



# **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

## **Chapter B10: Management of collaborative arrangements**

**Draft for consultation**

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## About the Quality Code

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers.<sup>1</sup> It makes clear what higher education providers are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of them. The Quality Code covers all four nations of the UK and all providers of UK higher education operating overseas. It protects the interests of all students, regardless of where they are studying or whether they are full-time, part-time, undergraduate or postgraduate students.

Each Chapter contains a single Expectation, which expresses the key principle that the higher education community has identified as essential for the assurance of academic standards and quality within the area covered by the Chapter. Higher education providers reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) are required to meet all the Expectations. The manner in which they do so is their own responsibility. QAA carries out reviews to check whether higher education providers are meeting the Expectations.<sup>2</sup>

Each Chapter has been developed by QAA through an extensive process of consultation with higher education providers; their representative bodies; the National Union of Students; professional, statutory and regulatory bodies; and other interested parties.

Higher education providers are also responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Chapter where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.

The Expectation in each Chapter is accompanied by a series of Indicators that reflect sound practice, and through which providers can demonstrate they are meeting the relevant Expectation. Indicators are not designed to be used as a checklist; they are intended to help providers reflect on and develop their regulations, procedures and practices to demonstrate that the Expectations in the Quality Code are being met. Each Indicator is numbered and printed in bold and is supported by an explanatory note that gives more information about it, together with examples of how the Indicator may be interpreted in practice.

The *General introduction*<sup>3</sup> to the Quality Code should be considered in conjunction with this document. It provides a technical introduction for users, including guidance concerning the terminology used and a quick-reference glossary.

## About this Chapter

This Chapter discusses what is expected of degree-awarding bodies, or other higher education providers, when initiating and managing collaborative activities. Historically, degree-awarding bodies have collaborated with partner organisations but higher education providers who do not have degree-awarding powers may themselves be involved in managing collaborative arrangements with other organisations. For example, Further Education Colleges may be involved in delivering Foundation Degrees which include work-based learning provided through other partner organisations; higher education providers without degree-awarding powers may provide student placements with partner

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-introduction.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Quality-Code-introduction.aspx).

organisations. This Chapter does not address the responsibilities and obligations of any partners (although these will be articulated and overseen by the providers managing the arrangement). Its focus is on the effective management and oversight of the arrangements rather than on the delivery of the learning. The other Chapters of the Quality Code apply to any provision delivered through collaborative arrangements, wherever this takes place, and degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers managing collaborative arrangements, and their partners, are therefore required to meet the Expectations of these Chapters when engaging in collaborative arrangements. Where this Chapter includes Indicators and explanatory text which refer to topics addressed in other chapters (for example, learning and teaching, or assessment) these identify only issues that are specific to the management of collaborative arrangements. The substantive Chapters are the source of definitive guidance on the topics concerned.

This publication supersedes the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice), Section 2: Collaborative Provision and flexible and distributed learning* (amplified version 2010), published by QAA, and forms a Chapter of the Quality Code.

The first edition of *Section 2* of the *Code of Practice* was published in 1999. The second edition was published in 2004 when the definition of collaborative provision was extended from educational provision leading to an award to include specific credit contributing to an award which was delivered, supported or assessed through an arrangement with a partner. An amplified version of the second edition was published in 2010 to demonstrate how the precepts and guidance could be applied to a wider range of contexts, different collaborative models (including work-based learning and employer-responsive provision) and a more diverse range of partners than those which originally informed the development of the second edition.

In the context of the development of the Quality Code and revisions of its constituent Chapters, the focus of this Chapter has now changed. The part of former Section 2 of the Quality Code which related to flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning) has been excised; content which related to teaching and learning is now subsumed within *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* and those aspects which relate to the formal arrangements for collaboration are covered in this Chapter. The introduction of new guidance on teaching and learning (*Chapter B3: Learning and teaching*) and on learning resources and student support (*Chapter B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance*) means that the focus of Chapter B10 is now on the operation and management of collaborative activities rather than the delivery of educational provision through collaboration.

## **Chapter B10: Management of collaborative arrangements**

### **Definition of 'collaborative arrangements'**

In this Chapter of the Quality Code, the term 'collaborative arrangements' denotes educational provision leading or contributing to academic credit or a qualification of a degree-awarding body, delivered, supported, or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation.

### **The scope of collaborative arrangements**

When QAA first published guidance on collaborative provision in 1999, as part of its *Code of Practice*, the majority of collaborative provision tended to involve a body with degree-awarding powers collaborating with another publicly funded education provider or an

overseas education provider as a partner. Typically, the collaborative arrangements were articulation arrangements, placements for professional training, or a validated or franchised relationship for taught programmes.

Contemporary higher education involves a wide range of collaborative partners and arrangements. These have developed as higher education providers have increased their participation in global higher education. Governments have also progressively sought to accommodate new forms of provision and types of provider to widen access, to promote lifelong learning and to increase student employability. Alongside these initiatives, the Bologna Process has facilitated the development of joint programmes within Europe.

As a consequence, many degree-awarding bodies and higher education providers now have much more diverse portfolios of collaborative activities. Partners are now likely to include other awarding bodies, private providers, non-academic providers (or those whose purpose is not primarily education), and employers, alongside publicly-funded education providers who do not have degree-awarding powers. Collaborative arrangements may operate within the UK or transnationally and now include (this is neither an exhaustive nor a mutually exclusive list):

- collaboration on research degree provision
- franchised programmes delivered by non degree-awarding bodies through a variety of models
- validated programmes delivered by non degree-awarding bodies.
- joint, dual/double or multiple awards granted in conjunction with one or more awarding bodies both within and outside the UK
- provision by 'embedded colleges' of study preparatory to higher education or preparatory to master's programmes
- articulation arrangements (whereby all students who satisfy academic criteria on one programme are automatically entitled (on academic grounds) to be admitted with advanced standing to a subsequent part or year of a programme of a degree-awarding body<sup>4</sup>)
- a range of work-based provision that might involve delivering individual modules or elements of programmes for a specific employer, or using the workplace as a site of learning<sup>5</sup>
- credit-rating of learning/training/continuing professional development provided by employers/other organisations
- placements including work-based learning, continuing professional development and experience in the NHS necessary for a Primary Medical Qualification
- study abroad
- collaboration in the provision of learning support, learning resources or facilities
- branch campuses, educational villages and 'flying faculty' arrangements within the UK and internationally, which include aspects of collaboration (such as provision of resources or employment of local administrative/clerical staff through collaboration with a partner)
- collaboration between higher education providers on the delivery of Gaelic and Welsh language provision

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<sup>4</sup> A distinction is drawn here between arrangements which are a form of progression and secure entry to the first year of a higher education programme (which are covered in *Chapter B2: Admissions*) and those which secure admission with advanced standing and which are the proper subject of *Chapter B10: Management of collaborative arrangements*.

<sup>5</sup> QAA (2010), Employer-responsive provision survey. A reflective report, [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/EffectiveProvision.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/EffectiveProvision.pdf)

This spectrum of collaborative activity provides a continuum of opportunities for collaboration in learning and teaching delivery, assessment, learner support and the location of learning. These range from delivery of whole programmes of study to elements of programmes, individual modules, or 'bite-sized chunks' of learning which can be studied on their own. Higher education providers, and sometimes other organisations, collaborate in providing alternative sites or contexts for learning, and/or in providing support, resources or specialist facilities for learning. In parallel, the recruitment of international students to a foundation year or other preparation for entry to higher education now operates in a more regulated environment in terms of UK national legislation. The delivery of transnational education is also subject to complex and fast-changing legislative requirements across different national jurisdictions.

This broadening and growth of collaborative activity can present a range of benefits and opportunities for learners, staff, and employers, such as:

- flexible entry routes and modes of study (such as part-time study while working)
- provision for off-campus working in a range of sites, including the workplace
- curricula that offer learning related to contemporary working practices and the needs of both employers and employees
- continuing professional development including skills development
- opportunities for employer-related engagement and internships
- programmes enriched by the opportunity to study abroad at a range of awarding bodies
- international cooperation
- greater mobility of students and staff
- new forms of teaching delivery
- personal, social, cultural and economic benefits
- sustainability for teaching and learning in Gaelic and Welsh languages.

Doubtless, models of collaboration and the range of partner organisations will continue to expand and to present new challenges. However, there are a number of principles that underpin good practice in all forms of collaborative activity and that inform the Expectation of this Chapter and the Indicators of sound practice.

## **Responsibilities of the degree-awarding body**

The fundamental principle underpinning all collaborative arrangements is that the degree-awarding body has overall responsibility for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities delivered wherever these take place and whoever provides them.

