

# Collaborative Partnership: Schedule of Roles and Responsibilities

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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Nexus ICA has a collaborative partnership with the University of West London (UWL) and, as such, they share responsibility for a variety of academic and quality-related areas. This document provides an overview of those differing roles and responsibilities that exist between Nexus ICA and UWL.

1.2 UWL has established processes for the management of collaborative arrangements. These include the appointment of a Collaborative Link Tutor (CLT) to maintain regular contact with and support a partner institution; an annual review of a partnership; periodic review of the operation of a partnership; and specific arrangements and procedures to cover the management of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience.

## 2. Collaborative Link Tutor

2.1 Appropriate academic and administrative support is provided to Nexus ICA (partner institution) via provision of a CLT, who is an experienced member of academic staff in a relevant subject area.

2.2 The CLT ensures that delivery of the academic courses and student experience are appropriately supported by both the partner institution and the University. As academic lead for operational oversight the CLT has the following key responsibilities:

- i. Maintaining regular contact with the partner institution, including visits, to ensure that the course is appropriately supported by the partner and the University.
- ii. Maintaining oversight of the partner's management of academic standards and the quality of the student experience, identifying any necessary actions.
- iii. Supporting the partner in its development of the course(s) and its staff expertise.
- iv. Checking that the partner and the students are aware of current regulations and changes to any University policy and that the partner has been provided with updates on procedures and regulations.
- v. Liaison with appropriate members of University staff as necessary to seek advice on problems or issues that may emerge within the partnership.
- vi. Helping to monitor publicity, marketing and public information (hard and electronic copy) including regular checks of the partner's website.
- vii. Contributing to relevant partnership review events.
- viii. Preparation of an annual report.

## 3. Annual Programme Review

3.1 The CLT is responsible for preparing an annual report. This report covers any actions taken as a result of the recommendations made in the previous year's report; a summary of the CLT's activities in support of the partnership; a commentary on management and administration, management of academic standards, the student experience, and on any risks arising; and concludes with recommended actions for the University/School or the partner institution during the forthcoming year.

3.2 Appendices may include a summary of student feedback, and a questionnaire for the CLT to use to obtain student feedback at course level where it has not been possible to meet with students can be provided by the AQSO.

3.3 The annual report will be submitted in the prescribed UWL template.

## 4. Annual Review of Collaborative Arrangements

4.1 An annual review meeting is held between the partner institution and the University. The minutes of the meeting are reported to the CPSG, as well as to the relevant SAQSC. The review meetings are organised by the AQSO and alternate between the University and the partner's premises.

4.2 The review considers the management and strategic direction of the partnership, the assurance of quality and standards, and includes a check of the information about the partnership held on the University's collaborative database. Matters for discussion include:

- i. Any changes within the partner institutions, during the previous year, e.g. mergers/changes of ownership, structural reorganisation, or changes of key personnel in the organisation.
- ii. The University's management of the collaborative provision.
- iii. The partner's management of the collaborative provision.
- iv. Effectiveness of academic liaison and administrative links between the partners.
- v. The assurance of academic standards through assessment processes.
- vi. Information from monitoring processes including external examiner reports.
- vii. Annual reports and student evaluations.
- viii. Student numbers, student progression and achievement.
- ix. The quality of student learning opportunities.
- x. Sufficiency of resources including staffing, staff development and learning facilities.
- xi. Any proposed new courses or other developments.
- xii. Contractual modifications or extensions.

4.3 Documentation will be sent from the University to the partner institution two weeks prior to the review meeting and will include the following:

- i. Agenda;
- ii. Minutes of previous year's annual review (where applicable);
- iii. External examiner(s) annual report(s);
- iv. Response to the external examiner(s) annual report(s);
- v. CLT annual report and visit reports;
- vi. Course annual report from the partner;
- vii. Course annual report from the University (where applicable);
- viii. Information held on the University's collaborative database for checking and updating;

- ix. Printout of the information on the University from the partner's website for checking.

## 5. Periodic Review of Collaborative Arrangements

5.1 A periodic review will be undertaken by the University normally every five years in order to consider the operation of the collaborative partnership and the procedures in place for quality assurance and enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards.

