



# **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

**Part B: Assuring and Enhancing  
Academic Quality**

**Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education  
Provision with Others**

PART  
**B**

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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 students and the general public can expect of them. The Quality Code covers all four nations of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and all providers of UK higher education operating internationally. 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.

The Quality Code has three Parts. Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards contains three Chapters and seven Expectations. Each of the 11 Chapters of Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, and Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision contain a single Expectation. An Expectation 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 respective Chapter or Part. 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>

The Expectations in Part C and each Chapter of Part B are 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 supported by an explanatory note that gives more information about it, together with examples of how the Indicator may be interpreted in practice. Indicators are grouped into clusters under a heading. There are no Indicators in Part A. The explanatory text provided directly supports the relevant Expectation.

Each Part and 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.

The *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General introduction*<sup>3</sup> 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. A more detailed glossary is available on QAA's website.<sup>4</sup>

## The Quality Code and legislation

Higher education providers are 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 Part or Chapter where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.

## Equality and diversity in the Quality Code

The Quality Code promotes an inclusive approach by embedding consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, for example, because of a declared disability, specific cultural background, location or age, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in and responsibility for promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning. In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of

inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary. Offering an equal opportunity to learn is distinguished from every student having an equal chance of success, because this is dependent on a range of factors including their motivation and engagement in learning.

All higher education providers have legal obligations which they must meet, for example, in relation to equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination (in the UK particular considerations, such as the anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments, apply to disabled students). The Quality Code does not seek to duplicate or interpret these requirements.

## About this Chapter

Part A, Part C and other Chapters of Part B of the Quality Code set out how academic standards are established and maintained, and how the quality of learning opportunities is assured and enhanced; they apply to all UK higher education provision, regardless of where it is delivered or who delivers it. The Expectations make clear the role of all higher education providers in securing high quality learning opportunities for students, regardless of whether or not they are the degree-awarding body. All higher education providers that work with others to deliver learning opportunities should read these elements of the Quality Code first.

The delivery of learning opportunities with others can bring many benefits. Nevertheless, there are inherent risks to both academic standards and quality whenever learning opportunities are not directly delivered and supported by the degree-awarding body making the award. This Chapter sets out what steps can be taken to mitigate these risks and the formalities which can be conducted to secure arrangements. It describes what is expected of UK degree-awarding bodies managing arrangements for student learning to be delivered or supported by an organisation other than themselves (a delivery organisation or support provider). It also applies to higher education providers without degree awarding powers that arrange the delivery or support of learning by a third party (by agreement with the degree-awarding body). It sets out what is expected of degree-awarding bodies that provide joint, dual/double or multiple awards in partnership with other awarding bodies.

For many years, degree-awarding bodies have collaborated with other organisations to deliver parts of, or whole, programmes of study either within the UK or internationally. Some have also made arrangements for study abroad, placements or work-based learning outside the 'home' organisation as part of programmes of study. With the agreement of the degree-awarding body, higher education providers without degree awarding powers also make arrangements with third parties to deliver or support student learning. For example, further education colleges may provide foundation degrees that include work-based learning delivered or supported by other organisations.

This Chapter does not address the quality of learning opportunities provided through such arrangements. As indicated above, this is covered in the other Chapters of Part B of the Quality Code, and all higher education providers are required to meet the Expectations of these Chapters. The specific responsibilities of other parties delivering or supporting learning opportunities are determined by the providers procuring the arrangements. Instead, this Chapter focuses on how such arrangements are effectively managed and overseen by the degree-awarding body (or higher education provider without degree awarding powers arranging provision by a third party). Ensuring that robust processes are in place to secure the quality of student learning opportunities, irrespective of where these take place or who provides them, is central to this Chapter.

Sometimes Indicators and explanatory text refer to topics addressed in other Chapters of the Quality Code (for example, learning and teaching, assessment or learning resources). Where this occurs, only issues that are specific to the management of arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others are identified. 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 (the Code of Practice)*, Section 2: *Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (including e-learning) (amplified version 2010)*<sup>5</sup> and Section 9: *Work-Based and Placement Learning* (2007), published by QAA.

This Chapter was subject to public consultation between August and October 2012. The final version was published in December 2012 and it became a reference point for reviews coordinated by QAA in January 2014.

# Introduction: Managing higher education provision with others

## The scope of this Chapter

This Chapter of the Quality Code applies to the management of all learning opportunities leading or contributing to the award of academic credit or a qualification that are delivered, assessed or supported through an arrangement with one or more organisations other than the degree-awarding body.

In determining which provision falls within the scope of this Chapter, the critical factor is whether the achievement of the learning outcomes for the module or programme are dependent on the arrangement made with the other delivery organisation or support providers). It follows that voluntary placements or work experience do not fall within the scope of this Chapter, but placement learning or work-based learning necessary to achieve the relevant learning outcomes would. Similarly, hiring general rooms from another organisation are not be deemed to fall within this Chapter, but arrangements to use specialist facilities or equipment on which students were dependent to demonstrate specific learning outcomes are regarded as falling within its scope.

## The diversity of arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others

Contemporary higher education involves a wide range of arrangements for delivering learning and teaching at all academic levels. At one end of the continuum, programme delivery, learner support and assessment may all be provided by staff of the degree-awarding body on its campus(es). At the other end, a degree-awarding body may make arrangements for a programme of study to be delivered by another organisation, with support for learning provided from yet another organisation that is neither part of the delivery organisation nor the degree-awarding body.<sup>6</sup> Between these two extremities there are many possible combinations involving learning and teaching, research supervision, assessment, learner support, facilities and sites for learning or assessment delivered by the degree-awarding body and/or various delivery organisation(s) or support provider(s). These arrangements may apply to the delivery of whole programmes of study or to elements of programmes, individual modules, or self-contained components of study. Alternative sites and contexts for learning or assessment, or specialist support, resources or facilities for learning, may be provided, for example, by organisations offering work-based or placement learning opportunities, or employers supporting employees on higher education programmes where the workplace is used as a learning environment.

The number of such arrangements has grown as higher education providers have increased their participation in global higher education, widened access, promoted lifelong learning and increased student employability. Alongside these initiatives, the harmonisation of higher education systems across Europe as part of the Bologna Process has facilitated the development of joint programmes within Europe.

Consequently, many higher education providers now work with a wide range of organisations, including other awarding bodies, other education providers (both public and private), non-academic providers (or those whose purpose is not primarily education), and employers.

The following list (which is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive) illustrates different arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others to which this Chapter applies. They may operate either within the UK or transnationally.

- Joint supervision of research degrees or provision for doctoral research to be conducted at another academic or industrial organisation (applicable either to individuals or cohorts of students).
- Doctoral Training Centres involving more than one organisation.
- Franchised programmes delivered by delivery organisations through a variety of models.

- Validated programmes delivered by delivery organisations.
- Joint, dual/double or multiple awards granted by one or more other awarding bodies.
- Provision by 'embedded colleges' of study preparatory to undergraduate or postgraduate higher education 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 stage of a programme of a degree-awarding body.<sup>7</sup>
- A range of work-based learning that may involve delivering full programmes, individual modules or elements of programmes for a specific employer, or otherwise using the workplace as a site of learning.<sup>8</sup>
- Credit-rating of learning/training/continuing professional development provided by employers/other organisations.
- Placements, including those in industry, those required for teacher education, experience necessary for qualifications in the health professions (including for a Primary Medical Qualification) and continuing professional development.
- Study abroad, including exchanges and student mobility programmes such as ERASMUS.
- Provision of learning support, resources or specialist facilities.
- Branch campuses, educational villages and 'flying faculty' arrangements, which include aspects of collaboration (such as provision of resources or employment of local administrative/clerical staff through arrangements with another organisation).
- Distance learning and online delivery/massive open online courses (MOOCs) involving work with delivery organisations or support providers.
- Collaboration between higher education providers on the delivery of Gaelic and Welsh-language provision (such as sharing resources, common curricula).

The increasing variety of arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others can enhance the student experience and 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) which may widen access
- access to additional expertise and facilities for research degree provision
- 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 the Gaelic and Welsh languages.

Models of delivery, and the range of other organisations involved in delivering and supporting learning opportunities, are likely to continue to expand and to present new challenges. There are a number of principles that underpin good practice in managing all such arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others, and these inform the Expectation of this Chapter and the Indicators of sound practice.

## Responsibilities of the degree-awarding body

Part A of the Quality Code explains how academic standards are set and maintained for higher education qualifications in the UK and sets out what is expected of degree-awarding bodies in setting, delivering and maintaining the academic standards of the awards that they make.

The fundamental principle underpinning all arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others is that the degree-awarding body has ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, regardless of where these opportunities are delivered and who provides them.