The degree-awarding body is directly responsible for the academic standards of any awards granted in its name (whether these are in the form of academic credit or qualifications), as well as for the accuracy of any transcript or record of achievement summarising these.

Ultimately, the degree-awarding body is also responsible for the quality of learning opportunities provided although aspects of their delivery and quality assurance may be delegated to a partner. Degree-awarding bodies are therefore responsible for ensuring that the Expectations of the Quality Code are met and that its Indicators of sound practice have been considered. However, they ensure that their partners have an explicit understanding both of the Chapters of the Quality Code relevant to the collaboration, and of the respective responsibilities of the degree-awarding body and partner organisation(s) in addressing the relevant Expectations and Indicators of sound practice.

In the case of transnational collaboration with other awarding bodies, there may need to be some accommodation as to how some principles are realised. The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2009) provides a useful reference point for collaboration with partners in Europe who also use these guidelines.<sup>6</sup>

## **Assessment and management of risk**

Whether the opportunities presented by a potential collaborative arrangement are outweighed by the challenges depends on the partner and nature of the activity. Collaboration with a partner organisation inevitably carries risks. Collaborative arrangements that break down can present difficulties for students involved and damage the reputation of participant organisations, as well as that of UK higher education more generally. They can also give rise to high human, financial and legal costs. It is therefore incumbent on degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers to assess the risks involved and manage these appropriately.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers find they need to adopt a risk-based approach to developing and managing collaborative activity where the effort invested is commensurate with the complexity of the proposed collaboration, the nature of the partner organisation, the level of experience of the degree-awarding body and the risks associated with each of these.<sup>7</sup>

## **Proportionate procedures and processes**

Historically, degree-awarding bodies have established detailed procedures for negotiating and managing collaborative provision. In the current context, however, a 'one size fits all' approach to the negotiation, development, approval, and management of collaborative arrangements is neither sufficient nor appropriate. Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers now find it necessary to develop and approve (through the appropriate institutional authorities) a range of different practices and procedures that are tailored and appropriate to the risks of the collaboration involved. In particular, the due diligence enquiries and the formal agreements adopted are proportionate to the volume, complexity, and nature of the collaboration and to the type of partner organisation involved. For example, the procedures which apply to student placements are likely to be less complex than those which apply to validation of programmes at an overseas partner institution.

Equally degree-awarding bodies may be flexible in the design and application of internal quality assurance processes in order to ensure that they are appropriate to the different timescales and contexts within which they may need to operate. This can be achieved without undermining the broad principles that underpin the assurance of academic standards and quality.<sup>8</sup>

This Chapter does not prescribe any particular form of due diligence or formal agreement, nor can it provide detailed guidance on how to negotiate and manage the development of partnerships. However, it does address the most important factors that need to be considered in collaborative arrangements and signposts a range of advice and guidance.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.enqa.eu/pubs\\_esg.lasso](http://www.enqa.eu/pubs_esg.lasso)

<sup>7</sup> See *Employer-responsive provision survey: A reflective report*, paragraphs 28-37.

<sup>8</sup> See *Employer-responsive provision survey: A reflective report*, paragraphs 28-30 and 35-37.

#### Further information and additional references:

- The International Unit (2012), *International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities 2012*, [www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx](http://www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx)
  - UNESCO/OECD (2005), *Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*, [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=29228&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29228&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)
  - UNESCO/COUNCIL OF EUROPE *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education* (2007)
  - European University Association (2004), *Developing Joint Masters Programmes for Europe*, [www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Joint\\_Masters\\_report.1087219975578.pdf](http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Joint_Masters_report.1087219975578.pdf)
  - European University Association (2007), *Guidelines for Quality Enhancement in European Joint Master Programmes*, [www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/EMNEM\\_report.1147364824803.pdf](http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/EMNEM_report.1147364824803.pdf)
  - ENQA (2009), *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, [www.enqa.eu/files/ESG\\_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf)
  - *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher education in the European region*, Lisbon (1997)
  - The Committee of the Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, *Recommendation the Recognition of Joint Degrees*, Strasbourg (2004)
  - JOIMAN (Joint Degree Management and Administration Network), *How to Manage Joint Study Programmes? Guidelines and Good Practices from the JOIMAN Network*, [https://www.joiman.eu/ProjectResults/PublicDeliverables/How%20to%20Manage%20Joint%20Study%20Programmes%20-%20Final%20Publication%20of%20the%20project/How%20to%20Manage%20Joint%20Study%20Programmes\\_JOIMAN%20Network.pdf](https://www.joiman.eu/ProjectResults/PublicDeliverables/How%20to%20Manage%20Joint%20Study%20Programmes%20-%20Final%20Publication%20of%20the%20project/How%20to%20Manage%20Joint%20Study%20Programmes_JOIMAN%20Network.pdf)
  - UUK (2010), *The Growth of private and for-profit higher education providers in the UK*, [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/PrivateProvidersmar10.pdf](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/PrivateProvidersmar10.pdf)
  - Council of Validating Universities (2005), *CVU Handbook for Practitioner. The Quality Management of Collaborative Provision*.
- Examples for employer-body guidelines concerning work-based and experiential learning:
- CIPR (2010), *Work Placement charter*, [www.cipr.co.uk/sites/default/files/10%20Dec%2014%20WPC\\_0.pdf](http://www.cipr.co.uk/sites/default/files/10%20Dec%2014%20WPC_0.pdf)
  - Skillset (2010), *Guidelines for Employers offering Work Placement Schemes in the Creative Industries*, [www.creativeskillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset\\_14734.pdf?1](http://www.creativeskillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset_14734.pdf?1)
  - BECTU (2009), *Work Experience Guidelines*, [www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources/library/115](http://www.bectu.org.uk/advice-resources/library/115)

- LANTRA (2010), Guidance for employers: Getting involved in work experience and work-related learning, [www.lantra.co.uk/Downloads/Standards-qualifications/Guidance/Guidance-for-employers---work-experience-\(Feb-2010\).aspx](http://www.lantra.co.uk/Downloads/Standards-qualifications/Guidance/Guidance-for-employers---work-experience-(Feb-2010).aspx)

## Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about the management of collaborative arrangements, which degree-awarding bodies and higher education providers are required to meet.

**Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers implement and manage collaborative arrangements effectively. Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities delivered irrespective of where these take place or who provides them.**

Note:

As indicated in 'About this Chapter', this Chapter provides guidance on what is expected of degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers that manage collaborative arrangements and does not address what is expected of partner organisations. In both the Expectation and the subsequent Indicators, a distinction is drawn between responsibilities of degree-awarding bodies and those of higher education providers who may not have degree-awarding powers. All higher education providers (with or without degree-awarding powers) are required to meet the first part of the Expectation and are identified as having a role in some Indicators of sound practice. However, some responsibilities are reserved for degree-awarding bodies, and these are explicitly identified in the Expectation and relevant Indicators below. In all cases, the term 'higher education providers' is used to refer to providers without degree-awarding powers in the role of managing their own collaborative arrangements rather than their role as partners with degree-awarding bodies. The term 'partner' or 'partner organisation' is used throughout this Chapter to denote a partner that is not managing or leading the collaboration.

# Indicators of sound practice

## Strategy and governance

### Indicator 1

**Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers adopt a strategic approach to collaborative activity and are clear about its fit with their missions, academic portfolios and corporate plans.**

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers that manage collaborative arrangements determine their institutional strategy for collaborative activity and how it can be sustained. Collaborative arrangements are considered and purposeful, and their role in delivering the mission, academic portfolio and corporate plan of higher education providers is clear. Collaborative arrangements derive from a considered strategic approach, rather than responses to individual initiatives, in order to secure institutional commitment and to facilitate the planned allocation of appropriate resources to support and oversee them.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers ensure that they have appropriate staff capacity for, and can commit the necessary resources (at central and local levels) to, the initial investigation, negotiation, approval, development and sustained oversight of collaborative arrangements. As portfolios of collaborative activity may be both wide-ranging and complex, this involves expertise in the assurance of quality and standards, the necessary financial, legal and management skills, as well as the relevant academic and cultural knowledge and experience. The larger the number of partners, the more varied the type of activity, and the further the distance from the higher education provider, the greater the oversight and administrative capacity required.

### Further information and additional references

- The International Unit (2012), *International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities 2012*, [www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx](http://www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx)
- ENQA (2009), *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, [www.enqa.eu/files/ESG\\_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf)
- Council of Validating Universities (2005), *CVU Handbook for Practitioner. The Quality Management of Collaborative Provision*.

