

**University of Suffolk**

**PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL,  
MONITORING AND REVIEW OF  
PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY**

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## 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 Partnership activity represents an important aspect of the implementation of the University of Suffolk's strategic plan, providing opportunities to widen participation in higher education, extend the academic portfolio and develop links with compatible institutions in regional, national and international arenas.
- 1.2 In particular, the University regards internationalisation as essential to the growth and relevance of the institution. A key strategic objective as part of this internationalisation agenda is being proactive in seeking out international partners with a shared approach in terms of mission, offer and student experience.
- 1.3 The University recognises its responsibility for the quality and academic standards of all arrangements delivered in partnership with others, in accordance with the expectations of the [OfS regulatory framework](#) and [the UK Quality Code, including the advice and guidance on partnerships](#). This handbook outlines procedures for the approval, monitoring and review of partnership activity.
- 1.4 Procedures vary according to the type of partnership and the degree of risk involved. Arrangements involving the award of credit, or the recognition of credit gained elsewhere towards an award of the University, require a higher degree of oversight than those arrangements not involving award or recognition of credit. Appendix A provides a summary of the approval process for each type of partnership arrangement.
- 1.5 Partnership arrangements involving teaching and assessment in a language other than English are not permitted (except in the case of study abroad or exchange agreements where the development of foreign language skills provides an underpinning rationale for the exchange programme, building on the study of the foreign language within the student's course).
- 1.6 This handbook covers the following types of partnership activity:
- **Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):** where the University agrees to promote cooperation, discussions and positive academic relations with another institution to their mutual benefit, without establishing a formal legal relationship between the two organisations (this may be a precursor to a more detailed partnership agreement).
  - **Progression arrangements with no recognition of credit towards a University of Suffolk award:** where the University guarantees students consideration for admission to the first year of a University of Suffolk course, normally under the usual admission criteria, after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.
  - **Progression arrangements with recognition of credit towards a University of Suffolk award:** where the University guarantees students consideration for admission with recognised credit (but not guaranteed entry) to a University of Suffolk

course under the usual admission criteria, after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.

- **Articulation arrangements:** where the University guarantees students entry to an advanced stage of a University of Suffolk course as a result of successfully completing an agreed programme of study at a partner institution.
- **Delivery of University of Suffolk module(s) at a partner institution:** where the University agrees to deliver module(s) at a partner institution, leading to the award of University of Suffolk credit.
- **Delivery of a University of Suffolk course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others:** where the University delivers one of its own courses off-campus (usually overseas) in collaboration with a partner institution, with delivery and assessment being undertaken by University staff.
- **Co-delivery of a course in partnership with a professional organisation:** where the University delivers a course in collaboration with a professional organisation (for example involving co-teaching and/or use of the partner's facilities and resources).
- **Validation arrangements:** where the University judges that a programme (or part thereof) developed and delivered by another institution is of an appropriate quality and academic standard to lead to a University of Suffolk award.
- **Franchise arrangements:** whereby the University allows the whole or part of one or more of its own internally developed courses to be delivered and assessed at a partner institution, leading to a University of Suffolk award.
- **Dual or multiple awards:** where the University and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to separate awards of both, or all, of the institutions (with awards made on successful completion of all elements of the collaborative course<sup>1</sup>).
- **Joint awards:** where the University and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to a joint award of both, or all, institutions.
- **Exchange arrangements and study abroad:** including student exchanges and student mobility programmes such as the Turing Scheme.

1.7 If a potential partnership does not fall into one of the above categories, please contact the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships (CAIP) ([partnerships@uos.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@uos.ac.uk)) in the first instance for further advice and guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> These are referred to as double or multiple degrees (co-dependent, mutually contingent qualifications) in the QAA's [Characteristics statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body](#) (October 2015).

- 1.8 Proposals for partnership arrangements may come forward through various routes, for example through academic schools, by an approach from another institution or via a steer from the Executive to help further the University's strategic objectives. It is imperative that once a representative of the University has been approached regarding a possible relationship with a new organisation, the representative should notify the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships ([partnerships@uos.ac.uk](mailto:partnerships@uos.ac.uk)) at the earliest opportunity. An initial expression of interest form for prospective partner institutions is available on the [University website](#).
- 1.9 Sufficient lead-in time should be built in for the development and approval of proposed new partnerships. Whilst every effort is made to expedite matters, prospective partners should be aware that, depending on the nature of the arrangement and the approval process (and associated meeting schedules), it can take time to undertake due diligence activity and complete the approval process. No partnership arrangement should commence until the approval process has been completed and the underpinning legal agreement has been signed by authorised signatories of all parties.

## 2. Due diligence

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- 2.1 Partnership activity can present a higher level of risk, particularly in the international arena, and it is therefore vital that appropriate due diligence activity is undertaken before the University embarks on a relationship with any partner organisation, regardless of the proposed type of arrangement. While the level of due diligence will vary according to the nature of the risks involved, due diligence should normally include consideration of the following:
- a) the size and status of the proposed partner institution, and compatibility in terms of mission and educational objectives
  - b) the legal, financial and academic standing of the institution (including standing in national and international league tables and legal capacity to enter into an agreement with the University of Suffolk)
  - c) whether the prospective partner is known to have current or previous relationships with other UK awarding bodies (if so, enquiries should be made of that institution as to the standing of the prospective partner and their experiences of partnership working)
  - d) whether the prospective partner is known to have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University
  - e) whether the proposed arrangement conflicts with any existing partnership arrangements within the University
  - f) for international partnerships, the stability of the region where the institution is based and any aspects of the legal, political, financial or cultural environment that may impact on the proposed partnership (information can be obtained from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country, including the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
  - g) the language of delivery and assessment at the proposed partner institution
  - h) for arrangements involving collaboration in terms of course delivery, whether the proposed partner institution has experience of successful delivery of comparable courses at a similar level, or has demonstrable capacity to deliver courses at that level
  - i) the proposed partner institution's understanding of the UK higher education sector (including the culture and ethos of UK higher education) and its capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
  - j) the capacity to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement, both within the University and the proposed partner institution
  - k) an assessment of risk associated with the proposed partnership.

- 2.2 More information on required due diligence activity for each type of partnership arrangement is provided in subsequent sections of this handbook. The Director of Finance and Planning should be consulted on any financial due diligence activity.
- 2.3 The [advice and guidance on partnerships](#) within the UK Quality Code is a useful reference point in terms of the conduct of due diligence enquiries and associated risk assessment and risk management.

### **3. Financial costings**

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- 3.1 All proposed partnership arrangements should be fully costed in order to ensure that the underpinning financial arrangements are strong enough to manage the risks effectively, in accordance with the expectations of the UK Quality Code. Early consultation with the Finance and Planning team is vital in this regard.
- 3.2 It is important to factor in potential hidden costs, including time spent by relevant academic and professional services staff in considering new proposals, supporting their implementation, monitoring their ongoing progress and assuring adherence to the University's expectations regarding quality and academic standards. In addition to staffing costs and associated overheads, it is important to factor in full and accurate costings for all other aspects of partnership activity which might include:
- a) travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for visits to the partner institution (including as part of the initial approval process and for ongoing liaison, monitoring and review purposes)
  - b) costs of employing external panel members for initial approval and periodic review of the partnership
  - c) costs of employing external examiners to oversee courses, where relevant
  - d) legal costs
  - e) translation costs (for example to facilitate due diligence activity)
  - f) taxation and exchange control arrangements.
- 3.3 It may also be appropriate to consider contingency funds to cover any unforeseen costs that may arise. For partnership arrangements involving delivery of HE provision by a partner institution, this should include contingency plans in the event of the delivery organisation becoming insolvent, ceasing trading or otherwise terminating the agreement (which may result in the need for the University to teach out existing students in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan).
- 3.4 More information on required costing activity for each type of partnership arrangement is provided in subsequent sections of this handbook and within the specified form. Guidance for University staff on the completion of University costing models can be obtained from the Finance team.



## 4. Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

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- 4.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is designed to enable the University and another institution to agree to promote cooperation, discussions and positive academic relations to their mutual benefit, without establishing a binding relationship between them. Under such arrangements, opportunities may be sought for the exchange of students and academic staff or other activities agreed to be mutually beneficial.
- 4.2 The MoU represents a statement of intent rather than an agreement establishing a formal relationship between the two institutions. This type of arrangement might be a precursor to the negotiation of a more detailed partnership arrangement.

### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 4.3 In order to seek approval for a MoU, the [MoU proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval.
- 4.4 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that the proposed institution is a suitable partner for the University (for example in terms of reputation, academic standing, mission and educational objectives)
  - b) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives
  - c) that the proposed arrangement has academic credibility
  - d) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
  - e) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - f) that the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

### Approval of the MoU

- 4.5 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Portfolio Oversight Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the MoU can be completed.
- 4.6 The MoU should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the MoU should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.

- 4.7 The original signed copy of the MoU will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring of MoUs

- 4.8 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the MoU, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution and periodically reviewing the arrangement, providing updates to the Portfolio Oversight Committee as required.
- 4.9 MoUs are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 4.4 above

#### Escalation of a MoU

- 4.10 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the two institutions to include other more complex arrangements, the relevant approval process should be completed in accordance with the guidance in relevant section(s) of this handbook.
- 4.11 It is important to ensure that MoUs are not allowed to escalate into more complex partnership arrangements without the necessary approval being sought and appropriate legal agreements being developed to underpin the revised arrangement.