The principal responsibility of the degree-awarding body is 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 formal transcript or record of achievement confirming these. Indicator 11 explores this more fully.

The degree-awarding body also has ultimate responsibility for the quality of learning opportunities provided, even though aspects of their delivery and quality assurance may be delegated to another organisation. Degree-awarding bodies are responsible for assuring themselves that the Expectations of the Quality Code are met and that its Indicators of sound practice have been considered by those directly delivering or supporting learning opportunities. This includes ensuring that any delivery organisations or support providers have an explicit and unambiguous understanding of their respective responsibilities.

In the case of transnational arrangements with other awarding bodies, there may need to be an accommodation as to how some principles are put into practice. The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2009) provides a reference point for collaboration with partners in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

## Assessment and management of risk

Whether the benefits presented by a potential arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with others are outweighed by the challenges depends on the nature of the delivery organisation or support provider and on the activity.

Delivering learning opportunities with others inevitably carries risks. Arrangements that break down can present difficulties for students and can 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 higher education providers without degree awarding powers that are making arrangements with a third party) to assess the risks involved and manage them appropriately.

Adopting a risk-based approach to commissioning, developing and managing arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others mitigates these dangers. This approach ensures that the effort invested is commensurate with the complexity of the proposed collaboration, the status of the delivery organisation or support provider, the level of experience of the degree-awarding body, and the risks associated with each of these.<sup>9</sup>

## Proportionate procedures and processes

In the current context, a 'one size fits all' approach to the development, approval and management of arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others is neither sufficient nor appropriate. Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that are arranging provision by a third party) now find it necessary to develop and approve a range of different practices and procedures that are tailored and proportionate to the risks of the collaboration they are planning. In particular, the due diligence enquiries and the formal agreements adopted are proportionate to the volume, complexity and nature of the activity, to the type of delivery organisation or support provider involved, and to the associated risks. For example, the procedures that apply to student placements are likely to be less complex than those that apply to validation of programmes delivered by an organisation in another country.



Equally, degree-awarding bodies may be flexible in the design and application of internal quality assurance processes in order to ensure that these 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>10</sup>

This Chapter does not prescribe any particular form of due diligence or formal agreement, nor does it provide detailed guidance on how to develop, negotiate and manage arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others. However, it does address the most important factors that need to be considered in establishing and overseeing such arrangements and signposts a range of advice and guidance.

## External links

Higher education providers are responsible for ascertaining which laws and regulations apply to them. To meet the Expectation of this Chapter of the Quality Code, higher education providers may wish to consider the indicative lists of further guidelines, references and resources. QAA takes no responsibility for the content of external websites .

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### Further guidance, reference and resources

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/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2005) *Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education*  
[www.unesco.org/education/guidelines\\_E.indd.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/guidelines_E.indd.pdf)

UNESCO/Council of Europe (2007) *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*  
[www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/REVISED\\_CODE\\_OF\\_GOOD\\_PRACTICE\\_TNE.pdf](http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/REVISED_CODE_OF_GOOD_PRACTICE_TNE.pdf)

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/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG\\_3edition-2.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG_3edition-2.pdf)

UNESCO (1997) *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region*  
[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13522&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13522&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

The Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (2004) *Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees*  
[www.aic.lv/bologna/Recognition/leg\\_aca/RecJDand\\_ExpM.pdf](http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Recognition/leg_aca/RecJDand_ExpM.pdf)

Joint Degree Management and Administration Network (JOIMAN) *How to Manage Joint Study Programmes? Guidelines and Good Practices from the JOIMAN Network*  
[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](http://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)

Universities UK (UUK) (2010) *The Growth of Private and For-Profit Higher Education Providers in the UK*

[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/PrivateProviders.aspx](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/PrivateProviders.aspx)

Council of Validating Universities (CVU) (2012) *CVU Handbook for Practitioners: Managing Quality and Standards in Collaborative Provision*

[www.cvu.ac.uk/about](http://www.cvu.ac.uk/about)

Association of Colleges (2012) *HE in FE Guide*

[www.aoc.co.uk/term/college-higher-education](http://www.aoc.co.uk/term/college-higher-education)

QAA's Concerns procedure

[www.qaa.ac.uk/concerns](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/concerns)

### **Examples of guidance on managing placements and work-based learning:**

Resources produced by ASET ([www.asetonline.org/](http://www.asetonline.org/)), in particular - ASET (2009) *A Good Practice Guide for Placement and Other Work-Based Learning Opportunities in Higher Education*  
[agcas.org.uk/assets/download?file=946&parent=384](http://agcas.org.uk/assets/download?file=946&parent=384)

ASET (2010) *Health and Safety for Student Placements*

### **Examples of employer-body guidelines concerning work-based and experiential learning:**

Chartered Institute of Public Relations (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*

[http://creativeskillset.org/assets/0000/6234/Guidelines\\_for\\_employers\\_offering\\_work\\_placements\\_in\\_the\\_Creative\\_Industries.pdf](http://creativeskillset.org/assets/0000/6234/Guidelines_for_employers_offering_work_placements_in_the_Creative_Industries.pdf)

Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (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)

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# Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about managing the delivery of learning opportunities with others, which degree-awarding bodies and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that are organising provision by third parties are required to meet.

**Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.**

Note:

In both the Expectation and the subsequent Indicators, explicit reference is made to the particular responsibilities reserved for degree-awarding bodies. Degree-awarding bodies, and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that are arranging provision by a third party, are all required to meet the second part of the Expectation and will find the Indicators of sound practice helpful in this respect.

The terms 'delivery organisation' and 'support provider' are used throughout this Chapter to denote an organisation with which an arrangement has been made for learning to be delivered or support to be provided. The term 'partner' is used reserved for the other awarding bodies involved in joint, dual/double or multiple awards.

# Indicators of sound practice

## Strategy and governance

### Indicator 1

**A strategic approach to delivering learning opportunities with others is adopted. Appropriate levels of resources (including staff) are committed to the activities to ensure that the necessary oversight is sustained.**

Degree-awarding bodies that deliver learning opportunities with others (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that arrange for provision by a third party)<sup>11</sup> determine their strategic approach to these activities and how they can be sustained. Arrangements are considered and purposeful, and their role in delivering the mission, academic portfolio and corporate plan of the higher education providers is clear. All arrangements for learning opportunities to be delivered or supported by organisations other than the degree-awarding body are compatible with this considered strategic approach, in order to secure organisational commitment to them and to facilitate the planned allocation of appropriate resources to support and oversee them.

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that arrange provision by a third party) ensure they can commit the necessary staff and other resources at both central and local levels to the initial investigation, negotiation, approval, development and sustained oversight of arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others. As portfolios of such activity may be both wide ranging and complex, this involves expertise in the assurance of academic standards and quality; the necessary financial, legal and management skills; and relevant academic and cultural knowledge and experience. The level of oversight and administrative capacity required depends on several factors, including the number of organisations involved, the type of activity, and the geographical distance from the degree-awarding body.

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### Further guidance, reference and resources

Council of Validating Universities (2012) *CVU Handbook for Practitioners: Managing Quality and Standards in Collaborative Provision*.  
[www.cvu.ac.uk/about](http://www.cvu.ac.uk/about)

ENQA (2009) *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*  
[www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG\\_3edition-2.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ESG_3edition-2.pdf)

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)

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## Indicator 2

**Governance arrangements at appropriate levels are in place for all learning opportunities which are not directly provided by the degree-awarding body. Arrangements for learning to be delivered, or support to be provided, are developed, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-awarding body.**

## Policies and procedures

The senior academic authority of degree-awarding bodies formally develops, approves, documents and operates a range of policies and procedures that govern the delivery of learning opportunities with others. As the range of activities is diverse, the policies, procedures, frameworks and management structures which are put in place to govern them may vary. The contractual arrangements and the consequential entitlements of participating students may also differ. Despite these variations, these policies and procedures are fit for purpose and proportionate to the relative risks involved. Arrangements are firmly based on these policies and procedures, which are observed by all delivery organisations, support providers and partners.

For further information on governance arrangements, see the Quality Code Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards.

## Taxonomies of arrangements

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that arrange for provision by a third party) are clear as to what the various types of arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others 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 delivery organisation or support provider of aspects of the management of academic standards and quality, and the respective roles of the degree-awarding body and the other party in this respect
- requirements of other third parties, such as professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- student entitlements
- the relationship between the student and the degree-awarding body.

Degree-awarding bodies may delegate aspects of delivery or management of a module or programme (such as promotion and publicity; recruitment; selection and admission; learning, teaching and assessment; management of student records; and quality assurance) where they have confidence that the delivery organisation has the capacity to assume that function. In the context of joint degrees, responsibility for these aspects is shared with the other awarding body or bodies, and the partners typically divide the delivery and aspects of management between them. In all circumstances, degree-awarding bodies devise and operate policies and procedures to ensure that their respective responsibilities are clearly identified, formally recorded and properly discharged.