5.2 Matters for review include:

- i. The quality management and enhancement of the collaborative partnership by the University;
- ii. The delivery and standards of achievement of the course(s);
- iii. Resourcing of the course(s);
- iv. Student support and guidance;
- v. The quality of the teaching and learning and methods of assessment; and
- vi. Staffing and staff development of the staff delivering and supporting the course(s).

5.3 The review will include contribution from external subject experts with a view to identifying areas of good practice for wider dissemination, or areas for enhancement.

5.4 Further details as to the conduct of the periodic review can be found in the University's collaborative handbook (p. 10).

## 6. Assessments

### 6.1 Assessment Arrangements

6.1.1 The University has responsibility for the integrity of the assessment and examination process taking place at the partner institution.

6.1.2 The partner institution is responsible for designing coursework assessment tasks and examination papers although all such assessment materials will need to be approved by the relevant Head of School or field leader and the appropriate external examiner prior to the assessment taking place.

6.1.3 An assessment schedule for each course is drawn up in consultation with the partner institution and indicates responsibilities and timescales, the dates of examinations and assessment boards, external examiner visits, and coursework submission deadlines.

6.1.4 Assessment boards are conducted according to University regulations. Where an assessment board takes place at the partner institution, it will be attended or chaired by a member of University staff, and the terms of reference of the assessment board will be the same as for the assessment boards held at the University.

### 6.2 Marking and Moderation Arrangements

6.2.1 The organisation of marking, moderation and external examination of students' work is the responsibility of the partner institution course leader, with assistance from the CLT, where necessary.

6.2.2 First marking is undertaken by the partner institution, usually by the module leader or tutor responsible for delivering the module, using the assessment criteria and grade descriptors in the relevant Module Study Guide.

6.2.3 A sample of marked work is selected for second marking within the partner institution, by a member of the course team with knowledge of the subject area. The sample is usually a minimum of 20% plus all failures. In the event of a disagreement regarding the marks between the first and second markers, this should be resolved by discussion, with the reason for the disagreement and its resolution being recorded on the assessment cover sheet, prior to forwarding for moderation. If a disagreement between first and second markers cannot be resolved, the work should be referred to a third party, nominated by the Head of School or field leader.

6.2.4 Moderation of coursework is the process of ensuring that the appropriate quality assurance systems are in place to maintain the academic standards of the University award. A range of tutors, students and types of assessment activity should be included in the moderation process. External examiners moderate the assessment process across the partnership and comment upon the standards achieved by students, in relation to relevant external benchmarks and other comparable institutions within the UK. This function is conducted through the scrutiny of marked students' work, visits to the course teams, meeting students, observing practical assessments and attending assessment boards.

## 7 External Examining

### 7.1 The Selection and Appointment of External Examiners

7.1.1 The University retains overall responsibility for the selection and appointment of external examiners, though the partner institution can suggest and nominate suitable candidates.

7.1.2 Procedures for the nomination, selection, appointment and termination of external examiners, and their role, are set out in Section 6 of the University's Quality Handbook and also the partner institution's own external examining policy.

### 7.2 Preparation for External Examining

7.2.1 The University provides induction and briefing to external examiners on their role and responsibilities.

7.2.2 In addition to the above induction and briefing the partner institution will be involved in the preparation of external examiners, particularly with regard to informing them about the organisation. The Head of School or field leader provides an annual written agreement to external examiners, which specifies duties regarding curriculum coverage, sampling and attendance at assessment boards.

### 7.3 Reporting Arrangements

7.3.1 External examiners are required to report annually to the Vice-Chancellor. The AQSO forwards a copy of the report to the course leader at partner institutions. The University through the relevant School responds directly to the external examiners' reports. Collaborative partners are invited to formally comment and

contribute to the response, and the Head of School or field leader sends the overall response directly to the external examiner. A copy of the response is sent to the partner institution and the AQSO. Schools have procedures for dealing with any concern raised in an external examiner report in conjunction with the partner institution.

#### 7.4 Certificates and Transcripts

7.4.1 The University issues the certificates and transcripts for courses at partner institutions. As the awarding body, the University is responsible for ensuring that certificates and transcripts are accurate and that they are only issued to those who have satisfied the assessment and examination requirements for the award.

## 8 Course Management

### 8.1 Admissions, Enrolment and Registration

8.1.1 The responsibility for admissions lies with the partner institution with guidance on appropriate entrance requirements given by the University, as well as appropriate support and advice in particular cases or where difficulties or issues arise.