#### Termination or expiry of a MoU

- 4.12 Either institution may withdraw from the MoU or cease to pursue the objectives of the MoU at any time.
- 4.13 The periodic review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the MoU continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the MoU and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 5. Progression arrangements with no recognition of credit

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- 5.1 Under a progression agreement, the University of Suffolk guarantees students at the partner institution consideration for admission to the first year of a University of Suffolk course after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at the partner institution. This is normally subject to standard admissions criteria for the relevant course, although the criteria may be adapted, for example to meet widening participation objectives as part of Access and Participation planning. The University does not recognise credit from the partner institution, and students enter the University at the same point as standard applicants.
- 5.2 Students wishing to be admitted through a progression arrangement will have to apply individually for transfer to the University and progression may be subject to an individual admissions hurdle, for example individual application, interview or examination of a student's performance on their current programme. The relevant academic school within the University retains the right to refuse admission.
- 5.3 Students admitted under progression arrangements will be required to meet standard English language entry requirements, as outlined on the University of Suffolk website.

### Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link

- 5.4 In order to seek approval for a progression arrangement with no recognition of credit, the [progression agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and signed by relevant parties.
- 5.5 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives
  - b) that the proposed institution from which students will progress is of an appropriate academic standing
  - c) that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution prepares students well for progression to the relevant University of Suffolk course, enabling them to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes commensurate with relevant academic and non-academic entry requirements
  - d) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - e) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the progression arrangement (including the provision of guidance and support to progressing students)
  - f) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the progression arrangement.

### Approval of the progression agreement

- 5.6 Once the proposal form has been approved by the relevant parties, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the progression agreement can be completed.
- 5.7 The agreement should be drafted by External Relations and/or the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be submitted to the partner institution for signature.
- 5.8 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

### Ongoing monitoring of the progression agreement

- 5.9 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the progression agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to progressing students.
- 5.10 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis (including monitoring the progress of students entering the University of Suffolk from the partner institution), feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Portfolio Oversight Committee and/or Quality Committee as required.
- 5.11 Progression agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 5.5 above

### Escalation of a progression agreement

- 5.12 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the two institutions to include other more complex arrangements, the relevant approval process should be completed in accordance with the guidance in relevant section(s) of this handbook.
- 5.13 It is important to ensure that progression agreements are not allowed to escalate into more complex partnership arrangements without the necessary approval being sought and appropriate legal agreements being developed to underpin the revised arrangement.

Termination or expiry of a progression agreement

- 5.14 Either institution may withdraw from the progression agreement or cease to pursue its objectives at any time during the term of the agreement. The potential impact on any students at the partner institution intending to apply for progression to the University of Suffolk should be taken into consideration when considering withdrawal from the agreement.
- 5.15 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the progression agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 6. Progression arrangements with recognition of credit

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- 6.1 Under a progression agreement with recognition of credit towards a University of Suffolk award, the University guarantees students consideration for admission with recognised credit (but not guaranteed entry) to a University of Suffolk course under the usual admission criteria, after successful completion of an agreed programme of study at a partner institution. The maximum amount of credit that can be recognised through prior learning is specified within the framework and regulations for the relevant type of award.
- 6.2 For example, a student might complete an agreed programme of study at a partner institution and then apply for direct entry to Level 5 of an honours degree programme at the University of Suffolk (i.e. with 120 credits of recognised prior learning at Level 4).
- 6.3 Students wishing to be admitted through a progression arrangement with recognition of credit will have to apply individually for transfer to the University and progression may be subject to an individual admissions hurdle, for example individual application, interview or examination of a student's performance on their current programme. The relevant academic school at the University retains the right to refuse admission.
- 6.4 Students admitted under progression arrangements will be required to meet standard English language entry requirements, as outlined on the University of Suffolk website.

### *Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link*

- 6.5 In order to seek approval for a progression arrangement with recognition of credit, the [progression agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Quality Committee for approval.
- 6.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - b) that the proposed institution from which students will progress is of an appropriate academic standing
  - c) that students at the partner institution are provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and standard, and that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution prepares students well for progression to the relevant stage of the University of Suffolk course (enabling them to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes commensurate with those elements of the University course for which they are seeking recognition of prior learning)

- d) for international links, that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution enables students to develop appropriate English language skills in alignment with standard University English language entry requirements
  - e) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - f) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the progression arrangement
  - g) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the progression arrangement.
- 6.7 The supporting evidence should include full details of the programme of study at the proposed partner institution from which students will be progressing; information on the course to which they will be progressing at the University of Suffolk; and evidence of mapping of relevant learning outcomes for the recognition of prior learning.
- 6.8 If programme delivery and assessment at the partner institution is in a language other than English, an independent translator needs to be appointed to support the approval process. The translator should be on the British Council and/or Institute of Linguistics register of translators.

#### Approval of the progression agreement

- 6.9 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Quality Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the progression agreement can be completed.
- 6.10 The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.
- 6.11 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring of progression agreements

- 6.12 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the progression agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to progressing students.
- 6.13 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Quality Committee as required. This should include monitoring the progress and experience of students entering the University of Suffolk from the

partner institution, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by either institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.

- 6.14 Progression agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 6.6 above.

*Escalation of a progression agreement*

- 6.15 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the two institutions to include other more complex arrangements, the relevant approval process should be completed in accordance with the guidance in relevant section(s) of this handbook.
- 6.16 It is important to ensure that progression agreements are not allowed to escalate into more complex partnership arrangements without the necessary approval being sought and appropriate legal agreements being developed to underpin the revised arrangement.

*Termination or expiry of a progression agreement*

- 6.17 If either institution wishes to withdraw from the progression agreement or cease to pursue its objectives at any time during the term of the agreement, care should be taken to ensure that there is no adverse impact on any students involved in the partnership (for example those students at the partner institution expecting to progress to the University of Suffolk).
- 6.18 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the progression agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.



## 7. Articulation arrangements

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- 7.1 Under an articulation agreement, the University guarantees students entry to an advanced stage of a University of Suffolk course (with recognition of prior learning), as a result of successfully completing an agreed programme of study at a partner institution. The maximum amount of credit that can be recognised through prior learning is specified within the framework and regulations for the relevant type of award, but may be reduced by the Quality Committee depending on the degree of risk involved.
- 7.2 For example, a student might complete an agreed programme of study at a partner institution and then enter Level 5 of an honours degree programme at the University of Suffolk (i.e. with 120 credits of recognised prior learning at Level 4). In the international arena, these are sometimes referred to as 2+2 arrangements.
- 7.3 Unlike progression arrangements, the relevant academic school within the University of Suffolk does not normally have the right to refuse admission to a student who has fulfilled the agreed conditions for entry (including, for international students, meeting relevant English language entry requirements and other UK immigration requirements). The only exception is where the student has a criminal conviction which results in the decision not to make the offer of a place or to withdraw an offer (in accordance with the procedure outlined in the [Admissions Policy](#)).

### *Due diligence activity and approval of the proposed link*

- 7.4 In order to seek approval for an articulation arrangement, the [articulation agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Quality Committee for approval.
- 7.5 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - b) the proposed partner institution has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and is of sound financial standing (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
  - c) that the proposed institution from which students will articulate is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
  - d) that students at the partner institution are provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and standard, and that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution prepares students well for articulation to

the relevant stage of the University of Suffolk course (enabling them to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes commensurate with those elements of the University course for which they will be granted recognition of prior learning)

- e) for international links, that the programme of study at the proposed partner institution enables students to develop appropriate English language skills in alignment with standard University English language entry requirements
  - f) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - g) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the articulation arrangement
  - h) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the articulation arrangement.
- 7.6 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should normally make one or more visits to the partner institution to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.
- 7.7 The supporting evidence should include full details of the programme of study at the proposed partner institution from which students will be articulating; information on the course to which they will be articulating at the University of Suffolk; and evidence of mapping of relevant learning outcomes for the recognition of prior learning. This is to ensure that the standards set and achieved by students at the partner institution are equivalent to those set and achieved by internal students at the equivalent stage of their studies at the University. The external examiner for the University of Suffolk course should be consulted on this mapping exercise, to secure their agreement that academic standards are comparable in relation to the proposed recognition of prior learning.
- 7.8 If programme delivery and assessment at the partner institution is in a language other than English, an independent translator needs to be appointed to support the approval process. The translator should be on the British Council and/or Institute of Linguistics register of translators.

#### *Approval of the articulation agreement*

- 7.9 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Quality Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the Articulation Agreement can be completed.
- 7.10 The agreement is a legally binding document that sets out the rights and obligations of the parties, and includes clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students when a partnership ends. Where appropriate, a financial agreement must also be agreed and signed by all parties as an appendix to the Articulation Agreement.
- 7.11 The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors where appropriate. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-

Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.

- 7.12 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### *Ongoing monitoring of articulation agreements*

- 7.13 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the Articulation Agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to articulating students.
- 7.14 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Quality Committee as required. This should include monitoring the progress and experience of students entering the University of Suffolk from the partner institution, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by either institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.
- 7.15 Articulation agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 7.5 above

#### *Escalation of an articulation agreement*

- 7.16 Where discussions lead to proposals for further development of the relationship between the two institutions to include other more complex arrangements, the relevant approval process should be completed in accordance with the guidance in relevant section(s) of this handbook.
- 7.17 It is important to ensure that articulation agreements are not allowed to escalate into more complex partnership arrangements without the necessary approval being sought and appropriate legal agreements being developed to underpin the revised arrangement.

