

Process owner: Academic Policy & Quality Office
Chapter approved by: Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee
Date of approval: May 2012
Last updated: July 2018
Date of next review: July 2019

1. SCOPE OF CHAPTER 5

- 1.1 This chapter of the Quality & Standards Handbook aims to be an accessible and comprehensive guide to procedural requirements for the approval, monitoring and review of collaborative provision. Its primary audiences are:
- staff - both at Brookes and at existing or potential partner organisations - who are interested in developing collaborative partnerships;
 - central University and Faculty-based staff who are responsible for the delivery, management or administration of collaborative arrangements;
 - funding and regulatory bodies, external quality agencies, and professional bodies with an interest in the University's management of its collaborative partnerships.
- 1.2 The University is mindful of the expectations articulated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018): that *effective arrangements must be in place to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure, and the academic experience is of high-quality, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them*. In the design of its procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of its collaborative partnerships and provision, the University recognises - and seeks to manage - the risks associated with the devolution of responsibilities for managing quality and standards to, or sharing these responsibilities with, a partner. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, the processes for approval, monitoring and review are tailored according to the extent to which responsibilities are devolved to a partner organisation. However, while recognising the risks involved, the University also wishes to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits associated with entering into collaborative arrangements, such as widening participation in higher education, securing market advantages, and developing good relationships with other educational establishments, employers, etc, in the UK and abroad.
- 1.3 Approval, monitoring and review procedures for collaborative provision differ from the processes applying to home provision in a number of ways:
- approval for new partnerships is given by the Learning Partnerships Advisory Group on the recommendation of Faculty Executive Groups, prior to the academic approval of specific delivery arrangements;
 - approval and review events are managed by the APQO, rather than by Faculty quality teams;
 - Faculty overviews of the annual programme review exercise are considered by the Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee, and the outcomes of the QA processes are used to inform LPAG's monitoring of partnership performance;
 - the five-yearly periodic review process is a mechanism for re-approval of the provision and renewal of the contract governing the partnership, and involves a re-submission to LPAG.
- 1.4 This chapter covers the following procedures:
- the initial approval of new collaborative partnerships by LPAG [section 7];
 - the approval of specific collaborative programmes with a new or existing partner [sections 8-17];
 - modification of existing collaborative arrangements [section 18];
 - monitoring requirements [section 19];
 - periodic review and renewal of existing partnerships and programmes [section 20];
 - improvement action planning, and closure of collaborative arrangements [sections 21-22];

Sections 2-6 set out the definitions of common forms of collaborative provision and some key considerations, and section 23 outlines the responsibilities of the key players in the approval, monitoring and review of collaborative arrangements.

- 1.5 This chapter does not include procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of:
- Degree/Higher Apprenticeships – these are covered in Chapter 7 of the Quality & Standards Handbook;
 - collaborative research degrees, the academic arrangements for which are approved and monitored by the Research Degrees Committee – *however*, LPAG approval is required prior to entering into contractual arrangements in which a dual or joint award is made with another awarding body (*see section 7.17*);
 - school experience, clinical practice, and other placements which form an integral part of Brookes 'home' programmes and are quality assured through the normal procedures governing that provision [*NOTE: Faculty AESCs are required annually to approve the Faculty framework for selecting placement providers, and to monitor placement quality through an annual report from the Partnerships & Placements Managers – using template T5.8*];
 - individual claims for the accreditation of prior learning; and
 - progression agreements - in which admission to a Brookes programme from a programme delivered by another institution is not automatic, but is conditional on some check on the applicant's prior learning or achievement.
- 1.6 Elements of other chapters of the [Quality & Standards Handbook](#) also apply to collaborative provision, and cross-references are made in the relevant sections of this chapter. The closure of collaborative programmes and/or partnerships is covered in Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2 (Programme design and approval), section 6. For annual programme review requirements, refer to chapter 3: section 4.
- 1.7 The procedures for negotiation, approval and management of collaborative partnerships, set out in this chapter, aim to ensure that:
- i. the selection of partners is based on clear criteria, and on thorough due diligence enquiries;
 - ii. collaborative arrangements are fully costed and risk assessed; and consideration of the financial and business aspects of partnership proposals is separated from that of academic delivery and the quality of learning opportunities provided;
 - iii. written agreements and related documentation clearly sets out the rights and responsibilities of the University and its partners in respect of the specified arrangements;
 - iv. the University is able to fulfil its responsibility for the academic standards of any awards made in its name, and ensure that they meet the expectations of the UK higher education sector, as articulated in the UK Quality Code, national or international qualifications frameworks, and any relevant subject/professional benchmarks;
 - v. the University can assure itself that the quality of learning opportunities offered by a partner organisation is sufficient to enable students to achieve the standards (including, where relevant, the professional standards) required for the award to which the collaborative programme leads;
 - vi. students receive accurate and comprehensive information about their programme of study and the award to which it leads.

2. WHAT IS 'COLLABORATIVE PROVISION'?

- 2.1 The University adopts the definition of collaborative provision (previously set out in the UK Quality Code, B10) as any *learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of academic credit or a qualification that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more other organisations*. That is, any arrangement in which Oxford Brookes awards a qualification or credit, on the basis of education provided *by, with or at* another organisation, either in the UK or elsewhere in the world.

- 2.2 As noted in 1.2 above, the University recognises that it has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities on all programmes of study leading to its awards, wherever or however they are delivered, and this principle underpins the procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of its collaborative provision (set out in the sections below).
- 2.3 The University's approach to collaborative provision is driven by its mission and corporate aims, to "...develop mutually beneficial partnerships to facilitate the application of the university's education, research, and knowledge transfer nationally and internationally..." More details of the University's 2020 Strategy can be found [here](#)
- 2.4 Oxford Brookes is also committed to widening participation in higher education within the region, in particular through its Associate College Partnership (ACP) network; and has a number of other, non-ACP, partners in the UK, delivering a range of programmes in specialist discipline areas. The University's International Strategy provides a framework for the development of international partnerships.
- 2.5 The University's current collaborative provision register can be found on the APQO website at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/programme-specifications/collaborative-provision-register/>

3. COMMON TYPES OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

- 3.1 Some of the common models for collaborative arrangements at Oxford Brookes are described in the following paragraphs. In practice, arrangements in place with individual partner organisations may consist of a combination of several of these different types of provision; and approval panels must ensure that they give appropriate consideration to the different aspects of collaborative proposals.

3.2 Associate College Partnership (ACP) provision

The standard ACP delivery model involves the franchising of student numbers from the University to the ACP partner, for the delivery of programmes that have been developed in collaboration between the University and one or more ACP members. Students have enrolled status both at the partner College and at the University.

The current members of the ACP are:

- Abingdon & Witney College
- Activate Learning (City of Oxford College, Banbury & Bicester College, Reading College, Bracknell & Wokingham College)
- Bridgwater and Taunton College
- Brooklands College
- Solihull College & University Centre
- Swindon College
- Wiltshire College

Details of the ACP members and the Brookes programmes they offer are available at:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/courses/foundation-degrees-and-partnership-courses/>

The provision delivered by ACP partner colleges primarily consists of foundation degree programmes, and level 6 Honours degree top-up courses, jointly developed by the University and the partner colleges for delivery by any or all of the members of the ACP who can demonstrate - through the formal approval processes - that they have the capacity to offer the programme/s. In these cases, measures are taken to ensure the equivalence of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience across delivery sites (including, in the case of some programmes, at the University). The ACP portfolio has also included some level 7 provision, in a few cases where a partner college has been able to provide appropriate academic expertise; and there are instances in which Brookes programmes may be delivered by flying faculty on ACP partner college premises.

3.3 **Flying faculty**

This type of provision involves the delivery of a programme - either new or existing - entirely by Brookes staff, to a separate cohort of students at a location other than the University campuses. Under this arrangement, the University retains full responsibility for, and directly manages, the quality and standards of the programme. The responsibilities of the partner are usually limited to the provision of teaching accommodation and, possibly, learning resources - they are also likely to have responsibilities relating to marketing and recruitment.

3.4 **Articulation agreement**

The University recognises and grants credit for guaranteed entry onto the later stage of a programme leading to a Brookes award, to students completing a named programme of study in a partner organisation. An articulation agreement may be a standalone arrangement, but is more usually coupled with a wider collaborative arrangement in which it leads to entry onto a franchise of the later stages of a Brookes programme delivered by the same partner. **Note:** *Where entry to the Brookes programme is conditional on some check on the applicant's prior learning or achievement, this is known as a progression arrangement, which is not considered to be collaborative provision and is therefore not covered here. The granting of advanced standing (or credit entry) to individuals on a one-off basis is dealt with through the APL process.*

3.5 **Credit-rating arrangement**

The University recognises and awards credit for successful completion of modules/short courses offered by another organisation.

3.6 **Franchised provision leading to an Oxford Brookes award or credit**

The University authorises the delivery of all or part of one of its own approved programmes by a partner organisation. The University, as awarding body, retains overall responsibility for the programme content, the teaching and assessment strategy, the assessment regime and quality assurance. Students may either be enrolled or (normally, for international partners) registered with the University [see also section 5 below].