8.1.2 All students enrolled on a course at the partner institution that leads to an award from the University will be required to register with the University. The partner institution will communicate regularly with the University on matters affecting students' registration details and status, i.e.:

- i. Suspension of registration;
- ii. Permanent withdrawal;
- iii. Extensions of registration period;
- iv. Repeat periods of study.

8.1.3 In registering for a University award, students of the partner institution confirm that they undertake to observe the University regulations applicable to their course of study. Students are also subject to the regulations of the partner institution, and the partnership agreement indicates under which circumstances each set of regulations takes precedence. Students are bound by the course regulations in force at the time of their initial registration unless they have been notified of, and have agreed to, subsequent changes.

### 8.2 Student Progression

8.2.1 The University is responsible for the progression of all students on collaborative provision courses and maintains up-to-date records on student progression and achievement for review purposes. The partner institution will inform the University on a regular basis of all cases of withdrawal or non-progression and of the reasons. This is usually done through assessment boards and regular returns to the University.

### 8.3 Discipline, Complaints and Appeals

8.3.1 The partner institution is responsible for handling student discipline and complaints according to their own procedures. These procedures are checked for compliance with University protocols during institutional quality audits (described in Section 2 of the Collaborative Handbook), and the delegation of responsibilities is detailed in individual partnership agreements.

8.3.2 Students are entitled to a review of the handling of a complaint by the University, once the local process has been completed.

8.3.3 Appeals against the outcome of an assessment board and cases of alleged plagiarism are handled by the University. The University's procedures are provided in the Student Handbook and on the University's website: <http://uwl.ac.uk>.

#### 8.4 Information for Students and Student Support

8.4.1 The partner institution is responsible for ensuring that students are given accurate and comprehensive information about their course, which is comparable to the information given to students studying similar courses at the University. Information for students includes details about:

- i. The collaborative arrangement, including responsibilities of the different parties;
- ii. The status of the student with regard to the University
- iii. The opportunities for students to use the University's learning and other resources (as agreed in the partnership agreement);
- iv. The complaints procedure and how to use it;
- v. The appeals procedure and how to use it;
- vi. The nature of the relevant University award and the information which a successful candidate can expect on the certificate or transcript;
- vii. Named contacts at the University and the partner organisation;
- viii. Student Handbook;
- ix. Course Handbook;
- x. Course Specification.

8.4.2 Provision of student support including academic, administrative and pastoral support is the responsibility of the partner institution, in order that students studying on collaborative courses have a comparable experience to University students. It is acknowledged though that the scale of such provision of services may differ. Students will also have access to University services as part of their status as students of the University; the responsibility for provision of student resources and support is set out in the partnership agreement.

#### 8.5 Publicity and Marketing

8.5.1 Responsibility for the production and publication of all recruitment, publicity and marketing materials falls on the partner institution, however, in all types of collaboration, the partnership agreement indicates that the University approves all publicity and marketing material.

8.5.2 By means of the approval process, the University seeks to ensure that publicity and marketing materials avoid:

- i. Inappropriate or misleading comparisons with other providers;
- ii. Derogatory statements about other providers;
- iii. Misleading statements about recognition of awards by public or other authorised bodies;
- iv. Bringing UK higher education into disrepute.

8.5.3 The University will agree with the partner organisation the mechanisms for the approval of materials prior to publication. Approval of materials is undertaken by Schools, with the text normally checked by the CLT, in consultation with the Marketing, Communications and Recruitment Department at the University.

8.5.4 Course publicity will be produced taking into consideration the following guidance;

- i. The text does not mislead potential students as to the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the standing of the award offered.
- ii. The material should be consistent with course entries in the University prospectus and other centrally produced literature, and with any other material issued by the School and partner organisation.
- iii. The material should state how the course is to be offered (for example, by distance learning or face-to-face tuition), identify the location and specify the learner support which will be available.
- iv. It should clearly state the course entrance requirements, including, for overseas recruitment, the standard of English required to gain entry to the course.
- v. Information about fees and payment methods should be clear and accurate.
- vi. The University logo should be used in the approved format and should be placed conspicuously on all recruitment material and in all newspaper advertisements.
- vii. Publicity materials produced by the partner organisation (including advertisements) must be copied to the University for reference and monitoring purposes.