#### *Termination or expiry of an articulation agreement*

- 7.18 The Articulation Agreement should include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students involved in the articulation arrangement is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.
- 7.19 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should

formally withdraw from the Articulation Agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 8. Delivery of University of Suffolk module(s) at a partner institution

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- 8.1 Where an academic school within the University wishes to allow delivery of individual modules at another institution, leading to the award of University of Suffolk credit, the approval of the Quality Committee is required.
- 8.2 In such situations, the students to whom the module(s) are being delivered remain registered students of the partner institution, but the University of Suffolk retains responsibility for ensuring the quality and academic standard of the learning and assessment opportunities provided. The University will need to retain basic student records in order to record student achievement and issue transcripts, and where appropriate to provide access to relevant University resources and support services.
- 8.3 In all instances delivery should be undertaken by members of University of Suffolk staff, and the language of delivery and assessment must be English. While the mode of delivery may differ, students should be expected to complete the same assessments (in accordance with the same assessment criteria and subject to the same assessment regulations, policies and procedures) as students completing the module(s) at the University of Suffolk.
- 8.4 Marking should be subject to internal and external moderation in accordance with the University of Suffolk Assessment Moderation Policy, and marks should be ratified by the relevant University of Suffolk Assessment Board in accordance with standard University practice.

### Approval of the proposed link

- 8.5 In order to seek approval for the delivery of module(s) at a proposed partner institution, the relevant [proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Quality Committee for approval.
- 8.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
  - b) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - c) that the proposed partner institution has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University
  - d) that the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the

University (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)

- e) for international partnerships, that in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- f) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- g) that the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the module(s) (including physical resources, learning resources, and academic and pastoral support and guidance arrangements)
- h) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the delivery of the module(s), both within the University and at the proposed partner institution (including provision for the maintenance of student records within the University)
- i) that the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and the associated culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- j) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the delivery of the module(s) at the proposed partner institution
- k) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University.

#### Legal agreement

- 8.7 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Quality Committee, negotiations with the partner institution concerning the underpinning legal agreement can be completed. The agreement should set out the rights and obligations of the parties, and include clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students when a partnership ends. Where appropriate, a financial agreement must also be agreed and signed by all parties as an appendix to the agreement.
- 8.8 The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors where appropriate. The final draft of the agreement should be submitted for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature.
- 8.9 The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

### Ongoing monitoring of the arrangement

- 8.10 A member of University academic staff should be nominated to oversee the arrangement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and coordinating module delivery and assessment. The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, providing updates to the Quality Committee as required.
- 8.11 Where module(s) are being delivered on an ongoing basis, they should feed into relevant course and school level quality monitoring processes. This includes monitoring student performance and making provision for gaining student feedback on their learning experiences to inform enhancement activity.
- 8.12 Where module(s) are delivered on a one-off basis, a report on the delivery of the module(s) should be submitted to the Quality Committee for quality monitoring purposes.
- 8.13 Underpinning legal agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 8.6 above.

### Termination or expiry of an off-site delivery agreement

- 8.14 In accordance with the underpinning legal agreement, if either institution wishes to withdraw from the agreement, arrangements should be put in place to ensure any students currently enrolled on University of Suffolk module(s) are able to complete the modules and be awarded the relevant credit.
- 8.15 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 9. Delivery of a University of Suffolk course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others

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- 9.1 A flying faculty model of delivery involves an academic school delivering one or more of its courses off-campus, usually overseas and in collaboration with a partner institution. The University retains responsibility for course design, delivery and assessment using University-appointed staff, while the partner institution may support the arrangement in terms of provision of (for example) marketing and recruitment activity, facilities and resources, teaching support, administrative support and/or student support services. The course may either be an existing validated course or a new course developed specifically for this purpose.
- 9.2 Where the University intends to deliver the course independently under a flying faculty model, with no collaboration with a partner institution involved, standard University course validation procedures will apply. This procedure only applies where the University works in partnership with others to deliver its courses off-campus.
- 9.3 Under a flying faculty model, students enrolled on the course are registered students of the University of Suffolk and are subject to all University regulations, policies and procedures. The University retains full responsibility for ensuring the quality and academic standards of the learning and assessment opportunities provided.
- 9.4 All prospective new partner institutions that are intended to be involved in supporting a University flying faculty arrangement need to go through a screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the proposed collaborative arrangement is appropriate and the proposed partner institution has the capacity to support the flying faculty model of delivery in the ways proposed.
- 9.5 Where the course involved is a proposed new course or where substantial changes are required to an existing validated course to allow for delivery under a flying faculty model, this due diligence scrutiny should supplement the standard University procedure for the validation of new courses, with screening of the proposed partner institution (Stage 1) completed prior to the course validation event (Stage 2). Where the course involved is an existing validated course that does not require substantial modification to allow for the new mode of delivery, a paper-based process to approve the specific arrangements for delivery of the course under a flying faculty model will be required (Stage 2).

### *Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed with the partnership proposal*

- 9.6 In order to verify that the proposed collaborative arrangement is appropriate and that the proposed partner institution has the capacity to support the flying faculty model of delivery, the [flying faculty partnership proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted, sequentially, to:
- i) the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective (the proposal form should be accompanied by a financial model produced in liaison with the Finance and Planning team)



ii) the Quality Committee for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.

9.7 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:

- a) that there is a good strategic case to work with the proposed partner institution to support the flying faculty arrangement (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate professional standing and has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University
- c) that the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include consideration of the registered status, ownership and financing of the organisation and internal governance arrangements (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
- d) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- e) for international arrangements, that in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- f) that the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and the associated culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- g) that the proposed partner institution has the capacity to support delivery of the course in the ways proposed, for example the provision of a learning infrastructure appropriate to support the needs of students and the provision of a safe working environment for staff and students
- h) where the proposed partner institution is to be involved in marketing and recruitment activity, that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the course and to train relevant partner staff on University recruitment and admissions processes
- i) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the delivery of the course, both within the University and at the proposed partner institution
- j) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
- k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

- 9.8 Approval of the proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee signals permission to progress to Stage 2 of the approval process.

*Approval process stage 2: approval of the course and flying faculty model of delivery*

- 9.9 Where the course involved is a proposed new course or where substantial changes (as determined by the Head of Quality) are required to an existing validated course to allow for delivery under a flying faculty model, the standard University procedure for the validation of new courses should be completed at this second stage (with Stage 1 completed prior to the course validation event).
- 9.10 Alternatively, where the course involved is an existing validated course that does not require substantial modification to allow for delivery under a flying faculty model, a paper-based approval process will be undertaken to verify that arrangements for delivery of the course under a flying faculty model are appropriate and that students will be provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and academic standard. To inform this process, the course team should produce a bespoke course handbook for students, along with an overarching summary document which outlines the course team's plans for delivery of the course in the specified location(s). Templates are available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.
- 9.11 A site visit by at least one senior member of University staff should normally be undertaken to determine the adequacy of facilities and resources at the intended location(s) of delivery and to meet with staff from the proposed partner institution. A formal record of the visit should be made (using the visit report template) to inform the approval process.
- 9.12 The overarching summary document, course handbook and site visit report should be considered by a small panel comprising:
- Chair (a member of University of Suffolk academic staff)
  - an external academic subject expert (selected by the University in liaison with the relevant academic school)
  - a representative from the Quality team
  - a representative from the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships.
- 9.13 Panel members are expected to return their written comments on the documentation (via a standard template) by email to the validation panel Secretary within two weeks of receipt. The Chair will review all comments and decide, in liaison with the Secretary, whether to approve the delivery of the course via the flying faculty model (under the delegated authority of Senate) or whether any points need further investigation with the course team or further discussion with panel members. When the panel's review of the documentation is complete and approval has been confirmed by the Chair, the Secretary will draft a report on behalf of the Chair, which will be circulated to all panel members for their approval before being passed to the course team, via the Quality team, for their response. The report will be submitted to the Quality Committee for information.

### Legal agreement

- 9.14 Following approval of the partnership arrangement and the flying faculty model of delivery, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement should include clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students when a partnership ends, in accordance with an agreed Student Protection Plan. A financial agreement must also be agreed and signed by all parties as an appendix to the agreement. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.
- 9.15 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

### Ongoing monitoring and review of the flying faculty arrangement

- 9.16 Partnership arrangements associated with flying faculty models of delivery are subject to the following monitoring and review mechanisms, as outlined in the Quality Manual and adapted where necessary to suit the individual partnership arrangement:
- quality monitoring processes
  - course re-approval (on a maximum of a five year cycle)
  - the external examining system (the external examiner should normally visit the site of course delivery at least once during the term of their appointment)
  - student feedback mechanisms
  - course modification, suspension and withdrawal procedures.
- 9.17 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle, and this should normally align with the course re-approval process. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 9.7 above.

### Termination or expiry of partnership agreement

- 9.18 The legal agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students enrolled on the course is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.

## 10. Co-delivery of a course in partnership with a professional organisation

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- 10.1 There may be occasions where an academic school within the University wishes to deliver a course in partnership with a professional organisation, potentially involving co-teaching and use of the partner institution's premises for course delivery. This type of arrangement typically involves partnerships with local organisations that are able to offer expertise in terms of professional skills development within a work-based learning setting, to complement students' academic study at the University.
- 10.2 The course will normally be designed and developed by the University in collaboration with the partner institution, with a member of University staff appointed as Course Leader. The course team may include staff from both institutions (with partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment subject to approval by the University).
- 10.3 In such situations, students enrolled on the course are registered students of the University of Suffolk and are subject to all University regulations, policies and procedures. The University retains responsibility for ensuring the quality and academic standards of the learning and assessment opportunities provided. Students should have full access to relevant University resources and support services, in addition to relevant resources and support at the partner institution.
- 10.4 All prospective new partner institutions that are intended to be involved in co-delivery of a University course need to go through an initial screening process to determine whether they are suitable for the conduct of higher education provision and for co-delivery of the specific course (Stage 1). This due diligence scrutiny should supplement the standard University procedure for gaining initial approval to proceed to publicity and validation for the associated course, adapted as necessary to reflect the proposed collaborative arrangement.
- 10.5 Initial approval to proceed both with the proposed partnership and with the proposed course leads to the development of a full course proposal and a formal approval event for the proposed award (Stage 2).

