such as External Examiners, PSRBs, student feedback, academic staff from other disciplines, and an external representative on the University's Studies Committee. (<i>See Monitoring and Evaluation Theme mapping document</i>). ○ All proposed partnership arrangements must go through an internal business and academic approval process, culminating in University Authorisation (<i>COP Principle 3.13: Business Approval and COP Principle 3.14: Academic Approval</i>). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business approval is designed to supplement the academic approval procedure by providing a mechanism for comprehensive scrutiny and due diligence in such matters as resources, risk assessment and management, financial arrangements, and obligations of the University (<i>COP Principle 3.13: Business Approval</i>). ○ All programmes, irrespective of the mode or location of delivery, require academic approval by the University's Studies Committee. The approval processes for programmes delivered through a partner organisation are as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for UK campus programmes (<i>COP Principle 3.14: Academic Approval</i>). ○ The University actively participates in all external reviews of its partnership arrangements and programmes offered in multi-mode, multi-location format in order to ensure independent verification of the quality and standards of this type of provision (<i>COP Principle 3.28: External Review</i>). |

| Guiding Principles (Standards and Quality) | Heriot-Watt University Practice |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitoring and review processes operate at all levels (course, programme, discipline, School, University) across all locations and for all modes of study (ie, including partnership arrangements). For example, Course Feedback Surveys, Annual Monitoring and Review (which incorporates a separate Partner Annual Monitoring and Review process), the External Examiner System, Academic Review and the monitoring of Key Performance Indicators. In addition, all partnerships are monitored through the University's Internal Audit process (See: <i>Guiding Principles 2 and 7; the Monitoring and Evaluation mapping document</i>). A range of external expertise is drawn upon for the purposes of monitoring and review (e.g., External Examiners, PSRBs, Industrial Advisory Boards, etc.). See <i>External Expertise mapping document</i>. ○ Quality Assurance procedures for other types of arrangement, such as study abroad and placements, are proportionate and aligned with HWU's policies. For example, Study Abroad partnerships are reviewed annually under the high-level School Annual Monitoring Review process which allows Schools to provide an overview of their Study Abroad provision without having to submit individual reports for each partnership (in the case of ALPs and JCPs where separate PAMR reports are also required). Study Abroad partnerships and Industrial Placements are also scrutinised as part of the Internal Audit process every three-years to ensure that the School infrastructure is sufficient to manage these arrangements. ○ All Graduate Apprenticeship programmes are directly mapped to the relevant Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Outcome Framework for the high level outcomes. We have used the low level outcomes to provide the flexibility that employers need and provide examples of how these might be met. In the rare occasion where an employer cannot provide an opportunity for an outcome to be met we make alternative provision – we are attempting to create employer networks to reduce the use of traditional assessment methods in these cases. ○ Feedback Staff feedback is predominantly obtained through the PAMR process (where references to student feedback are also provided). One School has reported that focus groups are run for articulation partner students which allows them to address any issues and concerns raised. This is then fed into any future support guidance that is given to prospective and new students. Approved Learning Partner staff and students have the opportunity to provide feedback through the Academic Review process. All HWU PG students are invited to participate in a student experience survey annually. ○ The PAMR process requires the collaborative production of annual reports between the partner and HWU, and incorporates feedback from both staff and students. ○ All students (including partnership) have the opportunity to provide feedback through mechanisms such as the Course Feedback Survey, the Annual Survey and the Postgraduate Student Experience Survey. Additionally, UK-based exchange and placement students will be invited to participate in the National Student Survey. The Academic Review process also seeks feedback from a representative sample of students. See the <i>'Monitoring and Evaluation'</i> and the <i>'External Expertise'</i> mapping documents. ○ Information provided to students Information supplied to students is periodically monitored through student/staff feedback as part of the PAMR process and through discussions with partner staff during partner visits. ○ Complaints and appeals procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The University follows the complaints framework of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. (<i>Refer to the Complaints, Concerns and Appeals mapping document</i>). ○ Complaints and appeals procedures vary by partnership type. In the case of Approved Learning Partners, student complaints should first be dealt with by the partner and then by Heriot-Watt University if the matter cannot be resolved. In the case of Joint Collaborative Partners, it is the Lead institution who manages student complaints and appeals of an academic nature. ○ Students receive a programme handbook which contains information on the University's complaints and appeals process. ○ Maintaining regular formal communication with partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regular formal communication is achieved through key School contacts (such as Programme Directors, Directors of Learning & Teaching, Learning & Teaching Managers and Directors of Administration) and local HWU in-country offices. Communication can be in the form of email, telephone calls, Skype calls and partner visits. Academic Quality records key Heriot-Watt University and partner contacts in the central partnership database to ensure that the University has central oversight of key contacts in relation to a partnership. With regard to Joint Collaborative Partnerships specifically, the Collaborative Partner Board of Studies/Management Board meets at least once a year to maintain formal communication and to review the partnership on a regular basis. Furthermore, the Partner Annual Monitoring and Review (PAMR) process requires formal communication between partners in order to produce the PAMR report. Key themes such as student performance, student feedback and staff feedback are discussed and outcomes from discussions are recorded within the report. ○ In the Edinburgh Business School the full language model is being phased out: previously the courses (under the old model) were fully translated and there was a detailed translation process in place with a number of quality checks built in to the system (including subject expertise). ○ Assessment processes in foreign languages minimise the need for translation as the foreign language markers mark a sample of English scripts for the initial comparison. If there is a need for translation at any point we have professional translation team (one internal post and a group of experienced external translators). Processes are managed and overseen through the School's Moderation Policy. ○ Guidance provided to students was that they had to have a sufficient level of English to be able to engage with all administration of the programmes in English (eg, appeals, complaints), administration. <p>Quality procedures set out in the written agreement The University has in place a series of standard templates for partnerships arrangements (Approved Learning Partner, Joint Collaborative Partner, Articulation Partner, Joint Doctoral Degree), all of which contain standard clauses on quality procedures. These are available on the External Partnership website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the Joint PGT written agreement, Section 4: Programme Management and Administration, states that a Collaborative Board of Studies should be appointed to oversee academic aspects of the programme; comply with the normal procedures of the Lead Institution (in respect of monitoring and review); make recommendations for approval of the programme, the programme regulations and modifications using the procedures of the Lead Institution. Furthermore, the written agreement states that all partners share responsibility for academic standards and the quality of the educational provision. ○ The Joint PGR written agreement is currently being finalised and will include necessary clauses in relation to policies, regulations and quality assurance. |