3.7 **Validation arrangements**

The University recognises a programme of study, designed and offered by another organisation, as being of an appropriate standard and quality to lead to a Brookes award or credit. Students are always enrolled with the partner organisation and registered with the University for the purposes of making the award on successful completion of the programme [see also section 5 below].

3.8 **Jointly-Provided programmes**

The University collaborates with one or more providers to jointly design a programme of study, and deliver it via an arrangement where students study in one or more of them. When such programmes are designed and delivered with other degree-awarding bodies, they may lead to either dual/multiple awards or a joint award. The term 'jointly-provided' refers to the educational experience provided rather than, necessarily, to the nature of the award, and examples of jointly-provided programmes leading to a single (Oxford Brookes) award include those developed in partnership with ACP members.

4. **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 There are some aspects of collaborative provision that potentially challenge the University's ability to secure the quality of the student learning experience and assure the standards of the awards it will be making. It is therefore important that careful consideration is given to the arrangements that will need to be put in place to ensure the success of the partnership - robust initial and ongoing risk assessments are key to this. Some of the issues that may apply are described below, in relation to:
- Flying faculty delivery
 - Jointly-provided programmes involving more than one awarding body
 - Study/assessment in a language other than English

- Professional accreditation
- Serial arrangements

4.2 Flying Faculty

- 4.2.1 This model is generally considered to be low risk in respect of the awarding body's ability to directly assure academic quality and standards, but it can be an expensive model to deliver because of the demands on staff time. For *international* arrangements, delivery teams also need to be alert to any changes to in-country permissions to operate, and to Government advice on political situations that could potentially put University staff at risk.

4.3 Programmes leading to joint or dual/multiple awards

- 4.3.1 See guidance on *Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body* (QAA, Oct 2015): http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/joint-degree-characteristics-15.pdf?sfvrsn=c305f781_16 which also includes a note on research degrees offered by one or more awarding bodies.
- 4.3.2 The University has the legal powers to allow it to collaborate with other degree-awarding bodies - in the UK or abroad - to jointly provide programmes of study which lead to joint, dual or multiple awards. However, it should be noted that UK degree-awarding bodies are not permitted to make arrangements for students to receive a UK degree alongside that of a non-UK degree-awarding body where the UK degree-awarding body has had negligible input to the design of the programme and little control over its delivery. UK degree-awarding bodies are also expected to maintain awareness of how their programmes and academic credit are used, in order to avoid the situation where a non-UK degree-awarding body makes an award without the knowledge of the UK degree-awarding body, to a student who has completed a programme of study designed to lead to a UK qualification offered through a franchise or validation arrangement.
- 4.3.3 As a general guide (for reputational reasons), jointly delivered programmes of study leading to dual/multiple or joint awards should not be offered in partnership with institutions that would not meet the threshold criteria for taught degree-awarding powers in the UK. Certificates and transcripts should refer to the other partner/s and make it clear that they refer to the completion of a single, jointly-conceived programme of study.
- 4.3.4 Any programmes of study leading to dual/multiple or joint awards must meet both the expectations of the Framework for HE Qualifications (in EWNI) and of any other relevant national qualifications frameworks. Partnerships with existing partners currently delivering through a franchise arrangement, who subsequently gain and wish to exercise their own degree awarding powers alongside those of the University, may need to be renegotiated and redefined as more of a 'mutual recognition' arrangement.
- 4.3.5 A programme of study leading to a *dual or multiple award* involves each partner granting a separate award (at the same level) based on the same programme of study and assessed work. Responsibility for the quality and standards of each award rests with the relevant awarding body and cannot be shared between the partners – each partner applies its own regulations for making awards and for quality assurance, hence the requirement for comparability of academic standards, as described above. The University should be alert to the potential for doubling the credit value (for the purposes of credit accumulation and transfer) of individual modules completed, and should ensure that the award certificate and/or transcript provides sufficient information to clarify that a single programme of study delivered in collaboration with one or more partners has led to multiple awards.
- 4.3.6 *Joint awards* involve the granting of a single award for successful completion of a programme of study which has been designed and delivered by two or more institutions, who have combined their degree awarding powers for the purposes of making the award. In this case, the University must ensure that the legal basis on which the award is made is sound (i.e. the partner has the legal and regulatory capacity to make awards in collaboration with other institutions), especially where it involves pooling degree awarding powers granted within different legal jurisdictions. The responsibility for the quality

and academic standards of the award is shared between the awarding bodies, and requires careful work to align that regulations and quality assurance processes for the programme (providing a framework for admissions, assessment, progression and making awards) to ensure standards are secured. Joint award arrangements tend to pose a greater level of institutional risk than those for dual/multiple awards; however, they offer the opportunity to work in association with high quality partner HE providers.

4.4 Professional accreditation

4.4.1 In some cases, collaborative programmes leading to Brookes awards are accredited by a professional body, and the University is therefore additionally responsible for ensuring that the professional – as well as academic - standards continue to be met. The loss of professional accreditation is damaging to the University's reputation, and is likely to adversely affect student recruitment; and professional competencies are often delivered and assessed via placements provided by third parties. The failure of a programme to retain professional accreditation is therefore considered to be a key area of risk, which must be carefully monitored by the managing Faculty.

4.5 Language of study

4.5.1 A small (and declining) number of the University's collaborative programmes offered by international partners are taught and assessed in a language other than English. This enables Brookes to reach a broader market within those countries than it would normally have access to, but has implications for the University's ability to assure itself of the academic quality and standards of that provision.

4.5.2 In particular, assessment in a foreign language introduces risks to the University's ability to maintain control of the academic standards of its awards and make judgements about the standards of student achievement, and appropriate measures must be put in place to manage this risk, taking into account the costs and availability of good quality translation services. New proposals for collaborative programmes delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English will not normally be accepted, except in the case of an existing partner delivering in that language or where LPAG is provided with evidence that the benefits of the partnership are likely to substantially outweigh the risks associated with delivery in a foreign language.

4.5.3 Proposing teams must consider the following issues:

- i. the continuing availability of external examiners who are able to work easily in all languages involved, and are familiar with the academic standards expected of UK awards in the discipline;
- ii. the arrangements which will be put in place to ensure the accurate translation of assessed student work (noting that such intervention has the potential to advantage or disadvantage students), programme information, handbooks, marketing materials, etc;
- iii. the proposed liaison manager's ability to work in the languages involved, and how their access to the staff, provision and the students studying on the programme/s will be facilitated to enable them to assure the University of the effective day to day management of the provision;
- iv. the exit strategy, including the teaching out arrangements should it be necessary to withdraw from the relationship.

4.5.4 The language of instruction and/or assessment is recorded on the certificate or transcript, as specified in the Operations Manual.

4.6 Serial arrangements

4.6.1 A serial arrangement is one in which the University enters into a collaborative arrangement with a partner organisation who, in turn, uses this as a basis for entering into collaborative arrangements of their own with a third party to offer the University's awards. A key risk is that serial arrangements can seriously jeopardise an institution's ability to know what is being delivered in its name. Faculty Executive Groups and LPAG should therefore not permit such proposals to proceed to approval panel

stage, other than in exceptional circumstances in which the University has a direct involvement in the assessment of all students on the programmes leading to its awards.

5. NOTE ON THE STATUS OF STUDENTS ON COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES

- 5.1 It is important for Brookes staff and partner organisations to be clear about the status of the students studying on a programme leading to a Brookes award or credit, and to consider the entitlements this confers upon them. Many students studying on collaborative programmes are enrolled with the organisation delivering their programme of study, and are only registered with Oxford Brookes for the purposes of making the final award on successful completion of the approved programme.
- 5.2 There is a difference in contractual relationship between the University and students with enrolled and registered status. The contract of an enrolled student is between the University and the student; whereas with a registered student the contract is primarily between the student and the partner organisation; while the University has the relationship with the partner.
- 5.3 Enrolled status generally applies to students who are funded by a UK funding body (such as those studying at the University's partner FE colleges), or where at least 50% of their programme is taught by University staff off-campus in the UK or abroad (flying faculty); and these students may have similar access to University resources and facilities as those studying on-campus, depending on the terms of the contract between Oxford Brookes and the partner organisation.
- 5.4 Registered status does not (unless specifically negotiated and costed, and written into the agreement governing the partnership) allow for access to Brookes learning resources and support services, and, in these cases, approval panels must therefore satisfy themselves that the partner organisation is able to provide the appropriate resources and support for learning for successful delivery of the programme.

6. AWARDS

- 6.1 The certificates and/or transcripts for awards for collaborative programmes must record the name of the partner, location of study, and the language of study (if not English). Certificates/transcripts for dual awards should also be clear about the nature of the programme of study which led to the award being made, to avoid the danger of mis-representation of the award (see 4.3 above).
- 6.2 Enrolled students are invited to attend graduation ceremonies at Brookes, while awards ceremonies for registered students will be held at the partner's premises. Liaison Managers should liaise with the Academic Office (Graduation Team) to ensure the appropriate arrangements are made.