### *Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny*

- 10.6 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the [proposal form for co-delivery of a course with a professional organisation](#) (available on the University website) should be completed alongside the standard course proposal form and submitted, sequentially, to:
- i) the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - ii) the Quality Committee for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 10.7 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:

- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate professional standing and has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University
- c) that the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include consideration of the registered status, ownership and financing of the organisation and internal governance arrangements (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
- d) that the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- e) that the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and the associated culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- f) that the proposed co-delivery arrangement has academic credibility, and the proposed partner institution has demonstrable academic and/or professional capacity to deliver any learning, teaching and support at the appropriate levels (with reference to the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and relevant subject benchmark statements)
- g) that the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students; provide a safe working environment; and meet the requirements of the course (including physical resources, learning resources, and staffing arrangements)
- h) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the delivery of the course, both within the University and at the proposed partner institution
- i) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the delivery of the course in collaboration with the proposed partner institution
- j) that the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
- k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

10.8 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the proposed partner institution to view facilities and resources and meet with staff.

10.9 Approval of the proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee signals permission to develop a full course proposal, leading to final approval of the partnership arrangement and the associated course.

Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and co-delivered course

10.10 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and the Quality Committee, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated course.

10.11 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 10.7), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:

- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns with relevant UK reference points (including the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements)
- b) the University and the proposed partner institution have arrangements in place to ensure that students on the course will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate and consistent quality and standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
- c) the learning infrastructure at the University and the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the award (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
- d) the legal and contractual relationship of students with each institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
- e) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement (including arrangements for the appointment, induction and professional development of staff at the partner institution who will be involved in course delivery and/or assessment)
- f) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the course.

10.12 An approval event will be held to consider the proposed partnership and the associated course, usually taking place over a full day. An approval panel will be appointed on behalf of the Quality Committee to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
- one external academic subject expert (selected by the University in liaison with the relevant academic school)
- at least one employer representative (nominated by, but not closely associated with, the course team)

- at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area outside the relevant academic school)
- one member of senior staff from the proposed partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed course)
- Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- Quality team representative
- Learning Services representative
- Students' Union representative.

10.13 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

10.14 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed partner institution, should compile the following documentation for consideration by the panel as part of the approval event:

- a) information on the proposed partner institution, including evidence of credibility as an academic partner; academic and/or professional capacity to deliver any associated learning, teaching and support at the appropriate levels; legal status; and capacity to enter into the proposed partnership arrangement
- b) information on the proposed new course (covering the elements of the course to be delivered at both institutions and presented in accordance with the documentation requirements for a standard University of Suffolk course validation event, i.e. to include a course validation document, student course handbook, mapping of course and module learning outcomes, staff CVs and HEAR descriptions for each award presented for approval)
- c) criteria for the appointment of staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment at the partner institution, and arrangements for their induction and ongoing professional development
- d) arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of all published information associated with the course, including ensuring clarity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of each institution
- e) arrangements for course management and administration.

10.15 The documentation should be submitted in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the approval event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.

10.16 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally view facilities and resources and undertake discussions with the proposed course team, including relevant staff at the partner institution. Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the approval documentation.

- 10.17 The panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the University and the proposed partner institution to effectively deliver the proposed course, and decide under the delegated authority of Senate whether the proposed partnership arrangement and course should be approved for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or should be rejected. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the panel's discussions and conclusions and specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved and the course can commence.
- 10.18 The report will be submitted to Senate, via the Quality Committee, for information.
- 10.19 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.
- 10.20 Further guidance on the course approval process and the conduct of the approval event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

#### Legal agreement

- 10.21 Following approval of the partnership arrangement and the associated course, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement should include clauses on termination in order to safeguard the interests of students when a partnership ends, in accordance with an agreed Student Protection Plan. Where appropriate, a financial agreement must also be agreed and signed by all parties as an appendix to the agreement. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors where appropriate.
- 10.22 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring and review of the co-delivery arrangement

- 10.23 Partnership arrangements involving co-delivery of a University course are subject to the following monitoring and review mechanisms, as outlined in the Quality Manual and adapted where necessary to suit the individual partnership arrangement:
- quality monitoring processes



- course re-approval (on a maximum of a five year cycle)
- the external examining system (the external examiner should normally visit the partner institution at least once during the term of their appointment)
- student feedback mechanisms
- course modification, suspension and withdrawal procedures.

10.24 Following course approval, the appointment of any new partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment is subject to approval by the University through the submission of a CV to the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships. The University is responsible for ensuring that all partner institution staff involved in course delivery and/or assessment are appropriately trained, briefed and supported in terms of teaching, learning and assessment.

10.25 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle, and this should normally align with the course re-approval process. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 10.7 and 10.11 above.

*Termination or expiry of a co-delivery agreement*

10.26 The legal agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students enrolled on the course is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan.

10.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 11. Validation arrangements

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- 11.1 A validation arrangement is one whereby the University of Suffolk, as an awarding institution, judges that a course (or part thereof) designed and delivered by another HE provider is of an appropriate quality and academic standard to lead to a University of Suffolk award. The course will normally be designed, delivered and assessed by the partner institution, and the partner institution will normally have direct contractual responsibility to the student. The role of the University will be to approve entry standards, the design of the programme, arrangements for its delivery and mechanisms for quality assurance and enhancement. The University of Suffolk remains ultimately responsible for the quality and academic standard of the award.
- 11.2 All prospective new validation arrangements need to go through an initial screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the proposed partnership is worthy of further, more detailed scrutiny. Approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny leads to the development of a full proposal and an institutional validation event (Stage 2). Following final approval of the partnership arrangement at institutional level, approval of individual courses to be offered through the validation arrangement can commence (Stage 3). Institutional and course level validation may be combined when the validation arrangement is confined to a small number of courses.

### *Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny*

- 11.3 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the [validation agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to:
- the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - the Senate for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 11.4 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - b) the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
  - c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution are consistent with those of the University

- d) the proposed validation arrangement has academic credibility, and the proposed partner institution has experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or has demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
  - e) the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
  - f) the proposed partner institution has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
  - g) the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include consideration of the registered status, ownership and financing of the organisation (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
  - h) the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
  - i) the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - j) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.
- 11.5 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the proposed partner institution to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.
- 11.6 Approval of the validation agreement proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate signals permission to develop a full proposal, leading to final approval of the partnership arrangement at institutional level (Stage 2) and at course level (Stage 3).

*Approval process stage 2: institutional validation*

- 11.7 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at institutional level. This second stage in the process, involving an institutional validation event, ultimately leads to the approval of the partnership arrangement at institutional level by Senate. This paves the way for the validation of individual courses (Stage 3).
- 11.8 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 11.4), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:
- a) both the University and the proposed partner institution have arrangements in place to ensure that students on validated courses will be provided with teaching and

learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance

- b) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the awards (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
- c) the partner institution has a sound understanding of relevant University of Suffolk regulations, policies and procedures (or, where bespoke academic frameworks and/or regulations are required, these are appropriate and conform to the expectations of the University and relevant UK reference points)
- d) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement
- e) the legal and contractual relationship of students with the University and the partner institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
- f) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the partnership arrangement.

11.9 An institutional validation event will be held to consider the proposed partnership, usually taking place at the proposed partner institution over a full day. An institutional validation panel will be appointed on behalf of Senate to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
- one external academic (external to the University and its partner institutions) with experience of managing collaborative provision (where possible from the same discipline area as the proposed validated provision)
- at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from the same discipline area as the proposed validated provision)
- Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- Quality team representative
- Learning Services representative
- Students' Union representative.