Degree-awarding bodies may find it useful to develop a taxonomy of the different ways they deliver learning opportunities with others which explains the different policies, procedures and student entitlements that each activity entails.

## Organisational structures for oversight and accountability

Degree-awarding bodies are ultimately responsible for the quality of any learning opportunities delivered through others on their behalf. In both degree-awarding bodies and higher education providers without degree awarding powers that arrange provision by a third party, the central locus of responsibility for arrangements to deliver learning opportunities with others is clear, as are the delegated functions at different levels of the organisation (for example, department, school or faculty). It is also made clear how accountability for these activities is consistently assured throughout the organisation, through both executive and deliberative structures. For more information on this topic see Part C: Information About Higher Education Provision.

Given the increasing complexity, range and quantity of activities where learning opportunities are delivered or supported with others and not directly by the degree-awarding body, the precise locus of central responsibility may differ depending on the type of activity. Both the management arrangements and the responsibilities delegated may vary according to the type of activity and its associated risks. For example, arrangements involving the validation of full programmes elsewhere (either within the UK or internationally) may be administered through central 'partnerships' or 'collaborative provision' office; arrangements for placements may be managed through individual departments, faculties or careers offices; placements 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.

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### Further guidelines, references and resources

Committee of University Chairs (2009) *Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK*

[www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/1/pubs/hefce/2009/0914/09\\_14.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/1/pubs/hefce/2009/0914/09_14.pdf)

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#### 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. Consideration of the business case is conducted separately from approval of the academic proposal.**

The delivery of learning opportunities with others can provide benefits. However, such arrangements also have the potential to create opportunities for corrupt practices or to present conflicts of interest. Financial considerations may have a negative impact on the proper resourcing of academic standards and quality. As part of governance arrangements, appropriate safeguards are established for the negotiation and agreement of arrangements with other parties in order to protect against potential conflicts of interest or competing priorities (both for the organisation and for individuals) which might otherwise compromise the integrity of arrangements or the quality of the learning opportunities provided.

Decisions about the academic probity of programmes, modules or credit are taken separately from the negotiations about the legal, financial or other implications of potential arrangements with other parties (though these may be conducted concurrently). Due diligence enquiries and decisions about agreements are completed before the implementation of any academic activities.

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## Further guidelines, references and resources

*The Bribery Act (2010)*

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents)

International Unit in association with Eversheds LLP (2012) A Legal Guide to UK Anti-Bribery and Corruption

*Companies Act (2006)*

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents)

*Further and Higher Education (Scotland Act) (2005)*

[www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/6/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/6/contents)

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### 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 as to their own 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 about the legal basis for pooling or combining powers to make awards.

Degree-awarding bodies ascertain that they themselves 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 understand the terms of their own degree awarding powers, 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 academic framework and regulations any programme leading to a joint award is delivered and assessed, or alternatively whether a bespoke academic framework and regulations is required.

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

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

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## Further guidelines, references and resources

Concerning powers, rights and duties of further and higher education providers, and of degree-awarding bodies:

*Further and Higher Education Act (1992)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents)

*Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (1992)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/37/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/37/contents)

Concerning the use of the university title:

*Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/30/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/30/contents)

*Section 49 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (1992)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/37/section/49](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/37/section/49)

Concerning lawful UK degrees:

*Sections 214 to 217 of the Education Reform Act (1988)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/part/IV/crossheading/unrecognised-degrees](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/part/IV/crossheading/unrecognised-degrees)

*The Education (Recognised Bodies) (England) Order (2010)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2618/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2618/contents/made)

*The Education (Listed Bodies) (Scotland) Order (2004)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2004/539/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2004/539/contents/made)

*Companies Act (2006)*  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/46/contents)

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (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)

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# Developing, agreeing and managing an arrangement to deliver learning opportunities with others

## Indicator 5

**The risks of each arrangement to deliver learning opportunities with others are assessed at the outset and reviewed subsequently on a periodic basis. Appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of the various arrangements are determined and put in place.**

## Staff capacity for assessing and managing risk

Degree-awarding bodies arranging to deliver learning opportunities with others (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by a third party) 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 arrangement; selecting and deciding upon the other party or parties; determining ways of managing risks; and establishing risk management strategies.

Degree-awarding bodies that validate modules or programmes ensure that they have in place (or can secure) the relevant disciplinary expertise to approve, monitor and, if necessary, deliver teaching, learning and assessment in the range of subject areas envisaged. They have the knowledge, experience and intellectual capital to underwrite the relevant qualifications. See also below and Indicator 9.

## Financial risks

The financial risks associated with arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others can be considerable, especially if the arrangements generate 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 academic interests of students.

Degree-awarding bodies have obligations to students admitted to programmes under their awarding authority (see Indicator 9). Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have thoroughly considered the financial standing of prospective delivery organisations or support providers and adequately assessed the financial risks of working with them in a potentially volatile marketplace or commercial environment, including the costs of providing alternative teaching to complete the delivery of the programme if the arrangement fails.

Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others 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. Arrangements are therefore properly costed and accounted for accurately and fully (see Indicator 6).

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by a third party) that are subject to the financial regulations of public funding bodies ensure that they are operating within any relevant requirements or limitations in respect of the use of publicly provided resources for the purpose of delivering learning opportunities with others.

## Risks presented by other organisations

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without Degree awarding powers arranging provision with a third party) consider carefully whether prospective delivery organisations, support providers or partners share their understanding of, and vision for, the proposed arrangement to work together. In arrangements with employers, privately funded higher education 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. The requirements of the degree-awarding body for the maintenance of its academic standards and the assurance of quality are communicated clearly.

The delivery of transnational education is subject to complex, changing legislative requirements and regulatory frameworks across different national jurisdictions.

There may be requirements for delivery organisations or support providers to be registered, 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. Degree-awarding bodies keep abreast of the implications of these requirements for any arrangements, not only at the outset but on an ongoing basis.

An assessment is made of the UK provider's ability to operate within the legislative, political, ethical and cultural requirements of a particular country and, at the same time, to fulfil the Expectations of the Quality Code.

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. 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 other organisations involved in the delivery or support of programmes leading to UK awards.

## Risk management

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) have effective risk-management procedures in place to protect the interests of students in the event that a delivery organisation, support provider or partner does not discharge its responsibilities. Provision is made to suspend or withdraw from an arrangement if the other organisation does not fulfil its obligations or if its ownership or status changes in such a way as to jeopardise the arrangement. Termination and mediation procedures are put in place that include the provision of guidance and support for students in such circumstances. Degree awarding bodies ensure that adequate contingency plans are in place against the possibility that a delivery organisation becomes insolvent, ceases trading, or an agreement is terminated for some other reason and it has to assume responsibility for teaching out a programme (see Indicator 9).

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

Periodically, arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others are reviewed to ensure that they are achieving the intended objectives, that the organisations involved remain compatible, and to reassess the academic, financial, legal, ethical, and reputational risks.

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## Further guidelines, references and resources

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Risk management guidance (repository of resources)

[www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/reg/assurance/guidance/riskmanagement/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/reg/assurance/guidance/riskmanagement/)

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) Institutional Assurance Review

[www.hefcw.ac.uk/working\\_with\\_he\\_providers/institutional\\_assurance/audit\\_risk.aspx](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/working_with_he_providers/institutional_assurance/audit_risk.aspx)

JISClegal website

[www.jisclegal.ac.uk/legalareas/copyrightipr.aspx](http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/legalareas/copyrightipr.aspx)

UUK (2007) *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education*

[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/SORP.aspx](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/SORP.aspx)

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\\_final\\_281011cm\\_beo\\_commentsrchecked\\_2\\_.doc](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/equalityact/nsg_fhe_provider_version_am_final_281011cm_beo_commentsrchecked_2_.doc)

UK Border Agency (UKBA) (2012) *Points-Based System: Guidance for Sponsors*

[www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers/types-of-licence](http://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers/types-of-licence)

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### Indicator 6

**Appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures are determined for each proposed arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with an organisation other than the degree-awarding body. They are conducted periodically to check the capacity of the other organisation to continue to fulfil its designated role in the arrangement.**

In order to safeguard the interests of students, degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) undertake appropriate due diligence before proceeding in any substantive way with the development of an arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with others. Due diligence enquiries are refreshed periodically and also where circumstances change (for example, if the activities are extended or if the ownership of a delivery organisation or support provider changes).

The nature of the arrangement and its risks determines what type of due diligence enquiries may be necessary. An assessment is made of the conditions that are required 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 vary depending on factors such as: whether an entire programme is being delivered by an organisation other than the degree-awarding body; 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 required; or whether placements for a cohort of students are required.