7. NEW PARTNER APPROVAL

- 7.1 The partnership approval process is the means by which the University establishes the market demand, strategic fit and financial viability for a proposed new collaborative arrangement, and satisfies itself that a proposed new partner:
- i. is in good financial health and has the appropriate legal standing to enter into the proposed partnership;
 - ii. has an educational ethos that is consistent with the University's strategic priorities;
 - iii. has in place an appropriate governance framework for maintaining academic standards and quality, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
 - iv. has the facilities and resources to provide a high quality higher education learning environment;
 - v. has the ability to market the programme appropriately.

- 7.2 All templates and guidance notes relating to partnership approval are available on the APQO website at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/collaborative-provision/forms/>
- 7.3 The approval of new collaborative partnerships is the responsibility of the Learning Partnerships Advisory Group (LPAG), the terms of reference and membership for which are available at <https://sites.google.com/brookes.ac.uk/university-committees/vice-chancellors-group/learning-partnerships-advisory-group>. The committee meets approximately six times per year, and the executive authority for decision-making rests with the Chair (via a delegation from the Vice-Chancellor), who acts with the advice of other members of the Group. Project teams should work with their Faculty link Quality Assurance Officer to ensure that new partnership proposals - or proposals to extend the scope of arrangements with existing partners - are prepared for LPAG approval in sufficient time to allow for the further detailed development of the proposed arrangements and completion of the academic approval process, before the first intake of students. Guidance note G2.5, linked to [Chapter 2 of the Quality & Standards Handbook](#), includes an outline of the key milestones in the approval process for collaborative arrangements, which Faculty colleagues should bear in mind when planning project development team (PDT) activities.
- 7.4 All proposals for new collaborative arrangements must be approved by the PVC/Dean of Faculty - usually through the Faculty Executive Group - prior to submission to LPAG. They must consider the completed Collaborative Partnership Proposal/Renewal Forms and business plans, and satisfy themselves that comprehensive due diligence enquiries have been made, and realistic assessments of the potential risks and likely exit options (including the costs) have been carried out. Due diligence enquiries are not required for new proposals with existing Associate College Partnership members, but the Faculty Executive must be satisfied that there is a robust analysis of the likely market demand for the new provision. PDTs should refer to APQO guidance note G5.1 for advice on carrying out due diligence enquiries, and to guidance note G5.2 for advice on risk assessment.
- 7.5 The project leader (or a representative from the PDT) must visit the prospective partner in advance of submitting a proposal to LPAG, to assess their ability to support programmes of study leading to Brookes awards (through, for example, viewing their facilities and learning resources, meeting with academic staff, and sampling assessed student work) and to seek outline agreement on the financial arrangements. In the case of a new international partner, it should be established at this stage that they will be able to make payments to Brookes in Sterling, US Dollars or Euro. The visit will also be useful for collecting information to complete the CPPF. During this consultation phase, a letter of intention to collaborate or Memorandum of Understanding may be drafted using the template available on the APQO website (T5.10), but the partner is not permitted to publish any statements which might imply that the proposed provision has been approved, or to use the University's logo in any promotional publications. Advice should be sought from the Associate Deans (Strategy & Development) and Associate Deans (Student Experience) within the Faculty, and with the APQO, at this stage, in order to agree a timescale for completion of the approval process.
- 7.6 Once a visit to the delivery site has been made and the initial due diligence enquiries have been carried out (if necessary), formal proposals for new partnerships are presented to LPAG on the appropriate Collaborative Provision Proposal Form (CPPF – see 7.7 below), which provides the Group with details of:
- the legal, financial and academic standing of the prospective partner;
 - the proposed collaborative programme arrangements, and who will be responsible for their development and management;
 - the business case and financial model which will support the proposal;
 - the risk register for the proposed provision.
- 7.7 There are several CPPF forms, tailored for different types of collaborative arrangements, as follows:
- i. **CPPF 1** (template T5.1) is to be completed in the case of proposals (including 'short courses') relating to prospective new partners (UK or international), or to the extension of arrangements with existing

partners who do not belong to the Associate College Partnership. CPPF 1 must be accompanied by a full Business Plan.

- ii. **CPPF 2** (template T5.2) should be completed for any proposals relating to current members of the Associate College Partnership. Members of the ACP are considered to have a 'highly trusted status' as a consequence of the maturity of the relationships between these partner colleges and the University. The initial approval process for the addition of new provision therefore involves a shorter submission to LPAG, since the partners are well known to the University, and a standard financial model is in place. A business plan is not required for proposals that conform to this model: however, CPPF2 forms should be accompanied by a detailed business plan for proposals that do not conform to the standard model. Where a new programme is proposed for delivery by more than one ACP partner, a separate CPPF2 form must be completed for each college.
 - iii. **CPP/RF 3** (template T5.3) should be completed for proposals relating to articulation or credit rating arrangements. A full business plan is not needed with CPP/RF3, but a template is available on which proposers should provide a summary of the likely costs and income associated with the arrangement. The CPP/RF is used both for the approval of new, and the renewal of existing, credit rating or articulation arrangements.
- 7.8 The CPPF and business case templates, and guidance on carrying out due diligence enquiries and risk assessments, are available from the APQO website (guidance notes G5.1, G5.2 and G5.3); and the Faculty link QAO can advise on their completion. The PDT chair is responsible for completing the CPPF form, drawing on information provided by the prospective partner, and in consultation with relevant Brookes colleagues outside the Faculty (as shown in each section of the form) in order to ensure that the information presented is sufficiently independent and comprehensive.
- 7.9 A risk assessment template is an integral element of all CPPF and CPRF forms, and advice should be sought from the Associate Dean (Strategy & Development) for the proposing Faculty on completing this element of the form. The ADSD will assist the PDT in assessing the severity of the risks associated with the proposal, and with the production of risk improvement action plans (template T5.13) for all risks rated M/H, H/M or H/H, prior to submission to Faculty Executive and LPAG. The ADSD may also require the PDT to produce risk improvement plans for risks rated M/M and below, if they consider it necessary in the context of the proposal. All risk improvement action plans should be submitted to LPAG with the CPPF/CPRF. On consideration of the documentation, LPAG may make recommendations about the Faculty's assessment of the risks associated with the development of the proposed arrangements, and ask for adjustments to be made or additional risk improvement plans to be produced.
- 7.10 Some partners may wish to apply for professional accreditation for graduates of the collaborative programme, and the requirements to achieve this should be made clear in the CPPF. Where the equivalent programme at Brookes is recognised by a PSRB, PDTs should establish what steps are necessary in order to achieve and retain recognition for students studying through the collaborative arrangement.
- 7.11 The Faculty Executive must approve the CPPF and business plan, including the membership of the Project Development Team, which should be established prior to submission to LPAG. If the Faculty Executive considers that the information contained in the form is insufficient, they should return it to the PDT for further work (assisted by the Associate Dean Strategy & Development) before any consideration may be given to the proposal at institutional level. The Faculty approval stage should involve a careful consideration of the risk assessment for a new collaborative arrangement, especially where:
- delivery is not in the UK;
 - delivery and/or assessment is in a language other than English.
 - elements of the programme are delivered or supported by a third party, e.g. placements/work-based learning;

- the programme will be accredited by a professional body, and there is a professional body aspect to assessment, e.g. of clinical competencies;
 - Brookes does not have academic expertise in the discipline.
- 7.12 Faculty Executive groups should ensure that business plans take account of any potential impact of the risks identified in the CPPF on the costs of the partnership arrangements. They should also ensure that the following (if applicable) have been properly costed in the business plan:
- exit options;
 - the entitlements of non-ACP students who have enrolled status with Brookes;
 - any teaching provided by Brookes staff.
- 7.13 The CPPF, once approved by the Faculty Executive and signed off by the PVC/Dean, should be submitted to the secretary of LPAG – via the Faculty’s link QAO - for circulation to members. LPAG meeting dates can be found online at <https://sites.google.com/brookes.ac.uk/university-committees/vice-chancellors-group/learning-partnerships-advisory-group/committee-dates> and the link QAO can provide advice on deadlines for documentation. The PDT chair, Head of Department, Faculty Head of Finance & Planning, and proposed Liaison Manager (if not the PDT chair) will be invited to attend the meeting at which their proposal is discussed, in order to assist LPAG in making their decision by providing additional information or clarification about aspects of the proposal. The Associate Deans (Strategy & Development) are members of LPAG, and may also take part in the discussion of proposals originating from their Faculty.
- 7.14 LPAG members will assess proposals against the University’s partnership criteria (UK or International, as appropriate); and the Chair – with due regard to the University’s statutory responsibility to safeguard the standards of its awards - will exercise their discretion to either:
- approve the proposal to proceed to approval via the appropriate process (see sections 8-17),
 - refer the proposal back to the Faculty for further development and re-submission (either for consideration by the full committee or for approval by the Chair only),
 - or - where it demonstrates insufficient fit with the University’s strategies and policies, and is considered to present an unacceptably high level of risk - reject the proposal.
- 7.15 LPAG may highlight issues relating to the proposed delivery arrangements for further exploration by the academic approval or review panel, in which case the LPAG secretary will bring this to the attention of the PDT chair when LPAG’s decision is communicated to them.
- 7.16 The approval of a new collaborative partnership is not complete until a University panel has approved the delivery of the proposed collaborative programme/s (see sections 8-17). Once any conditions of approval have been met to the panel’s satisfaction, the legal contract will be finalised, and delivery may commence. Partnership agreements are signed for a maximum period of five years, at which point a resubmission to LPAG is required in order to refresh the due diligence enquiries and confirm that the partnership still fits with current strategic priorities. If LPAG approval is given for the continuation of the partnership, this is followed by a periodic programme review exercise, which must have a successful outcome to allow continued recruitment to the programme/s delivered by the partner and renewal of the legal contract.