5. Awarding organisations that make arrangements for the delivery of learning opportunities with others, retain the authority and responsibility for awarding certificates and records of study in relation to student achievement.

The award of a UK higher education qualification is a highly-valued and much sought-after achievement; it is important that the award of certificates is protected and secure to ensure that this status can be maintained. Consequently, the awarding organisation will maintain records of study and achievement for students who achieve a qualification and will issue certificates to each individual student.

Retaining authority for awarding certificates

As specified within Part Three of the Code of Practice (COP) for the Management of Multi-Location, Multi-Mode Programmes:

- The University shall have sole authority for awarding, and ensuring the accuracy of, certificates and transcripts relating to all its programmes irrespective of mode or location of study, however, special arrangements exist for joint/dual awards through Joint Collaborative Partnerships. Students receive a transcript regardless of where they study, i.e. at HWU or a Partner Institution.
- Responsibilities for issuing certificates are also set out within the respective contracts/agreements.
- The legal power of the University as a UK degree-awarding body means that the institution is responsible for the academic standards of all credit and awards granted in its name. This responsibility is never delegated, although it may be shared in the case of Joint Collaborative Partnerships.
- For a Joint Collaborative Programme, leading to a joint or dual award, subject to specific arrangements as detailed in the contract, and any overriding statutory or other legal provision, transcripts and certificates produced by HWU will record the name of any partner organisation engaged in delivery of a programme of study. Certificates and transcripts must include all information required to provide a full understanding of the student's achievements (*COP Principle 1.29, p45*).
- The Board of Examiners is constituted in line with the University's regulations. In the case of some Joint Collaborative Partnership arrangements, the Collaborative Board of Studies acts as the Examination Board for the programme and the composition and terms of reference of the Board in relation to examinations is set out in the formal agreement (Appendix A of the formal agreement).
- Arrangements for assessment and examinations are set out in the formal agreement.