Due diligence procedures which are appropriate and proportionate to the arrangement envisaged are determined and operated. For example, checks on the legal status of a UK business potentially providing an individual placement or work-based learning might simply involve checking information at Companies House. Checks on the financial stability of the organisation are unlikely to be necessary for local authority-funded schools or social services providing placements. These enquiries provide information that enables the academic, financial, legal and reputational risks identified to be addressed.

Key areas where proportionate due diligence enquiries are necessary for most arrangements include the following:

- the ability of the prospective delivery organisation, support provider or partner to provide the human and material resources to operate the arrangement successfully
- the academic/professional capacity of the prospective delivery, support or partner organisation to deliver any learning and teaching or support at the appropriate levels
- the ability of the prospective delivery, support or partner organisation to provide an appropriate and safe working environment for students
- the legal status of the prospective delivery, support or partner organisation in its own country and its capacity to enter into a legally binding agreement
- the accredited or recognised status of a prospective delivery, support or partner organisation accorded by the relevant authorising bodies in the country where the provision will be delivered
- the reputation and/or academic standing of the organisation (drawing on a range of performance indicators,<sup>12</sup> as well as the experience of other providers who have collaborated with the organisation)
- the financial stability of the prospective delivery organisation, support provider or partner.

Additional enquiries, which may include the following areas, are pursued depending on, and proportionate to, the type of arrangement involved.

## **International arrangements**

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) fully apprise themselves of:

- the legal and regulatory frameworks of the country concerned
- the political, ethical and cultural context
- the higher education structures in the country where the delivery, support or partner organisation is operating
- cultural assumptions about higher education learning methods
- any requirements for the potential delivery, support or 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 educational 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 international partners may have, either within the UK or overseas, and whether these could present either potential risks to the proposed arrangement or to the reputation of those involved.

## **Programmes leading to joint awards**

Degree-awarding bodies:

- satisfy themselves that their partner(s) has/have the legal and regulatory capacity to grant the relevant joint awards
- ascertain 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 their own qualifications.

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

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision with a third party) ascertain:

- the ownership and financing of the prospective delivery organisation or support provider
- its governance structures (in particular ensuring 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 providers may have, either within the UK or overseas, and whether these could present potential risks to the proposed arrangement or to the reputation of those involved.

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

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by a third party):

- ascertain the level of familiarity of the prospective delivery organisation with the standards and ethos of UK higher education
- satisfy themselves about the ability of the prospective delivery 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 an equitable, valid, reliable manner.

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### **Further guidelines, references and resources**

*The Bribery Act (2010)*

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents)

International Unit in association with Eversheds LLP (2012) *A Legal Guide to UK Anti-Bribery and Corruption*

The International Unit (2012) *International Partnerships: A Legal Guide for UK Universities 2012*

[www.brookes.ac.uk/documents/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/collaborative-provision/international-partnerships-legal-guide/](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/documents/asa/apqo/quality-and-standards-handbook/collaborative-provision/international-partnerships-legal-guide/)

Council of Validating Universities (2012) *CVU Handbook for Practitioners: Managing Quality and Standards in Collaborative Provision*

[www.cvu.ac.uk/about](http://www.cvu.ac.uk/about)

UKCISA: UK Council for International Student Affairs

[www.ukcisa.org.uk/](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/)

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## Indicator 7

**There is a written and legally binding agreement, or other document, 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 higher education provider without degree -awarding powers arranging provision by a third party) and by the delivery organisation, support provider or partner(s) before the relevant activity commences.**

## Written agreements

Written agreements, or other documents, clarifying the responsibilities of those involved and what each can expect of the others are in place for all arrangements where learning opportunities are delivered with others. These agreements also provide assurance that the delivery, support or partner organisation understands the requirements of UK higher education and agrees to fulfil its responsibilities and obligations.

Appropriate written agreements, memoranda, contracts or other documents, such as letters, are put in place; these are proportionate to the scale and nature of the activities involved and allow the degree-awarding body sufficient powers to protect standards and quality. The nature and content of these agreements differ depending on the type of arrangement. For example, a letter confirming the arrangements involved may suffice for an individual work placement, whereas a validation arrangement would require a more complex agreement. There are differences in the scope and coverage of a formal articulation agreement as compared with a contract for franchising a programme to an international delivery organisation. The content of a memorandum of agreement or contract for a joint award between two or more awarding bodies would differ from an agreement for dual awards.

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) take advice from their legal advisers as necessary on the appropriate form and content of written agreements or contracts.

Formal agreements are signed by the relevant authority within the organisation. This may vary depending on the nature of the activity. Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) ensure that they have a clear and well publicised central policy on who is authorised to sign different types of agreements or documents on their behalf. Details of the authorised signatories are regularly updated and widely available within the organisation.

Formal agreements are signed before the activity to which they relate commences. For example, if a degree-awarding body makes an arrangement for programmes to be provided by another delivery organisation, agreements are signed before students are admitted. Agreements for placements or study abroad are signed before the activity commences.

## The content of agreements

The following list (which is not exhaustive) highlights matters relating to academic standards and quality that may be addressed when drafting an agreement, contract or other document for an arrangement for learning opportunities to be provided by an organisation other than the degree-awarding body.

- 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 that are particular to the delivery of specific programme(s) encompassed by the 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 (or, in the case of joint degrees, shared) in each arrangement (for example, the management of admissions, arrangements for student engagement or the conduct of annual monitoring).
- Clarification as to which academic frameworks and regulations and quality assurance processes apply.
- The services to be provided by each organisation taking account of the obligations to ensure that learning opportunities are delivered to the requirements of the degree-awarding body.
- Financial arrangements.
- Insurance and indemnity.
- Arrangements for academic appeals and student complaints.
- 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.
- A statement of the arrangements through which the parties will ensure compliance with statutory obligations including equality, data protection, freedom of information, health and safety, immigration, and environmental law.
- The source or location of any quality-related information or statistical data to be produced, for example for a funding council or professional statutory regulatory bodies, and responsibility for submission of this information.
- A statement as to whether serial arrangements involving further sub-contracting are precluded, and, if they are not, what sorts of arrangements might be permitted and under what conditions (see Indicator 8).
- Arrangements governing the use of the degree-awarding body's name and logo; and provision for oversight, by the degree-awarding body, of information relating to the arrangement and any associated promotional activity that has been placed in the public domain.
- An obligation on the delivery organisation, support provider or 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 delivery organisation or support provider changing ownership and what this might imply for re-recognition or revalidation and establishing a revised agreement.
- Specification of the law applicable to the agreement and 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 (including scope for compensation).
- Specification of the residual obligations of both parties to students on termination of the arrangement, including the obligations of the degree-awarding body to enable students to complete their studies leading to the award of credit or a qualification in its name (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 with one or more delivery organisations, degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision with third parties) 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.

## **Implementation, monitoring and review of agreements**

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) ensure that commitments in the written agreement are effectively communicated to all relevant staff in the delivery, support or 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. Mechanisms are put in place to monitor and ensure that the terms, conditions and expectations that were originally approved have been, and continue to be, met. The effectiveness of written agreements is also reviewed periodically (at organisational and/or programme/module levels as appropriate to the activity). The frequency and nature of monitoring and review may best be decided by reference to risk, proportionality and fitness for purpose.

Formal written agreements have a defined lifespan. A review process is initiated before agreements are extended or renewed.

Degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers arranging provision by third parties) assure themselves that they have the necessary management capacity at local and central levels to communicate effectively with delivery, support or partner organisations and to oversee the implementation, operation, monitoring and review of formal agreements and the outcomes of the arrangements they cover.

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## Further guidelines, references and resources

Council of Validating Universities (2012) *CVU Handbook for Practitioners: Managing Quality and Standards in Collaborative Provision*  
[www.cvu.ac.uk/about](http://www.cvu.ac.uk/about)

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)

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### Indicator 8

**Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that they retain proper control of the academic standards of awards where learning opportunities are delivered with others. No serial arrangements are undertaken without the express written permission of the degree-awarding body, which retains oversight of what is being done in its name.**

Serial arrangements occur when the delivery organisation (through an arrangement of its own) offers whole programmes (franchised or validated by the degree-awarding body) elsewhere or assigns to another party powers delegated to it by the degree-awarding body. Such arrangements can severely curtail the ability of a degree-awarding body to safeguard the academic standards of its awards. For this reason, degree-awarding bodies do not permit serial arrangements (that is, further sub-contracting) involving their programmes in their entirety.