Note on collaborative research degree programmes leading to a dual or joint award with another institution

- 7.17 Proposals for collaborative research degree programmes (joint PhD studentships are excluded from this process) – once the appropriate consultation with the Faculty Head of Finance & Planning has been undertaken, and Faculty Executive approval obtained - should be presented to the Research Degrees Committee on the RDC Collaborative PhD Proposal Form (available from the Research Degrees Team in Student Central). When approval has been given by RDC, this documentation is submitted to LPAG, accompanied by a note of RDC’s conclusions and recommendations, and their analysis of the key risks associated with the proposed arrangements. LPAG will assess the proposal

and, if satisfied that appropriate due diligence has been carried out, the Chair will give authorisation for the contract to be drawn up. Ongoing monitoring of the arrangements is the responsibility of RDC.

8. ACADEMIC APPROVAL

- 8.1 Permission to proceed to the approval of specific collaborative arrangements is dependent on LPAG approval of the partnership through the process described above. The following part of the process is how the University satisfies itself of the partner's academic suitability for the delivery of specific provision, in order to secure the quality of the academic experience for students and ensure that appropriate quality assurance procedures are in place to protect the academic standards of the University's awards. The detailed arrangements for the event, including agreeing on the location, convening the panel, and drawing up the agenda, should be made by the link QAO in collaboration with the PDT chair (supported by appropriate Faculty administration).
- 8.2 The approval processes for the following types of collaborative provision are included in this section:
- Franchised and validated provision, and jointly-provided programmes leading to a single Brookes award; including short courses (section 12)
 - Flying Faculty provision (section 13)
 - Articulation agreements (section 14)
 - Credit-rating arrangements (section 15)
 - Jointly-provided programmes leading to multiple awards (section 16)
 - Modification of collaborative arrangements (section 18)

Templates and guides required for the approval of collaborative arrangements can be found on the APQO website at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/collaborative-provision/>

- 8.3 The level of risk involved in a collaborative arrangement depends on the nature and scope of the responsibilities for teaching, assessment, learning support and quality management that are devolved to the partner/s (overall responsibility for the academic standards of the awards cannot be delegated). The key points to be taken into account when assessing the level of risk involved in a proposed collaborative arrangement include the partner's experience of collaborative provision and of delivering HE programmes in the discipline, the number of partners involved in and the complexity of the collaboration, and the characteristics of the partner (including its previous 'quality' record), which are taken into account through the LPAG approval process (see section 7). See section 19 (paragraph 19.13-19.14) for details of how the risk register and associated action plans should be monitored and reviewed once a partnership has been approved.
- 8.4 The standard length of contract for all types of collaborative arrangements is five years, although an approval or periodic review panel has the discretion to set a shorter approval period if they consider that the partner's capacity to meet the criteria for approval is limited and requires an early review. There is also provision for carrying out the review process earlier than the full term of approval, where:
- the University programme (where there is equivalent on-campus provision) undergoes review and revision;
 - the partner revises their programme (in the case of validation, credit rating or articulation arrangements);
 - student performance data, or other evidence, gives cause for concern about academic standards on the partner programme;
 - there are changes to national permissions and regulations, or to professional body requirements, that impact significantly on the operation of the programme.

9. FORMAT/LOCATION OF APPROVAL (OR REVIEW) EVENTS

- 9.1 For collaborative arrangements with UK partners, it is expected that approval and periodic review events will be held at the partner's premises. In cases where the same provision is being/to be delivered by several partners, the location for the event should be agreed by all parties and approved by the APQO – the event may be hosted by Oxford Brookes, if appropriate. However, visits should be made in advance of the approval/review event to each of the other delivery locations by (at least) two members of the panel, one of whom may be the QAO who is the panel Secretary, to view the teaching accommodation, learning resources and facilities, and to meet with students. They should preferably be accompanied by the Liaison Manager or PDT Chair. Where specialist facilities are involved, the visit team must include a member with the appropriate expertise to make a judgement on their suitability. Their reports on the other delivery sites should form part of the evidence considered by the approval/review panel (the site visit report template, T5.14, is available on the APQO website at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/collaborative-provision/forms/>).
- 9.2 For international flying faculty (with no elements of franchise or validation) and credit rating arrangements, the process for approval should balance practicalities with the University's responsibility for quality and standards. It may be decided that it is appropriate for the approval event to be held at Brookes, provided that a site visit has taken place to assess the resources and facilities available (through the due diligence enquiries), and a visit report is included in the submission for the approval panel. In this case, with the agreement of the APQO, the full panel may remain at Brookes and conduct meetings with partner staff by video-conference. An approval or review event may also be conducted remotely in this way if Government advice suggests that it is too risky to travel to the country of delivery; however, Faculties and LPAG should reflect on the benefits and risks of initiating or renewing collaborative arrangements in potentially dangerous political environments.
- 9.3 For collaborations involving franchise, validation or programmes leading to dual/joint awards, approval and review events are normally held at the partner premises. However, a 'hybrid' video-conferencing/face-to-face approach may be used for the event, if deemed appropriate by the APQO. This would typically involve the panel Chair, QAO and the external panel member, accompanied by the Liaison Manager, travelling to the partner organisation, while other panel members and University staff connected with the proposal participate in the event by video-conference from a Brookes campus. The PDT for an international collaboration may submit a request to APQO that the approval (or periodic review) event should be held at Oxford Brookes by video-conference (or equivalent technology); and the levels of risk associated with the proposal, as noted in 8.3 above, will inform the decision on whether or not this is appropriate. The PDT chair should seek advice from the Faculty link QAO about the format for the event at an early stage, preferably at the same time as the LPAG submission is made.
- 9.4 A remote event as described above would not normally be permitted for arrangements with a new partner, or for an existing partner proposing to deliver in a different country or through a subsidiary company. The maturity of the partnership - indicated by the length of the relationship and the track record for quality of the provision concerned - should be a key consideration in deciding whether an event should be conducted by the 'hybrid' model. In addition, the due diligence enquiries and the risk assessment submitted to LPAG should indicate low levels of risk, especially if the new proposed programmes are in a different subject area to the provision delivered through the established partnership with Brookes.
- 9.5 The hybrid panel model may also only be used if compatible video-conferencing facilities are available at Brookes and the partner organisation. The IT systems must be fully tested before the event, and IT support must also be available on the day of the event. The format for the event (and the rationale on which the decision to use the hybrid model was made) should be outlined in the submission document for the approval/review, and will be recorded in the panel report of the event.

- 9.6 The costs of validation, including travel expenses for approval and periodic review panel members, should be incorporated into the business plan for the partnership.

10. THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TEAM (PDT)

- 10.1 By the time LPAG approval is sought, the PDT must have been established, and a suitably experienced Liaison Manager identified. The PDT's primary focus should be the development of the programme delivery and management arrangements, and to ensure that all documents, including the programme specification, programme handbook and the operations manual are consistent with each other and with any other material relevant to the programme. The PDT should comprise representatives from an appropriate range of internal and partner stakeholders to ensure that all aspects of the delivery and quality management of the programme have been fully considered and agreed in advance of the approval panel meeting. The PDT may also wish to discuss aspects of the business plan for the partnership, but they should take into account the confidentiality of any financial or commercially sensitive information considered by LPAG, and consider the extent to which this information should be circulated.
- 10.2 The membership and activities of the PDT described in the design and approval process for on-campus provision (see [Quality & Standards Handbook Chapter 2: section 2.2](#) and guidance note G2.1) apply equally to collaborative programmes. However, the membership of the PDT for a collaborative programme should meet the following additional requirements:
- the PDT chair should be an appropriately senior member of academic staff from the managing Department/School, with experience of managing and/or delivering collaborative programmes;
 - relevant personnel from the partner organisation, in particular the member of staff responsible for managing the programme, should be included;
 - the link QAO should be invited to all meetings;
 - a representative from Legal Services should be invited to all meetings, since a collaborative arrangement always requires a contract between the University and the partner organisation;
 - the Faculty Head of Finance & Planning is a key member of the PDT, especially in the early stages when the business plan is being drawn up for submission to LPAG;
 - it is advisable for the PDT to include or consult with colleagues in the Directorates of Academic & Student Affairs and Learning Resources for advice on the adequacy of the learning resources and support services, or of the procedures in place to deal with student conduct and complaints, at the partner organisation.
- 10.3 The PDT is responsible for the preparation of the programme documentation to an appropriate standard for submission to an approval panel. The documentation must be signed off by the Faculty (through an appropriate process which should involve the PLQA and/or ADSE) and submitted to the link QAO, who will check that the documentation is complete before it is circulated to members of the panel.

