GUIDELINES FOR VALIDATION/REVIEW PANELS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMMES

1. Programme Review

A critical but constructive and detailed appraisal of the collaborative proposal/existing programme is to be carried out and a report with findings and recommendations will be considered by Education Committee Quality and Standards (ECQS) and the outcome reported to Academic Council of the University.

2. General Criteria

(a) The Validation Panel must be able to satisfy itself that the collaborative organisation can deliver the proposed programme at a level consistent with provision offered by the University.

(b) The Validation Panel must be able to satisfy itself that the appropriate due diligence has been undertaken based on the level of risk identified.

Due diligence procedures will take account of the following areas:

1. The legal, financial and cultural aspects of working in a particular country to ensure that the University is in a position to meet any legal and regulatory national requirements.
2. The legal and financial status of the partner
3. The reputation and academic standing of the partner
4. The ability and capacity of the partner to deliver on the proposed partnership, in terms of staffing, resources and access to learning opportunities.

(c) The Validation Panel should ensure that the collaborative organization is fully cognisant of the University’s policies, procedures and mission and that differing cultural expectations are taken into account where necessary.

(d) The Validation Panel needs to ensure that the proposed or existing collaborative arrangement meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>), taking cognisance of associated advice and guidance, in particular that relating to Partnerships (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/partnerships>).

(e) The Validation Panel must ensure that the arrangement will meet the requirement of students for personal and intellectual development and as a preparation for or furthering of careers.

3. The Institution

The Panel should assess the appropriateness of the proposed partner taking into consideration the following:

1. Whether the collaborative organisation is of good standing; whether it has a secure medium term future; whether it is financially sound.
2. Whether the collaborative organisation has an effective framework for the management of Higher Education programmes, especially in relation to quality assurance.
3. 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.
4. Whether it has experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level.
5. Whether physical resources are appropriate and an appropriate learning environment is provided for students.
6. Whether there is adequate provision for academic and pastoral support and guidance.
7. 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.

3. The Programme

It would assist ECQS to have views on the following:

(a) The appropriateness of the particular learning outcomes of the programme within the overall objectives of the institution and the University.

(b) The standards set for the programme with regard to the following:

(i) The admission requirements and procedures in relation to the programme and its objectives;

(ii) The structure of the programme, including its academic progression and internal coherence, and its compatibility with the principles incorporated in the overall framework of the University and its system of awards;

(iii) The relevance and currency of the syllabuses and learning outcomes for the different components of the programme and the extent of consultation with industry, commerce and professions or other interested bodies;

(iv) The forms and quality of the teaching and learning processes, including group work and independent learning, which are to be offered to the students; and

(v) The examination, assessment methods and feedback arrangements to students and their likely effectiveness as a learning aid and in revealing student achievement in relation to the programme and module aims and intended learning outcomes.

(c) The staff resources available for the programme and their opportunities for development and their ability to work together constructively;

(d) For current programmes undergoing periodic review, the programme committee’s critical appraisal of the operation of the programme during its period of approval, and the rationale for any proposed changes;

(e) For current programmes undergoing periodic review, the performance of students on the programme, their subsequent career achievements, their views of the programme and other evidence, including reports from external examiners;

(f) The approach taken to address issues arising from quality assurance procedures (if appropriate);

(g) The adequacy of the provision and deployment of other resources for the programme, including accommodation, library, laboratory and computing as may be relevant;

(h) The conditions, if any, on which the programme is recommended for approval and the period of approval.

Where the proposal involves the provision of joint supervision at PhD level, with students spending time off-campus with the partner (a collaborative research degree programme), the Panel should also seek to ensure assurances that appropriate arrangements for support, supervision and training are available. In particular, the arrangement should enable compliance with the University’s Study Regulations for Research Degree Programmes and fulfilment of key expectations of the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

A copy of the Regulations are available on:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/GeneralRegulations/StudyRegulations/StudyRegulationsforResearchDegreeProgrammes>

The Code of Practice can be accessed on:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/dasa/AcademicAffairs/ResearchDegreeProgrammes>

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