11.10 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

11.11 The relevant University academic school(s) and the proposed partner institution should compile a partnership proposal document and supporting evidence for consideration by the panel, in consultation with relevant academic and professional services departments within the University. This should provide an evaluative commentary on the extent to which the proposed partnership meets the criteria for approval (see paragraphs 11.4 and 11.8 above) and should outline proposed arrangements for the strategic and operational management of the partnership by both parties. The document should cover:

- a) introductory information on the partner institution (including mission and educational objectives; current HE portfolio and student numbers by course; student profiles; outcomes of relevant external reviews)
- b) the partner institution's HE strategy and plans for portfolio development, and the perceived benefits of the proposed partnership for both parties
- c) organisational structures and key staff who will be involved in managing and supporting the partnership within both institutions
- d) internal HE governance arrangements at the partner institution, and how these will feed into the University's governance structures
- e) mechanisms for the appointment, induction, appraisal and professional development of academic staff (including any peer review schemes in operation within the partner institution)
- f) entry criteria for HE programmes and information on recruitment and admissions processes (including arrangements for induction and for supporting the transition to HE)
- g) the intended legal and contractual relationship of students with the University and the partner institution, and associated registration status and student entitlements (and how this will be communicated to students)
- h) learning, teaching and assessment strategy, and associated policies and procedures that will apply to partnership provision (including arrangements for conduct and invigilation of examinations; arrangements for the submission of student work; arrangements for internal and external moderation of assessment; and mechanisms for providing feedback to students on assessed work)
- i) mechanisms for ensuring academic oversight of provision, including University academic link tutor arrangements
- j) teaching and learning accommodation
- k) library and IT provision (including use of any online learning environments)
- l) social facilities for students
- m) other specialist facilities and/or resources (where relevant)
- n) arrangements for securing employer engagement in course design, development and/or delivery
- o) arrangements for managing work-based learning opportunities (where relevant)
- p) student support mechanisms (e.g. tutorial support, academic skills development, welfare, counselling, careers guidance, specialist support for students with disabilities, advice on accommodation, student finances)
- q) arrangements for monitoring student retention, progression, achievement and graduate destinations (and relevant data showing performance in this regard)
- r) arrangements for dealing with student complaints, academic appeals and disciplinary matters (including relevant policies and procedures to be used for the partnership arrangement)

- s) student representation and feedback mechanisms at module, course and institutional level (including relevant data showing student satisfaction levels)
  - t) internal arrangements within the partner institution for monitoring and review of the quality and academic standard of HE provision (including evidence of recent outputs, such as annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports)
  - u) arrangements for ensuring that published information is complete, accurate and up-to-date, in accordance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance where relevant
  - v) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).
- 11.12 The documentation should be submitted to the University in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the validation event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation (including the partnership proposal document and supporting evidence) is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.
- 11.13 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally undertake discussions with relevant members of staff and students of the proposed partner institution as well as members of staff at the University who will be supporting and overseeing the partnership arrangement. They will also view facilities and resources, including a tour of any online learning environments. Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the validation documentation.
- 11.14 Under the delegated authority of Senate, the panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the proposed partner institution to effectively deliver validated provision and the suitability of arrangements for collectively managing the partnership arrangement, leading to a decision on whether to approve the proposed validation arrangement at an institutional level for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or to reject the proposal. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the panel's discussions and conclusions and specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved at institutional level.
- 11.15 The report will be submitted to Senate (via the Quality Committee) for information.
- 11.16 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the institutional validation event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.

11.17 Further guidance on the institutional validation process and the conduct of the institutional validation event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

*Approval process stage 3: course level validation*

11.18 Once institutional validation has been secured, each course (or group of courses) to be offered by the partner institution under the validation arrangement is subject to an approval process. This is conducted in accordance with the University of Suffolk [procedure for the validation of new courses at partner institutions](#).

*Approval of the validation agreement*

11.19 Following confirmation of institutional validation, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement must include an appropriate exit strategy in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.

11.20 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information. Agreements are normally subject to renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle.

*Ongoing monitoring and review of the validation arrangement*

11.21 Partnership arrangements involving validated provision are subject to the following monitoring and review mechanisms, as outlined in the [Quality Manual](#) and adapted where necessary to suit the individual partnership arrangement:

- institutional review (usually on a maximum of a five year cycle)
- course re-approval (usually on a maximum of a five year cycle)
- quality monitoring processes, including production of an annual monitoring report (AMR) for each course or cognate group of courses
- the external examining system
- student representation and feedback mechanisms
- procedures for the approval of modifications to courses and for the suspension or withdrawal of courses.

11.22 Link Tutor(s) are normally appointed from within the relevant University academic school to oversee and support the validation arrangement from an academic perspective. Link Tutors work closely with relevant University academic and professional services teams to ensure that the partnership is effectively managed in accordance with internal and external requirements, and that any associated risks are

mitigated. They play a key role in ensuring that the partner upholds the University's expectations in terms of quality and academic standards.

- 11.23 The appointment of any new partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment for validated provision is subject to approval by the University through the submission of a CV to the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships.
- 11.24 Strategic management of the partnership is normally facilitated through a joint Partnership Management Group or equivalent, including representation from both institutions and reporting annually (or more regularly as required) to the Portfolio Oversight Committee. Sub-groups may be established to deal with operational management of the partnership.
- 11.25 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that partner institution(s) continue to have the capacity to fulfil their designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 11.4 and 11.8 above.

*Termination or expiry of a validation agreement*

- 11.26 The validation agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students involved in the validation arrangement is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.
- 11.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.



## 12. Franchise arrangements

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- 12.1 A franchise arrangement is one whereby the University allows the whole or part of one or more of its own courses to be delivered and assessed at a partner institution, leading to an award of the University of Suffolk. The curriculum content of a franchised course is developed and owned by the University, and franchise students will be assessed through the auspices of the relevant University of Suffolk Assessment Board. The University of Suffolk remains ultimately responsible for the quality of the student learning experience and for the academic standards of the award(s).
- 12.2 Under a franchise arrangement, the University of Suffolk will normally have direct contractual responsibility to the student. Students are registered with the University and are subject to its academic regulations, policies and procedures, including those relating to complaints and academic appeals. The partner institution is responsible for the delivery of the franchised course, learning resources and student support, subject to the University's overall responsibility for the quality of the student learning experience and the academic standard of the award. Careful consideration must be given to the University of Suffolk resources that students are able to access, and this must be detailed within the agreement.
- 12.3 The emphasis of the approval process is to ensure that the partner institution is able to effectively deliver franchised provision and provide students with a high quality learning experience which enables them to reach an academic standard equivalent to that at the University.
- 12.4 All prospective new franchise arrangements need to go through an initial screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the proposed partnership is worthy of further, more detailed scrutiny. Approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny leads to the development of a full proposal and an institutional approval event (Stage 2). Following final approval of the partnership arrangement at institutional level, approval of the partner to deliver individual franchised courses can commence (Stage 3). Institutional and course level approval may be combined when the franchise arrangement is confined to a small number of courses.

### Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny

- 12.5 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the [franchise agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted, sequentially, to:
- the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - the Senate for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 12.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:

- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new partnership in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
- b) the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, has a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
- c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution are consistent with those of the University
- d) the proposed partner institution has experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or has demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
- e) the proposed partner institution has an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
- f) the proposed partner institution has the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
- g) the proposed partner institution is financially stable and does not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University, with due diligence activity to include consideration of the registered status, ownership and financing of the organisation (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
- h) the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
- i) the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
- j) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution.

12.7 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the proposed partner institution to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.

12.8 Approval of the franchise agreement proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate signals permission to develop a full proposal, leading to final approval of the partnership arrangement at institutional level (Stage 2).

### Approval process stage 2: institutional approval

- 12.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at institutional level. This second stage in the process, involving an institutional approval event, ultimately leads to the approval of the partnership arrangement by Senate. This paves the way for the approval of the partner's ability to delivered individual franchised courses (Stage 3).
- 12.10 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 12.6), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:
- a) both the University and the proposed partner institution have arrangements in place to ensure that students on franchised courses will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and academic standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
  - b) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the awards (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
  - c) the partner institution has a sound understanding of relevant University of Suffolk regulations, policies and procedures
  - d) the legal and contractual relationship of students with the University and the partner institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
  - e) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement
  - f) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the partnership arrangement.
- 12.11 An institutional approval event will be held to consider the proposed partnership, usually taking place at the proposed partner institution over a full day. An approval panel will be appointed on behalf of the Quality Committee to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
  - one external academic (external to the University and its partner institutions) with experience of managing collaborative provision (where possible from the same discipline area as the proposed franchised provision)
  - at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from the same discipline area as the proposed franchised provision)
  - Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
  - Quality team representative
  - Learning Services representative
  - Students' Union representative.

12.12 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

12.13 The relevant University academic school(s) and the proposed partner institution should compile a partnership proposal document and supporting evidence for consideration by the panel, in consultation with relevant academic and professional services departments within the University. This should provide an evaluative commentary on the extent to which the proposed partnership meets the criteria for approval (see paragraphs 12.6 and 12.10 above) and should outline proposed arrangements for the strategic and operational management of the partnership by both parties. The document should cover:

- a) introductory information on the partner institution (including mission and educational objectives; current HE portfolio and student numbers by course; student profiles; outcomes of relevant external reviews)
- b) HE strategy and plans for portfolio development within the partner institution, and the perceived benefits of the proposed partnership to both parties
- c) organisational structures and key staff who will be involved in managing and supporting the partnership from both institutions
- d) internal HE governance arrangements at the partner institution, and how these will feed into the University's governance structures
- e) mechanisms for the appointment, induction, appraisal and professional development of academic staff (including any peer review schemes in operation within the institution)
- f) entry criteria for HE programmes and information on recruitment and admissions processes (including arrangements for induction and for supporting the transition to HE)
- g) the intended legal and contractual relationship of students with the University and the partner institution, and associated registration status and student entitlements (and how this will be communicated to students)
- h) learning, teaching and assessment strategy, and associated policies and procedures that will apply to partnership provision (including arrangements for conduct and invigilation of examinations; arrangements for the submission of student work; arrangements for internal and external moderation of assessment; and mechanisms for providing feedback to students on assessed work)
- i) mechanisms for ensuring academic oversight of provision, including University academic link tutor arrangements
- j) teaching and learning accommodation
- k) library and IT provision (including use of any online learning environments)
- l) social facilities for students
- m) other specialist facilities and/or resources (where relevant)

- n) arrangements for securing employer engagement in course development and/or delivery
- o) arrangements for managing work-based learning opportunities (where relevant)
- p) student support mechanisms (e.g. tutorial support, academic skills development, welfare, counselling, careers guidance, specialist support for students with disabilities, advice on accommodation, student finances)
- q) arrangements for monitoring student retention, progression, achievement and graduate destinations (and relevant data showing performance in this regard)
- r) arrangements for dealing with student complaints, academic appeals and disciplinary matters (including relevant policies and procedures to be used for the partnership arrangement)
- s) student representation and feedback mechanisms at module, course and institutional level (including relevant data showing student satisfaction levels)
- t) internal arrangements within the partner institution for monitoring and review of the quality and academic standard of HE provision (including evidence of recent outputs, such as annual monitoring reports and external examiner reports)
- u) arrangements for ensuring that published information is complete, accurate and up-to-date, in accordance with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance where relevant
- v) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).