Degree-awarding bodies may permit some aspects of programme delivery to be delegated by the delivery organisation to a third party, however. For instance, as noted above, degree-awarding bodies may agree to the delivery organisation arranging for a third party to provide specific learning opportunities such as placements or work-based learning. This permission, and the terms and general procedures under which it operates, is reflected in the written agreement. In order to discharge their 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 one organisation, it becomes much more difficult once the chain of responsibility is extended. Therefore, degree-awarding bodies ensure that the chain of information in such 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.

Degree-awarding bodies may also participate in consortium arrangements with multiple delivery organisations (and sometimes multiple awarding bodies) to provide a range of learning opportunities and this can provide considerable benefits in the context of widening participation and offer a range of



progression opportunities. These are not serial arrangements but multi-party arrangements. Indicator 7 refers to the practice of drawing up a formal agreement appropriate to the nature of the collaboration involved. Agreements may be drawn up between multiple organisations that make clear the relationship between each of the participating parties and their collective and individual responsibilities. Thus degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have a direct relationship with each individual organisation in a learning activity involving multiple parties and that they can maintain clear oversight of, and responsibility for, what is done in their name.

### Indicator 9

**Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a delivery organisation or support provider or partner withdraws from an arrangement or that the degree-awarding body decides to terminate an arrangement.**

When degree-awarding bodies enter into an arrangement for a programme of study to be delivered with others, or agree an 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 an obligation to students admitted to programmes under their awarding authority. When either a degree-awarding body or its delivery organisation or partner decides to withdraw from or terminate an arrangement, for whatever reason, degree-awarding bodies follow their usual protocols applicable to 'in-house' provision for orderly discontinuation of the programme in a manner which protects the academic interests of students studying on, or who have applied to study on the programme. See *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*.

There may also be occasions where a delivery organisation becomes insolvent, ceases trading or the agreement has suddenly to be terminated for some other reason. Degree-awarding bodies therefore ensure that adequate contingency plans are in place against that possibility (see Indicator 5). A range of solutions may be possible for teaching out the programme. Only in exceptional cases, and with the express agreement of the students involved, is the awarding authority transferred to a third party degree-awarding body.

Similarly, in the context of arrangements for learning opportunities to be delivered or supported by employers, degree-awarding bodies (and higher education providers without degree awarding powers organising this provision) 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 arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others that are subject to a formal agreement.**

See Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision. Given the range of activities and arrangements in any one higher education provider, it might not be reasonable (or appropriate) for records to be held centrally. As different offices within a provider may be involved in managing different types of arrangements (see Indicator 2), they may maintain separate records of these.

How the records are maintained may therefore reflect the organisational structures or the ways in which the provider chooses to categorise its activities (see Indicator 2). Higher education providers determine these categories but make it clear to what they relate. They ensure that there is a central locus of responsibility for accessing these separately maintained records and providing information on them as necessary when requested.

A higher education provider's public reputation depends in part on its willingness to be open and informative about its activities. Degree-awarding bodies, higher education providers without degree awarding powers and organisations with which they work conduct their activities openly and transparently with a view to maintaining and enhancing public confidence in UK higher education.

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## Further Guidelines, References and Resources

HEFCE (2011) *Provision of Information about Higher Education: Outcomes of Consultation and Next Steps, 18/2011*

[www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2011/11\\_18/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2011/11_18/).

HEFCE, Wider Information Set

[www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/it/publicinfo/kis](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/it/publicinfo/kis).

The National Archives, *Records Management Guidance*

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/manage-information/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/manage-information/)

Diploma Supplement

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/diploma-supplement\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/diploma-supplement_en.htm)

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## Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards

### Indicator 11

**Degree-awarding bodies are responsible 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 learning opportunities delivered by others are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that they confer at the same level. They are also consistent with UK national requirements.**

The legal power of a degree-awarding body in the UK to grant higher education qualifications (see Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards) carries with it a responsibility to ensure that the academic standards of all its qualifications and academic credit (where used) 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 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. While responsibility for academic standards is never delegated, degree-awarding bodies may, in the context of joint awards, exercise this responsibility in conjunction with another awarding body.

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 may be based on a single programme and the same assessed student work. If so, degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves that they are content to make an award on this basis, and are able to do so within their academic frameworks and 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 one programme has also resulted in the conferral of an additional award (see also Indicator 19) by another awarding body. Regardless of the collaborative nature of the programme, responsibility for each separate 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), regardless of where this takes place or who delivers it.

Explicit reference to the Quality Code enables degree-awarding bodies, students, employers and the public (whether within the UK or internationally) to have confidence that an award of credit or a qualification is of a recognised and acceptable academic standard within the UK. *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS), which have been adopted by the relevant degree-awarding bodies in the UK (see Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards), 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 arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others. Degree-awarding bodies satisfy themselves, through their approval processes, that UK qualifications involving delivery (whether partially or entirely) with other organisations or partners are appropriately located within the FHEQ/SCQF.<sup>13</sup>

Where a degree-awarding body validates programmes leading to the same qualification provided by different delivery organisations 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/FQHEIS 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 academic standards. Where transnational education is concerned, alternatives to the UK-centred context of some Subject Benchmark Statements may be 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 arrangements. Such variations are explicitly acknowledged and explained in order to avoid misunderstandings. In some international jurisdictions, all students, irrespective of programme of study, may be required to take certain local modules; any such requirements may be met independently of the degree-awarding body's programme.

Where degree-awarding bodies award credit for modules delivered through arrangements with delivery organisations, 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 UK national credit frameworks.<sup>14</sup> In the case of credit imported for study abroad, credits may be awarded in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), or other national credit systems where appropriate.

In formulating articulation agreements, degree-awarding bodies assure themselves that the programme provided by the delivery organisation is, and remains, at an appropriate level to articulate with the designated 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 delivery organisation contribute to the final award and, if so, ensure that the volume and level of learning completed 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 their modules or programmes delivered through other organisations are assessed at the appropriate level (with reference to Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, 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* is met, and that consideration is given to the acquisition of appropriate skills identified in the *Vitae Researcher Development Statement* (endorsed by QAA).<sup>15</sup> Where such collaboration leads to joint awards, any national expectations, in terms of academic standards, of partner awarding bodies are also met.

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### Further guidelines, references and resources

The 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>

*Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England*  
[www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2730](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2730)

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48_en.htm)

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#### Indicator 12

**When making arrangements to deliver a programme with others, degree-awarding bodies fulfil the requirements of any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) that has approved or recognised the programme or qualification, in relation to aspects of its delivery and any associated formal agreements. The status of the programme or qualification in respect of PSRB recognition is made clear to prospective students.**

UK PSRBs sometimes limit their accreditation, approval or recognition of programmes or qualifications 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 secure accreditation for programmes delivered with others where this is a requirement.

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 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 and that the status of the programme is clearly publicised.

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### Further guidelines, references and resources

Professional Associations Research Network (PARN)  
[www.parnglobal.com/?mn=1](http://www.parnglobal.com/?mn=1)

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# Quality assurance

Arrangements for maintaining academic standards and assuring the quality of learning opportunities are in place, at appropriate levels, for any learning delivered or supported by organisation(s) other than the degree-awarding body or a partner. Degree-awarding bodies put in place arrangements that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for their own directly delivered provision. These form part of the arrangements described in Indicator 2 and are approved by the degree-awarding body. Specific aspects of these are described more fully below.

## Indicator 13

**Degree-awarding bodies approve module(s) and programmes delivered through an arrangement with another delivery organisation, support provider or partner through processes that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for assuring quality and academic standards for programmes directly provided by the degree-awarding body.**

## Approval processes

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 an arrangement with a delivery organisation, support provider or partner is adequate to enable students to achieve the academic standard required for their awards.

Degree-awarding bodies may be flexible in the design and application of quality assurance processes to ensure that they are appropriate to the timescales and contexts within which other organisations may operate (for example, employers or other awarding bodies). Procedures and processes can differ, for some 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 Expectations of Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards.<sup>16</sup>

## Learning opportunities delivered by other awarding bodies

In considering study abroad schemes and jointly delivered programmes leading to joint, dual/double or multiple awards, degree-awarding bodies may accept the detailed approval processes undertaken at module level by partner awarding bodies for the modules or components which those partners are delivering. Degree-awarding bodies which deliver study abroad or exchange schemes with other awarding bodies as part of structured programmes of study set out arrangements for credit recognition in their academic frameworks and regulations. They retain responsibility for ensuring that the modules proposed to be available abroad are at a level appropriate to achieve the intended learning outcomes for that component of the overall programme. In the case of jointly delivered programmes leading to joint, dual/double or multiple awards, degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for making an assessment as to whether the proposed programme as an entity (and its assessment strategy) delivers and tests programme outcomes at the appropriate level for the award and maintains its own academic standards as a degree-awarding body. In some cases, the requirements of partner awarding bodies may mean that the threshold standards of the degree-awarding body are exceeded; degree-awarding bodies ensure that their academic standards are not compromised through any joint arrangements (see Indicator 11). Conjoint validation or approval events, involving representation from all the awarding bodies involved, are used as effective means of facilitating joint approval of programmes leading to joint awards.