11. THE OPERATIONS MANUAL

- 11.1 An Operations Manual is required for each collaborative programme - or one per set of cognate programmes delivered by a partner, with the same Liaison Manager. It forms part of the legal agreement governing the partnership and sets out the parameters for delivery of the approved programme/s. The main functions of the Operations Manual are:
- i. to assist in the day to day management of the collaboration by setting out the responsibilities of academic and administrative staff at the University and the partner/s involved in the collaborative arrangement, in order to support admissions to, delivery and quality management of the programme, and to ensure the accuracy of published information relating to the provision;
 - ii. to provide a reference point for approval panels to assess the suitability of the proposed arrangements and the partner's capacity to fulfill its requirements;
 - iii. to enable the University to demonstrate consistency with the expectations of the UK Quality Code, in respect of assuring the quality of the student experience and managing the risks associated with the partnership arrangements.

- 11.2 The Operations Manual forms a key part of the contracts governing a partnership, along with:
- the signed legal agreement between the University and the Partner (the panel approval report is also attached as an appendix to the contract)
 - the approved Programme Specification and module descriptions
 - the University Regulations and other relevant academic policies
 - the University's Quality & Standards Handbook
 - the approved Programme (student) Handbook
- These documents form the definitive programme record, of which the APQO is the guardian.

- 11.3 The Operations Manual must be prepared by the PDT chair, with assistance from the link QAO and other members of the PDT, using template T5.5). The PDT is collectively responsible for ensuring that the Operations Manual accurately and comprehensively describes how the proposed collaborative arrangements will operate in practice; and that it is consistent with the programme handbook and other definitive programme information. The Operations Manual is approved by the programme approval panel, and is a key document in respect of the five-yearly periodic review exercise. It should be reviewed annually, and the risk register (and associated risk improvement plans, if applicable) updated as part of the annual programme review process. Advice on any proposed changes to delivery arrangements should be sought from the Academic Policy & Quality Office, in order to determine the appropriate approval process, and, once approved, the updated document should be lodged with the APQO.

12. APPROVAL PROCESS: Franchised and Validated provision, and Jointly-Provided programmes leading to a single Brookes award

- 12.1 See section 3 above, for definitions of these types of collaborative arrangements. Refer to section 16 below for procedures relating to jointly-provided programmes leading to joint or dual/multiple awards with other awarding institutions.
- 12.2 The approval panel event for franchised or validated provision to be delivered in collaboration with a new partner should normally take place at the partner premises where the proposed programme/s will be delivered (but see section 9 above). Where a new proposal is to be delivered at more than one site, the APQO must agree where the approval event will take place. A site visit must be undertaken to the other delivery locations to assess the learning resources, teaching accommodation and other relevant facilities available at each site against the programme approval criteria (as set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2, and guidance note G2.3), and – where applicable – to meet with students. The visit/s must take place prior to consideration of the proposals by an approval panel; preferably no more than one month before the approval event, so as to ensure currency of the information. The visit report/s should provide an evaluation of the suitability of the partner's resources and facilities for the delivery of the proposed programme/s, and must be included in the submission for the approval panel.
- 12.3 The panel will be convened by the link QAO, in consultation with the Faculty, and should consist of:
- Chair, independent of the proposing faculty - they should be an appropriately senior member of University staff, with experience of membership of approval panels for home provision, and of managing or delivering collaborative provision;
 - University representative (from outside the proposing Faculty)
 - Faculty representative (from within the proposing Faculty, but independent of the Department/School which will be managing the provision)
 - Directorate representative (optional)
 - at least one external assessor from outside the University, who meets the criteria below (two may be required where a professional perspective is required that the external academic expert cannot offer)
 - link QAO (panel Secretary)

- 12.4 External panel members should have:
- the ability to form an expert and objective opinion of the overall standards of the programmes, and the capacity of the proposed teaching team to deliver them;
 - academic qualifications at least to the level of the proposed programme and academic expertise relevant to the subject area under consideration;
 - familiarity with current developments in the field of study concerned;
 - understanding and experience of current practice and developments in teaching, learning and assessment in higher education;
 - for programmes with professional elements, awareness of the educational requirements for the profession;
 - experience of managing or operating collaborative arrangements.
- 12.5 External assessors should be identified by the Faculty (usually the Chair of the PDT with advice from the PLQA), who should complete the nomination form/s and submit them to the APQO, via the link QAO, for approval.
- 12.6 The following documentation should be prepared by the PDT for the approval panel:
- Submission Document (T2.6)
 - Programme Specification (T2.7)
 - Module Descriptions (T2.8)
 - Programme Handbook (in line with APQO guidance in T2.9)
 - Operations Manual (T5.5)
 - Site visit report for all delivery sites not visited during the approval event (T5.14)
 - Partner prospectus, if available (or link to partner's website)
 - For professionally accredited programmes, the PSRB may require additional documentation which should also be included in the submission
 - Where local permission to operate in the country of delivery will need to be secured, details of the approval process should be included in the submission document.
- 12.7 All documentation must be carefully scrutinised by the PDT and signed off by the AD(SE) and/or PL(QA) before submission to the panel. The documentation – which may be provided in hard copy or electronically, as agreed with the Panel Chair and Officer - should be received by the panel at least 2 weeks in advance of the event).
- 12.8 The agenda for the approval event will be drawn up by the link QAO in consultation with the Faculty. It is advisable to hold a pre-meeting at the University between the link QAO, the Panel Chair and the Liaison Manager (other panel members may be included, as required) a week before the approval event, to confirm the agenda and identify any additional information required prior to the event. The pre-meeting is particularly advisable where the event is to take place abroad.
- 12.9 The panel must refer to the programme approval criteria set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2), and satisfy themselves that:
- the partner can provide the necessary resources and facilities to support the programme/s under consideration;
 - the staff at the partner organisation are appropriately qualified and have relevant subject expertise, and a good understanding of:
 - the nature, content, aims and learning outcomes of the programme/s
 - the learning, teaching and assessment strategies to be employed on the programme/s
 - the University's approach to learning outcomes, assessment, grading and moderation
 - the University's quality assurance policies and procedures
 - the arrangements set out in the Operations Manual are appropriate and understood by all parties;

- a robust staffing plan is in place to ensure the successful, and sustainable, delivery of the programme/s; and arrangements have been put in place to support any planned staff development activities to which partner staff are entitled.

Collaborative short courses

12.10 The process outlined in this section also applies to franchised or jointly-provided provision that meets the Brookes definition of a short course, i.e. provision of less than 60 credits at any level. If the proposal involves awarding Brookes credit for a short course already provided by the partner organisation (a credit rating arrangement), please refer to section 15 below.

12.11 The following documentation should be prepared for a short course approval:

- Programme specification and module specifications (for single-module short courses, the module specification acts as the PS);
- Statement of rationale, course management arrangements, delivery arrangements, student support arrangements, learning resources, teaching staff;
- Draft programme handbook (or module handbook for single-module short courses);
- Indication of whether the credit could contribute to a higher award, which should be identified with any progression requirements;
- Institutional details of partner (from CPPF1, to include a resource visit report);
- Operations Manual (shortened to cover only the relevant aspects of delivery);
- Draft certificate, which has been agreed with the Academic Registrar.

13. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR DELIVERY BY FLYING FACULTY

13.1 See section 3 above for definitions of these types of collaborative arrangements. A programme approval panel will be convened, for an approval meeting to be held at either Brookes or the partner's premises, as agreed with the APQO. If the event is held at the partner premises, it will include a tour of the premises to assess the quality of the learning environment and any learning resources being provided by the partner.

13.2 The approval panel should comprise as a minimum:

- Chair, independent of the proposing Faculty (with experience of managing or delivering collaborative provision);
- an assessor from within the Faculty delivering the proposed programme, but independent of the Department/School by which the programme will be managed;
- an assessor from a Faculty not involved in the delivery of the proposed programme;
- external assessor, employed, or with recent relevant experience, in another UK higher education institution. Where the proposal is for existing provision (being delivered at Brookes) to be delivered by flying faculty, this role may be taken by the current external examiner;
- Faculty link QAO (panel Secretary).

13.3 The following documentation should be submitted by the PDT to the panel:

- Submission document (T2.6), including details of how local permission to operate in the country of delivery will be obtained, if relevant;
- Programme specification (T2.7);
- Module descriptors (T2.8);
- Programme handbook (the content must be in line with APQO guidance in T2.9);
- The Programme Specification and Programme Handbook must contain particularly clear information about:
 - programme structure and delivery patterns;
 - the provision of learning support and academic advice;
 - access to learning resources;
 - the submission of work for assessment, or arrangements for examinations.

- Site visit report (T5.14) for all delivery sites not visited during the approval event, describing the learning resources, teaching accommodation and other relevant facilities available at each site, and providing an evaluation of their suitability for the delivery of the proposed programme/s;
- For professionally accredited programmes, the PSRB may require additional documentation which should also be included in the submission.

