

COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

G5.3a: Completing the CPPF/CPRF - Risk Register and Improvement Action Plans

Please read this guidance note before you complete the risk register.

Refer also to guidance note G5.1 for information about types of collaborative provision and the common risks associated with them; and to guidance note G5.2 on conducting academic due diligence.

1. Introduction

It is important that the University has a good understanding of the potential risks associated with a proposal prior to entering into, or renewing, partnership arrangements. The assessment of key business risks is part of the information required by the Associate Dean Strategy & Development (ADSD) and Faculty Executive before they sign off the business plan and allow the proposal to go to the Learning Partnerships Advisory Group (LPAG).

The advice and guidance underpinning the UK Quality Code for HE (2018) recommends that providers' risk management methodology should not compromise the rigour of the process for the approval of new collaborative arrangements, but permit an agile response to developing low-risk arrangements. Likewise, the process should not exclude higher risk arrangements, where measures can be taken to mitigate identified risks.

This process is designed to provide an overview of the key business risks that could affect the successful delivery of the proposed programme. It is not intended to be used as a tool to prevent a proposal from proceeding. The primary benefit of the risk assessment is to highlight key uncertainties so that risk improvement actions can be agreed to increase the likelihood of approval of the proposal and successful delivery of the programme.

2. Background to business risk management

2.1 What is business risk?

For the purposes of this exercise, business risk can be defined as the threat or possibility that an action or event will adversely or beneficially affect the Faculty's (or University's) ability to achieve the stated objectives of the proposed collaboration.

2.2 What is business risk management?

Business risk management is a process that identifies, evaluates and controls business risks (and identified opportunities). At the simplistic level, it is about asking:

- What can go wrong?
- What is the likelihood of it going wrong?
- What is the potential impact should it go wrong?
- What has already been done to manage these risks?
- What more should be done to reduce the threat's likelihood or impact?

The main aims of the risk assessment process set out in the CPPF/CPRF forms are:

- better-informed decision taking
- reduction of the impact of unplanned events
- increased probability of achieving the successful delivery of the proposed programme

3. Guidance for the Completion of the Risk Assessment

3.1 Assistance

It is expected that some assistance will be needed in completing the assessment of risks associated with proposed partnership arrangements. Please contact your ADSD and/or Faculty Head of Finance and Planning as they will be able to explain the process in more detail and to provide assistance in

completing the risk register. The colleagues on the consultation list for completing the CPPF/CPRF will also be able to advise you. Ultimately, it is the Faculty Executive's responsibility to ensure that the risk assessment is as accurate, clear and complete as possible. Therefore, please take advice from colleagues where you think that they have expertise in terms of knowledge of the proposed programme or of the environment in which it will take place (particularly if delivery is overseas).

The risk assessment must be completed before the ADSD is asked to approve the Business Plan.

3.2 Context

A context for risk identification and assessment needs to be in place in advance of the exercise.

The context for making the assessment is to identify and evaluate key risks to the development and implementation of the proposed partnership in accordance with the proposed timetable and the achievement of objectives for the first year, relating to:

- Financial & business aspects
- Academic delivery & quality of learning
- Other stated targets and aims

The aim of the assessment is to identify the key business risks that could prevent the achievement of these objectives.

4. Completion of Risk Register, Matrix and Improvement Plans

4.1 Identification of Risks

The risk register process is embedded in the CPPF and CPRF forms, available from the APQO website at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook>. The list of pre-defined risks (section A) has been significantly reduced in 2020, and a series of prompt questions (section B) has been added, in order to move away from a 'checklist' approach and promote analysis and consideration of the proposal itself - particularly the due diligence elements - thereby encouraging the identification and inclusion of proposal-specific or unusual risks. Further prompt questions to help you consider and identify additional risks which may apply to a proposal are set out in section C – please note that there may be other key risks that are not specifically related to these prompts, and, if so, they must be included in the risk register.

4.2 Evaluation of Impact

Impact is expressed as the potential severity of the consequences should a risk occur. Brookes measures the undesirable impact of business risks in this context in terms of damage to the University's reputation and/or financial position. Assess the potential impact of each of the defined risks as H/M/L using the scale shown below.

IMPACT RATING GUIDELINES	
High	Adverse publicity/demotivation of key stakeholders e.g. funding bodies/QAA/professional bodies and/or
	Additional costs and/or loss of revenue >20% of predicted income from the proposed programme delivery in first year
Medium	Adverse publicity/demotivation affecting external non-key stakeholders e.g. Students and/or
	Additional costs and/or loss of revenue between 5 - 20% of predicted

	income from proposed programme delivery in first year
Low	Adverse publicity / demotivation affecting internal stakeholders e.g. staff and/or
	Additional costs and/or loss of revenue < 5% of predicted income from proposed programme delivery in first year

Business risks can have a range of potential impacts, according to the extent to which the risk occurs. It may be helpful to have a specific circumstance in mind – perhaps basing your assessment on the most likely outcome. **Please note : your assessment should be based on actions already taken and controls in place at the time of the assessment, and should not include any assumptions about future actions planned but not yet taken.** The assessment must be of the impact over the period covering implementation and the first 12 months of the programme running.