12.14 The documentation should be submitted to the University in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the approval event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation (including the partnership proposal document and associated evidence) is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.

12.15 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally undertake discussions with relevant members of staff and students of the proposed partner institution and relevant University staff involved in overseeing and supporting the partnership arrangement. They will also view facilities and resources, including a tour of any online learning environments. Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the approval documentation.

12.16 Under the delegated authority of Senate, the panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the proposed partner institution to effectively deliver franchised provision and the suitability of arrangements for collectively managing the partnership arrangement, leading to a decision on whether to approve the proposed franchise arrangement for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or whether to reject the proposal. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the panel's discussions and conclusions and

specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved at institutional level.

- 12.17 The report will be submitted to Senate (via the Quality Committee) for information.
- 12.18 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the institutional approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.
- 12.19 Further guidance on the institutional approval process and the conduct of the institutional approval event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

*Approval process stage 3: course approval*

- 12.20 Once institutional approval has been secured, each course (or group of courses) to be offered by the partner institution under the franchise arrangement is subject to an approval process to ensure that arrangements for course delivery, staffing, resources, student support and course management at the partner institution are appropriate. It is assumed that curriculum content has already been approved for internal delivery at the University of Suffolk as part of standard University procedures for the validation of courses, but where this is not the case this may be incorporated into the approval process.
- 12.21 The course level approval process is conducted in accordance with the University of Suffolk [Procedure for the validation of new courses at partner institutions](#), with a particular focus on ensuring that the partner institution has the capacity to effectively deliver the University course as part of a franchise arrangement.
- 12.22 The documentation compiled by the course team at the partner institution in conjunction with the relevant University academic school(s) should include:
- a) existing definitive course record for the course to be franchised and associated module specifications, adapted where necessary for the partnership arrangement
  - b) localised student course handbook
  - c) recruitment and admissions information including target markets and estimated student numbers
  - d) arrangements for the approval of publicity material
  - e) arrangements for selection and admission of students to the franchised programme (including academic and English language entry requirements)
  - f) partner institution's learning, teaching and assessment strategy
  - g) information on staffing (including staff CVs and evidence of appropriate technical and administrative support)

- h) teaching and learning accommodation for the franchised course(s)
- i) library and IT provision for the franchised course(s)
- j) other specialist resources (where relevant)
- k) arrangements for tutorial support
- l) mechanisms for providing feedback to students on assessed work
- m) arrangements for monitoring student retention, progression and achievement
- n) arrangements for moderating, recording and sharing marks with the University
- o) Assessment Board arrangements and arrangements for publishing results
- p) arrangements for the production of certificates and transcripts
- q) student representation and feedback mechanisms at module/course level
- r) arrangements for management of the course at the partner institution and liaison with the University (including frequency of visits by academic staff from the University to the partner institution)
- s) arrangements for ongoing monitoring and review of quality and academic standards.

#### Approval of the franchise agreement

12.23 Following confirmation of institutional level approval, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of both parties. The agreement must include an appropriate exit strategy in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.

12.24 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The agreement should then be forwarded to the partner institution for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring and review of the franchise arrangement

12.25 Partnership arrangements involving franchised provision are subject to the following monitoring and review mechanisms, as outlined in the [Quality Manual](#) and adapted where necessary to suit the individual partnership arrangement:

- institutional review (usually on a maximum of a five year cycle)
- course re-approval (franchised provision at the partner institution is normally incorporated into the re-approval of the University course)

- quality monitoring processes, including production of an annual monitoring report (AMR) for each course or cognate group of courses
- the external examining system (normally, an external examiner is appointed with responsibility for overseeing the course at all sites of delivery, with an agreed sample of student work provided for external moderation by the partner institution concerned; the external examiner should normally visit the partner institution at least once during the term of their appointment)
- student feedback mechanisms.

12.26 Changes to courses within the University that are also franchised to partner institutions should be discussed and agreed with staff from the partner institution prior to seeking approval in accordance with the University's [Procedure for the approval of changes to existing courses](#).

12.27 Link Tutor(s) are appointed from within the relevant University academic school to oversee and support the franchise arrangement from an academic perspective. Link Tutors work closely with relevant University academic and professional services teams to ensure that the partnership is effectively managed in accordance with internal and external requirements, and that any associated risks are mitigated. They play a key role in ensuring that the partner upholds the University's expectations in terms of quality and academic standards.

12.28 The appointment of any new partner staff to be involved in course delivery and/or assessment for franchised provision is subject to approval by the University through the submission of a CV to the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships.

12.29 Strategic management of the partnership is normally facilitated through a joint Partnership Management Group or equivalent, including representation from both institutions and reporting annually (or more regularly as required) to the Portfolio Oversight Committee. Sub-groups may be established to deal with operational management of the partnership.

12.30 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that partner institution(s) continue to have the capacity to fulfil their designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 12.6 and 12.10 above.

#### Termination or expiry of a franchise agreement

12.31 The franchise agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students involved in the franchise arrangement is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.

12.32 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.



### 13. Dual or multiple awards

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- 13.1 Under a dual or multiple award arrangement, the University of Suffolk and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to separate awards of both, or all, of the institutions. Such arrangements usually involve recognition of credit from the elements of the course delivered at the partner institution(s), with students required to fulfil the requirements of all degree awarding bodies in order to be eligible for the award. The University of Suffolk is individually responsible for the quality and academic standard of the award made in its name.
- 13.2 The development of dual or multiple awards should only be considered where degree awarding powers at the relevant level are held by all partner institutions. The awards should be based on the same assessed student work, and the title of the awards should be the same (unless there are any national constraints verified by the University as part of the approval process).
- 13.3 The quality and academic standard of the awards should meet the University of Suffolk's expectations in relation to relevant UK reference points (for example the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications and relevant subject benchmark statements), irrespective of the expectations of the partner institution(s). The QAA's [Characteristics Statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body](#) (February 2020) should also be consulted.
- 13.4 All prospective new dual or multiple awards need to go through an initial screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the proposed partnership arrangement and associated course is worthy of further, more detailed scrutiny. Approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny leads to the development of a full proposal and a formal approval event for the dual or multiple award (Stage 2).

#### Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny

- 13.5 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the [dual or multiple award proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted, sequentially, to:
- i) the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - ii) the Senate for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 13.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new dual or multiple award in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)

- b) the proposed partner institution(s) are of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, have a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions
  - c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution(s) are consistent with those of the University
  - d) the proposed partner institution(s) have experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or have demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
  - e) the proposed partner institution(s) have an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
  - f) the proposed partner institution(s) provide a safe working environment for students
  - g) the proposed partner institution(s) have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
  - h) the proposed partner institution(s) are financially stable and do not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
  - i) the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
  - j) the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University or its students
  - k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution(s).
- 13.7 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the partner institution(s) to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.
- 13.8 Approval of the dual or multiple award proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate signals permission to develop a full proposal, leading to final approval of partnership and the associated dual or multiple award (Stage 2).

Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and dual / multiple award

- 13.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated dual or multiple award.
- 13.10 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 13.6), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:
- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns with relevant UK reference points (including the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements)
  - b) the proposed partner institution(s) have arrangements in place to ensure that students on the course leading to the dual or multiple award will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate and consistent quality and standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
  - c) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution(s) is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the awards (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
  - d) the regulations, policies and procedures governing the delivery of the course are appropriate (within the context of relevant UK reference points); meet the requirements of each partner; and are clearly communicated to students
  - e) the legal and contractual relationship of students with each institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
  - f) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement
  - g) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the dual or multiple award.
- 13.11 An approval event will be held to consider the proposed partnership and the associated dual or multiple award, usually taking place over a full day. An approval panel will be appointed on behalf of the Quality Committee to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
  - one external academic subject expert (selected by the University in liaison with the relevant academic school)
  - at least one employer representative (nominated by, but not closely associated with, the course team)
  - at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area outside the relevant academic school)

- one member of senior staff from each partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed dual or multiple award)
- Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- Quality team representative
- Learning Services representative
- Students' Union representative.