## Arrangements for learning and teaching, support and resources

In approving modules or programmes - or in credit-rating provision to be delivered wholly or partly through a delivery organisation, support provider or partner - degree-awarding bodies consider the arrangements for learning and teaching, support and learning resources to be provided by those organisations.

While degree-awarding bodies ensure that the Expectations of *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement* and *Chapter B5: Student Engagement* are met, the requirements and investigations are proportionate to the volume, complexity and level of learning involved.

For example, where learning opportunities are to be delivered or supported by organisations other than the degree-awarding body, the precise role that staff are to undertake is the starting point to determine how appropriately qualified staff are to fulfil it. If an entire programme is to be delivered by an organisation that is not itself a degree-awarding body, then the degree-awarding body requires those staff involved in learning and teaching to meet its usual specifications for being appropriately qualified to teach at a specific level. In the context of transnational arrangements, additional local requirements may apply.

Where individual modules or parts of programmes are delivered by organisations other than the degree-awarding body, an assessment is made of 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 a mentoring or supervisory capacity and it is the suitability of staff for this specific function (and the need for any support or development) that is assessed. See *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*.

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 the partner 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 delivery organisation, support provider or partner, an evaluation is made of 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>17</sup>

## Research degrees

When approving arrangements for research degrees to be provided in conjunction with other organisations, 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* can be met.

More detailed information on initial and subsequent approval processes may be found in Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching* and *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*.

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### Further Guidelines, References and Resources

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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## Indicator 14

**Degree-awarding bodies clarify which organisation is responsible for admitting and registering a student to modules or programmes delivered with others, and ensure that admissions are consistent with their own admissions policies.**

Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others may generate particular requirements for recruitment, selection and admission, 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 international qualifications and credits
- arrangements for the recognition of prior learning (see *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*)
- 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.

Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for approving the criteria for admission. In addition, degree-awarding bodies stipulate 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 arrangement (for example a validation arrangement or an articulation agreement) and on the level of risk associated with the delivery organisation. Degree-awarding bodies determine and implement arrangements that are fit for purpose and record these in the formal written agreements. Arrangements are consistent with the overarching admissions policies of the degree-awarding body.

In the case of joint, dual/double or multiple awards, partners determine which of them is responsible for the management of the admissions process (or how responsibilities are shared) and the obligations of respective parties are recorded in the written agreements.

## Registration, enrolment and contractual relationships with students

Degree-awarding bodies make clear with which organisation a student is registered and what legal and contractual relationships the student has with the degree-awarding body, delivery organisation, support provider or partner organisation, respectively. In the case of publicly funded higher education providers, 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: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*.

## Indicator 15

**Degree-awarding bodies ensure that delivery organisations involved in the assessment of students understand and follow the assessment requirements approved by the degree-awarding body for the components or programmes being assessed in order to maintain its academic standards. In the case of joint, dual/double and multiple awards, or for study abroad and student exchanges, degree-awarding bodies agree with their partners on the division of assessment responsibilities and the assessment regulations and requirements which apply.**

Degree-awarding bodies are legally autonomous bodies and can exercise considerable discretion over their assessment practices. Delivery organisations may have little knowledge at the outset of a relationship about the requirements that will be placed upon them to ensure that assessments are secure and conducted effectively. In the case of delivery organizations located internationally, 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. This is of particular importance where non-academic organisations (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 Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards and *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*.

## **Staff development**

Staff development (or mentoring/supervision) may be required if staff from delivery organisations who are less experienced in delivering higher education are to become involved in formative or summative assessment. 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 learning arrangement involved and the unique characteristics of the delivery organisation.

## **Joint, dual/double and multiple awards**

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 in relation to maintaining oversight of the academic standards of those components of the joint programme for which they are responsible. In the case of joint awards of doctoral degrees, partners reach a shared understanding of how the degree will be examined in a way that satisfies the academic requirements of each of the awarding bodies involved such that the academic standards of none are compromised. A degree-awarding body participating as one of the partners in a consortium of educational providers for joint or multiple awards is involved in the assessment process (or its oversight) that leads to one of its awards, irrespective of whether or not a student has attended the degree-awarding body. These arrangements are recorded in the written agreements.

## **Study abroad and exchanges**

Where students study abroad or participate in exchanges as part of approved programmes of study, agreement is reached about recognition for learning undertaken with, and assessed by, other providers and awarding bodies.

Arrangements for recognition, including credit recognition where relevant, particularly in the context of study abroad, are typically addressed in the degree-awarding bodies' assessment regulations.

## **Assessment conducted by other providers or awarding bodies**

Where marks contributing to summative assessment are imported from other higher education providers or awarding bodies (through articulation arrangements, exchanges or study abroad), degree-awarding bodies determine whether any rescaling or adjustment is required to assure equivalence with marking schemes for their own programmes (see also *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*).

## **Assessment in other languages**



Some degree-awarding bodies offer programmes with delivery organisations 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 able to work easily in all the languages concerned and are 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.

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## Further guidelines, references and resources

Joint Degree Management and Administration Network (JOIMAN) *How to Manage Joint Study Programmes? Guidelines and Good Practices from the JOIMAN Network*

[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](http://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)

QAA, Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions in Wales for Effective Practice in Examining and Assessing in a Language other than the Language of Tuition

[www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=98](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=98).

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### Indicator 16

**Degree-awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The external examining procedures for qualifications where learning opportunities are delivered with others are consistent with the degree awarding body's approved practices.**

The consistency of application of external examining procedures is a central element in maintaining standards and quality in arrangements where learning opportunities are provided with organisations other than the degree-awarding body. Any departures from the degree-awarding body's approved 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 *Chapter B7: External Examining* and *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*.

Degree-awarding bodies remain responsible for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. They delegate the activities of nomination, induction and briefing of an external examiner to a delivery organisation only where they are satisfied of that organisation'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>18</sup> In this context, degree-awarding bodies consider what external examining arrangements are appropriate to satisfy the requirements 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 elsewhere through another delivery organisation, a single external examiner may be appointed to cover all versions of the programme, as an aid to ensuring consistency of practice and equity of treatment of students.

External examiners provide an annual report to the degree-awarding body (see *Chapter B7: External Examining*).

Arrangements for external examining are fully addressed in *Chapter B7: External Examining* and *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*.

### Indicator 17

**Degree-awarding bodies ensure that modules and programmes offered through other delivery organisations, support providers or partners are monitored and reviewed through procedures that are consistent with, or comparable to, those used for modules or programmes provided directly by them.**

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 or functions to a delivery organisation or support provider where they have confidence in that other organisation's capacity to undertake the responsibility. For example, gathering feedback from students, securing effective engagement with 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 that any delegation of quality management is being properly discharged and check this on a regular basis (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 another organisation and may review entry, progression, retention and performance data in comparison with their own benchmarks or key performance indicators.

Degree-awarding bodies periodically review programmes delivered wholly or partly through arrangements with other delivery organisations, support providers or partners. Where only specific aspects of a programme are delivered or supported by others, or where programmes are franchised, the degree-awarding body may conduct these reviews as part of the periodic review of 'in-house' provision provided directly by them. This can help ensure equivalence of academic standards between programmes. Alternatively, degree-awarding bodies may review programmes through reapproval processes, particularly where such programmes are not embedded within departments or faculties of the degree-awarding body.

In the context of joint, dual/double or multiple awards, degree-awarding bodies share responsibilities for monitoring and review. Individual modules or elements of programmes may be monitored by the partner awarding body responsible for delivering them. However, outcomes are shared between the partners so that each degree-awarding body can assure itself that the academic standards of the award as a whole are being maintained and that the quality of learning opportunities, as a whole, is appropriate. In the same way that approval of joint programmes may be conducted conjointly, the review of joint programmes may also be conducted jointly by the partners involved.

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

# Information for students and delivery organisations, support providers or partners

## Indicator 18

**Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to learning opportunities delivered with others which lead to their awards. Information is produced for prospective and current students which is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Delivery organisations or support providers are provided with all information necessary for the effective delivery of the learning or support.**

## Information about higher education provision

Students, prospective students, employers and other stakeholders need to be able to satisfy themselves that awards obtained through arrangements where learning is delivered or supported by organisations other than the degree-awarding body are fully equivalent to other awards offered at a similar level by the same degree-awarding body. To this end, higher education providers produce information on awards delivered through such arrangements (whether in full or in part) that meets the Expectation of Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision.