- 13.4 In considering the proposal, the panel should focus particularly on the following areas, as applicable:
- programme structure and delivery pattern, and how this will be managed by the Faculty;
 - responsibilities for advertising and marketing the programme;
 - the receipt of student applications and selection of students;
 - submission of work for assessment, or arrangements for exams;
 - the provision of student support and guidance, including academic advice and access to learning resources;
 - communication links (including the transfer of student data) between the University and the partner.

- 13.5 The approval process must confirm that:
- the learning environment and arrangements for student support are appropriate;
 - appropriate records will be kept of all students enrolled/registered for the University award and/or credits;
 - any relevant permissions (including visas for staff) have been obtained in the country of operation;
 - appropriate arrangements are in place for monitoring the quality and standards of the provision.
 - in addition - for new programmes - the University's programme approval criteria must be met (see Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2, and guidance note G2.3).

14. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

- 14.1 An articulation agreement is the formal arrangement with another institution whereby students who are successful on an identified programme delivered by that partner can gain automatic entry with credit (advanced standing) onto a later stage of a specified Brookes programme - or one of several specified programmes - of study. The credit achieved for the completion of the partner programme is transferred to contribute to the programme and award completed at the University. The two separate programmes are the responsibility of the respective institutions delivering them; however, since together they contribute to a single award, the University has responsibility for ensuring that the curriculum and standards of achievement of the partner programme are, and continue to be, at an appropriate academic standard to be considered equivalent to the identified component of the Brookes award/s to which entry is granted.
- 14.2 An articulation agreement is frequently an element of a wider collaborative arrangement, for example, it leads to entry onto a franchised Brookes programme to be delivered by the same partner; and the approval of the articulation arrangement should therefore be considered at the same time as the approval of the franchise arrangements. In this case, the process outlined in section 12 above applies, but refer to the documentation requirements for the articulation arrangement in this section. A single operations manual should include details of both elements of the arrangement.
- 14.3 For standalone articulation arrangements, an approval panel will be convened by the APQO, which must include a Chair and at least one member of the relevant Faculty AESC, independent of the proposing team. The panel must also include an external member, who may be the external examiner for the programme to which students will gain entry with advanced standing.
- 14.4 The approval panel will focus particularly on the equivalence of the learning outcomes of the partner programme with those of the comparable Brookes award. The external panel member will be asked to make an assessment of the standard of student achievement on the partner programme, upon consideration of a sample of assessed student work.

- 14.5 The following documentation should be prepared by the PDT for the approval panel:
- i. the CPPF3 approved by LPAG (template T5.3);
 - ii. Programme specification, or equivalent document, for the partner's programme;
 - iii. Evidence to show how the partner programme equates to comparable levels of the University programme (through mapping of intended learning outcomes of the partner programme against those of the relevant stages of the Brookes award, with reference to the Framework for HE Qualifications, contained in the UK Quality Code)
 - iv. External verification of the partner's programme (if available), such as external examiners' reports or other external quality reports;
 - v. Draft Operations Manual (this should be shortened to cover only the relevant aspects of the partnership – see 14.6 below).
 - vi. A report on the review of samples of student assessed work (together with assessment briefs, exam papers, assessment criteria, etc) which has been carried out by the appropriate academic ;
- 14.6 The Operations Manual should:
- i. specify the title of the partner programme leading to advanced standing to the Brookes programme, and the number of students permitted;
 - ii. if the partner programme is not delivered and assessed in English, describe the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the articulation, and also describe how the English language competence of the students will be determined for entry onto the Brookes programme;
 - iii. specify the Brookes programme to which the articulation is approved, and the access point;
 - iv. identify the liaison manager who will be responsible for monitoring the articulation;
 - v. specify the arrangements for monitoring and review of the agreement, including the process to be followed when the partner's programme is modified;
 - vi. describe the role of the external examiner appointed to monitor the standards of the partner programme (this will usually involve the extension of the duties of the external examiner for the Brookes programme to which entry is granted);
 - vii. provide for the University to revisit the agreement if the performance of students or any other evidence raises questions about academic standards on the partner programme.

15. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR CREDIT RATING ARRANGEMENTS

- 15.1 Credit rating, in which the University assigns specific credit to modules offered by a partner organisation, for example, an employer, is related to articulation. The key difference lies in how the credit may be used: a credit rating involves creating an award in its own right, while the Brookes credit associated with a partner programme through an articulation agreement has no currency outside that agreement.
- 15.2 A similar approval process as that described for articulation arrangements in 14 above applies. However, instead of considering a mapping against the learning outcomes of the earlier stages of a programme to which entry is granted, the approval panel must be provided with evidence to show how the learning outcomes of the partner's programme equate to the level of the credit that will be awarded and to demonstrate that the learning equates to the volume of credit being awarded. A programme specification should also be produced, using the short course programme specification template, to include details of the programmes in which students may use the credit awarded through the credit rating arrangement. The approval panel should also be provided with a draft certificate, which has been agreed with the Academic Registrar.

16. APPROVAL PROCESS FOR JOINTLY PROVIDED PROGRAMMES LEADING TO JOINT OR DUAL/MULTIPLE AWARDS

- 16.1 The approval process is the same as that described in section 12 above, but panels should be aware that programmes of study leading to joint awards present particular challenges for quality assurance

and securing academic standards since responsibilities are shared with a partner. It is desirable to agree a joint framework for managing the quality and standards of the programme, including, potentially, a joint regulatory framework governing assessment and award requirements. The procedures and how they will be implemented should be clearly articulated in the Operations Manual. Programme teams should be aware that the process of drafting and agreeing such a framework may be lengthy, especially where the programme needs to meet the requirements of different jurisdictions, and appropriate time should be built in to the programme design stage of the project.

- 16.2 In order to ensure that any issues are resolved, a joint approval event must be held, i.e. both the panel and the programme team must be representative of both partners. The event may be held either at Brookes or the partner's premises, as agreed between the parties involved and approved by the APQO.

17. OUTCOMES OF APPROVAL EVENTS

- 17.1 The possible outcomes of, and the procedures to be followed after, the approval event are the same as for home provision (refer to Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2: section 2.7), except that:
- the report of the approval event is written by the Faculty link QAO;
 - the panel report is received by the Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee, rather than AESC;
 - full programme/module details are not held on eCSIS, but the Course & Student Administration Team will enter outline details on eCSIS (for ACP and other provision where students are enrolled) or VSMS (other collaborative provision);
 - the programme and partnership will not continue in approval indefinitely but will be approved for a maximum period of five years, in line with the standard contract length (a shorter period of approval may be set if the panel considers that an earlier review is required), and may only be renewed/extended on the recommendation of a periodic review panel.
- 17.2 All conditions set by the approval panel must be addressed to the satisfaction of the panel before approval is confirmed and the legal agreement may be finalised and signed. The 'subject to validation' flag will then be removed from the programme, and recruitment may commence. The APQO will enter the new arrangements onto the University's register of collaborative provision.

18. MODIFICATIONS/EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Modifications to curriculum, delivery or support

- 18.1 Partner organisations may suggest modifications to collaborative programmes, but they may only be approved and implemented on completion of the appropriate approval process as set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2: section 4.
- 18.2 Where programmes leading to the same award are being delivered by more than one partner, through a franchise arrangement, and/or also by the University, major and minor modifications should only be permitted if they are agreed for the delivery of the programme by all parties, in order to ensure continued comparability of the standards of the award across all delivery locations.
- 18.3 In the case of validation, credit rating and articulation arrangements, the partner organisation must notify the University when modifications are to be made to the partner's programme, and the Faculty AESC must ensure that the partner programme continues to meet the University's requirements for the credit being awarded.
- 18.4 Modifications to ACP and flying faculty provision are dealt with in the same way as for home provision. Modifications to jointly-provided programmes leading to dual or joint awards must be agreed by all partners involved.

New teaching staff

- 18.5 Approval of new teaching staff – CVs of new staff appointed by the partner to teach on an existing collaborative programme should be submitted to the Liaison Manager and considered for approval by the Faculty AESC. The 'new staff CV' template (T5.9) should be used for ACP provision. The outcome of the FAESC consideration should be reported to the APQO via the link QAO, for recording with the definitive programme documentation – the Operations Manual must also be updated.

Additional delivery locations

- 18.6 For the approval of additional delivery locations for existing collaborative arrangements, i.e. the same partner will be delivering the same programme/s at a new location, a site visit (as described in 9.1 above) will be undertaken by an appropriate member of University staff, plus a secretary (usually a QAO, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed with the Head of APQO) who will write a report to notify the Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee. The format of the report is likely to vary, depending on the nature of the provision concerned (for example, specialist facilities may need to be evaluated for some provision), and Faculties should consult their link QAO to agree on the agenda for the visit, and the personnel who will need to be involved in the visit. A report template (T5.14) is available for staff carrying out a site visit without a QAO accompanying them.
Note: If the proposal involves the addition of new teaching staff as well as a new delivery location, an approval event should be held.
- 18.7 In all cases of modification to approved arrangements, the Operations Manual (and risk register) must be updated and approved, and lodged with the definitive documents governing the collaborative arrangements, held by the Academic Policy & Quality Office.