Records of Study

- The University has in place a Student Records Management Policy which sets out responsibilities for information governance and records management at the institutional and School levels. The Academic Registry and each School and Institute will create and maintain a comprehensive student record of the progress and attainment for each student, including students studying with a Partner.
- Where HWU is the lead institution for the delivery of a dual award, the University records **all of a student's credits** pertaining to that particular award in terms of SCQF and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Other national credit systems may be shown on the formal transcript of assessment results where the University has deemed it appropriate to do so (e.g. the credit system operated by the Malaysian Qualifications Authority).
- The Terms of Reference for the Examination Board (as set out in the formal agreement Appendix A) include:-
 - To consider and confirm course marks achieved by all students registered on the programme
 - To determine whether students have met the requirements for awards
 - To produce a report on its proceedings in the form and manner required by each Institution.
- With regards to a marks translation scheme, if the partner is a European institution, then students are awarded ECTS credits. An example on how one School operates a marks translation scheme is that the number of credits required depending on the country and institution are specified and these are written into the course and programme documentation. This is the same for non-European institutions i.e. marks/grades are not converted as such, but students are awarded pass/fail and 60 credits per semester if the student achieves the pre-specified number of credits.
- A University Student Administration System (Banner) is used for the accurate recording of all assessment and award decisions regardless of the mode or location of delivery. The student's transcript is produced from this same system.

6. All awarding organisations maintain accurate, up-to-date records of all partnership arrangements that are subject to a formal agreement.

The governance procedures will establish the types of partnership arrangements where a formal agreement will be required; this will normally depend on the level of risk to quality and academic standards posed by the arrangement. Records of the partnership arrangements should be maintained and kept up-to-date with any changes following review or evaluation of the partnership or other relevant changes, such as financial arrangements or change of key personnel.

- The University's Governance and Legal Services directorate has developed template Agreements for each partnership arrangement, which are available via the University's External Partnerships webpage.
- Definitions of each type of partnership arrangement are available on the External Partnerships webpage to allow Schools to make an informed decision on the type of University-approved partnership they wish to enter into with another Institution. The University does not currently publish a typology of potential partnership arrangements but work is underway to develop a comprehensive guide to partnerships, as well as a one-page briefing paper to succinctly describe each type of partnership.
- A central record of Approved Learning Partners, Joint Collaborative Partners, Articulation Partners and Joint Doctoral Degrees is held within Academic Quality. The central record for each partnership includes: name and address of Partner Institution; key contact details; validation period of agreement; Award details; list of programmes associated with partnership; the campus(es) and School(s) to which the partnership is applicable and the Lead Institution. Additionally, the central partnership database flags when a partnership is due to expire; if a Partner Annual Monitoring Report is required (and if so, if it has been received) and; specifies the supporting documentation which has been received as part of the approval/renewal application. In addition to this, Schools maintain their own record of partnership arrangements.
- An annual review of the central record is conducted within each School and Schools are responsible for ensuring that the information is accurate and up-to-date. Additionally, Schools are required to participate in the Partner Annual Monitoring and Review process (annually) and the Internal Audit process (every 3 years). These processes are an additional mechanism to review the information held on record for each partnership. *See: Guiding Principles 2 and 7; the Monitoring and Evaluation mapping document.*
- The original copies of Approved Learning Partner, Joint Collaborative Partner and Articulation Partner Contractual Agreements are held within Academic Quality.
- Exchange Partner records and documentation are held within the University's Go Global office within the Academic Registry Directorate. These are stored within a simple database including information such as; School in which the agreement is with, Partner Institution name, Erasmus Code (if applicable), contact email address, programme of study, agreed student flows. Additionally, this database records when exchange agreements are due for renewal and at what stage each renewal is at, with regards to signatories.
- A new system has been formalised to ensure that in future, records of Joint Doctoral Degree Partners are held within Academic Quality.
- The University has an "International Partner Network" webpage which contains a list of partnerships involved in programmes with the University to allow prospective students, employers and other providers to confirm that a partnership is genuine.
- Work placement/industrial placement records are retained at the School level. These records are only retained when the placements are accredited, within the University Student Records System (Banner). A paper record is retained in the School in line with data protection requirements.

7. Awarding organisations monitor and evaluate their partnership arrangements to satisfy themselves that the arrangements are achieving their stated outcomes and that academic standards and quality are being maintained.

Awarding organisations will monitor and evaluate all aspects of their partnership arrangements on a continuous basis. This will include the contract between the partners (where this is required), due diligence data and the arrangements for delivery, assessment and student support (as appropriate to the partnership arrangement) to ensure that the student learning experience is of an appropriate quality and that published information/material is accurate.

The University has in place a number of monitoring and review policies and procedures (as detailed below) to satisfy itself that the partnership arrangements are achieving their stated outcomes and that academic standards and quality are being maintained.