13.12 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

13.13 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed partner institution(s), should compile the following documentation for consideration by the panel as part of the approval event:

- a) information on the proposed partner institution(s), including evidence of credibility as an academic partner, legal status and capacity to enter into the proposed partnership arrangements
- b) for international collaborations, information on the legal, financial and cultural environment (particularly in relation to quality and standards and language issues) from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country (e.g. the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
- c) information on the proposed new course leading to the dual or multiple award (covering the elements of the course to be delivered at all partner institutions and presented in accordance with the documentation requirements for a standard University of Suffolk course validation event, i.e. to include a course validation document, student course handbook, mapping of course and module learning outcomes, staff CVs and HEAR descriptions for each award presented for approval)
- d) arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of all published information associated with the dual or multiple award, including ensuring clarity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner institution
- e) the admissions criteria for the dual/multiple award, and arrangements for managing the admissions and enrolment process (including the intended legal and contractual relationship of students with each partner institution, and associated registration status and student entitlements)
- f) assessment regulations, policies and procedures for the dual/multiple award, taking into consideration the requirements and expectations of each institution and ensuring consistency of approach in terms of the maintenance of academic standards
- g) resourcing, including physical, IT and learning resources, at each institution
- h) student support and guidance mechanisms at each institution, including arrangements for induction and ongoing academic and pastoral support

- i) information on how student complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters will be dealt with across all institutions (including copies of relevant policies and procedures)
  - j) staffing policies and criteria for the appointment of academic staff at the partner institution
  - k) arrangements for course management and administration (including arrangements for the maintenance of student records and monitoring student progression and achievement)
  - l) arrangements for ongoing quality monitoring and enhancement (including arrangements for student representation and feedback and for the appointment of an external examiner)
  - m) arrangements for the production of transcripts and certificates and for graduation ceremonies (transcripts and certificates should clearly state that the course is taught collaboratively to avoid graduates double-counting credit awarded)
  - n) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).
- 13.14 The documentation should be submitted in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the approval event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.
- 13.15 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally view facilities and resources and undertake discussions with the proposed course team, including relevant staff at the partner institution(s). Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution(s) by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the approval documentation.
- 13.16 Under the delegated authority of Senate, the panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the University and the proposed partner institution(s) to effectively deliver the proposed course leading to dual or multiple awards, and decide whether to approve the proposed partnership arrangement and dual or multiple award for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or whether to reject the proposal. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the panel's discussions and conclusions and specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved at institutional level and the course leading to the dual or multiple award can commence.
- 13.17 The report will be submitted to Senate, via the Quality Committee, for information
- 13.18 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be

arranged at the time of the approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.

- 13.19 Further guidance on the approval process and the conduct of the approval event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

*Approval of the underpinning legal agreement*

- 13.20 Following confirmation of approval of the dual or multiple award, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of all parties. The agreement must include an appropriate exit strategy in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.
- 13.21 The final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be forwarded to the partner institution(s) for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement should be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

*Ongoing monitoring and review of the dual or multiple award*

- 13.22 A member of University academic staff should be nominated to oversee the partnership arrangement and the associated dual or multiple award, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution(s), approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to students as they transfer between institutions.
- 13.23 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Quality Committee as required. This should include monitoring the progress and experience of students, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by any institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.
- 13.24 An external examiner should be appointed to oversee the quality of the course, in accordance with the University's standard external examiner policies and procedures. The course will be subject to re-approval on a maximum of a five year cycle, in accordance with the standard University of Suffolk *Procedure for the re-approval of existing courses*, adapted as necessary to suit the partnership arrangement.
- 13.25 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to

ensure that partner institution(s) continue to have the capacity to fulfil their designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 13.6 and 13.10 above.

*Termination or expiry of a dual / multiple award agreement*

- 13.26 The agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the experience of students enrolled on the dual or multiple award is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.
- 13.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 14. Joint awards

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- 14.1 Under a joint award arrangement, the University of Suffolk and one or more other awarding institution(s) together provide a course leading to a joint award of both, or all, of the institutions. Such arrangements usually involve recognition of credit from the elements of the course delivered at the partner institution(s). While institutions should agree a mutually satisfactory approach to the management of quality and academic standards, each institution remains individually responsible for the quality and academic standard of the joint award.
- 14.2 The development of a joint award should only be considered where degree awarding powers at the relevant level are held by all partner institutions and the proposed partner institution(s) have the necessary legal powers to award a joint degree.
- 14.3 The quality and academic standard of the award should meet the University of Suffolk's expectations in relation to relevant UK reference points (for example the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications and relevant subject benchmark statements), irrespective of the expectations of the partner institution(s). The QAA's [Characteristics Statement for qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body](#) (February 2020) should also be consulted.
- 14.4 All prospective new joint awards need to go through an initial screening process (Stage 1) to determine whether the partnership arrangement and the proposed new joint award is worthy of further, more detailed scrutiny. Approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny leads to the development of a full proposal and a formal approval event for the joint award (Stage 2).

### Approval process stage 1: initial approval to proceed to detailed scrutiny

- 14.5 In order to seek initial approval to proceed to more detailed scrutiny, the [joint award proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted, sequentially, to:
- the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval to proceed from a strategic, financial and legal perspective
  - the Senate for approval to proceed from an academic perspective.
- 14.6 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new joint award in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - b) the proposed partner institution(s) are of an appropriate academic standing and, where relevant, have a sound track record of partnership with other higher education institutions



- c) the mission and educational objectives of the proposed partner institution(s) are consistent with those of the University
  - d) the proposed partner institution(s) have experience of delivering comparable programmes at a similar level (or have demonstrable capacity to deliver programmes at that level)
  - e) the proposed partner institution(s) have an understanding of the UK higher education sector (and its culture and ethos) and the capacity to meet associated quality assurance and enhancement requirements
  - f) the proposed partner institution(s) provide a safe working environment for students
  - g) the proposed partner institution(s) have the legal capacity to enter into a contract with the University and, for international partnerships, in-country recognition requirements have been investigated and, where relevant, met (or there is a clear action plan in place to achieve required recognition)
  - h) the proposed partner institution(s) are financially stable and do not have any business and/or ethical interests or links that might pose a reputational risk to the University (the Director of Finance and Planning or nominee should be involved in the review of financial due diligence information)
  - i) the proposed arrangement does not conflict with any existing partnership arrangements
  - j) the proposed arrangement does not present undue risks to the University
  - k) the arrangement is fully supported by senior staff from both the University and the proposed partner institution(s).
- 14.7 To inform this due diligence process, relevant University staff should make one or more visits to the partner institution(s) to view facilities and resources and meet with staff and students.
- 14.8 Approval of the joint award proposal form by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate signals permission to develop a full proposal, leading to final approval of partnership and the associated joint award (Stage 2).

*Approval process stage 2: approval of the partnership and joint award*

- 14.9 Once initial approval to proceed has been granted by the Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate, a more detailed evaluation of the academic and quality assurance aspects of the proposal is undertaken at both institutional and course level. This second stage in the process, involving an approval event, ultimately leads to the approval by Senate of the partnership arrangement and the associated joint award.
- 14.10 In addition to reaffirming the due diligence outcomes considered at Stage 1 (see paragraph 14.6), the Stage 2 approval process is designed to ensure that:

- a) the programme of study as a whole provides a coherent, high quality learning experience for students that aligns with relevant UK reference points (including the FHEQ and relevant subject benchmark statements)
- b) the proposed partner institution(s) have arrangements in place to ensure that students on the course leading to the joint award will be provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate and consistent quality and academic standard, as well as adequate academic and pastoral support and guidance
- c) the learning infrastructure at the partner institution(s) is appropriate to support the needs of students and meet the requirements of the award (including physical resources, learning resources and staffing arrangements)
- d) the regulations, policies and procedures governing the delivery of the course are appropriate (within the context of relevant UK reference points); meet the requirements of each partner; and are clearly communicated to students
- e) the legal and contractual relationship of students with each institution, and associated student entitlements, are appropriate and clearly communicated
- f) appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the partnership arrangement
- g) appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the joint award.

14.11 An approval event will be held to consider the proposed partnership and the associated joint award, usually taking place over a full day. An approval panel will be appointed on behalf of the Quality Committee to consider the proposal and will typically comprise:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
- one external academic subject expert (selected by the University in liaison with the relevant academic school)
- at least one employer representative (nominated by, but not closely associated with, the course team)
- at least one member of University of Suffolk academic staff (where possible from a cognate discipline area outside the relevant academic school)
- one member of senior staff from each partner institution (with no direct responsibility for the proposed joint award)
- Centre for Academic and International Partnerships representative
- Quality team representative
- Learning Services representative
- Students' Union representative.

14.12 The panel will be serviced by a senior University administrator.

14.13 The relevant academic school at the University of Suffolk, in liaison with the proposed partner institution(s), should compile the following documentation for consideration by the panel as part of the approval event:

- a) information on the proposed partner institution(s), including evidence of credibility as an academic partner, legal status and capacity to enter into the proposed partnership arrangements
- b) for international collaborations, information on the legal, financial and cultural environment (particularly in relation to quality and standards and language issues) from relevant national government offices and agencies and UK bodies with a presence in the country (e.g. the British Council, UK NARIC and UK government offices)
- c) information on the proposed new course leading to the joint award (covering the elements of the course to be delivered at all partner institutions and presented in accordance with the documentation requirements for a standard University of Suffolk course validation event, i.e. to include a course validation document, student course handbook, mapping of course and module learning outcomes, staff CVs and HEAR descriptions for each award presented for approval)
- d) arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of all published information associated with the joint award, including ensuring clarity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner institution
- e) the admissions criteria for the joint award, and arrangements for managing the admissions and enrolment process (including the intended legal and contractual relationship of students with each partner institution, and associated registration status and student entitlements)
- f) assessment regulations, policies and procedures for the joint award, taking into consideration the requirements and expectations of each institution and ensuring consistency of approach in terms of the maintenance of academic standards
- g) resourcing, including physical, IT and learning resources, at each institution
- h) student support and guidance mechanisms at each institution, including arrangements for induction and ongoing academic and pastoral support
- i) information on how student complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters will be dealt with across all institutions
- j) staffing policies and criteria for the appointment of academic staff at the partner institution
- k) arrangements for course management and administration (including arrangements for the maintenance of student records and monitoring student progression and achievement)