4.3 Evaluation of Likelihood

Likelihood can be described as the probability of the risk occurring. Assess the likelihood of the risk occurring as H/M/L using the following criteria.

LIKELIHOOD RATING CRITERIA	
High	This risk will probably occur during the first year of the proposed programme delivery (more than 50% probability)
Medium	This risk could occur during the first year of the proposed programme delivery (10% - 50% probability)
Low	This risk is unlikely to occur during the first year of the proposed programme delivery (less than 10% probability)

Please bear in mind that the assessment is of the likelihood of the risk occurring and producing the impacts assessed under 4.2. Once again, the likelihood must be assessed over the period from implementation to completion of the first year's teaching.

4.4 Actions Taken/Controls Already in Place

Please provide sufficient information here to enable the ADSD and LPAG to understand the reasoning behind the risk assessment. If a risk is assessed as 'High', explain why. If a risk is assessed as 'Medium' or 'Low', please outline the main risk controls or mitigating factors that justify such an evaluation.

For example: If the likelihood of the risk 'Failure to recruit suitable teaching and support staff' is scored as 'low', the key control could be 'sufficient resources and expertise already in place' The ADSD and LPAG will require an indication that the risk has been considered and appropriate controls put in place.

4.5 Risk Tolerance Matrix

Once the risk register has been completed, each risk number should be plotted on the risk matrix (G5.3b) which is available at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook> This will determine whether each risk is high, medium or low risk severity. It would be helpful if each risk on the register is then colour coded to indicate whether it is high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) risk severity.

4.6 Completion of Improvement Plan Template

The risk improvement planning template must be completed for each high severity risk, and submitted with the risk register for LPAG approval. Additionally, the ADSD, Faculty Executive or LPAG may request additional risk improvement plans for specific risks, based on the subject matter and context of the proposal.

The improvement planning template (T5.14) is available on the APQO website at <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook>. A separate copy of the template is to be completed for each high severity risk requiring an action plan. The purpose of the planning template is to record individual actions that have not yet been completed at the time of the risk assessment, to indicate how the risk is to be mitigated in the future. Each action must be 'SMART' with an identifiable completion point (rather than something continuous or ongoing).

The information to be entered under the various heading is:

'Specific Action'	A description of the action to be taken.
'Measurement of Action'	The end point of the action (e.g. a decision made, a policy agreed, an agreement signed etc.)
'Milestone'	The initial target date for completion (month/year).
'Accountability'	The person who will ensure that the action is completed.
'Status'	This should be left blank in the original plan, but will be used for subsequent monitoring of the status of planned actions once the proposal has been approved. At this point, one of the following three comments should be inserted, as appropriate: ' <i>completed</i> ', ' <i>on target</i> ' or ' <i>delayed until (with new date)</i> '.

The implementation of all actions within risk improvement plans must be reviewed and confirmed by updating the 'Status' field (see above). The minimum expectation is for the plans to be updated *at least* once during the first year and as part of the annual programme review process. However, depending on the nature of the actions and the overall risk profile, more frequent updates may be necessary.

5. Monitoring and reviewing the Risk Register and Action Plans

The risk assessment is completed before any proposal is approved and consequently before a full implementation plan (as set out in the programme documentation and Operations Manual once the arrangements are fully approved through the academic approval process) is developed. The risk assessment, and any risk improvement plans, submitted at the pre-approval stage (i.e. to LPAG) should therefore be treated as a iterative document, to be added to as necessary and used to inform the development of any implementation plan (supplemented by any additional project or operational risks if they arise). Updates made during the development and implementation phase of approved partnerships should be reported to LPAG.

5.1 Reviewing the risk register

Once the arrangements have been finalised through the academic approval process, the risk register should be reviewed at least annually by the Liaison Manager, with assistance from the ADESE, 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 (see 5.2 below);

- 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 (for M/H risks), should be developed.

5.2 Monitoring and updating the action plans

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 reported to LPAG (or, for international institutional partnerships, IIPOG). As noted in 4.6 above, the minimum expectation is for the plans to be updated *at least* once during the first year and subsequently as part of the annual review process; but, 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 or IIPOG, as appropriate.

6. Summary

It is recommended that you arrange to complete the risk assessment in conjunction with your ADSD (and/or your Faculty Head of Finance & Planning), and after taking advice as necessary from colleagues with experience of the programme or of the particular delivery environment, especially if overseas. Advice can also be sought from [Gary Lambourne](#), the University's Insurance & Risk Officer.