1. WHAT IS ‘COLLABORATIVE PROVISION’?

1.1 The University adopts the definition of collaborative provision (as given in the UK Quality Code advice and guidance on partnerships, 2018) as provision that leads to the award of academic credit and that is delivered, assessed or supported in partnership between the University and one or more other organisations, i.e. provision where the achievement of learning outcomes for a module or programme are dependent on the arrangements made between the organisations.

1.2 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.

1.3 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 and its supporting strategies can be found here.

1.4 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.

1.5 This guidance note provides an introduction to the most common models of collaborative provision.

1.6 The following arrangements are not generally considered as collaborative provision:

- 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. However, Faculty AESC/QLICs 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;
- 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.

1.7 The academic arrangements for collaborative research degrees 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.

2. COMMON MODELS OF COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

2.1 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, according to the risks they pose to quality and standards.

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Associate College Partnership (ACP) provision

2.2 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.

2.3 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 & Taunton College
   - Brooklands College
   - Solihull College & University Centre
   - Swindon College
   - Wiltshire College

2.4 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/](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 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, or where ACP staff teach elements of a programme on Brookes premises.

Flying faculty

2.5 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 some responsibilities relating to marketing and recruitment.

Articulation agreements

2.6 This arrangement is a formal arrangement with another institution whereby the University recognises and grants credit to students who are successful on a named programme of study offered by the partner organisation for guaranteed entry onto a later stage of a programme of study - or one of several specified programmes - leading to a Brookes award. 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.

2.7 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.

2.8 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. The granting of advanced standing (or credit entry) to individuals on a one-off basis is dealt with through the APL process. Please contact the Brookes Global team for advice on how to set up a progression agreement with an international institution.
Credit-rating arrangements

2.9 Credit rating is where the University recognises and awards credit for successful completion of modules/short courses offered by another organisation. This type of arrangement 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.

Franchised provision leading to an Oxford Brookes award or credit

2.10 This is where 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 registered with the University – advice on the status of students studying through this type of arrangement should be sought from the Academic Registrar (Director of ASA).

Validation arrangements

2.11 A validation arrangement is where the University recognises a programme of study which has been designed and is offered by another organisation, as being of an appropriate standard and quality to lead to a Brookes award or credit. Students are enrolled with the partner organisation, and registered with the University for the purposes of making the award on successful completion of the programme.

Jointly-provided programmes

2.12 This is where the University collaborates with one or more other 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 also 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.

2.13 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.

2.14 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.

2.15 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.
Dual/multiple awards

2.16 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.

Joint awards

2.17 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.

2.18 See the Characteristics Statement 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 This document also includes a note on research degrees offered by one or more awarding bodies.

2.19 PDTs and 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 bespoke 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; therefore appropriate time should be built in to the programme design stage of the project.

3. AWARDS

3.1 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 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.

3.2 Students may be eligible to attend graduation ceremonies at Brookes, where practical. However, awards ceremonies for students of international partners will normally be held at the partner’s premises. Liaison Managers should liaise with the ASA Graduation Team to ensure the appropriate arrangements are made and invitations issued.

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