- l) arrangements for ongoing quality monitoring and enhancement (including arrangements for student representation and feedback and for the appointment of an external examiner)
  - m) arrangements for the production of transcripts and certificates and for graduation ceremonies (transcripts and certificates should clearly state that the course is taught collaboratively)
  - n) arrangements for ensuring continuity of study in the event of termination of the partnership, including a Student Protection Plan developed in conjunction with the University which reflects relevant guidance from the Office for Students (OfS).
- 14.14 The documentation should be submitted in an agreed electronic format at least four weeks in advance of the approval event. A briefing pack containing relevant documentation is sent to panel members at least three weeks in advance of the event.
- 14.15 It is the duty of the panel to critically examine the proposal, and they will normally view facilities and resources and undertake discussions with the proposed course team, including relevant staff at the partner institution(s). Where the approval panel meets at the University of Suffolk, this needs to be backed up by a site visit to the partner institution(s) by a subset of the panel, with a report on the visit forming part of the approval documentation.
- 14.16 Under the delegated authority of Senate, the panel should make a collective judgement regarding the ability of the University and the proposed partner institution(s) to effectively deliver the proposed course leading to the joint award, and decide whether to approve the proposed partnership arrangement and joint award for the recommended period of time (normally five years) either conditionally or unconditionally, or whether to reject the proposal. The outcome will be recorded in a report which will summarise the panel's discussions and conclusions and specify any conditions and/or recommendations that are to be met or responded to by agreed deadlines before the partnership is approved at institutional level and the course leading to the joint award can commence.
- 14.17 The report will be submitted to Senate, via the Quality Committee, for information.
- 14.18 The response to conditions and/or recommendations is normally approved by the panel Chair, acting under the delegated authority of Senate and drawing on the advice of other panel members as appropriate. Exceptionally, a conditions meeting will be arranged at the time of the approval event to ensure that all conditions have been met and that recommendations have been considered, with membership as agreed by the panel Chair.
- 14.19 Further guidance on the approval process and the conduct of the approval event is available in the [Quality Manual](#) on the University website.

### Approval of the underpinning legal agreement

- 14.20 Following confirmation of approval of the joint award, a formal collaboration agreement must be drawn up which sets out the rights and obligations of all parties. The agreement must include an appropriate exit strategy in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement, in accordance with the agreed Student Protection Plan. The agreement should be drafted by the Centre for Academic and International Partnerships in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional services departments, drawing on advice from the University's solicitors.
- 14.21 A final draft of the agreement should be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and signature by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. It should then be forwarded to the partner institution(s) for signature. The original signed copy of the agreement will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership link will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

### Ongoing monitoring and review of the joint award

- 14.22 A member of University academic staff should be nominated to oversee the partnership arrangement and the associated joint award, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution(s), approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to students as they transfer between institutions.
- 14.23 The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, feeding into course and school level quality monitoring processes and providing updates to the Quality Committee as required. This should include monitoring the progress and experience of students, and ensuring that any curriculum changes made by any institution do not have a negative impact on the continuing alignment of provision.
- 14.24 An external examiner should also be appointed to oversee the quality of the course, in accordance with the University's standard external examiner policies and procedures. The course will be subject to re-approval on a maximum of a five year cycle, in accordance with the standard University of Suffolk *Procedure for the re-approval of existing courses*, adapted as necessary to suit the partnership arrangement.
- 14.25 Collaboration agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that partner institution(s) continue to have the capacity to fulfil their designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraphs 14.6 and 14.10 above.

### Termination or expiry of a joint award agreement

- 14.26 The agreement must include clauses relating to grounds for termination of the agreement and an appropriate exit strategy that ensures that the quality of the

experience of students enrolled on the joint award is not compromised in the event of the termination or expiry of the agreement.

- 14.27 Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## 15. Exchange agreements and study abroad (including Turing Scheme)

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- 15.1 Exchange arrangements include student and staff exchanges and student mobility programmes under the Turing Scheme. Under such arrangements, individual students studying specified University of Suffolk courses can accrue a maximum of 120 credits at international partner institutions and reciprocal arrangements for partner institution students to study at the University of Suffolk are also in place. For out-going students under such an arrangement, the University of Suffolk agrees to recognise and grant credit for those modules undertaken at the partner institution.
- 15.2 Under an exchange arrangement, the University of Suffolk is responsible for ensuring that the academic standards set and achieved by students at the partner institution are equivalent to those set and achieved by internal students at the same stage of their studies.
- 15.3 Criteria that should be considered in negotiating an exchange agreement include:
- a) the size and type of institution and its academic standing
  - b) projected student demand in both directions
  - c) the quality and academic standard of relevant HE provision
  - d) language of delivery and assessment at the partner institution
  - e) location
  - f) student security
  - g) curriculum alignment
  - h) the reliability of the partner's administrative procedures

### Approval of the proposed exchange arrangement

- 15.4 In order to seek approval for a new exchange arrangement, the [exchange agreement proposal form](#) (available on the University website) should be completed and submitted to the Portfolio Oversight Committee for approval, via the Exchange Agreement sub-group.
- 15.5 The form should summarise due diligence activity outcomes (with supporting evidence), in order to demonstrate the following:
- a) that there is a good strategic case to support the development of the proposed new exchange agreement in line with institutional and/or school objectives (including endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning)
  - b) that the proposed partner institution is of an appropriate academic standing and that students at the partner institution are provided with teaching and learning opportunities of an appropriate quality and academic standard
  - c) that the proposed partner institution has appropriate staffing, facilities and resources to support programme delivery in the relevant subject area(s)

- d) that arrangements for student support and guidance at the partner institution are appropriate
- e) that adequate student accommodation is available for students
- f) that the proposed exchange agreement does not present undue risks to the University or its students (including analysis of the stability of the region and student security both on and off campus)
- g) that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage, oversee and support the exchange agreement (including arrangements for credit transfer and, where relevant, mark conversion)
- h) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the accuracy of all published information associated with the exchange agreement.

#### Approval of the exchange agreement

- 15.6 Once the proposal form has been approved by the Portfolio Oversight Committee Exchange Agreement sub-group, negotiations with the proposed partner institution concerning the exchange agreement can be completed. Schools should liaise with the Study Abroad Adviser regarding agreement templates.
- 15.7 The agreement should be submitted to the Study Abroad Adviser, who will finalise it in consultation with relevant academic schools and professional support departments. The agreement should be signed by the Vice-Chancellor or other authorised signatory. The Study Abroad Adviser will arrange for the agreement to be signed by the legal representative of the partner institution, and the final signed version will be maintained within a central University repository. The partnership will be added to the Partnerships Register, which is provided at least annually to Senate for information.

#### Ongoing monitoring of exchange agreements

- 15.8 A member of University staff should be nominated to oversee the implementation of the exchange agreement, with responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, approving relevant publicity material (in liaison with External Relations) and providing support and guidance to students involved in the exchange. The nominated contact should also be responsible for reviewing the arrangement on an annual basis, providing updates to the Portfolio Oversight Committee as required.
- 15.9 The operation of the exchange agreement should feed into the University's quality monitoring processes at course and school level. This includes making provision for gaining student feedback on their learning experiences while on exchange, to inform enhancement activity.
- 15.10 Exchange agreements are normally subject to review and renewal on a maximum of a five year cycle. Due diligence activities should be revisited as part of this process to ensure that the partner institution continues to have the capacity to fulfil its designated responsibilities and meet the criteria outlined in paragraph 15.5 above.



Termination or expiry of an exchange agreement

- 15.11 If either institution wishes to withdraw from the exchange agreement, arrangements should be put in place to ensure any students currently taking part in the exchange are able to complete their studies and, where relevant, be awarded the associated credit.
- 15.12 The annual review of the arrangement should seek to determine whether the agreement continues to function and whether there is commitment from both sides to continue to pursue the objectives. Where arrangements are inactive or defunct, both sides should formally withdraw from the agreement and the Partnerships Register should be updated accordingly.

## Appendix A: Summary of the approval processes for different types of partnership

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	Progression and articulation arrangements	Delivery of University modules at a partner institution	Delivery of a University course under a flying faculty model in partnership with others	Co-delivery of a course with a professional organisation	Validation arrangements	Franchise arrangements	Dual, multiple or joint awards	Exchange arrangements (including study abroad)
Portfolio Oversight Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)	<p><i>For arrangements not involving recognition of credit:</i> approval of proposal form by relevant senior staff</p> <p><i>For arrangements involving recognition of credit:</i> Quality Committee approval of proposal form</p> <p><i>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</i></p>	<p>Quality Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)</p> <p><i>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</i></p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Quality Committee approval of flying faculty partnership proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and financial arrangements)</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Quality Committee approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p><i>Stage 1:</i> Portfolio Oversight Committee and Senate approval of initial proposal form (including due diligence outcomes and costing model)</p>	<p>Portfolio Oversight Committee approval of proposal form (including due diligence outcomes)</p> <p><i>Note: proposal form requires endorsement of any underpinning financial arrangements by the Director of Finance and Planning</i></p>
			<p><i>Stage 2:</i> Course validation event (for new or substantially modified courses) or paper-based approval process informed by site visit (for existing validated courses)</p>	<p><i>Stage 2:</i> Course validation event (including scrutiny of partnership arrangement)</p>	<p><i>Stage 2:</i> Institutional validation event</p> <p><i>Stage 3:</i> Course validation event(s)</p>	<p><i>Stage 2:</i> Institutional approval event</p> <p><i>Stage 3:</i> Course approval event(s)</p>	<p><i>Stage 2:</i> Course approval event (including scrutiny of partnership arrangements)</p>	