## 8.6 Financial and Legal Arrangements

8.6.1 Financial arrangements between the University and the partner institution are agreed and detailed in the financial schedule of the collaborative agreement. The financial arrangements will:

- i. Comply with statutory and funding council requirements, including the requirement that overseas provision should not be cross-subsidised by HEFCE funding.
- ii. Provide for the recording and accounting of all transactions in connection with the transfer of funds between the University and the partner organisation.
- iii. Provide safeguards so that, in the event of changes in the financial environment, academic standards and the interests of students are protected.
- iv. Where appropriate, in overseas provision, cover contingencies for dealing with currency fluctuations, including meeting obligations to students adversely affected by changes.
- v. Detail who is responsible for expenses arising from the management of the collaborative partnership link.

8.6.2 All legal details including the resolution of disputes are detailed in the collaborative agreement. Any disputes will be resolved within the jurisdiction of English law.

## 8.7 Termination of a Collaborative Arrangement

### 8.7.1 Process

- i. To terminate a collaborative arrangement (agreement and/or schedule), the University must complete a proposal to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE). Prior to preparing the proposal, the University will discuss with the partner the reasons for termination, the management of the period leading up to termination, and any changes to the financial arrangements. Further advice will be sought from the AQSO and the Head of In-House Legal Services. The proposal will be sent to the VCE for approval, and copied to the AQSO for comment on the suitability of the arrangements for safeguarding standards and quality while the contract is managed out.
- ii. Once the proposal to terminate is approved by the VCE, the Head of In-House Legal Services will send a formal letter to the partner organisation asking the partner to confirm acceptance of the termination, and send a copy of this letter to the AQSO. The AQSO will then organise a partnership closure meeting to discuss the "teaching-through" arrangements and any lessons learned from the management of the relationship.

### 8.7.2 Guidance

- i. Termination of collaborative agreements can involve substantial costs – especially if the University's legal right to terminate is challenged, or if a "breach of a material term" requires emergency action by the University (e.g. re-marking all scripts or investigating maladministration).
- ii. The preferred route to termination is by mutual agreement. If the collaborative agreement has not been breached, but the School has good reasons (financial, logistical, curricular, etc.) for not continuing, then a formal notice to terminate may be given prior to enrolment for the next academic year; otherwise, the collaborative agreement will continue as it stands for a further year.
- iii. The University continues to be responsible for the academic standards of the award(s) and the quality of learning opportunities available to students, and arrangements for "teaching-through" must be robust. Different models exist: for example, the partner may continue with teaching; it may be possible to bring students into the University, redesign the curriculum to allow for negotiated/distance learning, or arrange for another University to take over the collaborative agreement.
- iv. Any arrangement for "teaching-through" has associated delivery and monitoring costs related to the timeline for termination. University regulations specify the maximum period allowed to achieve a qualification. As it can be many years before students have exhausted their opportunities, the School must ensure that all necessary academic and administrative arrangements are in place, including assessment arrangements (double marking, assessment boards, external examining, etc.), internal review and reporting arrangements and any CLT support. The School will also need to know whether the fees/income split between

the partner and the University will continue on the same terms; revisions may be necessary depending on the “teaching-through” arrangements.

## 9. Information held by the University

### 9.1 Collaborative Partnership Database

Once a collaborative partnership has been approved by the AQSC, the details will be entered onto the University’s collaborative partnership database by the AQSO. The information held on the database includes:

- i. The name and address of the partner organisation;
- ii. The course(s) and awards involved;
- iii. The School responsible for the collaborative partnership;
- iv. The details of the Head of School;
- v. The details of the CLT;
- vi. The details of the individuals at the partnership responsible for overseeing the arrangement;
- vii. The partnership course leader(s);
- viii. The details of the external examiner(s);
- ix. The date the course(s) commenced with the partner;
  - x. The date for the previous and next annual review meetings;
  - xi. The date for the next periodic review;
- xii. Contract details regarding student access to University services;
- xiii. Contract details regarding responsibility for offer to overseas students;
- xiv. Contract expiry date.

# Appendix 1

## Collaborative Arrangements Quality Management Flow Chart

Source: UWL: 'Collaborative Handbook Section 3 – Management of collaborative arrangements'

