**Written Submissions for Validation and Periodic Review (Taught Programmes)**

1. Validation

*Institutional Approval*

To obtain institutional approval, prospective new partners are required to prepare, in collaboration with the relevant School/Faculty, a written submission in the form of a self-evaluation document, with supporting evidence for consideration as part of a formal validation process. This should include information on the following areas:

* The rationale for the collaborative link.
* A statement about the history and mission statement. (not required for NI Regional Colleges)
* Recent annual reports, operating accounts and business plans (not required for NI Regional Colleges)
* Details of current and future academic and strategic plans.
* Organisation structure.
* Arrangements for the assurance of quality and standards.
* Reports from external quality bodies.
* A prospectus and/or separate list of programmes, including student numbers.

The University will also expect the written submission to address the following issues:

* Whether the collaborative organisation is of good standing; whether it has a secure medium term future; whether it is financially sound.
* Whether the collaborative organisation has an effective framework for the management of Higher Education programmes, especially in relation to quality assurance.
* Whether the staffing establishment is appropriate both across the collaborative organisation as a whole and for the programme(s) under consideration and if there is an effective Staff Development programme in place.
* Whether it has experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level.
* Whether physical resources are appropriate and an appropriate learning environment is provided for students.
* Whether there is adequate provision for academic and pastoral support and guidance.
* Whether it has, or has had, collaborative relationships with other institutions and whether any awarding institution has withdrawn from a collaborative programme with the prospective collaborative organisation.

For overseas collaborative agreements which will have a higher level of risk associated with them, the University also needs to be satisfied:

* That the prospective collaborative organisation has an understanding of the current practices of UK Higher Education, eg in connection with external examining, assessment arrangements and quality assurance.
* That it has the capacity to address differences in cultures and expectations between HE systems in such a way as to ensure that the requirements of the arrangement can be met.
* That, if instruction and assessment is to be in a language other than English, it has the capacity to provide translation facilities to an appropriate standard.

*Programme Approval*

A written submission for Programme Approval is required in support of all proposed new collaborative taught programmes which should be prepared by the Programme Team, who will normally include representation from both Queen’s and the partner institution. The Programme Team should ensure that the written submission is consistent with the relevant sections of the UK Quality Code and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Normally, the written submission for programme approval will include the following:

* A full programme specification which should include the programme regulations and specific reference to any aspect of the programme that may be delivered through distance or blended learning.
* Module information.
* How the content of the programme is appropriate to the subject and the qualification concerned and aligns with the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement.
* How the learning outcomes of the programme are appropriate to the level of the award and to those of similar programmes delivered by the University.
* How the assessment scheme is appropriate and adequate (consistent with UK Quality Code), including, as appropriate, arrangements for moderation, preparation of examination papers, second marking and Boards of Examiners.
* How the programme will be monitored and reviewed (consistent with UK Quality Code and the University’s quality assurance framework).
* How arrangements will be made for the operation of the collaboration including appeals and complaints.
* How student feedback will be obtained and acted upon.
* Student support arrangements.
* Information on learning resources and infrastructure and how this will support the programme (including any implications for access to electronic library resources which should be discussed with the Subject Librarian).
* Information on staffing for the programme including brief staff CVs and how the staffing is sufficient to deliver and support the programme (CVs should be provided separately and must be password protected).
* Roles and responsibility of the University and roles and responsibility of the collaborative partner.

In addition, for programmes which are to be delivered through flexible or distributed learning (e.g., distance learning or e-learning) the written submission should include:

* The educational and pedagogical rationale for delivery by FDL methods.
* The technical arrangements to assure the quality of the delivery method.
* The range of resources to be used with perceptible information.
* The technical and academic support methodology for the programme.
* The quality assurance process to be implemented before course delivery.
* Evaluation of the quality of the design of learning materials (including pace of learning and presentation of material).
* Facilities for supporting interaction between students.
* Evaluation of systems of communication (including methods of obtaining student feedback).
* Results of any piloting of learning and assessment materials.
* Evaluation of the assessment methods (including notification of results to students and how the organisation assures itself that assessed work is properly attributable to the appropriate student).

With regard to proposed new Foundation Degree Programmes, the submission document should specifically include:

1. Membership of the programme planning team (normally should include employers).
2. Background to and rationale for the proposed programme.
3. Background information on the Regional College and the Employer consortia (evidence of consultation with industry on the development of the curricula is essential).
4. Details of any links with professional bodies.
5. Evidence of demand for the programme.
6. Admissions criteria.
7. Programme specification.
8. Programme regulations (detailed regulations are normally part of the overall programme specification).
9. Arrangements for work placement.
10. Module content.
11. Articulation arrangements to study at Queen’s.
12. Programme management arrangements.
13. Mechanisms for Quality Assurance.
14. Details of learning resources.
15. Short CV’s of proposed teaching staff.

2. Periodic Review

Periodic Reviews require the submission of a reflective statement in relation to the programme(s) and the collaboration under consideration.  Its purpose is to provide an insight into the past (over the period of approval), and include details of any modifications which are to be made to the programme(s) and the rationale for those changes, as well as looking forward and highlighting plans that are in place to improve the provision and the student experience.  The reflective statement should show the effectiveness of quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms in reviewing and enhancing provision.  Examples of good practice should also be included.  The Programme Team should ensure that the documentation complies with the relevant sections of the UK Quality Code.

In addition, supporting documentation should also be provided as follows (by agreement, the documentation may be in the format requested by, and provided for, another external agency, e.g.  DAERA, ETI, provided that the relevant information is obtained):

Enhancing the Quality of Education Provision

1. Programme specification (including regulations).
2. Module descriptions, including learning outcomes, level and credit values and assessment methods.
3. Details of any changes made to the programme since the last approval.
4. Current advertising material.
5. Copies of information given to students, including handbooks, reading lists, assessment guides and assessment requirements.
6. Arrangements for academic appeals and student discipline.

Statistical Information, Covering the Last Three Years

1. Number of applications and admissions per year.
2. Entry qualifications of students.
3. Students with disabilities.
4. International students.
5. Student attainment including progression and completion.
6. Staff/student ratios for the period covered by the review.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

1. Module and programme reviews.
2. External examiners reports for the period covered by the review.
3. University Coordinator(s) reports for the period covered by the review.
4. Minutes of SSCC meetings plus follow up actions.
5. Anonymised details of any student complaints/appeals and how they were resolved.
6. Arrangements for programme monitoring and enhancement.
7. The method used for securing and responding to student feedback (National Student Survey, SVC/SSCC).
8. Procedures for the internal management of the programme.
9. Use made of Management Information Statistics.
10. Engagement with University strategies.
11. Engagement with employers.
12. Any external audit and assessment reports relating to the programme(s).
13. Comment on how the relevant sections of the UK Quality Code, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and subject benchmark statements are referenced as part of the quality assurance procedures.

Enhancing the Quality of Student Experience

1. Academic and other staff (summary CVs for each member of academic staff contributing to programme delivery are required.   CVs should normally be no more than 1-2 pages).
2. Details of current library and information technology resources.
3. Details of other institutional facilities available to students.
4. Details of pastoral care arrangements.
5. Advice and guidance.
6. Careers information.

The Programme Team should also provide a copy of the existing MOA with any proposed revisions to the MOA highlighted throughout.