### Indicator 2

**Governance arrangements at appropriate levels are in place for all types of collaborative activity and collaborative arrangements are negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-awarding body.**

Collaborative arrangements are firmly based on policies and procedures for the oversight of collaborative activity that are formally approved by the central authorities of the degree-awarding body, and supported by all partners.

Given the range of collaborative activities in which degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers engage, the frameworks, policies, procedures and management under which the various forms of collaboration operate inevitably differ; as do the contractual arrangements and the consequential entitlements of participating students. Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers are clear as to what the various types of activity entail in terms of:

- risks
- negotiation and development
- financial arrangements
- formal approval and agreement
- management /oversight /accountability
- quality assurance
- the potential for any delegation to a partner organisation of aspects of the management of standards and quality and the respective roles of the partner and the degree awarding body in managing these
- requirements of other third parties such as Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)
- student entitlements
- the relationship between the student and the degree awarding body.

Degree-awarding bodies may delegate responsibility for aspects of delivery or management of a programme (such as promotion and publicity; recruitment; selection and admissions; learning, teaching and assessment; management of student records; and quality assurance) where they have confidence that a partner has the capacity to assume that responsibility. In the context of joint degrees these aspects are shared. In these circumstances, degree-awarding bodies put in place policies and procedures to ensure that their respective responsibilities are clearly identified, formally recorded and properly discharged.

At a minimum, a range of policies and procedures that are fit for purpose and proportionate to the risks of the type of collaborative arrangement involved are developed, documented, formally adopted, and implemented. Degree-awarding bodies may find it useful to develop a taxonomy of different collaborative arrangements clarifying the policies, procedures and student entitlements that each entails.

The central locus of responsibility for collaborative arrangements within a degree-awarding body or other higher education provider is clear, as are the delegated responsibilities at different levels of the organisation (for example department, faculty and centre). Likewise, degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers are clear about how accountability for collaborative activities is consistently assured throughout the organisation (through both executive and deliberative structures). For more information on this topic see Indicator 7 of Part C: Information about higher education provision.

Given the increasing complexity, range and quantity of collaborative arrangements, the precise locus of central responsibility may differ depending on the type of activity. Typically, both the management arrangements and responsibilities delegated also differ according to the type of collaborative activity and its associated risks. For example, collaborative arrangements involving the validation of full programmes (either within the UK or internationally) may be administered through a central partnerships office; arrangements for placements may be managed through individual departments, faculties or careers offices; placements with NHS trusts for Primary Medical Qualifications may be managed by medical schools; study abroad may be administered through a central 'Year Abroad' office; articulation arrangements may be managed through an international office. It is a matter for

individual degree-awarding bodies to determine the governance and management frameworks which are appropriate and to document clearly the arrangements they adopt.

#### **Further information and additional references**

- Committee of University Chairs (2009), Guide for members of higher education governing bodies in the UK, [www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce1/pubs/hefce/2009/0914/09\\_14.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce1/pubs/hefce/2009/0914/09_14.pdf)
- *Companies Act* (2006), [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents)

#### **Indicator 3**

**Policies and procedures ensure that there are adequate safeguards against financial impropriety or conflicts of interest that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities.**

Financial considerations may also have a bearing on academic standards and quality in matters of recruitment and progression, and resourcing. Appropriate safeguards are established to protect against potential conflicts of interest or competing priorities, both for the organisation and for individuals, which might compromise the integrity of arrangements or the education provided.

Decisions about the academic probity of programmes, courses or credit are taken separately from the negotiations about the legal, financial or other implications of potential partnerships. Due diligence enquiries and decisions about agreements are completed before any detailed academic developments take place.

#### **Further information and additional references**

- *The Bribery Act* (2010), [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents)

#### **Indicator 4**

**Degree-awarding bodies that engage with other authorised awarding bodies to provide a programme of study leading to a joint academic award satisfy themselves that they have the legal capacity to do so.**

Joint academic awards, where a single qualification is granted for successful completion of one programme of study offered collaboratively by two or more awarding bodies, raise questions of the nature of the legal basis for pooling or combining powers to make awards.

Degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that they have the legal and regulatory capacity to grant academic awards jointly with other organisations, especially where this involves pooling or combining awarding powers granted within different legal jurisdictions. Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they are aware of the terms from which their degree-awarding powers derive, and whether these enable the awarding of joint degrees or whether further action needs to be taken to allow them to do so legally (for example by amending their charter).

Similarly, degree-awarding bodies consider not only whether their statutes and regulations permit the award (or subsequent withdrawal) of joint qualifications but also under what regulatory framework any programme leading to a joint award is delivered and assessed, or alternatively whether a bespoke regulatory framework is required.

Degree-awarding bodies also ensure that they have obtained any necessary approvals from PSRBs for the joint award of a qualification for successful completion of relevant programmes.

The legal capacity of a partner organisation to engage with another awarding body is explored as part of due diligence (see Indicator 6).

#### **Further information and additional references**

- Concerning powers, rights and duties of further and higher education providers, and of degree-awarding bodies, *Further and Higher Education Act (1992)*, *Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (1992)*
  - Concerning the use of the university title, *Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)*
  - Concerning lawful UK degrees, sections 214 to 217 of the *Education Reform Act (1988)*, and The Education (Recognized Bodies) (England) Order 2010, the Education (Listed Bodies) (Scotland) Order 2004
  - *Companies Act (2006)*, [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents)
  - BIS (2004), Applications for the grant of taught degree-awarding powers, research degree-awarding powers and university title. Guidance for applicant organisations in England and Wales, [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/a/11-781-applications-for-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/a/11-781-applications-for-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf)
  - BIS (2010), Applications for the grant of foundation degree-awarding powers. Guidance for applicant organisations in England and Wales, [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/a/11-782-applications-for-foundation-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/a/11-782-applications-for-foundation-degree-awarding-powers-guidance.pdf)
  - BIS (2010), Companion guide for foundation degree-awarding powers, [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/c/11-783-companion-guide-foundation-degree-awarding-powers.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/c/11-783-companion-guide-foundation-degree-awarding-powers.pdf)
  - QAA colloquia on joint degrees, [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/joint-degrees-legal-issues-conference-report.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/joint-degrees-legal-issues-conference-report.aspx)
- [www.qaa.ac.uk/Newsroom/Events/Pages/joint-degrees-colloquia.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Newsroom/Events/Pages/joint-degrees-colloquia.aspx)

## Negotiating, agreeing and managing a collaborative arrangement

### Indicator 5

**Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers assess the risks of each collaborative arrangement and review these subsequently on a periodic basis. They determine, and put in place, appropriate safeguards to manage the risks of their various arrangements.**

Higher education providers secure appropriate staff capacity, with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience, to elicit and analyse: the information relevant to assessing the potential financial, legal, academic and reputational risks of a proposed collaborative arrangement; selecting and deciding upon a partner; and determining ways of managing risks.

The financial risks associated with collaborative arrangements can be considerable, especially if the arrangements provide a significant proportion of an organisation's income. Therefore degree-awarding bodies ensure both that their financial management arrangements are strong enough to manage the risks effectively, and that the financial arrangements themselves do not jeopardise the integrity of the academic standards and quality of the provision or the interests of students.

As noted in Indicator 9, the degree-awarding body has obligations to students admitted to a programme. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have thoroughly considered the financial standing of prospective partners and adequately assessed the financial risks of undertaking collaborative provision in a volatile marketplace or commercial environment (including the costs of teaching out the programme if the arrangement fails).

Collaborative arrangements may be subject to statutory financial obligations in some foreign jurisdictions. These obligations may include payment of tax, guarantee bonds, or limits on level of fees and transfer of funds outside the country. Collaborative arrangements are therefore properly costed and accounted for accurately and fully (see also Indicator 6).

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers that are subject to the financial regulations of public funding bodies may find that there are specific requirements or limitations in respect of the use of publicly provided resources for the purpose of collaborative arrangements and other similar activities.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers consider carefully whether prospective partner organisations share an appropriate understanding of, and vision for, the proposed collaboration. In collaborations with employers, private providers, international partners or organisations that are not primarily educational or academic providers, steps are taken to establish and foster a shared understanding about the ethos, culture, requirements and standards of UK higher education. Thus degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers ensure that their partners have a full understanding of the requirements of the relevant degree-awarding body for the maintenance of its academic standards and the assurance of quality.

Degree-awarding bodies that validate modules or programmes ensure that they have in place (or can secure) the relevant disciplinary expertise to approve and monitor teaching, learning and assessment in the range of disciplinary areas envisaged.