## Control over publicity and promotional activity

Degree-awarding bodies have effective control over all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to learning opportunities provided with others, ensuring that it is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. There is transparency about which organisation awards the credit or qualification and which organisations are delivering learning and assessment or providing support and facilities.

Degree-awarding bodies establish clear guidelines as to the process for sign-off of publicity materials produced by delivery organisations or support providers, and clarify where the authority resides for approving such materials. Where the production of information is delegated to a delivery organisation, 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 nature and standing of the programmes and qualifications provided under the arrangement.

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

## Monitoring of information

Degree-awarding bodies monitor regularly all sources of information produced by other organisations with which they work (including websites and prospectuses) for prospective students and/or for current students and staff involved in the arrangements. Regular checks on the information actually being provided, including user surveys, ensure that it remains fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

## Provision of information to delivery organisations and support providers

Delivery organisations and support providers receive all information relevant to the programmes or modules which they are delivering or supporting in order to place their contribution in context. Where modules or elements of programmes (rather than whole programmes) are delivered through organisations other than the degree-awarding body, these 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 the contribution that the element makes to the award of any credit or qualification.

## **Provision of information to current students**

All students who are on placements, participating in study abroad schemes, taking modules or registered on programmes delivered by organisations other than the degree-awarding body (in particular in the context of transnational education) are routinely provided with information about their studies and clear statements about their rights and responsibilities as students, as set out in Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision. 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 delivery organisation, support provider or the placement host
- the avenues open to them for concerns, complaints and appeals, and how these are divided between the delivery organisation, support provider or partner and the degree-awarding body
- the degree-awarding body's responsibilities to a student where an employer is a delivery organisation or support provider, and in particular where the student is an employee of that organisation (for example if 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 delivered with other organisations. Current 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 the learning opportunities offered. Any changes to arrangements are communicated promptly to students.

## **Information about academic appeals and student complaints**

In the case of complaints and appeals about academic matters, students at a delivery organisation have ultimate right of appeal to the degree-awarding body. The degree-awarding body may also review academic complaints once procedures at the delivery organisation have been exhausted.

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that their own responsibilities, and the roles of the organisations with whom they work, are clearly distinguished and publicised. They ensure that students studying at delivery organisations have clear information about the initial route for making an academic appeal or formal student complaint, and the sequence of processes involved. They also make clear the channels through which dissatisfied students can contact the degree-awarding body directly.

In the case of joint and dual/double or multiple awards, the partners 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.

See also *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*.

## Certificates and records of study

### Indicator 19

**When degree-awarding bodies make arrangements for the delivery of learning opportunities with others, they ensure that they retain authority for awarding certificates and issuing detailed records of study in relation to student achievement.**

**The certificate and/or record of academic achievement states the principal language of instruction and/or assessment where this is not English.<sup>20</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 other higher education provider involved in the delivery of the programme of study.<sup>21</sup> Where information relating to the language of study or to the name and location of the delivery organisation or 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 award of credit or qualifications. 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 and records of academic achievement (and their duplicates). The ultimate responsibility for the security and accuracy of certificates and transcripts/records of achievement lies with the body in whose name they are issued. If the degree-awarding body wishes to delegate the issue of these documents to a delivery organisation, it ensures that it has retained the means to exercise proper control over the process. In the case of joint awards, the responsibility for issuing a single certificate is shared.

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that the information contained on the certificate and/or 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 **clarifies**, for a single jointly delivered programme (and its associated credit, where relevant), 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 *Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision*.

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## Further Guidelines, References and Resources

UUK and GuildHE (2012) *Bringing it all Together: Introducing the HEAR*

[www.hear.ac.uk/assets/documents/hear/institution-resources/hear-Bringing-it-all-together.pdf](http://www.hear.ac.uk/assets/documents/hear/institution-resources/hear-Bringing-it-all-together.pdf)

Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) website with access to further information

[www.hear.ac.uk](http://www.hear.ac.uk)

Higher Education Achievement Report Resources page, which leads to guidance documents, case studies and the JISC HEAR pages

[www.hear.ac.uk/resources](http://www.hear.ac.uk/resources)

Diploma Supplement

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ds\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ds_en.htm)

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# Appendix 1 - The Expectation and Indicators: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others

## The Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about managing the delivery of learning opportunities with others, which degree-awarding bodies, and higher education providers without degree-awarding powers that are organising provision by third parties, are required to meet:

**Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.**

## The Indicators of sound practice

### Indicator 1

A strategic approach to delivering learning opportunities with others is adopted. Appropriate levels of resources (including staff) are committed to the activities to ensure that the necessary oversight is sustained.

### Indicator 2

Governance arrangements at appropriate levels are in place for all learning opportunities which are not directly provided by the degree-awarding body. Arrangements for learning to be delivered, or support to be provided, are developed, 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. Consideration of the business case is conducted separately from approval of the academic proposal.

### 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

The risks of each arrangement to deliver learning opportunities with others are assessed at the outset and reviewed subsequently on a periodic basis. Appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of the various arrangements are determined and put in place.

### Indicator 6

Appropriate and proportionate due diligence procedures are determined for each proposed arrangement for delivering learning opportunities with an organisation other than the degree-awarding body. They are conducted periodically to check the capacity of the other organisation to continue to fulfil its designated role in the arrangement.

### **Indicator 7**

There is a written and legally binding agreement, or other document, 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 higher education provider without degree-awarding powers arranging provision by a third party) and by the delivery organisation, support provider or partner(s) before the relevant activity commences.

### **Indicator 8**

Degree-awarding bodies take responsibility for ensuring that they retain proper control of the academic standards of awards where learning opportunities are delivered with others. No serial arrangements are undertaken without the express written permission of the degree-awarding body which retains oversight of what is being done in its name.

### **Indicator 9**

Degree-awarding bodies retain responsibility for ensuring that students admitted to a programme who wish to complete it under their awarding authority can do so in the event that a delivery organisation or support provider or partner withdraws from an arrangement or that the degree-awarding body decides to terminate an arrangement.

### **Indicator 10**

All higher education providers maintain records (by type and category) of all arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others that are subject to a formal agreement.

### **Indicator 11**

Degree-awarding bodies are responsible 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 learning opportunities delivered by others are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that they confer at the same level. They are also consistent with UK national requirements.

### **Indicator 12**

When making arrangements to deliver a programme with others, degree-awarding bodies fulfil the requirements of any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) that has approved or recognised the programme or qualification, in relation to aspects of its delivery and any associated formal agreements. The status of the programme or qualification in respect of PSRB recognition is made clear to prospective students.

### **Indicator 13**

Degree-awarding bodies approve module(s) and programmes delivered through an arrangement with another delivery organisation, support provider or partner through processes that are at least as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for assuring quality and academic standards for programmes directly provided by the degree-awarding body.

### **Indicator 14**

Degree-awarding bodies clarify which organisation is responsible for admitting and registering a student to modules or programmes delivered with others, and ensure that admissions are consistent with their own admissions policies.



### **Indicator 15**

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that delivery organisations involved in the assessment of students understand and follow the assessment requirements approved by the degree-awarding body for the components or programmes being assessed in order to maintain its academic standards. In the case of joint, dual/double and multiple awards or for study abroad and student exchanges, degree-awarding bodies agree with their partners on the division of assessment responsibilities and the assessment regulations and requirements which apply.

### **Indicator 16**

Degree-awarding bodies retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment, briefing and functions of external examiners. The external examining procedures for qualifications where learning opportunities are delivered with others are consistent with the degree awarding body's approved practices.

### **Indicator 17**

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that modules and programmes offered through other delivery organisations, support providers or partners are monitored and reviewed through procedures that are consistent with, or comparable to, those used for modules or programmes provided directly by them.

### **Indicator 18**

Degree-awarding bodies ensure that they have effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to learning opportunities delivered with others which lead to their awards. Information is produced for prospective and current students which is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Delivery organisations or support providers are provided with all information necessary for the effective delivery of the learning or support.

### **Indicator 19**

When degree-awarding bodies make arrangements for the delivery of learning opportunities with others, they ensure that they retain authority for awarding certificates and issuing detailed records of study in relation to student achievement. The certificate and/or record of academic achievement states the principal language of instruction and/or assessment where this is not English.<sup>22</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 other higher education provider involved in the delivery of the programme of study.<sup>23</sup> Where information relating to the language of study or to the name and location of the delivery organisation or partner is recorded on the record of achievement only, the certificate refers to the existence of this formal record.

## Appendix 2 - Glossary of terms

The meanings and usage given to words differ from one organisation to another and from one country to another. This is a source of actual and potential confusion. It is important that readers of the Quality Code should be aware of the way in which its compilers have chosen to use words relevant to arrangements for managing higher education provision with others.

The following glossary clarifies how terms are used in this Chapter of the Quality Code. It does not imply endorsement, approval or disapproval by QAA of any of the functions, processes or arrangements that are described.