19. MONITORING

- 19.1 The monitoring of the academic quality and standards of collaborative provision takes place through a number of mechanisms:
- Liaison Manager visits (19.2 – 19.4)
 - External examiner reports (19.5 – 19.10)
 - Programme Committees, and other forums/mechanisms for eliciting feedback from students (19.11)
 - Annual programme review reports (19.12)
 - Monitoring and review of risk registers and risk improvement plans (19.13)

Liaison Managers

- 19.2 A suitably qualified and experienced person must be appointed (by the PVC/Dean of Faculty, on the recommendation of the relevant Head of Department/School) as Liaison Manager, for all collaborative arrangements. This is a key role in the effective management of the University's collaborative arrangements; and Liaison Managers play a crucial part in ensuring that programmes are being delivered as approved, and the quality and standards of the University's awards are being protected. The Liaison Manager role description and person specification is available on the APQO website at <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/collaborative-provision/forms/> - it is also included in the Operations Manual, and may be tailored, if necessary, according to the needs of the collaborative arrangements.
- 19.3 In the case of the Associate College Partnership, individual Liaison Managers are appointed with respect to individual programmes; however, the Head of UK Partnerships provides an additional operational link between the University and ACP members. This includes working with Associate Deans (Strategy & Development) to agree target student numbers and financial arrangements. The UK Partnerships team is also responsible for managing and servicing the ACP Steering Group.
- 19.4 For articulation arrangements, the Liaison Manager should make an annual visit to the partner, to attend the examination committee and meet with students to provide advice and support to those who

are planning to progress to the Brookes programme. The Liaison Manager must produce an annual moderation report (using template T5.11), covering the standards of student work and the operation of the assessment process, in order to provide assurance that the standards of student achievement on the partner programme/s remain appropriate for entry to the Brookes programme/s.

External examiners

- 19.5 External examiners have a key role to play in assuring the University of the academic standards of awards delivered through collaborative arrangements, either in the UK or abroad. The University retains responsibility for the academic standards of any awards made in its name and is responsible for the appointment and role of external examiners for collaborative provision, as set out in the external examining policy (which can be found in the [University Regulations: A3.7](#)).
- 19.6 External examiners should be appointed for all collaborative programmes that lead to an award or credit of the University, including dual awards, short courses (above level 4), etc. The university retains responsibility for the appointment of external examiners for collaborative provision, although the partner may make suggestions for examiners. The examiner must be independent of both the partner and the University, and is primarily acting on behalf of the University in enabling it to maintain oversight of the standards of its awards.
- 19.7 In order to enable the University to make a comparison of the standards of its awards delivered at home and through collaborative arrangements, it is good practice to appoint an external examiner to oversee both the home and the collaborative programmes. If, for logistical reasons, an examiner only examines on the collaborative programme, efforts should be made to provide a sample of work by home students to enable them to make a comparison of standards of achievement. Where there is no matching home programme, an external examiner for a programme within a cognate discipline area should be asked to examine the collaborative programme, if possible. Examiners are asked to make it clear in their reports which of their comments apply to the home programme and which to the provision delivered in each partner organisation.
- 19.8 For provision delivered in a language other than English, an external examiner who is able to work fluently in both English and the language of delivery (as well as meeting the other criteria for appointment) should be appointed. Non-UK based external examiners must have experience of delivering and assessing in a UK HEI. If this is not possible, a non-UK subject specialist may be paired with an examiner from a UK HEI.
- 19.9 External examiners must approve the assignment briefs and examination papers in the same way as for home provision, and an explanation for any variation in assessment strategies for home and franchised collaborative programmes should be provided; for example, to explain how it has been tailored to the local context.
- 19.10 For articulation arrangements, the external examiner for the Brookes award to which students gain entry should be provided with the Liaison Manager's report referred to in 11.4 above (along with their samples of assessed work and other documentation associated with the franchised Brookes programme to which students gain entry) so that they may comment in their report on whether the standards of achievement on the partner programme meet the threshold for the Brookes awards. The external examiner may also, if they wish, request to view samples of student work on the partner programme.

Programme committees

- 19.11 All partnerships must have programme committees (or an equivalent to the Subject Committees for home provision), of which the Brookes Liaison Manager must be a member and, as a minimum, receive the agendas, papers and minutes. The standard terms of reference, which are based on those for Subject Committees for home provision, are set out in the Operations Manual template and should be modified as necessary to reflect the provision covered in the document. Programme

committees must consider feedback from students, and the minutes should provide information to students about how their comments are to be acted upon.

Annual programme review

19.12 All collaborative provision is subject to the University's annual programme review requirements, as set out in the [Quality & Standards Handbook: chapter 3](#) (further information about the process for collaborative partnerships, and the reporting templates, can be found in section 4 of this chapter). Annual review is the point in the year at which programme teams should reflect on the effectiveness of delivery arrangements as set out in the Operations Manual, and the risk register should be reviewed and updated at the same time (see 19.14 below).

Monitoring and review of risk register and action plans

19.13 The implementation of all actions within risk improvement plans must be monitored and confirmed by updating the 'Status' field. Plans should be updated by the Liaison Manager and monitored by the Faculty Executive (for business/financial risks), or the Faculty AESC (for risks relating to academic delivery). The minimum expectation is for the plans to be updated *at least* once during the first year and as part of the annual review process. However, depending on the nature and timing of the actions, and the overall risk profile, more frequent updates may be necessary. If there is an increase in the level of risk, for example, because insufficient progress is being made on actions, this should be reported to LPAG (via the ADSD) or CPSC (via the ADSE), depending on the nature of the risk. LPAG may indicate that they wish to receive updates on action plans for specific risks, at the point at which they give approval for a partnership, if they feel it is necessary.

19.14 At each annual programme review, the risk register should be reviewed by the Liaison Manager, with assistance from the ADSE, ADSD, and the Faculty Head of Finance & Planning. At this point in the year:

- the existing risk improvement plans should be checked to ensure all actions are complete;
- any time-expired risks should be closed down;
- any risks carried forward should be re-assessed;
- new risks, if applicable, should be added and assessed;
- new risk improvement plans, if needed, should be developed.

Faculties should refer to the guidance on risk assessment on the APQO website (G5.2), if required. The revised risk register, and any associated action plans, should then be approved by the Faculty Executive, and monitored as before.

20. PERIODIC REVIEW AND PARTNERSHIP RENEWAL

20.1 The five-yearly periodic review of collaborative provision is a two-stage process, through which the University:

- i. reviews individual partnership arrangements, through refreshed due diligence enquiries, assessments of ongoing market demand and re-negotiated financial agreements, prior to the renewal of a contract;
- ii. assures itself of the security of the academic standards of programmes of study which are delivered through partnership arrangements and lead to Oxford Brookes awards; and that a high quality learning experience is being provided by the partner organisation, which enables students to achieve good outcomes.

20.2 Periodic review should usually take place at least 15 months prior to the expiry of the contract, since permission to recruit to the collaborative programme/s is suspended in the last year of the contract, pending a successful outcome of the review. This is so that no students may be recruited for a start date beyond the date of expiry of the current contract until a satisfactory periodic review has taken place, in order to allow time to change or terminate the partnership without prejudicing existing applicants. However, this may vary according to the frequency of intakes, and the recruitment cycle,

for different partnerships. The renewal of the contract between the University and the partner is dependent on the satisfactory resolution of all conditions set by the periodic review panel.

Review of the partnership

- 20.3 Partnership review focuses on the track record of the partnership and its future direction and sustainability, as well as the mechanisms in place to enable the ongoing management of the delivery and quality assurance of the programmes of study involved. Partnership agreements for the delivery of specific collaborative arrangements are signed for a maximum period of five years, and - if the contract is to be renewed - LPAG approval for continuation of the arrangements must be sought prior to carrying out the quinquennial academic review of the provision. A submission to LPAG is not required if the contract is not to be renewed, as the provisions of the current contract will remain in force while existing students - recruited prior to the expiry date - complete their studies. However, the programme/s must still undergo periodic programme review (see 20.7 below) in order to ensure that standards and quality are maintained for the remaining students during the teach-out period.
- 20.4 Renewal submissions must be made to LPAG on the appropriate Collaborative Partnership Renewal Form: CPRF1 should be used for non-ACP partners; CPRF2 for ACP members; and CPPRF3 for credit rating and articulation arrangements. The CPRF primarily focuses on refreshing the financial, legal and academic due diligence enquiries and analysing the track record of the partnership since it was last approved or renewed. LPAG will assess the recruitment to the programme/s over the previous five years and consider whether convincing evidence of a continuing market for the provision is presented in the CPRF; and they will consider whether the partnership still fits with Faculty and University strategic priorities.
- 20.5 New programmes are often added to a partner organisation's portfolio of provision leading to Oxford Brookes awards as the partnership develops and strengthens. Individual legal agreements are drawn up to cover each programme (or group of programmes approved at the same time)*, so they are not required to follow the same five-year cycle, unless a shorter initial period of approval is applied to new additions to the portfolio for the purpose of synchronising the reviews. It is therefore likely that programmes delivered by the same partner will be subject to periodic review at different times; however, a CPRF submission to LPAG is required for each programme (or cognate group of programmes) as they become due for review - even if other programmes in the portfolio have recently been reviewed - so that LPAG can take a view on the market demand and business case for each aspect of the portfolio with that partner.
- *NOTE: 'umbrella' agreements are being introduced for each ACP partner from 2018, with all programmes delivered by each college being subsumed into the single agreement as they complete their five year reviews. However, programmes will remain on their existing periodic review cycle under the umbrella contracts.*
- 20.6 It is also possible that the same provision may be delivered by a number of partner organisations: this is especially the case within the ACP. It is desirable that these programmes should be reviewed at the same time for all partners involved in its delivery, in case curriculum changes are required in order to maintain currency. Therefore, if a college is approved to commence delivery of the same programme which is already provided by one or more ACP members, the initial period of approval for that programme may be set so as to be coterminous with the other partners.