Degree-awarding bodies maintain a full and current understanding of UK legislation affecting the admission of international students (including immigration and visa requirements) and of the implications for partner organisations collaborating in the delivery of programmes leading to UK awards.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers have effective risk-management procedures in place to protect the interests of students in the event that a partner does not discharge its responsibilities. Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers make provision to suspend or withdraw from an arrangement if the partner does not fulfil its obligations or if the ownership of a partner, or its status, changes in such a way as to jeopardise the collaboration. They put in place termination and mediation procedures that include the provision of guidance and support for students in such circumstances.

Risk management procedures include regular and adequate avenues for communication with partner organisations. These may include link tutor arrangements, steering groups and opportunities for partners to provide feedback as a means of monitoring the arrangements. The resource implications of these arrangements are properly factored into the consideration of the financial aspects of the partnership.

Periodically, degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers review collaborative arrangements to ensure that they are achieving intended objectives, that partners are compatible, and to re-assess the financial, legal, academic, ethical and reputational risks.

#### **Further information and additional references**

- UUK (2007), Statement of recommended practice: accounting for further and higher education, [www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/SORP\\_2007.pdf](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/SORP_2007.pdf)
- *Companies Act* (2006), [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents)
- Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (2011), Higher Education Finance
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (2011), Equality Act Guidance for education providers, [www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/EqualityAct/nsg\\_fhe\\_provider\\_version\\_am\\_fin\\_al\\_281011cm\\_beo\\_commentsrcchecked\\_2\\_.doc](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/nsg_fhe_provider_version_am_fin_al_281011cm_beo_commentsrcchecked_2_.doc)
- UKBA (2012), Points-based system: guidance for sponsors, [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pbsguidance/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pbsguidance/)

#### **Indicator 6**

**Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers determine appropriate due diligence procedures for each collaborative arrangement and conduct these periodically to satisfy themselves about the capacity of the partner organisation to fulfil its designated role in the proposed arrangement. This investigation includes the legal status of the partner, and its capacity in law to contract with the degree-awarding body.**

In order to safeguard the interests of students, degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers undertake appropriate due diligence before proceeding in any substantive way with the development of a partnership. Due diligence enquiries are refreshed periodically and also where circumstances change (for example if the collaborative activities are extended or if the ownership of a partner changes).

The nature of the collaboration determines what type of due diligence enquiries may be necessary. An assessment is made of the conditions that are necessary to enable the proposed arrangement to succeed. The due diligence enquiries are tailored to these and are proportionate to the complexity and volume of the provision involved and the risks it may present. The extent and intensity of the enquiries therefore differ depending on factors such as: whether a full programme is being delivered collaboratively; whether the degree-awarding body is delivering the programme but some or most of the learning is taking place off-site (for example in the workplace); whether an individual student placement is involved; or whether placements for a cohort of students are required.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers determine and operate due diligence procedures appropriate to the collaboration envisaged and which provide the information that will enable them to address the financial, legal, academic and reputational risks identified.

Key areas where due diligence enquiries are necessary may include:

- the legal status of a prospective partner organisation in its own country and its capacity to contract with the degree-awarding body
- the accredited or recognised status of a prospective partner organisation accorded by the relevant authorising bodies in the country where the provision will be delivered
- the reputation and/or academic standing of a prospective partner organisation (drawing on a range of performance indicators<sup>9</sup> to assess this and the experience of other providers who have collaborated with the organisation)
- the financial stability of a prospective partner organisation
- the ability of the prospective partner organisation to provide the human and material resources to operate the collaboration successfully
- the academic /professional capacity of the prospective partner organisation to deliver any learning and teaching or support at the appropriate levels
- the ability of the prospective partner organisation to provide an appropriate and safe working environment for students.

Additional enquiries are pursued depending on the type of collaboration involved. These are outlined for different activities:

### **Overseas collaborative arrangements**

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers fully apprise themselves of:

- the legal and regulatory frameworks of the country concerned
- the political and cultural context
- the higher education structures in the country where the partner organisation is operating

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<sup>9</sup> These would include public documents (such as, within the UK, reports of QAA and its predecessor bodies on collaborative arrangements with UK institutions)

- any requirements for the potential partner organisation to be accredited or recognised by the appropriate authorities in the jurisdiction where the provision will be delivered and/or for individual programmes to have the approval of the relevant national authority (since both of these factors may have implications for collaborative activity and/or the recognition of qualifications for progression to further study or employment - especially within the public sector - in those countries)
- the range of business and ethical interests and links that overseas partners may have, either within the UK or overseas, and whether these could present potential risks to the proposed arrangement.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers assess their ability to operate within the legislative, political and cultural requirements of that overseas country and, at the same time, to fulfil the expectations of the Quality Code.

### **Collaboration leading to joint awards**

- A degree-awarding body satisfies itself that its partner(s) has the legal and regulatory capacity to grant the relevant joint awards.
- A degree-awarding body ascertains what the national legislation and national or regional qualifications frameworks of all the awarding bodies involved are (since joint degrees are awarded in accordance with each of these) and whether these could have implications for the standard of its own award.

### **Partnerships with private providers of higher education, non-educational or non-academic providers**

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers ascertain:

- the ownership and financing of the prospective partner organisation
- its governance structures (in particular that academic and business decision-making are separate)
- whether it is registered as a company or a charity and the nature of any accreditation
- the range of business and ethical interests and links that private providers may have, either within the UK or overseas, and whether these could present potential risks to the proposed arrangement.

### **Arrangements where a partner organisation is directly involved in the delivery and/or assessment of learning**

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers:

- ascertain the level of familiarity of the prospective partner organisation with standards and ethos of UK higher education
- satisfy themselves about the ability of the prospective partner organisation to manage processes for quality assurance in higher education and to meet the relevant Expectations of the Quality Code
- satisfy themselves as to the adequacy of operational structures (including record-keeping) in place to support learning delivery and/or assessment in a valid, reliable and robust manner.

### Further information and additional references

- *The Bribery Act* (2010), [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents)
- The International Unit (2012), *International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities 2012*, [www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx](http://www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx)
- Council of Validating Universities (2005), *CVU Handbook for Practitioner. The Quality Management of Collaborative Provision*.

### Indicator 7

**There is a written agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties which is regularly monitored and reviewed. It is signed by the authorised representatives of the degree-awarding body or other higher education provider and by the partner organisation(s) before students are admitted.**

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers have formal written agreements for any form of collaboration clarifying the rights and responsibilities of those involved. This also provides assurance that the partner organisation understands the requirements of UK higher education and agrees to fulfil its responsibilities and obligations. Formal written agreements have a defined lifespan. A review process is required before agreements are extended or renewed.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers put in place contracts, memoranda or other written agreements which are proportionate to the scale and nature of activities involved and which allow sufficient powers to protect standards and quality. The nature and content of these agreements differ depending on the type of collaborative arrangement. For example, there are differences in the scope and coverage of a formal articulation agreement as compared with a memorandum of understanding/agreement for dual or joint awards between two awarding bodies. Placement agreements are less complex than the contracts for franchising a programme to an overseas partner.

Degree-awarding bodies and higher education providers take advice from their legal advisers on the form and content of agreements and contracts.

Formal agreements are signed by the relevant authority within the organisation. This may differ depending on the nature of the activity. Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers ensure that they have a clear and well publicised central policy on who is authorised to sign different types of agreements and contracts on their behalf. Details of the authorised signatories are regularly updated and widely available within the organisation.

The following list (which is not exhaustive) highlights matters which relate to academic standards and quality and which may be addressed when drafting an agreement or contract for a collaborative arrangement.

- The distinction between those aspects of the arrangement that relate to the organisational-level relationship and collaboration between the parties in general, and those aspects particular to the delivery of specific programme(s) covered by the collaborative arrangement (which might be the subject of annexes to the agreement).
- Definition of the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of each of the parties.

- Definition of any powers delegated in each arrangement (for example the management of admissions, arrangements for student engagement or the conduct of annual monitoring).
- Clarification as to which regulations and quality assurance processes apply.
- The services to be provided by each organisation.
- Financial arrangements.
- Specification of the role of external examiners in ensuring that the degree-awarding body can fulfil its responsibility for the academic standards of the awards.
- Arrangements for ownership of copyright and intellectual property rights.
- Clarification as to which party assumes the legal responsibilities in relation to data protection, equality and diversity issues, immigration and visa requirements and under what jurisdiction.
- The source or location of any quality-related information to be produced, for example for a funding council or PSRB, and responsibility for submission of this information.
- Clarification as to whether serial arrangements are precluded, or under what conditions any such arrangements might be allowed (Indicator 8 refers).
- Arrangements governing the use of the degree-awarding body's logo; and provision for oversight, by the degree-awarding body, of information relating to the collaboration placed in the public domain and of any associated promotional activity.
- An obligation on the partner to notify the degree-awarding body or other higher education provider of any change to its status or ownership.
- The consequences of a private provider changing ownership and what this might imply for re-recognition or revalidation and establishing a revised agreement.
- Specification of the legal jurisdiction under which any disputes would be resolved.
- Provisions to enable either organisation to suspend or withdraw from the agreement if the other party fails to fulfil its obligations.
- Termination and mediation provisions and financial arrangements to be followed if the arrangement ceases.
- Specification of the residual obligations of both parties to students on termination of the collaborative arrangement, including the obligations of the degree-awarding body to enable students to complete their studies leading to one of its awards (see Indicator 9).
- Procedures for amending the agreement and/or for agreeing additional appendices.
- Date and mechanism for review of the agreement.