**Articulation arrangement:** A process 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 stage of a programme of a degree-awarding body. These arrangements, which are subject to formal agreements between the parties, normally involve credit accumulation and transfer, so that credit achieved for the approved study at the first provider is transferred to contribute to the programme and award completed at the second (the degree-awarding body). The two separate components are the responsibility of the respective organisations delivering them but, together, contribute to a single award (of the degree-awarding body). Students normally have a contractual relationship with the organisation which delivers the first component and subsequently with the degree-awarding body.

**Branch campus:** A campus of a college or university that is located separately from the main or 'home' campus of the university or college and is often smaller than the main campus.

**Cotutelle agreement:** An arrangement for a research degree student to be jointly supervised typically by supervisors from different awarding bodies and in different countries.

**Deliberative structures:** The organisational structures, typically committees, that allow members of an organisation to participate in policy formulation and decision-making.

**Delivery organisation:** An organisation that delivers learning opportunities on behalf of a degree-awarding body. This may be a higher education provider without degree awarding powers, a degree-awarding body other than that granting the award (for example, in the context of some federal structures), an employer or another organisation approved by the degree-awarding body.

**Dual/double or multiple awards:** Arrangements where two or more awarding bodies together provide a single jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to separate awards (and separate certification) being granted by both, or all, of them.

**Due diligence:** Enquiries relating to the governance, ethos, status, capacity, reputation and general suitability of a potential delivery organisation or support provider to satisfy the requirements of a degree-awarding body for an arrangement to deliver learning opportunities.

**Educational village:** A group of education providers occupying a shared campus and ethos, and forming a pedagogic community, despite not necessarily providing education of the same type or at the same level.

**Embedded colleges:** Private organisations (usually part of a network of colleges) operating near to, or within, the premises of a degree-awarding body, usually engaged in the preparation of students for entry to higher education programmes.

**Executive structures:** The structures within an organisation for decisions and action to be taken by a hierarchy of individual officers.

**Franchising:** A process by which a degree-awarding body agrees to authorise a delivery organisation to deliver (and sometimes assess) part or all of one (or more) of its own approved programmes. Often, the degree-awarding body retains direct responsibility for the programme content, the teaching and assessment strategy, the assessment regime and the quality assurance. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the degree-awarding body.

**Foundation year:** A year of study preparatory to higher education.

**Flying faculty:** An arrangement whereby a programme is delivered in a location away from the main campus (usually in another country) by staff from the degree-awarding body, who also carry out all assessment. Support for students may be provided by local staff.

**Higher education provider:** A generic term for those who deliver higher education which leads to an award from, or which is validated by, a UK degree-awarding body, or is otherwise reviewed by QAA.

**Jointly delivered programme:** A programme delivered or provided jointly by two or more organisations, irrespective of the award (whether single, joint, dual/double or multiple). It refers to the education provided rather than the nature of the award.

**Joint award:** An arrangement under which two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants. A single certificate or document (signed by the competent authorities) attests to the successful completion of this jointly delivered programme, replacing the separate institutional or national qualifications.

**Learning opportunities:** The provision made for students' learning, including planned study programmes, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories, studios or specialist facilities).

**MOOC (or 'massive open online course'):** A form of distance learning providing online courses aimed at large-scale participation and open access via the web.

**Multiple awards:** An arrangement whereby three or more awarding bodies together provide a single jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to a separate award (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for dual/double awards, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

**Partner (or 'partner organisation'):** Another awarding body with which a degree-awarding body enters into an agreement to deliver learning opportunities and grant awards.

**Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ):** A first medical degree awarded by a body or combination of bodies that is recognised by the General Medical Council for this purpose, or that was empowered to issue PMQs at the time the degree was awarded.

**Progression arrangements:** Arrangements whereby students who have completed a programme at one organisation successfully may be considered for entry (on an individual basis) either to the beginning, or to a more advanced stage, of a programme of the degree-awarding body. See also articulation arrangement.

**Professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs):** Organisations that set the standards for and regulate the entry into particular professions, and are authorised to accredit, approve or recognise programmes leading to professional qualifications for which they may have a statutory or regulatory responsibility.

**Quality assurance:** The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the process that supports them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meets UK expectations, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

**Serial arrangement:** A serial arrangement occurs when the delivery organisation (through an arrangement of its own) offers whole programmes (franchised to it or validated by the degree-awarding body) elsewhere or assigns to another party powers delegated to it by the degree-awarding body.

**Support provider:** An organisation, other than the degree-awarding body, which supplies support, resources or specialist facilities for student learning opportunities. This may be a higher education provider without degree-awarding powers, a degree-awarding body other than that granting the award (for example, in the context of some federal structures), an employer or another organisation approved by the degree-awarding body.

**Transnational education (TNE):** Education and learning opportunities that are provided in more than one country. In the context of the Quality Code, it typically refers to higher education provision of a UK degree-awarding body which is delivered in a country outside the UK and often by delivery organisations other than the degree-awarding body.

**Validation:** A process by which a degree-awarding body judges a module or programme developed and delivered by another organisation and approves it as being of an appropriate standard and quality to contribute, or lead, to one of its awards. Students normally have a direct contractual relationship with the delivery organisation.

## Appendix 3 - Membership of the advisory group for this Chapter

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Alison Blackburn	Director of Student and Academic Support Service	University of Central Lancashire
Professor John Baldock	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research	University of Kent
Lynn Parker	Chair	Association of Collaborative Providers
Sarah Butler	Assistant Director	QAA (Chair)
Carolyn Campbell	Head of Networks and Partnerships	QAA
Professor Brian Caraher	Research Director: Poetry, Irish Writing, Creative Writing and Modern Literary Studies; Internationalisation Advocate, School of English	Queen's University Belfast
Nick Davy	Higher Education Policy Manager	Association of Colleges
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 and Europe	Study Group UK
Neil Mackenzie	Students' Union Manager	Bradford College Students' Union
Ruth Moir	Director of International Development	Heriot Watt University
Huw Llandeg Morris	Academic Registrar	Swansea University
Wendy Muir	Project Manager, International Partnership Development;	University of Glasgow

Assistant Director (Senate Office)

Trish O'Brien	Head of Provider Relations	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Neil Owens	Assistant Registrar, Academic Quality and 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 Learning Support	University of Manchester
James Winter	Chair	Council of Validating Universities

# References

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

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education)

<sup>3</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=181](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=181)

<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary)

<sup>5</sup> The first edition of *Section 2: Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning 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, assessed or supported 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 that 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 the former *Section 2: Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning of the Code of Practice* which related to flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning) has been excised; content that related to learning and teaching is now subsumed within *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching* and those aspects that relate to the formal management of the arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others are covered in this Chapter.

<sup>6</sup> See the section 'Learning and teaching' in *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*.

<sup>7</sup> A distinction is drawn here between, on the one hand, 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: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*) or individual recognition of prior learning (and experiential learning) (AP(E)L) arrangements (which are covered in *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and Recognition of Prior Learning*, and those, on the other hand, which secure admission with advanced standing for cohorts of students and which are the proper subject of *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*. See Appendix 2: Glossary of terms.

<sup>8</sup> QAA (2010) *Employer-Responsive Provision Survey - a Reflective Report*, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64)

<sup>9</sup> See *Employer-Responsive Provision Survey - a Reflective Report*, paragraphs 28-37, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64)

<sup>10</sup> See *Employer-Responsive Provision Survey - a Reflective Report*, paragraphs 28-30 and 35-37, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64).

<sup>11</sup> These arrangements are made with the agreement of the degree-awarding body. See 'About this Chapter' and the explanatory text to Indicator 8.

<sup>12</sup> These would include public documents (such as, within the UK, reports of QAA and its predecessor bodies on collaborative arrangements with UK institutions).

<sup>13</sup> The FQHEIS sits within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This is available at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk).

<sup>14</sup> The SCQF, available at [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk); the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW), available at <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/qualificationsinwales/creditqualificationsframework/?lang=en>; and the *Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England* available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2730](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2730)

<sup>15</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/rds](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rds); [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

<sup>16</sup> See *Employer-Responsive Provision Survey - a Reflective Report*, available at [www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=64)

<sup>17</sup> See Part 1 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (2009), available at [www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/](http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/).

<sup>18</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 and Scottish higher education providers in the Welsh or Gaelic languages.

<sup>19</sup> This applies to higher education providers which have delivered the entire programme or to multiple partners involved in a joint, dual/double or multiple award.

<sup>20</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 and Scottish higher education providers in the Welsh or Gaelic languages.

<sup>21</sup> This applies to higher education providers which have delivered the entire programme or to multiple partners involved in a joint, dual/double or multiple award.



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