Periodic programme review

- 20.7 The focus of the periodic review as a reflection on the quality of the student learning experience and the standards of student achievement, and on the arrangements for managing and enhancing the provision, is similar to that set out for home programmes (see *Chapter 4* of the *Quality & Standards Handbook*); and the documentation requirements are also the same. The constitution of the periodic review panel is also the same as for home programmes, except that it does not have to include a student panel member. However, the periodic review of collaborative provision differs from periodic review for home provision in that reviews are held after a maximum of five years; and the process

incorporates both a review and re-approval of the delivery and management arrangements for the provision, so that any changes to the provision can be incorporated into the process. The review therefore follows a similar pattern to the approval processes described in the sections (from 8 onwards) of this chapter, and the outcomes of the review will be as described in section 17. The review of collaborative provision also involves meeting with senior staff at the partner organisation in order to confirm their commitment to the partnership as approved by LPAG. In most cases, the periodic review is held at the partner's premises (but see section 9 above).

- 20.8 Articulation arrangements should also be reviewed every five years – this exercise should be carried out as part of the periodic review of the programme to which entry is granted, if that programme is also delivered by the same partner. If the articulation arrangement guarantees entry to an on-campus programme, the review may be combined with the periodic review of the home programme, if the timescales coincide.

21. IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANNING (BREACHES OF QUALITY EXPECTATIONS)

- 21.1 The Improvement Action Planning process has been introduced in order to address instances where the quality of collaborative provision falls significantly below the expectations set out in the Operations Manual, which is the primary reference point relating to the management and delivery of a collaborative programme. This process provides an opportunity to resolve the problems in a collaborative way before a suspension notice is issued. It is intended to enable a dialogue between the Brookes Faculty and the partner organisation, in order to agree on an appropriate and timely course of action and hence to protect the interests of students on the programmes involved. The process was originally designed for use across the Associate College Partnership, but may be adapted and applied to any partnership, as appropriate.

- 21.2 There are a range of QA mechanisms currently in place in order to monitor the quality of collaborative arrangements, as outlined in sections 19-20 above. In terms of lines of accountability, Liaison Managers report to Faculty AESCs on a regular basis (in some faculties, this is via a Collaborative Provision Sub-Committee or Liaison Managers' Forum), and FAESCs also receive approval and review panel reports, and annual review - including external examiners' - reports. The Chair of the FAESC is a member of the Faculty Executive, and, where an academic quality issue identified through one of the reporting mechanisms cannot be resolved by the FAESC, this is the route by which it should be escalated to the Faculty Executive. At this point, the Faculty Executive should make a decision on whether to initiate an improvement action plan.

- 21.3 A working group of University and College staff (as listed below) should be convened in order to draw up the improvement action plan, to ensure there is a shared understanding of the issues and to agree on the appropriate resolution and timeframe. The group should be chaired by the Faculty ADSE or ADSD. The working group should include:

- Liaison Manager for the programme under consideration (Brookes)
- Programme Manager for the programme under consideration (Partner)
- Faculty AD/SD or PL for CP (Brookes)
- Faculty AD/SE or PL for QA (Brookes)
- Head of UK Partnerships (Brookes)
- PL/SE for ACP (Brookes) – for ACP partnerships
- HE Manager, or equivalent (Partner)
- Principal's nominee, equivalent to AD/SE or PVC/SE (Partner)
- Faculty link Quality Assurance Officer (Brookes)
- Other representatives from Brookes or the Partner, as appropriate to the issues being considered.

- 21.4 The outcome of this dialogue should be an action plan to address the issues within an agreed timescale, such that there will be minimal impact on the student experience. As part of this process,

the group may also wish to consider how tuition fee income could be utilised more effectively in order to address the current issues and enhance the student experience. The action plan drawn up by the working group should clearly outline: the key issues, the action/s required to address them, the individuals responsible for each action, the deadline by which each action should be implemented, and the criteria against which they will be measured. The risks associated with not implementing each action (i.e. the impact on current students) should also be assessed and recorded.

- 21.5 If the outcome of the working group discussion is that it is not possible to achieve the required quality of delivery within a reasonable timescale, a decision may be made to suspend recruitment to the programme while the issues are addressed. This decision should, ideally, be by mutual agreement; however, where there is a disagreement between the University and the College, the University reserves the right to issue a suspension notice.
- 21.6 The action plan drawn up by the working group should be approved by the Faculty AESC and reported to the Faculty Executive. CPSC should also be notified of any programmes being placed under an improvement action plan and when they have been lifted, or escalated further. The working group should continue to meet to ensure the implementation of the action plan, providing updates on progress for each meeting of the Faculty AESC. The plan is monitored in this way by the Faculty AESC, and the Faculty Executive should be notified once the action plan has been completed to the satisfaction of the working group and Faculty AESC. The improvement notice may then be lifted.
- 21.7 The Faculty AESC should report any missed deadlines for satisfactory implementation of actions to the Faculty Executive. The Chair of the Faculty AESC will advise the Faculty Executive on whether acceptable alternative arrangements have been put in place and, if not, the Faculty Executive may issue a suspension notice.
- 21.8 The improvement action plan procedures should be managed between the Faculty and the Partner concerned, through the working group and with notification to CPSC (and hence to AESC and LPAG, though its minutes). However, if an issue cannot be resolved through these measures, the Faculty may refer it to SMT for further advice.

22. CLOSURE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND/OR COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES

- 22.1 Please refer to the suspension and closure processes described in the Quality & Standards Handbook chapter 2: section 5 - these processes apply equally to collaborative provision. Please note that there is a formal process for reviewing the viability of, and potentially suspending, programmes delivered by the Associate College Partnership – advice on this procedure should be sought from the Head of UK Partnerships.
- 22.2 As with home provision, the termination of a partnership or closure of a collaborative programme may arise in a number of ways. Irrespective of the circumstances, safeguarding the interests of any students remaining on the programmes is paramount, and the exit strategy must ensure the integrity and continuity of their education while studying for a Brookes award. Exit strategies must also give consideration to minimising the reputational damage to the University. It can be difficult to predict the exact circumstances which may lead to the termination of a partnership, particularly in the case of a serious breach of contract. The management of the closure of collaborative arrangements may take a variety of forms, depending on the situation, and the process of agreeing the exit process must therefore be carried out in consultation with the appropriate range of interested parties within Brookes and the partner organisation.
- 22.3 A number of potential exit strategies will have been identified at the point of consideration of a new partnership (or the renewal of an existing one), and approved by the Learning Partnerships Advisory Group. It is of key importance that due consideration is given to exit strategies at the point of initiation of a new partnership, since withdrawal from collaborative arrangements can be protracted and expensive if not managed effectively. Potential exit strategies should be reviewed regularly by the

managing Faculty – through the annual review process, and at the five-yearly contract renewal (at which point they will be presented to LPAG prior to the periodic review of the provision) - in order to assess whether they remain appropriate in the context of any changes to the risk environment.

- 22.4 When a Faculty decides to terminate a partnership agreement, SMT support for the decision must be sought in good time to give formal notice; and a more detailed plan for the withdrawal must be drawn up before the period of notice expires. If possible, the exit plan should be negotiated with the partner - in the case of international partners, all Brookes staff travelling out to meet with partner staff to agree the exit plan must be made aware of all factors affecting the termination of the arrangement. *NOTE: The standard survivorship provisions of the Brookes legal agreement normally suffice in the case of planned closures at the expiry of a current contract, and further detail is only required if the exit arrangements differ from the normal requirements set out in the existing contract.*
- 22.5 The University retains overall responsibility for the remaining students on the programme/s, and for enabling them to complete their studies, regardless of the willingness of the partner to work with Brookes staff to protect the interests of students. Where there is a significant teaching out period for a collaborative arrangement, a review of the provision to be closed should be undertaken by a University panel – following the University’s periodic review process as set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook chapters on collaborative provision and periodic review - in order for the University to ensure that appropriate quality management arrangements will remain in place to enable the remaining students to complete their programme of study and achieve the award for which they are registered (*NOTE: a review is not necessary where no students remain on the programme/s*). These arrangements should be approved by AESC on receipt of the review report, and monitored by the appropriate Faculty AESC and Faculty Executive group; and, where deemed necessary, SMT.

END OF CHAPTER 5