In the case of student placements or research degree programmes delivered in collaboration with one or more partners, degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers also consider establishing a contract (for example a cotutelle agreement) with the student clarifying the responsibilities of each of the parties (including the student) and what each is expected to deliver.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers effectively communicate commitments in the written agreement to all relevant staff in the partner organisation who are involved from the inception of the activity to its completion.

The existence of a written agreement is not in itself a sufficient guarantee that its terms and conditions are being met effectively. Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers put in place mechanisms to monitor and ensure that the terms, conditions and expectations that were originally approved have been, and continue to be, met. They also review the effectiveness of written agreements periodically (at organisational and/or programme/module levels as appropriate to the nature of the collaborative arrangement).

The frequency and nature of monitoring and review may best be decided by reference to risk, proportionality and fitness for purpose.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers assure themselves that they have the necessary management capacity at local and central levels to communicate effectively with partner organisations and to oversee the implementation, operation, monitoring and review of formal agreements and the outcomes of collaborative arrangements.

#### **Further information and additional references**

- Council of Validating Universities (2005), *CVU Handbook for Practitioner. The Quality Management of Collaborative Provision*.
- The International Unit (2012), *International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities 2012*, [www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx](http://www.international.ac.uk/research-and-publications/research-and-publications.aspx)

#### **Indicator 8**

**The agreement or contract makes it clear that any serial arrangement may be undertaken only with the express written permission of the degree-awarding body in each instance. Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that they retain proper control of the academic standards of awards offered through any such arrangements.**

Serial arrangements, whereby the partner organisation (through an arrangement of its own) offers approved collaborative provision elsewhere or assigns to another partner powers delegated to it by a degree-awarding body, can severely curtail the ability of a degree-awarding body to safeguard the academic standards of awards made in its name. In order to discharge their awarding responsibility properly, and to be in a position to manage potential risk, degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have an effective link to any assessment of the academic achievement of students that leads to their awards. While this responsibility may be readily manageable through a direct relationship with a partner organisation, it becomes much more difficult once the chain of responsibility is extended. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the chain of information in serial arrangements is never so long that they are unable to have full confidence in their ability to control their academic standards effectively and to know what is being done in their name.

Indicator 7 refers to the importance of drawing up a formal agreement appropriate to the nature of the collaboration involved. Agreements may be drawn up between multiple partners that make clear the nature of collaboration between each of the participating parties and their collective and individual responsibilities. Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have a direct relationship (and bi-partite agreement) with each individual partner in a collaborative activity involving multiple partners and thus that they can maintain clear oversight of what is done in their name.

#### **Indicator 9**

**Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme can complete it under their awarding authority in the event that they wish to terminate a collaborative arrangement or a partner withdraws from an arrangement.**

When degree-awarding bodies enter into a collaborative arrangement for a programme of study or articulation arrangement leading to one of their awards, they make clear to prospective students which body will make the academic award. Degree-awarding bodies therefore have a contractual obligation to students admitted to programmes under their awarding authority who successfully complete the requisite programme(s). When either a degree-awarding body or its partner decides to withdraw from a collaborative arrangement, for whatever reason, degree-awarding bodies follow their usual protocols applicable to 'in house' provision for orderly discontinuation of the arrangement in a manner which protects the interests of students registered for, or accepted for admission to, the collaborative programme. See *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*, Indicator 7.

Similarly, in the context of collaborative arrangements with employers, higher education providers are clear as to their obligations to students who are also employees in the event that their employment is terminated.

#### **Indicator 10**

**All higher education providers maintain records (by type and category) of all collaborative activity that is subject to a formal agreement.**

Indicator 9 of Part C: Information about higher education provision applies here. As different offices within an organisation may be involved in managing separate types of collaborative activity (see Indicator 2), they may maintain separate records of the relevant arrangements. However, higher education providers ensure that there is a central locus of responsibility for accessing all these and providing information on them as necessary.

A higher education provider's public reputation depends in part on its willingness to be open and informative about its activities. Degree-awarding bodies, other higher education providers and their collaborative partners conduct their activities openly and transparently with a view to maintaining and enhancing public confidence in UK higher education.

#### **Further information and additional references**

- The National Archives, Records Management Guidance, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/projects-and-work/records-management-guidance.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/projects-and-work/records-management-guidance.htm)

## **Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards**

#### **Indicator 11**

**Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in their name. This responsibility is never delegated. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the standards of any of their awards involving collaborative arrangements are consistent with those set for other awards they confer at the same level and with UK national requirements.**

The legal power of a degree-awarding body in the UK to grant higher education awards carries with it a responsibility to ensure that the academic standards of all its awards and qualifications are consciously and carefully secured.

This applies equally to joint awards (awarded jointly by two or more degree-awarding bodies), and dual/double or multiple awards (separate qualifications awarded by each awarding body involved in a joint programme). In these situations, each awarding body retains responsibility for ensuring that its own academic standards are maintained irrespective of the requirements of any partner awarding bodies. The collective responsibility for a joint or multiple awards (and the need to accept the academic standards of the other partners) does not remove the responsibility of the individual degree-awarding body to ensure that its own academic standards are safeguarded. Because of this, degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that the standards and quality of their awards are not jeopardised by the arrangements they have entered into with partners.

Programmes of study that lead to dual/double or multiple awards involve the granting of separate qualifications by each of the awarding bodies involved. The awards are based on the same assessed student work, and degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that they are content to make an award on this basis, and are able to do so within their regulations. Degree-awarding bodies participating in dual/double or multiple awards through a credit-based structure are alert to the consequences of each participating partner offering credit for the same pieces of work, thereby potentially multiplying the credit value (for transfer and accumulation purposes) of a module or unit that has been successfully completed. Records of study therefore show where the achievement of credit and successful completion of a programme has also led to the conferral of another award (see also Indicator 19). Regardless of the collaborative nature of the programme, responsibility for each award, and its academic standard, remains with the body awarding it.

This Indicator also applies to any credit awarded by a degree-awarding body and to the academic standards of modules or parts of programmes. Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for securing the academic standards of elements of programmes or individual modules delivered in their name (and any associated credit awarded) wherever they are delivered, by whomever they are delivered, and through whatever collaborative arrangement they are delivered.

Explicit reference to the Quality Code enables degree-awarding bodies, students, employers and the public (whether within the UK or overseas) to have confidence that an award of credit or a qualification is of a recognised and acceptable standard within the UK. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), which have been adopted by the relevant degree-awarding bodies in the UK (see *Chapter A1: The national level*), cover all UK higher education provision, wherever and however offered. No distinction is made between provision by the degree-awarding body itself, at its main home campus, and that offered elsewhere or through collaborative arrangements. Degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves, through their approval processes, that UK awards involving collaborative delivery (whether partially or entirely) are appropriately located within the FHEQ/SCQF.

Where a degree-awarding body validates programmes leading to the same qualification offered by different partners and with different curricula, it ensures that the standards of the different programmes are equivalent to each other and equivalent to the standards of the degree-awarding body's other programmes leading to qualifications at the same level.

In the context of joint awards, and dual/double or multiple awards, the academic standards have to satisfy the requirements both of the FHEQ/SCQF and any national requirements (such as a national qualifications framework) of the partner awarding bodies. Degree-awarding bodies share a responsibility to ensure that the standards of all jurisdictions can be met.

Degree-awarding bodies use relevant UK subject benchmark statements as points of reference in setting and maintaining standards. Where transnational education is concerned, some alternatives to the UK-centred context of some subject benchmark statements are appropriate in order to contextualise the disciplinary understanding in an appropriate way. Indeed, there may be cases where points of reference from outside the UK legitimately apply to cross-border collaborative arrangements. Such variations are explicitly acknowledged and explained in order to avoid misunderstandings. In some overseas jurisdictions, all students, irrespective of programme of study, may be required to take certain local modules; any such requirements are generally met independently of the degree-awarding body's programme.