- **Annual Monitoring and Review process (AMR)**
All academic activities of the University, including programmes delivered through partnerships or in multi-modes/locations, are reviewed on an annual basis through the Annual Monitoring and Review process. Academic Quality summarise outcomes from the Schools' PAMR and SAMR (both of which are described below) into the University AMR Report (*COP Principle 3.25: Annual Monitoring and Review*).
- **Partner Annual Monitoring and Review (PAMR)**
The PAMR process has been designed to specifically monitor the delivery of programmes through Approved Learning Partners and Joint Collaborative Partners. A report for every ALP or JCP is required from all Schools to capture key information such as student numbers, student progression and retention, student feedback, staff feedback and any amendments made to the programme (*COP Principle 3.25: Annual Monitoring and Review*). In the case of JCPs, it is HWU policy that the Lead institution takes responsibility for producing the monitoring report which is shared with all partners. If HWU is not the Lead institution, a courtesy letter will be sent to the Lead institution in response to the report to acknowledge the report and provide comment if necessary.
- **School Annual Monitoring and Review process (SAMR)**
Information from the PAMR then informs the School's overarching SAMR where key information is collated into a summary report of the School's activities during the previous academic year. In addition to ALPs and JCPs, the SAMR reviews other forms of partnership provision, such as Articulation Partners and Study Abroad/Student Exchange Partners (*COP Principle 3.25: Annual Monitoring and Review*).
- **Academic Review**
The University's internal enhancement-led Academic Review process considers all academic activities, irrespective of the mode or location of delivery, on a five-year cycle. The Academic Review process ensures that academic standards of a programme are being maintained; that programmes are of an appropriate quality; that students are receiving an appropriate learning experience and; that learning and teaching are being enhanced in a managed way (*COP Principle 3.27: Periodic Review and Re-Approval of Partnerships and Multi-Location/Multi-Mode Programmes*).
- **Internal Audit**
In addition to the Academic Review process, a separate assurance-led process (an Internal Audit) reviews each School's management and operation of its high-risk activity (including all partnerships) on a three-year cycle. The shorter timeframe of the Internal Audit reflects the more rapid pace of change and the need for more frequent scrutiny of partnership activity (*COP Principle 3.27: Periodic Review and Re-Approval of Partnerships and Multi-Location/Multi-Mode Programmes*).
- Written agreements are normally renewed between 3-5 years (however there are some exceptions to this) and a review of the partnership (including due diligence enquiries) should be undertaken a year before the renewal date. This is stipulated in the written agreement. Furthermore, staff from the University must undertake a quality assurance visit prior to approval and re-approval of a partnership in order to confirm that the academic standards and quality of the partner are still of a satisfactory level (*COP Principle 3.23: Visits to Partner Organisations*).
- Measures are in place to ensure continuity to student completion. For example, should a partnership be withdrawn or terminated, a formal teach-out arrangement is agreed and documented as part of the withdrawal process. Student progression/completion will be monitored following the appropriate exam boards and as part of the PAMR process.
- Staff feedback is predominantly obtained through the PAMR process (where references to student feedback are also provided). One School has reported that focus groups are run for articulation partner students which allows them to address any issues and concerns raised. This is then fed into any future support guidance that is given to prospective and new students. Approved Learning Partner staff and students have the opportunity to provide feedback through the Academic Review process. All HWU PG students are invited to participate in a student experience survey annually.
- The PAMR process requires the collaborative production of annual reports between the partner and HWU, and incorporates feedback from both staff and students.
- All students (including partnership) have the opportunity to provide feedback through mechanisms such as the Course Feedback Survey, the Annual Survey and the Postgraduate Student Experience Survey. Additionally, UK-based exchange and placement students will be invited to participate in the National Student Survey. The Academic Review process also seeks feedback from a representative sample of students. See the 'Monitoring and Evaluation' and the 'External Expertise' mapping documents.
- Regular formal communication is achieved through key School contacts (such as Programme Directors, Directors of Learning & Teaching, Learning & Teaching Managers and Directors of Administration) and local HWU in-country offices. Communication can be in the form of email, telephone calls, Skype calls and partner visits. Academic Quality records key Heriot-Watt University and partner contacts in the central partnership database to ensure that the University has central oversight of key contacts in relation to a partnership. With regard to Joint Collaborative Partnerships specifically, the Collaborative Partner Board of Studies/Management Board meets at least once a year to maintain formal communication and to review the partnership on a regular basis. Furthermore, the Partner Annual Monitoring and Review (PAMR) process requires formal communication between partners in order to produce the PAMR report. Key themes such as student performance, student feedback and staff feedback are discussed and outcomes from discussions are recorded within the report.

