Please read the notes below and guidance note G5.3b before you complete the risk register in the CPPF/CPRF for your proposal.

SECTOR EXPECTATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES

1. 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.

2. The procedures for negotiation, approval and management of collaborative partnerships therefore 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 ensure that the academic standards of any awards made in its name 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.

3. 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. 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, professional bodies, employers, etc, in the UK and internationally.

4. The processes set out in Chapter 5 of the Quality & Standards Handbook are tailored according to the extent to which responsibilities for teaching and assessment are devolved to a partner organisation. Approval, monitoring and review procedures for collaborative provision also differ from the processes applying to home provision in a number of ways:
   • approval for new partnerships must be given by the Learning Partnerships Advisory Group, on the recommendation of Faculty Executive Groups, prior to the academic approval of specific delivery arrangements;
   • secretarial support for approval and review events is provided by the APQO, rather than by Faculty Quality Officers;
   • 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 LPA;
LPAG receives an annual report on the financial performance of all current partnerships, and the outcomes of financial due diligence enquiries; and provides an annual report on its activities to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

5. The advice and guidance underpinning the UK Quality Code recommends that providers’ risk-based methodology should not compromise the rigour of the process, 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. The methodology to be followed at Brookes when completing a risk register for collaborative partnership proposals (in the CPPF/CPRF) is set out in guidance note G5.3b.

PARTNER-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS

6. 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, which is why examination committees are always managed by Brookes). 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 and the complexity of the collaboration, and the characteristics of the partner (including its previous ‘quality’ record).

7. There are some aspects of collaborative provision that may particularly 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:
   - Student status (access to University learning resources and services)
   - Professional accreditation
   - Teaching/assessment in a language other than English
   - Serial arrangements
   - Flying faculty delivery
   - Jointly-provided programmes involving more than one awarding body (see guidance note G5.1)

8. It is important to be clear about the status of students on the proposed collaborative programme/s, and the entitlements that will be conferred on them – especially in respect of international partnerships. In most cases, the expectation is that the partner organisation is able to provide the appropriate resources and support for learning for successful delivery of the programme/s. However, a partnership may be dependent on students having access to relevant online learning resources through the Brookes library. Access to learning resources needs to be costed and agreed with publishers, and should therefore be discussed with the Associate Director of Learning Resources – Collections (Paul Harwood pharwood@brookes.ac.uk ) It is also important to clarify whether any access to ASA services will be required in order to support the partnership, and these requirements should be discussed with the Director of Academic & Student Administration (John Kirk jkirk@brookes.ac.uk ) NOTE: there is a standard agreement in place to provide ACP students with equal access to Brookes services and resources as on-campus students.

9. The transfer of student data between partners and the University – especially where it involves transfer between different jurisdictions – is also risky, so you should ensure you follow the Checklist for Partnership Data Protection Reviews (available on the APQO website under ‘forms and guides’ for Chapter 5 of the Quality & Standards Handbook) when completing Appendix C of the Operations Manual, once a new partnership has gained LPAG approval.

10. 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. 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 – these requirements should be clearly set out in the CPPF, and key controls and actions should be recorded in the risk register.

11. A small number of the University’s 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. 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 any costs involved. LPAG may be reluctant to approve new proposals for collaborative programmes delivered and/or assessed in a language other than English, except in the case of an existing partner delivering in that language or where they are provided with evidence that the benefits of the partnership are likely to substantially outweigh the risks associated with delivery in a foreign language.

12. 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.

13. The **flying faculty** model of collaborative provision is often considered to be low risk in respect of the awarding body’s ability to directly assure academic quality and standards. However, 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 when they travel out to teach on the programme.