Where degree-awarding bodies award credit for modules delivered in collaboration with other providers, they ensure that credits are awarded through a process that is consistent with the awarding body's policies on the assignment of credit level and volume and which also takes account of guidance embodied in national credit frameworks<sup>10</sup> or the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System where appropriate.

In formulating articulation agreements, degree-awarding bodies assure themselves that the programme provided by the partner organisation is, and remains, at an appropriate level to articulate with the entry point to the specified programme(s) provided at the degree-awarding body. They also clarify whether or not assessments from the component delivered and assessed by the partner organisation contribute to the final award and, if so, ensure that the volume and level of learning is appropriate to the amount of credit which is associated with those assessments.

To ensure that standards are equivalent wherever the assessment takes place, degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that the outcomes of modules or programmes delivered through collaborative arrangements are assessed at the appropriate level (with reference to the qualification descriptors of the FHEQ/SCQF, relevant subject benchmark statements and the Expectation of *Chapter A6: Assessment of achievement of learning outcomes*), and in accordance with their own regulations and guidance.

Where degree-awarding bodies collaborate on the delivery of research degrees, the degree-awarding body ensures that the Expectation of *Chapter B11: Research degrees* of the Quality Code is met, and that consideration is given to the acquisition of appropriate skills identified in the *Vitae Researcher Development Statement*<sup>11</sup> (endorsed by QAA). Where such collaboration leads to joint awards, any national expectations, in terms of academic standards, of the partner awarding bodies will also need to be met.

Detailed information on academic standards is found in Chapter A1: *The national level*.

#### Indicator 12

**Degree-awarding bodies inform any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) that has approved or recognised a programme or award of any proposals to collaborate on any aspects of its delivery and of any formal agreements involving that programme or award. Degree-awarding bodies secure accreditation for collaborative arrangements where necessary. The status of the programme in respect of UK PSRB recognition is made clear to prospective students.**

<sup>10</sup> Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, [www.scqf.org.uk/](http://www.scqf.org.uk/); Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales, <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en>; Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/rds](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rds) ; [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

UK PSRBs sometimes limit their accreditation, approval or recognition of programmes or awards to particular modes or locations of delivery. On occasion, they may be unwilling to accredit or recognise a programme or award not provided directly by the degree-awarding body. Degree-awarding bodies ensure that the status of programmes or awards in respect of UK PSRB recognition (accredited, approved or recognised) is represented accurately so that applicants or students are not misled, either accidentally or through fraudulent misrepresentation. A definitive ruling on this matter is secured from the relevant UK PSRB.

More detailed information on this topic may be found by reference to Indicators 3 and 4 of Part C: Information about higher education provision.

Similarly, there may be requirements within other jurisdictions for programmes to be approved, accredited or recognised by the relevant national authorising bodies in order to secure recognition of the qualification for further study or employment (see Indicator 6). Degree-awarding bodies ensure that relevant approvals are obtained.

## **Assuring academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities**

### **Indicator 13**

**Degree-awarding bodies approve module(s) and programmes delivered through a collaborative arrangement through processes for assuring quality and academic standards that are as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the degree-awarding body.**

Degree-awarding bodies are directly responsible for securing the academic standard of any award and for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through a collaborative arrangement is adequate to enable a student to achieve the academic standard required for their awards. Degree awarding bodies put in place arrangements for assuring quality and standards in collaborative arrangements that are as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for their own directly delivered provision.

Degree-awarding bodies are able to be flexible in the design and application of quality assurance processes to ensure that they are appropriate to the timescales and contexts within which some partner organisations may operate (for example employers). Procedures and processes can differ, for some collaborative activities, provided that they are proportionate to the learning involved, are equally robust, do not undermine the broad principles that underpin academic standards and quality, and meet the Expectation of *Chapter A4: Programme Approval and Review*.<sup>12</sup>

In approving modules, programmes or credit-rating provision delivered wholly or partly through collaborative arrangements, degree-awarding bodies consider the arrangements for teaching/learning, support, and learning resources to be provided by the partner. Whilst degree-awarding bodies ensure that the Expectations of *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching*, and *Chapter B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice, and guidance* are met, the requirements and investigations are proportionate to the volume, complexity and level of learning involved.

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<sup>12</sup> See *Employer-responsive provision survey: A reflective report*, paragraphs 28-30 and 35-37.

For example, in the context of collaborative arrangements, it is the precise role which staff are to undertake which is used as the starting point to determine how appropriately staff are qualified to fulfil it. If an entire programme is to be delivered by a partner organisation that is not itself a degree-awarding body, then the degree-awarding body requires those staff involved in teaching to meet its usual specifications for qualifications to teach at a specific level. In the context of transnational collaborative arrangements, additional local requirements may apply.

Where individual modules or parts of programmes are delivered by partner organisations, degree-awarding bodies or other higher education providers assess the appropriateness of the staff to deliver the type of learning or support involved on the relevant modules. For example, a work-based or placement provider may be involved in providing a mentoring or supervising role and it is the suitability of staff for this function (and the need for any support or development) that is assessed.

Similarly, degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that staff involved in the delivery of inter-sectoral or transnational education are fully prepared for, and understand, the cultural assumptions about higher education in the UK, which may differ from the expectations of other sectors or other countries in which they operate.

In the case of joint and dual/double or multiple awards, where due diligence searches on the standing of the partner are satisfactory, investigations to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified to deliver those parts of the programme for which it is responsible are of a nature and intensity that is proportionate and relevant to the partner involved.

When considering the appropriateness of physical learning resources and the learning environment provided by a partner organisation, degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers consider whether these are relevant to, and adequate for, the type, level, and volume of the learning to be undertaken and whether they are appropriate to secure the achievement of the relevant learning outcomes (rather than whether they are identical to the resources available at the degree-awarding body)<sup>13</sup>.

When approving arrangements for research degrees to be provided through a collaborative arrangement, the degree-awarding body takes steps to assure itself that the quality of supervision and the provision of an appropriate research environment are adequate and that the Expectation of *Chapter B11: Research degrees* of the Quality Code can be met.

More detailed information on approval processes may be found in *Chapter A4: Programme approval and review*, *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* and *Chapter B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice, and guidance*.

#### **Further information and additional references**

- QAA (2008), Quality assurance and the HEFCE priority for higher education learning linked to employer engagement and workforce development:

[www.qaa.ac.uk/Partners/Employers/Documents/QAA\\_statement.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Partners/Employers/Documents/QAA_statement.pdf)

-QAA (2010), Employer-responsive provision survey. A reflective report,

[www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/EffectiveProvision.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/EffectiveProvision.pdf)

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<sup>13</sup> For further details on this see QAA's statement on employer-responsive provision published in July 2008, which can be accessed at: [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Partners/Employers/Documents/QAA\\_statement.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Partners/Employers/Documents/QAA_statement.pdf)

#### **Indicator 14**

**Degree-awarding bodies clarify which provider is responsible for admitting a student to modules or programmes involving collaborative arrangements and ensure that admissions procedures are consistent with their own admissions policies.**

Collaborative arrangements may generate particular requirements for admissions procedures, especially in international contexts, and depending on whether whole programmes or parts of programmes are delivered through such arrangements. Areas that may require particular care include:

- entry requirements and academic prerequisites
- recognition of overseas qualifications and credits
- arrangements for the accreditation of prior learning (APL) and the assessment of prior experiential learning (AP[E]L)
- language proficiency in the language in which the programme will be delivered and/or assessed
- information about the status of students in relation to the degree-awarding body
- cultural assumptions about higher education learning methods.

In addition to the particular considerations relating to setting the criteria for admission, degree-awarding bodies clarify where responsibility lies not only for decisions on admissions but also for the management of the admissions process. The precise allocation of responsibilities varies depending on the nature of the collaboration (whether a validation arrangement, an articulation agreement or some form of progression arrangement) and possibly on the risks associated with different partners. Degree-awarding bodies determine and implement arrangements that are fit for purpose and record these in the formal agreements.

Degree-awarding bodies clarify with which higher education provider a student is registered and what legal and contractual relationships the student has with the degree-awarding body and partner organisation respectively. In the case of publicly-funded higher education providers, the registration may follow funding streams. In the case of joint and dual/double or multiple awards it may be that a student is registered with more than one awarding body. In all cases the status and rights of the student in relation to the degree-awarding body are made clear.

Admissions are addressed in detail in *Chapter B2: Admissions*.

#### **Indicator 15**

**Degree-awarding bodies ensure that a partner organisation involved in the assessment of students understands and follows the requirements approved by the degree-awarding body for the conduct of assessments.**

Degree-awarding bodies are legally autonomous bodies and can exercise considerable discretion over their assessment practices. A partner organisation may have little knowledge at the outset of a relationship about the requirements that will be placed upon it to ensure that assessments are secure and conducted effectively. In the case of overseas partners, some of these requirements may be considered unusual compared to the local context. Local custom and practice are not accepted where these may jeopardise the integrity of the assessment process or the consistency of its application across the degree-awarding body's

provision as a whole. Degree-awarding bodies therefore ensure that all involved in the assessment of students are given explicit information and briefing about the protocols and processes for conducting assessment, and about acceptable and unacceptable practices. Provision of explicit information and briefings is of equal importance where partner organisations that are neither degree-awarding bodies nor academic or educational providers (such as employers) are involved in aspects of assessment. In these circumstances, degree-awarding bodies consider carefully whether there is a need to ensure a direct relationship between those conducting aspects of the assessment and the degree-awarding body in order to secure direct oversight of final assessment decisions. See also *Chapter A6: Assessment of achievement of learning outcomes* and *Chapter B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning*.

If staff from partner organisations are less experienced in delivering higher education but are to become involved in formative or summative assessment, staff development (or mentoring/supervision) may be required. In these cases, degree-awarding bodies ensure that appropriate training, briefing and mentoring is provided (on an ongoing basis) so that those involved are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities and to ensure that assessment is robust. The approach taken is tailored to the nature of the collaborative activity involved and the unique characteristics of the partner.

In the case of joint and dual/double or multiple awards, a shared understanding is reached of the assessment responsibilities of each of the partners vis-à-vis maintaining oversight of the academic standards of those components of the joint programme for which they are responsible. Degree-awarding bodies participating as one of the partners in a consortium of educational providers for joint or multiple awards are involved in any assessment (or its oversight) that leads to one of their awards, irrespective of whether or not a student has attended the degree-awarding body. These arrangements are recorded in the written agreements.

Some degree-awarding bodies may choose to offer collaborative programmes in languages other than those in which they ordinarily work. While this may extend the range of students they can reach, it raises important questions about the capacity of a degree-awarding body to satisfy itself about the quality of the provision that leads to its awards. Similarly, assessment of students' work in a foreign language poses serious challenges to the ability of a degree-awarding body to be in proper control of the academic standards of awards made in its name. Degree-awarding bodies that do permit assessment in languages other than those in which they ordinarily work take steps to ensure that they have a continuing availability of internal and external examiners who are both able to work easily in all the languages concerned and fully trained to perform their role effectively. Any intervention between the examiner(s) and the work produced by the student, such as language translation, introduces another level of risk in making reliable and valid judgments about student achievement. Degree-awarding bodies are vigilant in ensuring that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by the use of translations of assessed work.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Indicator 16**

**Degree-awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The external examining procedures for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements are consistent with the degree awarding body's usual practices.**

<sup>14</sup> Institutions may find it useful to refer to the QAA publication *Guidelines for higher education institutions in Wales for effective practice in examining and assessing in a language other than the language of tuition*

The consistency of application of external examination procedures is a central element in maintaining standards and quality in collaborative activities. Any departures from the usual procedures for external examining are thought through very carefully and at the highest level, in advance of their implementation, and accepted only where it is clear that standards and quality will not be jeopardised. See also Indicator 2 of *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Degree-awarding bodies remain responsible for the appointment and functions of external examiners. External examiners are required to report to the degree-awarding body. Degree-awarding bodies may delegate the nomination, induction and briefing of an external examiner to a partner higher education provider but only where they are satisfied of the partner's capability to undertake the task. In the case of joint awards, degree-awarding bodies consider the desirability and feasibility of making joint appointments or whether dual appointments are appropriate.<sup>15</sup> In this context, degree-awarding bodies consider what external examining arrangements are appropriate to satisfy the requirements and expectations of all the partners involved and in order to secure the academic standards of their awards in accordance with Indicator 11.

Where a programme is delivered both by the degree-awarding body and also through a partner, it is often desirable to appoint a single external examiner to cover all versions of the programme, as an aid to ensuring consistency of practice and equity of treatment of students.

Arrangements for external examining are fully addressed in *Chapter B7: External Examining*.

#### **Indicator 17**

**Degree-awarding bodies ensure that modules and programmes offered through, or involving, collaborative arrangements are monitored and reviewed effectively through procedures that are consistent with or comparable to those used for their other provision.**

Degree-awarding bodies are ultimately responsible for assuring the quality of the learning opportunities provided for modules and programmes that lead to their awards, but they might choose to delegate operational aspects of this responsibility to a partner organisation where they have confidence in the partner's capacity to undertake that responsibility. For example, gathering feedback from students or a full annual monitoring process may be delegated, particularly as these can be more effective if conducted closer to the point of delivery. Nevertheless, degree-awarding bodies are able to satisfy themselves, and stakeholders, on a regular basis that any delegated responsibility for quality management is being properly discharged (see also *Chapter B5: Student engagement* and *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*). Degree-awarding bodies therefore review the outcomes of any monitoring processes delegated to a partner organisation and may review entry, progression, retention and performance data in comparison with their own benchmarks or key performance indicators.

Degree-awarding bodies review periodically programmes delivered wholly or partly through collaborative arrangements. Where only specific aspects of the delivery of a programme are collaborative or where programmes are franchised, the degree-awarding body may conduct these as part of the periodic review of 'in house' provision. This can ensure equivalence of standards between programmes. Alternatively, degree-awarding bodies review programmes

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<sup>15</sup> See Part 1 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2009) [www.enqa.eu/pubs\\_esg.lasso](http://www.enqa.eu/pubs_esg.lasso)

through revalidation particularly where such programmes are not embedded within departments or faculties of the degree-awarding body.

More detailed information on monitoring and review may be found in *Chapter B8: Programme monitoring and review*.

## Information for students and partner organisations

### Indicator 18

**Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers produce relevant information for prospective and current students, and to partner organisations.**

Students, potential students, employers and other stakeholders need to be able to satisfy themselves that awards obtained through collaborative arrangements are fully equivalent to other awards offered at a similar level by the same degree awarding body. To this end, degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers produce information on awards delivered through collaborative arrangements (whether in full or in part) that meets the Expectation of Part C: Information about higher education provision of the Quality Code.

Degree-awarding bodies have effective control over all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to their collaborative provision, ensuring that it is fit for purpose, trustworthy and accessible. Degree-awarding bodies establish clear guidelines as to the process for sign-off of collaborative partners' publicity materials, and clarify where the authority resides for approving such materials. Where the production of information is delegated to a partner, degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that this control is exercised consistently and fairly and that the public is not likely to be misled about the collaborative arrangement or about the nature and standing of the programmes and awards provided under the arrangement.

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that their logos are used in a way that appropriately reflects the nature of the relationship between the degree-awarding body and its partner organisation(s).

Degree-awarding bodies monitor regularly all sources of information (including websites and prospectuses) produced by a partner organisation for prospective students and/or for those involved in collaborative arrangements. Regular checks on the information actually being provided, including user surveys, help to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers provide all relevant information to partners about the programmes or modules on which they are collaborating in order to place the partners' contribution in context. Where modules or elements of programmes (rather than whole programmes) are delivered collaboratively, partner organisations (such as employers) are provided with adequate and transparent information about the intended learning outcomes of these components, the associated teaching and learning strategies, the level of learning and where relevant, and the contribution that the element makes to any qualification.

All students taking modules or registered on programmes delivered through collaborative arrangements (in particular in the context of transnational education) are routinely provided with clear statements about their rights and responsibilities as students as set out in

Indicator 5 of Part C: Information about higher education provision. In the context of collaborative arrangements, they also receive information about:

- their entitlements to services (including access to language support and orientation in the case of international students) and how to access services
- their relationship to the degree-awarding body and what information will be shared between the organisations involved
- any entitlements to membership of student representative bodies (of the degree-awarding body)
- whether the disciplinary and/or fitness to practise procedures applicable (if any) are those of the higher education provider or the placement host
- the avenues open to them for concerns, complaints and appeals, and how these are divided between the collaborative partner and the degree-awarding body
- the degree-awarding body's responsibilities to a student in the context of collaboration with an employer as a partner organisation, and in particular where the student is an employee of that partner (for example where the student is made redundant, moves to a post with another company, or is redeployed to another site).

Degree-awarding bodies acknowledge different levels of responsibility for students registered on programmes involving collaborative arrangements. Students and prospective students are explicitly informed of the nature of their formal relationship with their degree-awarding body, and which organisation is responsible for which part of their learning experience.

In the case of complaints and appeals, students at a partner organisation have ultimate right of appeal to the degree-awarding body. The degree-awarding body may also review academic complaints once the procedures at the partner organisation have been exhausted. Degree-awarding bodies ensure that their own responsibilities, and those of their partners, are clearly distinguished and publicised. They ensure that students at partner organisations have clear information about the initial route for making an appeal or formal complaint and the sequence of processes involved. They also make clear the channels through which dissatisfied students can contact the degree-awarding body directly. See also *Chapter B9: Complaints and appeals* of the Quality Code.

In the case of joint and dual/double or multiple awards, partner institutions determine how any appeals or complaints will be dealt with jointly and how the processes will be administered (for example, identifying one degree-awarding body to take lead responsibility). Students on jointly-delivered programmes are given clear information about the procedure to be followed and which organisation(s) should initially be approached in order to lodge a complaint or appeal.

**Further information and additional references**

- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) covers England and Wales, [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

## Certificates and records of study

### Indicator 19

**Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have sole authority for awarding certificates and detailed records of study relating to achievement through collaborative arrangements.**

**The certificate and/or record of academic achievement state the principal language of instruction and/or assessment where this was not English<sup>16</sup>. Subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any relevant jurisdiction, the certificate and/or the record of achievement records the name and location of any higher education provider which is a partner in delivery of the programme of study. Where information relating to the language of study or to the name and location of the partner is recorded on the record of achievement only, the certificate refers to the existence of this formal record.**

Certificates and records of achievement represent the main sources of verification of the granting of an award or qualification. They are extremely valuable documents and can be the subject of theft and forgery. Degree-awarding bodies therefore safeguard the physical security of blank documents and limit the authority to issue certificates, records of academic achievement (and their duplicates). The ultimate responsibility for the security and accuracy of certificates and transcripts lies with the body in whose name they are issued. If the degree-awarding body wishes to delegate responsibility to a partner organisation for issuing these documents, it ensures that it has retained the means to exercise proper control over all certificates and transcripts/records of achievement that are issued.

The information contained on the certificate and record of achievement does not omit anything that is needed for a full understanding of a student's achievement. The principal language of study and/or assessment, where this is not English, is a key piece of information for those who need to refer to certificates and transcripts. Omission of this information can mislead and in some countries may cause difficulties in the recognition of all awards from the degree-awarding body.

In the interests of transparency, the certificate and/or the record of achievement clarify for a single jointly-delivered programme (and its associated credit), whether the programme leads to dual/double or multiple awards (and certificates) of other partner awarding bodies involved as opposed to a single award. In the case of joint awards, the (single) certificate lists the names of all awarding bodies involved in granting the award and bears the signatures of the competent authorities in each awarding body. For all jointly-delivered programmes, the formal record of achievement indicates at which higher education provider the different parts of the programme were studied.

More detailed information on records of academic achievement may be found in Indicator 6 of Part C: Information about higher education provision.

### Further information and additional references

- Guidelines on HEAR
- Diploma Supplement, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ds\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ds_en.htm)

<sup>16</sup> The exception to this are awards for programmes or modules relating to the study of a foreign language where the principal language of assessment is also the language of study and programmes provided and assessed by Welsh institutions in the Welsh or Gaelic languages

# Appendix 1: The Expectation and Indicators

## The Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about the management of collaborative arrangements, which higher education providers are required to meet:

**Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers implement and manage collaborative arrangements effectively. Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities delivered irrespective of where these take place or who provides them.**

## The Indicators of sound practice

### Indicator 1

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers adopt a strategic approach to collaborative activity and are clear about its fit with their missions, academic portfolios and corporate plans.

### Indicator 2

Governance arrangements at appropriate levels are in place for all types of collaborative activity and collaborative arrangements are negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-awarding body.

### Indicator 3

Policies and procedures ensure that there are adequate safeguards against financial impropriety or conflicts of interest that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities.

### Indicator 4

Degree-awarding bodies that engage with other authorised awarding bodies to provide a programme of study leading to a joint academic award satisfy themselves that they have the legal capacity to do so.

### Indicator 5

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers assess the risks of each collaborative arrangement and review these subsequently on a periodic basis. They determine, and put in place, appropriate safeguards to manage the risks of their various arrangements.

### Indicator 6

Degree-awarding bodies and other higher education providers determine appropriate due diligence procedures for each collaborative arrangement and implement these periodically to satisfy themselves about the capacity of the partner organisation to fulfil its designated role in the proposed arrangement. This investigation includes the legal status of the partner, and its capacity in law to contract with the degree-awarding body.

### Indicator 7

There is a written agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties which is regularly monitored and reviewed. It is signed by the authorised representatives of the degree-awarding body or other higher education provider and by the partner organisation(s) before students are admitted.

**Indicator 8**

The agreement or contract makes it clear that any serial arrangement may be undertaken only with the express written permission of the degree-awarding body in each instance. Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that they retain proper control of the academic standards of awards offered through any such arrangements.

**Indicator 9**

Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme can complete it under their awarding authority in the event that they wish to terminate a collaborative arrangement or a partner withdraws from an arrangement.

**Indicator 10**

All higher education providers maintain records (by type and category) of all collaborative activity that is subject to a formal agreement.

**Indicator 11**

Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for the academic standards of all credit and qualifications granted in their name. This responsibility is never delegated. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the standards of any of their awards involving collaborative arrangements are consistent with those set for other awards they confer at the same level and with UK national requirements.

**Indicator 12**

Degree-awarding bodies inform any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) that has approved or recognised a programme or award of any proposals to collaborate on any aspects of its delivery and of any formal agreements involving that programme or award. Degree-awarding bodies secure accreditation for collaborative arrangements where necessary. The status of the programme in respect of UK PSRB recognition is made clear to prospective students.

**Indicator 13**

Degree-awarding bodies approve module(s) and programmes delivered through a collaborative arrangement through processes for assuring quality and academic standards that are as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the degree-awarding body.

**Indicator 14**

Degree-awarding bodies clarify which provider is responsible for admitting a student to modules or programmes involving collaborative arrangements and ensure that admissions procedures are consistent with their own admissions policies.

**Indicator 15**

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that a partner organisation involved in the assessment of students understands and follows the requirements approved by the degree-awarding body for the conduct of assessments.

**Indicator 16**

Degree-awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The external examining procedures for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements are consistent with the degree awarding body's usual practices.

**Indicator 17**

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that modules and programmes offered through, or involving, collaborative arrangements are monitored and reviewed effectively through procedures that are consistent with or comparable to those used for their other provision.

**Indicator 18**

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<sup>17</sup> The exception to this are awards for programmes or modules relating to the study of a foreign language where the principal language of assessment is also the language of study and programmes provided and assessed by Welsh institutions in the Welsh or Gaelic languages.

## Appendix 2: Membership of the advisory group for this Chapter

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Professor John Baldock	Pro-Vice Chancellor Research	University of Kent
Alison Blackburn	Director of Student and Academic Support Service	University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)
Maldwyn Buckland	Acting chair	Association of Collaborative Providers (ACP)
Sarah Butler	Assistant Director	QAA (Chair)
Carolyn Campbell	Head of Networks and Partnerships	QAA
Professor Brian Caraher	Research Director: Poetry, Irish Writing, Creative Writing & Modern Literary Studies; Internationalisation Advocate, School of English	Queen's University Belfast
Nick Davy	HE Policy Manager	Association of Colleges (AoC)
Dr Ben Griffith	Education Policy Manager	General Medical Council
Dr Frank Haddleton	Director of Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement	University of Hertfordshire
Dr Anett Loescher	Development Officer	QAA (Secretariat)
Paul Lovegrove	Principal, International Study Centres, UK & Europe	Study Group UK
Ruth Moir	Director of International Development	Heriot Watt University
Huw Llandeg Morris	Academic Registrar	Swansea
Wendy Muir	Project Manager, International Partnership Development; Assistant Director (Senate Office)	University of Glasgow
Trish O'Brien	Head of Framework Implementation and Qualifications Recognition	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland
Neil Owens	Assistant Registrar, Academic Quality & Standards	Kingston University
Dr Robert Partridge	Academic Registrar	University of Bristol
Kate Quantrell	University Registrar and Secretary	Coventry University
Louise Walmsley	Director of Teaching and	University of Manchester

	Learning Support	
James Winter	Chair	Council of Validating Universities (CVU)

Corresponding members

Sarah Ingram	Project Officer, Registry and Academic Services	Cardiff University
Neil Mackenzie	Students' Union Manager	Bradford College Students' Union
Ashley Westwood	Placement student	University of Gloucestershire
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